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A Narrative Study Of Chaldean Refugees And The Myth Of Return: From Chaldean Babylon To The New World

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A NARRATIVE STUDY OF CHALDEAN REFUGEES AND THE MYTH OF RETURN: FROM CHALDEAN BABYLON TO THE NEW WORLD

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the loving memory of my mentor, Mary Cay Sengstock (1936-2014), who encouraged me to pursue this research. Her scholarship on the Chaldean community served as a tremendous inspiration, and her book, *Chaldean Americans: Changing Conceptions of Ethnic Identity*, provided me with a foundational understanding of Chaldean American culture. She was the first person I talked to in the department of Sociology at Wayne State, and she was the one who connected me with my excellent advisor, Dr. Khari Brown. My very first graduate level class as an official student at Wayne State was taught by her, and my first teaching experience occurred under her guidance while serving as a volunteer teacher assistant in one of her classes. It was through her course on applied sociology, as well as her Pro-seminar course, that my understanding of the discipline was greatly expanded. I will always be grateful for her encouragement, her passion for assisting hurting people through a sociological understanding, and for serving as a great role model and scholar. Thank you Dr. Sengstock!

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time there lived a king whose kingdom was among the greatest on earth. Unlike fairy tales, this was not an imaginary king; his name was Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar. King Nabopolassar and his subjects were the Chaldeans, the indigenous people of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, considered by some scholars to be the most powerful kingdom in the ancient world, as science, mathematics, and astronomy flourished during this time (Lendering 2004; Munier 2004:13-14). This Babylonian kingdom occupied the territory known in modern times as Iraq. The Chaldean people are still in Iraq today, but they no longer possess dominant group status, in fact they are at present experiencing, according to the U.S. State Department, a genocide which threatens to eradicate Chaldean civilization and Culture in the region. Secretary of State, John Kerry, acknowledged in March of 2016 that this is a genocide that is leveled against religious minority groups including Yazidis, Christians, including Chaldeans, as well as other minority ethnic and religious groups within Iraq and Syria.

Historically, the Chaldean position of dominance came to an abrupt end in 535 BC. at the hands of the Persian King, Cyrus the Great, and then latter waves of Arab Muslim invaders, around 633 AD., further contributed to their decline. These trends continued with the absorption of Iraq into the Ottoman Empire, which lasted until after World War I when Iraq became a British colony. British rule lasted only until the Kingdom of Iraq was established in 1933, followed by the establishment of a republic in 1958.

By the time the Ba'ath party was established in 1947 Chaldeans had long been accustomed to living as minorities within their homeland. According to the U.S.

Department of State's 1999 estimate, published in their "refworld" website, Muslims accounted for over 95 percent of the population, while Syrian and Chaldean Christians, combined with Yazidis, and Jews made up less than 5 percent (Resource Information Center 2000). Even though Chaldeans were accustomed to living as minorities, Under Saddam, while life was far from perfect, there was according to all of the research subjects in this study a certain level of stability and ironically even a measure of "freedom" that was established through his dictatorial rule which managed to maintain control through the use of coercion. News sources including an article in Business Insider also point out the loss of stability and freedom following Saddam's removal, but this article, like many other news sources, have also discussed the highly publicized fact that Saddam was rather brutal to the Kurds and the Shia, so perhaps not everyone would agree life was better under Saddam than it is now (Wael Al-Sallami 2014).

Following the United States' invasion and the subsequent collapse of the Saddam regime in 2003, Iraq became a very different place from what it was before the invasion, and the stability that had existed in Iraq during much of Saddam's time began to unravel with the emergence of tribalism, sectarianism, as well as power vacuums that arose as each faction sought to gain control (Sassoon 2011:2). This instability was only exacerbated with the removal of United States troops from Iraq in 2011, which had a negative impact on all Iraqis, but especially for minorities. The instability and unrest that has ensued in Iraq has brought about horrific atrocities and acts of violence including torture and death.

In addition to the loss of life, there was also the loss of property, careers, freedom, culture, and a sense of security. Unfortunately, numerous Chaldean refugees were forced

to experience many of these atrocities first hand while living in the turmoil that had gripped their homeland since the toppling of the Saddam regime, which many analysists, including Noam Chomsky, argue was for the purpose of ensuring the United States and its allies' interests (Goodman 2015).

As a result of the above developments, the Sunnis, who had been accustomed to holding political power, have been unable to accept a government dominated by Shias, and Shias, including Iraq's former Prime Minister, Nuri Al-Maliki have been rather brutal in their opposition to Sunnis. In a PBS Frontline news article, several Sunnis complained about Al-Maliki's mass arrests of thousands of innocent Sunnis who were not given trials. The article credits the mistreatment of Sunnis as a contributing factor toward the rise of ISIS, as the response for many Sunnis to the loss of power and harsh treatment experienced at the hands of the Shia majority has been to join forces with militant groups such as Al-Qaeda, or ISIS, both radical Sunni groups intent on establishing an Islamic state based on their own versions of Islam (Boghani 2014).

Another contributing factor towards the buildup of these radical groups, according to many of the Chaldean refugees who participated in my research, was the decision by the United States to break up the Iraqi military, causing many to lose their jobs. Since these individuals were trained in military combat, and since they were now unemployed, joining forces with other militant groups, like Al Qaeda and ISIS, seemed like the natural option available to them.

Because of the chaos that has ensued, many Sunnis in Shia dominated areas have been displaced due to threats on their lives, and likewise, Shia in Sunni dominated areas have

also been displaced because of the threats on their lives as well. With this reality, it is not surprising that religious minorities everywhere, including Chaldeans, have also had to flee or run the risk of being killed. Considering the severity of the religious persecution and threats experienced by Chaldeans in Iraq it is surprising that little scholarly attention has been given to the Chaldean refugees flooding into the Detroit metropolitan area. This is also surprising when considering that Detroit has received the bulk of these refugees who have joined the largest Chaldean community outside of the Middle East. The Chaldean Community Foundation estimates there are around 121,000 Chaldeans in the Detroit area and around 200,000 Chaldeans and Assyrians throughout the United States.

According to the U.S Department of State, the U.S received 131,153 Iraqi refugees between 2007 and May 31st 2016, during this same period, Michigan alone has received 19, 490 Iraqi refugees, with the Detroit area receiving the bulk of these new residents. Of the 19,490 Iraqi refugees, it is difficult to determine how many are Chaldeans as the U.S. State Department does not distinguish between Chaldeans and other Iraqi ethnic groups. While the exact numbers of Chaldean refugees is not known, the Chaldean community, including groups that work with refugees such as the Chaldean Community Foundation and the Chaldean American Ladies of Charity, are aware of the influx of Chaldean refugees flooding into the area due to an increase in the need for their services.

Problem Statement

This study seeks to fill in this gap in the literature by employing an in-depth interview study that considers the influences involved in the decision to flee Iraq, (the push factors) as well as the decision to seek refuge in the Detroit metropolitan area (the pull factors).

Conversely, it will also consider the push/pull factors involved in the potential decision to either stay in the Detroit area, or to return to the homeland. Part of assessing the push/pull factors involves a focus on changes experienced by Chaldean refugees before relocation as well as after and to consider how these changes affect the presence or absence of what is called, "the myth of return."

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective that has guided this study is, "the myth of return," which posits that refugees, especially if they were a part of the dominant group in the homeland, will tend to hold onto the idea of eventually returning to their place of origin, even if in all practical reality they probably never will. The original source of this theory is unknown, but the earliest published source comes from Badr Dahya in 1973. Since this earliest publication, the theory has been refined to include other dynamics, including the idea that refugees from dominant groups are more likely to be loyal to the home country, and tend to view their relocation as a temporary fix that will last only until conditions in the homeland are secure again (pull factors), or until they can secure enough resources, while in exile, to return (Al-Rasheed 1994:200).

However, while they believe that they will return someday, what they really desire, is not so much the experience of "returning," but to experience "home" which tends to be idealized or mythologized in a way that does not actually represent the true place that they consider home (Zetter 1999:4). As long as these refugees hold onto the myth, they will tend to see their relocation as temporary rather than a permanent solution to the crises which they experienced in their homeland. For these refugees, to reject the myth of

return is the equivalent to rejecting the homeland and or the immigrant community within the host country (Dahya 1973:268).

Since these refugees are adamant they will one day return, "home" they tend to resist becoming too attached to the host country and will tend to resist becoming involved in social institutions in which they are not required to interact (Anwar 1979:222). For these refugees, it seems pointless to establish roots and to assimilate, since they do not plan to stay anyways. Therefore, refugees who cling firmly to the myth of return are less likely to assimilate than those who do not cling to it, or to those who only slightly cling to it (Al-Rasheed 1994:212-13).

The presence or absence of the myth of return is also influenced by the relationship of the immigrants to the host society. If there is a friendly relationship, then the presence of the myth is reduced, but if the relationship is strained (increasing push factors) then the likelihood of its presence is increased. In this later scenario, holding on to the myth of return is a way for the immigrant group to reject the host society, which they feel has rejected them. With this in mind, this research has considered the relationship that Chaldeans have with the non-Chaldean population in The Detroit Metropolitan area. If the relationship is good, then the myth of return is less likely to be present, but if the relationship is strained (leading to push factors), then the likelihood of the myth will be heightened. In addition, this research has also considered the relationship between Chaldean refugees and their homeland, including their persecuted minority status and its effect on the likelihood of the myth of return among Chaldean refugees in the Detroit area.

Research Question

Does the myth of return apply to Chaldean refugees in the Detroit Metropolitan area? Considering the fact that they were persecuted religious minorities in the homeland it would seem, according to what the literature suggests, the myth would not apply. However, the Chaldeans present an intriguing case, due to their being among the indigenous people of Iraq, and due to their deep historic and cultural ties to their homeland. Also, when considering that many Chaldeans left loved ones behind, and that some of the clergy in Iraq are urging Chaldeans not to leave in order to preserve Chaldean culture and a Christian presence in the Middle East, it is conceivable that the myth of return could be present within the refugee population in the Detroit Metropolitan area.

As long as the Chaldean population in Iraq continues to experience atrocities such as, hangings, beheadings, arson fires on their homes and churches, the issuing of heavy fines of around $750 U.S. for each person that does not convert to radical forms of Islam, (Phillips 2014) as well as ransoms as much as $15,000 to $20,000 U.S. (according to some of the interviewees) to free abducted people, the myth of return is probably not going to be significant among Chaldean refugees in the Detroit area in the foreseeable future. However, if the relationship between Chaldeans and non-Chaldeans in the Detroit area is strained, then theoretically, there is the potential for the presence of the myth of return in the years to come. This research looks at whether or not the myth of return is prevalent, at this current time, among the participants involved in the study.

Substantive Importance

The potential benefits of this proposed research are substantial since the data generated sheds some light on whether or not the Chaldean refugee research subjects plan to stay in the Detroit Metropolitan area, or whether they entertain the idea of returning to their homeland; and this information may be useful to Chaldean leaders in their efforts to secure solidarity in their differing views on how to address the crises experienced by Chaldean victims still living in Iraq.

Some Chaldean Leaders like, Mark Arabo, a Chaldean American activist, are pushing for the U.S. government not to limit the number of refugees that are allowed to enter the country; but other Chaldeans, like some clergy back in Iraq, as well as immigration lawyer, Robert DeKelaita, argue that Christians should not be eradicated in Iraq, and that there should be an effort to preserve Chaldean culture in the Middle East.

Given these differing opinions on the best future for the Chaldean community both in the Detroit area as well as in other parts of the world, including Iraq, the data produced may be of use to community leaders in assessing how the refugees themselves feel about staying or returning. Roger Zetter, a refugee scholar, argues that studies of this nature can be useful in the establishment of programs and policies aimed to assist refugees (1999:2).

This research is also significant in that it can be useful to political leaders in some of the advanced nations, like the U.S., that are most likely to engage in militaristic campaigns around the world in efforts to ensure their national and international interests. Specifically, the narratives showcased in this research can provide political leaders a

glimpse into the effects that war can have on civilian individuals and their families and particularly on minority groups.

More importantly, this research is worthwhile because it will provide an outlet to those who have been the targets of unimaginable atrocities. Their stories need to be heard so that the international community does not simply ignore their plight. This study will serve as just one, of hopefully many sources, that seeks to shed some light on the experiences of these Chaldean Iraqi victims.

Structural layout of this research

This first chapter serves as an introduction to this study and attempts to contextualize the nature of this research. Chapter two involves a review of the literature that specifically pertains to the research question involving the myth of return. Chapter three highlights the methodological design of this study and addresses issues pertaining to methodology. Chapter four involves findings related to push/pull factors that are involved in the decision to leave Iraq, as well as the potential decision to return. Chapter five, on the other hand, addresses push/pull factors related to the decision to relocate to the Detroit area, as well as to the potential decision to leave and to perhaps return to the homeland. Chapter six, serves as a conclusion, and involves a discussion pertaining to the myth of return and its impact on the Chaldean refugees in this study.

Conclusion

The discussion thus far has provided the context from which this study centers. While the myth of return has been useful in studies involving other immigrant and refugee populations around the world, the theory has not been utilized to further our

understanding of the Chaldean refugee population in the Detroit Metropolitan area. I have articulated how the use of this theoretical perspective can further our understanding regarding whether or not Chaldean refugees in the Detroit area are satisfied with their new location, or whether or not they plan to leave the Detroit area, and to perhaps return to the homeland.

In attempting to assess the presence or absence of the myth of return, it was necessary for me to ask questions about their experiences in Iraq, as well as to ask about changes that they experienced before their long journey to the Detroit area. By asking these types of questions, an opportunity was established for the research subjects to share their heartbreaking stories, and to serve as just one, of hopefully many outlets for outsiders to hear about the tragedies that are happening to this population, the indigenous people of Iraq.

I also discussed how data generated by this study will likely be useful to community leaders within the Chaldean population, as well as to other organizations or groups that serve them. By shedding light on the frustrations and concerns held by the refugee participants of this study, community leaders may gain some insights into some of the concerns shared by the people who they are dedicated to serving. In other words, it is easier to assist a group of people if you have an expanded understanding of what challenges and frustrations are of concern to them.

Lastly, I addressed the potential for this study to be of use to political leaders in advanced nations that are more likely to engage in military combat in regions beyond their

borders, as the narratives in this study shed light on how war impacts the average citizens, as well as its impact on minority groups.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Upon reflection of the religious persecution that many Chaldeans experienced, it would seem likely that such an event would have generated a fair amount of attention among social scientists. Surprisingly, there has been very little focus on Chaldeans both before and after Saddam's reign. What little attention has been generated has primarily centered on Chaldean acculturation/assimilation into U.S. culture, rather than on the myth of return, or on the experiences Chaldeans faced which forced them to flee Iraq. This research seeks to situate itself within this void by directly listening to the experiences, feelings, and perceptions of the Chaldeans who lived in Iraq during this turbulent time. The following sources provide examples of the literature that pertain to the myth of return and to my research questions. These sources have been arranged from the oldest publications to the most recent. They are arranged in this manner in order to reveal the development of the myth of return through the years as later scholars contributed to the refining of the theory.

One of the earliest and most cited sources connected with the myth of return, is Badr Dahya's 1973 article, involving his qualitative participant observation study in which he seeks to decipher whether Pakistani immigrant's loyalty is to Britain or Pakistan. He considers their commitment to the myth of return as an indicator of where their loyalty lies; and Dahya found that Pakistanis cling to the myth of return even though their circumstances, including pressures from their kin in Britain as well as in Pakistan, suggest they will stay (1973:247). One factor that contributes to the presence of the myth involves the strained relationships between Pakistanis and their host society in Britain.

Some of the tensions that exist can be attributable to cultural differences between the two societies.

One clear example of a cultural difference can be seen with a dialogue, highlighted by Dahya, between a British employer and a Pakistani employee. The employer asked the employee to simply sweep the shop floors, but because of the employee's caste (a cultural trait the employer was oblivious to), he refuses to do so. The shop keeper misunderstood his reasons for refusing to sweep the floors, and assumed that he didn't know how to do it. When the shop keeper began to demonstrate how to do the job, the employee told him he knew how to sweep the floors, but he could not do it because of his caste rank (1973:250).

Dahya explains how the persistence of the Pakistani immigrant's adherence to caste status is not surprising, as it is consistent with their purpose in migrating to Britain in the first place, to raise the status of their family back home. By saving up money in Britain, young males (which were the primary demographic of the population observed by the author) were able to send most of their hard earned funds back to their home country to be used by the family head for the construction of pakka houses. These large houses were built in a rather extravagant manner with the purpose of demonstrating to the community the family's high status. They also serve to reinforce the myth of return for Pakistani immigrants in Britain, since all of the investment from their hard work in Britain is channeled back to Pakistan to be used for the construction of the pakka houses (1973:255).

In addition to the impact of investment in Pakistan on the adherence to the myth of return among the Pakistanis in Britain, the myth is also influenced by the immigrant's loyalty to the ethnic community in Britain as well as to their communities in Pakistan. This idea is articulated by Dahya where he states, "The migrant continues to re-affirm his adherence to the myth of return because for him to do otherwise would be tantamount to renouncing his membership of the village community and the village-kin group in Britain – for these groups together form a single whole, and for a migrant to opt out of one means opting out of the other as well. The myth is an expression of one's intention to continue to remain a member of both of them" (1973:268).

Although the myth of return seems to be well entrenched within Dahya's Pakistani immigrant population, this does not at all indicate that it is equally entrenched among the Chaldean refugee population in the Detroit metropolitan area, as my research seems to indicate. There are some key differences between these two populations. The primary difference is that the Pakistani immigrants, examined by Dahya, were not refugees and were not forced out of their country because of persecution, as are the Chaldean refugees in the Detroit metropolitan area. Another key difference has to do with religion. The Pakistani immigrants were Muslims, a religious minority group, in a traditionally Christian nation, whereas Chaldean refugees in the Detroit area are Eastern Rite Catholic which is affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, a major religious tradition not only in the Detroit area, but in the United States as well. Since Chaldean refugees share a major religious tradition with many in their host society, they are less likely to face religious opposition which could lead to "push" factors that could potentially contribute to the

presence of the myth of return. The likelihood of the existence of the myth is also influenced by whether or not the immigrants came from a dominant or minority group in their place of origin. This point will be discussed later on in the discussion of Al Rasheed's work.

Another early and heavily cited source related to the myth of return is Muhammad Anwar's 1979 work which emphasizes the relationship between refugees and their host society. Specifically, as the title suggests, the author discusses the relationship between Pakistani refugees and British society. Within this discourse he reveals how Pakistanis view native British citizens as being unfriendly towards them, and as a result Pakistanis turn inward and insulate themselves from the larger society (1979:218). Not surprisingly, this contributes to the perpetuation of the myth of return and reinforces the refugees' loyalty to the motherland as opposed to Britain. Anwar elaborates on how Pakistanis manage to insulate themselves by only participating in British institutions where they are required to, like employment and the education system; but where they have a choice, they choose not to participate and instead turn to the ethnic community (1979:222). This commitment to their Pakistani community is also demonstrated by their obligations to their family through monetary support and investments in Pakistan. These obligations, as well as visits to their homeland, keep the desire to return a reality in their lives. As a result, they do not wish to adapt to British society, as their commitments and status are aligned to Pakistan, not Britain (1979:219).

My research has considered whether or not Chaldeans in the Detroit metropolitan area, like the Pakistani refugees in Britain, also avoid societal institutions where they have a

choice, and it has considered whether or not they attempt to build bridges with their host society? Like Anwar's Pakistanis, many Chaldeans also have family and economic ties to the homeland. My research has sought to establish whether this reality causes them to be loyal to Iraq, rather than to the U.S.

While Anwar's focus dealt with the relationship of Pakistanis to the host society in Britain, Egon F. Kunz (1981) focused on the relationship between refugees and their country of origin. He maintains the social relationships that refugees have with their home countries falls into three different categories. The first category involves refugees who believe their objections to the homeland are shared by most of their compatriots. Although this is the case, they strongly identify with the nation, but not with the government. Kunz suggests these refugees could be classified as, "majority identified refugees." The second category involves those who because of their experiences are ambivalent or embittered toward their former compatriots. Their ambivalence is due to their original desire to identify with the nation on the one hand and a feeling of rejection by the nation on the other hand. Kunz classifies this group as, "events-alienated refugees." The third category involves refugees who, for various ideological reasons, have no desire to identify with their homeland. Kunz classifies this group as, "self-alienated persons" (1981:43).

Of the three types of relationships between refugees and their places of origins, it would seem that Chaldean refugees in the Detroit area would fit best into the second category, since they were once a part of the dominant and indigenous group in Iraq, but have now become a persecuted minority group. Although this may be the case for some,

the research subjects in my study tended to fit more into the third category due to their religious and political views which contrast with dominant group perspectives.

The interviewees, however, did not necessarily refuse to identify as “Iraqi “rather, their reluctance was with identifying with their compatriots.

In addition to his focus on the relationships between refugees and their places of origin, Kunz also considers the relationships between refugees and the host society. He maintains that Monistic societies are more likely to demand conformity from refugees than are pluralistic societies. However, he argues that the assimilation requirements of a monistic society are more likely to be embraced by events oriented refugees who have faced antagonism in their homeland, and who are eager to find a new home in which to settle and to assimilate, than for refugees who are identified with the dominant group in the homeland (1981:48-49). Kunz’s observation involving the contrast between majority and minority identified refugees and their attitudes towards assimilation into the host society is similar to Madawi Al-Rasheed’s work, except her focus specifically involves the comparison of majority and minority identified refugees with the presence or absence of the myth of return.

Al-Rasheed (1994) explains how the common perception of the myth of return involves the assumption that immigrants from other countries will long to return to their place of origin. She maintains this common assumption applies to certain groups but not to others, and the presence or absence of the myth is based on the relationship with the homeland, as well as the host country. Borrowing from Dahya, Al-Rasheed conveys the idea that for certain immigrant groups to lack a desire to return to their native countries

would be on par to a rejection of their native countries or villages. But she also argues that adherence to the myth of return depends on the immigrant's ties to the homeland. If immigrant ties are weak, then the myth of return is less likely to apply, but if these ties are strong then it is more likely. In order to demonstrate this point she compares two immigrant groups in Britain, Arab Muslims, and Assyrian Christians.

By making this comparison she found the Arab Muslims, since they were part of the dominant group in their native lands, felt stronger ties to their places of origin, whereas the Assyrian Christians, since they were a part of the minority religious/ethnic group, felt fewer ties. Al-Rasheed found that for the Arab Muslims (just like the Pakistani Muslims in Dahya's work) not to embrace the myth of return is tantamount to rejecting both the immigrant community in Britain as well as the community in the homeland (1994:200). As a result of these differential ties, the myth of return applied to the Arab Muslims, but not to the Assyrian Christians. Based on Al-Rasheed's work I suspected my research subjects, who like the Assyrian Christians, were also a religious minority in their native country, would likewise be less inclined to adhere to the myth of return. However, as stated earlier, when considering the fact that Chaldeans have relatives in Iraq, as well as significant cultural, economic, and historical ties to the country, perhaps some will have a desire to return to their native country, so long as it is safe.

Another 1994 article written by Roger Zetter focused more on the relationship between the refugee population and the host society, than between refugees and the homeland. One issue discussed involves whether or not refugees feel like second class citizens in the host community, or in his words, "not the cheese the refugees eat"

(1994:212). The Greek-Cypriot refugees that he observed, especially in the earlier years, felt as though they were in fact second class citizens, and one of the factors that contributed to this dynamic was their residential location and the subsidized and stigmatized housing in which they dwelt.

Other social forces that can influence the likelihood of the myth of return, according to Zetter, involve the following factors: Job commitments, a break with the norms of the past, realization that past social networks could never be reconstituted, new socioeconomic aspirations, and support for a new polity (1994:313-14). Zetter explains even though intuitively it would seem as though refugees who have established roots would be less likely to return than refugees who have not, his research actually suggests the opposite. The reason behind this counterintuitive finding, in his estimation, has to do with the level of dependency on the government. Those who are more dependent on government subsidies are less likely to embrace the concept of return, because they feel tied down, whereas those who are the least dependent feel less restrained and as a result tend to hold on to the myth more than the dependent refugees (1994:316-319).

Among the women, Zetter found some to be more impacted by relocation than others. Those who expressed dissatisfaction voiced the following concerns: Loss of extended family, the loss of domestic roles to menial labor, changing family values, and difficulty in establishing new forms of trust with neighbors. Other women, however, indicated that the lost norms, such as the dowry house provision, were bound to change anyways and they tended to view this loss of norms as a positive change. These latter women were

undoubtedly among the younger and or the second generation, which he found to be, consistent with the literature, less likely to embrace the notion of return (1994:316-17).

This article is relevant to my research in that it highlights some of the conditions that have an impact on the possibility of whether or not refugees will embrace the myth of return or not. Considering many of Zetter's research subjects felt as though they were second class citizens, even though they shared the same ethnicity as those in the host society, it would seem even more likely that my Chaldean research subjects would feel like second class citizens, since they do not share the same ethnicity with those in the host society, however this did not seem to be the case. Other questions that emerge from this article has to do with whether or not my research subjects who have established more roots are more or less likely to embrace the myth of return, and whether or not there are differences between age and gender in the likelihood of the myth.

Although earlier scholars (e.g. Anwar) developed the concept of the myth of return, later scholars, such as Al-Rasheed, refined it. Included among these later scholars is the previously mentioned author, Zetter, who also published another article in 1999 where he described how the myth of return challenges the notion that "adaptation and integration are necessarily either progressive or permanent, set against the perceptions of 'home'" (1999:4). He posits that the concept of 'home' for refugees is reconstructed in a fictitious and idealized form, and that the idea of return is also fictitious, since objectively the likelihood of relocating to the homeland is remote (1999:4).

Furthermore, Zetter maintains the myth of return is somewhat deceptive, as he argues what is being mythologized is not so much "return," but rather, "home." He suggests that

it might be more accurate to refer to this concept as the myth of "home" or the myth of "return home." He maintains that "home" is reconstructed and idealized for various reasons including political claims toward repatriation, the recovery of lost property, to establish a sense of security and permanency in times of chaos and uncertainty, and the desire to hold onto the bonds of family. The interplay between these motives contributes to the complexity involved in the interpretation of the myth of return. In addition to the above motivations, Zetter also suggests forced displacement, "deterritorialization," and the loss of "Home" can also trigger a powerful myth-creating process (1999:7). Since Chaldean refugees have experienced all of the above, perhaps they too, like the Greek-Cypriot population studied by Zetter, will cling to the myth of return, or perhaps, "the myth of return home."

While Anwar discusses the relationship between Pakistani refugees to their host society in Britain, Sengstock offers some insight into the relationship that Chaldeans have had toward their host society in the Detroit metropolitan area. Specifically, she discusses the strained relationship that took place during the 1990s following the First Gulf War. According to Sengstock, since Chaldeans are from Iraq, and since most of them speak Arabic (some speak Chaldean as well) many Americans associated Chaldeans (for some, the only "Iraqis" they knew) with the "bad guys" who we were fighting in Iraq at the time. She discusses how some Americans also refused to distinguish between Christian Chaldeans from Iraq and Arab Iraqi Muslims. She discusses how because of these dynamics, many Chaldeans wished to disassociate themselves with Saddam Hussain, Iraq, and with Arabs in general (most likely because of the anti-Arab bigotry that existed at the

time and continues to exist in America to this day). However, even though Chaldeans may wish to disassociate themselves, in the words of Sengstock, "Most Americans, have little patience with the distinctions which groups make among themselves" (1999:186-87).

Although many Americans at the time were convinced that Chaldeans were Arabs, Chaldeans themselves, in the midst of the First Gulf War crisis, were not quite sure how to define themselves. Related to this Sengstock states,

> At the onset of the Gulf war, some American-born Chaldeans who had never before thought about their heritage contacted their parents to inquire: What's an Arab? Are we Arabs? Who's Saddam Hussain? Why is he leader in Iraq? They were receiving numerous questions from coworkers and other associates and needed to give some answers. Suddenly they were being defined as representatives of Iraq and the Arabs, whether they viewed themselves in this way or not" (1999:187).

Sengstock also asks, "Will they continue to call themselves Chaldeans? Will their American associates' continued insistence that an 'Arab is an Arab is an Arab' result in their eventual acceptance of a generalized 'Arabic' identity? Once hostilities between the United States and Iraq have been forgotten, will the Chaldeans return to calling themselves 'Iraqis"? (1999:187).

Are recently relocated Chaldean refugees in the Detroit area negatively stereotyped in the same way that more established Chaldeans were after the first Gulf War, as Sengstock found in her sample? This research has considered whether or not recent Chaldean arrivals have experienced negative stereotypes in the way described by Sengstock, and has also considered whether or not such negative stereotyping and bigotry (push factors) contribute to the presence of the myth of return? In attempting to assess the relationship

between Chaldeans and the host society in the Detroit Metropolitan area, this study will seek to answer these questions.

Will H. Moore, and Stephen M. Shellman's 2004 study is relevant to my research as the authors consider the reasons behind why migrants decide to leave their friends, family, home and belongings to venture to new regions or even cross borders where their futures are uncertain. The authors' statistical analyses indicate that migrants are much more likely to leave their homes when they feel threatened by violence from either the government or from dissidents, than they are for economic or political reasons. In addition, the authors found the decision to stay or leave was also tied to whether or not others from the group decided to stay or leave. Migrants were much more likely to leave, if others from the group left before them.

Considering that these variables were statistically positive and substantially significant, it is not surprising that the interviewees' narratives in my study have pointed toward violence (a major push factor) as a primary incentive for leaving, and the decision to relocate to the Detroit metropolitan area has been due to the fact that other Chaldean immigrants, including many of their family members, have settled in the region first.

Regardless of the rationale in the decision to relocate to the Detroit area, now that these refugees have relocated, the decision to stay or leave will partly be influenced, as Anwar posited, by their relationship with the host society. Research conducted by Zick et al (2001) sheds light on effects of the attitudes of the dominant group in the host society, on immigrants. Their study focused specifically on "guest workers" (Guest Arbiter) in Germany who immigrated with the understanding that they were only temporarily

immigrating to Germany as “guest workers” and that eventually they would return to their homeland after their work was done. Interestingly, many of these guest workers have raised families and some have remained there for up to three generations.

However, they are still considered “just guest workers” that do not share in the same benefits and rights that German citizens have. Not surprisingly, they found immigrants to Germany from Poland and other eastern European countries were much more likely to assimilate, than were immigrants from other countries such as Turkey. This is most likely due to prejudice based on physical trait differences (skin color) towards non-European immigrants. The authors also discuss how many of the immigrants from Eastern Europe were of German dissent and were therefore considered “resettlers” (aussiedler) and in contrast to the non-European immigrants, the “aussiedler” were granted full citizenship with all of the same rights as native German citizens. This difference in treatment most likely contributes to feeling of resentment among those who are considered merely “guest workers”.

In addition, the authors also found that German citizens, who embrace the idea of a multi-cultural society and integration, were less likely to harbor attitudes of prejudice, than those who embrace the idea of assimilation and segregation. Likewise, they found the same to be true of the minority immigrant population. Immigrants who embrace the idea of a multi-cultural society were less likely to harbor attitudes of prejudice against other minorities as well as against German citizens, than those who were embraced the idea of assimilation and segregation.

Are non-Chaldean Americans, like many German citizens, less likely to embrace

Chaldeans due to physical trait differences, such as skin color? Do non-Chaldean Americans view Chaldean refugees as merely "guests," or are they ready to embrace them as fellow Americans? Based on Zick's research in Germany, It is likely, if non-Chaldean refugees embrace the idea of assimilation and segregation, that they will also be more likely to harbor attitudes of prejudice against Chaldean refugees. However, if they embrace the idea of a multi-cultural society and integration, then they will be less likely to harbor prejudice.

Although my research does not focus on the attitudes of non-Chaldean Americans, it does seek to understand the experiences of Chaldean refugees with the dominant non-Chaldean population, and the information gleaned from Zick et al has been useful in interpreting the answers Chaldean refugees gave regarding how they feel that they have been treated by non-Chaldean Americans. The Turkish immigrant population in Germany discussed by Zick et al has some characteristics that are different from my sample of Chaldean refugees. For example, unlike the Turkish "guest workers," Chaldeans did not relocate to the Detroit area as merely, "guest workers," and many have already managed to obtain United States citizenship. Another key difference, that I addressed earlier on, is the fact that Chaldeans are primarily Christians, immigrating to an area that's primarily Christian, whereas the Turkish, "guest workers" are primarily Muslims in a traditionally Christian country. Since the Turkish immigrants to Germany are religious minorities, they are more likely to face discrimination and prejudice, than are the Chaldeans in my sample. The only similarity shared by Chaldeans in the Detroit area, and Turkish immigrants in

Germany, is the fact that they both have physical trait differences (skin color) from the dominant groups in the areas in which they live.

While Zick et al's primary focus was on Turkish guest workers in their host country, Moran-Taylor and Menjivar's 2005 article centers on the issue of return. This piece is particularly relevant, as the horrific atrocities experienced by the Guatemalan and Salvadoran refugees, highlighted in the article, parallels quite closely with the experiences of the Chaldean refugees moving into the Detroit metropolitan area. In Guatemala, for example, it is estimated that in the violence some 200,000 were either killed or missing, and that there were approximately 1.5 million who were internally displaced. Similarly, El Salvador's civil war resulted in the killing or disappearing of around 75,000 people and the internal displacement of around 400,000.

Without a doubt these experiences certainly would have impacted attitudes of return, and since Chaldeans experienced similar atrocities in Iraq, it is likely the impact of war on their attitudes of return would be similar. One key difference, though, is that the violence experienced by Guatemalans and Salvadorans took place in the 1980s, and has since dissipated, whereas the violence in Iraq continues and does not show any indication that it will let up any time soon, hence making the likelihood of return more remote for Chaldean refugees than for Guatemalans and Salvadorans.

Through the process of inductive inquiry, the authors found it necessary to classify their respondent's attitudes toward return in three categories, assertive, ambivalent, and no desires. Not surprisingly, migrants who fell into the assertive category were people who have left young children behind and who had no plans on moving their children to the

United States, and who sometimes did in fact return to their homeland. The authors also found the strong desires of return in their research subjects were also influenced by the difficulty in finding employment, or with discrimination in the work place while living in the United States.

Among the immigrants categorized as ambivalent, some expressed the frustration of not being able to regularize their immigration status, while others were still paying debts such as mortgages on properties in their place of origin, and others expressed their status in the United Sates as, "home, but not at home." On the other end of the spectrum are those who expressed no desire to return. Some of the reasons for this attitude include being married to individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, entrepreneurship and economic instability in the homeland, and an uneasiness regarding the political climate back home, as well as fears of violence.

Considering the similarities between Chaldean refugees and the Salvadorans and Guatemalans in this study, it is reasonable to assume that Chaldeans could likely fall into one of these three categories as well, but due to the continued violence in Iraq, It would seem safe to assume that there will be a disproportional number in the no desire to return category as opposed to the assertive or ambivalent categories.

Another major contribution to this discussion on the push/pull factors and how they relate to the myth of return is Joseph Sassoon's 2011 book, where he discusses the major obstacles faced by almost all Iraqi refugees wishing to return to their homeland. The author points out while the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UHCR) has expressed that it is better for refugees to return due to 'pull' factors, in the country of

origin, unfortunately, the vast majority of Iraqi refugees have returned due to 'push' factors in the countries where they have been exiled. According to the 2008 Ipsos (a French research firm which translates to Public Affairs & Opinion Research) survey, cited by Sassoon, these 'push' factors include the inability to secure visas in the host country, as well as the severe lack of any economic opportunities (2011:156). The same Ipsos survey also found only four percent of Iraqi refugees living in Syria at the time planned to return to Iraq.

Another 2008 survey conducted by the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDm) and the International Organization for Migration, (IOM) also cited by Sassoon, found that of 13,000 families who returned to their homes in Iraq, only 17 percent returned from other countries, the remaining 83 percent were IDP (internally displaced persons) families who were internally displaced due to the chaotic conditions that ensued following the collapse of the Saddam regime (2011:156-57). The fact that so few planned on returning is not surprising considering the dire circumstances in Iraq. Sassoon lists some of the major concerns held by Iraqi refugees living abroad, and they include such thing as a lack of health care, employment, educational opportunities for their children, as well as the housing crisis (2011:158). Zetter mentioned that the myth of 'return' is really the myth of 'home,' or the myth of 'return home' but for many Iraqis, 'home' doesn't exist anymore (this stands in sharp contrast to the Pakistanis observed by Dahya and Anwar, who have substantial investments in the construction of their elaborate pakka houses back in Pakistan).

Related to this housing crisis in Iraq, Sassoon incorporates the following statistics from Elizabeth Ferris' "Looming Crisis," as well as MoDM and IOM's, "Returnee Monitoring." About 25 percent of IDPs cited losing their property as the primary reason for their displacement, and the report from Returnee Monitoring of IDPs and refugees indicated that around 46 percent had their homes either occupied by others, or partially, and in some cases completely, destroyed (2011:161-62).

Given the challenges surrounding the housing crises, it is not surprising that few entertain the idea of returning, and this is especially the case, according to Sassoon, for minority groups such as Christians, Sabean-Mandeans, and Yazidis. This finding is predictable in light of Al-Rasheed's assertion that minority group refugees are less likely to adhere to the myth of return as are refugees who belonged to dominant groups in their homelands.

In addition to the lack of education, jobs, health care, and homes, Sassoon discusses another potential barrier involving women who are especially reluctant to return to an Iraq that has become dominated by religious dogmas which many women fear would have a negative effect on their lives and careers. He stated Christian women were especially adamant about not returning due to the lack of law and order, sexual violence, and lack of women's rights which have become so pervasive in Iraqi society (2011:157-58).

With all of the above information provided by Sassoon, the probability of the existence of the myth of return among the Chaldean refugee population in the Detroit metropolitan area would seem very slim. However, were the conditions in Iraq to become less threatening, and considering the fact that Chaldeans do have

familial and economic ties, as well as a clergy which are urging them not to sever their cultural connections to Iraq, perhaps there will be some indication of the myth of return. Most likely, though, the idea of return would be predicated on the climate of Iraq becoming more stabilized and more hospitable for women and religious minorities. Some of the Chaldeans in my sample did express a slight desire to return to Iraq if things were to stabilize there, however, they all seemed to be skeptical that this would occur to the degree that it would be enticing to live there again.

Besides for the above 'push' factors out of Iraq, Sassoon also highlights certain political factors that could contribute to a strained relationship between Chaldean refugees and the host society in the Detroit Metropolitan area. Sassoon discusses how the U.S. lead invasion of Iraq resulted in both the internal and external displacement of Iraqis. Considering that the U.S. and its allies are partly responsible for the displacement of millions of Iraqis, one would think that the U.S. would be eager to come to the aid of these people, however, this has not been the case as the U.S. (and Britain) have been slow to open its doors for refugees to seek asylum (2011:110). In addition, Sassoon explains how the United States has spent hundreds of billions on the war effort, but very little has been spent to aid those who have been displaced as a result of the war (2011:111).

Do Iraqi refugees in the Detroit metropolitan area harbor resentment for the U.S. government's role in their displacement? Are they also resentful for the lack of support received by the U.S. in the aftermath of the collapse of the Saddam

regime? If so, do these feelings lead to a strained relationship, and to 'push' factors that encourage the myth of return? Sassoon explains how that the U.S. and its allies wanted to establish a democratic and an inclusive society in Iraq, but instead the country has been broken apart by tribalism and sectarianism, and this condition has forced many to leave. Related to this Sassoon states,

> The Americans wanted a pluralistic and multi-ethnic society but the result was that the minorities, who had lived and prospered in Iraq for centuries, found themselves a prime target of the religious groups and their militias, and hence a high percentage of them were forced to leave the country. The Americans aspired to make Iraq an example of modernization for the rest of the Arab world, but what took place set Iraq back a long way (2011:167).

Considering that since the time Sassoon's book was written, things have only deteriorated with the rise of ISIS and it's intolerance toward minority religious groups, and considering the immense loss (casualties of war, loss of property, culture, and home) experienced by Chaldean refugees, it would not be surprising to find many of them are resentful, and perhaps blame the United States for its role in the destruction of their society. If this is the case, does this resentment contribute to a 'push' factor and for the desire to restore what was lost, and to return? The Chaldeans in my sample had differing opinions regarding the United States' actions in Iraq, and I will discuss these opinions later on in chapter five.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLGY

This study involves the narratives of eleven Chaldean refugees to the Detroit metropolitan area. Hearing the stories of these refugees is the best way to assess the presence or absence of the myth of return, and as stated earlier, provides just one of hopefully many opportunities for their stories to be shared, so that their plight does not go unnoticed. The data that were produced from this study are rich with meaning and context and sheds light on this subject in a way that would not be possible with the limitations of survey data. Through the lens of the myth of return theoretical perspective, I was able to extract information not only pertaining to the degree to which the myth of return is involved, but also information regarding my research subjects' challenges, disappointments, frustrations, as well as their positive feelings either towards their home country in Iraq, or towards the United States, and specifically their new location in the Detroit metropolitan area.

Restatement of purpose

This research has endeavored to fill in a gap in the literature by employing an in-depth interview study that considered the influences involved in the decision to flee Iraq, (the push factors) as well as the decision to seek refuge in the Detroit metropolitan area (the pull factors). Conversely, it also considered the push/pull factors involved in the decision to either stay in the Detroit area, or to the potential decision to return someday to the homeland. Part of assessing the push/pull factors involved a focus on changes experienced by Chaldean refugees before relocation as well as after and it considered how these changes affect the presence or absence of the myth of return.

In addition, considering many of the changes examined in this research were unsuspected, the in-depth interview approach, with its open ended questions, proved to be the best option for generating data related to these changes and to the myth of return. In other words, if this research had utilized a questionnaire with limited and set closed answer questions, I would not have detected unknown factors that are relevant to this study. This approach also produced rich data involving the interviewees' stories that could be showcased in fulfillment of the stated purposes of this study.

Although the in-depth interview approach proved to be the best option for this research, there were certain limitations with this method as well. For example, the recruitment process would have probably been much easier and less intimidating with a simple questionnaire, than with an hour long sit down interview. This factor would have also contributed to the sample size, which more than likely would have been larger if people were simply filling out questionnaires.

Context of Study

The interviewees in this study reside in four different suburban cities within the Detroit area. These cities include: Sterling Heights, West Bloomfield, Walled Lake, and Novi. The following includes the 2014 median household incomes for each city:

Sterling Heights =$58,800, West Bloomfield = $90,317, Walled Lake = $46,098, Novi = $80.299. In comparison, the median household income of the 6 research subjects who volunteered to share information regarding income was approximately $30,000 with a mean of approximately $28,967, and a mode of $45,000. These figures are based on the

informal estimates provided by the research subjects, and do not reflect their precise incomes, as would be stated on their income tax statements.

Two of the interviewees were unemployed and nine were employed at the time of the interviews. The two unemployed interviewees were stay at home moms, and one of these mothers was also a returning college student. Both of these individuals had high level jobs in Iraq with one being a veterinarian, and the other working for the government in the Ministry of Trade. Two of the interviewees had jobs working for the United States government in Iraq, one worked for the Army, and another one worked for an agency which assisted in the development of democracy. Another individual worked for the U.N. while living in Iraq, and 3 of the interviewees were students in Iraq. The others had various jobs in Iraq. Most of those who were employed in Iraq held lower level positions here in the Detroit metropolitan area than they did in Iraq. All of the research subjects were either students or were employed in Iraq prior to departure.

It should also be pointed out, at the time of the interview, some of the participants lived alone, some lived with their immediate families, and others, in keeping with traditional Chaldean culture, lived together with extended families, including other adult siblings, parents, as well as with their spouses and children. Some of the research subjects lived within or close by ethnic Chaldean communities, and others were further away from other Chaldean residents. Some of the interviews took place at St Joseph's Chaldean Catholic Church in Troy, Michigan, and others took place at Holy Martyrs Chaldean Catholic church in Sterling Heights, Michigan. In the appendices are letters of permission to interview at these sites as well as at the Chaldean Community Foundation, although

interviews did not occur at the latter. In addition, there is a letter of support from Bishop Francis Y. Kalabat for this research involving the Chaldean refugee community.

Sample

The sample was a purposeful snowball generated sample that consisted of eleven Detroit area Iraqi Chaldean refugees who left Iraq sometime between 2003 and the present and who were 18 years of age or older at the time of departure. Some of the refugees originally lived in Northern Iraq around the city of Mosul, and others were from Baghdad. All of the interviewees spoke English and Arabic, and some spoke Chaldean as well. There were six males and five females in the sample, and the average age was 39 with the oldest being 52 and the youngest 28. Five were single or divorced and six were married and in heterosexual relationships. The sample consisted of highly educated individuals, with all but one having at least some college. Specifically, one had a high school diploma, one had an associate's degree, six had Bachelor's degrees, two had master's degrees and one had a PhD. Another issue related to sampling, is sample size. Although the sample consists of an N of 11, I Initially proposed an N of 20, however, after analyzing the data produced from the 11 research subjects, I realized that I had reached saturation, as the data were more than sufficient to answer my research question and provided new themes as well.

Methodological Design

The first step in employing my methodological framework involved a reflexive analysis of the inherent characteristics and biases that I, as the researcher, brought to this study. Since my research subjects have an ethnic orientation that is distinct from my own

background, I needed to develop a rather comprehensive understanding of Chaldean culture. Specifically, I needed to identify any characteristic distinctions between my cultural make up and that of my Chaldean research subjects in order to avoid possible misconceptions that could potentially contribute to faulty conclusions in my assessment of the data. Some of the distinctions that could potentially contribute to misunderstandings would include the fact that I have been influenced by the media in the U.S. which has presented the Iraqi crisis from an American perspective, whereas my research subjects have had more of an insider's perspective. There are also other cultural distinctions such as different ideas pertaining to neo-local residency, as well as religious differences.

After reflexive analysis the next step was to develop a set of data generating questions that could be incorporated into an interview guide. These questions were designed to encourage research subjects to share their stories and their experiences while still living in Iraq, as well as their experiences while living in the Detroit metropolitan area. The questions were also designed to extract data relevant to the research questions involving push/pull factors in the decision to leave or return to Iraq, as well as the push/pull factors involved in the decision to relocate to the Detroit area, as well as the decision to stay or to leave the Detroit area. In addition to questions pertaining to push/pull factors, there were also questions relating to their perceptions of where "home" is, or where their heart is, or where they felt they belong. Related to this were questions involving whether or not they would like to return to Iraq someday.

In addition to the types of questions mentioned above, there were also questions relating to how they identify themselves. For example, do they prefer to identify as Iraqi,

Chaldean, American, or perhaps other? The data produced from all of these various types of questions were then used to assess the extent to which the myth of return was a factor among the participants in the study. While the interview guide served to structure the interviews, the interviews were not a slave to it, as this is a narrative study and the main objective was to hear the stories of the research subjects. Basically, all of the questions on the interview guide were posed to the participants, but the conversation was not limited to questions on the interview guide. Below is the exact interview guide that was used in each of the interviews. It contains the questions as well as the discussion prompts.

Interview Guide

Intro script: As you may know I am researching Chaldean Iraqis who have immigrated to the Detroit area since 2003 and I want to understand how changes that you have experienced while living in Iraq as well as while living here has impacted your life. So, I'm wondering if we can start by having you tell me about your life in Iraq.

1. Can you tell me about your life in Iraq?

   Now I would like to know more about how your life was impacted by changes in politics, for instance, when the Shia gained political power, or when ISIS gained control over certain regions within Iraq.

2. Could you share with me, if and how your life changed as the Shia gained political power following the Saddam era?
3. Could you tell me if and how life changed as ISIS was gaining power in certain regions?

4. Could you share what your number one reason was for leaving Iraq?

Probe: Are there any other reasons behind your decision to leave Iraq?

5. What factors caused you to move to the Detroit area?

Note: The following questions relate to the myth of return theory.

Okay, now I want to talk to you about how you feel about Iraq now that you are here. So my first question is:

6. Do you have a desire to return to Iraq?

   If no ask, "Have you ever had a desire to return to Iraq, or have you always been resolute in not wanting to return?"

   If yes ask, "Have you always wanted to return, or is it a desire that has developed more recently?"

7. What do you think is the likelihood that you will return to Iraq?

   If they indicate a strong likelihood ask, "Can you tell me why you think that it is likely that you will return?

8. Where would you say is the place that best describes where you feel you belong, or where your heart is?

9. How would you describe your experience living here in the Detroit area?

10. Do you feel like you are treated well in the Detroit area? Can you explain?

11. How do you think Americans perceive you? Why? Can you explain some interactions that you have had with Americans that make you believe they view

you this way? Do Americans understand who you are, or do they mistakenly confuse you as belonging to a different ethnic/religious group?

12. Are you connected with the non-Chaldean community?

If so ask, "How did you get connected or involved?"

If not ask, "Why not? Do you plan on connecting with the non-Chaldean community?"

I know that it is sometimes difficult to talk about politics, but I would really like to know about your opinions regarding the U.S. involvement in Iraq. I am not asking because I want to judge you, nor do I want Americans to judge you, I am asking because I want Americans to understand how these events and politics have impacted the lives of people in Iraq.

13. Do you have any thoughts or opinions regarding the United States' involvement in Iraq over the past two decades?

14. Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding your experiences in Iraq or the move to the U.S.?

Survey questions

15. What is your age, sex, household income, employment status, type of job held in Iraq, type of job held here, how many children, level of education, how many relatives do you have in Iraq, how many relatives do you have here in the Detroit area?

Recruitment

Because this was a purposive snowball generated sample participants were included in the study through word of mouth, and also through the use of a study flyer which invited Chaldean refugees to participate in a one hour interview regarding their experiences in Iraq as well as in the Detroit metropolitan area. This flyer contained my contact information, so that interested candidates could contact me if they were inclined to do so. These flyers were distributed to various Chaldean churches, the Chaldean Community Foundation, as well as at Wayne State University. Out of the eleven interviewees, only two contacted me after seeing the flyer. Three of the interviewees were recruited through contacts that I made while visiting a Chaldean church in the area. Two of the contacts were made through a friend on LinkedIn. I was also able to secure four contacts through acquaintances, including a fellow student at Wayne State.

In addition to these contacts, I was also able to connect with three Chaldean individuals who were not qualified to be interviewed themselves, simply because they were too young at the time of departure out of Iraq, but they all said they knew several people that were qualified, but then for some reason I was not able to reconnect with them even though they all seemed confident they could secure interviewees for the study. One of the acquaintances, mentioned above, contacted a married couple in her family, who indicated to her they were willing to be interviewed. She therefore provided them with my contact information as well as the flyer, but after several promptings, they never contacted me to schedule an interview. Following IRB protocol, I only contacted people via phone or email, if I was provided this contact information from individuals who knew

the potential interviewee(s) and who suggested that I contact them, otherwise interviewees contacted me via phone or through face to face encounters.

One of the major challenges involved with recruitment was the difficulty in lining up interviews which proved to be a rather slow process. Although there seemed to be a fair amount of interest in the study, it is likely that fear could have been a contributing factor to the slow recruitment process. Considering the research subjects are coming from a society where you have to be careful who you trust, it would not be surprising if this was factor. One of the concerns expressed to me by more than one leader within the Chaldean community before I began the recruitment process involved the challenge of gaining the trust of potential research subjects.

When considering that even during Saddam's time, one had to be careful not to do or say anything that could draw negative attention from the regime, and especially considering the sectarian violence following the removal of Saddam which contributed to an atmosphere, where one didn't know who to trust, it would not be surprising if many individuals were afraid to take part in this research. Perhaps some suspected that I worked for the government, or for the newspaper, or for some nefarious organization. I tried to reduce these fears by expressing to potential interviewees that the interviews were completely anonymous and confidential, but these sentiments may not have alleviated their fears.

It is very possible that dozens or even hundreds of people saw the flyer but chose not to contact me because of the above mentioned fears or simply because they were too busy to participate. It is also very possible that many had intentions of contacting me to

be interviewed after seeing a flyer, but then life's demands took hold; the flyer was set aside, and then forgotten about or buried under other paper work, mail, etc. Another likely cause for the slow recruitment process could be due to the fact that many interested individuals simply did not speak English well enough to be interviewed. It is also very likely that many individuals who might have been interested were simply too busy to fit an interview into their schedules.

Although the recruitment process was slow, no individual directly declined to be interviewed or expressed reasons for not wanting to be interviewed. Out of the elven interviewees, two shared that they agreed to be interviewed because they wanted their experiences to be known in academia, and six of the interviewees indicated that they agreed to participate because there was a need for participants, or that they simply wanted to help me out. The other interviewees did not express their reasons for participation. Below is the flyer that was distributed in order to recruit participant volunteers. The flyer appears exactly as it did for the potential participants minus the contact information which I omitted from this document.

Seeking Chaldean Volunteers!

This dissertation research project is seeking volunteers to participate in a Wayne State University study involving Chaldean refugees in the Detroit metropolitan area. If you are interested in sharing any changes that you may have experienced in Iraq as well as changes that you have experienced while living here in the Detroit area, then please consider participating in an approximately one hour interview. The information gathered in this study will be useful to community leaders as they seek to better serve the Chaldean refugee population. If you are an English speaking Chaldean who departed Iraq after 2003 and were 18 years or older at the time of departure, then you are eligible to participate. Please contact Wayne State PhD student, Joseph Byle if you are interested in in taking part in this study, and thank you for your consideration.

Joseph J. Byle

Once contacts were made, interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewees. Before each interview was conducted, I presented each interviewee with an IRB approved consent form for them to read and to be signed by them as well as myself, since I was the Principle Investigator obtaining consent. Following the signing of the consent forms, I presented each interviewee with a pamphlet from the Perspectives of Troy counseling center which is equipped to counsel individuals dealing with trauma, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Next, I started the digital recorder and began the interview which lasted for approximately one hour.

Interview recordings were transcribed into Atlasti software and then each transcript was coded through the use of the coding tools available within the software. The coding procedure began with closed coding in which I produced codes for each of the data sets that pertained specifically to my research questions and to the myth of return. After closed coding, I began open coding in which I created codes for other themes that emerged but that did not necessarily pertain specifically to the research questions or to the myth of return. Closed and open coding resulted in 197 different codes.

Each code was named and then categorized into seven different categories including the following: 1) Push factors involved in the decision to leave Iraq, 2) Pull factors involved in the desire to return to Iraq, 3) Pull factors in the decision to relocate to the Detroit metropolitan area, 4) Push factors related to the desire to leave the Detroit area, 5) Closed codes pertaining to the research questions, but not necessarily to push/pull factors or not necessarily directly related to the myth of return, 6) Closed codes directly related to the myth of return, and 7) The remaining open codes.

After categorizing the codes into these broad categories, I then began to further divide them into 29 different sub categories, or code families, which involved specific themes such as fear, death threats, abductions, etc. Some of the codes are almost identical to other codes, but are distinguished by subtle nuanced differences. This flexibility and attention to detail stands in contrast to survey data that would tend to ignore subtle differences by lumping these codes into broader categories where some of the meaning would be lost. For example, one code involves no desire to return to Iraq, and another one involves no desire to return to Iraq 'now.' The sub categories were produced by coding themes that are similar to other themes, and by coding themes that contrast with other themes. For example, one code pertains to optimism following the removal of Saddam, and another contrasting code involves fear following the removal of Saddam.

After categorizing all of the codes, I then analyzed them qualitatively and quantitatively. If a code emerged often or if it was qualitatively significant, then I kept the code, however, if the code did not occur often and was not qualitatively significant, then I eliminated it. There were many codes that did not occur often, but were nonetheless qualitatively significant, so I did not eliminate them from the list. Of the 197 codes, I only eliminated nine which were all in the open codes category. This elimination process was difficult, because some of the codes that were eliminated seemed to be rather interesting, but were not of use for this particular study. Part of the analysis of codes involved the writing of memos regarding my observations. These memos were then attached to the relevant data segments and codes. The categorization process along with the writing of memos contributed to the identification of various patterns and connections within the data.

In addition to coding, categorization, and memo writing, I also conducted other analytical strategies through the use of Atlasti, resulting in word frequency documents including a word cloud as well as an excel spreadsheet. Both the word cloud and the spreadsheet alphabetized all 3, 288 words that were used throughout all of the transcripts and in addition counted the frequency of each word. The word cloud changed the font sizes for each word according to frequency. Words that occurred infrequently were spelled out with small fonts, words that appeared often received larger fonts, and the words that were rather ubiquitous were spelled out with the largest font sizes. By placing the curser over any word I could obtain the exact number of times the word occurred. The spreadsheet did not change font sizes, but it did display the exact number of times a word occurred in each transcript as well as how many times the word occurred throughout all of the transcripts. By surveying the word frequency documents I was able to decipher whether or not there were other themes that I missed in the coding process. While I did not detect any new themes, some of the themes that were prominent in the codes were also prominent in the word frequency documents, and this served to reinforce accuracy of my observations and the coding of the transcripts.

Validity/Reliability:

I have attempted to gain validity in this research by thoroughly interrogating the data through reading, transcribing, vigorously coding transcripts, memo writing, as well as through careful analysis of word frequency documents. In addition, I had a qualitatively trained colleague who analyzed my codes in order to assess thoroughness, and to see if I had perhaps overlooked any meaningful data that should be considered. Additionally, I

had competent readers including my advisor and dissertation committee, one qualitatively trained PhD student who is also a member of the Chaldean community, an administrator and President of the Chaldean Community Foundation who are heavily involved with Chaldean refugees on a daily basis, as well as one of my research subjects. These readers read and offered constructive feedback for the rough drafts on each of my dissertation chapters.

Validity was also enhanced through careful attention to negative cases, which according to Hess-Biber and Leavy, strengthen validity (2006, p. 63). For example, based on the literature, I suspected the myth of return would not be much of a presence among my sample of Chaldean refugees, primarily because they came from a disenfranchised minority group in their homeland and because of ongoing turmoil in the regions in which they once lived. Whenever cases within the data emerged which discussed wanting to return, I made sure to probe deeper during interview sessions and I also gave special attention to those data segments within the transcripts.

Reliability was established, in part, through the competence that I gained as a qualitative researcher through the completion of doctoral level courses on qualitative research. Reliability was also enhanced through the use of multiple means of documenting the data including written notes, recordings, transcripts, etc., the documenting of sampling techniques, as well as through documenting the relationship between me, as the primary researcher, and my research subjects. All of the above characteristics increase reliability (Airisian p. 536). In addition, the use of Atlasti software also proved to be a powerful and reliable tool for deep analysis. Without the use of qualitative software, the

possibility of missing themes, patterns, and connections within the data would be much greater, and various analyses would simply not be possible without the software. For example, no one conducting this analysis the old fashioned way would alphabetize all 3, 288 words used; let alone count the number of times each word occurred, as this would not be feasible.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have laid out all of the major items relevant to my methodological framework. When considering how all of the elements of this study fit together, the purposes of this study, theoretical perspective, research questions, choices regarding data collection techniques, type and size of the sample, recruitment strategies, issues related to reliability and validity, as well as the analytical techniques, the inclusion of these elements seem rather logical and therefore I believe this to be a well-designed study. Because of the soundness of this research design I believe that this study has contributed to the literature regarding the myth of return as it pertains to the Chaldean refugees who participated in this research.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS PART I

Taking into consideration Al-Rasheed's (1994:201) assertion that the presence of the myth of return is partially dependent on the relationship of the immigrants to their homeland, this chapter will discuss the findings related to push/pull factors involved in the decision of the refugees in this study to leave Iraq or to possibly return some time in the future. This chapter is divided into two sections; the first section will explore the findings related to push factors involved in leaving Iraq such as, lack of security, chaos in Iraq, a strained relationship with Muslims, loss of friends and family, loss of freedom, and pessimism regarding the likelihood that Iraq will be restored. The second section will cover pull factors related to the possibility of perhaps someday returning to Iraq. Specifically, the pull factors include family and friends in Iraq, improved economy following 2003, desire to restore Chaldean culture in Iraq, and friendly relationships with Muslim friends.

Push Factors to Leave Iraq

Out of all of the push factors related to the decision to leave Iraq, it is not surprising that the number one reason given by every research subject in this study is the lack of security. This finding confirms the assertion made by Moore and Shellman, (2004) that people are statistically much more likely to leave their places of origin due to violence and security concerns than for economic or political reasons. It is not hard to understand why this would be the most important factor in the decision of refugees to leave their place of origin. What good is a robust economy if there is a strong likelihood that you will end up dead?

Even though violence was the number one reason for leaving Iraq, however, it was certainly not the only reason, as this section clearly demonstrates. Also, while some of the push factors may not have been enough in and of themselves there is an accumulation effect that combines to produce a powerful desire to leave. Basically, violence alone would have been enough to persuade the research subjects to leave, but even if there was no violence, the accumulation effect of all of the other push factors would have also been enough to persuade them to leave. In order to convey the strong impact of the various push factors, I have showcased multiple excerpts from the interview transcripts, and this method of displaying the data also allows for the research subjects' stories to be heard. The first section coveys the rationale for ranking violence as the number one reason for departing Iraq.

The Threat of Violence

> **Interviewee Ten:** And you see people there being killed, kidnapped, they being crucified, aggressive things happen to them. Like your income is more, but what can you do with your income, you're not safe. Safety is a very important thing.
>
> **Joseph:** Yeah, the people I'm interviewing say that safety is the number one thing. Would you say that was your number one thing for leaving Iraq, safety?
> **Interviewee Ten:** Yes.

The violent acts mentioned in the above quote were rather pervasive themes throughout the interviews, but the violence, experienced by the participants of this study, was not limited to the above mentioned atrocities; and the chaos that ensued following the removal of Saddam reached such levels that it would not be an exaggeration to classify much of Iraq as being in a state of anomie. The research subjects in this study lived in

constant fear, day and night, from the very real possibilities of being abducted for money, being killed at gun point or perhaps through a bomb explosion, having property stolen or destroyed, or experiencing the bombing of houses, churches, and businesses. Although there were no reports of sexual violence among the research participants, they did address the concern that it was a real threat, and Sassoon also addressed the concerns raised by other Iraqi refugee women regarding the high prevalence of sexual violence in the country (2009: 157-58).

With all of the rampant violence deep fear was rather intense, especially for three of the interviewees who received personal death threats and warnings that they were being watched. The research subjects associated much of this violence to extremist groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS, but also to extreme sectarian feuding that emerged following the removal of Saddam. It is impossible to fully relate to the fear and stress experienced by the participants of this study without having personally lived through it, but a slight picture of their experiences can be established through the stories that they tell. The following interview excerpts will provide a glimpse of their experiences and will allow the reader to relate somewhat to what they have gone through. As mentioned above, abductions were rampant, and the below quotes highlight how abductions personally affected some of the participants.

Abductions

> **Interviewee One:** The Sunnis were killing the Shiites, and the Shiites were killing the Sunnis, and whenever they were not killing each other they were killing the Christians

> **Joseph:** Did you know anyone who was targeted?
> **Interviewee One** Of course, my uncle was kidnapped and we freed him for a ransom. He would have been killed, they really messed him up, like really bad!

Below is an excerpt from an interview with a couple (Interviewees Three and Four) who lived through similar experiences as Interviewee One.

> **Joseph:** Did you guys know anybody that was kidnapped?
> **Interviewee Four:** Yeah, I know many, one of the persons that was killed is my cousin, he was working on the printing press and so some gangster come at early morning to the place where he was sleeping. So they need to take money from him, so they need to kidnap him and make a compromise with his relatives or his family to take money from them, but because he defeated them and he resisted them they killed him immediately, this was in 2005.
> **Joseph:** Oh my, that had to be so tragic for you and your family, I can't even imagine!
> **Interviewee Four:** It was very tragic issue!
> **Joseph:** It must have made you afraid too; this happened to your cousin and it could potentially happen to you, is that what you were thinking?
> **Interviewee Four:** Yes, it frightened us and some of our family, we left for this reason.
> **Joseph:** You guys were living in Baghdad?
> **Interviewee Four:** Me? Yea we stayed there. This incident happened before we were married. I got my marriage after this incident in one month. And we have many friends, they have been kidnapped also, like eh one a priest, who is my friend, who get kidnapped ah in 2007 I think, and I had my friend who is a dentist who got kidnapped, I have three or four of them. And another person we lost in the church also.
> **Interviewee Five:** In the church, our friends, relatives.
> **Interviewee Four:** Her cousin's husband he had been killed inside the church in that incident in 2010.

These tragic stories of abductions were not limited to the individuals quoted above, as all of the participants mentioned the pervasiveness of these acts, mainly as a corrupt way of making money. Basically bands of criminals would abduct someone and then demand huge payments for their release. One of the research subjects said that the ransom

payment could be as much as $16,00 U.S., and another stated the payments could be as much as $20,000 U.S. Interviewee Eleven said in some instances the family will pay the ransom and then the criminals will kill the captive anyway after they take the money. The below excerpt from Interviewee Six conveys the belief that these abductions were also partly motivated through "patriotic" ideals.

> **Interviewee Six:** There was no ISIS then, no it was Al Qaeda, and Al Qaeda and all these extremists that were going here and there kidnapping people and asking for a ransom, behead you and so and so, at the time.
> **Joseph:** So you would say some of these people went to Al Qaeda because they had nothing to do?
> **Interviewee Six:** Exactly, they either were out of money so they formed a gang and kidnap you and ask your parents for a ransom, you pay $20,000 U.S. or your son is out! That's how they made a living. Some were thinking they were patriotic, and thinking that this is the best way to kick America out, by killing as many as they can and planting bombs, you know? Many methods of resisting and doing so and so.

Bombings

With the constant fear of being abducted, it was not surprising to hear Interviewee Eight explain how his mother would pray all day for the safety of the family from the time they left for work or school in the morning until they returned in the evening. More than likely, though, Interviewee Eight's mother was not only concerned about abductions, but also about the imminent threat of death at gun point or through the explosion of bombs, which was also a real concern for all of the participants in this study. The threat of bombs was a major contributor to the deep fears that they lived with constantly. Much of the bombing described by the participants of this study involved bombing that was targeted specifically toward Christian homes, businesses, and churches. Because of the intentional targeting of Christians, including Chaldeans, and other minorities, there was a feeling that

there is no safe place. During Saddam's time, this criminal activity would not have been tolerated, but because it was so wide spread following the removal of Saddam, Christians and other minority groups always had their guards up, and always wondered, if they were going to be the next victims. The research subjects explained how simple things like commuting from place to place, or even attending church, was dangerous because of the widely known bombings, or attempted bombings on churches.

According to Assyrian International News Agency's website, 119 churches, including 17 Chaldean Catholic churches, have either been attacked or bombed since June of 2004. The latest included the 1,400 year old St. Elijah's Monastery of Mosul which was completely leveled by ISIS, according to a January 2016 report from the news agency. In response to these church bombings, Interviewee Nine discussed how her mom would say something like, "Oh well, if we die, at least we will die in church." But she said for her it was very scary, and when she shared this she had a very pronounced look of terror on her face as she relived these memories.

Another interviewee had the same look of terror on his face when he described being evacuated out of the church mass due to a bomb that was placed next to the building. Fortunately, the bomb was detonated before it could kill and destroy. The below excepts bring to light the experiences of others who were also negatively impacted by church bombings.

> **Interviewee Eight:** You probably heard what happened to that church the Lady of Salvation.
> **Joseph:** In Baghdad?
> **Interviewee Eight:** Yeah
> **Joseph:** I heard about it.

> **Interviewee Eight:** Because when that happened to that church, that night, I took my decision to leave Iraq. That was 2010 and as I told you, my dad had a chance to leave Iraq in 2,000, and we told him we're not leaving, we have our jobs as engineers and we probably won't have good professions there. 2003 came and we still had good jobs and we used to be like above average family, and then 2006 came and it was the worst year that I ever witnessed in Iraq because the sectarian violence was the most and we survived as well and after that we bought a new house in another area where Christians were the majority. And in 2010 I get marriage in Iraq, so we wasn't really planning to travel, but I got married and I start feeling more responsible. And because of my job I was eligible to travel to the U. S. from Baghdad directly so I didn't have to go to Jordan as a refugee and apply and wait.
> **Joseph:** Were you a member of that church? Or did you attend that church?
> **Interviewee Eight:** Ah not really, it was for Syriac, not for Chaldean, but it was like really close to the church that I was attending, and during the mass, I remember that night, because the priest start acting very strange because he knew. We didn't know because we were in the mass, then they said there was a terrorist attack, and there's a couple like my dad's cousin was there. And he was one of the few survivors.

As stated earlier, bombings were not limited to churches, as homes and businesses were also targeted. Two of the research participants in this study are sisters that I interviewed on separate occasions. They both described how their family's liquor store was bombed and completely destroyed by religious radicals who they believe targeted them for two reasons, one being that they are Christians, and two because they were selling liquor, which is forbidden in the Quran. One of these sisters also explained being in her home when all of the windows shattered because a nearby bomb went off. She further described how radical groups, like Al-Qaeda would bomb a home in a Christian neighborhood as a sign for the others to leave before they faced the same fate. This tactic of radical groups may shed light on why nearly 25 percent of the internally displaced

individuals reported the loss of property as the main reason for their displacement (2009: 161-62).

Personal Death Threats

While the bombings and abductions would serve as very strong push factors to leave Iraq, personal death threats would certainly contribute as well. After asking Interviewee One if he had ever heard of anyone who received a death threat, he responded with the following story: “Oh of course, I actually kind of indirectly got threatened because I was a first ranking student at college. They told me, "You either cease to be the first ranking student, or we will have your life." I felt so offended, I said, I'm not going to be deliberately not the best, and so we left.” Interviewee Eight also received a death threat after Al Qaeda operatives suspected him of being a spy for the U.S. or for Israel, simply because of the military backup that he received while working to help poor people in dangerous places. He expressed frustration due to the fact that their first assumption was not that he was there to support the poor, but that he must be a spy, and they told him that he must therefore be killed. Interviewee Nine’s experience was quite similar as evident in the following excerpt.

> **Joseph:** Did you have any encounters with Al Qaeda?
> **Interviewee Nine:** I was this close to get killed by them. They took my car, I found out they fund their operations by robbing people.
> **Joseph:** You can get your car back if you pay extra money?
> **Interviewee Nine:** What happened is, I used to in the middle of doing projects with myself and the U.S. Army to create internet connections with them and all that. They can use it and make money. They issued me three badges to access the military complex nobody can have access without that. I used to have pistols in the car, and my laptop which has everything on there, and what else? So when I got robbed they took all these things with them and they found out that I'm working with the U.S. Army. So they

> started harassing me, and trying to kill me. That's why I left my neighborhood. So they called me a couple of times and they said we know all about you, and we'll fuck you up. Just wait, we will catch you.
> **Joseph:** You're not the first person that I've heard that's had this kind of death threat. I've talked with other people that have had the same thing. It's pretty scary, right? You probably don't sleep well at night.
> **Interviewee Nine:** You know, I have no choice, I am already known by them that I'm supporting the U.S. government. I am a Christian. So what am I going to do, go back home and not know how I'm going to make my living, or keep working with the U.S Army and have somebody to back you up in case something happen. It's better than leave them and stay home because you will be killed.

Perhaps the most dramatic account related to personal death threats came from the rather suspenseful and nail biting story provided by Interviewee Six. In the below excerpt he explains how he was put on a hit list, stalked, and threatened simply because of his views on Israel and the United States' involvement in Iraq.

> **Interviewee Six:** And one day there was a conversation about the Arab/Israeli issue and ah I was talking to some people and ah they say that we have to liberate Iraq from the Americans and then we have to go on and finish the job with Israel, so I told them, I said during the Saddam's era we were not allowed to say this, but now as they say there is freedom of speech, so when will the Arabs understand that Israel does not belong to them? And I told them read the history, it belongs to Israel, to the Jews, God gave it to them, and when I said that it triggered!
> **Joseph:** Anger?
> **Interviewee Six:** Yeah, one of them said, I'd shoot you know if I had a gun on me.
> **Joseph:** Wow, that's pretty extreme!
> **Interviewee Six:** Anyway so that started it, and a while later in 2005, early 2005 I was approached by some people at night and ah they said we want you, they came at night and I was terrified to open the door because they would shoot you and nobody knows... Yeah!
> **Joseph:** And when they're coming at night it makes you kind of nervous.
> **Interviewee Six:** And there was a curfew at the time, yeah there was a curfew at the time, and that's why I was a bit, (nervous) and he said don't worry we just want to talk to you, nobody is going to harm you. They were all covered.
> **Joseph:** Wow!

Interviewee Six went on to explain how they asked him to join them in kicking out the invaders (the U.S. and its allies). He responded by stating to them how ridiculous it is to think that Iraq could fight against the American forces and how that it makes more sense to work with the Americans and to allow them to rebuild the country as they had pledged. He also stated to them that the Americans will not stay forever because it's too expensive for them to stay. In response to this they said, "You so and so Christians, you love them too much, so you deserved to be killed like them." After this conversation they drove away, but from this point on he was basically stalked by them. He was told by different people to be careful because he was being watched. A neighbor came to him and said, "Be careful people are being beheaded. Be careful people are watching you."

Due to these threats, he decided to move his family to a large apartment complex that was very populated. He thought they could hide there amongst the crowed, but he was wrong. One day when he was stopped in a traffic jam, a police officer pulled up next to him and said you moved, and then proceeded to tell him the exact location of his building as well as his address. The officer then said, "You can run, but you cannot hide." He learned shortly after this that he was on a hit list and that it was only a matter of time before his name would be next on the list to be killed.

He also heard that it could be his wife and kids that would be targeted. With this knowledge he immediately put his wife and kids on a plane for Jordan and then he lived in hiding while making trips back and forth to his apartment to move stuff out. After he removed all of the family's belongings, he joined his family in Jordan. Before leaving,

though, he told his friends, “I'm not going to come back to this country anymore because it's ruined it’s unfortunate, it's so sad!”

Three Infamous Choices

It is difficult to imagine living in an environment where you are in constant fear for your life as well as for the lives of your friends and family, especially when you know you are being watched. In addition to all of the fears discussed above, some of the research subjects mentioned the possibility of being confronted with the three infamous choices posed by religious radicals: 1) Convert to our brand of Islam, 2) Pay a tax for non-conversion, or 3) Off with your head. One interviewee mentioned that she knew of an individual who agreed to convert, but they killed him anyways.

Given these tough choices, along with all of the violence outlined above, it’s not surprising that the people interviewed made the decision to leave, and some of the participants expressed that if they had not left when they did, they probably would not be alive today. Their decision to leave, however, was not only based on the prevalence of violence, as there were other powerful push factors involved not only in the decision to leave, but also in the potential for the myth of return. The next section will address the tremendous chaos that engulfed Iraq following the removal of Saddam.

Chaos Following Saddam Era

One theme that was rather pronounced throughout the data was the high level of discontent due to the extreme dysfunction that emerged following the removal of Saddam. Without exception, every research subject strongly emphasized the contrast between Iraq before 2003, when Saddam was still in power, with the Iraq after 2003. Post

2003 Iraq was a very different place from the Iraq that existed before. The interviewees attributed several factors behind the dysfunction that emerged post 2003. These include 1) The transition between a Sunni controlled government and a Shia controlled government, 2) The United States' mismanagement of Iraq, 3) Sectarianism, 4) Power vacuums, 5) Corruption,

6) Incompetence including the loss of competent professionals, 7) the loss of protective laws, and 8) the loss of basic social services including education, health care, and law enforcement. I will address the United States' mismanagement of Iraq in the next chapter dealing with the push/pull factors involved in the decision to stay in the Detroit area or to perhaps return to Iraq, but for now the focus will be on the transition within the Iraqi government which one interviewee described as, "Too fast and shabby!"

Incompetent Shia leaders

Perhaps the transition from a Sunni controlled government to a Shia controlled government would not have been all that problematic, except the Shia leaders lacked the experience necessary to govern a country. At least this was the opinion of the participants in this study who complained that not only were these leaders incompetent, but they were corrupt as well. As discussed in chapter one, the Sunnis, although they were the numerical minority, were the dominant group and therefore were experienced at governing, whereas the Shia were not. The following excerpt from Interviewee Six is representative of the frustrations and disappointments that the others in the study also felt toward the new Shia leaders.

> **Interviewee Six:** It's corrupt the people who came to rule the country. I was telling a friend the other day, you feel like your country is being kidnapped by a group of thugs, ok? They call themselves politicians but they have no, the slightest clue how to run a country.
> **Joseph:** Inexperienced?
> **Interviewee Six:** Inexperienced one day I was listening to a documentary comparing the former government with the new government, and one of the new politicians was saying that, How did this whole nation rule for so many years and be brutal like that? And I replied there's an Arabic website, it's a news website and you can read the article and make comments underneath it. So I made a comment I said, it's surprising, how did they let Saddam do that, and how do they let you now rule with no experience? You messed the country up, at least at the time when Saddam was in power...
> **Joseph:** There was order and...(Joe)
> **Interviewee Six:** Yea, you could go out at one O clock or midnight without even thinking that someone was going to harm you. Security was too good, it was too secure, it was extra secure, you see?

Although all of the participants were critical of Shia leadership, about half (5 out of 11) argued that the Shia were kinder to Christians, than were the Sunni, and some were rather firm in this belief. The others basically saw no difference between Shia and Sunni with regard to their treatment of Christians. One interviewee explained that the Shia leaders were not only unfair toward the Sunni, but also to other Shia, especially the poor Shia who he believed were neglected by the new Shia government.

Systemic Corruption

In addition to the unanimously held view regarding Shia governmental incompetence and corruption, all of the interviewees also expressed concern regarding widespread corruption throughout society as well as the breakdown of law and order due to a loss of formal police officers as well as through blatant disregard for the law. Several participants complained that you can basically do whatever you want so long as you pay the right

people. If you want to kill or steal from someone, just pay the judge and you will walk away. One interviewee explained how he had a minor case involving damage to his car that was caused by another driver. He said it should have just been a simple case, but the corrupt judge was demanding a $2,000.00 U.S. fee just to hear the case. With the constant fear of violence, coupled with a loss of law enforcement and a corrupt judicial system, if there even is a judicial system at all, many of the research subjects expressed feelings of vulnerability from the lack of legal protection. This feeling of vulnerability is clearly expressed in the following excerpt.

> **Interviewee Four:** I don't know what the term is. I will tell you something, because in the last years there is no rules, and systems in Iraq, so if I make accident, if I hit somebodies when I'm driving there is no Judge, or court, or police station to give me my right and to give the victim their right; you know what I mean? No there is a group of persons, of families. So maybe the victims or the families of the victims were asking me, "Who is your family? Who is you belong to? We will go to your family to negotiate with them to take money from them instead of the victim; you know what I mean? So there is no government to go to.
> **Joseph:** This is after 2003? (Joe)
> **Interviewee Four:** Yea, this is after, but before, there is police station and courts.
> **Joseph:** So that would make it very challenging!
> **Interviewee Four:** Because I am a Christian, I don't have this like the Muslim, who are you belong to, because all of my family is here. So who are they going to negotiate with? I have no big family to support me.
> **Joseph:** That makes you vulnerable.
> **Interviewee Four:** Yea, it make me feeling fear.

Societal Change/Sectarianism

One of the ideas emphasized in the above excerpt as well as throughout this chapter so far is the tremendous amount of change that occurred in Iraq following the removal of Saddam in 2003. Interviewee Seven described it as, “a whole decade worth of change in just one year” (between 2002 and 2003). The participants in this study described changes

at every level, and up to this point I have shared data involving changes at the meso and macro levels, but the participants discussed how "individuals" also changed after 2003. Many described how people they knew for years suddenly changed and became almost unrecognizable. At the same time they also noticed growing dissention and sectarianism in society. The changes in individuals were basically attributed to religious influences. It is almost as if Saddam and his fairly secular regime, suppressed religious devotion and practices, but once his proverbial thumb was removed, suddenly people were able to express their pent up religiosity and became rather zealous and more separatist in their attitudes to outsiders.

The participants also discussed how before 2003, hardly anyone noticed who was a Sunni, or a Shia, or a Christian, but after 2003, suddenly, people started taking note of the distinctions. Related to this change, Interviewee Eight discussed how the sectarian influence was exacerbated after the United States brought people into government who were outside of the political process, and who were sectarian in their religious views. The following quote from Interviewee Eight emphasizes his feelings regarding this. "Yeah they brought in people from the outside based on their religious beliefs, so that was the first, you know, crack starting in the community. Before that we didn't even know who's a Shia and who's a Sunni. It wasn't recognized like that, it was really like one contiguity, but after that, from the name, from the name, (raised voice) oh this one she's that, or he's talking this language so he's Shia, this one's Sunni, this one's Christian, this is a Kurdish."

Perhaps this condition that he describes is also due to the fact that under Saddam, everyone had a common enemy to fear, and that was Saddam. Under these conditions,

they were inclined to set aside their differences and band together, but when their common enemy was gone, then people began to express their true selves and then began to turn on each other. Interviewee Ten put it this way, "During Saddam's time, we had one person to fear, now there are many people to fear, but you don't know who." The following excerpt clearly expresses some of the frustrations, also shared by others in the study, regarding how people changed along sectarian lines.

> **Interviewee Ten:** more strict beliefs started with the Sunni people, yeah I had some friends, they stopped watching TV, they stopped putting any statues at their homes, they started, like very weird beliefs! I don't know what happened to them. They are not my friends actually we were together at the college.
> **Joseph:** So you saw a change.
> **Interviewee Ten:** I saw changes, yeah.
> **Joseph:** I've heard that from people, especially after 2003. People started changing and they started noticing the differences.
> **Interviewee Ten:** Yeah, so probably those, one hundred percent, they moved to extreme beliefs.
> **Joseph:** So, during Saddam's regime, you didn't really pay much attention to who was a Shia and who was a Sunni, but after Saddam...
> **Interviewee Ten:** Yes there was, but after it was very very obvious. Sometimes my friends who follow Facebook will see some comments from their friends that are very aggressive between each other, even in the news; sometimes it's very discriminatory when you see the comments, even in the news.
> **Joseph:** Yeah, that's very interesting.
> **Interviewee Ten:** Big changes!
> **Joseph:** In a very short period of time!
> **Interviewee Ten:** A very short period of time! Our neighbors were diverse, we had some Sunni, some Shia, Christians, some from the north of Iraq some from the south of Iraq, we were all friends, we were neighbors, we shared everything. We shared the Christmas; we shared the Muslims' feast, everything together. I don't know what happened now, they share these things anymore or they don't. I don't think because if you (a Muslim) say, "Merry Christmas" to Christian people, this is a sin. You can't say this anymore. Before they celebrate, even some Muslims they used to put a Christmas tree in their house, now they don't.

Oppression of Women

In addition to all of the above mentioned sectarian changes, there were also substantial changes related to the status of women following 2003 with the rise of extreme religious influences. Some of the concerns raised by the women and men in this study include, forced hijab wearing, not being able to leave the house or to drive without a male chaperone, and simply a reduction in opportunities available to women. All of the interviewees, who discussed concerns related to the status of women in Iraq, mentioned the pressure, which didn't exist before 2003, to wear hijabs. The type of pressure that was discussed by these participants was not mere peer pressure, but rather that it simply was not safe for any woman, regardless of religious affiliation, to go out in public without covering, as you could be killed, and you could even jeopardize the safety of the people that you were with.

The loss of freedom and opportunities for women presents a very strong push factor, and also serves to reduce the presence of the myth of return. The below excerpts really emphasize the above concerns raised by the participants and their stories shed light on what it was like being woman in a country that became a very different place. The first excerpt is from Interviewee Seven.

> **Interviewee Seven:** There's no future for us, even if you finish school like, you can't, for women you can't drive.
> **Joseph:** It wasn't always that way?
> **Interviewee Seven:** It wasn't always that way it wasn't that bad, like my mom she drive ever since she was 19 in the 80s. She actually used to take us shopping; my dad was like," take them," my dad he doesn't have this responsibility (both laugh). So my mom was the one who drives and takes us shopping if you need anything, especially before 2003. Even after 2003, but when it started getting really really bad in 2006 and 2007 when the civil

> war started; it's really bad, so even at that point my dad has to come with us.
> **Joseph:** So what was the difference, so part of the reason for leaving was security, but part of it was also because of being a female in this area that's being controlled by religious radicals? Or would you say it that way? I don't want to put words in your mouth.
> **Interviewee Seven:** Yeah yeah, because the country is not safe and being a female it's really bad, you have no future, basically, even if you finish your education there's no jobs opportunity there's basically nothing to do there.

Just to clarify, Interviewee Seven was not saying that it was against Iraqi law to drive, but that it simply was not safe, especially without a male chaperone. The below comments by Interviewee Eight describe just how unsafe it was in certain places for women to leave the house without covering.

> **Interviewee Eight:** So this is the situation that a lot of the time when you're moving in the streets and when you are carpooling to the university or to work you might notice check points for hijabs, especially in Sunni neighborhoods. Hey, why you're not putting a scarf over your head. Listen, driver, next time if we see anybody who's not wearing a hijab we are going to kill you!
> **Joseph:** Hmm, Wow!
> **Interviewee Eight:** So the driver will say, please put on a hijab, I know you're Christians but this is the way that it is. Otherwise, I'm sorry stay home.
> **Joseph:** So your wife would cover up, just to stay safe?
> **Interviewee Eight:** Sometimes, yeah, she has to, yeah.

Although women felt pressure to wear the hijab due to safety concerns, Interviewee Five refused to wear the hijab because it does not represent who she is. In the following exchange between her and her husband and me, she describes why the loss of freedom for women was a major push factor for her.

> **Interviewee Five:** Yes, but also in Iraq you cannot....He feel more free than me, but I don't! I can't go to the door, I can't open the door to anyone in Iraq, I can't walk, I can't drive I cannot go to work. I'm not free there!
> **Interviewee Four:** I will explain this to you.....

Joseph: Is that because you're a woman?
Interviewee Five: A women, yes, also I don't put this thing over my head (the hijab).
Joseph: Did you ever feel like you wanted to for safety?
Interviewee Five: No no, I don't!
Interviewee Four: The place where she was working they asked her, why you don't put the hijab on?
Interviewee Five: Yea, they asked me, "Why you don't put the hijab on?"
Joseph: So for you leaving Iraq was about safety and freedom?
Interviewee Five: Yes, I couldn't go out without my husband.
Interviewee Four: She need freedom as a woman, not like here where the women, she can driving, and fighting, and anything.
Joseph: She can do anything?
Interviewee Four: Anything! Because our culture is different and especially the Muslim culture don't give the rights to the woman. As you know now when you hear the news that in the Saudi Arabia they don't let the ladies driving the car. But after 2003 these issues became worse than before. I told you why, because of the rule of the religious parties, this is why.

The pressure to wear the hijab following 2003 did not only impact Christian and other minority women, but according to Interviewee Ten in the following excerpt, it also had an impact on Muslim women as well.

Joseph: Did you notice, or did you hear from friends or family who were still there after 2003 that there were different concerns that women experienced, like pressures from religious groups maybe to wear the hijab?
Interviewee ten: At that time, no during the 70s and 80s, like you don't see Hijab at all, like you might see one or two and the old ladies back at that time, they wore the black cape, I don't know what you call it, but that's what they wear. They didn't wear all these decals that they wear now, like the hijab, and it was not mandatory.
Joseph: Even for Muslim women?
Interviewee Ten: I'm talking about Muslim women.
Joseph: Oh wow.
Interviewee Ten: Now, my immediate family, my aunt in Basara, and my cousin they are wearing hijab, even if they are Christian because they would be killed!
Joseph: Because they are afraid to go out without it?
Interviewee Ten: Yes, they are afraid. They didn't convert to Islam, but they are afraid.
Joseph: They are just doing it to protect themselves?

> **Interviewee Ten:** Yeah, to protect themselves.
> **Joseph:** Do they resent having to do that?
> **Interviewee Ten:** They have no choice! They can't go with uncovered heads out in the streets or shopping, and this is since 2003, I'm telling you.
> **Joseph:** That's a big change.

Although there was pressure for women to cover up when out in public, Interviewee Seven noted that the university, at least the one she attended, was one public place where women were free to remove their hijabs. She described how she would wear the hijab during her commute to the university, but once there, she would take it off. She said that a lot of women, including Muslim women, did the same thing.

Non Violent Push Factors

Although the loss of freedom for women, including forced hijab wearing, the chaotic conditions, the corruption, as well as the extreme violence that griped Iraq following 2003 are certainly among the most powerful push factors contributing to the decision to leave, they are not the only factors involved. Other factors at play would include Chaldean suspicion of Muslims, Muslim suspicion of Christians including Chaldeans, Discrimination against Chaldeans, as well as a loss of basic public services and utilities. I will address each of these additional factors listed above, as they were all prominent findings that emerged out of the data. I will begin by discussing the issue pertaining to the Chaldean suspicion of Muslims.

Suspicion of Muslims

When considering the minority and marginalized status of Chaldeans in Iraq, it is not a shocking find to learn that the Chaldean refugees in this study, who have fled persecution, would harbor mistrust and suspicion of Muslims who make up the dominant group in Iraq.

Even though this finding was rather prominent, it does not necessarily mean the refugees in this study viewed "all" Muslims with suspicion; and I will discuss later on, it also does not necessarily mean that they do not have friendly relationships with Muslims. However, there is still the potential for suspicion, even among Muslims who they consider friends. One intriguing example of this came from Interviewee One, where he discussed his mistrust of a Muslim friend.

> **Interviewee One:** Do I have friends, even my best friend who's Muslim, and I'm doubting the fact that he's my best friend anymore because he cannot cease to be a Muslim. You know, a tiger will not get rid of its spots or its lines, whatever it is. But I only have one friend that I really care for that's in Iraq. He is a Sunni, no he's Shiite, you see you might hear a lot about, oh well Sunnis were persecuted too, by Shiites, no, they were not persecuted as much as Christians because guess what, you're both Muslims, there's a certain level, a very high level of things that you share and it's your religion.

The above excerpt serves as an example of an idea, expressed by others in the study, where the mistrust isn't so much with the Muslim people per se, but with Islam in general. Related to this idea involves the earlier discussion where I shared some of the interviewees' stories about how people changed after 2003 by expressing Islamic religiosity in a more robust way. The concern of the participants in this study wasn't so much with the people themselves, but with the influence of Islam on their friends and acquaintances. In some of my conversations that I had with Chaldean refugees, including some that I interviewed, there was the belief that the "nice" Muslims are not very religious, but once they become more religious, and once they start reading the Quran, they become radicalized. Not everyone in this study held these views, and later on I will point out examples of where the interviewees made distinctions between peace loving

Muslims and radical Muslims. The following excerpts express views related to suspicion of Muslims, or perhaps more precisely to radical forms of Islam. The first excerpt is very interesting and sheds some light on the cultural influences that occurred when Al Qaeda was gaining control in the region in which this interviewee lived.

> **Interviewee One:** I was in college when Al Qaeda had part of Baghdad, um we were not to wear jeans, we were not to pluck our eyebrows, if we do. Ah, we were not to eat tomato with cucumber.
> **Joseph:** Interesting!
> **Interviewee One:** You know why?
> **Joseph:** No
> **Interviewee One:** This is a sexual reference.
> **Joseph:** I didn't know.
> **Interviewee One:** A tomato, in the Arabic language nouns are feminine and masculine, so a tomato is a girl plant and a cucumber is....
> **Joseph:** I can see the connection.
> **Interviewee One:** You can see the reference?
> **Joseph:** Yeah, interesting!
> **Interviewee One:** The Iraqis make salad with tomato and cucumber together and the marriage of that is a sexual reference and therefore should be banned.
> **Joseph:** So Al Qaeda was trying to get this banned?
> **Interviewee One:** Yeah!
> **Joseph:** Interesting! (Both laugh)
> **Interviewee One:** You should not drink ice or utilize ice because that was made by the infidels.
> **Joseph:** Wow, Interesting!
> **Interviewee One:** You could not wear certain colors, women had to wear hijabs.
> **Joseph:** Even Christian women?
> **Interviewee One:** Yeah, my sister and my mom had busses that took them to school, and the driver said that if you're not wearing a hijab, I cannot take you because I'm not risking my life and everyone else's,
> **Joseph:** Interesting! How wide spread was Al Qaeda in your area?
> **Interviewee One:** Let me tell you something; Sunni, Shiite, Al Qaeda, ISIS, what's the common denominator?
> **Joseph:** They're all part of the same religion, different sects, but same religion. **Interviewee One:** They're very similar. That's why I disagree with people who say not all Muslims are corrupt, oh no they all are in the sense that I can make an ISIS person out of any Muslim person right now.

> Because you have the mobilization, you have the verses, the rationale, you have your case

A similar perspective on Muslims came from a couple (Interviewees Three and Four) who had a very large and newly built home in Iraq with modern architectural design (They showed me a picture and it was a very impressive looking house). They lost literally everything in a matter of two hours when ISIS marched into their town, and now ISIS is living in their house while they live in a humble trailer home in the Detroit area. While they are glad to be alive, they are sadden and understandably angry by their tremendous loss. The following excerpt expresses their distrust of Muslims which is most likely due to their experiences while living in Iraq.

> **Interviewee Two:** Well, you know the first time I would became to the United States, I think I have my home in Iraq, and I say to myself I will bank all of my money from here to the United States, and growing up in Iraq all the Muslim community you cannot trust them at all times. And in my imagination, I always say, all we have sometimes the Muslims will be take it, but I don't imagine in this time, in my life, not until 30 years, 60 years, that this will happen. But we come here to the United Sates with nothing.
> **Interviewee Three:** Nothing
> **Interviewee Two:** We start from zero, under the zero. You know the life in America it's very difficult.
> **Interviewee Three:** Only in my dress, only in my dress come.
> **Interviewee Two:** If we going to the Turkish, to Turkey, also the radical. Muslims, all the Turkey radical, Iran, Shia, Syria, radical Sunni, Jordan, radical Sunni. The source of the terrorist is Saudi Arabia. When you live with Muslims, I don't say that, but it's true, when you live with Muslims always you make your eyes open. You don't know where and when he come and put his knife in your back.
> **Interviewee Three:** All the time this soldier, just killed killed killed! War War!
> **Joseph:** So fear, you're living in fear, you can't trust...
> **Interviewee Two:** You can't trust anyone, you can't trust.
> **Joseph:** Do you think that was part of the reason why you left Iraq too, other than you didn't have a choice?

> **Interviewee Two:** Yes, we don't have any choice, we don't have, yeah! I had two daughters in Iraq and if I stay in Iraq I don't know what time, after one month, two month, they come and take automobile or car, kill me and take my wife and daughters.
> **Interviewee Three:** Yeah yeah!
> **Interviewee Two:** This is very easy!
> **Interviewee Three:** Very easy, they kill and take my daughters too!

Although all of the interviewees demonstrated a certain level of suspicion toward Muslims, the interviewees who were directly targeted by death threats, or by great material loss, like the couple featured in the above transcript, seemed to have the strongest feelings of mistrust. These individuals also tended to see all Muslims in the same negative light whereas the interviewees who were not directly targeted tended to distinguish between peaceful Muslims and radical Muslims. Interviewee One, like the above couple, demonstrated a high level of suspicion of Muslims, as evident in the prior excerpt, and he also received a personal death threat because of his top academic rank that presented a threat to dominant group members at his school.

Likewise, Interviewee Six also demonstrated a high level of suspicion, and he, as discussed earlier, was stalked and received multiple death threats. Although he had a high level of distrust of Muslims, he did make some distinctions, as he explained that the Shia, on average, are nicer to Christians than are the Sunni. One example of his suspicion of Muslims became apparent in a conversation pertaining to the status of his family that is still in Iraq. In response to my question about whether or not his family received the kind of death threats he did, he stated, “Not yet. I think my two cousins are working, and one of them bought a house recently. They think they are safe. I told them, you think it. God

forbid that you don't protect yourself, because you are a minority, a very small minority. You're under the mercy of them!"

Unfamiliar People Surfaced

Somewhat related to this conversation regarding suspicion of Muslims, involves the observation made by three of the interviewees regarding a change where unfamiliar people started surfacing and then took charge and began running the streets. The suspicion was that these unfamiliar people were Al Qaeda operatives, but no one really knew for sure whether these people were affiliated with Al Qaeda or not. The first excerpt related to these unfamiliar people comes from Interviewee Six.

> **Interviewee Six:** After Saddam Husain was removed it turns into chaos and it was really awful.
> **Joseph:** A big change.
> **Interviewee Six:** Oh yea, it was insecure, there was no security. Suddenly people that you have never known before begin to surface not knowing where they came from, and they start running the streets and they start controlling everything, and the lack of security reached a point where anybody could do anything to anybody without being punished or you can go and mug people and you can go and unfortunately rape one without being punished.
> **Joseph:** As sociologists we call that anomie.

The next two transcripts from Interviewee Seven and Interviewee Eleven exhibit similar observations as Interviewee Six.

> **Joseph:** Did you know anyone who belonged to Al Qaeda?
> **Interviewee Seven:** No, you know they're there, but they are hiding. So you know when you live in a neighborhood for like, your whole life? I was born there and I turned 18 when I left, so almost my whole life there. So you know when there's strangers walking in your area, these people they don't belong here, you know, because you know your neighbors, I know my cousins' friends, but when you see strangers you know these people they're not from here, but you don't know their names.
> **Joseph:** Yea and you don't want to ask, and

> **Interviewee Seven:** Exactly!
> **Joseph:** Did you have any encounters with Al Qaeda, or know of anyone that was a part of Al Qaeda?
> **Interviewee Eleven:** No, tried to stay away. Our neighborhood was mainly Sunni. Our neighborhood, let's say we had like 20 houses. So Al Qaeda, they take over our neighborhood, let's say it's like they are taking West Bloomfield. You start seeing them in the streets.... You don't know who they are, and you cannot do anything. Maybe they're involved with the people, or maybe they are neighbors, we don't know, they could be Al Qaeda.

Muslim Suspicion of Chaldeans

As I mentioned earlier, the attitudes of suspicion and prejudice were not limited to Chaldeans, as Muslims were also suspicious of Christians and other minorities, including Chaldeans. The Muslim attitudes described by the participants in this study are reminiscent of Herbert Blumer's identification of dominant group traits as highlighted by Lawrence et al (1996:955). Specifically, the dominant group trait which tends to see minority groups as having designs on the prerogatives of the dominant group, as well as the dominant group trait involving the attitude that it is superior to the minority group. The other traits, identified by Blumer, are also most likely involved, but I did not detect them in the data.

One area of suspicion involves assumptions based on the principle of guilt by association. For example, the United States is perceived to be a Christian country on the one hand, and since Chaldeans are also Christians, it's assumed they must therefore be sympathetic to the United States and its involvement in Iraq. However, all but one of the Chaldeans in this study, as I will discuss in the next chapter, were quite critical of the United States' involvement in Iraq. The following quote from Interviewee Two highlights

this type of suspicion based on the faulty assumption of guilt by association. "The Muslims radical say, "The army of the United States is Christian, so you Christian so you be like them the enemy of us. Yes, and when the 2003 started the war and the Saddam Regime would end, eh, gradually, step by step the persecution of the Christian would be growing up step by step." Similarly, Interviewee Six shared how after explaining his view that Iraqis should allow the United States to rebuild Iraq, he was told by some radicals that, "You so and so and so Christians, you love them too much, so you deserved to be killed like them!"

The type of attitude related to the dominant group trait which sees itself as being superior to a minority group was also described by the interviewees. Zetter (1994: 212) mentioned there is a greater likelihood of the myth of return if immigrants feel like second class citizens in their relationship with the host society where they have relocated. If this is the case, it would seem logical that the opposite would also be true, where if the immigrants felt like second class citizens in their homeland, then there would be a diminished likelihood of the myth of return. The second class status described by the interviewees involved prejudice and discrimination which existed both before 2003 and after, but especially after. The next excerpt from Interviewee Eight describes the discrimination Chaldeans have faced before 2003 and after.

> **Interviewee Eight:** Because Christian has been targeted all the time, since 1919, if you heard about the targeting of the Christians in the north of Iraq, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriac as well
> **Joseph:** Is that after Britain left?
> **Interviewee Eight:** Yeah, exactly, after show off revolution. People didn't really, because we was like, eh, whether you admit it or not, we were not

really practicing our Christianity normal. We can't go to church in a regular way, we have to hide something or we can't practice our routine regular.
Joseph: Since 1919?
Interviewee Eight: Yeah, all over, even when I talk to my friends now days, who say, do you remember how it was when we were discriminated against? How it was in secondary school, primary school. Everybody was laughing about how we prayed, you guys are all infidel.
Joseph: You experienced that too?
Interviewee Eight: Of course, I'm talking about myself. And even now, the other generation, my dad, we're all the same, because living as a minority in the community always like eh, especially like uneducated people and eh, let me say this, Islam particularly, they are having difficulties living with others peacefully. Because now we all know that their holy book asks them to do that. This is a well-known thing that we learned while we were there. This is a fact, you cannot change that.
Joseph: So you became accustomed to living under that kind of oppression?
Interviewee Eight: Exactly, you have to modify yourself, and always consider yourself as a second kind of people, like eh, not the first class, second class, always.
Joseph: Did that get worse after 2003?
Interviewee Eight: Oh yeah, definitely, 100 percent. Because, as I told you, all that but no one can mess with you because of your religion, because the government was so strong, and they had the same thing in Egypt, same thing in Syria as well. But after the good government, the strong government go away, it's a mess. You're a very easy target for them.
Joseph: So you would say life was better for Christians under Saddam, then now?
Interviewee Eight: Yes! Definitely! Yeah because even for those people who want to hurt you with the presence of good government or strong government security. Ah with a good security it's less chance. More protection, you can go to church. It's not very pleasant for them, but you can go and you can practice and you can do whatever you want. But after that there's certain times you cannot go.

Similar to the above excerpt, Interviewee One described, in the below dialogue, a type of "glass ceiling" that existed before 2003.

Interviewee One: And living in Iraq, we can actually say, if you want to describe it would be in my life, it would be the pre 2003 and after, post 2003 era, because these are two very distinctly different.
Joseph: Especially for Chaldeans.

> **Interviewee One:** Yes, very! And um up until 2003 or until Saddam was in power and was still in power Chaldeans were still kind of liked and protected by him. One thing, though, Chaldeans would never get to higher management positions. No CEO, no general manager, no department head.
> **Joseph:** Were those only open to Sunni Muslims?
> **Interviewee One:** Sunnis pre 2003 and Shiites post 2003.

Few Friends and Family Left in Iraq

The discrimination that took place before 2003, and especially after, certainly contributed to a major push factor to leave Iraq, and when combined with all of the other push factors discussed thus far, the pressure to depart must have been tremendous. However, there were other push factors that also contributed greatly. These other push factors all involve some type of loss. The greatest type of loss experienced by some of the interviewees, involved the loss of friends and family, as well as the loss of the Chaldean community in general. As discussed in Chapter Two, Moore and Shellman (2004: 730) found people are more likely to leave their homelands, if other friends and family left before them. This is not a surprising find, as the loss of friends and family would most certainly produce a feeling of loneliness. Interviewee Seven described the feeling of loneliness as all of her family left Iraq in the following excerpt.

> **Joseph:** Any other reasons why you left besides security, lack of opportunity?
> **Interviewee Seven:** Security, lack of opportunity, my relatives, all of my people, they are all here. My family was actually the last family who actually left Baghdad.
> **Joseph:** And that feels kind of lonely?
> **Interviewee Seven:** Lonely, Yeah, and the rest of my family, my uncles, everybody is in metro Detroit area.
> **Joseph:** So that would be the factor that led you to Metro Detroit?
> **Interviewee Seven:** Yea, back in the days, even before 2003, you feel sad and start crying, but now we're last people to leave and we're not sad. There's no one to say good bye to.

> **Joseph:** Right, yeah that's interesting, it's sad if you don't leave.
> **Interviewee Seven:** We don't have anybody left there, my family, my relatives, everybody left. So basically even if you stay in your own country, what's the point?

Interviewee Four had a similar experience, and he discussed the feeling of loneliness and the loss of family as the second major factor, behind a lack of security, for leaving. In response to my question regarding what was his number one reason for leaving Iraq, he stated, "The security and the second issue is feeling lonely because after 2003 many of our friends and family started to escape and flee so I found myself living alone in Baghdad without any friends, any relatives, just keeping in touch with them through Facebook, by phone so it's hard." Although Interviewee Four's wife (Interviewee Five) still had most of her family in Iraq, she expressed a different type of loneliness that they both experienced due to the loss of the Christian community in Iraq. Although some of the interviewees experienced loss in Iraq as their friends and family were leaving, others experienced a loss by leaving behind friends and family when they left Iraq. This later case is an example of a pull factor to return to Iraq. I will discuss this pull factor in more detail in the next chapter.

Loss of Community Services/Brain Drain

In addition to the loss of friends and family while living in Iraq, another major form of loss identified by the research subjects involved the loss of basic community services. I already discussed the loss within the criminal justice system, but there are other community services which were also compromised, such as quality health care, education, and in some cases, basic utilities such as water and electricity. These push factors were also identified and discussed by Sassoon (158). Part of the reason behind the loss of

quality health care and education, according to some of the research subjects, as well as Sassoon, (140) was due to a devastating "brain drain" in which many of the professionals in the fields of education and health care simply left the country when things became too chaotic and violent. Interviewee Nine addresses this brain drain in the following dialogue.

> **Interviewee Nine:** Living in Iraq, no it's a hell, because most of the people are ignorant, they don't know, they don't have an education. All the educated people left Iraq. I have a lot of friends here, physicians, engineers, they're Iraqi. Yesterday I went with my fiancé out with my friend and his wife, both of them are Doctors and their parents are doctors, surgeons. So we were talking about all of the surgeries there, and she showed me a picture of her mom operating on a woman. And I thought, what a loss to Iraq to leave, to have her mom leave Iraq to Jordan to practice her medicine, you know her profession in Jordan. We need her back in Iraq because there's a lot of people, if you get sick in Iraq you have to leave Iraq to go to Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey to get treatment.
> **Joseph:** I've heard that heath care in Iraq is really bad since 2003.
> **Interviewee Nine:** Horrible! Horrible!

In another section of the transcript, Interviewee Nine discusses how the loss of educated people has also impacted the political process in a negative way.

> **Interviewee Nine:** Yeah, people are stupid and the government is stupid, the only thing they know is to steal money and corruption.
> **Joseph:** It's disorganized?
> **Interviewee Nine:** Disorganized. And the reason why the Iraqi government is so fucked up right now is because the people, who're electing them, are ignorant! They don't know how to read and write, they elect a picture. The picture is a symbol of this guy from this party, he is so religion and he's Sayyid, it means this guy is a Sayyid, he's related to this Imam Ali, he's very religious, he knows God and because this party has this guy and because the people like this party.
> **Joseph:** It doesn't matter if he has experience?
> **Interviewee Nine:** It doesn't matter if he has experience. You need people with an education who will say, this guy is an engineer, but him in this place. This guy is a doctor put him the ministry of medicine. Put this guy in the ministry of transportation. You cannot put someone here and there just because he belongs to this party and to have him control and lead facilities in the government, he cannot do that. So that's what's happening

> in Iraq, it's not like here in the United States where if you want someone in a certain position, you have to have certain qualifications.
> **Joseph:** And this is all after 2003 this change?
> **Interviewee Nine:** Yeah.

When considering all of the problems that have become so pervasive in Iraq, one would at least hope that there would be qualified individuals throughout the various sectors of society that could assist in the establishment of order and who could offer their expertise where it is needed most. In addition to the above losses, Interviewee Eight expressed his concern with the current condition of public education in Iraq, which he said was, "a mess" and stated this as one of the major reasons why he left, as he wanted his young daughter to receive a quality education.

The last concern related to push factors involves a loss in utilities. Interviewees Four, Five, and Ten, all discussed how in Baghdad, there were times when they experienced interruptions in services like electricity, and clean drinking water. Interviewees Four and Five also discussed the difficulty in trying to sleep without air conditioning when it is 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Pull Factors to Return to Iraq

Clearly the long list of push factors discussed in this chapter combine to create a virtual tsunami like force that has strongly influenced the decision to leave Iraq. These push factors also have a bearing on the myth of return, which I will discuss in chapter six. Although all of these push factors contributed to the decision to leave Iraq, there are also strong pull factors related to the potential decision to return. However, I should point out the list of pull factors is substantially shorter than the list of push factors and the pull

factors seemed to have little impact on the potential decision to return. This second section will focus on pull factors such as family and friends in Iraq, a desire to preserve Chaldean culture in the Middle East, economic factors including improved economy following 2003, and good relationships with Muslims.

Family Left Behind

Most likely the strongest pull factor that could contribute to a decision to return to Iraq would be family that was left behind. Out of the eleven interviewees, five had some family in Iraq, and one said most of her family was in Iraq. The remaining five indicated all of their family has left Iraq, and most of them have relocated to the Detroit area.

Even though having family in Iraq would seem to be a strong pull factor, only one of the interviewees (Interviewee Three) with family in Iraq indicated that she would like to return, but she did not see return as a likely possibility. She also cited other reasons (The loss of her family's beautiful house, her career, as well as several of the push factors mentioned earlier) besides family for wanting to return. As I stated, though, Interviewee Five was an exception as the other interviewees with family had no desire to return. Even Interviewee Five, who still had all of her biological family in Iraq, indicated strongly she would not like to return and stated the lack of freedom for women as one of the reasons why, and in other parts of the interview expressed concern regarding several of the other push factors, mentioned above, as well.

Even though Interviewee Five does not have biological family in the Detroit area, all of her husband's family has relocated to the area, and so she does have family through marriage. Interviewee Eight has a brother in Iraq, and the family would like to be reunited

with him, but they have tried to accomplish this by having him relocate to the Detroit area, rather than for the family to return to Iraq.

Friends Left Behind

Closely related to the loss of family, would be the loss of friends in Iraq. This loss, like the loss of family, would seem to be a strong pull factor, yet it did not seem to be strong enough to persuade the interviewees to return. Interviewee Five is also the exception here, as she stated the loss of friends as one of the reasons that she would like to return. The following excerpt conveys the strength of this pull factor, but at the same time conveys how it did not persuade Interviewee Eight and his family to return. "But now the last three years in Iraq, only bad memories, so you just want to run away. Except of course, we got very good friends that we got over there, we have like brothers not friends, and they was like crying very badly when we leave, but this is a fact, you cannot risk your future for your own security, you have to be realistic." This excerpt reveals just how difficult it must be for refugees to leave loved ones behind. This story exhibits the dilemma most people will face at some point in their lives involving an inner struggle between heart and mind. The heart wants to stay in order to be close to loved ones, but the mind rationalizes the situation and determines that staying is not the best thing to do.

I should also point out that saying goodbye to friends was not limited to Christian or Chaldean friends, as six of the interviewees discussed having good Muslim friends as well. The below excerpt provides an example of how some of the interviewees had friendly relationships with Muslims, which also serves as a pull factor. It also provides an example of an awareness of unfair over generalizations and negative stereotypes of Muslims.

Joseph: And you probably still have contact with friends and family through phone and internet?
Interviewee Five: Yes
Interviewee Four: Every time, and say Merry Christmas to them. Even our Muslim friends will call and say Merry Christmas!
Joseph: Your Muslim friends?
Interviewee Four: Yea, they miss us, and they love us. There are fair Muslims there.
Joseph: Just like here. There are bad apples in every group, right?
Interviewee Five: The problem is certain groups affected the all. Certain groups do things, ah, their actions spread to all.
Interviewee Four: She means, when you have a cup of pure water, and you put just a drop of dye in it, it affects the whole thing. Like here in Detroit, sometimes when you hear on the TV about some killings, the persons living in Japan or Iraq, he will say, "Oh, Detroit is a bad place to live," so same thing.
Joseph: There's a lot of good people living in Detroit, but there are some bad ones too.
Interviewee Four: Yeah, you are as American persons, you hear somebody's been killed or kidnapped in Baghdad, and the media also makes this exaggerated. The media sometimes makes things bigger than what it actually is.
Joseph: It distorts.
Interviewee Four: It's a business, I think, it makes money.

This couple was well aware of the extremists, but they made distinctions between peace loving Muslims and extremists. Interviewee Eleven also had Muslim friends, and she explained, in the transcript below, how they felt bad that Christians were being pushed out of Iraq.

Joseph: One thing that I think is interesting. How do your Muslim friends feel about Christians being pushed out, does it bother them?
Interviewee Eleven: Some do, and I remember my neighbors too, they felt so bad. They would say, "we love you, we wish you could stay here, but we know it's going to be dangerous for you guys and yeah. But they were even afraid to say goodbye to us. They know we're leaving because everything is packed up.

She went on to explain how some of her Muslim friends were afraid of saying good bye, and she thought it might be due to the fear of being targeted by the extremists for showing sympathy to Christians. Perhaps these Muslim friends also felt awkward about what was happening to their Christian friends and neighbors, and therefore did not say good bye because they were embarrassed. This is of course mere speculation, and regardless of the reason behind their fear in saying good bye, her main point was that some of their Muslim friends cared about Chaldeans and felt bad that they were being pushed out of their homeland.

Desire to Preserve Chaldean Culture

Certainly friends and family represent strong pull factors, and it would seem as though the desire to restore and preserve Chaldean culture in Iraq would also be a strong pull factor, especially since some Chaldean leaders, including some clergy, are urging Chaldeans not to abandon their homeland. However, among the research subjects in this study, only one said she would like to return in order to restore Chaldean culture as well to help people in a humanitarian manner. Everyone in the study felt saddened that Chaldean culture was being eradicated in Iraq, but they did not see it as a strong enough pull factor to consider returning.

Desire to Restore Career in Iraq

Interviewees Two and Three (a married couple) indicated that they would like to return, not so much to restore Chaldean culture, but because they would love to restore their careers. They were both doctors in the medical field, and now the husband is doing menial labor in a factory in the Detroit area while his wife is a stay at home mom.

Although this is a strong pull for them, they are skeptical that they will ever return and or to restore their career. The following excerpt expresses their feelings of sadness over the loss of their jobs, and exhibits just how strong this pull factor is for them.

> **Joseph:** You lost your job?
> **Interviewee Two:** Yes we lost them, we were veterinarians!
> **Interviewee Three:** We were Doctors
> **Joseph:** Oh, both of you were doctors?
> **Interviewee Two:** Everything, Everything we collect in our whole life, we lost!
> **Interviewee Three:** 27 years I am veterinarian, and 29 years or 30 years in Iraq as veterinarian.
> **Joseph:** Just gone!
> **Interviewee Two:** Gone! In two hours, no more!
> **Interviewee Three:** Gone!

This is the same couple, mentioned earlier, who lost their very large and newly built home in just two hours. Interviewee Five also misses her job working as an administrator for the Iraqi government. Now she is working at a store arranging bags, which is not her ambition. She is going to college in the Detroit area to pursue something that is more fulfilling for her. Somewhat related to the desire to restore lost careers is the improved economy in Iraq.

Improved Iraqi Economy

In this chapter I have discussed multiple, mostly negative, changes that occurred in Iraq following the removal of Saddam in 2003. One exception to these negative changes would be the improvement of the economy in 2003, due to the lifting of the United States' embargo on Iraq. This pull factor is strengthened when combined with the ability of whole families, including extended families, to live comfortably on just one income. Interviewee Eight shared how he lived with his adult siblings within in their parents' house, and how

they all survived on just their father's income. Even though economic factors had some lure, they did not trump the security concerns expressed by all of the interviewees. As discussed earlier, what good is having more money, if you could end up dead?

When weighing the push factors involved in the decision to leave Iraq verses the pull factors involved in the potential decision to return, the push factors far outweigh the pull factors. I will discuss how this dynamic impacts the myth of return in chapter six.

CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS PART II

While Al-Rasheed (1994:201) observed the effects of the relationship of the immigrants to their homelands on the presence or absence of the myth of return, Dahya (1973:250) posited that a strained relationship with the host country can also have a bearing on the likelihood of the myth of return. If the relationship is strained then there is a greater chance the myth of return will exist among the immigrants in their host countries. Given this possibility, this chapter will consider the pull factors involved in the decision of Chaldean refugees to relocate to the Detroit metropolitan area, as well as the push factors involved in the decision to stay in the Detroit area or to the potential decision to leave and to possibly return to Iraq.

Like chapter four, this chapter is also divided into two sections. The first section will address the tensions between Chaldean refugees and the host country, including the Detroit metropolitan area. Specifically, this section will explore tensions related to the U.S. involvement in Iraq, negative stereotypes, and transitional challenges. The second section will consider the pull factors involved in the decision to relocate to the Detroit area. These pull factors will include ties to friends and family, opportunities, positive attitudes towards the U.S. and the Detroit area, and the availability of public services and benefits such as health care, housing, legal protection, law enforcement, and basic utilities.

Push Factors to Leave Detroit Area

Out of all of the push factors addressed in this study, the view that the United States mismanaged Iraq was the most pronounced. This research attempted to assess whether

or not this tension contributed to the presence of the myth of return, and in order to evaluate this possibility, questions were asked to uncover specific examples of just how the United States was negligent in its dealings with Iraq. All but one of the interviewees expressed the United States mismanaged Iraq, and the one exception did not have an opinion one way or another.

U.S. Mismanagement of Iraq

There were multiple issues raised regarding this mismanagement, but the most prominent issue involved the removal of Saddam. Although seven of the interviewees expressed they were once optimistic things would improve following the removal of Saddam, their opinions changed as they witnessed the chaos that ensued after his removal. Nine out of the eleven interviewees indicated that removing Saddam was a mistake, and some even expressed that they wished he was back in power. One rationale behind the view that his removal was a mistake involves the idea that Iraq and other nations in the region need to have a strong dictatorial type of leadership. This view was expressed rather clearly from Interviewee One, in the below transcript, where he responded after I asked him if he had any opinions regarding the United States' actions in Iraq.

> **Interviewee One:** They (the U.S.) were brash, very uninformed. I was actually very disappointed at the notion that, I don't know was it Dick Cheney or Bush who said Iraq is willing to receive us with flowers?
> **Joe:** You thought that was naive?
> **Interviewee One** That was extremely naive! Um, I feel as though, whoever managed that war thought of Iraqis as just Americans who spoke a different language. They didn't really take into consideration the culture, or the fact that this country is only a little over 200 hundred years and you're dealing with a 5 to 7 thousand years of history there; pride, customs, traditions,

> chauvinism, a patriarchal pyramidal ruling pattern. America should have understood, and I think it is understanding very well how the Greco or the Roman democracy is not the model for that region; from the days of the Babylonians or the Pharaohs you had one guy who was head of state and who ran everybody under, like a pyramid. People you see in Iraq, Egypt, in Tunisia, in Libya, and Yemen, once they gave the people the choice, they all got into their little sects and there's no more unity, and things just fell apart. Just imagine the Pyramid of Giza and you tear it apart.

Interviewee Six articulated a similar idea with this statement, "It's so sad to say this, but I always believed that Iraq, and the Arab world in general, has got to be ruled by an iron fist, unfortunately." He then continued by stating the view that the United States should have warned Saddam, or slapped his wrist so to speak, rather than to have assassinated him.

Along these same lines, Interviewee Nine conveyed a similar view regarding the need for strong leaders, including dictator Bashar al-Assad in Syria. She discussed how her family left Iraq for Syria in order to escape the violence. She felt like Syria, at the time, was reminiscent of Iraq under Saddam. She described how Christians were free to openly express their religiosity, including freedom to display religious statuary. It is interesting how she describes greater religious tolerance under the dictators of Saddam and Assad, than with the sectarian feuding which erupted when Saddam was removed.

In addition to the above examples, Interviewee Eight also stressed the idea that the region needs strong dictatorial leaders and indicated this is preferable to the chaos that took over after the Saddam era. Although not everyone specifically voiced the opinion that the removal of Saddam was a mistake, everyone, as discussed in chapter four, agreed that life after Saddam was much more chaotic and violent. Interviewees Six and Ten both indicated that it was not a mistake to remove Saddam, but that things were mismanaged

following his removal. Interviewee Six, like nine other interviewees, believed that both the United States as well as the Iraqis mismanaged the country, while Interviewee Ten believed that the mismanagement of Iraq should be blamed solely on the Iraqis and not the United States.

When considering that nine of the eleven interviewees believed the United States made a mistake in removing Saddam, this could certainly be considered a major source of contention and perhaps could contribute to a sense of resentment and a possible push factor. Besides the removal of Saddam, though, there were other push factors related to the United States' involvement in Iraq, and the dismantling of the Iraqi Army would be one of them. Out of the eleven interviewees, eight expressed the dismantling of the Iraqi Army was a big mistake. The following excerpts shed light on just why people held this view.

> **Interviewee One:** One huge mistake was the way they dismantled the Iraqi army because guess why? You just created your own Al Qaeda.
> **Joseph:** So they split off and joined radical groups?
> **Interviewee One:** Yeah, because they're angry, remember the Iraqi army was once the fifth strongest army in the world and you have highly skilled, highly trained, and highly proud officers whose luxurious lifestyle got cut, and their benefits got cut and their amenities got cut and their lives were threatened and their life got turned upside down and disrupted. And guess what, you had it coming!

Interviewee Two shared a similar view, but he also pointed out how the dismantling enhanced other militaristic groups besides Al-Qaeda. Related to this he states, "The United Sates made many mistakes in Iraq, the first mistake involved the dissolving of the Iraqi Army. Soldiers then joined Al Qaeda, ISIS and other militias. And you know they have a big experience in war, and they transferred all of this experience to Al Qaeda and

other radical party." Interviewee Six had similar views but also offered an alternative approach to dismantling the army. He states, "The other mistake they made is they dissolved the military they dissolved all the security entities. I told them I said look, these security personal are highly trained and it's their country they know it by heart. Put them on your side and this operation as you call it, don't make experienced enemies. But at the time it was too late, ok? So they did mismanage it, yeah it shouldn't have happened." In addition to dismantling the Iraqi Army, Interviewee Eight explained how the United States dismantled other sector of Iraq with this statement, "And also not only the army the media I believe, all the Iraqi governmental employees, they laid them off. Just because a man is gone, doesn't mean the country has to fall unless very big policy has to take place something that we cannot protect." The dismantling of the Iraqi Army and other sectors of Iraq were unexpected themes involving tensions with the United States.

Another source of agitation involved disapproval over the support that the United States gave to corrupt leaders, including some religious leaders as well as some religious parties. This alliance, according to some of the interviewees, contributed to the sectarian divisions which as discussed in chapter four, has had such a negative impact on the country. This concern can be seen in the following transcript where Interviewee Eight was discussing various ways in which the United States mismanaged Iraq.

> **Interviewee Eight:** So the Americans first mistake was militarily, and then politically. It was a mess, yeah!
> **Joseph:** Yeah, um supporting the wrong people?
> **Interviewee Eight:** Yeah they brought in people from the outside based on their religious beliefs, so that was the first, you know crack starting in the community. Before that we didn't even know who's a Shia and who's a Sunni. It wasn't recognized like that, it was really like one contiguity, but

> after that, from the name, from the name, (raised voice) oh this one she's that, or he's talking this language so he's Shia, this one's Sunni, this one's Christian, this is a Kurdish.

Interviewee Two, in the below excerpt, voiced a similar perspective but with a bit more detail pertaining to the religious aspects of the political parties that were aspiring to gain control of the country.

> **Interviewee Two:** The second mistake they (the U.S.) put the religion party in the top of the government in Iraq.
> **Joseph:** The Shia?
> **Interviewee Two:** Shia and Sunni, they bring the religious men in their big hats, you see them in black or white or something like that, and they put him in the top or above the government. You know the religion, the Shia, want to rule Iraq, and the mind of the religions is not like an elaborate man, his thought or his mind is different. He wants to control all of the people by the religion, Muslim religions especially. Muslim religions, they want to control all of Iraq.

It is not difficult to imagine why Chaldean Christians, as well as other minority religious groups, would see the United States' support for dominant group religious leaders in government as being problematic, especially considering the persecution that minority groups have experienced at the hands of dominant religious groups. In contrast, as discussed in chapter four, Saddam was fairly secular and stifled sectarian discord. The discontent with support for religious leaders also involved the fact that there were outside interests from other countries who were backing these religious leaders. This concern is conveyed in the following excerpt from Interviewee Four.

> **Interviewee Four:** and the other thing that made me pessimistic I don't know why the Americans gave a chance to the neighbors to interfere in the Iraqi issues. She has a power. She could, America could have prevent any foreign interference in Iraqi issues, but they did not do anything, I do not know why.
> **Joseph:** You're talking about Iran? Syria?

> **Interviewee Four:** Especially Iran, because America supported the Shia religious groups to get the rule in Iraq. I thought the United Sates was going to make a secular rule in Iraq. Not religious group, because America is a different country, a free country, a secular country. So she has to support this kind of government in Iraq, but the opposite happened, I don't know why the support of the religious group and this was as I told you as a Christian, not as a Muslim, maybe the Shia Muslim like this, but for me, I don't like this. I don't like my president or my prime minister to belong to a religious group. I need this position lead by a human or a person who became a father to all Iraqis not just to a specific religious group. So this is what happened, and I stayed optimistic in 2005, 2006 but finally I didn't find any hope.

One of the major push factors discussed in chapter four involved widespread corruption. This was a major source of irritation and certainly contributed to the decision to leave Iraq, but when considering the fact that the United States backed some of the corrupt leaders, this could also be a push factor involved in a potential decision to leave the U.S. Interviewees Two and Three, a married couple, discussed their frustrations with the U.S. support for corrupt leaders in the below transcript.

> **Interviewee Two:** So the third big mistake is that America, she put the bad people in the government, not puta the good people. And we don't have political opinion.
> **Joseph:** So America contributed to putting bad people in government. Too religious?
> **Interviewee Two:** Too religious, yeah.
> **Interviewee Three:** They destroyed Iraq, they destroyed everything in Iraq,
> **Interviewee Two:** Look it's like this, everything is destroyed, and cheating people, and not good people, very very bad! All they want is to put all of the people's money in their pocket, take take take!
> **Interviewee Three:** Take take take, and the people is poor, not all people.
> **Joseph:** All the money is going in the hands of a few people?
> **Interviewee Two:** Yeah yeah yeah! All of them they have two citizens, they Iraqi citizen and British citizen. When he pockets their money he say, I'm British, I'm going to Britain, or I'm Swedish, I'm going to Sweden, and Germany, I'm going to Germany. And the Iraqi people are under the line of the poor.

Interviewee Five conveyed similar frustrations with the U.S. with this statement, The Americans they brought in bad people. Government, the soldiers were just doing their job, but the government peoples they were thieves and murderers.

Another source of irritation with the U.S. involves the decision to pull troops out from Iraq. A very common complaint made by the interviewees as well as other individuals in the Chaldean community that I have talked to, is that the U.S basically invaded, made a big mess, and then left. This sense of frustration is clearly articulated by Interviewee Eight in the following excerpt.

> **Joseph:** Do you think it was a mistake for the U.S. to pull our troops out of Iraq?
> **Interviewee Eight:** Yes, absolutely! What's happened at that time, under the current president and the unwise decision, I'll say it that way, this was really not a wise thing. Why do that?
> **Joseph:** Because there's no protection for religious minorities?
> **Interviewee Eight:** Of course, everybody, let's talk about this, even the Shia and the Sunni; you know how many innocent people have been killed, because of that? This is really; we are currently noticing ISIS is the biggest of all time, because of that second decision. I'm not talking about 2003, but what happened when was that, in 2010 when he decided to withdraw all of the troops? ISIS got bigger, and they are in control, corrupted government in Iraq, a vacuum again in Syria. With these kind of people, we lived with them you cannot, they have a long path to democracy, and it's not like here.

It's not hard to understand how Iraqis, especially minorities, would be frustrated at the U.S. for removing Saddam, a major source of stability, and then removing U.S. troops, a major source of protection. It must have been particularly exasperating as ISIS was moving in with their campaign of terror, but with little protection from the U.S. and its allies. This sense of frustration is also quite apparent in the below excerpt from Interviewee Eleven who basically maintained that the U.S. simply did not care.

Joseph: So do you have any thoughts regarding the United States' actions in Iraq?
Interviewee Eleven: It's not good! Like they destroyed everything in 2003 and they thought they helped, but they didn't help. They made it worse and they didn't do anything for us.
Joseph: I've heard other people say taking the Iraqi army apart was a big mistake.
Interviewee Eleven: Yeah that was a mistake, and for me they took the American army too, they should keep them there.
Joseph: So you think removing the troops was a mistake too?
Interviewee Eleven: Yeah, it was a mistake too.
Joseph: I've heard it expressed this way, the U.S. went in and made a big mess and then we left.
Interviewee Eleven: Yeah that make BIG mess, for sure, and then they left! I think they thought they help us, but they didn't do anything for us. They make just worse! Yeah they make it worse. Because I think they thought it was going to be just like here, freedom of religion, freedom to talk, or whatever and they thought it would be the same thing. Yeah, but you know I think they did, but they didn't care. You know I think they just wanted the oil.

Although most of the interviewees expressed disapproval in the decision to remove U.S. troops, Interviewee Ten indicated that she did not necessarily disapprove of this removal, and she did not necessarily see a connection between the removal of the troops and the rise of ISIS. She pointed out how that there was a gap in time between the removal of the troops and the spread of ISIS. Others argued, though, that ISIS would not have been able to have proliferated as it did if there was more of a U.S. military presence in Iraq.

In addition to going into Iraq, making a big mess, and then leaving, there were also tensions due to the U.S. and its allies' actions before the 2003 U.S. invasion. The primary frustration prior to 2003 involved the sanctions or the embargoes leveled against Iraq. Interviewee Four offers a glimpse into the harsh conditions in which Iraqis were living in during this era, in the below excerpt.

> **Interviewee Four:** I know it was a kind of poverty because we were under embargo, you know sanctions so the life was difficult; I mean the economic life was difficult.
> **Joseph:** You felt that?
> **Interviewee Four:** Yea, I felt it this is when I was in college in 1991 after the Kuwait invasion, after Saddam Husain invaded Kuwait the United Nations put Iraq under sanctions for 12 or 13 years. It was very hard, really, because there were many peoples; don't find the food to eat at that time, so we were suffering. But no after 2003, I don't need to deny the economical issue became better.
> **Joseph:** After 2003?
> **Interviewee Four:** Yea, after 2003 because the Iraq was import and export and the wages of the employee and the government became better.

Given all of the above frustrations with the U.S. and its actions in Iraq, it is not surprising that the interviewees expressed disdain for Presidents, Herbert Walker Bush, George W. Bush, Barrack Obama, as well as Paul Bremer, the former interim President of Iraq. Although this was the case and all though there was wide spread agreement among the interviewees that the U.S. mismanaged Iraq, there was little indication that these tensions were significant enough to produce a push factor that would entice the research participants to leave the U.S. and specifically the Detroit area. There was a general sense that the past is in the past and that these tensions were not something that the interviewees dwelled on. All of the interviewees seemed to be forward looking and eager to pursue their future goals, but there was a sense of ambivalence in their feelings toward the U.S. On the one hand they were somewhat resentful for the mistakes the U.S. made in Iraq, but at the same time, they were grateful toward the U.S. for the opportunity to construct a new life in a country where there is tremendous freedom.

Tensions with Non-Chaldeans

So far the major thrust of this chapter has centered on tensions involving the United

States' actions in Iraq, and now the focus will shift to certain tensions with the host community in the Detroit metropolitan area. Because of the research done on the Chaldean Community in the Detroit area following the First Gulf War, in which Chaldean Americans found themselves the targets of negative stereotypes, overly broad generalizations, and being associated with the "bad guys" in Iraq, (Sengstock, 186 – 188) I fully expected to encounter numerous accounts from the interviewees regarding such treatment in the Detroit area. However, I was surprised to find very few examples of this. In fact only one interviewee emphasized concern related to discrimination and negative stereotyping while all of the other interviewees expressed they felt welcomed in the Detroit area for the most part, and they seemed to down play any negative treatment.

One possibility as to why interviewees tended to downplay negative treatment, could involve the fact that I, as the primary investigator and interviewer, am not Chaldean, and because I have been a Detroit area resident for virtually my entire life. This reality creates an "insider/outsider" dynamic in which interviewees find it awkward expressing any negative feelings regarding their experiences living in the Detroit area, simply because they do not want to offend me, as a native Detroiter (an "insider"). I do not believe the insider/outsider dynamic was much of a factor, though, because when I asked other potentially awkward questions (e.g. questions related to the U.S. involvement in Iraq), the interviewees did not hesitate to tell me the various ways in which the U.S. was negligent in Iraq. If they felt free to express themselves regarding U.S. politics in Iraq, then it would seem that they would have felt free to express themselves with the question pertaining to their treatment in the U.S.

While this may be the case, the question still remains why the findings in my study differed from the findings of Sengstock, who like me also was a non-Chaldean American. It seems likely the discrepancy in findings has to do with the fact that Sengstock's sample was quite different than the sample in my study, and also because her study was conducted in a different era and under different circumstances. For example, Sengstock sampled individuals who were already long established Chaldean Americans, whereas my sample was limited to Chaldean refugees who had only recently arrived. The individuals in my sample came from war torn Iraq and were, as discussed in chapter four, the targets of prejudice, discrimination, as well as negative stereotyping. Whatever unpleasant experiences they may have faced after relocating to the Detroit area, would have seemed mild in comparison to what they fled in post 2003 Iraq.

Another difference is that her sample was taken shortly after the first Gulf War in Iraq, a time in which, according to her research, Chaldeans were being unfairly stereotyped as the "bad guys" that we were fighting in Iraq. Since the individuals in my study were not in the U.S. during the first and second Gulf Wars, they did not experience the sudden increase in negative treatment. Also, the individuals in my sample have obviously not been in the U.S. as long as the individuals in Sengstock's sample, and therefore perhaps they simply have not experienced as much negative treatment as those who have been here longer. Perhaps there could have been a difference due to the fact that I am of a different gender than Sengstock, but I do not believe this to be the case, as both the male and female interviewees in my study seemed quite comfortable expressing negative perspectives regarding the U.S. involvement in Iraq, so it would seem that they would also

feel free to express any frustrations with how they have been treated in the U.S. It is also quite likely if my sample consisted of people who were Muslim, then I would have received more data expressing greater levels of dissatisfaction with treatment in the United States. The following excerpts convey fairly well the overall response to the question related to how my research subjects feel they have been treated by the non-Chaldean community in the Detroit area.

> **Joseph:** So how do you feel you are treated here, do you feel like people have embraced you, or do you feel welcomed here in the Detroit metropolitan area?
> **Interviewee Ten:** Yes yes!
> **Joseph:** Do you ever feel like people maybe sometimes misunderstand who you are? Maybe stereotype you, maybe thinking that you're Arab, and or Muslim?
> **Interviewee Ten:** No, never, even like with the language, always people, they help. Sometimes it's hard to recall the word, even if I know the word. People they try to help me, to recall the word like at the Doctor's office, people, they are very welcoming, yeah, never had this.
> **Joseph:** You never felt poorly treated, or that people think that you're a Muslim extremist?
> **Interviewee Ten:** No, never. Even Muslims, I don't believe they are treated like that, because I see them everywhere, like at the hospitals, at the court, everywhere you see them.
> **Joseph:** You think they are treated well too?
> **Interviewee Ten:** Yeah, I don't believe they are treated poorly like that. They have very good positions, they are teachers, they are in schools, they are everywhere. If they were not treated good, they would not stay here. It's a great country. You see all of the cultures, you see people from Africa, from countries I've never heard of and they speak languages like, I don't know.
> **Joseph:** Yeah it's a multi-cultural society.

The next excerpt from Interviewees Two and Three, a married couple, also seems to reflect the overall consensus regarding how people feel they have been treated in the Detroit area.

Joseph: How do you guys feel like you're treated here? Do you feel like people are friendly here?
Interviewee Two: Very very friendly, America is very beautiful! It's very nice! **Interviewee Three:** They help you and me. And they support us.
Interviewee Two: American community is good! Not just good, it's awesome!
Joseph: Any frustrations with Americans in how they perceive you, or how they treat you?
Interviewee Two: They don't support us directly, but when we talk with them, their smile is enough for us. The good dealing with us, that's enough for us. We don't want anything from them like a material, but we know the helping, smiling, like when you go to market they help you
Interviewee Three: Everything!
Joseph: You haven't experienced any discrimination or people misunderstanding you.
Interviewee Two: No no no, because all of them, they always be helpful.
Interviewee Three: Be friendly. I remember working in a big super market in Maryland for two months. All the community of this super market is American. They always come to me and say do this, don't do this and I think they're very very friendly and always nice. We love American community!

Even though the majority of the interviewees expressed sentiments similar to the above examples, Interviewee One could be considered an exception, but his concerns with negative stereotypes were not so much experiences that he himself had, but were mostly the experiences of members of his family.

Joseph: How do you feel you have been treated here in the United States?
Interviewee One: I have, because of my red beard which looks Irish, it has spared me a lot of discrimination and my name is "..." which is a distinctly Arabic name, but if I go by "....."
Joseph: It sounds sort of Christian?
Interviewee One: Or maybe Moby Dickish? So, even my accent, because I speak French and multiple dialects of Arabic and multiple dialects of English, it's not really a Middle Eastern accent, and um, discrimination is here and it exists and we experience it daily at work.
Joseph: So you don't necessarily experience it yourself because of your skin tone and red beard, and accent, but....
Interviewee One: My brother, my cousins who are all PhDs and they hold

very important positions, they get discriminated against and thought to be an Arab. The stereotypes are real.
Joseph: What kind of stereotypes?
Interviewee One: There's the Arab thing, which means that you are less civilized, you are violent, you're aggressive. You're a Chaldean, a minority, a ghetto, a different kind of ghetto. Actually, some of them (whites) are jealous of us.
Joseph: Of the wealthier Chaldeans?
Interviewee One: Of the Wealthier Chaldeans or I actually with people at work with me, I mean to be here and within five years to get into a managerial position and to actually run people around. So some of them say, "What is this Middle Eastern piece of shit have to do with ordering me or telling me what to do?
Joseph: Interesting, Wow!
Interviewee One: Yeah, so, there's a lot of that, and in the workplace I have answered questions very decisively to cut that crap. One of them actually asked that question about the Mercedes parked outside the tent.
Joseph: That's so rude!

Although Interviewee One was the only individual who really emphasized the negative treatment experienced by Chaldeans in the Detroit area, Interviewee Nine, while conveying an overall positive picture, did indicate that he had experienced some negative treatment. For example, there were some neighbors in the apartment complex where he used to live, who asked him whether or not he was a terrorist. There was also a woman, who eventually became his girlfriend, who also asked him if he was a terrorist. Perhaps the reason why Interviewee Nine was the only research subject to experience such an insulting question has to do with the fact that he is a fairly young man who is rather tall and quite muscular and as a result, is more readily profiled in this manner. Besides for these two instances, he also mentioned, that people are sometimes rude to him over the phone, when they hear his accent. Even though he mentioned the above examples of

negative treatment, his overall response was to downplay these instances and to convey that they were few and far between.

By asking the research subjects questions pertaining to how they feel they have been treated by non-Chaldeans in the Detroit area, I was able to gain a sense as to whether or not they felt like second class citizens. If so, this finding is relevant to this study, as Zetter maintains that refugees may entertain the idea of return, if they do in fact feel like second class citizens (1994, 312). The data generated in this study does not indicate that this is a very powerful push factor, as even the one individual who stressed the reality of negative treatment, stated rather emphatically that he would not return to Iraq. This of course is not an indication that the myth of return is not impacted by refugees feeling like second class citizens, as Zetter has suggested, rather, I simply did not find this within my sample. If I had more than one individual who stressed negative treatment, then perhaps I would have found this dynamic at play.

In addition to all of the above mentioned push factors, some interviewees discussed the difficulty in establishing a new home in the Detroit area. Many of the mentioned difficulties are common challenges that immigrants and refugees face upon relocation, for example, learning the language, finding suitable employment, learning the culture, etc. Chapter four addressed a concern raised by three of the interviewees regarding being employed at a lower level in the U.S. than in Iraq. This was addressed as a potential pull factor to return to Iraq, but this also serves as a possible push factor to leave the Detroit area.

Pull Factors to Relocate to the Detroit Area

Out of all of the pull factors related to the decision to relocate to the Detroit area, (as well as to the decision to remain in the Detroit area) the strongest pull factor would most likely involve the fact that many of the refugees have friends and family who settled in the Detroit area first. Some of these family members were able to sponsor them, and thus assisting in their relocation. Also, some of the friends and family were able to assist them with such things as housing, interpreting, getting driver's licenses, as well as learning the culture. In addition to the support received from friends and family, there was also support received from an established Chaldean community in the Detroit area. This established community also offers a slice of Iraqi and Chaldean culture, complete with Chaldean restaurants, markets, community centers, as well as Chaldean churches. The community certainly presents a powerful pull factor, and also potentially assuages feelings of homesickness, and therefore reducing the impact of the myth of return.

Positive Feelings toward the U.S./Detroit

Earlier on in the chapter I discussed how the interviewees overall tended to downplay any negative treatment that they may have experienced from non-Chaldeans in the Detroit area. In contrast, there were rather strong positive feelings toward the U.S. and towards Americans in general, including the non-Chaldean community in the Detroit area. Some of these positive feelings were highlighted above in the section pertaining to the question regarding how the interviewees felt they had been treated so far while living in the U.S. One example a positive feeling toward the U.S. is articulated in this quote from

Interviewee Nine, “You're so blessed to wake up and to see yourself living in this beautiful country, and you're safe and protected here.”

Earlier on I mentioned how there was only one individual who really emphasized the negative treatment experienced by Chaldeans in the Detroit area, but even he expressed feelings of gratitude for the privilege of living in the U.S. In the following quote he basically states that one of the benefits of the invasion of Iraq (which he saw as a big mistake) was that it eventually led to his relocation. “So that was the silver lining of the Iraqi invasion. I made it, and my family, and everybody in Iraq and who really wanted to come to America badly now you see them all striving and thriving and they're all in colleges and work. We didn't have that luxury, but we are all here now and enjoying this country.” These positive sentiments are not unique to the interviewees mentioned above, as all eleven research subjects stressed positive feelings toward the Detroit area and to the U.S. in general.

One of the prominent themes related to positive feelings toward the U.S. involved freedoms associated with the American system. This gratitude for freedom was clearly articulated by Interviewee Six in the following excerpt.

> **Interviewee Six:** When we first came to America we were living in Maryland, by DC. Washington. I loved it there but the cost of living was very high we moved to Michigan. I like it, I like the country, I told you I like the system. Freedom is very precious and not many people appreciate it, you know? I like it a lot, of course nowhere; no one is perfect but Jesus. That's what I believe, that's my belief. But I think I believe that this is the most civilized, the most advanced, the most perfect, you can't say perfect, the best place in the world. No matter what happens, no matter what you hear, you see criminals on the news you turn the news on it's always killing and looting and so on, but still, if this country wasn't the best it wouldn't have reached this level. If this system wasn't the best in the world, that's

> why I tell my friends my family, some people argue every now and then that Iraq was better. How do you say that? How could you say Iraq was better? Look at them and look at us. Compare the two countries. And I tell them if this country was not the best we wouldn't have reached this level, they have curiosity on Mars, you know? That's how advanced they are. And this perfect system, do whatever you want to do, don't break the law, and this freedom you have is so precious, you don't appreciate it.

In addition to the freedoms mentioned above, several of the interviewees also expressed that they were grateful for religious freedoms that they have in America as well. Another topic related to positive feelings was expressed by three of the interviewees who shared gratitude for simple things like basic utilities. An example of this can be seen in the following excerpt from Interviewee Ten.

> **Joseph:** So how would you describe your experience living here in the Detroit metropolitan area, has it been a good experience overall do you think?
> **Interviewee Ten:** Yeah, to be honest with you, I enjoy living here. I enjoy simple things. There I had a degree, I had a good life, a stressful life, here I've had some stress, I've had some struggles, but I've enjoyed everything.
> **Joseph:** You had to learn English?
> **Interviewee Ten:** I know some English, but I've become more fluent. But I enjoy things, people, even my family when I tell them about it they make fun of me. They don't know this, like the roads, the shopping, the heating and the cooling system. The laundry system here, whatever. Simple things, they don't know how easy this lifestyle is. Like how easy you get gas to your stove, how easy you get gas to your heating system. These things, you don't know how easy these thing are to your life. I enjoy these things I feel these things, my family they don't feel these things, because they didn't suffer. When they left Iraq everything was easy.

Besides for being grateful for basic utilities, the interviewees also shared that they were also grateful for some of the essential services such as health care, education, and especially for protection provided by the criminal justice system including federal and local laws as well as for the protection provided by the police force. It is not surprising that all of

the interviewees voiced an appreciation for a functioning criminal justice system, considering the fact, as discussed in chapter four, that the number one greatest push factor to leave Iraq involved the lack of security as well as a broken criminal justice system. This gratitude for security was clearly conveyed by Interviewee Four with this quote, “Yea, certainly, and here I'm feeling more safe towards my family and my kids they are going to school and back safely. And my mind is not busy worrying some terrorist will go to their school and kidnap some of them and some bomb thing will happen at their school. So this is making me feel comfortable toward them and to my wife also.”

In addition to the above themes related to positive feelings towards the U.S., three of the interviewees stressed being grateful for the lack of discrimination. In discussing her daughter’s future, Interviewee Ten expressed how she was grateful that her daughter would not have to face the type of discrimination that she would have faced if they were still in Iraq. Her sentiment is conveyed here with this quote,”So I enjoy these little things, so I enjoy life here. Like when my daughter goes to school and I feel she's safe.
Yeah, it's very important. Yeah and when I see her here and like she is growing in a good culture that doesn't discriminate. That she feels the freedom, that everything, I enjoy these things and I'm happy for her.”

In chapter four I discussed how the list of push factors involved in the decision to leave Iraq was far greater in number than the list of pull factors that could potentially contribute to the decision to return to Iraq. I also discussed how that the push factors tended to be stronger influences than the pull factors which were rather weak. In contrast, the list of push factors involved in the potential decision to leave the Detroit area are almost equal

in number to the pull factors that were involved in the decision to relocate to the Detroit area. However, even though this was the case, the pull factors were much stronger than the push factors. For example, I mentioned earlier on in the chapter that even though all of the interviewees expressed that the U.S. mismanaged Iraq; the general feeling was that this is now in the past, and their focus now tends to be focused on the future. Since this is the case, the view that the U.S. mismanaged Iraq tends to be a rather weak push factor to leave the United States. The pull factors, on the other hand, tend to be rather strong, especially the desire to relocate to the area in which friends and family settled first. The desire to have access to basic public services such as health care, education, a criminal justice system, as well as basic utilities also serve as strong pull factors.

Lastly, although, the push factors addressed in this chapter could potentially lead to the decision to leave the Detroit area or the U.S. in general, this does not necessarily mean that they would return to Iraq, as there are other countries in which they could consider moving to. While this may be the case, it is not the primary interest in this study which addresses the potential to return to Iraq.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

In this research I have considered the presence or absence of the myth of return among my sample of Chaldean refugee research subjects. In order to assess whether or not the myth of return is a factor in my sample, I asked questions pertaining to push factors involved in the decision to leave Iraq, as well as the pull factors involved in the potential decision to return. Since the literature suggests the likelihood of the myth of return is also impacted by the refugees' relationship with the host country, I also asked questions pertaining to the push/pull factors that are involved in the decision to remain in the Detroit area, or in the potential decision to leave and to perhaps return to Iraq. By asking questions related to push/pull factors, the interviewees were provided an outlet in which to tell their stories, which in addition to assessing the presence or absence of the myth of return, was the other specific aim of this study. In addition to asking push/pull questions, I also asked questions pertaining to the possibility of return, as well as questions pertaining to where they feel "home" is, or where they feel they belong. These latter questions also served to assess whether or not the myth was a factor.

Research Question

Is the myth of return present or absent among the research subjects?

Results

When weighing the push factors involved in the decision to leave Iraq verses the pull factors involved in the potential decision to return, the push factors far outweigh the pull factors in both a quantitative and a qualitative sense. Quantitatively, the list of push factors involves 72 codes, while the pull factors involve only 12 codes. In addition, the

individual push factor codes occurred at a greater frequency than the individual pull factor codes. Qualitatively, the push factor codes tended to be stronger influences than the pull factor codes, as the former were emphasized more than the latter. For example, the push factor involving the concern over the lack of security trumped the weaker pull factor to preserve a Chaldean and a Christian presence in the Middle East. Even the strongest pull factor relating to family left behind was rather weak, as interviewees with family in Iraq indicated that they would rather arrange to have their family join them to live in the Detroit area, as opposed to being reunited through their relocating to Iraq.

When analyzing the push/pull factors pertaining to the decision to stay in the Detroit area versus the potential to leave and to perhaps return to Iraq, the push factors were not that different quantitatively, as they were almost equal in number. Specifically, there were 27 push factor codes and 26 codes that were categorized as pull factors. While the total numbers of these push/pull codes were virtually the same, the pull codes tended to be much stronger. In chapter five I discussed how even though there was widespread agreement involving the idea that the United States mismanaged Iraq, the overall tone among all of the research subjects was that it was in the past, and it was not something that was in their everyday conscience. I also discussed how only one interviewee emphasized negative stereotyping and discrimination against Chaldeans, while all of the other interviewees really downplayed these negative experiences and instead emphasized the feeling of being welcomed and helped by Americans. In contrast, the pull factors involving friends and family as well as an established Chaldean community tended to be rather strong pull factors involved in the decision to relocate to the Detroit area as well as

in the decision to remain. To summarize, the push factor to leave Iraq were strong, while the pull factors to relocate to the Detroit area were also quite strong. In contrast, the pull factors to return to Iraq were rather weak, as were the push factors to leave the Detroit area.

Where is "Home"?

In addition to analyzing the above push/pull factors, I also asked each interviewee questions pertaining to where their heart was or where they felt "home" was, Iraq or the U.S.? I asked questions related to this because the literature suggests the myth of return tends to involve an idealized or a mythologized conception of "home." In response to these questions, five of the interviewees indicated their heart was in Iraq, and they stated this was the case simply because they have not been in the Detroit area long enough to have established roots. In contrast, four of the interviewees indicated their heart was in the U.S. and their reasons for stating this were due to the fact most of their family was here and or because they now have a career and opportunities here rather than in Iraq. One interviewee indicated that her heart was both in Iraq and the U.S., and another indicated that his heart was in England. He stated this because he lived in England for a time when he was a teenager and has fond memories there. Whether or not an interviewee stated his or her heart was in Iraq did not seem to have any bearing on whether or not they were holding onto the myth of return.

Identification Preferences

Somewhat related to the above issue pertaining to where the research subjects feel they belong is their sense of identity, as this also has the potential of influencing the myth

of return. Their sense of identity is a topic that was discussed in chapter two in the section dealing with Sengstock's research. In this section I discussed how Sengstock found many Chaldean Americans, following the First Gulf War, wished to disassociate themselves with Iraq, and therefore wished to identify as "Chaldean" rather than "Iraqi." Interviewee Ten observed the same tendency in the following excerpt.

> **Interviewee Ten:** Yeah, now before when someone would ask you where you are from, you would say we are from Iraq, now if you are Chaldean, you don't say you're from Iraq, you say we are Chaldean.
> **Joseph:** Because people are not proud of Iraq anymore?
> **Interviewee Ten:** Yeah, they are not, because of the discrimination they say we are Chaldean, we are not Iraqi.
> **Joseph:** Interesting, and you noticed that shift where people used to say Iraqi, but now they say Chaldean?
> **Interviewee Ten:** Yeah, I visited here in 1982 and we used to say we are from Iraq, and people they were confused, they didn't know the difference between Iraq and Iran. Everybody says, Iran? Yeah because Iraq is more popular after the war.
> **Joseph:** Yeah, after the gulf war?
> **Interviewee Ten:** Yeah, after the first gulf war, now everybody knows Iraq. But people didn't know Iraq, you have to say the Middle East, or they say Lebanon or Kuwait, they know these countries more. So now Chaldean they never say we are from Iraq. They say we're Chaldean, even at school, like my daughter's school, they have a Chaldean flag and they have an Iraqi flag. Like you feel that (she was referring to the attempt to disassociate with Iraq).
> **Joseph:** So there's a desire for people to distance themselves from Iraq?
> **Interviewee Ten:** Yeah, we never had this before, yeah never!
> **Joseph:** And that's because of what has become of Iraq? (Joe)
> Yeah.

Interestingly, even though Sengstock, along with Interviewee Ten, observed the tendency of Chaldeans to identify as "Chaldean" as opposed to "Iraqi," there were three interviewees who stated they prefer to Identify as "Iraqi" in order to make a statement, in the face of genocide and the attempt to eradicate Chaldeans, that Iraq is "their" ancestral

homeland. These individuals stated they prefer to identify as "Iraqi" in Iraq, but "Chaldean" in the U.S. Similarly, four other interviewees also stated they prefer to identify as "Iraqi" simply because it is their country of origin. One interviewee stated that she identified as Chaldean and Iraqi equally, and one stated that he identifies as an "American Iraqi Chaldean," and in that order. Out of the eleven research subjects, only two stated they identified as "Chaldean" and not as "Iraqi."

It is interesting that the majority of the research subjects preferred to identify, at least to some extent, with "Iraqi," because of the observations made by Sengstock and Interviewee Ten. One of the questions posed by Sengstock back in 1999 asked whether or not Chaldeans would continue to prefer to identify as "Chaldean" or if after things settled down in Iraq, would they again prefer to identify as "Iraqi"? In light of Sengstock and Interviewee Ten's observations, as well as my own research, it is plausible that the identification preferences of Chaldeans could vary depending on the sample taken. If questions pertaining to identification preferences are posed to Chaldean Americans who have been in the U.S. for quite some time, it seems likely that most will prefer to identify as "Chaldean" and not "Iraqi" so as to disassociate themselves from Iraq. However, as my research seems to indicate, if these same questions are posed to Chaldean refugees who have been forced out of their homeland, then it would seem likely they would prefer to identify, at least to some extent, with "Iraqi," perhaps as a way to protest their forced removal from their homeland. Even though the majority of my research subjects identified with the term "Iraqi," I did not detect that this identification preference was connected with the presence of the myth of return which I will discuss in the next section.

Myth of Return

Out of the eleven interviewees, four stated they would consider moving back to Iraq if the country were to be restored and two of these four would still only consider moving back if just the right career opportunities were available to them. All four of these individuals, like the remaining seven interviewees, were highly skeptical that Iraq would be restored to the Iraq that they knew before 2003. The four who stated they would consider returning under just the right conditions, do not show indications of the myth of return as they all had a realistic assessment of what Iraq has become, as opposed to an idealized or mythologized conception of 'home" typical of people holding on to the myth of return. Six of the interviewees indicated they had no desire to return to Iraq ever, not even to visit. One interviewee said she would consider returning now, if the right opportunity emerged. She expressed some interest in returning as a humanitarian worker or perhaps to work for the American government, but she also stated that she is quite happy living in the Detroit area. Of the three categories of return highlighted by Moran-Taylor and Menjivar (2005:2) in their study of Salvadoran refugees, the last two, ambivalent and no desire are the most relevant to the Chaldean refugees in this study. The first category involving an assertive desire to return was not found within the sample of Chaldean refugees in this research.

Is The Myth of Return Present or Absent?

In response to the research question involving whether or not the myth of return was a factor among my research subjects, I basically did not find the presence of the myth among any of the research subjects in this study. As stated above, even those who would

consider returning under just the right conditions had an accurate assessment of home and were skeptical that things would be restored in Iraq.

Also, in contrast to Anwar's (1979:218-222) findings where immigrants deliberately chose not to establish roots in their host country of Britain, since they were planning on returning to Pakistan someday, my research subjects did not have this tendency. Instead, they worked to become a part of the community in the U.S. and specifically in the Detroit area. All of my interviewees with young children had them enrolled in public schools where they were learning English, everyone seemed determined to become a part of the fabric of their new home. Even the one interviewee, who emphasized negative treatment against Chaldeans, also expressed that he enjoyed living in this country, and had no desire to return to Iraq. I believe the primary reasons for not detecting the myth of return among my sample can be attributed to the fact that Chaldeans are a persecuted minority in Iraq, a country that continues to experience violence and instability. I also believe the myth is absent due to the rather positive relations that my sample has with the non-Chaldean population in the U.S./Detroit area.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research could be done involving a representative random probability sample to determine the percentage of Chaldean refugees in the Detroit area who desire to return. Quantitative surveys could include the Likert scale to determine the strength of attitudes toward returning as well as to determine the strength of how Chaldean refugees feel they are treated in the Detroit area. Also, a similar study to this qualitative one could be conducted in the future to determine if there are any changes in refugee attitudes

towards either returning to Iraq, or to their perceptions of how they are treated in the Detroit area. Perhaps this future study could utilize a larger heterogeneous sample that could include other groups from Iraq besides just Chaldeans.

Practical Implications

It is likely that other Chaldean refugees have experienced the same push/pull factors as the refugees in my sample, and this information can be useful to community leaders who are interested in either relocating Chaldean refugees out of Iraq, or working to preserve a Chaldean presence in Iraq. By better understanding the challenges faced by Chaldeans both in Iraq as well as in the U.S., leaders from both camps can use the information to further their goals.

The data generated from the research subjects' narratives can also be useful to political leaders, as it provides a picture of the effects of war on a nation from an insider's perspective. Often, the focus of wars is on the military campaigns and not so much on how the war is impacting civilian individuals and their families who have nothing to do with the politics of war. Particularly, this data may be useful to political leaders in the wealthier core nations that are most likely to engage in armed combat on a grand scale in an effort to secure their national interests.

Weaknesses

One possible weakness in this study involves the insider/outsider dynamic. Since I was born a U.S. citizen, and since I am a white resident in the Detroit area, my research subjects may have felt uncomfortable and awkward expressing dissatisfaction with living in the Detroit area. This dynamic could have caused them to avoid sharing their true

feelings. However, I did not perceive this to be the case because when I asked other potentially sensitive questions, like mistakes that the U.S. government made in its political and military involvement in Iraq, there seemed to be no hesitance in expressing frustrations and disappointments with the United States' military actions as well as its political actions despite the fact that I am a citizen. If they felt awkward about opening up to me regarding their treatment here in the Detroit area, it would seem that they would have also found it awkward opening up to me about the U.S involvement in Iraq as well.

Another limitation with my research is that I am not an ethnic Chaldean and so I could have potentially misinterpreted data provided by my research subjects whose cultural orientation is distinct from my own. To minimize this weakness, I have attempted to familiarize myself with the culture by reading about it, and by becoming acquainted with individuals within the Chaldean community, and by spending time in the community. Also, whenever I had questions involving the culture, I have always found Chaldeans to be more than happy to share their knowledge with me. Additionally, I also have competent individuals in the Chaldean Community who have agreed to read this dissertation and to provide feedback regarding potential misunderstandings.

Another influence that has been particularly helpful in orienting me to Chaldean culture has been Sengstock's book on Chaldean Americans. While I am to some extent an outsider looking into Chaldean culture, I do not believe the barrier between my own culture and that of my research subjects is so great that it would lead to gross misinterpretations, but there is the possibility of minor misunderstandings.

An additional weakness involves a language barrier due to the fact that all of my interviews were conducted in English without the use of a translator, while all of my interviewees speak English as their second or even third language. All of my research subjects either speak Arabic, Chaldean, or both, as well as English, and unfortunately, I do not speak Arabic or Chaldean. This language barrier could have resulted in a loss of information simply due to the fact that my interviewees were perhaps at times unable to articulate the full sense of what they wanted to convey. Although there probably was some information lost due to the language barrier, this limitation would have been at a minimum due to the fact that all of my research subjects were quite competent in their English language skills. When there was an obvious breakdown in communication, I would work with my interviewees by asking questions in a slightly different way, attempting to avoid big complicated words, or by suggesting English words that I sensed they were attempting to recall.

There were also limitations involving my sample that should be addressed as well. These limitations pertain to the fact that my sample is skewed in three different ways. One contributing factor to this skewing involves the issue that my sample was limited only to individuals who could speak English well enough to be interviewed in it. The reason for this is that I personally do not speak Arabic or Chaldean, and also because I was not able to obtain an IRB qualified interpreter. This restriction to only those who speak fluent English skewed my sample in a couple of ways. One of these ways involves the fact that my sample was skewed toward those who came closer to 2003, rather than more recent arrivals, and this is simply due to the fact that individuals who came closer to 2003 have

been in the United States long enough to have developed a proficiency in English, whereas those who arrived more recently are less likely to be competent English speakers. Although this was the case, I was fortunately able to interview a couple who arrived fairly recently and so my sample is not completely devoid of recent arrivals. Having these two individuals in my sample did enrich this study because their experiences were somewhat different than for those who left Iraq closer to 2003. One difference has to do with the fact that the recent arrivals were negatively impacted by Al Qaeda as well as ISIS, whereas those who came closer to 2003 were impacted negatively by Al Qaeda, but not ISIS. All research subjects, however, were negatively impacted by a discriminatory culture that treated Chaldeans and other minorities like second class citizens.

Although it's true that individuals who relocated to the U.S. closer to 2003 are more likely to speak English fluently than those who have more recently immigrated, there is an exception, and this exception involves those who are among the more educated and who are therefore more likely to have acquired the English language in Iraq prior to relocating to the Detroit area. This is in fact the case for some of the research subjects, including the two mentioned above, in this study; and this in part explains a second way that the sample is skewed, as it leans to those who are highly educated rather than to those with little to no education.

The third way that the sample is skewed involves the idea that the people who consented to participate represent a certain personality type that is perhaps more outgoing and social, whereas those who are more introverted and private choose not to respond to recruitment strategies. There is the possibility, though, that there were some

who chose not to participate, not because they are unsocial, but because they had a certain measure of fear. It's possible that those with higher levels of education are less likely to fear academic research, simply due to the fact that they have had more exposure to it, and perhaps this is another reason why this sample favors those with high levels of education. I will discuss the possible effects of fear in more detail in the section dealing with recruitment.

Concluding Remarks

Even though the above limitations impact this research, the in-depth qualitative interview approach is most certainly the best choice for assessing the extent to which the myth of return is involved with the Chaldean refugee population the Detroit area. There are many complicated issues involved in the decision to stay or leave Iraq, as well as in the decision to relocate to the Detroit metropolitan area or to perhaps return to Iraq. These differences vary with each individual and from family to family, and even when there appears to be a set of similar factors related to these decisions from one individual to the next, there are still nuanced differences that would be difficult to measure using quantitative methodological approaches. The research question that pertains to this study requires context and a deeper understanding than what surveys could provide. Furthermore, as stated earlier, one of the aims of this research was to provide an outlet for which the unique narratives and experiences of each research subject could be shared. The exposure of these narratives is best gleaned through in-depth open ended question interviews, and the data generated from this research may be of use to community leaders who endeavor to better serve the Chaldean refugee population in the Detroit area.

Lastly, based on the literature pertaining to the myth of return that I have highlighted in this study, my findings are not surprising. Considering my research subjects come from a persecuted religious minority group in their homeland, and because they overall do not express feelings of being treated as second class citizens, as did the research subjects in Zetter's study (1994:312) or mere "guest workers," in their host country, as did the Turkish research subjects highlighted by Zick et el research (2001:544); It is not surprising that the myth of return is absent among my sample. Even those that did express they could potentially consider moving back to Iraq under just the right conditions, also did not hold on to the myth of return, as they maintained a realistic assessment of what "home" is, and in addition expressed skepticism regarding the possibility of "home" being restored. This realistic assessment stands in contrast to an idealized or mythologized conception of "home" as typical of someone holding on to the myth of return.

Additionally, there was no evidence the individuals in my sample insulated themselves by choosing to only participate in the social institutions where they were required to do so, like the Pakistanis in Anwar's (1979:222) study, who did so in order to avoid establishing roots and to reject the host country which they felt had rejected them. In contrast, my research subjects all seemed content to rebuild their lives in the Detroit area and viewed the possibility of return to Iraq as either very unlikely, or something they would never even consider.

APPENDIX A

Chaldean Community Foundation Letter of Support

Sharon Hannawa

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Sterling Heights,
MI. 48310

To Whom it may concern, I am writing on behalf of the Chaldean Community Foundation to express the foundation's support for this Wayne State University study conducted by PhD student, Joseph Byle entitled, "A Narrative Study of Chaldean Refugees and the Myth of Return: From Chaldean Babylon to the New Word." The foundation believes the data generated from this study has the potential of being useful to community leaders as they seek to serve the Chaldean refugee population. More importantly, we feel strongly that the heart wrenching stories of so many Chaldean refugees need to be heard so that their plight does not go unnoticed. Because of the potential benefits to the Chaldean refugee community, we have agreed to share Mr. Byle's contact information with anyone who may desire to participate in this voluntary, anonymous, and confidential study. The foundation has also agreed to allow Mr. Byle the use of a private room for research interviews, based on availability.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX B

Letter of support from Bishop Francis Y. Kalabat

Bishop Francis Y. Kalabat

St. Thomas the Apostle
Chaldean Catholic Diocese U.S.A.
(248)-351-0440

I am writing this letter on behalf of Joseph Byle's proposed Wayne State University research on Chaldean refugees in the Detroit Metropolitan area. I am supporting this research because I believe that the plight of these victims needs to be heard and addressed within academia. After reading Mr. Byle's research proposal, I also believe that the findings could be of potential benefit to community leaders as they seek to better serve this refugee population. Please consider the approval Of Mr. Byle's dissertation research entitled, "A Narrative Study of Chaldean Refugees and the Myth of Return: From Chaldean Babylon to the New World."

Sincerely,

Bishop Francis Y. Kalabat

APPENDIX C
Letter of Support from Father Mathew Zetouna

Father Matthew Zetouna

Holy Martyrs Chaldean Catholic Church
43700 Merrill Rd.
Sterling Heights, MI. 48314

I am writing this letter to express my support for Joseph Byle's dissertation proposal entitled, "A Narrative Study of Chaldean Refugees and the Myth of Return: From Chaldean Babylon to the New World." After examining this research proposal, I believe that the study will be of benefit to the Chaldean refugee community, as it will give refugees an outlet to share their experiences and frustrations. Because of the potential benefits of this study, I have agreed to provide Mr. Byle's contact information with any refugee who wishes to participate in this study. I have also agreed to allow Mr. Byle to use a private room in the church to conduct interviews.

Sincerely,

Father Matthew Zetouna

APPENDIX D
Letter of support from Father Rudy Zoma

Father Rudy Zoma

St. Joseph Chaldean Catholic Church
2442 E. Big Beaver Rd.
Troy, MI. 48083

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter of support for Joseph Byle's dissertation research proposal, "A Narrative Study of Chaldean Refugees and the Myth of Return: From Chaldean Babylon to the New World." I believe the data generated from this study will be of use to my Parish, as well as to other organizations that serve the Chaldean refugee population. I am also supporting this study because it will give Chaldean refugees a chance to share their stories, and I feel strongly that their stories need to be heard. Because of the benefits associated with this research I have agreed to share Mr. Byle's contact information with any refugee who is interested in participating. I have also agreed to allow Mr. Byle to use a private room in the church to conduct interviews.

Sincerely,

Father Rudy Zoma

APPENDIX E
IRB Approvals

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

IRB Administration Office
87 East Canfield, Second Floor Detroit,
Michigan 48201
Phone: (313) 577-1628
FAX: (313) 993-7122
http://irb.wayne.edu

NOTICE OF EXPEDITED APPROVAL

To: Joseph Byle

Sociology
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

From: Deborah Ellis or designee

Chairperson, Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3)

Date: October 19, 2015

RE: IRB #: 077415B3E

Protocol Title: A Narrative Study of Chaldean Refugees A the Myth of Return: From Chaldean Babylon to the New World

Funding Source:

Protocol #: 1508014231

Expiration Date: October 18, 2016

Risk Level / Category: Research not involving greater than minimal risk

The above-referenced protocol and items listed below (if applicable) were APPROVED following *Expedited Review* Category (#7)* by the Chairperson/designee *for* the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board (B3) for the period of 10/19/2015 through 10/18/2016. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required.

- Revised Protocol Summary Form (revision received in the IRB office 10/13/15)
- Revised Research Protocol-Dissertation (received in the IRB office 10/13/15)
- Medical records are not being accessed therefore HIPPA does not apply
- Behavioral Research Informed Consent (revision dated 10/13/2015)
- Study Flyer - Seeking Chaldean Volunteers

- Brochure for Participants: Perspectives Counseling Centers
- Data Collection Tool: Interview Guide

Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. You *may* receive a *"Continuation Renewal Reminder"* approximately two months prior to the expiration date; however, it is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval *before* the expiration date. Data collected during a period of lapsed approval is unapproved research and can never be reported or published as research data.

- All changes or amendments to the above-referenced protocol require review and approval by the IRS BEFORE implementation.
- Adverse Reactions/Unexpected Events (AR/UE) must be submitted on the appropriate form within the timeframe specified in the IRB Administration Office Policy (http://www.irb.wayne.edu//policies-human-research.php).

NOTE:

1. Upon notification of an impending regulatory site visit, hold notification, and/or external audit the IRB Administration Office must be contacted immediately.
2. Forms should be downloaded from the IRS website at each use.

*Based on the Expedited Review List, revised November 1998

Research Informed Consent

Title of Study: *A Narrative Study of Chaldean Refugees and the Myth of Return: From Chaldean Babylon to the New World*

Principal Investigator (PI): Joseph J. Byle
Sociology
248-935-8423

Purpose

You are being asked to be in a research study involving the experiences of Chaldeans both in Iraq as well as here in the Detroit area, and because you left Iraq after 2003, and were 18 years or older when you left, you are eligible to participate in this study. This study is being conducted at Wayne State University. The maximum number of study participants to be enrolled at Wayne State University is 20 Detroit area individuals. **Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.**

Study Procedures

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will be asked to be interviewed either individually or in a group by Joseph Byle for a one time session for approximately one hour. The interview will take place in a private room at Wayne State University, Holy Martyrs Chaldean Catholic Church, St Joseph Chaldean Catholic Church, or The Chaldean Community Foundation. The interview will be recorded and typed out into transcripts to be used by Mr. Byle for further study. All recordings will be deleted after they have been transcribed, and the transcriptions will be stored electronically in an encrypted file. Only Mr. Byle will have access to the transcriptions. If Mr. Byle includes any of the information that you shared, he will use a different name than your given name, to protect your identity. Some of the questions are sensitive in nature. For example, he will ask about your experiences while living in Iraq just before departure, as well as what you are experiencing now while living here in the Detroit area. He will also ask questions regarding your opinion of the United States' actions in Iraq. He will basically be asking you questions about changes that you have experienced in Iraq as well as while living here, and he will be asking how these changes have impacted your life. If there are any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering, you are always: free to decline. You are also able to stop participating in the interview at any time.

Benefits

As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future. Information gathered: from this study may be helpful to community leaders both within the Chaldean community as well as outside, as they seek to serve the Chaldean refugee population in the area.

Risks

By taking part in this study, there is the possibility that you could face the risk of emotional stress, (e.g. feelings of sadness or anxiety) as well as the possibility that you could experience psychological stress such as PTSD. In order to minimize this risk Mr. Byle will provide you with a brochure to the Perspectives of Troy counseling center which is equipped to deal with psychological stress such as PTSD.

There is also the risk that there could be a breach in confidentiality due to hacking or theft of the computer on which data are stored. This risk will be minimized by storing all interview recordings and transcripts on a password protected computer that is in a locked room in the Department of Sociology at Wayne State. In addition the files that data are stored on will be encrypted so that only Mr. Byle can open them. Consent forms will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the department of Sociology at Wayne State and only Mr. Byle will have access to them.

There may also be risks involved from taking part in this study that are not known to researchers at this time.

Study Costs

Participation in this study will be of no cost to you.

Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. You will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. Information that identifies you personally will not be released without your written permission. However, the study sponsor, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Wayne State University, or federal agencies with appropriate regulatory oversight (e.g., Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), etc.) may review your records.

When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

When audiotape recordings of you will be used for research or educational purposes, your identity will be protected or disguised. After the research is completed, the audio recordings will be deleted.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. You are free to only answer questions that you want to answer. You are free to withdraw from participation in this study at any time. Your decisions will not change any present or future relationship with Wayne State University or its affiliates, or other services you are entitled to receive.

The PI (Joseph Byle) may stop your participation in this study without your consent. The PI will make the decision and let you know if it is not possible for you to continue. The decision that is made is to protect your health and safety, or because you did not follow the instructions to take part in the study

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Mr. Byle or one of his research team members at the following phone number (313)-577-2930. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call the Wayne State Research Subject Advocate at (313) 577-1628 to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. If you choose to take part in this study you may withdraw at any time. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by signing this form. Your signature below indicates that you have read, or had read to you, this entire consent form, including the risks and benefits, and have had all of your questions answered. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

Signature of participant	Date
Printed name of participant	Time
Signature of person obtaining consent	Date
Printed name of person obtaining consent	Time

Participant's Initials

Interview Guide

Time approximation: 1hour

Intro script: As you may know I am researching Chaldean Iraqi refugees who have immigrated to the Detroit area since 2003 and I want to understand how changes that you have experienced while living in Iraq as well as while living here has impacted your life. So, I'm wondering if we can start by having you tell me about your life in Iraq.

1. Can you tell me about your life in Iraq?

   Now I would like to know more about how your life was impacted by changes in politics, for instance, when the Shia gained political power, or when ISIS gained control over certain regions within Iraq.

2. Could you share with me, if and how your life changed as the Shia gained political power following the Saddam era?
3. Could you tell me if and how life changed as ISIS was gaining power in certain regions?
4. Could you share what your number one reason was for leaving Iraq?

   Probe: Are there any other reasons behind your decision to leave Iraq?

5. What factors caused you to move to the Detroit area?

Note: The following questions relate to the myth of return theory.

Okay, now I want to talk to you about how you feel about Iraq now that you are here. So my first question is:

6. Do you have a desire to return to I r a q ?

   If no ask, "Have you ever had a desire to return to Iraq, or have you always been resolute in not wanting to return?"

   If yes ask, "Have you always wanted to return, or is it a desire that has developed more recently?"

7. What do you think is the likelihood that you will return to Iraq?

   If they indicate a strong likelihood ask, "Can you tell me why you think that it is likely that you will return?

8. Where would you say is the place that best describes where you feel you belong, or where your heart is?

9. How would you describe your experience living here in the Detroit area?

10. Do you feel like you are treated well in the Detroit area? Can you explain?

11. How do you think Americans perceive you? Why? Can you explain some interactions that you have had with Americans that make you believe they view you this way? Do Americans understand who you are, or do they mistakenly confuse you as belonging to a different ethnic/religious group?

12. Are you connected with the non-Chaldean community?

    If so ask, "How did you get connected or involved?"

    If not ask, "Why not? Do you plan on connecting with the non-Chaldean community?"

I know that it is sometimes difficult to talk about politics, but I would really like to know about your opinions regarding the U.S. involvement in Iraq. I am not asking

because I want to judge you, nor do I want Americans to judge you, I am asking because I want Americans to understand how these events and politics have impacted the lives of people in Iraq.

13. Do you have any thoughts or opinions regarding the United States' involvement in Iraq over the past two decades?
14. Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding your experiences in Iraq or the move to the U.S.?

Survey questions:

15. What is your age, sex, household income, employment status, type of job held in Iraq, type of job held here, how many children, level of education, how many relatives do you have in Iraq, how many relatives do you have here in the Detroit area?

Seeking Chaldean Volunteers!

This dissertation research project is seeking volunteers to participate in a Wayne State University study involving Chaldean refugees in the Detroit metropolitan area. If you are interested in sharing any changes that you may have experienced in Iraq as well as changes that you have experienced while living here in the Detroit area, then please consider participating in an approximately one hour interview. The information gathered in this study will be useful to community leaders as they seek to better serve the Chaldean refugee population. If you are an English speaking Chaldean who departed Iraq after 2003 and were 18 years or older at the time of departure, then you are eligible to participate. Please contact Wayne State PhD student, Joseph Byle if you are interested in in taking part in this study, and thank you for your consideration.

Joseph J. Byle

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ABSTRACT

A NARRATIVE STUDY OF CHALDEAN REFUGEES AND THE MYTH OF RETURN: FROM CHALDEAN BABYLON TO THE NEW WORLD

by

JOSEPH J. BYLE

May 2017

Advisor: Dr. Khari Brown

Major: Sociology

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

With the removal of Saddam following the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, life for all Iraqis changed for the worse, especially for minorities such as Christians, including Chaldeans. Considering the powerful push factors that have compelled Chaldean Refugees in the Detroit area to leave Iraq, the idea of returning to the homeland would seem like a remote possibility, however, these Chaldeans present an intriguing case, due to the fact that they are among the indigenous people in Iraq. Do their deep rooted ties to the homeland contribute to a desire to return? This research examines this possibility through an in-depth qualitative interview study that analyzes the push/pull factors involved in the decision to leave Iraq and to relocate to the Detroit area, as well as the push/pull factors pertaining to the potential decision to either stay in the Detroit area, or to perhaps return to the homeland. The theoretical perspective guiding this research is, "the myth of return."

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Ph.D. in Sociology, 2017
Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

M.A. in Comparative Religion, **2009**
Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan

B.A. in Christian Thought, 2001
William Tyndale College, Farmington Hills, Michigan

A.A. in General Studies, 1992
Oakland Community College, Auburn Hills, Michigan

Teaching Experience:

Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan
Graduate Student Assistant (2015-2016)
Duties: Taught *SOC 2000 Understanding Human Society*
Part time faculty position in the Department of Sociology (2012 – 2014)
Duties: Taught *SOC 2100 Special Topics in Sociology: The Sociology of Detroit*
Worked as GSA in the Office for Teaching and Learning (fall 2013 – fall 2014)

Monroe County Community College, Monroe, Michigan
Adjunct Faculty position
Duties: Teaching *SOC* 151 *Principles of Sociology* both in class and online (winter 2013 – Present)
Served on the (LAC) Learning Assessment Committee (January 2015 – 2016)

Oakland Community College, Auburn Hills, Michigan
Adjunct Faculty position
Duties: Teaching *HUM 1750 World Religions* (summer 2015 – Present)

Oakland University, Rochester Hills, Michigan
Adjunct Faculty position
Duties: Teaching *SOC/REL 305 Sociology of Religion, SOC/AN 331 Racial and Ethnic Relations*
and SOC 100 Introduction to Sociology (winter 2016-Present)

Macomb Community College, Warren, Michigan
Adjunct Faculty position
Duties: Teaching *HUMN 1700 Comparative Religions* (Winter 2017 – Present)