

The American University in Cairo

School of Public Policy

**BETWEEN RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT:
THE FORMATION OF IRAQI REFUGEE ‘COMMUNITIES’
IN CAIRO AND AMMAN**

A Thesis Submitted to

Migration and Refugee Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

by Emilie K. B. Minnick

Bachelor of Arts, Macalester College

under the supervision of Dr. Mulki Al-Sharmani

December 2009

The American University in Cairo

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Abstract

An abstract of the thesis of Emilie Minnick for the M.A. in Migration and Refugee Studies at the American University in Cairo. Thesis committee members Dr. Mulki Al-Sharmani and Dr. Ray Jureidini.

Title: *Between Return and Resettlement: The Formation of Iraqi Refugee ‘Communities’ in Cairo And Amman*

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate whether or not there is community formation among Iraqi refugees living in Amman, Jordan and Cairo, Egypt. These two countries were chosen as case studies because they offer an opportunity to analyze how different host country conditions in the Global South have an impact on the process of community formation. While Egypt is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and Jordan is not, access to rights in both countries is similarly restrictive. Furthermore, whereas there has been a long history of forced migration from Iraq to Jordan and Iraqi social networks are already in place, there were very few Iraqis living in Cairo before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Community formation will be studied by examining social support networks, livelihood strategies, articulations of collective identities and community building initiatives of Iraqi refugees. Research for this thesis was conducted over a period of three months, through interviews with 24 Iraqis and 4 focus group discussions with a total of 25 participants. The study finds that Iraqi refugees use a number of different social networks to secure livelihoods, information about resources and resettlement, housing, and other necessities, but that these social networks are primarily family-based. There is no community formation in the form of collective pooling of material resources in host countries; instead, remittances from family members living in Iraq or in third countries are the main source of livelihoods. However, there are some emerging manifestations of a sense of community, including a strong discourse of a collective Iraqi identity and the rejection of sectarian identity, the development of new social relationships among Iraqi refugees living in host countries, and a few community building initiatives established to assist other Iraqi refugees in need. Among those Iraqi refugees who cannot return to Iraq and do not have the opportunity to be resettled in Western countries, community formation in Amman and Cairo will continue to develop as it will become a necessity for survival.

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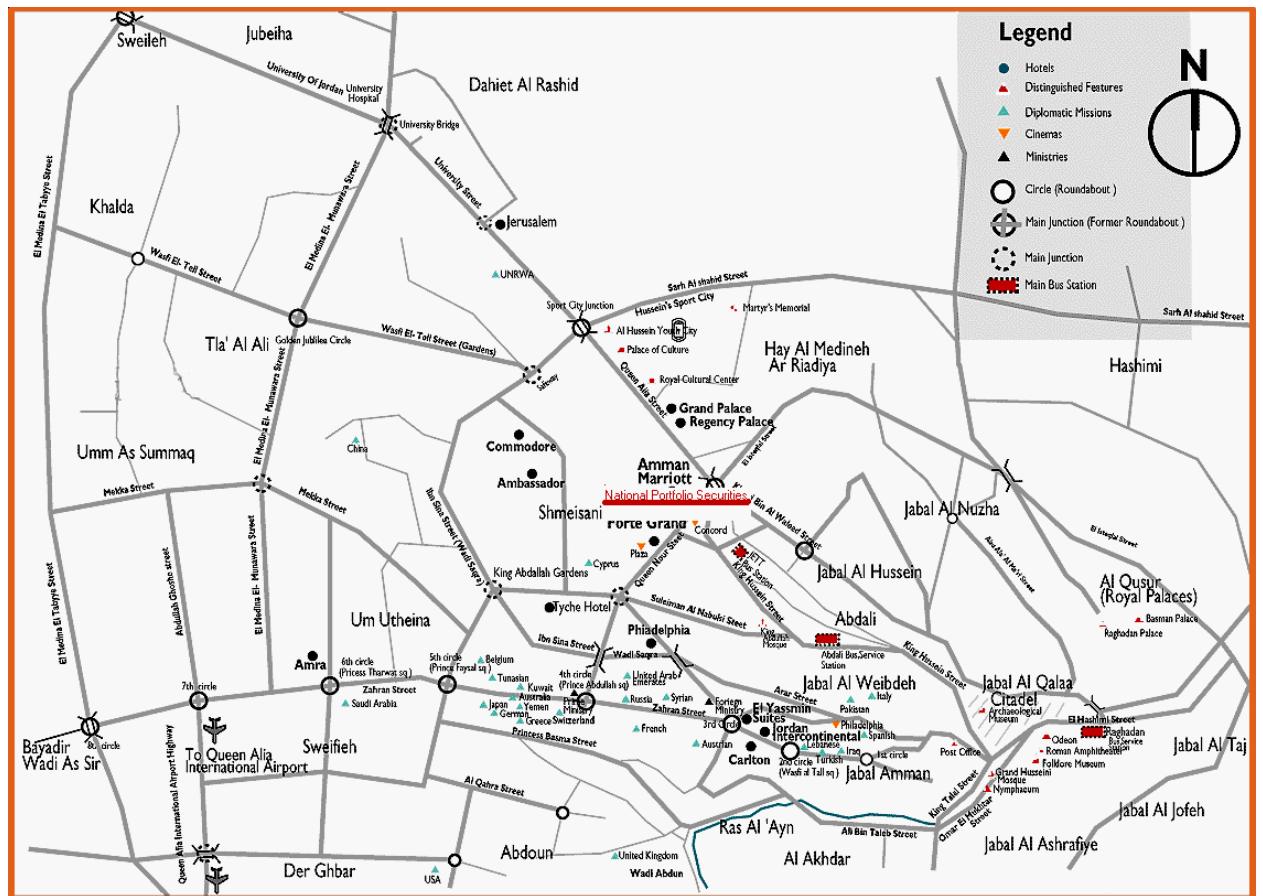
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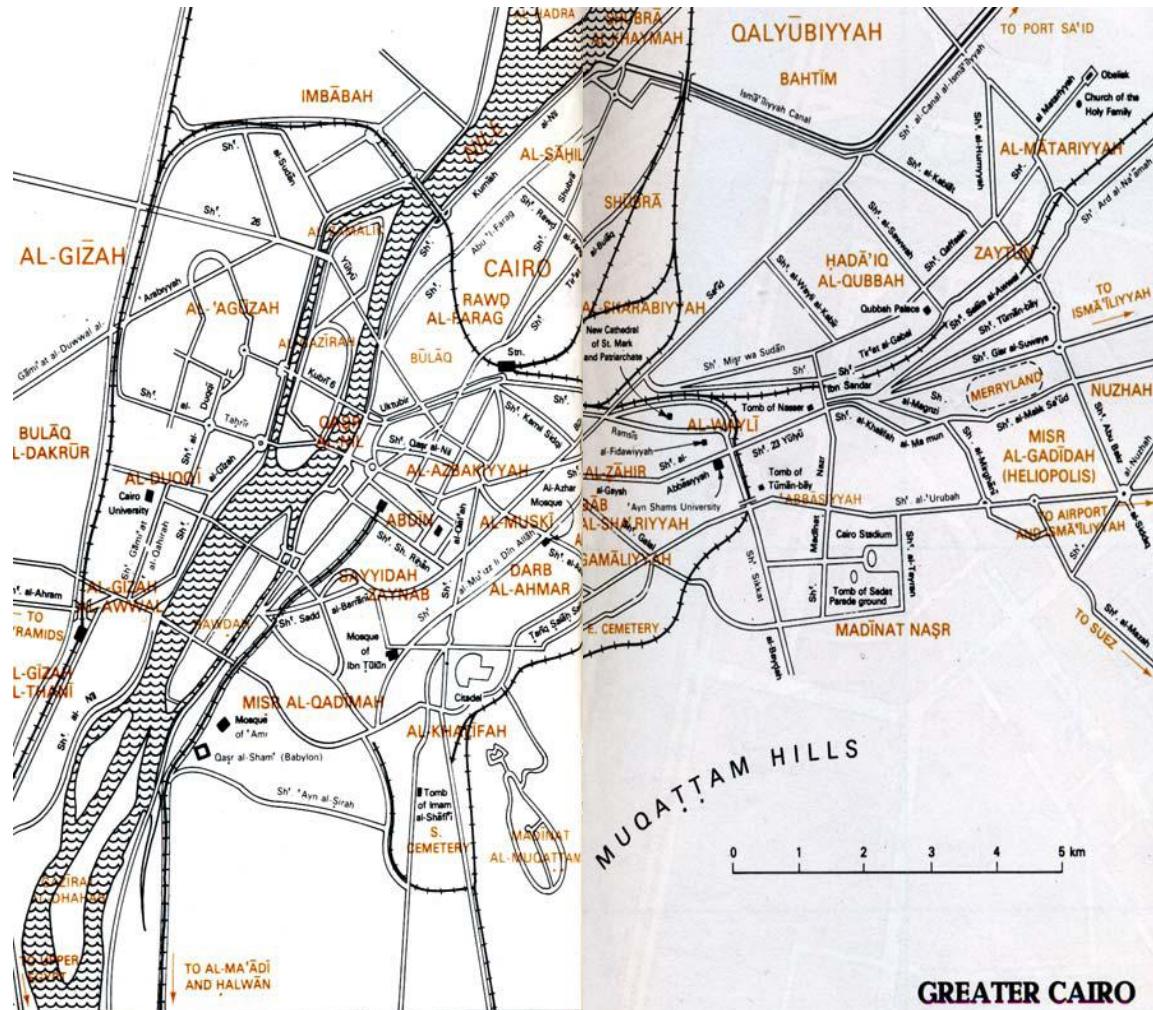
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Introduction

The complexity of the relationships between Iraqi refugees can be illustrated by an insight that I had on my first day of fieldwork. After conducting two interviews with Iraqis in Medinat Rehab, a ‘satellite city’ that is a gated community deep in the desert northeast of Cairo containing shopping malls, Western restaurants, and green spaces, I wanted to try Iraqi falafel for the first time. My two friends took me to the only Iraqi “restaurant” in Rehab, where a well-dressed older Iraqi gentleman had set up a makeshift falafel stand next to the side of a building. The man greeted my friends profusely as is the Iraqi custom, although they had only met a few times before. The man’s son arrived from around the corner and the greetings started up again. We were politely urged to sit down on some cheerfully-colored plastic chairs while we waited, and my friend began to mutter something under his breath. It turns out that this man and his son had invited my friend over for an elaborate Iraqi lunch one day a few months before. My friend went and ate very well, but in the man’s house he said there was a picture of Saddam Hussein hanging prominently on the wall. My friend happens to be very opinionated about the former dictator so needless to say, this was a major problem for him, which he could not reconcile with the man’s kind invitation. As we waited for our sandwiches, speculation began that the man used to be *Amn al-Dowla*, or state security under Saddam Hussein.

My friends obviously did not feel comfortable around this man because of his ties to the former regime and as my research continued, I came to realize that this feeling is common among Iraqis in exile. This experience led me to ask many other questions about Iraqi community formation. What does ‘community’ mean to Iraqi refugees? Is it seen as

desirable or useful? What are the manifestations of a community formation? What factors motivate and inhibit community formation? These questions will be the main focus of this thesis.

Purpose of Study

This research project examines how and why "communities" form in exile by using the example of Iraqi refugees living in Cairo, Egypt and Amman, Jordan. Recent studies suggest that for many Iraqi refugees in Cairo and Amman return to the home country is not an option and resettlement is only possible for an extremely small minority (Minnick and Nashaat 2009). This leaves most Iraqis to consider their prospects for remaining in Cairo and Amman for the indefinite future although their savings are running out, while both the Egyptian and Jordanian governments have made it difficult for Iraqis to obtain work permits and legal residency. It is well documented that groups of migrants often work together to pool their resources when living conditions are difficult. However, many academics and service providers construct the Iraqi refugee population as divided along sectarian lines and unwilling to work together (See Stack 2008, Anheleddu 2008). Yet despite such constraints and misconceptions, some Iraqi refugees are still engaging in community-building activities in both Cairo and Amman. This research project examines the nature of these "communities" of Iraqi refugees, seeking to understand if they are forming along sectarian, ethnic, religious, class or other divisions.

In this work, 'community formation' will draw on many different conceptualizations, whose elements will serve as a framework for analyzing the existence of community among Iraqi refugees. These elements include collective livelihood

strategies, establishment and maintenance of social relations and support networks, community building initiatives, and the construction of collective identities. This understanding of community formation was chosen because it is open to several interpretations of what community means; instead of a strictly geographically-bounded definition, community can be conceived of as transnational, or as transitory in nature, encompassing a feeling of belonging or sharing of a specific experience. The concept of community formation will be explored further in Chapter Two.

This project asks a number of questions. Is there an Iraqi refugee community/communities? What host country factors influence community formation? How do the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international actors such as international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) view Iraqi refugees and how do their policies influence Iraqi community formation? Who is participating in community formation and why? Why do some Iraqis lack trust in other Iraqis, while others do not? What is the role of the family and the social network in the migration process and in community formation?

Significance of Study

The Iraqi refugee crisis is a current and urgent issue that must be studied as it continues to change and develop. This study captures a specific time period in both Amman and Cairo, describing the situation of Iraqi refugees in the first part of 2009. Since the research phase, many Iraqi refugees living in Cairo have returned to Iraq. However, there are still many relevant issues to explore in this work as there has been not only a paucity of academic research on Iraqi refugees in the Middle East region, but also a lack of

research on urban refugees in general, their particular problems, and ways that resource-deprived host countries in the Global South can cope and deal with these issues in a productive way. Much of the literature on Iraqi refugees thus far has been statistical or anecdotal in nature. Through analysis of data collected from field-based research, this thesis seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the situation of Iraqi refugees in Amman and Cairo.

By exploring the differences between Iraqi refugee communities in Amman and Cairo, I seek to achieve a better understanding of how these two governments can better assist the Iraqi refugee population, both for the benefit of the host population and government and the Iraqi refugees themselves. Furthermore, the different situations of Iraqis in each country has and will continue to lead to differences in community formation and survival strategies, from which lessons can be learned that may also prove to be beneficial to Iraqis living in different host countries.

This exploratory research tries to understand Iraqi refugee community formation in light of these differences, questioning how Iraqis construct "community" internally and how outsiders such as the Egyptian and Jordanian governments, the UNHCR, and NGO service providers construct Iraqi communities. In contrast to commonly studied Western resettlement countries where multiculturalism is the norm, Egypt and Jordan provide a unique setting to examine the formation of new communities of refugees living in the urban South. Often, cities in the Global South have had a long history of hosting diverse refugee populations despite a lack of government policy promoting multiculturalism. How refugee populations cope with difficult circumstances in these countries, as well as the transnational character of these populations is largely understudied.

Instead, much of the literature on refugee community formation discusses refugees confined in camps or already resettled in the West. Community formation of refugees living in cities among their hosts in the Global South is an important survival strategy in many settings. Furthermore, because it is unlikely that the Iraqi refugee crisis will cease and that Iraqis will begin to repatriate *en masse*, it is crucial that host governments reconsider their policies concerning the formation of community associations as well as refugee rights such as education and employment. The research will reexamine the popular notion that refugees are burdens on their host countries by demonstrating that enabling and supporting Iraqis to form communities and to pool their resources may reduce any perceived burden on host countries.

Structure of Thesis

Chapter One will cover the background history of forced migration out of Iraq, emphasizing the continuity of the current flow with that of pre-2003 forced migration. Chapter One will also undertake a literature review of current and pertinent studies on Iraqi refugees, focusing on Egypt and Jordan but also examining other relevant articles. Chapter Two will introduce the theoretical orientation of this project, examining, in particular, the concept of community formation. Chapter Two will also put forth the methodology used for the research upon which this study is based and include the profile of the group studied, examining background characteristics of participants. Chapter Three will look at social networks and transnational families, examining the dynamics that influence the trajectories of Iraqi forced migration and the coping mechanisms employed by Iraqis in countries of asylum in order to understand how families and social networks

motivate or inhibit community formation. Chapter Four will discuss the main barriers to local integration and community formation among Iraqi refugees living in Amman and Cairo. These barriers include external factors that are shaped by the policies of host governments, UNHCR and INGOs, as well as internal factors that pertain to the Iraqi refugees themselves and their past experiences of persecution. Chapter Five will analyze the discursive constructions of a homogeneous Iraqi identity which are undertaken by Iraqi refugees in both countries, and the significance of these constructions to the process of community formation. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the main findings and suggest what the future might hold for Iraqi refugees in Cairo and Amman based on the input of the informants for this study.

Chapter One: Iraqi Refugees in Cairo and Amman

“The scope of migration from Iraq is ancient, durable, and global.” Geraldine Chatelard in ‘Constructing and Deconstructing ‘the Iraqi Refugee Crisis’,’ 2008.

Background

Iraq 1921 to 2003: A History of Forced Migration

According to Chatelard (2005, 2008), Iraqis have fled Iraq in major flows on several occasions, resulting in a long and complex trajectory of movement. This is especially due to the fact that since the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921, Iraq has been ruled by successive authoritarian leaders whose policies and persecution have forced different segments of the population to flee over the years. Iraqi Assyrian Christians, alongside their Levantine counterparts pioneered routes to the Americas and Australia as early as the 1930s (Chatelard 2005). In the 1950s, many Iraqi members of the communist party fled to the UK, and again after the 1958 coup, many monarchists fled to Jordan, and in the 1970s, many anti-Ba’ath activists and intellectuals fled the country when they could find the opportunity (Chatelard 2005:2). Also starting in the 1970s, Kurds in the north part of Iraq were forced into Iran and Turkey by the Iraqi government and many often transited from Turkey to Germany as laborers, like other Turks at the time. These flows form the basis of what Chatelard calls “several discrete migratory systems” based on chain migration to certain geographical areas made up of groups of people connected either by business, kin, or ethno-religious background (ibid).

Chatelard considers the migration links between Iraq and Iran different from the system of transit migration described above. In the 1970s under Saddam Hussein, many Iraqi Shias, including both Arabs and Kurds were forcibly expelled across the border as they were considered of “Iranian descent”. Furthermore, many religious leaders who led opposition movements against the Ba’ath party were forced to leave Iraq during this time. During the Iraq-Iran war from 1980-1988, many army deserters also left for or stayed in Iran (Tripp 2007).

This migration accelerated in 1991 after the end of the Gulf War and during the beginning of the UN-imposed sanctions, and the two previously separate migration systems began to overlap (Chatelard 2005:4). In Jordan specifically, because it was Iraq’s main financial partner and because of its proximity, the country further developed as a transit point for some Iraqi forced migrants. According to Chatelard, Jordan adopted a *laissez-faire* policy towards Iraqi refugees, granting them entry and allowing them to pass through the country, but not encouraging them to stay by denying permission to work or access to social services (2005: 10). Many transited through Jordan as part of family reunification schemes to the United States, Canada, and Australia, especially various Christian denominations.

Others were professionals whose skills were in demand in Jordan, and they made their homes there on a more permanent basis with the result that,

[N]ew comers [sic] from Iraq have at their disposal a variety of community structures that pre-date their migration such as professional, intellectual or artistic circles, members of previous generations of Iraqi exiles, relatives and friends with a stable status, religious institutions, tribal ties, etc. Settlement patters are largely based on these ties. [Chatelard 2008:3]

Thus, these social networks were utilized in order to find employment, make ends meet, and increasingly for clandestine migration to European countries.

Post-2003 Movements

On March 20, 2003 multinational forces, led by the United States, invaded Iraq in order to topple the regime of Saddam Hussein. The aftermath of this invasion, both directly and indirectly, has led to the displacement of millions of Iraqis internally and across borders to neighboring countries. After the invasion in 2003, many Iraqi refugees who had fled because of the regime were expected to return to Iraq. Furthermore, the UN expected 500,000 Iraqis to flee as a direct result of the invasion (Libal and Harding 2007:19). However, movement of this magnitude was not seen immediately after the invasion. Instead, by 2005 a steady flow out of the country was witnessed (Libal and Harding 2007) largely due to the security vacuum caused by the invasion. Casualty estimates vary from 81,639 (Iraq Body Count) to 650,000 (Burnham et. al. 2006) dead as a direct or indirect result of the invasion and one in eight Iraqis has been uprooted, the largest displacement in the region since that of the Palestinians in 1948 (Tripp 2007:309).

One of the main causes of displacement has been the extreme violence characterized by car bombs, suicide bombers and gunmen. The targets of this violence are varied. They include not only U.S. forces, but also anyone seen to be assisting U.S. forces or benefiting from the U.S. occupation (Tripp 2007: 285). The insurgents were drawn from all aspects of Iraqi society, including Iraqi and Arab nationalists, former Baathists, and Sunni Islamists alarmed by the idea of Shias taking over. In addition, the insurgency was fed by foreigners who were able to cross over Iraq's porous borders.

As this insurgency continued, it began to take on a sectarian aspect. Bombs in Shia quarters led to reprisals against Sunni mosques and neighborhoods and vice versa, initiating a “vicious cycle of revenge and atrocity” (Tripp 2007:287). Many of the cities with mixed populations, such as Baghdad, Kirkuk, Baquba, Mosul and Basra experienced this sectarian violence the worst, causing Iraqis to flee to areas where their ethnic and sectarian counterparts lived.

Apart from the staggering violence experienced by Iraqis, conditions of infrastructure and services, such as electricity, water, sanitation, health and employment, were rapidly deteriorating. The insecurity of everyday life was compounded by criminality and the lack of capacity of the Iraqi police forces to do anything about it. Kidnapping, smuggling, and theft were common. Additionally, Iraqi professionals, including doctors, teachers, professors and scientists were targeted as a part of “systematic attempts to intimidate or silence independent voices” waged by extreme Islamists and by Baathists (Tripp 2007: 288). Attacks on women in public life were also on the rise with the growth of the insurgency. Furthermore, many minority groups have also been targeted and forced to flee Iraq, including Chaldeans, Assyrians, Mandeans, and Yazidis.

The Iraqi Refugee “Crisis”

According to Libal and Harding (2007), an organizational narrative has emerged from the U.S. government that “the swell of refugees and displaced persons only became apparent following the bombing of the al’Askariyya shrine in Samarra’ in February 2006,” effectively attributing the cause of flight to increased sectarianism. Although there was

evidence that large flows of refugees were exiting Iraq the previous year, few organizations were tracking these flows, except the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants whose annual survey found that nearly 900,000 Iraqi refugees existed at the beginning of 2006. Nonetheless, the February 2006 Samarra bombing seems to have stimulated media attention to the Iraqi refugee crisis, almost as if the crisis did not exist earlier because information about the refugee flows did not exist. According to Libal and Harding, after a certain point, the U.S. government was forced to admit that the refugee flows coming out of Iraq were actually caused by the U.S. invasion, no longer identifying them as those ousted by the former regime (2007:20). Clearly, a state of denial existed on the part of U.S. government officials as well as the U.S. media. What was actually happening on the ground did not comply with the intended outcome of the Iraqi invasion. The invasion did not cause thousands of Iraqi exiles to come running back to Iraq. Instead, it eventually led to the outpouring of thousands of Iraqis both internally and to nearby countries in the region.

In 2006 the UNHCR declared the situation of Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria to be a crisis (Chatelard 2008). Chatelard (2008), however, argues that the newest wave of forced migration is not in reality a trend that is distinct or unique from what had been happening for years under Saddam Hussein and even before him. Instead, she deconstructs the ‘Iraqi refugee crisis’ by pointing out that the UNHCR for years had not paid attention to the Iraqis that had been displaced both in the Middle East region and further abroad in Europe and the United States. When the UNHCR declared the situation in Jordan and Syria to be a ‘crisis’, this had the effect of diverting attention from the UN’s lack of action pre-2003 (Chatelard 2008:3).

Iraqi Refugees in Jordan and Egypt

Approximately 2 million have left Iraq and entered neighboring countries; Jordan and Syria have accepted 1.4 million and 750,000 Iraqi refugees respectively—though many reside in the two countries illegally. Other surrounding countries—including Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran and Kuwait—have allowed only relatively few to enter. In addition to Jordan and Syria, a large number of Iraqis have also sought refuge in Egypt. The situation of Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Egypt will be discussed in detail below.

Jordan

Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, but is the host of over 2 million Palestinian refugees, the largest ratio of refugees to indigenous population of any country in the world (Chatelard 2002). Due to the unresolved status of Palestinian refugees, many countries hosting them, including Jordan, have refused to adopt the 1951 Convention or to devise a domestic legal framework that would deal with influxes of refugees. While the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) is responsible for Palestinian refugees only, UNHCR good offices in Jordan register and process refugees of other nationalities despite Jordan making no promises to respect their rights as refugees, leaving them in a “legal abyss” (Chatelard 2002:2). Jordanian policy on migrants and refugees, which was initially relatively open for Arabs in the spirit of pan-Arabism, has become increasingly restrictive in recent years (de Bel-Air 2007:1).

Historically, Jordan has received a small but steady influx of Iraqi forced migrants, most notably during 1991 after the failed Shiite uprising (Chatelard 2002). These migrants used Jordan mostly as a transit point to other countries, specifically to claim asylum in the West (*Ibid*). At the beginning of the U.S. invasion in Iraq in 2003,

Jordan was already hosting some 250,000- 300,000 Iraqis (de Bel-Air 2007:10). After the invasion, Jordan again received an influx of Iraqi refugees, first former allies of Saddam Hussein and then families fleeing the deteriorating security situation. According to the FAFO survey, between 450,000- 500,000 Iraqis live in Jordan as of May 2007 (FAFO 2007), although others have estimated as high as 750,000 to 1 million (UNHCR 2007). Iraqis in Jordan largely live in the Amman governorate, 60% of whom identify as Sunni Muslim, 18% as Shiite, and 25% as Christian, with the remainder identifying as Yazidi, Sabean or other (FAFO 2007).

Iraqis are not considered refugees by the Jordanian government, but temporary visitors. Initially, they were able to enter Jordan with ease and were allowed to own land and homes and make investments and business partnerships. Residency permits could be purchased with the deposit of between \$70,000 and \$150,000 in a Jordanian bank (de Bel-Air 2007:10). In addition, the Jordanian authorities did little about visa overstayers, showing leniency in the enforcement of immigration laws. However, entry into Jordan and legal stay there has become increasingly restrictive since the November 2005 hotel bombings in Amman, perpetrated by Iraqis (Human Rights Watch 2007). Since that time, Jordan has made it difficult to renew temporary residency permits and to enter the country via land and air; furthermore, deportations of visa overstayers have increased. The rights to own land and homes have also been revoked. For a short time, Iraqi men aged 18-35 were denied entry all together (Olwan 2009). As of May 1, 2008, the international courier TNT has been given a contract to process visa applications inside of Iraq, supposedly with special stipulations for humanitarian cases (de Bel-Air 2007:12). Iraqi refugee children in Jordan are allowed to attend Jordanian public schools

since 2007, but only 78% of school-aged children attend school. Three-quarters of Iraqi children attending school attend private, not public school because of difficulty finding spaces for children in already over-crowded government schools (FAFO 2007:21).

Reasons for not attending school include displacement and difficulties affording the cost of school (FAFO 2007:21).

Approximately 30% of working-aged Iraqis in Jordan are employed and many express difficulties finding employment due to legal status issues (FAFO 2007:24). Interestingly, about 30% of men who are employed are their own employers, indicating a high rate of entrepreneurial activity and investment among Iraqis living in Jordan.

Egypt

As Stefan Sperl (2001) commented in his case study of UNHCR's urban refugee policy in Cairo, "refugee self-reliance remains elusive in Cairo" (Sperl 2001:3). Indeed, this is a great understatement. Although Egypt is signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, it has made reservations on the rights to work and to public education. Therefore, as Sperl mentions, refugees are forced to work illegally in the informal sector, which does not cover the price of the apartments they must rent, the cost of which is often inflated because of their status as foreigners. According to Sperl, due to the fact that local integration "remains a distant goal...resettlement has become the only viable durable solution for refugees in Cairo" (Sperl 2001:3). However, even resettlement is largely unattainable.

Unlike Jordan, Egypt does not have a long history of Iraqi forced migration to its soil. Estimates of the Iraqi refugee population in Egypt vary from as many as 70,000

according to UNHCR (2007) to 150,000 according to Refugees International (2007). Most recently, the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, in cooperation with the Information and Decision Support Center of the Egyptian government (hereinafter CMRS/IDSC survey) estimated that 15-20,000 Iraqis are living in Egypt, a significantly lower number than previous estimates (CMRS 2009). UNHCR has contested this estimation, but has not been transparent about how it arrived at its considerably higher number. Iraqis in Egypt are concentrated primarily in Cairo and its surrounding area including Sixth of October City, Nasr City, Rehab City, Haram, Maadi and Heliopolis, with a smaller proportion located in Alexandria and other governorates outside of Cairo. According to the CMRS/ IDSC survey, 92.4% of the Iraqis surveyed are from Baghdad, including 98.2% Muslims, out of which 79.2% are Sunni Muslim, 5.5% Shia Muslim, and 13.4% unspecified Muslim, and 1.8% of the total sample is Christian (CMRS 2009).

Initially, Iraqis were able to enter Egypt with a one-month tourist visa that they could extend for an additional time period. However, in late 2006 it became increasingly difficult for Iraqis to obtain Egyptian visas because of tightened regulations, reportedly due to security concerns (Refugees International 2007). The CMRS/IDSC survey found that most Iraqis had entered Egypt between 2005 and 2007, with the majority (62%) entering in 2006 (CMRS 2009). Iraqis can obtain an asylum seeker's card from the UNHCR office in Cairo, which grants temporary prima facie refugee status, however many have not done so. As of October 31, 2008, 10,243 Iraqis had registered with the UNHCR (UNHCR Egypt 2008). Iraqi children are specifically not allowed to enroll in public school in Egypt and therefore must pay the high tuition rates of private schools. The UNHCR partner Caritas offers education grants and medical assistance to registered

Iraqis, but the education grants do not cover all of private tuition and medical assistance is dependent on frequent visits to Caritas' downtown and difficult to reach location, but does not cover certain expensive medicines or operations, reportedly especially those related to cancer.

Iraqi Refugees: Literature Review

In the first part of this section, I will be reviewing studies on Iraqi refugees living in different locations, mainly in the Middle East, examining a range of issues. In the second part of this section, I will review studies on Iraqi refugees in Jordan and in the third part, studies on Iraqis in Egypt. I will conclude the section with some overall remarks on the existing literature and comment on how this study will contribute to the scholarship on Iraqi refugees.

Until late 2008 and 2009, studies on the most recent displacement of Iraqis have been largely confined to anecdotal reports from journalists and international NGOs and statistical overviews, such as the Norwegian institute Fafo's survey of Iraqis in Jordan and the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies' survey of Iraqis in Egypt. Furthermore, studies on Iraqi refugees in asylum countries have largely focused on the cases of Syria and Jordan where larger numbers of Iraqis reside, with some emphasis on Lebanon as well. Egypt and other countries of asylum have received considerably less scholarly attention.

While most studies have focused primarily on Iraqi refugees' living conditions in countries of asylum or resettlement, Marfleet (2007) has examined the causes of flight. His work offers a more holistic approach to why Iraqis have fled Iraq en masse since the

2003 invasion, focusing on historical factors, including events that took place before 2003 leading to the conclusion that it was the ‘cumulative effect of pressures on the Iraqi population’ (2007:408) that is the key to understanding this mass movement of people. These pressures include years of war followed by economic sanctions, individual persecution and general oppression under the Saddam Hussein regime, as well as post-2003 conflicts and massive internal displacement. According to Marfleet, the departure of entire communities can make it impossible for individual families to stay (2007:408). He especially notes that immediately following the 2003 occupation, most Iraqis did not see their sectarian identity as important; however, as the process of dismantling the Iraqi state and de-Baathification took place, Marfleet states that this removed not only Baathists, but an entire contingent of Iraqi society which had grown up secular and nationalist. Sectarianism, according to Marfleet, is far from the entire explanation of why Iraqis chose to flee.

UNHCR has published two studies on Iraqi refugees living in principle host countries in the Middle East. UNHCR’s 2009 study of Iraqis in urban areas is entitled ‘Surviving in the city: A review of UNHCR’s operation for Iraqi refugees in urban areas of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.’ The study highlights the challenges of achieving the standards of the international refugee protection regime in Middle Eastern countries. The study also cites successes including the organization’s novel approach to the urban situation of Iraqis such as using ATM cards to distribute salaries and text messages to deliver important information. However, the study concludes that the protection space in these countries is still fragile due to the fact that it is based on unofficial understandings and agreements between UNHCR and host countries and also due to the fact that durable

solutions are still not within reach for Iraqi refugees in these countries. Strategies such as devoting more resources to community services and assistance, and especially to income generating activities are under review for implementation in these countries in order to allow for more self-reliance among Iraqi refugees.

Another of UNHCR's studies, entitled 'Realizing protection space for Iraqi refugees: UNHCR in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon' (2009) discusses the strategies that UNHCR has used in those countries in order to deal with the governments who are not signatories to the 1951 Convention. Although these countries have largely let Iraqis stay as 'guests' under pretenses of pan-Arab nationalism, they have been concerned by overburdened services that are not adequate for their own populations, security challenges, and the unresolved Palestinian issue. By supporting the institutions of the host countries directly and by promoting large-scale resettlement, UNHCR contends that it has expanded the 'protection space' available to Iraqi refugees in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. The study concludes by noting that it is not clear that those Iraqis who have returned have done so because security in Iraq has improved, suggesting that although protection space has perhaps been expanded, there are still many problems in host countries causing involuntary return to which UNHCR must seek more durable solutions.

In 'A quest for family protection: the fragmented social organization of transnational Iraqi migration', Chatelard (2008) examines family and network strategies activated during migration. She speaks of Iraqi diasporas, not a singular Iraqi diaspora, explaining that Iraqis of different ethnicities, religious affiliations, socio-economic status and political orientation have differing levels of access to certain destinations and therefore communities are fragmented along these lines. Chatelard notes that, "these

contrasted policies have converging outcomes: making sectarian or ethnic identities meaningful for migrants and exiles, sometimes more than they were before leaving Iraq” (2008:8). These migration networks are propelled forward by families, which constitute the main unit of Iraqi society since “solidarity and trust could only develop between close family associates or friends” during the Ba’ath regime due to the targeting of entire families, not individuals. Family strategies are utilized during the migration process to ensure the safety of individuals as well as to ensure the integrity of the family. Chatelard says that this often means individuals may migrate in different stages in order to meet both goals, eventually reuniting in a location that will allow all members entry.

Didem Danis (2007) has written of the role of Iraqi Christians’ social networks in finding employment in Istanbul in ‘A Faith that Binds: Iraqi Christian Women on the Domestic Service Ladder of Istanbul.’ In this article, Danis seeks to understand the importance of religious networks in migration routes and overcoming difficulties during migration and finds that priests and the church itself play a special role in providing a local and transnational social space and providing for the needs of Iraqi Christian migrants in Istanbul. In this case, Iraqi Christians use their religious affiliation to find jobs as domestic workers with Christian Turks, thereby forming an ethnic niche. Interestingly, Danis finds that the challenge to traditional gender roles represented by women, and not men, providing the household with income, are mitigated by a ‘discourse of impermanence’. Finally, the article emphasizes that although Iraqi women are able to activate these religious networks to assist them to find employment, this process also carries obligations which mean that the women often must submit to enduring poor and sometimes exploitative working conditions in order to keep their jobs.

In Leenders' (2008) article, 'Iraqi refugees in Syria: causing a spillover of the Iraqi conflict?' he shows that allegations of sectarian violence spilling over in to host countries such as Syria are largely unfounded due to the demographic makeup of Iraqis living abroad. He points out that not only does the Iraqi refugee population contain high numbers of women and children, but it also is largely composed of middle class professionals who did not participate in the sectarian conflict, but were victims of it and left Iraq in order to escape it showing their disapproval (Leenders 2008). However, he has commented that Iraqis in Syria have physically self-segregated themselves along sectarian lines living in different neighborhoods according to sect. However, others such as Niedhardt have disagreed with his understanding of Iraqi settlement patterns in Damascus, showing that his information is false concerning sectarian settlement patterns.

Niedhardt (2008) shows that Iraqis in Syria have chosen their residence purely based on socio-economic factors. Furthermore, symbols of Iraqi unity, not fragmentation, are visibly evident on the streets in these neighborhoods of Damascus, part of a process that Niedhardt refers to as 'Iraqization.' Furthermore, clashes between Iraqis and Syrians, and not between Iraqis of different religious affiliations, have been documented.

'The Myth of Return: Iraqi Arab and Assyrian Refugees in London' by Al-Rasheed (1994) problematizes the myth of return by pointing out that all refugees, even from the same country are not homogenous, especially in their degree of subscription to the 'myth of return.' Al-Rasheed uses Kunz's refugee vintages to show that whether Iraqi refugees subscribe to the myth of return depends a great deal on why they left home and what their relationship is to the host country. Al-Rasheed points out that Arab Iraqis did not want to leave home but were pushed out by the regime and still think of Iraq as their

homeland, which never fully allows them to integrate in the host society (Kunz's majority-identified), while Assyrians were minorities in Iraq and never treated as full citizens in the first place because of their role with the British during their rule in Iraq (Kunz's event-alienated). Al-Rasheed states that the myth of return serves as a force of social cohesion, assisting those who have two homes to maintain and make sense of their dual identities. It also contributes to the suspension of integration in the host country.

In Riller's (2009) article entitled 'Observations and recommendations on the resettlement expectations of Iraqi refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria,' she tries to answer the so-called surprising findings that many resettled Iraqi refugees are reportedly unhappy in their country of resettlement due to lack of professional opportunities, unsuitable living conditions, and insufficient assistance among other complaints.

According to Riller, registration at UNHCR is considered by Iraqi refugees as equivalent to entering into the resettlement process. As well as feeling entitled to resettlement, Iraqi refugees reportedly feel entitled to humanitarian assistance and often question and criticize methods of NGOs. Furthermore, she says that Iraqis tend to believe UNHCR is the ultimate decision-maker when it comes to the country of destination for resettlement and therefore, many Iraqis believe they themselves may choose their preferred destination. If granted resettlement in an undesirable country, this is reportedly seen as a transit stage in getting to a different and more preferred final destination. According to Riller, expectations for financial and other assistance once in the country of resettlement are high, although most refugees acknowledge that the current global financial crisis will impact their ability to find employment. Most refugees expressed the importance of their childrens' futures as a prime factor in choosing resettlement. Additionally, many Iraqi

refugees interviewed expressed that they would like to live in a country close to Iraq in the Arab world and be given legal residency and the right to work as an alternative to resettlement.

These articles address a wide array of themes, such as UNHCR's challenges balancing the desires of host country governments while expanding the protection space for Iraqi refugees under largely informal agreements, how social networks of Iraqis are activated and utilized, and whether sectarianism is a significant factor regarding leaving Iraq and how Iraqis interact in host countries, how Iraqis view resettlement to the West and how previous waves of Iraqi migrants have integrated based on their orientation toward the homeland. Al-Rasheed's article shows that different subgroups of Iraqis cope differently with life in exile, largely based on why they left Iraq in the first place. Marfleet's article complicates this idea by showing that many Iraqis in the most recent post-2003 wave left not for one simple reason, such as sectarianism, but for an accumulation of factors, which together pushed them to leave the country. Chatelard and Danis' articles confirm Al-Rasheed's findings that Iraqis are not one homogenous group, but composed of different subgroups who cope with life in exile by activating their various social networks. However, these subgroups are not based on sectarianism, as both Leenders and Niedhardt show. These two articles argue that sectarianism is not spilling over into exile, but they formulate their argument from different angles. Leenders believes that the reasons sectarianism is not an issue in Syria is largely because Iraqis have self-segregated themselves based on sect; Niedhardt argues the opposite: that Iraqis' social networks and neighborhood choices are based on socio-economic status, not sect. I will adopt Niedhardt and Marfleet's approach, arguing that sectarianism as an ideology is

not a prominent factor in the formation of Iraqi communities and construction of Iraqi identities in exile; on the contrary, sectarian-based identities are strongly refuted by Iraqi refugees. Instead, identities and social networks are based on other factors such as class, socio-economic status, profession, and family.

Iraqis in Jordan: Literature Review

De Bel-Air (2009) discusses the profile of Iraqis in Jordan, Jordanian policies toward Iraqi migrants, and popularly-held notions of Iraqis in Jordan. As others before have mentioned, Jordan's policy towards Iraqis is seemingly contradictory. Although the government claims that Iraqis are guests in Jordan through the notion of pan-Arab nationalism, the policy is one of what de Bel-Air calls 'segmented assimilation' granting rich Iraqis rights and privileges, while merely tolerating others. Interestingly, de Bel-Air claims that because of Jordan's already fragmented social fabric, Iraqis have not become integrated but instead live alongside of other communities, filling gaps in the housing market. Iraqis, he says, are spread out in different neighborhoods in Jordan reflecting their socio-economic diversity. However, he says, Iraqis' lack of integration does not mean that they constitute a community, but instead that ties or relationships between Iraqis in Amman seem relatively weak.

Drawing on legal texts, Olwan (2009) tackles the various legal aspects concerning Iraqis in Jordan, from entry, the right of asylum, the temporary protection regime and expulsion. He concludes that Iraqis must be offered legal channels of migration to Jordan. Jordan, he claims, is not upholding its international obligations as Iraqis could be forced

to return to Iraq due to their irregularity. Finally, he pushes for the Jordanian government to integrate Iraqis, most of whom will not be able to return or to be resettled.

‘Iraqis in Jordan: Their Number and Characteristics’ (FAFO 2007) concludes that there are fewer Iraqis living in Jordan than previously thought, estimating their numbers at 450,000- 500,000. FAFO used a variety of means to estimate the population of Iraqis in Jordan, originally concluding from its own survey that there were 161,000 Iraqis at the time of the survey (FAFO 2007:7). However, the Jordanian government’s technical team, who collaborated with FAFO on the estimation, ultimately arrived at the much higher estimate of 450,000- 500,000 Iraqi refugees through using other methodologies which were flawed in various ways. Ultimately, pressure from the Jordanian government was probably the cause behind this change as refugee numbers are inherently controversial (See Crisp 1999). The study also found a Sunni majority (68%), with a significant number of Shias (17%) and Christians (12%) as well. Significantly, 1 in 5 Iraqi households in Jordan are headed by females. Residency in Jordan is considerably lower than in Egypt at 56%, although the rate of valid residency is much lower among poorer Iraqis in Jordan at just 22%. According to the study, 35% of Iraqis are registered with UNHCR; registration is higher among Christians and poorer Iraqis. Transfers from Iraq are a main source of income for Iraqis in Jordan (42%) and around 40.7% of Iraqis in Jordan cite employment as an income source.

De Bel-Air and Olwan’s studies provide a solid context for understanding the circumstances that present obstacles to the community formation of Iraqi refugees in Jordan. My work will go into more depth, describing how Iraqis themselves view these obstacles.

One notable exception to the paucity of studies on Iraqi forced migration pre-2003 has been the work of a French scholar Geraldine Chatelard based in Amman, Jordan. Her 2009 article, ‘What visibility conceals: Re-embedding Refugee Migration from Iraq,’ has emphasized the long history of Iraqi forced migration to Jordan. She argues that this history certainly predates the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. She sees Jordan as having special ties to Iraq and playing a special role as a destination for Iraqi forced migrants, dubbing Jordan the “Western frontier of Iraq” (personal communication, April 2009) due to its porous borders and long history of economic and political ties.

In her 2002 article, ‘Jordan as a transit country semi-protectionist immigration policies and their effects on Iraqi forced migrants’, Chatelard looks at Iraqi forced migrants’ use of Jordan as a transit country. Because Jordan employs what Chatelard describes as ‘semi-protectionist’ immigration policies (letting Iraqis enter Jordan but pushing them to leave by depriving them of legal status), many have resorted to smuggling or trafficking networks (Chatelard 2002:3).¹ Chatelard maintains that due to Jordan’s *ad hoc* policies on Iraqi migrants, it has left the regulation of their migration to other agents. Therefore, the use of social networks and smuggling rings has been able to play a key role in the process of getting from Jordan to the West.

Chatelard’s (2005) article, ‘Iraqi forced migrants in Jordan: conditions, religious networks, and the smuggling process’ delves deeper into the religious support networks of Iraqi forced migrants in Jordan, examining their role in the smuggling process, in particular as a response to previously discussed restrictive policies in Jordan. Chatelard

¹ The phenomenon of trafficking has increased especially after 2003 (Heartland Alliance 2007:19). According to Heartland Alliance, Iraqi women and children are especially vulnerable to trafficking and Iraqi women are frequently trafficked from Iraq to other countries in the region for the purposes of prostitution, as well as forced into prostitution once they arrive as refugees in other countries. Reports of this happening are especially prominent in Jordan and Syria.

shows that Iraqis are aware from other Iraqis of the possibility of seeking asylum in Western countries, which has a higher success rate than resettlement from Amman and furthermore, if they are rejected, they know that they will not be forcibly repatriated from these countries. According to Chatelard, Church charities were the only institutions allowed to provide aid to Iraqis; thus, religious affiliation is important in avoiding the discrimination by the Jordanian state of different categories of Iraqi forced migrants. While Christian aid services are reportedly not accessed by Iraqi Muslims, Iraqi Shias have set up prayer rooms called a *majlis* despite suspicion from the Jordanian authorities. These Shia prayer rooms, Christian churches, and NGOs not only offer moral support, but also information and financial support for migrating to the West through the use of legal, semi-legal and illegal means including smuggling.

Chatelard's (2009) publication, 'Protection, mobility, and livelihood challenges of displaced Iraqis in urban settings in Jordan' discusses the opportunities that are provided to displaced Iraqis due to their urban settings, including (re)establishing social relations with other Iraqis, the ability to find housing and informal jobs, to register with UNHCR and access services from NGOs, communicate and transfer money with Iraqis in Iraq and other parts of the diaspora and "to enjoy a degree of desired anonymity" (2009: 7). The analysis recommends that the pursuit of protecting Iraqi refugees in urban areas must differentiate individual needs and individual abilities and desires to return to Iraq. Furthermore, she urges long-term solutions which will lay the foundation for voluntary repatriation, rather than short-term relief-based solutions. Chatelard puts forth four suggestions in this regard: to restore mobility, families and communities, and livelihoods

and to prepare preconditions to return. Restoring these will lead to more sustainable solutions.

Chatelard's work focuses on Iraqis' various strategies employed to migrate to safe countries where they can eventually reunify with their families. Mobility is a key aspect running through all of her work. In her 2002 article she shows how Jordan is used as a transit country, much like it is today. Similar to Rilke (2009), Chatelard shows that Iraqis follow diverse paths and utilize many strategies in their pursuit of family unity and safety. Like Marfleet (2007), Chatelard's work on Iraqi refugees post-2003 emphasized the continuity with exit migration seen before 2003. In this work, she delves deeper into the various ways that social networks are activated in order to pursue migration goals, examining the case of Jordan in detail and keeping in touch with informants over the long-term in order to better understand the complete trajectory of Iraqi migration. By doing so, she attempts to fill a much-needed gap in the literature on social networks and migration, not only looking at how families use networks for long-term migration goals, as well as how these networks are activated in countries of asylum. My work will continue to pursue this end, attempting to understand the role that social networks and communities play in the lives of Iraqi refugees in Amman and Cairo.

Iraqis in Egypt: Literature Review

Roman (2009) presents a general overview of the socio-economic situation of Iraqi Refugees in Egypt in 'Iraqi Refugees in Egypt'. She notes that Iraqi refugees in Egypt, unlike other refugee groups, have been unable to access services from most NGOs because the government has denied this permission to NGOs. She discusses the visa

restrictions imposed on Iraqis in 2006, which were likely imposed due to security concerns and have caused many Iraqi families to be split. With regards to education, Iraqi refugee children cannot attend public school unless there is no private school in their area (Roman 2009:6). Furthermore, Roman finds that Iraqi children face many problems in Egyptian schools. Roman finds that Iraqis express a great difficulty in obtaining legal permission to work due to Egypt's reservation on this right in the 1951 Refugee Convention. However, some Iraqis were able to obtain investment visas and invested in small businesses such as cafes and bakeries, and in the field of industrial production. Roman reports that health is also an area of great need for Iraqis as they reportedly have more health problems than other refugee groups in Egypt, yet they have no access to subsidized medical care. However, the CMRS survey found that only a minority of households interviewed contained individuals suffering from chronic diseases or disabilities (CMRS 2008:58).

Badawy (2009) gives an overview of the legal situation of Iraqis living in Egypt, focusing on discrimination experienced by Iraqis in particular as opposed to refugees in general. He finds that Iraqis in Egypt, until recently, were able to obtain residency through investment visas or through a family member's student visa. Registration at UNCHR is seen by the refugees as a last resort, especially because it is seen to constrain international travel.

The two articles by Badawy and Roman provide a general overview of living conditions of Iraqi refugees in Egypt that are useful in understanding the circumstances under which community formation is hindered. My work will go into more depth, showing how Iraqi refugees in Egypt view these obstacles as well as attempting to

provide more detail on the situation in Egypt, which has been underrepresented in the studies on Iraqi refugees.

The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) survey (2008) shows that Iraqis are involved in both local networks, meaning networks with other Iraqis within Egypt, and transnational networks with Iraqis in other countries including Iraq. Although the study finds that the main reason Iraqis chose to move to Egypt or chose their neighborhood within Cairo was not directly because of the presence of friends of family, it finds that the information that helped them make these decisions was transmitted through social networks of Iraqi friends and family already living in Egypt. Furthermore, the CMRS survey found that contrary to expectations of sectarian tension carrying over from Iraq to Egypt, Iraqis have strong links with each other inside of Egypt. Furthermore, the study finds that many Iraqis in Egypt turn to other Iraqis when they need help solving a problem. Finally, the study finds that Iraqis also maintain strong transnational networks with other Iraqis, especially family members and friends who remain in Iraq as well as extended family in third countries.

Conclusion

The final section in this chapter will briefly outline gaps in the literature that I will attempt to address in this thesis. Although the Iraqi refugee crisis has been ongoing for almost six years, there has not been a lot of academic research on this topic until recently. This work will serve to give a more detailed picture of the situation of Iraqi refugees in Egypt, who have been understudied, as well as providing a comparative angle between Egypt and Jordan. The latter has more Iraqi refugees and has been better studied. Still,

both host countries present very different legal and social contexts for the study of Iraqi refugees. Other gaps in the literature include the lack of field-based insights into the processes of migration decision-making, livelihood strategies of Iraqi refugees, and their transnational family and community-based ties. In addition to contributing empirical findings on Iraqi refugees, this work will also try to contribute to a better understanding of the notion of community formation in the forced migration literature. Community formation has been studied often among resettled refugees in Western countries, but much less frequently in the context of the Global South. Through the study of community formation processes and their obstacles, I hope to provide information and recommendations that will be relevant to host country governments and societies as well as to the resettlement countries to which many Iraqis' lives are connected through transnational families.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Orientation and Methodology

The main goal of this chapter is to lay out how ‘community formation’ has been understood and studied in the literature and to orient this thesis theoretically by analyzing and selecting which understandings of community formation will be used. Various scholars have attempted to conceptualize and examine community formation among refugees and migrants. This chapter will review some of this work and identify some main elements from these various conceptualizations, which then will be used to understand the process of community formation among Iraqi refugees in this study. Additionally, this chapter will describe the design of my research and the methods that were used in the collection of data. The chapter will conclude with a description of the 24 Iraqis who were individually interviewed and the 25 informants who took part in the focus group discussions.

Theoretical Orientation

Community formation

In this section I will review the different conceptualizations of refugee community formation that I will draw upon in this thesis. One of the most common manifestations of community formation has been shared livelihood strategies. This often includes not only sharing or pooling of material resources, but also information sharing. Another commonly cited manifestation of community formation is the existence of support networks, which are used for migration and settlement assistance as well as emotional

support. A sense of belonging, often developed out of the construction of collective identities, is another less-studied manifestation of community formation. Finally, the existence of community-based organizations or community building activities is a typical indicator of community formation.

Hammond (2004), in her study of Ethiopian returnees from camps in Sudan, describes community formation as the process “whereby a group of people, finding themselves thrown together by their circumstances but sharing no other common personal history, developed the bonds that tied them together” (11). She understands community formation to follow “certain conventions that were both a reflection of the social structure familiar to the returnees and of the disruption that structure necessarily underwent as a result of the displacement” (Hammond 2004:11). Of course, whatever shape community formation takes will be unique to the group of refugees who participate in it due to historical and cultural factors. Furthermore, the nature of the events that caused displacement may have a specific impact on community formation. For example, if a conflict between certain groups caused displacement, there may be no shared community formation among those groups.

More specifically, Hammond sees community formation as being “generated through the daily exchanges of goods, favors, and knowledge” (15). As such, community formation “involved a reexamination of the criteria by which decisions were made, actions taken, and judgments formed. Mapping a social world onto a heretofore unknown physical space involved identifying resources, both human and economic, to make life in this place possible” (15-16). The most important aspect of Hammond’s understanding of community formation is the notion of sharing, whether it be material resources or

knowledge. How Iraqis help each other get by on a day-to-day basis in Cairo and Amman is key to understanding community formation.

However, in the specific case that Hammond has studied, she understands community formation as occurring among individuals who have no shared personal history. While it may or may not be the case that Iraqis forming communities in Amman and Cairo did not know each other before they became refugees, they *do* share other commonalities such as city or neighborhood of origin, reason for flight, tragedy in the family, and many others which inevitably bring them closer together and facilitate the establishment of bonds or a sense of belonging between them.

Hyndman's (1997) work on refugee camps in Kenya has led her to conclude that refugee camps cannot be considered communities not only because of the enclosed space of the camp, but also because it is a concept imposed by outsiders, not based on material bonds and a sense of belonging. Hyndman has noted that the 'rhetoric of community' has often been employed by international aid organizations working with refugee populations "because it is popular, acceptable and politically strategic in humanitarian donor circles... community is part of a strategic discourse which consolidates the institutional power of refugee relief organizations" (16). Instead,

While there may be several subsets of communal interest or allied refugees cooperating—organized for example among refugees of common nationality, subclan affiliation, or proximate physical location—a camp is an institution organized as a temporary solution to displacement... "Community" is not enforced; it does not unduly restrict the movement of its members, and it usually involves a material relationship to place through access to land, jobs, and resources whereby it can sustain itself. [Hyndman 1997:20]

In urban areas in asylum countries, like in camps, refugees may come from many different places and backgrounds and may not form one single community or a

community at all. However, the opportunity to do so is there in the absence of restrictions as in the camp setting, as long as community is based on an internally-developed sense of belonging and provides safety and freedom to its members.

Furthermore, that is not to say that refugees from different backgrounds cannot form a community. Because of their similar circumstances in exile or harsh living conditions and marginalization in society, this may in fact induce community formation because it leads to the pooling of resources, both material and non-material. Grabska (2005, 2006) shows that Sudanese refugees rely on family and community support networks by borrowing money to meet daily needs, and sharing food or childcare responsibilities. While marginalization may lead to community formation as in the Sudanese case, there are also some similarities between refugee life in urban areas and in camps, especially with regard to lack of rights and freedoms, which may be obstacles to community formation. Restrictions on the right to work, education and freedom of movement are some of the many factors that can make life and community formation unsustainable for refugees.

Shelley (2001) describes the *lack* of community formation among Vietnamese refugees in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, due to several factors including the fact that a common “enemy” or common ethnic identity is not enough to induce community formation, government policies may not be amenable to community formation, the means to affect community may not be culturally present, and finally, community must be viewed as a “viable tool for survival and adaptation” (491). Shelley’s last point is especially relevant with regard to Iraqi community formation. Community must be a viable and sustainable means to adapting to life in exile. If external circumstances make it

unsustainable, then although other conducive factors may be present, community will not form.

Fragmentation along ethnic or religious lines as Hyndman describes is quite common among migrant and refugee populations. Wahlbeck's (1998) research with Kurds in London shows that sometimes fragmentation actually stimulates ethnic mobilization and community formation, where communities develop along these boundaries, which are often political. Wahlbeck believes that it is rare that refugees are able to establish strong united ethnic communities in their new countries because refugees groups often "display a political and social orientation towards the country of origin" in which political events and conflicts can divide refugees (1998:215). Wahlbeck's theory is interesting because it demonstrates that in the particular case of the Kurds, who are in fact from many different countries, speak different languages, and adhere to many disparate political ideas, there was never truly a unified Kurdish community to begin with, leading to its logical division in the country of settlement. His theory may not extend to other refugees groups, however, since the Kurdish case is somewhat unique. Wahlbeck's work also shows that outsiders, in this case the British government, often impose their incorrect understandings of refugee groups in order to distribute various forms of assistance. In this case there are multiple Kurdish communities and a single Kurdish community association would never be appropriate or effective.

In addition, the popularity of the community-based approach may cause refugees to subscribe on the surface to belonging to a community in order to obtain services from NGOs. Kelly posits the concept of *contingent communities*, "a group of people who will,

to some extent, conform to the expectations of the host society in order to gain the advantages of a formal community association, whilst the private face of the group remains unconstituted as a community” (Kelly 2003:35), using the example of Bosnian refugees in Britain.

The above conceptualizations of community formation demonstrate that community formation is based on a number of factors, not merely a common ethnic identity. Instead, there must be strong and meaningful relationships among members of the group and these relationships often involve extensive sharing of material and non-material resources. Furthermore, both internal and external factors influence community formation. Host country conditions, as well as cultural and historical circumstances will play a significant role in the development of community.

Mechanisms of community formation

This section will look at some of mechanisms by which community formation takes place, including shared livelihoods, family and community networks, and collective discourses.

Al-Sharmani (2003) understands the process of community building and identity construction to be intricately linked to securing a livelihood, especially in urban settings where refugees are largely invisible. She explains in her study of Somali refugees in Cairo that “the daily process of survival and maximizing livelihood resources involves the construction and transformation of several layers of distinct collective identities that are sometimes complementary and other times conflicting” (25). She notes that, “in the refugees’ daily networking, getting by, and planning ahead, clan affiliation is by no

means the primary source of collective identity or differentiation" (25). Instead, refugees call upon newly-acquired collective identities in order to pool resources, such as housing. Hammond (2004) and Al-Sharmani's view that community formation involves the pooling of resources through daily exchanges of goods, favors and knowledge as well as the development of new collective identities, will be drawn on to examine the degree and extent of community formation among Iraqi refugees in Cairo and Amman.

Adaptation to life in the host country and onward migration also depends on the availability and strength of social networks from which to obtain support. Refugees' social networks can be defined most simply by those who they are typically comprised of: family, friends, community members, community associations, other organizations and host society members, and those with whom refugees have relationships. An already existing social network in the host country- partially or wholly transplanted from the country of origin- can make life much easier because information and resources can be shared with newcomers. Furthermore, social networks often influence patterns of migration: which country to go to, which route to take, which neighborhood to settle in, which line of work to pursue, how to register and receive services for refugees, and how to move to a third country or when to return home, if desired. Social networks can be based on many commonalities including kinship ties, city of origin, common profession, shared neighborhood, common religion or ethnicity, or even future destination if in the process of resettlement. These social networks may exist before displacement or form during displacement. They can be localized but are often transnational, and they are used for different reasons depending on what is required.

Emmanuel Marx (1990) suggests using the concept of ‘social world’ in order to examine the process that refugees and migrants undergo to form and re-form communities. Marx says that a social world is “the sum of all the migrants’ relationships and of the forces impinging on them at any moment” (Marx 1990: 189). He uses the concept of social world in order to “examine the extent to which personal social worlds are disturbed and transformed” (Marx 1990: 191) and to explain how some refugees are able to quickly re-establish their livelihoods and communities, while others are not. For example, those who lost their relatives and livelihoods in flight may have more trouble rebuilding their social worlds than those who were able to “quickly maintain or establish full-fledged networks in a new environment” either by “moving along existing links or moving *en masse* to a new location” (Marx 1990: 197).

Marx goes on to explain that social worlds must not be conceived of as closed or territorially bound, but instead as an infinite system of networks of individuals and families linked together. Furthermore, in examining the social world “stable long-term relationships” should not be emphasized “at the expense of ephemeral short-terms ones. For the latter may in their way be just as important as the former” (Marx 1990: 195). Malkki agrees on this point, adding that “the transitory is not necessarily weak or fleeting in its *effects*... These memories—even when not very much narrativized—can powerfully shape what comes after” (Malkki 1997:92).

Horst (2006) examines whether Somalis’ social networks in the Dadaab refugee camps are used mainly for physical survival (livelihood) or to retain a Somali identity (124). She discovers that the two are interwoven and perpetuated by the cultural-religious responsibility to help others who have less; she finds that this is particularly determined

by transnational networks. Horst defines social networks as consisting of “complex human relations in which individuals negotiate and at times switch (power) positions, in order to survive” (127). During the course of Horst’s research, she examined instances in which people in the camps needed assistance and connected that to who they would ask for help. She found that kinship and occasionally other networks were extremely important in determining the provision of assistance. Not only did family, neighbors, and NGOs in the camps prove to be vital in the provision of security, but family members living outside the camps played a large role in determining security as well.

Horst holds that “social networks operate with a certain degree of flexibility and enable individuals to spread risks. There are many aspects of social relations, such as descent, kinship, age, gender, or residence, that play a role in an individual’s delineation of his own people” (127). In Somali culture, often kinship is the primary relationship from which one asks for assistance, but it is not the only determining factor. Horst finds that a good risk-spreading strategy is investing in social relations with people in different localities, as Somalis have done with the development of the *xawilaad* system.

Horst’s understanding of the formation of transnational social networks as a strategy to provide assistance and spread risk will also be essential to my discussion of community formation and its boundaries. Horst shows that different needs are sometimes met by different social networks. This project will also examine the role that social networks play in the lives of Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Egypt, and whether the types and uses of such networks facilitate or inhibit community formation. Thus, I will examine the strategies that Iraqi refugees use to secure livelihood, housing, education, and health services. This will be evaluated based on who is asked for help when an issue arises in

one of these areas (family, friends, NGO, etc.) and how frequently those people are asked for help. This will assist in determining the size, type of relationship, and strength of the social networks being formed (see Krahn and Lamba 2003). Besides collective livelihood strategies and social networks, community formation also manifests itself as the construction of a shared identity. In the next section, I will examine how collective discourses have contributed to the construction of an Iraqi exile identity, which is an important component of community formation.

Becoming an Iraqi refugee: identity construction

Becoming a refugee is not instantaneous, rather as Lisa Malkki (1995) has noted, “refugeeness entail[s] a process of *becoming*. It [is] a gradual transformation, not an automatic result of the crossing of a national border (Malkki 1995: 114). Becoming a refugee is a continuous process that involves many phases; throughout this process refugees learn how to be refugees both from each other (what testimony or persecution story to give at UNHCR for a successful refugee claim) and from the international community and host country governments (refugees must register at UNHCR, stand in line for medical assistance at Caritas, form community associations to help themselves to not be reliant upon others, etc.).

Every Iraqi made the decision to migrate based on a unique set of circumstances. These circumstances have continued to play a large role in countries of asylum, especially with regards to how Iraqis form relationships with other Iraqis. In order to examine the formation of collective identities among Iraqi refugees, Kunz’s (1973, 1981) push-pressure-pull model may be helpful. The model identifies different subgroups of

refugees and explains their varying orientations toward both the homeland and the country of asylum. Kunz posits three categories of refugees: ‘majority-identified refugees’, “who are firm in their conviction that their opposition to the events is shared by the majority of their compatriots. These refugees identify themselves enthusiastically with the nation, though not with its government” (Kunz 1981:42). The second category, ‘events-alienated refugees’,

covers those who either because of events immediately preceding the refugee situation, or because of past discrimination are ambivalent or embittered in their attitude toward their former compatriots. The ambivalence of those from this group derives from their original desire to be identified with the nation, and their subsequent realization of their rejection from the nation as a whole, or by a section of its citizens. [Kunz 1981:43]

According to Kunz, this group often includes religious or racial minorities but rarely social group minorities, such as women or sexual minorities. A third category, ‘self-alienated refugees’, includes those who for varied individual reasons “have no desire to identify themselves with the nation” (Kunz 1981:43).

Refugees who are strongly oriented to the homeland may not be interested in community formation because they plan to return home and do not want to invest in the country of asylum. On the other hand, they may be unable to return but have strong feelings of identification with the homeland that serve as the impetus for community formation with other individuals who have those same feelings. Orientation toward the homeland affects how communities form and develop in exile, especially with regard to integration. If the refugee group is intent on returning home, this may suspend integration. However, this may also encourage ethnic mobilization as a means of becoming involved in the return process or politics back home. Communities may also

form under the circumstance that return and resettlement are impossible, and therefore collective survival strategies may be developed in countries of asylum. Additionally, as will be discussed in the next paragraph, discourses about the homeland may play a strong role in the formation of collective identities in exile, which ultimately form the basis of community formation.

Indeed, as Grabska (2005) has noted, the common experience of being or becoming a refugee can foster a “sense of community” (10). I will examine this through analyzing the collective discourse of Iraqi refugees. Malkki’s work on Hutu refugees living in camps and towns in Tanzania shows how the Hutu use collective narratives, which she calls “mythico-history” to make sense of their present world in terms of the historical past. She says that their narratives “represented an interlinked set of ordering stories which converged to make (or remake) a world” (1995:55). These narratives, she says, are also used in order to construct “a nation constituted specifically as a *moral community*” in which the Hutu see themselves as good and construct the Tutsi as the evil Other (1995:73). Interestingly, Malkki observes that process of collective identity construction was very different, with the town refugees who saw themselves as cosmopolitan and wished to assimilate by drawing on multiple identities. Camp refugees, however, viewed themselves as pure Hutus who would ultimately return to their homeland. Malkki says, “it is possible to discern how the social, imaginative processes of constructing nationness and identity can come to be influenced by the local, everyday circumstances of life in exile, and how the spatial and social isolation of refugees can figure in these processes” (1995:3). Malkki’s understanding of how location and circumstances can influence the process of identity construction in exile will be the basis

of my comparison between Iraqi community formation in Jordan and Egypt.

Additionally, her understanding of the collective narrative as a part of the identity construction process is crucial to my analysis of Iraqi identity construction.

Conclusion

This work will examine community formation in light of the following elements: collective livelihood strategies, social networks, and construction of collective identities through discourse. Furthermore, the influence of the legal, social and political context in the host country on the possibility of community formation will also be key to my analysis of Iraqi community formation. In this section, community and community formation have been shown to be a complex concept in regard to refugees, therefore, I will explore a broad and flexible meaning of community formation by incorporating in my analysis many different understandings of the process and its manifestations. Community, as Shelley (2001) explained, is something that should be relevant and useful to those who are members, and thus must be understood by the ‘community’ itself as meaningful.

Methodology

Research Design

Since my arrival in Egypt in 2007, I have been involved in working with Iraqi refugees, through my job in resettlement at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and through volunteering to organize community activities with Iraqi refugees in Sixth of October City. While journalists and academics involved in similar projects have only

seen mistrust and sectarianism among Iraqis in Cairo, I have noticed hard-working and creative individuals with agency, striving to think of solutions for survival in a city that is difficult for even native Cairenes to negotiate. I became interested in the concept of community or communities because of my own experience living abroad and developing my own new social networks with people who I would never normally spend time, but who will indelibly shape my future, many of them Iraqi. It is with their help that I have completed this project.

My fieldwork took place in Cairo for four weeks in February, 2009 and in Amman, during three weeks in March, 2009. Data collection involved participant observation, interviews and focus groups. Throughout the interviews and focus groups, I sought to understand how social networks are being developed and utilized in Cairo and Amman; if sectarianism, religion, socioeconomic status or other factors influence the development of social networks, and for what these networks are being used. Most importantly, I wanted to understand if the “communities” being formed are viewed to be temporary or permanent and when; they are being used as a further migration strategy (e.g. to leave the countries of asylum); if they are being used as a means of pooling resources and engaging in collective survival strategies in the countries of asylum.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was difficult to undertake since most of the Iraqis that participated in the research spent most of their time with their families in their homes. I was able to observe Iraqis for a few hours at an Iraqi restaurant and at two shisha cafés in Cairo and in Amman. In addition, I spent a few hours in four different NGOs that provide

services to Iraqi refugees. The purpose of the participant observation was to examine how Iraqi communities may or may not visibly manifest themselves, how this is different in Cairo and Amman, and which segments of the Iraqi population are involved in visible community activities.

Semi-structured Interviews

A total of twenty-four semi-structured interviews were conducted in Amman and Cairo in order to examine livelihood production and collective identity formation (See Appendix A). Interviews were conducted with Iraqis from all segments of the refugee population; selection factors included neighborhood, sex, marital status, religion, ethnicity, and arrival date in Egypt or Jordan. In Cairo, the researcher has many ties to the Iraqi community, and was able to select participants for semi-structured interviews and focus groups based on these connections. In Amman, the Amman Community Development Center served as a gatekeeper for selecting interview and focus group participants, as well as personal contacts from both the NGO and Iraqi community there.

Focus groups

As discussed above, the researcher selected participants for focus groups in Cairo, while in Amman, the Amman Community Development Center served as a gatekeeper. Focus groups (see Appendix B) were conducted with Iraqi refugees in Cairo and Amman living in selected neighborhoods. Two focus groups were conducted in each city with a total of 25 participants, on topics such as Iraqis' understanding of the concept of 'community' and how it applies to them in exile. Focus groups were chosen for this research because

of the fact that community building is a collective activity by nature and it also yields important group dynamics at play while discussing a somewhat controversial topic that individual interviews might not capture.

Limitations and Challenges

This study is meant to be small-scale and exploratory in nature. As such, it is not meant to be representative of the situation of the Iraqi population in Cairo or Amman as a whole. Instead, the study examines in detail the specific situations of individuals from a variety of backgrounds. Engaging a variety of informants was both a main priority of the study and one of its main challenges. In Cairo, my time spent volunteering with STAR (Student Action for Refugees), an English language program for refugees, served as the main access point to informants. As the director of STAR, I had met and worked with many Iraqis in the past. Because I had already established a rapport with many of the Iraqi students, I was easily able to interview them. Better yet, in my view, I was able to reciprocate for their participation in a small way by telling them more about STAR and facilitating their entrance if they had applied to the program but not joined yet (of course, making it explicit that their admission into STAR classes was not in any way contingent on their participation in my study). However, at the same time the fact that most of the participants were connected to me through STAR was problematic because it meant that I may not have reached the more vulnerable Iraqis in Cairo, who perhaps do not have access to information about such resources as STAR.

In fact, this was a limitation of the study in both Cairo and Amman, as participants who I had access to were most likely not among the most vulnerable of the

Iraqi communities in the two locations. Locating participants for the study was more difficult in Amman because I did not live there and have the same level of knowledge of the Iraqi communities there. However, because I used two community based organizations located in lower income neighborhoods as gatekeepers in Amman for the focus groups, I actually felt that I was better able to access those more vulnerable among the Iraqi population in Amman. On the other hand, I had a difficult time finding participants for interviews in Amman and relied on personal contacts to introduce me to their acquaintances. Because I had not met most people I interviewed in Amman beforehand and because they did not know about me, it was more difficult to establish a rapport and thus to have the informants open up to me. For some interviews in both Cairo and Amman, I went on my own and interviewed people in English or Arabic. At other times, an Iraqi friend of mine accompanied me to the interviews. Her knowledge of the informants seemed to increase the level of trust, but in general most people seemed willing to talk to me openly nonetheless. However, at times I did not feel comfortable asking certain questions judging from their demeanor, especially those questions pertaining to religion or to financial issues.

In addition, I was concerned that my nationality as an American would hinder the degree of trust that I could establish with my informants. Some (former) members of the Ba'ath party are often worried that their status will affect any resettlement plans. Furthermore, those Iraqis who see the American-led invasion as occupation (as I do myself) may also have felt uncomfortable with my nationality. However, I found this generally not to be the case, with the exception of one woman who chose to leave a focus group discussion held in Cairo because she became very upset during the discussion.

At times my gender posed a challenge and at other times it served to facilitate my relationships with the Iraqis I spoke with. Being a young woman traveling around Cairo or Amman by herself could have been seen by some as strange, but it did not seem to bother anyone. The only time I noticed a difficulty was in Cairo when my interpreter was male; it was often easier for him to build a rapport with male informants, leaving me out of the conversation at times.

I was also concerned about the nationality of my interpreter in Cairo, as he was Iraqi. It has been documented, at least by journalists and some academics, that Iraqis do not trust each other (See Anheleddu 2008, Leenders 2009). Although this may have been the case, I did not notice it even though I attempted to be keenly aware of the dynamics between my interpreter and the informants. I believe this situation was mitigated by my interpreter's extreme affability, which was a great boon to the interviewing process. In short, although every research project has limitations and this one many, I do believe that the kind and trusting nature of the Iraqis who spoke to me led to a large degree of success in the endeavor.

Ethical Considerations

All participants were read verbal informed consent agreements that discussed the voluntary nature of participation in the research, confidentiality of participation and the possibility of recording the interview and focus group sessions with their full permission (See Appendix C). All recordings and field notes were kept in a safe place and no one except the researcher was permitted to view them. Because Iraqi refugees' legal status in their host countries is often precarious, there could be some risk to participation.

However, the researcher, as shown above, has proceeded with extreme caution. The benefits of participation were described as leading to research that may help to convince stakeholders in host country governments that Iraqi refugees should be allowed to establish community-based organizations of their own. This is because such organizations facilitate the building of social support networks, decrease the burden of refugees on the host society, and strengthen the position of those calling for protecting the right of refugees to remain in countries of asylum for long periods of time.

Profile of Participants

Although the sample is not representative, it contains Iraqis from diverse backgrounds. The research design for this study was meant to ensure that Iraqi refugees from all walks of life participated in order to get a more complete picture of circumstances in which Iraqis are living in their host countries. A detailed table can be found in Appendix D.

Of the interview informants, 12 are living in Jordan in diverse neighborhoods and 12 in Egypt also in diverse neighborhoods. Of the focus group participants, 16 were living in Jordan and 9 in Egypt. The majority of the participants in both interviews and focus group discussions hailed from Baghdad, which is indicative of the overall composition of the Iraqi population in Jordan and Egypt as most Iraqi refugees fled from Baghdad governorate. Of the other cities of origin represented in the sample, three participants were from Mosul and three were from Basra. Furthermore, most participants fled Iraq between the years 2005 and 2007, with 36.7% having left in 2006, which also mirrors the FAFO and CMRS survey results. However, the sample includes participants

from before 2003 in the case of Jordan, and also includes Iraqis from outside of Baghdad, in order to capture more diversity. Five of the forty-nine total participants were Christians and the remaining 89.8% were Muslim. The majority of participants (21) held a yellow card/UNHCR card. Thirteen of the participants had education visas obtained through their children. Six participants reported having no visa or an expired visa and 4 reported having a tourist visa. One person had an investment visa, one person had a visa obtained through employment and one person had a visa obtained through owning property.

Furthermore, a wide range of ages, educational levels and professions were represented. Twenty-six participants were male, and twenty-three were female. The average age was 39.2. The majority of participants were married (37) but eight had never been married. Two were widowed, 1 was divorced, and 1 was remarried. The average number of children was 2.4. The majority of participants held a technical diploma (10) or a Bachelor's degree (17), while 3 people had completed some university because it was interrupted. Eight people had a high school education while 2 people had completed elementary school and stopped attending afterward. Two people held Ph.D.s, 6 Master's degrees, and 1 person held a law degree.

Of those interviewed individually, eight participants were employed legally. Four were working informally, four had previously been employed but lost their jobs, and eight were unemployed. Ten informants were living with their immediate and extended family members, most often parents, but occasionally siblings. Ten were living with their immediate nuclear family only and four were living separated from members of their nuclear family who had either remained or returned to Iraq. Five interview informants left Iraq because they were threatened due to their work with the U.S. and eight more left

because of a specific security situation such as direct threats due to affiliation with Ba'ath party or kidnapping of a family member. Eight left because of the general security situation. Two informants left for employment purposes and one person left in order to be reunited with his family, who had already left Iraq for Canada. Five interview informants reported that they had no plans for their future, while the majority (11) planned to return eventually. Eight participants were hoping to be resettled to a Western country.

Chapter Three: Social Networks and Transnational Families

Refugees, and migrants in general, often mobilize social networks in order to enable the migration process, from exiting the country of origin, to settling in the country of asylum, and everything in between. Social networks can be based on a variety of relationships such as citizenship, family, profession, and religious or political ties, and can be informal or formal, transient or long-lasting. This chapter will examine the types and uses of Iraqi social networks in Cairo and Amman. By examining how social networks are functioning and are activated in Cairo and Amman, I will try to understand if they are contributing to collective identity construction and the community formation process of Iraqi refugees. The analysis will be based on qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions conducted for this project as well as recent studies on Iraqi refugees in the two host countries.

Iraqi social networks in Jordan and Egypt

A recent study of Iraqi refugees in Egypt found that it is extremely difficult for Iraqis to be resettled out of Egypt and security conditions in Iraq have not improved enough to warrant return (Minnick and Nashaat 2009). In Jordan, while more Iraqis have been resettled, there are still thousands who remain and cannot return to Iraq. Grabska (2006) discusses how Sudanese refugees in Cairo have dealt with this seemingly impossible situation of limbo. She shows that refugees use highly developed coping mechanisms to manage marginalization, by pooling resources or utilizing tightly knit, informal social networks.

Iraqi refugees also belong to social networks that shape their migration and settlement choices in Egypt and in Jordan. The links between Iraq and Jordan and the history of Iraqi forced migration to Jordan is much longer and stronger than the links and history between Iraq and Egypt. As such, my initial assumption was that Iraqi social networks in Amman would be much more established and diverse than those in Egypt, and thus Iraqis in Jordan would have an easier time settling, identifying resources for day-to-day life and coping with their displacement. However, the mere presence of other Iraqi migrants in Jordan does not necessarily mean that social networks will be called upon by newcomers in order to help them settle into life in Jordan. Often, other dimensions of identity besides nationality come into play, such as socioeconomic background. However, certain groups of Iraqis arriving in Jordan post-2003 have still been able to tap into other types of social networks to assist their settlement due to strong ties and a porous border between the two countries.

In Egypt, on the other hand, there were no preexisting social networks to facilitate life in Cairo for new arrivals as there was no significant pattern of migration from Iraq to Egypt prior to 2003. However, many Egyptians spent time in Iraq as labor migrants and it appears that this has played a small role in Iraqis' choice to move to Egypt and what social connections they have once they arrive in Egypt. A few Iraqis who were interviewed mentioned that an Egyptian friend or acquaintance met in Iraq had helped them find an apartment or with some other aspect of life in Egypt. Furthermore, Iraqis considered Egypt a welcoming country, partially because they had known Egyptians in Iraq. In fact, there is a long history of Egyptian labor migration to Iraq, beginning in the

1900s and continuing until the last phase in the mid-1980s, after which many Egyptians were expelled in the aftermath of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (El-Sohl 1994:120).

Iraqis draw on a wide variety of identities and relationships in order to survive in host countries. However, the most common social network that is used by Iraqis in both Egypt and Jordan is that of the family. Further reinforcing the strength family networks over other types of networks is the fact that persecution in Iraq was and is extended to the entire family, holding the whole family responsible for one family member's actions. This holds true for the period during the regime of Saddam Hussein as well as afterward in 2003 when militias and other groups targeted families for being collaborators and thus whole families have had to flee Iraq. Those families who have been able to remain unified have a much better chance of successfully coping with displacement and all of the challenges it brings than those separated from family and community structures (Chatelard 2009:14).

In addition to kinship ties, Iraqis' social networks also are based on professional networks, university networks, artistic networks, and business relationships. My findings indicate that these networks were much more common in Jordan than in Egypt. For example, one man I interviewed had attended university in Jordan. With the help of a Jordanian friend from university, he was able to start up a company with a Jordanian partner in order to get residency (Interview 22, March 22, 2009). Another man I interviewed, an Iraqi musician, told me that all of his friends he had met from a concert tour were living in Jordan as well and so he was able to reconnect with them there and obtain a position playing in an orchestra (Interview 15, March 29, 2009). An Iraqi artist that I interviewed told me he was able to get a job through Iraqi connections in Jordan

and because Iraqis are preferred as art teachers over Jordanians because of their well-known artistic talent (Interview 23, March 22, 2009). My research findings from Jordan included many examples of different professional and artistic networks into which Iraqis were linked.

In Cairo, these networks were less apparent. No Iraqis interviewed had attended a local university and those who had attempted to start up a business commonly spoke of the necessity to find Egyptian partners who were previously unknown to them. Without an already established relationship of trust, some Iraqis have had their investments stolen from them by local partners. It was very rare for Iraqis interviewed in Cairo to be employed, and if they were the most common job was self-employment, without the help of local Egyptians or Iraqis. In fact, some Iraqis even mentioned that they found employment through transnational connections. For example, one Iraqi man was able to get part-time work through a cousin living in the U.K. His relative knew a woman who needed help furnishing apartments in Sharm El-Sheikh and he was chosen for the job because of this connection (Interview 2, February 12, 2009). However, there was evidence that Iraqis had carried friendships over from Iraq or had made new friends during their stay in Egypt, meeting Iraqis in various places such as UNHCR or even on the street in certain neighborhoods. Through friends of friends, friendship networks have started to spread in Egypt, which will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Uses of social networks

Iraqis mobilize their social networks for many different purposes. Migration and the safety and security that it brings, resources such as employment, housing, information, and access to financial resources are all common reasons to tap into a social network.

Selecting the destination country is dependent on many factors, which were different for Egypt and Jordan. Surprisingly, in both Egypt and Jordan, very few of my informants chose to move due to family already living in the country. Initially, I had assumed that this would be the case for Egypt, but not for Jordan, where there are many more Iraqi refugees and the likelihood of knowing someone from Iraq is thus much higher. Instead of family, common reasons reported to move for Egypt were low cost of living and comfort and safety. For Jordan, common reasons were the possibility to continue a career in Jordan, the fact that it is so near to Iraq, and also comfort or safety.

Table 1: Why did you choose your current country of residence?²

	Cheap	Nearby	Family	Was there before	Comfort and/or safety	Residenc y attainable	Career	Transit migration
Egypt	5	0	1	1	3	1	1	0
Jordan	0	3	1	1	3	0	3	1
Total	5	3	2	2	6	1	4	1

Iraqis in Egypt and Jordan are well-connected to transnational networks, and to a lesser extent connected to local networks of other Iraqis living in the same host countries. Most often both transnational and local networks are family-based, but as discussed

² Although this question was open-ended, informants only replied with one response.

above, other types of networks are frequent as well, more commonly in Jordan. The majority of families (19) interviewed in Egypt and Jordan have immediate or extended family members living in Iraq or in a third country, and most have family members in several countries. The most common countries of the Iraqi diaspora are in Europe, North America and the Middle East, but some Iraqis even have relatives as far away as Malaysia, which is becoming known as an easy place for Muslims to obtain residency and find work. Everyone interviewed still had relatives living in Iraq, however, a few only had one or two extended family members living there such as one Christian Iraqi man whose entire family had moved to Canada except for one uncle who remains in Iraq. Only one family interviewed in Cairo had no relatives in other countries besides Iraq. A Christian family explained that because they have a very small family, they do not have members abroad. Interestingly, they also do not want to be resettled to another country and perhaps this is because they do not have the networks in place to facilitate their migration and transition.

With regards to local networks in Amman and Cairo, some networks were carried over from Iraq. These include some family and friendship networks in both countries, and artistic and business networks in Jordan. However, displacement causes disruption of social networks, which must be rebuilt, sometimes from scratch. Of the 12 Iraqis in Egypt that I interviewed, 5 knew no one before moving to Egypt, and 2 knew only acquaintances. Once in Egypt, most informants met other Iraqis only after they arrived. In Jordan, of the 12 Iraqis I interviewed, 4 people knew close relatives already living there and 3 people had friends already in Jordan. Again, this can be attributed to the many linkages between Jordan and Iraq and the proximity of the two countries.

Once an Iraqi family or some of its members exit Iraq, the next step is settling in the country of choice. Many different types of networks are engaged during this process. One must not only select a neighborhood to live in, but also find accommodation, schooling for children, and if possible, legal residency and employment. In Egypt, the most common reasons for neighborhood selection were family and friends living in that neighborhood and perceived safety of a neighborhood. In Jordan, my interviews show that Iraqis chose their neighborhood of residence based on friends, family or other Iraqis living there but also out of practical reasons such as affordable accommodation and the neighborhood being perceived as quiet or safe. One informant in Amman told me that he decided to live in Jebel al-Webdeh because there are other Iraqis living there: “You find life here. There is people, stores, a lot of Iraqis here you can find” (Interview 20, March 23, 2009). He said he met most of his Iraqis friends in Amman through other friends. One interesting difference between Jordan and Egypt is that there are concentrations of Iraqis in certain neighborhoods in Cairo such as Sixth of October City, Nasr City, and Maadi, while in Amman, there are very few neighborhoods that can be said to have a large Iraqi population. Instead, Iraqis are spread out in almost every neighborhood in this city. This may have an effect on the formation of communities. Those Iraqis who actively want to feel a sense of belonging to an Iraqi community in Amman will have to try harder to find places that they feel a sense of community.

Table 2: Why did you choose to live in your neighborhood?

	Family/ friends lived there	Heard many Iraqis lived there	Quiet/safe	Affordable rents	Near to schools or university	Coincidence	Lived in same neighborhood before
Egypt	3	1	3	1	1	2	1
Jordan	2	2	3	4	0	0	1

Obtaining legal residency is another important use for social networks. In Egypt, Iraqi parents are able to obtain legal residency if their children have education visas from being enrolled in a private school or university in Egypt. Iraqis can also obtain residency through their yellow card, but it must be renewed every six months. Furthermore, it can only be renewed three times and after that there is no chance to have legal residency, so it is more sustainable to obtain residency through children's enrollment in private schools. However, in Jordan, residency is much more difficult to obtain. Furthermore, those Iraqis in Egypt who do not have children also have a more difficult time obtaining residency. Another common strategy for obtaining residency in both Egypt and Jordan is through investment visas. Some Iraqis that I interviewed had obtained investment visas through host country individuals whom they already knew from another connection such as university, but many others, especially in Cairo, were forced to find a stranger to go into business with in order to obtain the residency benefit that an investment visa provides. Many Iraqis who have the money are able to obtain these visas but choose not to do business with them as they are afraid of going into business and losing money or because they had no intention of going into business in the first place. In Egypt, I interviewed one Iraqi who had started a bakery but had gone into debt and had to sell the business off.

Now he is unemployed. Another Iraqi man in Jordan had started a fake business with other Iraqi men he had met in Jordan in order to obtain the residency benefit of the investment visa, but all were working other jobs and afraid to take the risk of starting a real business.

Table 3: Type of residency permit

		Education visa through children	Investment visa	Yellow card	None	Tourist Visa	Residency through employment
Country of Residence	Egypt	8	0	3	1	0	0
	Jordan	1	1	3	2	4	1
	Total	9	1	6	3	4	1

The table above does not accurately reflect the frequency that Iraqis I interviewed actually had investment visas because some had expired.

Sharing information among social networks is probably the most common way that Iraqi social networks are utilized. Iraqis base many of their decisions on how to live in Egypt and Jordan on recommendations from other Iraqis. An Iraqi man living in Egypt who worked for the U.S. troops in Iraq said that, “Of course we help each other, even if Egyptian... especially information” (Interview 1, February 12, 2009). Iraqis find out about UNHCR and how to proceed there from other Iraqis. One Iraqi man in Jordan said that you can find your way to UNHCR to apply on your own, but “after that everybody would show everybody how to act in the second step” (Interview 19, March 23, 2009). School selection for children is also based on recommendations from other Iraqis. Interestingly, some families had made many of these arrangements and decisions through

other friends and family members already living in the country before arrival. One man I interviewed said that he had asked an Iraqi friend over the phone to find him an apartment in the outskirts of Cairo with a rent around \$100.00/month and to buy furniture for it. It was ready and waiting when his family arrived to Cairo. Other information that is shared includes the security situation and politics back home in Iraq and resettlement conditions in the U.S. and other countries.

One important use for social networks is to assist in finding employment. As exemplified in Didem's (2007) article on Iraqi Christian women in Istanbul, religious networks are often used in order to find employment. The Iraqi Christian women discussed in this article mobilize the wider network of Christians in Istanbul as their employers are Turkish Syriac Orthodox families. An Christian Iraqi woman in Cairo that I interviewed described her husband's difficulty in trying to access employment through Coptic connections. While he was not able to mobilize his broader Christian identity with Coptic Christians, he was able to mobilize this identity at a Church in a wealthy suburb of Cairo, which had a large congregation of other foreigners, none of which were Iraqi (Interview 8, March 6, 2009). In my research, I did not find any cases of Muslims, either Shi'a or Sunni, activating religious or sect-based networks in order to find employment. However, there was a strong connection between being employed and having connections with members of the host society. Of those Iraqis currently employed, 10 had connections in the host society, only 2 who were employed had no connections to the host society. About half of informants in both Egypt and Jordan reported that they had connections with either Egyptians or Jordanians respectively. However, in Egypt, those relationships were consistently reported to be more like acquaintances than friends. In

Jordan, more Iraqis reported that they had strong relationships with Jordanians, such as friends from work, from attending university in Jordan, or through marriage to a Jordanian. In addition to connections to host country members, connections with other Iraqis also influence prospects for finding a job. Seven informants reported that Iraqi family members or friends assisted them in obtaining employment.

Table 4: Employment in Host Country

	Not employed	Employed Informally	Employed Legally	Employed previously, not now
Egypt	5	1	2	4
Jordan	3	3	6	0
Total	8	4	8	4

Table 5: Social connections with Host Society

	Friends with host country nationals	Not friends with host country nationals
Egypt	6	6
Jordan	7	5
Total	13	11

In order to be able to migrate across long distances, a family must be connected to transnational network that can help them overcome or circumvent restrictive migration policies (Chatelard 2007:6). Often kinship networks are used because of state visa policies that favor family reunion. At other times, other networks must be activated, as Chatelard (2008) found in the case of smuggling among Iraqis in Jordan.

A different type of social network mobilized for onward migration to the West is that of American or Coalition employers from Iraq. Iraqis who worked with the U.S. or

Multinational forces, companies, NGOs, or media are eligible for resettlement to the United States. However, they first must activate this network by asking for recommendation letters and other documents that prove their work. Often, these employers get very involved in resettlement applications, but sometimes if they have left the job, the applicant will have an extremely difficult time tracking down the employer's personal email address, and will have to go through many channels to find it.

The development of communication technology has greatly facilitated Iraqis ability to keep in touch and assist each other, as well as to meet other Iraqis over the internet. Iraqi families communicate with each other frequently through cheap mobile rates or the internet; most Iraqis interviewed mentioned that they use Yahoo messenger and their mobile phones to communicate with friends and family members. This technology has also facilitated the process of tapping into networks in order learn about immigration requirements and to arrange marriages. Many Iraqis have used marriage as a strategy to secure an exit route and a new life for their children or themselves (see Chatelard 2008:5).

Transnational families and migration strategies

An important function of social networks, as noted above, is to allow individuals to spread risks. In the case of Iraqi refugees, social networks allow families to spread risks among family members who may live across many countries. A significant strategy employed by Iraqi families has been to spread the risk of remaining in Iraq, by allowing some family members to leave Iraq while others remain behind, to make money to send

to those abroad, to watch over property and land, or to care for those family members who are unable to travel.

Chatelard (2008) has noted that family migration strategies “are shaped by two often contradictory tensions: ensuring the safety of each member, and preserving the integrity of the family unit” (7). This sometimes means that families will be separated, living in different locations for extended periods of time, only to regroup in another destination much later. Sometimes this involves several intermediate locations, which are viewed as temporary steps toward a final destination and reunification. One Iraqi I interviewed views Jordan as a transit country. He is waiting to be resettled to Canada to join his entire family there. His aunt prepared her basement in Toronto for his family to stay in and his relatives will be responsible for him when he arrives (Interview 21, March 23, 2009). On the other hand, resettlement is sometimes used as a means of relocating to a third country, but the destination is not always viewed as permanent, but rather a transit country on the way to another more permanent location in order to rejoin family members there (Riller 2009:20). Family safety and reunification is an important motive not only for exiting Iraq, but also for moving onward from host countries. The destination and means are often flexible. For example, one informant in Egypt said that he doesn’t care what country he goes to, “I just want to gather with family and be stable” (Interview 10, March 11, 2009).

As evidenced above, Iraqi families are extremely transnational in nature. Family composition during the migration process is indicative of the stepping stone, risk-spreading migration strategy of Iraqis. Many families are living with other relatives besides their immediate family members, while others are split between two or more

countries. One common strategy is leaving some members behind in Iraq to earn an income, while others who are perceived to be more at risk remain in countries of asylum and receive remittances. For example, the family of one Iraqi woman I spoke with is split between Egypt and Iraq. The women are living in Egypt with the children and the men in the family are working in Baghdad and send them the money they need to survive. The women are living outside of Iraq because they feel it is still not safe for Christian women in Baghdad (Interview 9, March 11, 2009). As other informants pointed out, this is not true only for Christian women, but also for Muslim women who choose not to wear the hijab.

Other families send some members to Jordan or Egypt to continue their education, which may not be an opportunity for them in Iraq. One Iraqi in Egypt has a farm in Iraq which his uncle is running. If he needs money, his uncle sends a portion of the farm's profits (Interview 7, March 4, 2009). Others send some members abroad in order to be educated, such as an Iraqi woman whose family is split between Jordan and Iraq. She lives in Jordan with her daughter who is in university while the other 3 daughters and son are all married and still live in Iraq. (Interview 18, March 30, 2009). Another family living in Cairo took in their nephew so that he could go to university in Egypt, while his family remains behind in Iraq (Interview 12, February 22, 2009).

Livelihood Strategies and Remittances

Although legal residence is more difficult to obtain in Jordan than in Egypt, permission to work is equally unattainable in both countries. However, more Iraqis living in Amman (9) than in Cairo (3) are currently employed, as was shown above. I attribute this to Iraqis

in Jordan having stronger connections to the host society and to other Iraqis than Iraqis in Egypt.

Table 6: Main Sources of Income³

	Full-time employment	Informal employment	Remittances	Pension	UNHC R salary	Savings	Sold property	Invested in business
Egypt	1	3	2	2	0	3	0	1
Jordan	6	0	1	0	3	0	2	0
Total	7	3	3	2	3	3	2	1

Remittances between family members who are still living in Iraq or who are living somewhere else in the diaspora are a major source of income for Iraqis living in Jordan and Egypt. My findings concur with those of recent surveys on Iraqi refugees, as well, which show that in Egypt, around 47.4% of Iraqi refugees receive remittances from Iraq and in Jordan, 41.7%. In addition, 5.2% of Iraqis living in Egypt receive remittances from third countries and in Jordan 22.3% (CMRS 2008, FAFO 2007). It is important to note that remittances were mainly sent by and to family members, not between friends or acquaintances. Interestingly, in my research only three informants reported that remittances are their main source of income. However, many more people reported receiving some form of remittances: Seven people in Egypt and four people in Jordan. In the table above, income from pensions or property is also often sent as a remittance. Also, only one person reported that they send remittances, from Egypt, to a family member living in the Gulf. Many Iraqis interviewed mentioned an informal money transferring

³ There is a discrepancy between the number of informants responding that they receive remittances in the table on main sources of income and in the discussion on remittances because there were two separate questions: one on sources of income and one specifically geared towards sending or receiving remittances. This means that many did not consider remittances their main source of income but rather a supplementary source of income.

system, *Al-Nibal*, which transfers money from Iraq to many of the countries where Iraqis are residing. As it is not a legally registered business in Egypt or Jordan, *Al-Nibal* functions based on trust and through networking.

Many informants reported renting houses or receiving pensions remitted from Iraq. One informant in Egypt reported receiving remittances irregularly from income from renting his house to a South African security company. His father, who still lives in Iraq, sends the money through a wire transfer (Interview 2, February 12, 2009). Another informant in Egypt also rents his house and receives the money through Al-Nibal transfer company (Interview 3, February 18, 2009). Sometimes, relatives living in third countries send remittances as well. One man in Egypt occasionally receives a few hundred dollars from his sister living in Sweden (Interview 5, February 24, 2009), while a woman in Jordan reported receiving \$200-\$300 dollars per month from her sister in Qatar. Another common case is a family splitting itself between Iraq and the host country and those who remain in Iraq work and send the income as remittances to family members who cannot find employment in host countries. This was the case for one Christian family living in Egypt. The husband of my informant's sister had stayed behind in Iraq to work and send money, while the women stayed in Egypt because they were perceived to be in danger if they remained in Iraq (Interview 9, March 11, 2009). More Iraqi informants in Egypt were receiving remittances than in Jordan, perhaps because it is much more difficult to find employment, whether informal or formal, in Egypt than in Jordan. Thus transnational family networks are activated in order to be able to remain in the host country.

Mobility

Just as money moves between Iraq and Jordan and Egypt, so do people. Although visa restrictions and even UNHCR policies limit mobility, Iraqis often circumvent these obstacles in order to check on property, tend to business in Iraq, collect pensions, or to check to see if security conditions are safe for return. For example, one Iraqi man living in Egypt returned to Iraq in February 2008 to collect his pension, check on his house, and learn of the security situation firsthand (Interview 3, February 18, 2009). Two other Iraqi men I interviewed had imminent plans to return to Iraq in order to make a decision on whether to return.

As stated earlier, migration is often made possible through kinship networks, due to state policies allowing family members to obtain visas based on family presence in a country. However, in the case of Egypt, visas had to be applied for in another country such as Syria or Jordan, due to the absence of an Egyptian embassy in Iraq. Many of my informants mentioned that their family members had traveled to Syria or Jordan, in order to obtain an entry visa for one or more members of their family to travel to Jordan or Egypt. In addition, some family members go ahead of time to country of asylum to prepare for the arrival of the rest of family members.

Sect-based networks?

In addition to family-based networks, Chatelard finds that sect is also a common identity-based foundation for Iraqi social networks. “Sect” does not refer here to sectarian networks stemming from religious prejudice, but networks that form due to the nature of

the international migration system. Chatelard shows that in the first stage of international migration,

regional policies that govern access and residency are not universally applied to all Iraqis. On the contrary, access and the granting of entitlements are fundamentally unequal and based on sets of social criteria such as sectarian affiliation, ethnicity, political orientations, education, class wealth, etc. Therefore, the opportunity structure of Iraqi migrants varies widely... (2008:7).

Therefore, in order to begin the migration process, certain social networks are mobilized while others are not. As policies evolve and change, so do the social networks that are mobilized in the process to migrate.

It does not necessarily follow that most Iraqis believe in sectarian-based identities. Rather, Chatelard argues, at certain times this identity is utilized in order to achieve a certain goal. As is well-known, migrants who are marginalized often must resort to communal support networks. Sometimes, she notes, the result of these policies is to make “sectarian or ethnic identities meaningful for migrants and exiles, sometimes more than they were before leaving Iraq” (2008:8).

Furthermore, it is logical that Iraqis of the same religious or sectarian affiliation would tend belong to the same networks and mobilize those networks because as noted earlier, the family is the basic unit of Iraqi society and kinship the most common basis for social networks. While Chatelard has seen strong evidence for sect-based networks among Iraqi refugees, this work, has not seen much evidence of this. This is not to say that I disagree with the results of her work because there is ample hard evidence of certain receiving countries favoring certain types of migrants, i.e. Iraqi Christians getting resettlement priority in Germany over Iraqi Muslims (See The Local February 5 and August 25, 2009). Chatelard gives the example of the *Shi'a* majlis in Jordan as the basis

of a network that helps some Shi'a's get smuggled into Europe. In my work, I did not come across any institution similar to this or any specific sect-based network that could be said to exist.

Instead, my findings show that much of the so-called 'sect-based' networking among Iraqi refugees is actually family-based. As pioneer migrants settle in certain places, this inevitably draws more migrants of the same families to those places because this will ease their transition in the new location (See Massey 1993). For example, an Iraqi I interviewed living in Jordan who happens to be Christian is seeking resettlement to Canada in order to join his family members. There may or may not be many Iraqi Christians living in the area of Toronto where his family lives, I did not find out. However, it is not because he is Christian that he was able to mobilize the network that will provide his accommodation upon his arrival to Canada, but because he has family already living there. Finally, Iraq is famous for its long history of diversity and religious tolerance. Although it is not commonplace for Iraqi Christians to marry Iraqi Muslims, intermarriage is common among Shi'a and Sunni, a strong indicator that sect may not be a strong basis for social network formation. Chatelard discusses the absence of a unified Iraqi Diaspora; there are many Iraqi diasporas: Iraqi Christians in Chicago or Germany or Iraqi Shi'a in Dearborn, Michigan or Damascus, Syria. However, the reason for these religious and sect-based diasporas is probably more complicated than mobilization of those networks, but also because of family-based and other networks. If Iraqi social networks are largely family-based as I argue below, this will result in not all, but much of this migration to certain places being perceived as 'sect-based' because families often share the same religion and sect.

Conclusion

It seems that in the case of Iraqi refugees in Egypt and Jordan, the living situation is often seen as by refugees as temporary, therefore many families choose not to invest too heavily in establishing strong or multiple new social relations. Nevertheless, some old networks, such as family networks and artistic networks have been reestablished in host countries and some limited new networks are developing. Because the majority of networks are family-based and transitory, however, means that networks may not spread and become more community-based. Furthermore, the fact that most Iraqis already have strong transnational ties perhaps means that Iraqis may not view forming local social networks a priority or necessity in the short-term because transnational networks can satisfy many needs, such as financial and emotional support as is evidenced in the large number of Iraqis receiving remittances from abroad and communicating with extended family and friends on a regular basis. However, those who do not have strong transnational ties and cannot return to Iraq may begin to strengthen and deepen local social networks in host countries, as Van Hear has noted of other diasporas which are closer to the home country or lack transnational networks (as cited in Chatelard 2008:8). Chapter Four will discuss other obstacles to community formation, both external and internal, and will further examine why family-based networks are not conducive to community formation.

Chapter Four: Obstacles to Community Formation

This chapter will examine the external and internal factors that present obstacles to Iraqi community formation in Jordan and Egypt drawing on evidence from the findings of this research as well as recent studies that review refugee policies of both countries. External factors include the policies of host governments which make community formation processes difficult, such as lack of freedom of association and freedom of movement, lack of right to work, and restriction of family reunion. Internal factors inhibiting community formation consist of lack of collective livelihood strategies and mistrust among Iraqis outside of the family. I conclude that community formation among Iraqi refugees in Egypt and Jordan is not only limited by the policies of host countries but also that the process is hindered by the refugees themselves.

External Obstacles to Community Formation

All refugees are members of multiple social networks and communities. However, how social networks develop into communities depends largely on the environment in the host country. Communities may form because of a difficult environment where refugees are marginalized and must stick together in order to survive or they may form because the environment is amenable or even encourages community formation. Migrant and refugee networks are most commonly family-based in the initial stages of migration and if the circumstances are right, networks may spread and transform into more institutionalized structures such as community-based organizations (CBOs) (Marx 1990:210). Marx

comments that the development of social networks in refugee situations often can be “obstructed by policies of segregation, such as keeping refugees in closed camps, or by treating them as wards of state or welfare agencies (Marx 1990:198).

Host government responses toward Iraqi refugees in Egypt and Jordan

In this section I will examine what the governmental response has been toward Iraqi refugees in Egypt and Jordan, followed by a detailed analysis of the factors influencing such responses. Although Egypt is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and Jordan is not, the legal bureaucratic responses by the two governments to the Iraqi refugee influx do not actually differ a great deal. While Egypt defines Iraqis as refugees in the legal sense, Jordan views Iraqis as ‘temporary guests’ in line with the often-invoked ideology of pan-Arab nationalism. Neither country has created a separate body to deal with refugee status determination (RSD) and other legal matters, but has left this up to the UNHCR in both cases, in Jordan under a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1998.

With regards to international refugee organizations, both countries have INGOs working to assist Iraqis and refugees of other nationalities, including UNHCR and others such as Caritas, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and CARE. In Jordan, however, every program that works with Iraqi refugees must also include a percentage of the host country nationals as beneficiaries. Due to the Jordanian government’s vocalization of the Iraqi refugee crisis and because of higher numbers of Iraqis present in Jordan than in Egypt, more international media attention has been paid to Iraqis there. In addition, there are dozens of INGOs offering projects benefiting Iraqis. In Egypt, many INGOs and legal

aid organizations are not working with Iraqi refugees and Iraqis have less access to services from INGOs in Egypt than in Jordan, where Iraqi families considered vulnerable receive a monthly cash stipend from UNHCR that can be withdrawn using an ATM card.

Admissions and treatment of Iraqi refugees in Egypt and Jordan also vary considerably from the UN recommendations. Iraqis traveling to Egypt via airplane or boat must obtain a visa beforehand. Iraqis attempting to cross into Jordan via road have had varying degrees of success but many reports of rejection at the frontier have been reported during certain periods, especially after the November 2005 bombings in Amman. Iraqis in Egypt and Jordan are generally given *prima facie* refugee status under UNHCR unless they are suspected of possible exemption and then individual RSD is conducted. There are no camps in Egypt or Jordan; Iraqis in both countries are allowed to self-settle and live among the host community, usually in major urban centers, especially Cairo and Amman, but also to some extent in second cities such as Alexandria and Zarqa.

The rights granted Iraqi refugees in Egypt and Jordan are less generous than those recognized in the 1951 Refugee Convention. Egypt has made reservations on crucial rights contained in the Convention such as the right to work and the right to education. Although Jordan is not a signatory to the Convention, it restricts some rights of Iraqis under its MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with UNHCR, such as the prerequisite of legal residence in order to work, meaning a recognized refugee without a residency permit cannot legally work. Less explicitly restricted is the right of association, which is denied to Iraqis in both countries although in Egypt other nationalities are given limited freedom of association. Article 15 in the 1951 Refugee Convention concerning the Right of Association accords refugees the most favorable treatment as received by nationals of

a foreign country for participation in non-political and non-profit making associations.

Restrictions on freedom of association in Egypt and Jordan are discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Repatriation cannot always be considered voluntary in either Egypt or Jordan.

There is evidence of deportation and refoulement in both countries, however it is considered exceptional and UNHCR refugee status normally prevails (Badawy 2009, Olwan 2009). The reasons usually cited for return to Iraq include lack of economic opportunity or running out of money, not improved security (Minnick and Nashaat 2009).

Factors influencing host government response to Iraqi refugees

As evidenced above, treatment of Iraqi refugees in both host countries is not amenable to long-term local settlement or integration despite the cultural proximity of Iraqis to their Egyptian and Jordanian counterparts. Karen Jacobsen (1996) lays out a useful framework (See Table 8) when examining host government policies toward mass influxes of refugees in the Global South. Although Iraqis did not cross the border to Jordan or fly to Egypt *en masse*, UNHCR policy can define mass influxes to mean a rapid rate of arrival (Ex ComQuarterly Survey 2005). Jacobsen focuses on three main sources of pressure on host governments: UNHCR & the international refugee regime, the local community, and refugees themselves in order to determine how host governments will respond to refugee influxes. The consequences of a mass influx include “strains on economic resources and physical infrastructure, security risks, and threats to government authority” (Jacobsen 1996: 657). Choices for government response include inaction, positive response, or negative response, according to Jacobsen (*ibid*).

Table 7: Refugee Policy Decisions and Possible State Responses (Jacobsen 1996:659)

TABLE 1
U.N. POLICY YARDSTICK: REFUGEE POLICY DECISIONS AND POSSIBLE STATE RESPONSES

Policy Type	Positive Response	Negative Response
(United Nations Recommendations)		
I. Legal-Bureaucratic response		
Accede to international instruments, conventions, etc?	Yes, or accession equivalent	No accession
Define asylum seekers as refugees?	Yes	No; define asylum seekers as 'aliens,' etc.
Create separate bureaucratic authority responsible for refugees?	Yes	No, refugee affairs handled by army
Procedures for determination of refugee status?	Yes, proper procedures including legislation, appeal, etc	No proper procedures
II. International Refugee Organizations (IROs)		
Grant IROs permission to assist refugees?	IROs permitted into country	IROs excluded
Cooperate with or restrict IROs?	UNHCR permitted access to affected areas; cooperation	Restricted or no access; poor cooperation
III. Admission and Treatment of Refugees.		
Admit asylum seekers appearing at border?	Yes	No
Screen refugees?	No; or yes, in accordance with UNHCR regulations	Yes, but not in accordance with UNHCR
Location of refugees?	Refugees allowed to choose camps or self-settlement	Refugees forced to live in camps
Rights of and restrictions on refugees?	More rights (including freedom of movement, employment), no discrimination	More restrictions (on movement, employment) and discrimination
Refugee protection?	Emphasize physical safety; camps at safe distance from border; civilian nature of camps is maintained	Protection of camps frequently violated; combatants in camps; military recruitment of refugees
Repatriation?	Voluntary, according to UNHCR recommendations	Involuntary or forced; violations of UNHCR recommendations
Treatment of long-term refugees?	Potential for local settlement or permanent residence	No such local potential; refugees remain in camps

According to Jacobsen's framework, government responses to mass influxes of refugees are influenced by four things: "1) bureaucratic choices made by the government; 2)

international relations; 3) the absorption capacity of the local host community; and 4) national security considerations” (Jacobsen 1996: 660).

By bureaucratic choices made by the host government, Jacobsen is referring to which body is responsible for refugees and how this affects policy-making and treatment toward refugees. In the case of both Egypt and Jordan, refugee matters have been turned over to UNHCR entirely (see Kagan 2006). As the responsibility has shifted from these host governments to UNHCR, the context of policy making has changed and without accountability mechanisms at UNHCR, refugee protection is threatened. The normal role for UNHCR is to advocate for fair and just refugee policy on the part of host governments. However, when UNHCR is itself responsible for the implementation of RSD, it cannot at the same time be an impartial monitor of itself. Furthermore, UNHCR’s more direct involvement in RSD siphons resources away from other important protection work, which is the traditional mandate of UNHCR, such as advocating for host countries to become signatories of and follow the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol.

International relations have played an important role in host government responses toward Iraqi refugees. For a long period, both Syria and Jordan allowed entry of Iraqis with no visas on the pretense that they all share Arab ‘nationality’. This continued until pressure from nationals out of concern for stress on resources and security concerns overrode this generous policy. Thus, in Jordan, Iraqis are not defined as refugees, but as temporary guests, an extension of the Arab ideal of hospitality. Viewing Iraqis as refugees would seem to undermine the Palestinian right of return in the eyes of Arab host countries. This is because Palestinians are viewed as the only true refugees due to the definition under the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), a

special body dealing specifically with Palestinian refugees. Thus considering other non-Palestinians refugees would dilute the purity and exceptional case of the Palestinian refugee case. Furthermore, if the right of return is not granted to Palestinians, the fundamental population composition of many host countries, such as Jordan and Lebanon, would be permanently altered and is a threat to the national identity of these small countries.

Although entry has been historically possible for Arab nationals into Arab countries, rights that would lead to local integration have been less forthcoming, and this has been especially true after restrictions were imposed due to the large Iraqi influx. Permanent residency and citizenship have not been conferred to Iraqis in the region, largely related to the unresolved Palestinian issue, discussed above. Countries in the Middle East region maintain a delicate balance of citizens of various confessions and Palestinians; allowing the naturalization of Palestinians would upset this balance.

Other dynamics between states also come into play in the treatment of Iraqi refugees, including the relationships between Iraq, host countries, and the West, particularly the United States. The very existence of Iraqi refugees indicates a failure of the Iraqi state and the regime in Baghdad. Refugees returning to Iraq, on the other hand, would indicate a success in security gains which would serve to legitimate the current Maliki administration. Of course, related to this is the fear of host country governments that the security problems in Iraq would actually spillover into host countries. The reality of this accusation will be discussed at length below. Indeed, a spillover of extremism into Jordan and Egypt could of course affect these governments' currently friendly relations with the United States.

The concern of the sectarian conflict being carried by Iraqi refugees is closely related to the fear that the Shi'a sect could be spread by Iraqi refugees and take hold in Sunni host countries. Furthermore, as De Bel-Air (2009) notes, Jordan now has another neighboring country led by a Shia-majority government (14).

American guilt at causing the massive outpouring of Iraqis into neighboring countries has played a significant role in the situation of Iraqi refugees. The implementation of a new large-scale resettlement scheme for Iraqis to enter the United States called the Direct Access Program started in 2008 as a result of this. The program, run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), allows Iraqis who worked for the U.S. military or other American companies in Iraq to be resettled without registration at UNHCR. This large-scale resettlement scheme has led to what UNHCR calls an 'expansion of protection space' in host countries, especially Jordan, Syria and Lebanon (Barnes 2009). By decreasing the burden on host countries by removing large numbers of Iraqis, UNHCR believes that the Iraqis that remain will enjoy increased rights. However, between fiscal years 2007 and 2008, only 318 Iraqis were actually resettled to the United States from Egypt and only 6,271 from Jordan, a relatively small amount compared to the size of the Iraqi refugee population in each country (IOM 2009). The role of burden sharing will be discussed further in the following section.

Scapegoating and burden sharing

The intervention of the international refugee regime in the case of Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Egypt does not seem to be perceived by states as a threat to their sovereignty. Rather, both Jordan and Egypt would rather have UNHCR and INGOs take responsibility

for the care and maintenance of Iraqis as these countries view themselves as already overburdened by their own lack of resources and economic capacity. Jacobsen defines ‘absorption capacity’ as “the extent to which the community is willing and able to absorb an influx of refugees” relating to economic capacity and social receptiveness (1996:666). For example, in host communities that are already lacking resources or employment opportunities, or that has had a negative experience with refugees in the past and is not hospitable, governments may not make policies that are positive for refugees.

Fears that an Iraqi influx would burden infrastructure and services and cause further unemployment for Egyptian and Jordanian nationals are not wholly unfounded. Egypt already suffers from serious unemployment and poverty as does Jordan to a lesser but still significant extent. Both countries also have problems with overcrowding in government-run schools. Additionally, Jordan is one of the most water-poor countries in the world.

Furthermore, Iraqis in both Egypt and Jordan are widely blamed for inflation by locals and their arrival in countries of asylum coincided not only with the global food crisis but also with the global economic crisis. Jordan faced an increase in inflation from 1.6% in 2003 to 6.5% in 2006 as Iraqis arrived (De Bel-Air 2009:10). Such allegations very often arise when large influxes of refugees arrive during times of economic decline (Jacobsen 1996:666). However, at least in the case of Jordan, economists have attempted to disprove any necessary correlation between the trends (De Bel-Air 2009:10). In fact, it is widely believed in the field of refugee studies that most refugee influxes often bring economic development (UNHCR 2002). In Jordan, the media went to great lengths to view the Iraqi influx as an economic boom before the November 2005 hotel bombings in

Amman, focusing on capital and real-estate investment (De Bel-Air 2009:10). After the bombings—which were perpetrated by Iraqis—public opinion and policies regarding Iraqi migrants both became more unfavorable.

Coinciding with this change, as De Bel-Air puts it, Jordan “woke up” to poverty among Iraqi refugees (2009:11), furthering the idea that Iraqis may be an economic burden on Jordanian society. To this end, Jordan (and Syria) began to call for increased international aid, stipulating that the government wanted full control of this aid so that part of the aid would go toward impoverished Jordanian citizens. At least 20% of aid must now go to Jordanian nationals for any project implemented for Iraqi refugees (Chatelard 2009:19).

As in many other refugee ‘crises’, both the Egyptian and Jordanian governments claimed to have overwhelming amounts of Iraqi refugees flooding in and burdening infrastructure, in order to persuade the international community into donating funds and participating in burden-sharing. As a part of this ploy, it is often common to exaggerate refugee numbers (see Crisp 1999) and this was certainly done in both the case of Egypt and Jordan. In 2007, UNHCR estimated that there were between 500,000-750,000 Iraqis in Jordan and up to 70,000 in Egypt (UNHCR 2007) although statistical studies done by Fafo in 2007 estimated between 450,000- 500,000 Iraqis in Jordan and CMRS in 2008 estimated between 15,000-20,000 Iraqis in Egypt. Media and INGO estimates were even higher than those reported by UNHCR, with Refugees International reporting 150,000 Iraqi refugees in Egypt (Refugees International 2007).

Iraqi Refugees: A Security Threat?

Since 1967 when former Egyptian president Nasser signed emergency law into effect, Egyptians have been ruled without regard to their constitutional rights, including that of freedom of assembly. The law, extended several times and most recently in 2006, states that Egyptians cannot assemble in groups larger than five persons. Furthermore, law 84/2002, which went into force in June 2003 concerning NGOs, requires all NGOs to register and gives the government the power to dissolve the NGO at anytime. Article 15 in the 1951 Refugee on the Right of Association accords refugees the most favorable treatment as received by nationals of a foreign country, but given the constraints to the association of Egyptian citizens, this is a very low threshold for rights of association that refugees would enjoy.

These laws combined allow the Egyptian government a large margin by which to prevent any Iraqi to organize social or humanitarian activities. Indeed, this does seem to be the case as I have personally heard of many attempts of Iraqis to start NGOs, Iraqi-oriented businesses, or to found informal discussion groups. An Iraqi man living in Sixth of October City attempted to get permission to start an NGO to provide medical services to other Iraqis and followed the required registration process at the Ministry of Social Solidarity. Rather than being given a clear rejection, however, he was discretely told by a Ministry official that he should not continue with the application process. Later he and his wife opened a summer school for Iraqi children in partnership with UNHCR and under the umbrella of an internationally-recognized organization (Interview, April 2008). The following year, UNHCR did not continue to support him so without alternative sources of funding, he was forced to end the program. Another man operating a business

catering to Iraqi families wanting to tour Egypt was called on his mobile by the Egyptian Mukhabarat (national security department) and told to quit or he would be deported.

Although it is not a law that Iraqis in particular *cannot* gather in groups or form associations, in Egypt they are prevented from doing so as a matter of informal policy. This can be seen in the existence of a plethora of other refugee CBOs in Cairo run by Sudanese, Somalis and other groups. The emergency law, therefore, seems to be only applied to Iraqis. In Jordan, as in Egypt, Iraqis cannot form their own CBOs. The NGO law in Jordan is extremely restrictive and a new law passed in April of 2007 gives the government the right to monitor and dissolve NGOs and non-profit organizations if they stray slightly from their articles of association (Human Rights Watch 2008). However, Iraqis are allowed to participate in activities at community centers run by international NGOs and local NGOs (who often receive funding and capacity-building from INGOs).

Certainly, the excuse given for the prevention of Iraqis' right to association that is often cited is concerns over security. Many have warned that sectarian tensions and terrorism from Iraq will spill over into neighboring host countries in the region and cause conflict. Furthermore, recruitment of 'refugee warriors' has often been the norm in previous conflicts (Zolberg 1989). However, these allegations are largely unfounded due to the demographic makeup of Iraqis living abroad. As Leenders (2008) points out, not only does the Iraqi refugee population contain high numbers of women and children and therefore non-combatants, but it is also a group largely composed of middle class professionals who did not participate in the sectarian conflict, but were rather victims of it who left Iraq precisely in order to escape it (Leenders 2008). However, there have been exceptions, such as the November 2005 Amman hotel bombings mentioned above that

were perpetrated by Iraqis, as well as isolated incidents of violence reportedly sectarian in nature in some neighborhoods in Damascus (Leenders 2008).

Moreover, Egypt and Jordan are both almost entirely composed of Sunni Muslims with a small Christian minority, while the majority of Iraqis are Shi'a (although among Iraqi refugees, there are Sunni and Shi'a). Perhaps the real reason behind preventing Iraqis from associating is the fear of Shi'a Islam infiltrating Sunni countries. This theory is substantiated by the fact that Egyptian security shut down plans to start a Shi'a mosque in Sixth of October City by putting its organizers in detention and threatening deportation (Interview with UNHCR Egypt Public Information Officer, March 2009). However, de Bel-Air (2009) notes that there is no proof that deportations in Jordan have been carried out disproportionately against Iraqi Shi'as, quoting a government spokesperson as saying "We don't have a Sunni-Shia problem" (8).

Allegations made that Iraqis are a security threat to host countries could be part of the reason why many journalists and INGOs have commented that Iraqis seem to be afraid to leave their houses and associate with each other, (O'Donnell and Newland 2008). Of course, lack of legal residency is another major factor in this. In Egypt and in Jordan, many Iraqis felt that government security agents were watching them. Throughout my research, many Iraqis commented that they felt they had to be very careful and respectful laws of the host country so as not to call attention to themselves. One informant noted that being in Egypt "feels like being monitored all the time" (Interview 4, February 20, 2009). One Iraqi man living in Jordan said that, "We always deal with them [Jordanians] very careful- residency here is difficult, there is no way to go back to Baghdad or go to third country. Iraqis feel they have to be very straight"

(Interview 15, March 29, 2009). However, at the same time every interview informant reported that they felt their neighborhoods were safe.

Clearly the policies of both Egypt and Jordan are not conducive to community formation among Iraqi refugees. The policies in both countries are aimed toward temporary stay and rights are severely restricted to the point where many Iraqis do not feel comfortable even leaving their homes. For example, an Iraqi woman in Jordan expressed that she was afraid to let her son go to school because he looks older than he is. Without residency she is afraid he will be deported (Interview 17, March 30, 2009).

Although in the case of Amman and Cairo, external government policies strongly discourage integration and establishing refugee community associations, in other cases community formation has occurred despite such difficult circumstances, and even as a direct result of them. Collective livelihood strategies are often one of the most important coping mechanisms to deal with social exclusion and marginalization among self-settled refugees as Grabska (2005) demonstrates in the case of Sudanese refugees in Cairo. The process of marginalization, she notes, can involve both legal and social marginalization, i.e. being discriminated against by the host society (Grabska 2006:290). While Iraqi refugees in Cairo are arguably less marginalized than Sudanese, they are both legally marginalized by an inability to access certain refugee rights in both Cairo and Jordan, such as the right to work, and socially marginalized by being viewed as a burden on their host societies. For the most part, economic marginalization does not seem to be stimulating collective livelihood strategies, as will be discussed below. Furthermore, marginalization is not enough, on its own, to induce community formation. Grabska shows that Sudanese refugees have certain customs and traditionally have strong

connections to their communities, which if transferred to the host country facilitates community formation (Grabska 2005:51).

It is often very difficult to establish or reestablish communities after displacement because of the social disruption that it causes. Families, especially, suffer much disruption after events before and during displacement and are often separated in the process. Without the possibility of unified families, which are often the basis for meeting an individual's basic needs, community may not be sustainable as a coping strategy for life in displacement. Once families have the opportunity to reunite through legal entry and residency of family members outside of Egypt and Jordan, social support networks can be reestablished that are the very basis of strong communities. Therefore Chatelard's (2009) recommendations to restore mobility, families and communities and livelihoods will all lead to community formation. Current policies, however, will continue to discourage community formation of Iraqi refugees, although as will be discussed in Chapter Five, to some extent it is beginning to occur despite the difficult circumstances.

International Community constructions of Iraqi refugees

The way that Iraqi refugees are viewed by the international community and the policies that both contribute to and stem from this understanding inevitably affect the formation of community among refugee groups. As discussed above, policies of host countries such as Egypt and Jordan are not conducive to community formation for several reasons. Rather, they encourage Iraqis to transit through to another destination by making it impossible to set down roots permanently in these countries. The international refugee regime plays a role in influencing the policies and views of host country governments and

must accurately reflect an understanding of the situation in order to provide projects that are effective.

In Egypt, there are very few projects geared toward Iraqi refugees, with the exception of grants which serve to supplement costs of private education for children through UNHCR and limited medical assistance for small medical problems from Caritas. However, most Iraqis refuse to use these services because of the location of the NGOs, which is far away from where most Iraqis live and the reportedly poor treatment at the INGOs where services are administered. In Jordan, on the other hand, there are several projects that attempt to go beyond humanitarian needs into the more medium- to long-term development arena. These projects largely focus on training Iraqis to learn certain vocational skills and on community development. For example, CARE has founded a community development center for Iraqis in Amman, which offers music lessons, a library, computer and English courses, and a gym. Other NGOs offer vocational training courses such as learning how to repair computers. UNHCR has debated whether it should be engaged in such activities which seem to ignore the reality that Iraqi refugees cannot legally work in host countries; however UNHCR and INGOs do not seem to have given much thought to the reality of providing community development projects in the context of both the existence of some mistrust among Iraqis and the inability of Iraqis to stay and integrate in host countries long-term (UNHCR 2009). While it is important to incorporate a strategy that looks to the long-term, this must be done with a view to reality. Often, the use of community development discourse is strategically positioned to appease donors while ignoring the disempowering effect it may actually have on refugees who want to benefit from services but also should have a

voice in the decision of what services are needed and offered. The use of the word “community” implies that the refugees themselves have participated in the planning of the activities and they are therefore inherently appropriate for the refugees’ needs, acceptable and useful.

Furthermore, employing a community development strategy while simultaneously pushing for massive resettlement programs is detrimental to the formation of collective coping mechanisms and community formation because it pushes many Iraqis to leave countries of asylum. While trying to look for quick durable solutions, UNHCR has actually added to the problem as resettlement has in many cases proved to be unsustainable for many Iraqis. Many of those who were resettled, especially to the U.S., have returned to countries of asylum or Iraq itself mainly due to the difficulty of finding employment in the U.S. (IRC 2009). UNHCR has effectively undermined any chance for self-reliance by raising expectations for resettlement (See Riller 2009). Furthermore, many Iraqis report that they eventually would like to return to Iraq. Since that may not be feasible in the near future, a durable medium-term solution would be to encourage sustainable community coping mechanisms (not necessarily a community development centers which offer classes but not an authentic space where Iraqis want to gather), instead of undermining community formation by moving most Iraqi refugees out of Jordan, even if they do not ultimately want to stay in the United States.

Hyndman (1997) has noted that the ‘rhetoric of community’ has often been employed by international aid organizations working with refugee populations “because it is popular, acceptable and politically strategic in humanitarian donor circles... community is part of a strategic discourse which consolidates the institutional power of

refugee relief organizations” (16). In the case of her work in refugee camps in Kenya, however, Hyndman has determined that refugee camps cannot be considered communities. She explains that, “the concept of a unitary, single community in this instance undermines the heterogeneity in the camps in which several nationalities and subclans of Somalis and their various interests are represented” (1997:19). Instead,

While there may be several subsets of communal interest or allied refugees cooperating—organized for example among refugees of common nationality, subclan affiliation, or proximate physical location—a camp is an institution organized as a temporary solution to displacement... “Community” is not enforced; it does not unduly restrict the movement of its members, and it usually involves a material relationship to place through access to land, jobs, and resources whereby it can sustain itself. [Hyndman 1997:20]

The same could be said for many urban refugee groups, such as Iraqis in Amman and Cairo. Although they share a common nationality and other characteristics (Baghdad is the most common city of origin), this does not inevitably lead to shared interests or a sense of group belonging. Iraqi refugees are not a homogenous group, but fled for a variety of different reasons; thus it may be more appropriate to talk about Iraqi *communities* rather than a single Iraqi community. As Wahlbeck (1998) has found, sometimes these ‘divisions’ actually stimulate community formation along these boundaries. This does not mean that there is no Iraqi community formation, but instead there may be several Iraqi communities forming, which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

INGOs use the discourse of community in order to convince donors that their activities are effective, legitimate and appropriate. Furthermore, identifying urban refugees in order to distribute assistance to them is a well-known dilemma for service providers; by providing assistance at ‘community’ centers which are presumably well-

known, it makes it seem like the NGOs are facilitating access to these services, whether or not it is true. This ignores the fact that many urban refugees *choose* to remain anonymous because it is to their benefit, especially if they do not have legal residency (see Chatelard 2009).

Furthermore, Iraqi refugees in both Jordan and Egypt have not seemed very interested in attending community development centers unless they will personally benefit, for example, for a distribution of non-food items. During my participant observation at the CARE community development center in Amman, I noticed that there were hardly any Iraqis utilizing the facilities or attending courses. In Cairo, during a discussion on community centers, Iraqi men reported that they would only go to a community center if it provided services or if there was a benefit for them (Focus group discussions, April 16, 2009). Lynette Kelly (2003) proposes that the term ‘contingent community’ is better suited to understand the dynamics between external state and NGO actors which seem to impose the formation of communities on refugees in many cases. She defines ‘contingent community’ as a “group of people who will, to some extent, conform to the expectations of the host society in order to gain the advantages of a formal community association, but the private face of the group remains unconstituted as a community” (Kelly 2003:41). Indeed the natural formation of ‘community’ certainly comes under question when refugees themselves are not creating the community association, but instead the international community steps in to do it for them based on imputed common interests or links.

Iraqi refugees are often constructed by academics and journalists as divided along sectarian lines, afraid to associate with other Iraqis because of deep-seated mistrust.

According to a recent UNHCR report on urban Iraqi refugees, “the Iraqi refugee ‘community’ remains a divided, fearful and traumatized one” (UNHCR 2009:17). In an article on the ban on formation of associations in Egypt for Iraqi refugees, journalist Sara Anheleddu comments that, “The refugees of Iraq must overcome another hurdle, just as large: their lack of communication, lack of information, and lack of trust” (Anheleddu 2008). Michael Kagan, professor of Refugee Law at the American University in Cairo, has been quoted by journalist Liam Stack as pointing out that, “local government treatment of Iraqis and the sectarian divisions among the refugees themselves have stunted the growth of Iraqi organizations” (Stack 2008). Reinoud Leenders (2008) has commented that Iraqis in Syria have physically self-segregated themselves along sectarian lines living in different neighborhoods according to sect. However, this notion is contested by others such as Chatelard (2009) and Niedhardt (2008), who note that Iraqis have settled according to their socio-economic class as the price of rent varies significantly from neighborhood to neighborhood in Amman, Cairo and Damascus. While Leenders refers to this segregation as ‘sectarian’ he goes on to explain that this can be attributed to newly arrived Iraqis relying on their social networks, which are largely based on family or tribal ties, to settle into Damascus. This phenomenon can hardly be described as sectarian, which implies that there is a deliberate separation due to among Sunni, Shi'a or Christian because of prejudice or conflict between the groups. Instead, it can be attributed to common migration patterns which often see ‘pioneer’ migrants going ahead and family members following later, using information from those who went before to ease their settlement in the new country. As a result of this trend, pockets of

migrants or refugees from the same places or who are connected often end up moving to the same neighborhoods in the country of destination (See Massey 1993).

In Jordan, UNHCR and its partners have attempted to cultivate a sense of community among Iraqi refugees through their use of community centers and community outreach workers, which seems to ignore UNHCR's own understanding of the context in which they work (UNHCR itself has said that Iraqis are divided due to sectarian tension and mistrust). While the international community sees Iraqi refugees as afraid to leave their houses and distrustful of each other because of sectarianism, they continue to attempt to implement this community development strategy in Jordan and to a lesser extent in Egypt. Iraqi community outreach workers, volunteers for INGOs such as CARE, pay house visits to vulnerable Iraqi families, trying to reach those who may not know about available services or who are unable to visit offices because of cost of transportation or illness/disability. As a strategy of working with a population who are seen as distrustful of one another and wanting to remain 'invisible', perhaps this is not the wisest choice, as it leads to additional suspicion and fear. INGOs in Jordan, as one CARE employee said, seem to be competing for beneficiaries and there is an overabundance of INGOs in Amman, and especially in East Amman where donors perceive poor Iraqi families to live (as opposed to West Amman). Furthermore, UNHCR and its partners each have their own registration system in Amman, so every time an Iraqi refugee wants to benefit from a service they must give their biographic data again, which many have expressed is problematic because they don't understand why and become suspicious. One question, in particular, that causes suspicion is that of 'sect'. Many Iraqis adamantly refuse to answer this question as they do not think it is relevant and would rather not say.

Internal Obstacles to Community Formation

Jordan and Egypt's policies are not conducive to community formation because they restrict many essential freedoms and rights in addition to effectively pushing Iraqis to stay only temporarily. UNHCR also contributes to promoting the quick exit of Iraqis from host countries through its policy of using resettlement to 'expand the protection space' as discussed above (See UNHCR 2009). While marginalization sometimes can stimulate community formation, a common predicament, "enemy", cause or a common ethnic identity is not enough to induce community formation, Shelly (2001) found in his study of Vietnamese refugees in Milwaukee (491). Experiencing social marginalization, for example, is not enough to stimulate Iraqi community formation. Instead, he says that community formation is a process that "combines social construction with self-definition" (491). In other words, characteristics of both individuals and cultures play an important role in whether communities will form. This section will examine some of the internal characteristics and circumstances that hinder Iraqi community formation in Jordan and Egypt.

Collective livelihood strategies

A major element of community formation, according to Hammond (2004), is the "daily exchanges of goods, favors, and knowledge" (15). Al-Sharmani (2003) also views "the daily process of survival and maximizing livelihood resources" (25) as integral to community formation. She shows how Somali refugees in Cairo draw on not only traditional identities for support, such as tribal affiliation and family, but also newly acquired identities, such as those based on shared diasporic experiences in past host

societies (Al-Sharmani 2003:25). Somali refugees mobilize these different networks, borrowing money, sharing information about UNHCR, supporting each other emotionally, and donating money to Somali charities (25). One major manifestation of community formation as both Hammond and Al-Sharmani understand it is collective livelihood strategies.

As shown in Chapter Three, remittances between family members are one of the most common livelihood strategies of Iraqi refugees in Cairo and Jordan. Information sharing, among family members and other Iraqi friends and acquaintances is also widespread. However, money and goods were shared less frequently among Iraqis who were not related to each other. Many informants commented that they felt uncomfortable asking others for money, occasionally mentioning that they even felt uncomfortable asking family members for assistance. One Iraqi man in Egypt said that he received money occasionally from his sister in the Gulf, but he recognized that she too could not afford to send much. Most Iraqis that I interviewed responded that they would ask a relative for assistance if they ran out of money and some responded that they would rather return to Iraq than ask for assistance. One Iraqi man in Jordan said that if he runs out of money “I don’t ask anyone. I took my bags and return back to Iraq and what happen should happen. We don’t have a life” (Interview 20, March 23, 2009). An Iraqi woman in Egypt explained that “everyone is caring about himself” when asked about Iraqis helping each other to survive in Egypt (Interview 4, February 20, 2009). However, some reported that they felt comfortable lending money to other Iraqis and asking for help, if need be. An Iraqi professor in Egypt mentioned that, “I helped the others who came after me and all the students they live near to me.” He said, “if Iraqis want to travel

to Iraq, I give money for travel, he will pay back.” He explained that, “I can ask help from other Iraqis” (Interview 7, March 4, 2009). Interestingly, the findings on engagement in collective livelihood strategies were extremely mixed. Most notably, Iraqis who did engage in these collective strategies were mostly engaged in them transnationally and with close family members. Collective livelihood strategies could not be said to be community-based, where neighbors or others are also sharing resources within the host country itself.

Table 8: Who Iraqi informants would ask for help if they needed financial help

	No one	Parents	Siblings	Extended family	Iraqi friends	NGO or religious organization
Egypt	3	1	1	3	0	1
Jordan	1	0	2	2	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	3	5	1	2

The most common person that informants would ask for help from was a relative: in Egypt, 5 people would ask a relative for financial assistance, while in Jordan, 4 people would ask a relative. Only one person said that he would ask an Iraqi friend for help and no one responded that they would ask an Egyptian or Jordanian for help. More informants in Egypt than in Jordan would not ask for help from anyone.

The question remains why Iraqis are not helping each other with money and material goods. Although it is a stereotype that all Iraqis are rich, some truth can be found in the notion that Iraqi refugees arrived in host countries with enough money to sustain them. Many came with savings, or the money made from having sold their houses and furniture. Others are still receiving pensions from Iraq or income from renting their

houses and as discussed in the previous chapter, many Iraqis receive remittances. However, as time passes without replenishment from steady employment, evidence from this research indicates that many Iraqis are running out of money, as many are already relying heavily on savings that will eventually run out. Because so many Iraqi refugees do have sources of income being remitted to them from outside of their host countries, many may not yet need to engage in collective livelihood strategies.

Mistrust

That some Iraqis do not need to engage in shared livelihood activities is only a partial reason behind a lack of community formation. Mistrust which can be traced to the governing style of the Saddam Hussein regime runs deep within Iraqi social relationships and has been the reason for intense family solidarity and trust on the one hand, and considerable lack of trust between non-related Iraqis, on the other hand.

Mistrust among refugees is common and well-documented (Hynes 2003, Daniel and Knudsen 1995). Hynes notes that mistrust develops at every stage in the process of becoming and being a refugee. Especially of interest to this discussion, she notes that restructuring of the social order that occurs in the refugee process “is often, on the face of it, along ethnic, language or religious lines and trust is broken down along these lines meaning that members of other ethnic, language or religious groups are to be mistrusted” (Hynes 2003:3).

However, it is important to recognize that although sect-based identities may be occasionally mobilized by Iraqis in order to migrate, especially to the West, they are not otherwise meaningful to most Iraqis as some would argue, as will be discussed in the next

section. Instead, mistrust between Iraqis was cultivated by Saddam Hussein at all levels of society. One female informant explained that she doesn't feel comfortable around other Iraqis in Cairo "due to old years of mistrust" (Interview 12, February 22, 2009). As Chatelard (2008) points out, families were the targets of violence in both Ba'athist and post-Ba'athist Iraq. As such, "solidarity and trust could only develop between close family associates or friends" (6). Under Saddam Hussein's system of patronage, certain groups were granted privileges, while others were systematically denied citizenship and entire families would be punished for the actions of one member. Kanan Makiya (1998) described the fear and mistrust which developed out of this style of governance as "the kind of fear that comes not only from what the neighbours [sic] might say, but that makes people careful of what they say in front of their children. This fear has become part of the psychological constitution of citizenship" (275). Thus, distrust was felt toward anyone outside of the immediate family network. Chatelard explains that, "nuclear families...were the maximally solidary communities based on affection and loyalties. Mistrust prevailed towards all circles beyond the nuclear family because beyond that circle the individual felt at risk of being subject to violence" (2008:11).

This mistrust continued even after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, although the reason for it has changed. So-called "collaborators" who worked as translators for the U.S. and coalition forces, and later for U.S. companies and NGOs, were threatened with death, and such threats were often extended to family members. It is not a sectarian-based mistrust, but a distrust of those who supported the U.S.-led invasion, or those who fought against the occupying force. Now, among Iraqis in exile, this mistrust lingers, while sectarian mistrust is not so apparent.

In focus group discussions, Iraqi refugees in Egypt talked about أزمة ثقة, or a “crisis of trust” experienced by Iraqis since 2003. When I asked the participants in the focus group discussion why Iraqis were living as separate families and were not asking each other for help, one woman said that “It is more comfortable, I will avoid a lot of problems. I came here to avoid.” In response, another woman stated that she thought someone might hurt her if they knew the reason why she fled to Egypt. She said that, “Maybe I have an opinion and they have another opinion about the Ba’ath party.” Another woman said that, “Even though I like you more than others because you are Iraqi, I cannot make close relations.” (Focus group discussion, April 16, 2009) A Christian Iraqi woman explained that her family chooses not to make a lot of friends in Egypt because “We don’t know what others think about us; we are honest, but we don’t know if they are.” She illustrated this with a widely known Egyptian proverb باعد عن الشر و غني له meaning “Get away from the evil and sing for it” (Interview 9, March 11, 2009). Because trust is limited to family members, non-kinship-based networks are not frequent among Iraqi refugees, as shown in Chapter Three.

Another source of mistrust between Iraqis living in Cairo and Amman surrounds resettlement, which many are seeking. Those who were high level members of the Ba’ath party may be excluded from resettlement under the 1951 Refugee Convention’s exclusion clause if it can be proven that they committed serious non-political crimes, war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes against peace, or acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Many Iraqis expressed concern that those in charge at the UNHCR did not understand that almost every Iraqi was a member of the Ba’ath party and many joined against their will. This was expressed especially in Egypt with regards

to a high-ranking UNHCR official who many Iraqis felt was biased against all Ba'ath party members, regardless of the circumstances. Anxiety surrounding resettlement is one reason why many Iraqis feel it is better to keep to themselves.

Conclusion

Certainly there are many different reasons for a large degree of mistrust among Iraqi refugees, but sectarianism is not the correct framework from which to understand this. Furthermore, although some mistrust does exist, it is not the only obstacle to community formation. Iraqis are engaging in collective livelihood strategies transnationally, but are very rarely sharing material resources within host countries. However, information is being shared to a great extent. Moreover, Iraqi refugees themselves have identified the need to cooperate and communicate among each other in order to help each other understand what has taken place (Focus group discussion in Cairo, April 16, 2009, Salem-Pickartz 2009). In Egypt, there is evidence that this trust has started to grow, as Iraqi community outreach workers at St. Andrew's have started volunteering and Iraqi beneficiaries have become comfortable with this situation. These initial seeds of community building could be greatly enhanced and supplemented by a host country context amenable to community formation; as was shown above, external obstacles from the host country can play a major role in hindering community formation. However, this context can only be changed by UNHCR and international community pressure on governments hosting Iraqis to see the benefits of allowing Iraqi communities to develop. Chapter Five explores the evidence that community formation, to a small extent, is beginning to occur among some Iraqi refugees.

Chapter Five: Indications of Community Formation in Cairo and Amman

“We need to talk to Iraqis. Iraqis are like poison. You can find medicine and you can be killed by it.” Iraqi woman during focus group discussion in Cairo, Egypt, April 16, 2009

The above quote demonstrates the complicated relationship that Iraqis have with each other in exile. While many of them feel that they need to talk to each other and support each other emotionally, as well as financially, they also find it difficult to do so because of all of the events that have caused them to distrust each other. In this chapter I will review evidence from my interviews and focus group discussions that show there are some manifestations of community formation in Cairo and Amman, despite this mistrust. While it is not widespread, I argue that community formation is beginning to occur in a number of ways. First I will discuss collective identity construction of Iraqi refugees, which can be a basis for community formation. I will also look at how some Iraqis are providing each other with emotional support, an important element of community formation. Then I will examine new social relations are being formed among Iraqis. I will look at how Iraqis meet and what they do when they are together. I will address how some Iraqis are able to overcome their mistrust of other Iraqis. Finally, I will describe some initiatives on the part of some Iraqis to create businesses and educational programs that serve Iraqi refugees. I argue that activities also create potential spaces for community building.

Collective identity construction

Iraqis living in Cairo and Amman are in the process of constructing collective identities, which can be seen in their discourse. Malkki (1995) studies Hutu refugee narratives in Tanzania, which she calls “mythico-history”. She says that narratives of Hutu refugees “represented an interlinked set of ordering stories which converged to make (or remake) a world” (1995:55). Zarowsky, in her study of narratives of suffering among Somali returnees to Ethiopia, points out that, “narratives and “emotion talk” reveal the importance, in the aftermath of war and displacement... in creating community and political legitimacy” (2004:191). These discourses are a part of the collective identity construction process because certain subjects that Iraqi refugees discuss, such as sectarianism, are spoken about in the same way, using the same vocabulary and points of reference, which creates a sense of belonging. Discourses of common refugee experiences, suffering, and anti-sectarianism are pervasive throughout interviews and focus group discussions, as will be discussed below.

“We were never asked this question before 2003.”

It is common that Iraqis, when asked, will deny a sect-based identity. The question of religious sect when posed to an Iraqi is no doubt a sensitive one, especially due to fears in host countries of sectarian tensions spilling over and of Shi'a Islam spreading to Sunni neighbor countries. It would be understandable to refuse to answer the question of sect as it is not only considered rude but the answer can also be dangerous, causing many Iraqis to become suspicious of those who ask. However, there is another, positive discourse in this denial that often surfaces in conversations with Iraqi refugees, a discourse of

brotherhood and “Iraqiness”.

Throughout my interviews and focus groups, when the question of sect came up, it was always met with a strong denial of sectarian tensions among Iraqi refugees living in host countries. Although this denial could be explained by my status as an outsider, from extensive conversations with close informants and friends, I was able to determine with confidence that this was not the case. Although I am sure that some Iraqi refugees do hold sectarian beliefs, I believe that it is a very small number of people. Furthermore, it is important to remember that many Iraqis fled as a result of wanting to escape the so-called ‘sectarian war’ which erupted after the February 22, 2006 bombing of the Al-Askari mosque in Samarra. Although many families experienced great losses because of sectarian tensions, most people do not ascribe to these beliefs or seek revenge. Instead, it is generally agreed that militias, with leaders from foreign countries with specific interests, instigated and perpetuated these tensions.

Since the U.S.-led invasion in Iraq began in 2003, sectarianism or sectarian conflict has become a popular way for journalists, policy-makers and international NGOs to describe the current situation in Iraq. Together, such actors have constructed and perpetuated a discourse about the explosive nature of Iraqi sectarianism. This discourse runs deep among journalists, policy-makers, and international NGOs. Reidar Vissar calls this way of thinking the “ethnic paradigm” (2007). The International Crisis Group (ICG) (2006) points to the origins of sectarian divisions in Iraq pre-2003. During the Saddam Hussein regime (from 1979-2003), a Sunni-minority dictatorship ruled over a diverse population including a Shiite-majority as well as several denominations of Christians and other religions. According to ICG, “it was at times of intense national crisis that

repression assumed a more sectarian hue" (2006:7) especially during the Iraq-Iran war and after the 1991 defeat in the Gulf War. However, even the same report acknowledges that during this time many people from different religious sects continued to intermarry and sectarianism was not seen to be a threat to the nation (ICG 2006). Reidar Vissar (2007) argues against the ethnic-sectarian paradigm showing that,

historically, centripetal forces have always attracted the interests of Iraqis of all sects and ethnic groups. This can be seen above all in three factors: the endurance of Iraq as a concept of territorial identity, the persistent view of sectarianism as an ugly political force that is imposed from the outside, and the survival of the concept of "national unity" as a paramount aspiration. [Vissar 2007:810]

However, after 2003, some have claimed that Iraq's sectarian conflict borders on civil war (See ICG 2006). On the other side of the argument, commentators such as Sami Ramadani, an Iraqi exile in Britain and professor of sociology, argue that although at the formal level sectarianism has taken a hold in the government and obviously within militias, sectarianism "is not yet the dominant factor among the masses in the streets... Indeed, the people's hostility to the governmental parties and the occupation, and the historical absence of mass sectarian hostility have all combined to prevent large-scale communal strife and violence" (Ramadani 2007). Indeed, sectarianism has taken on strong political hues in Iraq due to the collapse of Iraqi state institutions and their subsequent reconstruction along sectarian lines. As Herring and Rangwala (2006) state,

the new sectarianism in Iraq's politics is not simply a reflection of pre-existing popular opinion. Instead, it arises from a complex weaving of institutional rivalries, new political ascendancies and international priorities that has given new force to sectarian claims within Iraq, without direct regard to the proportion of people who would endorse those claims (148).

A combination of internal changes and international forces has brought political sectarianism to the forefront of Iraqi society, but this does not mean that the majority of Iraqis subscribe strongly to a sectarian identity.

Perhaps precisely because many Iraqis deny wholeheartedly sectarianism and the strife that it has brought to their country and prefer to remember the way things were before the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, discourses in exile take on a strong emotional rejection of sectarian-based identities. Zarowsky asserts that, “emotional distress [is]....about social rupture and injustice and not simply about private suffering. Emotion is critical to creating, recognizing, reinforcing, and mobilizing the moral webs on which both individual and collective survival depend” (2004:189). Iraqi refugees use emotion when discussing sectarianism as a means to make sense of their present situation, especially in terms of how they relate to the homeland and to the host country. In a focus group with Iraqi refugee women living in Cairo, many emotionally expressed that they did not care about religious sect and asserted that it is common to intermarry in Iraq, a sign of tolerance.

Woman 1: “We are all one. There is no difference. We are all facing the same things.”

Woman 2: “You can find in a typical family all sectarians. It’s a mix.”

Woman 3: “We are all brothers.”

Woman 4: “In Iraq it is not nice to ask these questions.” (about religious sect)

Woman 5: “We are slipped into this mess with no choice.”

These women obviously felt very strongly that sectarian identity is not important to Iraqis as they all spoke loudly and passionately in front of the group. Furthermore, they all felt comfortable discussing their respective sects and were of different backgrounds, many of

them mixed. In individual interviews this tone was also the case, showing that it is not just the group setting that causes Iraqis to so fervently deny sectarian identity.

This collective discourse also assists Iraqi refugees to construct their social world anew after much disturbance. As Pineteh (2005) demonstrates in his work with Cameroonian asylum seekers in South Africa, “memory becomes a nexus of varied and shared experiences... which restores a sense of belonging and provides a communal bond...” (383). Remembering the non-sectarian past in Iraq helps Iraqis in exile to construct a similar non-sectarian present, blaming outsiders for the current sectarian problems in Iraq and bonding together as Iraqis. An Iraqi man living in Egypt described sectarianism by saying that, “This case Sunni-Shia was created by Iran to kill Iraqis. I am Iraqi first, then Muslim.” He explained that he went to Christian schools and has good relations with all religions. He said, “the sect category appeared after occupation, [it was] created by USA to divide Iraqi persons. I built my relations because this person is Iraqi not because of his work.” (Interview 7, March 4, 2009). Many Iraqis attribute the creation of sectarianism to either Iran, the U.S., or both. In this case, this man believes that the U.S. created sectarian tensions through its occupation of Iraq and Iran has tried to perpetuate this tension in order to serve its own interests. Another man explained that, “Muslim is Muslim. Even my children don’t know [about their sect].” He explained that when he meets Iraqis in Cairo, “I don’t ask him you are Muslim or Christian- I don’t care.” (Interview 5, February 24, 2009). Others feel emotional when they speak with strangers in the Iraqi accent. An Iraqi woman in Egypt explained that the Iraqi accent brings up memories and feelings for her (Interview 9, March 11, 2009).

Identifying as an Iraqi remains very a powerful and important means of self-representation in Cairo and Amman, and it transcends other identity markers, especially sect. In addition to discussions about lack of sectarian identification, focus group participants in both Jordan and Egypt agreed that Iraqi identity and its markers, such as accent, specific traditions for holiday celebrations, food, and symbols of nationalism, are extremely important to them in their life outside of Iraq. In Jordan, a focus group participant said, “Iraqi identity is inside the body. We learn easily as Iraqis, we adapt easily but doesn’t mean we change our identity” (Focus group discussion Jordan, March 26, 2009). Another man discussed his attempts to teach his daughter about Iraqi identity: “Even with our daughter we have a flag in our home. We encourage watching Iraqi sports on television” (Focus group discussion Jordan, March 26, 2009). In Cairo, one of the younger male focus group participants was wearing a necklace with the geographical outline of Iraq on it, which I noticed other Iraqis wearing in Egypt in Jordan, a trend reminiscent of a similar necklace of Palestine.

Of course, part of the reason that Iraqi refugees so enthusiastically identify as Iraqi is because they are out of their country and facing many problems, including discrimination as well as missing their homes and families that they left behind and where they spent most of their lives. But these discourses are more than just that because they also serve as a means for Iraqis to overcome and heal the trauma of the past, and especially the divisive tensions created during the so-called sectarian war.

“CARE doesn’t care”

Grabska (2005) found that use of the term ‘refugee’ by Sudanese refugees in Cairo served to create a sense of community (10). A similar process seems to be happening among Iraqi refugees in Cairo and Amman, but this sense of community seems to have formed out of a common sense of dissatisfaction at being called and treated as a refugee. I would argue that in the case of Iraqis in Cairo and Amman, it is the sharing (actual and discursive) of the experiences of displacement themselves that create a sense of community, of identity as an Iraqi outside of his or her country and of belonging to that group. This discourse concerns the difficulties of being a “refugee”, the processes of learning how to become a refugee, and complaints about the institutions that Iraqis must interface with on a daily basis.

In my research the most common thing that Iraqis said that they discussed was “news on the UN”. Although some people did not express the desire to form new friendships with other Iraqis, most felt an overwhelming affinity to other Iraqis and made a point of commiserating about their experiences in their host countries and at the UNHCR and its partners. Others shared information on how to act at the UN or what services were available, as discussed in Chapter 3. An online forum for Iraqi refugee-related issues and guidance has even been created by Iraqis at ankawa.com, which serves as a meeting place for assistance with UNHCR and NGO procedures as well as a place to vent frustrations with UNHCR procedures and life in host countries. The way that Iraqi refugees talk about treatment at the UNHCR, at NGOs, and in host countries was strikingly similar. This discourse of the struggles of refugee life serves to create a sense of belonging.

Many complained about treatment at the UNHCR or other NGOs such as CARE and Caritas. An Iraqi man interviewed in Egypt reported that he de-registered from the UNHCR because he felt that it has started to “breach its duties” by encouraging return to Iraq by free tickets and money...They say they won’t renew because conditions not fit for you. [There is] no legal way to stay, can’t register kids in schools, so imposes back to Iraq” (Interview 7, March 4, 2009). Others had stories of going to UNHCR to register and never receiving a response or phone call to follow up. Many Iraqis in Cairo felt that the UNHCR office was functioning differently in Egypt than in Jordan and Syria and that Iraqis in Cairo were being ignored for resettlement. One man said that, “the procedure of UNHCR is bad” (Interview 10, March 11, 2009). Another woman explained that she would not approach Caritas for assistance with health care because “I found it hopeless and not worthy to approach” (Interview 12, February 22, 2009).

Many felt that the treatment that Iraqis receive at NGOs is “insulting”, with specific reference to CARE in Jordan and Caritas in Egypt. A woman in Jordan recalled that some employees at CARE are good and some are bad. “They announced that they would give out appliances and then we were treated badly” (Focus group discussion April 29, 2009). Throughout interviews and focus group discussions, many Iraqis felt that the use of the word ‘refugee’ at NGOs had a derogatory connotation. For example, one woman said, “They use the word ‘refugee’ all the time. ‘You are a refugee’” (Focus group discussion April 29, 2009). This treatment and language, as well as many Iraqis’ dependency on NGOs has made them feel disrespected, especially because so many are highly educated.

A woman in Jordan commented that “We all carry degrees and we all feel like beggars” (Focus group discussion April 29, 2009).

“We are tired”: Discourse of suffering and psychological sickness

When speaking to my informants, one of the first things that many people mention is that they are facing psychological problems or that they are “tired” or suffering. As Zarowsky shows in her work with Somali returnees to Ethiopia, narratives that express emotions, can “both index and reinforce shared identity, experience, and commitment to collective survival on material, political, cultural and psychobehavioral levels” (2004:191). I argue again here, that collective discourses about psychological suffering are ways of expressing a shared condition as Iraqi refugees in order to heal past divisions and reconcile sectarian tensions that happened in Iraq. In Egypt and Jordan, many informants mentioned having psychological problems from car bombings, kidnappings, and other security problems back in Iraq that they experienced either directly or indirectly through a friend or family member or from poor living conditions in host countries. For example, an Iraqi man I interviewed in Egypt said that his oldest son needed special help from a private tutor due to his psychological problems in order to pass his classes but he was unable to afford this, so he quit school (Interview 10, March 11, 2009). Many similar stories like this exist and psychological problems are mentioned using the same language. During a focus group in Jordan, one man said that, “We are sick. What we care about is that we cannot go to Iraq and we are not getting resettled” (Focus group discussion, March 26, 2009).

Another commonly mentioned issue is that Iraqis are “tired” because they are suffering from conditions in host countries and have been suffering from many previous wars. During a focus group discussion in Cairo, one woman explained that, “All of us have good families, but we are tired ourselves because of the problems and circumstances we have been through” (Focus group discussion, April 16, 2009).

Establishing new social relationships

As I have established above, there are some manifestations of community formation among Iraqi refugees in Amman and Cairo. Often, these communities are formed based on both old and new relationships with other Iraqis in the host community. In this section, I will examine how these relationships are being established for those who are willing to associate with other Iraqis and have been able to overcome their mistrust or do not have any.

To be clear, while there are some Iraqis who are engaging in building new relationships with other Iraqis in their host countries, many others are not doing so because of trust issues. Furthermore, although new relationships are being established, it is not clear how strong these relationships are. The following tables show that not all informants were associating with other Iraqis. Furthermore, there were some informants who reported that they did not always feel comfortable associating with other Iraqi refugees.

Table 9: Do you get together regularly with other Iraqis?

	Yes, often	Yes, sometimes	No, limited contact
Egypt	4	3	5
Jordan	2	4	6
Total	6	7	11

Table 10: Do you feel comfortable associating with other Iraqis?

	No	It depends	Yes
Egypt	2	4	6
Jordan	0	1	9
Total	2	5	15

Although this topic did not come up with all informants, those who answered in Jordan felt more comfortable associating with other Iraqis than those living in Egypt. When looking at who reported that they felt comfortable, the trend seemed to be that younger people tended to feel more comfortable and people who were not associated with either the U.S. occupation or the Ba'ath party in their former employment. Furthermore, no self-reported Shi'a informants reported that they felt comfortable associating with other Iraqis, but the majority of Sunni informants did say that they felt comfortable associating with other Iraqis. This could be attributed to external factors, especially to the reactions of both the Egyptian and Jordanian government to hosting Shi'a Iraqis, who have made it clear that they do not want Iraqi Shi'as gathering to practice their sect of Islam.

For those who did meet other Iraqi refugees, the most common way that Iraqi informants reported meeting other Iraqis was through Iraqi friends. Friends who knew each other from Iraq or met randomly in Cairo or Amman would introduce each other and because trust was already established, it was easy for a new relationship to form. In this way, Iraqis' social networks in host countries are expanding. Some women mentioned that they met other Iraqis through their children's friends at school. The mothers of the children started getting together. This informant explained that, "We want to develop relationships, say hi during *eid*, for the kids" (Interview 9, March 11, 2009).

On the other hand, many informants also reported that they met Iraqis at UNHCR or NGOs. In this case, there is no pre-established trust, but perhaps common interests,

such as obtaining services, allow Iraqis to begin a conversation. Although I was unable to observe this, many of the discourses discussed above, which I argue are an indicator of community formation, can serve as a means to facilitate the establishment of new social relationships. Another interesting case is meeting Iraqis on the street or other public places. Crossing paths with another Iraqi, I gathered, is enough of a connection to strike up a conversation even if he or she is a stranger. One focus group participant in Jordan explained that, “Even when we meet on the bus- you can hear the accent is from Iraq, we are happy to meet other Iraqis” (Focus group discussion Jordan, March 26, 2009). Another focus group participant confirmed this by saying, “If I was walking on the street I wouldn’t talk to Jordanian, but of course I would talk to an Iraqi” (Focus group discussion Jordan, March 26, 2009). However, these types of chance meetings did not usually develop into significant new relationships, but were one-off occurrences.

Table 11: How do you meet Iraqis?

	On the street	At UNHCR/NGOs	Through Iraqi friends	Through children's school	At places that Iraqis frequent	At work
Egypt	0	3	6	2	1	0
Jordan	1	3	3	0	0	1
Total	1	6	9	2	1	1

Some informants reported that they did not meet any Iraqi refugees at all and are not included in the table.

Also interesting to examine is how frequently Iraqis get together and what kinds of activities Iraqis do when they get together. The majority of interview informants (thirteen people) reported that they get together with Iraqis sometimes, not frequently,

meaning around once per week. Seven informants, a significant number, said that they did not get together with other Iraqis at all, while four reported that they get together with Iraqis frequently, meaning more than once per week. The most common reason for not getting together with other Iraqis was that their relations are ‘limited’. This was always the term used to describe a lack of relationships with Iraqis in both Cairo and Amman. One informant in Egypt described friendships with Iraqis by saying, “There are two situations. Light relationships because we don’t want to get deep relations because sometimes we’re scared. According to me, happy and away. Scared if someone is talking behind his back.” He knows some Iraqis through friends but they are not close, just acquaintances. The family gets together with other Iraqis sometimes: “When we see them if we are shopping. We never plan to get together” (Interview 6, February 24, 2009).

Seven male informants reported that they go to cafes, which was the most commonly reported activity. Two of the activities, taking trips and home visits, were family activities where one family would get together with another family. Finally, in Jordan two informants reported that they go to important milestones such as weddings, funerals or visiting other Iraqis when they are sick. Events like these that are a part of establishing and maintaining a normal life in a new place-- those described by Hammond’s expression “getting on with life”-- are an integral part of the process of community formation.

There are also a few places that are known to many Iraqis where they can get together recreationally in Cairo and Amman. For example, in the City Stars Mall in Cairo, Iraqi families gather every Thursday night around 9:00pm to have dinner and talk with other Iraqis. There are also Iraqi restaurants in certain

neighborhoods of Cairo and Amman where Iraqis can meet and eat Iraqi cuisine.

These restaurants are owned by Iraqis and most of them employ Iraqis exclusively, usually family members. Many expressed that they felt more comfortable in these locations than at places owned by Egyptians or Jordanians. Including small falafel shops, there are around thirteen Iraqi restaurants in Cairo, with a high concentration in Sixth of October City, which has a high population of Iraqis. In Amman, there are around twelve Iraqi restaurants spread out all over the city. There are other businesses, such as small grocery and teashops owned by Iraqis as well. An Iraqi-owned teashop in downtown Amman was also mentioned as a frequent gathering place for Iraqis. One focus group participant explained that, “We have unofficial social places. There is a place, an Iraqi coffee place in Sahel Hashimiya where Iraqis meet and at Jama3 Husseiniya” (Focus group discussion Jordan, April 16, 2009). Nonetheless, there are no Iraqi-run community associations in either Cairo or Amman.

Table 12: What do you do with other Iraqis when you meet them?

	Go to cafes	Take trips	Home visits	Just phone calls	Events such as weddings, funerals, sick visits
Egypt	4	1	2	2	0
Jordan	3	0	1	0	2
Total	7	1	3	2	2

Are there Iraqi communities?

Most refugee groups are not a homogeneous, unified community, but instead composed of several different subgroups each allied by a shared interest or based on different shared characteristics (Hyndman 1997: 20). Wahlbeck (1998) in his research on Kurdish

refugees from Iran, Iraq and Turkey living in London shows that sometimes fragmentation actually stimulates ethnic mobilization and community formation, where communities, comprising of separate groups, develop.. He finds that, “refugees seldom are able to establish strong and united ethnic communities in their new country of settlement” (215). However, even if one united community does not exist, the possibility of many smaller communities remains. This section will explore manifestations of smaller-level community formation.

These subgroups are present to some extent among Iraqis in Cairo and Amman. It is instructive to examine the cause of flight and future plans of Iraqi refugees in order to better understand the formation of these new identities in exile. Kunz (1981) examines refugees’ orientation to the homeland in order to understand their behavior in countries of asylum. Kunz posits three categories of refugees: ‘majority-identified refugees’, ‘events-alienated refugees’, and ‘self-alienated refugees’. Majority-identified refugees are those “who are firm in their conviction that their opposition to the events is shared by the majority of their compatriots. These refugees identify themselves enthusiastically with the nation, though not with its government” (Kunz 1981:42). The second category, ‘events-alienated refugees’, covers those who either because of events immediately preceding the refugee situation, or because of past discrimination are ambivalent or embittered in their attitude toward their former compatriots. The ambivalence of those from this group derives from their original desire to be identified with the nation, and their subsequent realization of their rejection from the nation as a whole, or by a section of its citizens. [Kunz 1981:43]

According to Kunz, this group often includes religious or racial minorities but rarely social group minorities, such as sexual minorities or women. A third category, ‘self-

alienated refugees', includes those who for varied individual reasons "have no desire to identify themselves with the nation" (Kunz 1981:43).

In Cairo and Amman, religious and ethnic minority groups, Kunz's 'events-alienated refugees', are often those groups of Iraqis who feel that they cannot return to Iraq because there is nothing left for them there due to a specific type of persecution. These groups most commonly include religious minorities such as Christians or Yazidis, and those who worked with U.S. and coalition-affiliated companies or directly with the army. Around 40% of Christians have left Iraq since 2003 (Ferris 2008). Christian women, in particular, have been seriously threatened in Iraq. For example, a Christian woman in Egypt said that she would never go back. Christian women must wear hijab and abaya in order to be safe. (Interview 8, March 6, 2009) Those who fled because of direct threats, such as Iraqis who worked for Multinational Forces- Iraq (MNF-I) or U.S. companies, also feel that they will never be able to safely return to Iraq. Another Iraqi man who worked for an American company in the Green Zone said "if you were threatened in Iraq, you can't ever return." (Interview 1, February 12, 2009)

While I have not observed Christians forming *new* collective identities because of their persecution (they already have a strong collective identity from before leaving Iraq), those who worked for "the Americans" as MNF-I is commonly referred to, are definitely bonding over their shared experience working in the Green Zone. In the waiting room of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) office, which operates a special resettlement program for Iraqis who worked with American forces or companies and were threatened because of their work, I observed many Iraqis making conversation and discussing their stories and hardships. Because their work for the U.S. led them to be

perceived sometimes as traitors, this group feels that they can never return to Iraq. Many speak very proudly about their work, however, and seem happy to identify themselves as supporting the invasion. In fact, many of these Iraqis feel a strong affinity to America, which is the basis of their shared identity. One man explained, “We have been raised to go there” (Interview 4, February 20, 2009).

Most of those Iraqis who feel that they cannot return to Iraq because of threats are relying on resettlement for their futures. Initially, my hypothesis was that Iraqis who are planning to be resettled would not engage in community formation. However, I found that some families have made connections with other families at embassies or UNHCR offices with whom they will be traveling to the same country. An Iraqi woman getting resettled to Canada reported that her family has made friends with six other families who are also getting resettled to Canada. They talk every day and get together regularly.

Other ‘communities’ of Iraqis include affiliations of those with similar professions, such as professors, musicians, artists and businessmen in Amman and Cairo. These groups have well-established networks from Iraq. The Iraqi business community in Amman was operating since before 2003, which was facilitated by the porous border between Iraq and Amman and the close economic ties between the two countries. Iraqi businessmen often travel back and forth between Iraq and Jordan and most do not seem to be registered refugees. In Egypt, as well, there are Iraqis doing business. In fact, registering as a refugee would seem to hinder business because according to one informant in Egypt, UNHCR invalidates registration if a yellow card holder leaves the country; the same is true for Jordan. Many networks of artists and musicians were transported from Iraq into Jordan, quickly reestablishing links. One informant in Jordan,

a member of the symphony, said that most of his musician friends from Iraq came to Jordan and were regularly getting together to play music and discuss politics, Iraq, and music.

The meaning of ‘community’ and community building initiatives

Many examples of Iraqi individuals attempting to organize their communities also exist. These efforts seem to be based on a common understanding of community as a support system which goes beyond the immediate and extended family. It was mentioned by many in focus group discussions that Iraqi refugees are living as ‘separate families’ but that they need to overcome the difficult circumstances in which they are living and support each other. Some women commented that without their needs met and a sense of stability, including a source of income and freedoms and rights to move and work, Iraqis would not be able to overcome these challenges and form communities. In addition to freedom of movement and the right to work, physical space to gather with other Iraqis and be able to express an Iraqi identity was cited as a requirement for community. In focus group discussions, many felt that opening a coffee shop for Iraqis or a community center would significantly change the way that Iraqis were interacting with each other. Instead of being confined to the home, where many feel they cannot comfortably invite guests because of their living situations, they could gather in public and freely speak about problems and dreams. In short, community was seen as a support system of a group of individuals sharing an Iraqi identity. The prerequisites for community to develop include satisfaction of needs, existence of rights and freedoms, and a place to gather and express a uniquely Iraqi identity. Although these prerequisites are for the most part non-

existent in Cairo and Amman, some individual efforts to form support networks and spaces for Iraqi refugees will be discussed below.

An Iraqi couple in Sixth of October City in Cairo started a summer school for Iraqi children, which operated for one summer in 2007. The school operated out of two rented private school buildings with 350 Iraqi children as students and 10 Iraqi women as teachers. Initially, the cofounders, a husband and wife team, wanted to start an NGO to assist Iraqi refugees with health services because they saw a gap and knew a lot of Iraqi doctors who could work as volunteers, utilizing their skills for the good of the community. However, Safa explained that, “We have some papers from the Ministry of Social Solidarity but they didn’t agree for us. They did not say [no] directly- indirectly. We received the message... Somebody advised me ‘don’t continue’” (Interview, May 2008).

By joining with the UNHCR’s Department of Social Affairs, however, they were able to overcome the Egyptian government’s restrictive policy on allowing refugees to form legal community associations. Both parents and teachers received this project well as education is a big need among Iraqis in Cairo due to the high cost of private schools. Furthermore, the school was seen as a place to bring Iraqi children and parents together in order to overcome isolation, as many of the mothers and children would normally stay at home. The founders also said that it was easy to find Iraqi women who were formerly teachers in Iraq to volunteer for the teaching positions with no pay. However, the cofounders saw that many Iraqis “don’t have the interest [to join an association] because they want to leave Egypt and they don’t have future here. You know the future is missing here.” (Interview, May 2008) They also said that, “You know, we find ourselves alone,

only me and my husband. It's a lot of work." (Interview, May 2008). Unfortunately, they faced further obstacles from the Egyptian government and without the support of UNHCR were not able to continue this project in subsequent years. Another man in Cairo had worked as a clown in Iraq. He was trying to start an NGO for Iraqi children to have a place to learn if they could not afford to be in school. However, he faced many of the same challenges and was not successful.

Other Iraqis I interviewed are volunteering at NGOs that serve the Iraqi populations in Cairo and Amman. They feel it is important for Iraqis to support each other and talk to each other. In Cairo, Iraqis are volunteering at an NGO called the Refugee Legal Aid Office that provides legal advice on resettlement. According to one observer, Iraqi volunteers and interpreters working at this NGO were not accepted by Iraqi beneficiaries at first, but as time went on began to be trusted by other Iraqis using the services and the organization developed more legitimacy (Sadek 2009). In Amman, I interviewed an Iraqi woman who volunteers for CARE, one of large INGOs working in Jordan with Iraqi refugees. She felt that her work helping other Iraqis was important and had made many new friends through the NGO. At the same time, there are many personal benefits to this work. Iraqi volunteers at large NGOs in Jordan receive a stipend, which although not a full salary is very desirable because work is difficult to find for Iraqis here. In Cairo, I spoke to one woman who wanted to volunteer because she needed volunteer experience for her application for resettlement to Canada. As discussed in Chapter Four, it seems that many Iraqis do not engage in community building activities unless it will personally benefit them.

Accidental communities of memory

Despite the problems of trust among many Iraqi refugees, there is evidence that these divisions are beginning to heal themselves, if slowly. In the focus group discussion in Cairo and Amman, many Iraqis felt that they should be supporting each other more. Many informants also mentioned that sharing their experiences in Iraq and their problems in host countries with other Iraqis was comforting to them. One woman in Jordan said that, “When they [Iraqis] tell me their sadness I feel comfort.” (Interview 14, March 23, 2009). Another woman interviewed in Jordan said, “We have to share our feelings, our sadness and happiness together. We don’t have a home” (Interview 21, March 23, 2009).

In focus groups, men said that although relations are limited in host countries, they are developing. One Iraqi man in Egypt said, “It takes time. [We meet other Iraqis] at school, neighbors... It’s hard to make good relations.” He explained that these relations are temporary because no one is planning to stay. As Malkki (1997) has documented, these transient relationships can be just as important and have a lasting impact on people who experience them. She calls this phenomenon *accidental communities of memory*, referring to “a less explicit and often more biographical, microhistorical, unevenly emerging sense of accidental sharings of memory and transitory experience” (Malkki 1997:91). Malkki says that these events “bring together people who might not otherwise, in the ordinary course of their lives, have met” and that this experience is not transitory in its effects, but “can powerfully shape what comes after” (Malkki 1997:92). The experiences and changes that Iraqis are undergoing in Cairo and Amman may create a lasting sense of community among those who share them. An Iraqi man in Cairo said that he plans to stay in touch with the Iraqis he has met in Cairo even after he is resettled,

“because we lived abroad together.” For him, the experience of living abroad with other Iraqis is an important point of connection, which has shaped his life. Sharing this experience with new Iraqi friends is a coping mechanism to deal with the difficulties of being outside of your country, without networks and resources.

Conclusion

Throughout the course of my research and during my personal discussions with Iraqi friends and colleagues, it became clear that some Iraqis are interested in forming communities, celebrating their Iraqi identity with their Iraqi compatriots, and assisting other Iraqis in exile alongside them; some simply are not interested in these activities. The examples above are few and for every example, there are many other families who feel uncomfortable or simply do not want to engage with other Iraqis for various reasons and mainly associate with family members. This evidence backs Shelley’s (2001) observation that in order for community formation to take place, community must be viewed as a “viable tool for survival and adaptation” (491). As in focus group discussions, many women mentioned that Iraqi refugees are psychologically tired (تعبان) from the events that happened in Iraq and the many subsequent wars followed by sanctions and then more war; having visitors is very difficult because they are all living far apart and have to borrow food and money to invite guests over. At the same time, Iraqis that I interviewed seemed to be bonding over these experiences. Many Iraqis suggested that basic needs such as food, employment, and education must be fulfilled before anyone could be in a position to feel comfortable enough to form a community or worry about anyone besides the survival of their immediate family. To a large extent, I

found that Iraqis I interviewed are not investing in making relationships in Egypt or Jordan because they feel their situations are temporary and these relationships would not be of use. One man in Jordan put the day-to-day existence of Iraqis succinctly: “We don’t know tomorrow what [will] happen” (Interview 20, March 23, 2009). Community is not a viable option for refugee groups if it cannot be sustained. With minimal chances for employment, legal residency, and public education in Cairo and Amman, most Iraqis are longing to leave for a more welcoming country, not to form communities.

Conclusion

In this section, I will summarize the conclusions I have drawn from my research, highlighting some of the gaps and future directions for research. I will conclude by discussing the future of Iraqi refugees living in Cairo and Amman.

Summary

This study has attempted to analyze Iraqi community formation in Amman and Cairo by examining key indicators of community formation such as collective livelihood strategies, establishment of new social relations and support networks, community building initiatives, and the construction of collective identities.

My initial assumption was that the process of community formation would be farther along in Amman, where Iraqis and Iraqi refugees have been migrating for years, have established social networks and make up a much larger population than in Cairo. However, I found that the state of community formation in both places was very similar. In both countries, there was some degree of community formation, but there were many more obstacles preventing it. Although Egypt is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, this made little difference with regard to access to rights or durable solutions, which in some cases could provide a starting point for community formation. On the one hand, Iraqis in Amman were often concerned about their security because of a lack of legal residency. On the other hand, Iraqis in Cairo had similar concerns because

Egyptians were worried about the sectarian composition of the Iraqi population. Thus Iraqis in both countries were in precarious legal situations.

Iraqi refugees in Cairo and Amman face many similar challenges that many feel would only end by returning to Iraq or resettling to a Western country where they will have legal residency and opportunities for employment. Unlike other refugee groups who form communities as a response to extreme marginalization, this study has shown that Iraqi refugees do not see community as a viable means to survive and adapt to life in Cairo and Amman for several reasons. Mistrust between different subgroups and between Iraqis who are not related to one another is high and this makes forming new relationships very difficult. Problems thus tend to be solved within the immediate family and only occasionally may be taken to extended family or very close friends. Moreover, many families face acute psychological strains stemming from the loss of family members, friends, homes and livelihoods in Iraq and in view of economic and social problems in host countries, many families are too tired to focus on anything except for the basics.

Without employment opportunities, legal residency, affordable education for children, and integration prospects, conditions in host countries add little inducement to community formation. Family-based social networks exist, but they are mainly used for sharing information and socializing. Thus, Iraqis are not participating in shared livelihoods to a great extent and have not been tied to the places where they reside. Life in exile is characterized by a day-to-day impermanent existence.

Future Research Directions on Iraqi Community Formation in Exile

This study sought to shed light on the unique trajectory of Iraqi community formation in Amman and Cairo, which has developed differently from other refugee groups who are often subjected to many of the same hardships in countries of asylum in the Global South. While I was able to interview Iraqi refugees and conduct focus groups, I was not actually able to observe many of the social networks or community building activities in action. A long-term study with a greater emphasis on participant observation would be greatly beneficial to understanding the dynamics that have presented obstacles to Iraqis in their formation of communities. Furthermore, conducting interviews with family members and other members of social networks in Iraq and other countries could provide a more holistic view of how networks are functioning and their significance in the day-to-day lives of Iraqi refugees. Finally, a longitudinal study on Iraqis who have decided to permanently remain in Cairo and Amman after many have returned or resettled would be instructive in comprehensively understanding Iraqi community formation in these two cities.

The future of Iraqi refugees in Amman and Cairo

Many Iraqi refugees living in Jordan have already been resettled or returned and in Egypt, Iraqi refugees are no longer a population of concern to UNHCR because so many have returned to Iraq. The coming year will probably see many more Iraqis return home, following elections in March 2010 and the end of the school year. However, many more Iraqis in Jordan and Egypt will not return because they have decided it is not a viable option for them. They will continue to seek ways to immigrate to Western countries

while remaining in limbo with little chance for formal or informal local integration. In spite of this, many will not find ways to emigrate from their host countries because chances for resettlement are extremely slim, especially from Egypt, and because often migration to the West requires transnational connections which some do not have. As the numbers of Iraqi refugees in Egypt and Jordan begin to decrease because of return or resettlement, the protection space in both countries will increase. Small numbers of Iraqi refugees are not threatening to host governments and populations and their rights and freedoms will begin to increase, as they have already started to in Jordan where the visa process is now much easier for Iraqis and freedom of movement is less restrictive than it was two years ago. Furthermore, those Iraqis who remain will likely form communities because they will require the support of other Iraqi refugees if they have no transnational connections to provide financial and emotional support.

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Appendix A: Interview Questionnaire

Demographic Questions

Sex:

Age:

City of origin in Iraq:

Religious affiliation:

Sect:

Tribal affiliation:

Date of arrival to Egypt:

Neighborhood of residence within Cairo:

Current size of household:

Religious affiliations of household members:

Type of visa:

Current occupation (if any):

Previous occupation (in Iraq):

Educational background:

Marital status:

Location/legal status of spouse:

Current occupation of spouse (if any):

Number of children (if any):

Age of children:

Location/status of children:

Location of parents:

Location of siblings:

Migration Decision-Making and Refugee Status

1. Why did you decide to leave Iraq?
2. Why did you decide to come to (Cairo/Amman)?
3. Did you go anywhere else first?
4. How did you enter (Egypt/Jordan)?
5. Did you apply for refugee status? If so, who helped you apply?
6. Are there any organizations that help you as a refugee in (Egypt/Jordan)? Which organizations? How did you hear of them?
7. Did you have friends or family already living in (Cairo/Amman)?
8. Why did you choose to live in your neighborhood?

Daily Livelihood Strategies

Income

1. How do you support yourself and family in (Cairo/Amman)?
2. Do you receive from abroad (If yes, from who and from where)?
3. Do you send remittances from abroad (If yes, from who and from where)?
4. How do you receive/send remittances?
5. What do you use the remittance money for?
6. Do you ever ask people to bring specific items for you from abroad? If so, what? How many times?

7. Do you receive assistance from UNHCR or its partners (CARE, Caritas, etc.)?
8. Do you work? (If so, what is your job? Where? What is the nationality of your employer? How many hours per week?)
9. How did you find out about your current employment?

Housing and Neighborhood Choice

1. Did you live in any other neighborhood before your current neighborhood?
2. Do you know any other Iraqis in your neighborhood?
3. How did you find your present accommodation?
4. Who else lives with you?

Expenses

1. What are your main expenses (housing, food, education, medical, relatives, legal, community-based activities, transportation)?
2. If you run out of money, who do you ask for help?
3. Do other Iraqis help pay for expenses of housing, food, etc.?
4. How often do you ask others for assistance with your expenses?

Education

1. Do you receive any kind of education? If yes, where?
2. How did you find out about it?
3. Do you take any language or vocational classes?
4. Are your children receiving schooling?
5. What kind and where?
6. How do you pay for it?
7. How did you find out about your children's schooling?

Health

1. Did you have any health problems before arriving to (Egypt/Jordan)?
2. Do you receive any health services? Where?
3. Do you have any health concerns?
4. How do you find out about information pertaining to accessing medical services?
5. How do you pay for health needs?

Networking

1. Do you get together with many Iraqis in your neighborhood? How often?
 - a. Are they family members or friends?
 - a. What do you do when you get together?
 - b. Do you help one another with daily livelihood? (e.g. do you borrow from one another, share housing, share food, exchange information (probe what kind of information they exchange), help each other in other ways? (specify) How often do you do that?
 - c. Are there particular Iraqis that you depend on more than others? Who? Why do you think that is the case?
 - b. If they are friends, did you meet them in (Cairo/Amman) or did you know them before?

4. Do you feel comfortable associating with other Iraqis in (Cairo/Amman)?
5. How did you meet other Iraqis in/outside of your neighborhood that you did not already know from home?
6. Do you feel safe in your neighborhood? Why/Why not?
7. Do you mostly associate with other Iraqis in your neighborhood or those living in other neighborhoods?
8. Do most of the Iraqis you know (in Cairo/Amman) live in your neighborhood or another neighborhood?
Are you friends with non-Iraqis in (Cairo/Amman)?
9. Do you have family members or friends still in Iraq?
10. Do you have family members or friends living outside of Iraq and not in (Egypt/Jordan)? Where?
11. If so, how do you communicate with them? How frequently?
12. Do they assist you with anything (remittances, migration)?

Identity Formation and Future Plans

1. What are your plans for the future? Do you plan to stay in (Egypt/Jordan), return to Iraq, or move to a third country?
2. Have you made concrete steps to leave Egypt? (sell assets, buy plane ticket, etc.)
3. Have you applied for resettlement?
4. From who do you obtain information about resettlement?
5. How do you feel about Iraq now? Do you ever want to return?
6. Do you interact with Egyptians/Jordanians? Where? How often?
7. How would you describe these interactions?
8. Do you have Egyptian acquaintances/friends?
9. How would you describe these relationships ?
10. Do you have contact with other refugee communities?

Appendix B: Focus group discussion guide

1. What does ‘community’ mean to you- how would you define it?
2. How do Iraqis mainly identify themselves to each other? As Iraqi? As a member of their religion or religious sect? As from a certain city?
3. Do you know of any community associations for Iraqi refugees?
4. What other NGOs work with Iraqi refugees?
5. What community organizing activities are you involved with?
6. What are the needs of the Iraqis in (Cairo)?
7. What are your goals working to organize the Iraqis in (Cairo)?
8. What are the challenges or obstacles of working with Iraqi refugees?
9. Is it difficult to organize community activities with Iraqis in your community? Why?
10. Would you say that there is an Iraqi community in (Cairo) or are Iraqis living as separate individuals or families?
11. Do you think that Iraqis in (Cairo) trust each other? Why or why not?
12. Do Iraqis in (Cairo) mainly associate with other family members?
13. Do Iraqis in (Cairo) mainly associate with members of their same religious sect?
14. How often do Iraqis get together with other Iraqis that are not family members? How do they know them (did they know them in Iraq or meet in (Cairo)? For what purpose do they meet? (Recreation, discuss community issues, discuss politics) What types of things do they discuss?

Appendix C: Informed Consent

Hello, my name is Emilie Minnick. This research is being conducted as part of my MA thesis at the American University in Cairo. I am studying the social networks of Iraqi refugees in Cairo. Do you have any questions?

NO  YES —————→ ASK ABOUT AND ANSWER QUESTIONS

I would like to ask you to participate in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating. There are no direct benefits to you if you decide to participate. I nor the American University in Cairo are not able to offer any services as part of this study. I may ask you questions which may remind you of unpleasant experiences you and others in this community have had in the past. If you decide to take part, you may stop at any time. If you do not want to continue there is no penalty for withdrawing from the study. You also have the right not to answer any particular question. Do you understand?

  NO —————→ ASK ABOUT AND CLARIFY POINTS

Your participation in the study today will take about two hours. I will ask you questions in English and my translator will translate them into Arabic. I have several questions to help us guide our conversation, but you may talk about issues that you think are important for this discussion, and I encourage you to discuss issues of which I am not aware. Okay?

  NO —————→ ASK ABOUT AND CLARIFY POINTS

All information collected from you will be kept strictly confidential. Information shared as part of this discussion will only be shared with the three other researchers working on this project and the professor. No identifying information will ever be shared. No one will know the answers that you give me and your name will not be kept together with the answers that you provide. No information that could identify you will ever be released. The study will keep information in a secure and safe place with no access to it by anyone other than the study team members. An anonymous ID number will be attached to each participant. Do you have any questions?

NO  YES —————→ ANSWER QUESTIONS

If you have any other questions about this study, you may contact me at _____ or at my e-mail address _____.

I need to obtain your consent for this study. Do you voluntarily agree to participate?

YES  NO —————→ END

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. I would like to use this tape recorder [*show tape recorder*] in order to keep all of the information from this interview accurately. I will not record your name on the tape, only your ID number, and the tapes will be destroyed after use in this study. Do you agree to our using this tape recorder?

YES —————→ INTERVIEW WITH RECORDER NO —————→ TAKE NOTES ONLY

Date _____

Appendix D: Profile of Interview and Focus Group Participants

	Country of Residence	Sex of informant	Age	City of Origin in Iraq	Religion	Year of Arrival	Type of visa	Educational background	Marital Status	Number of children
Interview Informants	Egypt	Male	31-35	Baghdad	Muslim-Sunni	2006	Education visa through children	bachelor's technical diploma	Married	2
	Egypt	Male	26-30	Baghdad	Muslim-Shia	2005	No visa		Married	2
	Egypt	Male	51-55	Baghdad	Muslim	2006	Education visa through children	MA	Married	4
	Egypt	Female	36-40	Baghdad	Muslim-Shia	2007	Education visa through children	technical diploma	Married	3
	Egypt	Male	41-45	Baghdad	Muslim	2007	Education visa through children	technical diploma	Married	3
	Egypt	Male	31-35	Baghdad	Muslim	2006	Education visa through children	bachelor's	Married	3
	Egypt	Male	41-45	Mosul	Muslim-Sunni	2006	Education visa through children	Ph.D.	Married	5
	Egypt	Female	36-40	Baghdad	Christian	2006	Yellow card only	bachelor's	Married	0
	Egypt	Female	31-35	Baghdad	Christian	2006	Yellow card only	Adadiya (high school)	Never married	0
	Egypt	Male	46-50	Baghdad	Muslim	2006	Education visa through children	MA	Married	3
Focus Group Participants	Egypt	Male	26-30	Baghdad	Muslim-Sunni	2006	Education visa through children	bachelor's	Married	1
	Egypt	Female	46-50	Baghdad	Muslim-Sunni	2006	Yellow card only	bachelor's	Married	2
	Jordan	Male	56-60	Baghdad	Muslim	before 1996	Residency through employment	Ph.D.	Married	4

	Jordan	Female	21-25	Baghdad	Muslim	2005	Yellow card only	some university	Never married	0
	Jordan	Male	41-45	Baghdad	Muslim	2006	Tourist Visa	bachelor's	Married	5
	Jordan	Male	46-50	Baghdad	Muslim	2004	Yellow card only	Adadiya (high school)	Remarried	3
	Jordan	Female	41-45	Baghdad	Muslim	2001-2003	Yellow card only	bachelor's	Married	3
	Jordan	Female	61-65	Baghdad	Muslim	2006	Education visa through children	Adadiya (high school)	Widowed	5
	Jordan	Male	41-45	Baghdad	Muslim	2006	Tourist Visa	MA	Married	2
	Jordan	Male	41-45	Baghdad	Muslim-Sunni	2006	Investment visa	law degree	Married	4
	Jordan	Male	31-35	Baghdad	Christian	2001-2003	Tourist Visa	bachelor's	Never married	0
	Jordan	Male	41-45	Mosul	Muslim	2005	No visa	MA	Married	2
	Jordan	Male	36-40	Mosul	Muslim	1997-2000	No visa	some university	Married	3
	Jordan	Female	36-40	Baghdad	Muslim	2006	Tourist Visa	bachelor's	Married	2
	Egypt	Male	21-25	Basra	Muslim	unknown	Education through children	Bachelors	never married	0
Focus group participants	Egypt	Male	21-25	Baghdad	Muslim	2008	Education through children	Bachelors	never married	0
	Egypt	Male	21-25	Baghdad	Muslim	2007	Education through children	Part of Bachelors	married	0
	Egypt	Male	46-50	Baghdad	Muslim	2006	Yellow card only	MA	married	2
	Egypt	Male	41-45	Other	Muslim	2006	Yellow card only	Bachelors	married	3
	Egypt	Female	31-35	Baghdad	Muslim	unknown	Education through children	High School	divorced	5
	Egypt	Female	26-30	Baghdad	Muslim	2005	Yellow card only	Bachelors	never married	0
	Egypt	Female	46-50	Baghdad	Muslim	unknown	Own property	Technical diploma	never married	0
	Egypt	Female	51-55	Baghdad	Muslim	2005	Yellow card only	Technical diploma	married	3
	Jordan	Female	31-35	Basra	Muslim	2001-2003	Yellow card only	Technical diploma	married	2
	Jordan	Female	41-45	Basra	Muslim	2007	Yellow card only	Technical diploma	married	2

	Jordan	Female	41-45	Baghdad	Muslim	2005	Yellow card only	Elementary	married	1
	Jordan	Female	46-50	Baghdad	Muslim	2005	Yellow card only	High School	widow	7
	Jordan	Male	46-50	Baghdad	Muslim	2004	No visa/expired	High School	married	2
	Jordan	Male	46-50	Baghdad	Muslim	2004	Own property	High School	married	3
	Jordan	Male	51-55	Baghdad	Christian	2005	No visa/expired	MA	married	3
	Jordan	Male	41-45	Baghdad	Muslim	2001-2003	Yellow card only	Technical diploma	married	2
	Jordan	Male	51-55	Baghdad	Muslim	2001-2003	Yellow card only	Elementary	married	3
	Jordan	Female	36-40	Baghdad	Christian	2005	No visa/expired	High School	married	3
	Jordan	Female	51-55	Other	Muslim	2004	Yellow card only	Bachelors	Married	3
	Jordan	Female	46-50	Baghdad	Muslim	2004	No response	Technical diploma	Married	5
	Jordan	Female	31-35	Baghdad	Muslim	2005	Yellow card only	Bachelors	Never married	0
	Jordan	Female	41-45	Baghdad	Muslim	2006	Yellow card only	Bachelors	Married	3
	Jordan	Female	31-35	Baghdad	Muslim	2001-2003	Yellow card only	Bachelors	Married	3
	Jordan	Female	36-40	Baghdad	Muslim	2006	Yellow card only	Technical diploma	Married	2