

# War in Iraq: Environment of Insecurity and International Migration

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## ABSTRACT

This paper discusses possible relations between conflict and international migration, with specific reference to the most recent war in Iraq. Iraqi international migration trends are examined to ascertain the potential influence of war on migration. Conflict situations have been prevalent in Iraq for more than two decades, the roots of which can be traced back to 1979 when Saddam Hussein became the President of Iraq. Iraqi history, in the last quarter of a century, has been characterized by wars and post-war crises, which have subsequently triggered ethnic tensions. It is these ethnic tensions, I will argue, which facilitated international migration from Iraq. It is the overall instability associated with conflict which often leads to increasing tensions among different ethnic groups, such as Kurds, Turkmen, Shiites, and Sunnis. Ethnic conflict situations can result in a general environment of insecurity, which may serve as an “opportunity framework” for those already harbouring individual migration “plans”. It is western European countries which will be particularly influenced by these potential migration movements. During periods of conflict, Iraqis have established migration networks, and formed significantly sized immigrant communities in the West. It is these networks which will also serve as facilitating factors for the potential ethnic migration of some Iraqis.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, Iraqi politics and international relations have been highly influenced by wars and internal conflicts, in terms of international migration, as well as internal displacement. The Iraqi case must be considered within the larger context of the Middle East, considering first the 1948 War, which resulted in the displacement of 700,000 Palestinians (Russell, 1989: 27). The political turmoil, and the wars Iraq has subsequently endured, during the last two decades are a clear example of the relationship between conflicts and international migration. Discussing this relationship, with reference to future Iraqi migration, is insightful in terms of understanding international migration patterns in general, and the role, and impact of, conflicts in the Middle East.

As Russell indicated 12 years ago, international relations and international migration in the Middle East have not been the focus “in Western analyses of developments in the region”; indeed, Iraq was virtually never mentioned (Russell, 1992: 719-720). Iraq, like other countries in the Gulf, had been a country of immigration which for the most part attracted contract workers. It was following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991, however, that mass displacements of foreign workers took place (Russell, 1992: 721), and the Iraqi international migration regime significantly shifted from “immigration” to “emigration”. It is, in fact, estimated that more than two million migrants returned to their countries of origin after the 1991 Gulf War. In addition, a significant number of Iraqis also fled the country (as discussed later in this paper).

In this paper, I draw upon some secondary evidence to examine the changing patterns of Iraqi international migration, which has been responsive to international affairs in the region, and appears to be a growing issue of concern for “migrant receiving” Western countries. This paper, therefore, first introduces the concept of “environment of insecurity” (EOI), and its particular relevance to Iraq, with reference to the conflicts, clashes, and tensions of the last quarter of a century. There is then a review of Iraqi international migration trends between 1980 and 2003, which highlights the number of Iraqi immigrants and asylum seekers in “developed” countries. I conclude this paper with a discussion of the future of Iraqi international migration, with more specific reference to asylum seeker flows.

## CONCEPTUALIZING THE ENVIRONMENT OF INSECURITY

The primary relevance of the conflicts Iraq has been involved with, in terms of the issues addressed in this paper, is the ethnic tensions which have been trig-

gered by these conflicts, as ethnic tensions may, in turn, facilitate international migration (Sirkeci, 2003; Stansfield, 2004). The overall instability in Iraq may have also added to the tensions among different ethnic groups, such as Kurds, Turkmen, Shiites, and Sunnis. Ethnic conflict situations, along with socio-economic deprivation, can also contribute to a general EOI, which may serve as an opportunity framework for those who had existing migration “plans” (Sirkeci, 2003; Icduygu et al., 1999). During the period of wars, fleeing Iraqis may have established migration networks in conjunction with the formation of sizeable immigrant communities in Europe and North America. These networks (Massey et al., 1993) may, indeed, serve as facilitating (influential) factors for the potential ethnic emigration of some Iraqis. Therefore, it is probable that those countries with sizeable Iraqi communities will be targeted by further potential migrants from Iraq. This is due, in part, to the perceptions of potential migrants that their “co-ethnics” in the migration destination will be willing and able to assist them with the problems associated with immigration, such as housing, employment, and so on.

It is important to remember that the instability in Iraq is not only a result of the recent operations of the US-led “coalition forces”. The current Iraqi instability has its roots in, and increased during the decades of, Saddam Hussein’s brutal regime (HRW, 2003). It is also an outcome of long-term ethnic tensions in the country, centred around the issue that the Sunni Arabs (the minority) have run the government for the last half a century (Day and Freeman, 2003; Hurmuzlu, 2003). Ethnic tensions in Iraq resurfaced after the 2003 War, which created a temporary power vacuum, and subsequently triggered a power struggle among different ethnic groups. Any consensus among these groups (i.e. Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds, and Turkmen) seems remote, as is illustrated by the results of the 30 January 2005 election.

The “unofficial” results of this election indicate Shiites and Kurds won more seats than their population share, while Sunnis and Turkmen failed to have enough. Iraqi officials announced final election results which granted the main Shia party (the Shia United Iraqi Alliance) 140 out of 275 seats in the new parliament, Kurdish parties 75 seats, and interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi’s party 40 seats (BBC, 2005; CNN, 2005). To further clarify these results: the Kurds, comprising less than 20 per cent of the population, gained more than 27 per cent, the Shiites won the majority of seats, thereby leaving the boycotting Sunnis and Turkmen without adequate representation. In contexts where there is such a blatantly uneven distribution of political power, there will be, understandably, some groups who are left feeling unhappy and deprived. The reactions of members of these groups often involve making strategic decisions, including aligning with the dominant groups, refusing and opposing them, or

emigration (as explained in “strategic options” within EOI) (Icduygu et al., 1999). An EOI characterized by ethnic tensions may lead to the option of exit (migration) for some Iraqis in a post-war and post-election era, which has resulted in an uneven distribution of political power, along with societal instability. (This may, however, be less likely for individuals from those groups who had won power in the elections).

Contemporary international migration is better understood as a complicated human movement, involving different types of migrants, such as refugees, asylum seekers, family migrants, illegal migrants, migrant workers, and professionals. In most cases it is impossible to distinguish economic, political, or cultural reasons from each other, and that people often move with mixed, and overlapping, motivations has been highlighted in many cases studied (Faist, 2000; Castles, 2003, 2004). The concept of EOI also engages with mixed causes for international migration. EOI was first formulated to explain the Kurdish rivalry in Turkey by Icduygu and Sirkeci (Icduygu et al., 1999). Later, it was expanded to explain the interaction between the international migration of Turkish Kurds and the ethnic conflict (Sirkeci, 2003). Then the EOI paved the way to develop another tool for understanding international migration behaviour: “opportunity frameworks” of migration (Sirkeci, 2003). My development of this concept was rooted in the fact that people respond to ethnic conflicts, and that there are clearly examples of migration to escape from persecution, and the associated environment of insecurity which conflict brings.

Within this context of ethnic conflict, in my case study of Turkish Kurds and migration, I identified a particular type of migrant group which was distinguished from other migrants by two key characteristics. First, they were not directly involved in ethnic conflict, and second, they were already harbouring a migration plan which was unrelated to the ethnic conflict situation. They had, however, utilized the context of EOI to bring their migration plans to fruition. In considering this type of migrant it is useful to refer to Mancur Olson’s conception of “free riders” (Olson, 1965: 102-110). Sirkeci (2003: 244-255) found that the EOI in Turkey was triggered by the ethnic conflict and served as an opportunity framework for migration, which, in turn, assisted those individuals who had existing migration plans, along with the countless others, of course, who had fled Turkey due to the ethnic tensions and its repercussions.

EOI has two primary components. The first relates to the *material* environment of insecurity, which is characterized by poverty, deprivation, and armed conflict. The second refers to the *non-material* environment of insecurity, characterized by fear of persecution, discrimination, and practical constraints, such as language barriers (Sirkeci, 2003: 11). People exposed to the EOI have two options:

(1) status quo and (2) exit. The exit option may involve strategies of adopting the rival ethnic identity, defending it, joining the rebels, or leaving the conflict area. The status quo option primarily refers to those who remain in the region and adopt the dominant “ethnic” identity (e.g. Turkish), the dominant “civic” identity (e.g. Turkish citizenship), and/or align with the government forces (Sirkeci, 2003: 12; Icdyugu et al., 1999). There can also be mixed strategies.

In order to understand future Iraqi migration potential, the concept of opportunity frameworks is important because of its relevance to both the admission rules of receiving countries, and the conflict environment in the sending area. It is the wealthy countries of the North which are the primary targets of most migrants, and it is these countries which are increasingly tightening their admission regimes by virtually stopping all regular or legal migration (Bendel, 2005; Procter, 2005). Thus, potential migrants (of the South) are forced to employ clandestine means in order to challenge the increasing regulations to control migration (see Hammar et al., 1997 for South to North migration). The use of opportunity frameworks by Turkish Kurds, as afforded by ethnic conflicts, was a clear example of these types of challenges (Sirkeci, 2003). This use of opportunity frameworks may also prove to be an increasing dynamic among Iraqis, particularly among, for example, Turkmen or Sunnis in a political context in which Shiites and Kurds dominate the country.

The importance of the concept of EOI comes from its emphasis on the (ethnic) conflict situations as “opportunity frameworks”. While EOI may seem to over-generalize, the emphasis on opportunity frameworks may enhance the recent debates on irregular and/or illegal migration raised in other studies (e.g. Richards, 2004; Koser, 2000; Salt, 2000; Skeldon, 2000). EOI, which can be formulated as a set of combined push factors, may improve the chances of migration for those individuals already harbouring migration plans and who are from conflict areas, but live in surrounding, relatively secure areas. This is clearly related to issues concerning the admission policies of receiving countries – with the tightening of admission regimes in receiving countries, migration opportunities through legal or regular channels decrease, as do the hopes for migration abroad through legal routes. It is in such contexts in which EOI appears as an opportunity framework which is utilized by potential migrants, but not necessarily by those at greatest danger. For example, in the Turkish case, many Turks as well as Turkish Kurds claimed asylum in Germany, despite coming from relatively secure areas of Turkey (mainly from the periphery of the major areas of conflict) (Sirkeci, 2003).

In the Iraqi case, opportunity frameworks due to ethnic conflict can be identified for some ethnic groups. In post-war Iraq, as long as there is no function-

ing representative democracy, tensions between ethnic communities are likely to occur (Wilson, 2003; Aljazeera News Network, 2004; BBC, 2004), and there is the likelihood that some ethnic groups will suffer from discrimination by ruling or dominant ethnic groups (currently Shia and Kurds). Within this type of political climate, deprived ethnic populations may turn to emigration. In fact, even the possibility of such a conflict may prove sufficient reason to flee and seek refuge in other countries. This is because Iraqis have already witnessed “ethnic cleansing”, as Saddam Hussein attacked Kurds in Halapja on 16 March 1988 and again in March 1991. This highlights a key characteristic of the opportunity framework – that actual conflict is not necessary, as even the perception the possibility of impending conflict may trigger out-migration flows, in the form of refugee and asylum seeker flows, and other ways (including “clandestine migration”).

### DEFINING EOI IN IRAQ

The chaotic post-war environment in Iraq and the existing tensions among different ethnic groups are the central components of an Iraqi EOI. It is not, however, an entirely new phenomenon in Iraq. It has persisted for at least half a century, rooted in the Arabization policies of Iraqi governments (Batatu, 1978; IGC, 2003; Kerkuklu, 2004). This period commenced with the war between Iraq and Iran (1980-1988), and continued with the invasion of Kuwait in 1991 and the subsequent Gulf War. The United Nations’ sanctions and embargo followed in August 1990 (Alnasrawi, 2001). The war in 2003 was, therefore, merely the last phase of wars in (and on) Iraq, as Iraq had been bombarded almost daily since 1990 (*Guardian*, 2004). These “bombardments” refer to the Shiite uprising in 1991, Saddam’s bombings of Northern Kurdish towns in 1991, and long-lived clashes between two Kurdish parties (Kurdistan Patriotic Union and Kurdistan Democratic Party) in the North. These specific conflict situations, combined with widespread poverty, the uneven distribution of wealth, and the ongoing human rights abuses in the country, were the contributing components to the Iraqi EOI, particularly during the last two decades (HRW, 2003).

In the wake of the attacks in 2003, some optimists predicted a reconstruction which would be completed within the following decade (Day and Freeman, 2003: 309). In reality, since the invasion, killings and bombing incidents are daily occurrences in Iraq. This illustrates the fact that *fighting the war* was far easier than *fighting the peace*. This has been proven in the cases of Haiti, the Balkans, and Afghanistan (where the United States executed similar operations) (Barton and Crocker, 2003). The past record of the US’s unilateral, and I would argue, unjustified, operations indicates that administrations built in such a unilateral way have not been successful, and that multilateral solutions take longer to

achieve (Pei, 2003: 53). Withdrawal of foreign troops and the establishment of functioning Iraqi police forces and institutions are huge issues which seem likely to be solved in the long run. This clearly illustrates that “rapid reconstruction” is a myth. The process of reconstruction may result in long-term instability, and encourage people to migrate into more stable countries in and out of the Middle East.

In Iraq, the population is composed of ethnic and religious groups with conflicting interests: Arabs (75-80%); Kurds (15-20%); and Turkmen, Assyrians, and others (5-8%). In addition, these groups are divided into religious camps of Shiites (60-65%), Sunnis (32-37%), and Christians and others (3%) (CIA, 2003).

Despite the very limited resources of data, there are some data pertaining to the Iraqi population. The population of Iraq increased from 12.9 million in 1980, to 17.3 million in 1990, and to 24.7 million in 2003, which indicates a population growth rate of about 3 per cent (UN, 2001, 2002; CIA, 2003). This is very high in comparison with European and North American populations, as the statistics reveal the population growth rate in Iraq was 2.78 between 1995 and 2000, whereas it was 0.02 for Europe, 1.07 for North America, and 1.35 globally. A striking contrast revealed within the existing data is that 42 per cent of the entire Iraqi population is younger than age 14, as compared to 21.5 per cent in North America, and 17.5 per cent in Europe (UN, 2001, 2002). In the period between 1995 and 2000 in Iraq, the infant mortality rate was 94.9 per cent per thousand, and the total fertility rate was 5 per cent, whereas the corresponding figures for Europe were 9.7 per cent and 1.4 per cent, and for North America were 7.1 per cent and 2 per cent (UN, 2000, 2001).

In economic terms, Iraq, whose revenues are largely dependent on oil income (95%) was devastated by the huge costs of the war with Iran. This war was followed by international economic sanctions, and the costs of consecutive clashes. Thus, Iraq has emerged as a country in need of humanitarian aid, despite it being an oil-rich country three decades ago. Nationwide human rights violations have continued, indeed increased, despite the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime, which has further exacerbated the political insecurity in the country (HRW, 2003; Dodge and Simon, 2003).

### IRAQI INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION, 1980-2003

Waxman (2001) states there are no, or at least negligible, numbers of studies on Iraqi migration. As a sending country, however, Iraq cannot be neglected, as there are examples of large out migrations (for example, 500,000 Iraqis, mostly Kurds, seeking refuge in Turkey at the beginning of the 1990s) (Hobsbawn,

1994: 51; Hooglund, 1991: 7). A few studies have referred to Iraqi migration by providing one or two sentences, but more often than not they focused on the Kurdish case in particular, rather than Iraqi migration in general (e.g. McDowall, 1996; Nezan, 1996; Griffin, 1999; White, 2000).

Industrialized countries have witnessed a sharp increase in the number of Iraqi immigrants following the 1991 Gulf War (Table 1), along with regional displacement within the Gulf region (Hooglund, 1991; Russell, 1992). One possible explanation for this is the increase in the number of asylum applications due to the war and Arabization policies (Taylor, 2004) in Iraq. Annual numbers of Iraqi immigrants arriving in European countries increased from 8,140 in 1990 to 52,500 in 2001, illustrating a 550 per cent rise. Most of these immigrants were refugees and asylum seekers. In 2001, UNHCR reported that 530,000 of 12 million refugees in the world were from Iraq. The number of Iraqi refugees was 1,343,800 in 1992, steadily decreasing to about 700,000 in the mid-1990s, further decreasing to 500,000 in the 2000s.

Table 2 displays the number of Iraqi asylum seekers in developed countries during the period from 1980 to 2002, and clearly shows that the rises in conflict [or increasing environment of insecurity] resulted in sharp increases in asylum seeker flows. Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Denmark, and the Netherlands are the most popular destinations for Iraqi asylum seekers. The shifts in destination countries shown in Table 3 can be better understood by considering two facts: Turkey (and Greece in early periods) attracted Iraqis because of *geographical* proximity, but also due to *cultural* proximity characterized by the migration of tens of thousands of Iraqi Turkmen to Turkey during the last two decades (Sirkeci, 2005).

It can also be argued that Turkey was the easiest destination to access (i.e. long permeable borders), and the closest (i.e. geographical proximity) to reach, for those Iraqis fleeing their country in the period immediately following the Gulf War, and thus Turkey became the most popular destination between 1991 and 1995 for Iraqi migrants. In the later period, however, Iraqis preferred, and indeed managed to, migrate to other popular destinations. EOI as an opportunity framework provides a useful tool for explaining how certain Iraqis may have fled to these countries for reasons other than the conflict, chaos, and terror.

There are no figures, as yet, on Iraqi out-migration in the period following the most recent war, but the existing data indicate increases in the volume of migration during the previous post-war period, which supports the EOI argument. Thus, when there is a conflict situation, and political and economic instability in the country, more out-migration flows can be expected.

TABLE 1  
IRAQI IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS IN SOME INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES, 1990-2001

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Australia	191	1,407	1,539	1,092	2,539	2,617	1,966	1,793	1,510	1,673		
Canada	262	270	371	192	240	324	303	272	271	363	282	398
France*	108	174	237	179	202	236	279	217	331	245	262	296
Germany	707	1,384	1,484	1,246	2,066	6,941	10,934	14,189	7,435	8,662	11,601	17,167
Italy*	13	89	26	31	22	181	151	336	3,362	1,838	6,082	1,985
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	-	2,990	4,673	6,130	7,372	3,346	4,445	3,119
Norway	90	131	111	137	126	99	113	272	1,296	4,073	766	1,056
Sweden	3,928	4,589	6,964	6,808	5,087	5,007	4,429	7,136	9,379	9,212	10,180	12,869
UK	985	1,495	1,240	1,105	1,120	1,470	1,580	2,690	2,945	4,010	10,190	8,345
US	1,856	1,832	4,268	4,245	6,170	5,713	5,903	5,572	2,398	3,520	5,464	5,569
Total	8,140	11,371	16,240	15,035	17,572	25,578	30,331	38,607	36,299	36,942	49,272	50,804

Note: \*Only refugees.

Source: MPI, 2003.

TABLE 2  
IRAQI ASYLUM SEEKERS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, 1980-2002

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1980	1,590	1986	2,280	1991	18,510	1997	43,190
1981	2,530	1987	3,730	1992	17,660	1998	45,510
1982	2,380	1988	4,800	1993	15,200	1999	36,560
1983	1,290	1989	5,760	1994	12,940	2000	47,190
1984	2,490	1990	8,550	1995	18,670	2001	50,660
1985	2,270			1996	27,140	2002	51,890
Total (1980-1989):		29,110		Total (1990-2002)		393,670	

Source: UNHCR, 2003; UN, 2002.

TABLE 3  
TOP FIVE RECEIVING COUNTRIES OF IRAQI ASYLUM SEEKERS,  
1980-2002

Destination	1980-1990	Destination	1991-1995	Destination	1996-2002
Sweden	9,799	Turkey	22,370	Germany	80,230
Greece	6,762	Germany	13,121	UK	34,255
Germany	4,646	Sweden	11,126	Netherlands	31,144
Turkey	4,561	Netherlands	9,972	Sweden	27,184
UK	3,111	Denmark	5,236	Turkey	16,563
Total	37,606		82,977		298,135

Source: MPI, 2003; UNHCR, 2003

Iraq has suffered heavily from the three major clashes (i.e. war with Iran, the 1991 Gulf War, and the 2003 war), and continuous attacks, which have shattered the country's economic, socio-political and cultural life since 1979. As Table 4 displays, increasing numbers of Iraqi asylum applications were filed in some industrialized countries in the 1990s, particularly after the Gulf War. It is important to note that only about 25,000 Iraqis applied for asylum in the 1980s, but this figure increased to more than 200,000 in the 1990s. This increase is clearly linked to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Gulf War, and Saddam Hussein's attacks on the Kurds and Shiites (Russell, 1992). The embargo which followed

the Gulf crisis, and the increasing tensions between the US Government and Iraq, has resulted in the total destruction of Iraq in 2003. However, in between there was a period (1998-2001), which was characterized by increasing US and British military deployment in the Gulf, as well as the Iraqi refusal of weapon inspectors' to enter the presidential palaces. During this period, the United States and Britain bombed Iraq almost daily, commencing with Operation "Desert Fox", and its four days of bombing in December 1998 (*Guardian*, 2004).

These attacks, which increased the insecurity within the country, need to be considered as facilitating forces of emigration from Iraq. The total number of asylum applications by Iraqis between 2000 and 2002 reached 146,000 which is ten times more than the total figure for ten years of the 1980s (Table 4).

## THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION FROM IRAQ

EOI in Iraq, as discussed earlier, is likely to remain as a result of the persisting ethnic tensions, political instability, and socio-economic deprivation. Following the most recent elections (30 January 2005), it appears likely that Iraq will experience more ethnic tensions, as the election results were less than satisfactory for those other than Kurds and Shiites (CNN, 2005; BBC, 2005). In particular, Sunnis and Turkmen were clearly underrepresented. While debates continue about when, and how, the coalition forces should be withdrawn, street violence remains, and appears certain to increase the insecurity, and death toll, in Iraq. The shattered economy of Iraq is yet another contributing factor to the EOI, which, in turn, may facilitate further out-migration.

It seems certain that established networks of migration (e.g. earlier migrants, friends, and family), and economic pull factors (e.g. wage differentials, job opportunities) are potential factors in persuading Iraqis to follow in the footsteps of their fellow citizens who have migrated to the popular destinations, such as western European countries. Given the current trend of "Fortress Europe" (Bendel, 2005) to limit and control flows of immigration by tightening admission regimes, those potential Iraqi migrants will be left with very few choices. The literature reveals a variety of clandestine ways including visa-overstaying, illegal entry, fraudulent asylum seeking, and so on. With EOI, formulated as a set of combined push factors and as an opportunity framework, remaining pervasive in Iraq, there would appear an increasing pressure on individuals, from those EOI's, to migrate. This is a pressure on those individuals from disadvantaged minority ethnic groups in particular. Taylor names Turkmen, Yazidi, Sabia, and Marsh Arabs as few of those minorities in Iraq (2004: 8).

TABLE 4  
IRAQI ASYLUM APPLICATIONS BY DESTINATION COUNTRIES, 1980-2002

	1980-1989	%	1990-1999	%	2000	%	2001	%	2002	%
Austria	530	2.1	11,250	5.5	2,361	5.5	2,115	4.5	4,570	10.0
Belgium	90	0.4	1,510	0.7	569	1.3	368	0.8	461	1.0
Denmark	2,000	7.9	10,690	5.2	2,458	5.7	2,689	5.8	1,032	2.3
Finland	20	0.1	850	0.4	62	0.1	103	0.2	107	0.2
France	560	2.2	2,210	1.1	254	0.6	295	0.6	242	0.5
Germany	3,940	15.6	55,050	26.8	11,721	27.2	17,357	37.2	10,367	22.6
Greece	4,650	18.4	13,700	6.7	1,334	3.1	1,972	4.2	2,567	5.6
Italy	750	3.0	6,050	2.9	6,082	14.1	1,985	4.3	1,170	2.6
Netherlands	670	2.7	36,430	17.8	2,773	6.4	1,329	2.9	1,022	2.2
Norway	560	2.2	6,450	3.1	766	1.8	1,056	2.3	1,624	3.5
Portugal	10	0.0	10	0.0	*	0.0	*	0.0	*	0.0
Spain	600	2.4	2,220	1.1	118	0.3	64	0.1	82	0.2
Sweden	7,840	31.0	25,200	12.3	3,499	8.1	6,206	13.3	5,447	11.9
Switzerland	400	1.6	5,530	2.7	918	2.1	1,228	2.6	1,191	2.6
UK	2,130	8.4	9,710	4.7	7,080	16.4	6,710	14.4	14,945	32.6
Australia	531	2.1	11,350	5.5	2,361	5.5	2,118	4.5	175	0.4
Canada	*	0.0	2,868	1.4	303	0.7	406	0.9	235	0.5
USA	*	0.0	4,116	2.0	398	0.9	622	1.3	537	1.2
Europe	24,750**	97.9	186,860**	96.6	42,244**	98.1	45,595**	97.8	45,002**	98.3
Total	25,281**	100	205,194**	100	43,057**	100	46,623**	100	45,774**	100

Notes: \*Data not available; \*\*partial figures.

Source: UNHCR, 1999, 2003; MPI, 2003.

This is also a pressure on those individuals who had existing migration projects in mind, despite their not experiencing the same level of suffering, and who we may, therefore, refer to as “utilizers”. EOI as an opportunity framework for migration opens new avenues of migration for the utilizers, those with a “migration tendency”, and who are capable of emigration. EOI also facilitates those more able sufferers to move abroad (or to opt the “exit strategy”), often as refugees and asylum seekers. To clarify this distinction, there are those refugees and asylum seekers who frequently appear in and around the times of intense conflict, often from the core conflict area, and target the nearest “safe haven”. There are then the opportunity framework “utilizers”, who move to more favourable destinations, and usually originate from the periphery of the core conflict areas. In the Iraqi case, for example, about 90 per cent of asylum seekers migrated to developed countries in the West (e.g. Germany, UK, Sweden) while only 10 per cent ended up in Turkey, a neighbouring “safe country”. In response to the adverse socio-economic circumstances and unsettled ethnic tensions contributing to the EOI in post-war Iraq, some Iraqis seeking security are likely to target countries with sizeable existent Iraqi immigrant communities, and utilize migration networks.

The international migration regime of Europe requires further discussion, in terms of how it is responsive to the conflicts in its peripheral areas. For example, during the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of ethnic Bosnians, Kosovans, and Kurds immigrated into Germany and other western European countries. To reiterate, more conflict in the periphery means more immigration into western Europe. Most Iraqis also applied for asylum in these very same western European destination countries during the 1980s and 1990s, while less popular countries like Turkey functioned as transit (IOM, 1995, 2003). Therefore, it is evident that European countries need to reconsider their immigration policies in light of the potential effects of ethnic tensions in the periphery countries (of which Iraq is an example).

In this paper I have highlighted how existing and potential ethnic conflicts within Iraq are also factors in facilitating international migration, and argued that more international efforts need to be put into new immigration policies (Bendel, 2005). Revising immigration policies is clearly difficult, often deemed “mission impossible”. These difficulties are associated with two major aspects: (1) too many international, national, and individual actors are involved; therefore, regulations at the national level are incapable of handling it, and (2) the root causes of international migration are extremely difficult to remove. As Castles has explained, there are three kinds of reasons for policy failure: (1) effect of social dynamics of the process of migration, (2) effect of globalization and the North-South divide, and (3) different agendas of political systems (Castles, 2003, 2004:

205). Yet, the complexity of international migration, particularly in relation to conflict situations needs to, and I believe can, be more effectively addressed.

EOI as a conceptual tool to study international migration, in relation to ethnic conflicts, represents a novel approach. It may further the understanding of international migration in today's global context of ethnic conflicts. The international migration of Iraqis is an understudied field, which warrants greater attention from researchers and scholars. Iraqi international migration, however, should be studied as a function of ethnic conflict, international affairs, and socio-economic underdevelopment.

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## LA GUERRE EN IRAK : CONTEXTE D'INSÉCURITÉ ET MIGRATION INTERNATIONALE

Cet article porte sur les éventuels rapports entre conflit et migration internationale, tout particulièrement dans le contexte de la plus récente guerre en Irak. Les tendances de la migration internationale irakienne sont analysées afin d'établir une éventuelle influence de la guerre sur la migration. Les situations de conflit sont répandues en Irak depuis plus de deux décennies, les racines de ces conflits remontant à 1979, année où Saddam Hussein est devenu le président de ce pays. Pendant le dernier quart de siècle, l'histoire irakienne a été marquée par des guerres et des crises d'après-guerre qui ont déclenché des tensions entre ethnies. D'après nous, ce sont ces tensions ethniques qui ont contribué à la migration internationale à partir de l'Irak. C'est l'instabilité générale associée aux conflits qui engendre souvent des tensions plus vives entre différents groupes ethniques, à savoir les Kurdes, les Turkmènes, les chiïtes et les sunnites. Les situations de conflit ethnique peuvent mener à un contexte général d'insécurité, lequel sera une « occasion » pour les personnes qui ont déjà des « projets » individuels de migration. Les pays d'Europe occidentale seront particulièrement concernés par ces mouvements migratoires potentiels. Pendant les périodes de conflit, les Irakiens ont établi des réseaux de migration et formé en Occident des communautés d'immigrants assez vastes. Ces réseaux serviront également de facteurs facilitants pour la migration ethnique potentielle de certains Irakiens.

## LA GUERRA EN IRAQ: UN ENTORNO DE INSEGURIDAD Y MIGRACIÓN INTERNACIONAL

En este artículo se examinan las posibles relaciones entre los conflictos y migración internacional, aludiendo concretamente a la reciente guerra en Iraq. También se examinan las tendencias migratorias internacionales de los iraquíes a fin de determinar si la guerra incide en la migración. Las situaciones de conflicto han prevalecido durante más de dos décadas en Iraq y datan de 1979 cuando Saddam Hussein asumió la presidencia de ese país. La historia iraquí de los últimos 25 años se ha caracterizado por guerras y crisis consecutivas a dichas guerras, que han dado lugar a tensiones étnicas. Y son esas tensiones étnicas las que, en nuestra opinión, fomentaron las emigraciones desde Iraq. La inestabilidad global, junto con los conflictos, acrecientan las tensiones entre los distintos grupos étnicos, por ejemplo kurdos, turkmenos, chiítas y suníes. Las situaciones de conflicto suelen suscitar un clima de inseguridad que sirve de pretexto para quienes estaban contemplando la posibilidad de emigrar individualmente.

Los países de Europa occidental serán los más afectados por este tipo de emigración. Durante los periodos de conflicto, los iraquíes establecieron redes migratorias y conformaron importantes comunidades de expatriados en el Occidente. Son esas mismas redes las que servirán a la hora de alentar la emigración étnica de ciertos iraquíes.