

From Iraq to the United States: Justice, Human Rights, and Migration

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on justice, human rights, and migration in Iraq. It explores the ideas of justice and human rights, and how they influence the migration of the Iraqi Assyrians and Chaldeans. Through the use of qualitative methodology, including a review of scholarly literature, personal experience, and semi-formal interviews with ten individuals, this research mainly focuses on the influence that justice and human rights had on migration during the U.S.-Iraq War, from 2003 until 2011. Justice, human rights, and migration before and after the War are examined. The study concludes that justice and human rights are factors that influence the migration of Iraq's Assyrian and Chaldean community throughout the U.S.-Iraq War; however justice and human rights are not the only factors.

DEDICATION

I dedicate it to my Dad and Mom for leaving Iraq, and migrating for justice and human rights.

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Introduction

Iraq-1996, it was six fifteen in the evening on a chilly November day, and I remember it like it was yesterday. My father had just arrived home from the International Catholic Migration Commission organization, where he worked for three years. My mom had the teapot on the stove, and was preparing the evening tea. As he walked inside, and went forward to sit at the kitchen table, my mom immediately felt that he had some type of news. “Ha, mayla masala. Ma sahtela edyuka.” (What is the matter? What happened today?). He informed us that we were leaving Iraq, and setting on a journey to the United States. At the time, I was only six years old, and I did not understand the impact my life would experience. Nevertheless, that day will remain in my memory, and a part of me forever. It was the day my life changed a hundred and eighty degrees.

According to my father, he and other men and women had been threatened by Saddam Hussein’s government for their involvement with the United States governmental and non-governmental organizations. This is the reason we had to flee from Iraq. Bill Clinton, the incumbent U.S. president at the time issued a memorandum that stated any individual working or involved with the U.S. governmental and non-governmental organizations in Iraq would be brought to the United States. It was not long afterward that families with their one suitcase began their journey. We left Iraq, and headed toward Turkey, where we stayed in refugee camps for two nights. Then, we were taken to Guam, a U.S. territory, where we applied for asylum in the United States. We remained in Guam for two months, before officially migrating to the United States.

On February 19, 1997, my family and I arrived in the state of Arizona, where we eventually settled, and tried to create a new life and home. For me, adapting to the United

States was fairly easy. I learned the language, and adopted the culture. However, as I became older, I had to choose between, remaining an Iraqi or becoming an American. Nevertheless, I faced the real issue, when I visited Iraq with my family in the summer of 2006. For the first time, I noticed that I no longer belong in Iraq. I had an accent, when speaking Aramaic; and, the entire town labeled my family as the people who are visiting from America. Although, my parents, and my older sister were still considered as authentic Iraqis, my brother and I were labeled as foreigners or Amrikee.

Upon returning from Iraq, I began to notice my place in the United States as well. I realized that I am neither an Iraqi nor an American. Due to this identity crisis, I began to explore my origin, ethnicity, culture, language, my migration to the United States, and the factors behind our move away.

Throughout my research about my story, I came across the story of other Iraqis' migration out Iraq, especially after the start of the U.S.-Iraq War of 2003. Thus, my research on the migration of the Iraqi people began. Originally, I wanted to conduct a comparative analysis of the migration of Iraq's major groups, the Arabs, the Kurds, and the Assyrians and Chaldeans; however, due to the time constraint, I have decided to focus on one group only. I chose the Assyrians and Chaldeans, and there were a variety of factors that played a role in my decision. As a Chaldean, this research focus is a way of helping Assyrians and Chaldeans, and I to understand our origin and place in this world. It will help make sense of why one of Iraq's oldest and original civilizations is migrating out of Iraq, and settling down in other countries.

The focus of this thesis is to explore the factors that influence the migration of Assyrians and Chaldeans from Iraq to the United States from the year 2003 until 2013.

I specifically focus on justice and human rights, and their influence on migration. My research seeks to uncover the type of human rights, the Assyrians and Chaldeans seek, when they migrate out of Iraq. Furthermore, I look to find a connection between justice and human rights. How do the Assyrians and Chaldeans define justice and human rights. Throughout my research, I not only focus on migration, human rights and justice, but I also focus on defining and incorporating other issues, such as identity, ethnicity and religion. My research's overall purpose is to draw a connection between justice, human rights and migration by focusing on the Assyrians and Chaldeans of Iraq.

Using qualitative methodology that includes autoethnography, semi-formal interviews, and an ethnographic participant observation, I collected data. I used my own personal migration experience to not only explore the topic of migration, human rights, and justice further, but also to assist in my semi-formal interviews. Through my social network, I was able to find individuals to interview, and personally empathize with them. I also collected information in Iraq during the summer of 2013. Throughout my visit, I conducted participant observations while attending weddings and Church functions. Using these various qualitative methods, I explored the following questions; why do the Assyrians and Chaldeans migrate out of Iraq? What are the factors that affect the migration of Assyrians and Chaldeans? Are human rights abuses one of the factors that influence their migration? What is the role of justice within human rights for the Assyrians and Chaldeans? And, lastly, what does the future look like for this ancient civilization?

In chapter one, I present a variety of theoretical approaches that draw a connection between the three major themes, justice, human rights, and migration. I begin

discussing the idea and meaning of justice by incorporating Iris Marion Young's *The Politics of Difference* and Nancy Fraser's *The Scales of Justice*. I explore Young's difference principle and Fraser's parity of participation principle as a part of defining and describing justice. In other words, these principles outline the rights of humanity from a justice perspective. For human rights perspective, I begin with the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and reference the articles that outline the rights of individuals, especially minority groups. Furthermore, I incorporate Burns H. Weston's "Human Rights" in *International Law and World Order* by Weston and Richard A. Falk. Weston provides a detailed definition of human rights by referencing Karal Vasak's three generations of human rights, which bring forth the entitled rights of all human beings. Lastly, I discuss the idea of migration, and how factors, such as justice and human rights can influence an individual to migrate. For example, even individuals, who are citizens of a country will leave their birthplace, if they are being denied their human rights. In his book, *Citizenship and Migration*, Christian Joppke provides a very detailed explanation of the idea of citizenship in accordance with migration. He focuses on three themes: status, identity, and rights, and shows how neglecting citizenship status, identity, and rights can impact migration.

In this chapter, I begin with a social history of Iraq; I divide it into two sections: Mesopotamia and Iraq. The first section, Mesopotamia begins from the year 4000 BC and lasts until the 1930s. Mesopotamia is a greek word that means the land between the two rivers. I define and discuss Mesopotamia, and its ethnic composition. I highlight how it was known as the cradle of humanity, civilization, and the Abrahamic faiths. Mesopotamia was known as the fertile crescent. History names it as the cradle of

civilization because it is considered one of the first places where humanity settled down and created a society. Mesopotamia was also known as the cradle of humanity, in other words, human life began there. According to Christianity, Adam and Eve were created in the Garden of Eden, which was located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. These two rivers are precisely located in present-day Iraq. Mesopotamia was also known as the cradle of Abrahamic faiths, the three major monotheistic religions in the world: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, each of which, trace their roots back to Mesopotamia. Although majority of the Iraqi Jewish community migrated after World War II to the newly formed State of Israel. I, then move on to discuss Mesopotamia's transition from ethnically governed to religiously governed. After the rise of Islam, Iraq transitioned; it came to be governed by the Islamic religion and after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Islam was divided into two sects, the Sunni and the Shi'a. This sectarian separation not only brought about conflict, but also defined the current and future state of Iraq.

The first section ends at the 1930s because, the early 1930s were Iraq's last years as a colonized state governed by various empires. In 1932, Iraq became an independent country; thus section two covers the period from the 1930s to 2003. I begin with a discussion on the Ba'athist regime, which defined Iraq from mid-twentieth century until the beginning of the twenty-first century. Throughout the Ba'athist regime, there is a rise in Iraqi nationalism with an Arabized ideology for only the people who were Arab and Sunni. I then, move forward into discussing Saddam Hussein's role in Iraq, and the wars between U.S. and Iraq. Thus, concluding with the start of the U.S.-Iraq War, and Saddam Hussein's loss of control and power. Overall, the purpose of the social history is to provide readers with a historical overview of Iraq.

Chapter three covers the body of literature found on justice, human rights, and other factors, and how they impact migration, which is very limited. This chapter relies heavily from two authors, Ibrahim Sirkeci and Shak Hanish, who have written scholarly articles on the migration of Iraqis, specifically minority communities; such as, the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Mandaean, Yezidis. I also discuss United Nation's Human Rights reports conducted on Iraq during the U.S.-Iraq War.

Chapter four presents the data collected from ten interviews with Assyrians and Chaldeans, who discuss their journey from Iraq to the United States, specifically Arizona. Two out the ten individuals migrated in the mid-nineties, six migrated throughout the U.S.-Iraq War, and two migrated after the war. For every year from the year of 2003 until the year of 2013, I interviewed an individual that migrated from Iraq to the United States throughout that time period, with the exception of the years of 2003, 2006, and 2011. The interview data draws a connection between justice, human rights, and migration, as well as makes a comparison between the people who migrated after the fall of Saddam Hussein and during the U.S.-Iraq War, and after the U.S.-Iraq War.

In chapter five, I analyze the ten interviews to assess the change in justice, human rights, and migration, during the three different time frames. I compare the interviewees' responses between the times during Saddam's reign, during the U.S.-Iraq war, and after the war. I present justice and human rights changes during the three time frames; however, for the Assyrians and Chaldeans, justice and human rights impact on migration is the same. They feel that injustice and human rights abuse is targeted towards them, and is escalating as time progresses.

The last and final chapter focuses on the obstacles and limitations that took place within the research project. Furthermore, it looks at the significance of this research, especially for the Assyrian and Chaldean community in Arizona as well as in other other places. Lastly, this chapter will conclude with a brief description of the future of the Assyrians and Chaldeans.

1: Justice, Human Rights, and Migration Theory

Justice is the act of obtaining one's rights that are being denied. Human rights outlines the rights to which each human being is entitled. Furthermore, when both justice and human rights are denied, migration takes place.

Justice enforces the concept of differences to be acknowledged and accepted. The acceptance of differences principle proposes that people come to the realization that differences exist as a part of our social processes. Freedom and equality cannot be achieved through assimilation, or the rejection of differences. The second principle is the parity of participation, which allows people to participate in a society without any sort of obstacles. Through their participation, groups identified as different have the opportunity to voice their opinion, obtain equal representation, and be involved in the decision-making process. These two principles, acceptance of differences principle and parity of participation principle, enforce the rights of humanity in a just society.

In *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Iris Marion Young defines her conception of justice with the concepts of domination and oppression. She “argues where social group differences exist and some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, social justice requires explicitly acknowledging and attending to those group differences in order to undermine oppression.”¹ For Young, justice is acknowledging and accepting differences among groups because it eliminates oppression. For Young, acknowledgement and acceptance of differences transcends a society from oppression

¹ Iris Marion Young and Danielle S. Allen. *Justice and The Politics of Difference*. Pbk. reissue / ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011, 3

towards justice. She presents readers with three different political views on human being differences: traditional politics, egalitarian view, and emancipatory politics.² Young defines traditional politics as the type that excludes human beings based on their differences. Egalitarians view differences as one of the mechanisms used in the process of connecting human beings. Lastly, emancipatory politics uses differences as another defining form for equality.³ Although, all three views present different definitions of differences among human beings, Young argues “a positive self-definition of group difference is in fact more liberatory.”⁴ There are many different views on how human being differences need to be defined and handled. However, the most important aspect that needs to be included in defining human being differences is that the definition needs to be positive, and beneficial. Young argues that acceptance of differences, and emancipatory politics’ definition of differences is a positive definition of human being differences.

In *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*, Nancy Fraser defines justice as the parity of participation. She states, “this radical-democratic interpretation of the principle of equal moral worth, justice requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life.”⁵ Accordingly, every human being has the voluntary right to participate in all the different areas of the city life without obstacles. Justice is achieved when obstacles such as political, economic, and social are

² Ibid., 157

³ Ibid., 157-158

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Nancy Fraser and Inc ebrary. *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010, 16

demolished.⁶ Political obstacles are defined as denying people the right to express their opinion, and participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Economic challenges are created by denying of resources that people need to participate. Lastly, social obstacles are presented when people are prevented from participating because of their class standing.⁷ Obstacles presented in the forms of political, economic, and culture violate the participatory principle.

However, under this principle, every human being will possess rights such as distributive, equal, recognition, political, and representation.⁸ For Young and Frasier, the overall purpose of justice is to bring awareness and enforcement of these rights of humanity.

The concept of human rights or “‘the rights of man’-are literally the rights that one has because one is human.”⁹ is new, and its history is as old as the United Nations. After World War II, in 1945, the United Nations adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which outlined the rights of humanity.¹⁰ In the United Nation’s *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the document begins with “whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”¹¹ This is a strong

⁶ Ibid., 60

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹Jack Donnelly. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, 7

¹⁰ Burns H. Weston, and Richard A. Falk. "Problems of Socio-Political Justice." In *International law and world order: a problem-oriented coursebook*. 4th ed. St. Paul, MN: Thomson/West, 2006., 494.

¹¹ Burns H. Weston, Richard A. Falk, and Hilary Charlesworth. *Supplement of basic documents to International law and world order: a problem-oriented coursebook*. 4th ed.

and clear statement that every human being is born with and entitled to freedom, justice and peace. Furthermore, article 1 of the declaration states “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”¹² The declaration defines and synonymously interchanges the phrase ‘human rights’ with the concepts of freedom, equality, and justice.

However, the declaration never contained any article regarding the rights of minorities until the year 1992. The United Nations espoused the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. Like the *Declaration of Human Rights*, this Declaration provides more detail on the rights of minorities. For example, article 1 states that all “States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories, and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.”¹³ This Declaration specifically outlines and obligates nations to respect the rights of ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic identity of minorities within their region. Although, the *Declaration of Human Rights* provides a broader perspective of human rights compared to the *Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, it is still affective in outlining the basic rights entitled to all of humanity.

In his book, *Human Rights*, Burns H. Weston notes that the idea of human rights was recognized after World War II and was a key factor against political absolutism in the

St. Paul, MN: West Pub., 2006, 525.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 773.

18th and 19th century. The idea developed in response to the lack of respect for the principles of freedom and equality.¹⁴ When freedom and equality are being denied, the concept of human rights becomes more significant to humanity.

Weston notes Karel Vasak's three "generations" of human rights, which were inspired by the French Revolution.¹⁵ According to Weston, they are "the first generation of civil and political rights (*liberté*); the second generation of economic, social, and cultural rights (*égalité*); and the third generation of solidarity rights (*fraternité*)."¹⁶ These three sub-categories of human rights are to be understood as "cumulative, overlapping, and, it is important to note, interdependent and interpenetrating."¹⁷ The first generation of human rights, which focus on civil and political liberties, consists of anywhere from freedom to life, liberty, thought, conscience, and religion to freedom from gender, racial, and equivalent forms of discrimination.¹⁸ The first generation of human rights focuses on liberty, which is "a shield that safeguards the individual-alone and in association with others-against the abuse of political authority."¹⁹

The second generation of human rights, which consists of economic, social and cultural rights tend to meet the standards of the socialist thinking. Unlike the first generation of rights, Weston argues that the government is required to abstain, rather than interfere, the second-generation of rights request the government to interfere.²⁰ Weston

¹⁴ Weston, *Problems of Socio-Political Justice*, 495

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 498

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 499

¹⁹ Weston, *Problems of Socio-Political Justice*, 499

²⁰ *Ibid.*

identifies the second-generation rights as “fundamentally, claims to social equality.”²¹

The second-generation of rights consist of the rights outlined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, articles from twenty-two until twenty-seven. These articles declare that all human beings have the right to employment, education, and participation in a community’s social and cultural life.²² In other words, every individual is entitled to the economic, social, and cultural rights of a society.

The third generation of human rights, which are solidarity rights, outlines six types of rights.²³ Weston identifies these as “the right to political, economic, social, and cultural self-determination; the right to economic and social development; the right to participate in and benefit from mankind; the right to peace, the right to a healthy and sustainable environment, and the right to humanitarian disaster relief.”²⁴ Labeled as solidarity rights, these rights focus on the idea of collective action taken by a community through unity. Every individual should have the right to belong to and participate in a society and/or community.

The overall purpose of the three generations of human rights is to declare that all human beings regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, and religion are entitled to these rights. What about the idea of citizenship? Should individuals be granted justice and human rights regardless of their citizenship?

In his book *Citizenship and Immigration*, Christian Joppke analyzes and assesses citizenship after World War II in the context of migration. He provides a brief history of

²¹ Ibid.

²² Weston, *Supplement of basic documents to International law and world order*, 528

²³ Weston, *Problems of Socio-Political Justice*, 500

²⁴ Ibid.

citizenship, and analyzes it in the context of world migration with a specific emphasis on status, rights, and identity. He argues that individuals who have citizenship can still be denied status, identity, and rights.

Starting from citizenship's birthplace, Joppke discusses the idea of citizenship within an Athenian society. Quoting Aristotle, Joppke states that a citizen is "one who both rules and is ruled."²⁵ During Aristotle's time, a citizen had to be male, since women and slaves were not considered equal or citizens in the state of nature. However, Athenian society portrays a political perspective of citizenship that advocates political participation. According Joppke, Roman society presented citizenship from a legal perspective where individuals had rights.²⁶ However, the idea of citizenship was still being defined from a feudalist perspective involving the master-servant relationship. Through the French Revolution, this relationship was replaced and a state membership was created based on birth. This leads us into the citizenship idea brought forth in the modern world. Joppke then discusses citizenship in the context of social and political theory. He focuses on social citizenship, national citizenship, post-national membership and multicultural citizenship through his discourse on citizenship in the modern world of migration.

According to Joppke, Post-World War II marks the beginning of the human rights of an individual in the contemporary period. After the World War II events, the idea of citizenship was associated with the idea of human rights. However, this association became complicated by the increase in international migration.

²⁵ Christian Joppke. *Citizenship and Immigration*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2010, 6-7

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7

Deconstructing the idea of citizenship, Joppke focuses on three different aspects of citizenship: status, rights, and identity. Joppke argues that citizenship's simplest aspect is status. For an individual, citizenship status is a passport filled with rights. For example, an immigrant who obtains naturalized citizenship status, will obtain the same rights as individuals who have citizenship through birth.²⁷ The second aspect of citizenship is having a right. According to Joppke, "a 'right' is an entitlement that accrues equally to all persons."²⁸ However, over time the idea of rights has changed and differs between human rights and citizen rights. The third aspect of citizenship is identity that is a type of connection created between an individual and his/her community.²⁹ Joppke focuses on "state-imputed" identities; that is, the type of identity required for an immigrant to adopt or assimilate in order to obtain the status and rights.³⁰ Joppke demonstrates that even if individuals possessed citizenship of their region, their status, rights, and identity still differ. Therefore, if citizenship status, rights, and identity are not being recognized, and justice and human rights are being denied, then migration is likely to take place.

In her book, *Chaldean Americans: Changing Conceptions of Ethnic Identity*, Mary C. Sengstock argues that an individual's social and economic setting is a determining factor in their migration.³¹ Here, migration only takes place when individuals lack access not only to political and social rights, but to economic rights and the means to achieve these rights. When individuals possess political, economic, and social rights

²⁷ Joppke, 28-29

²⁸ Ibid., 29

²⁹ Ibid., 30

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Mary C. Sengstock. *Chaldean-Americans: changing conceptions of ethnic identity*. New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1982, 41

within their region, they are less likely to migrate.³² Sengstock argues that migration theorists believe that migration is determined by both a push and pull factor. Push consists of dissatisfying homeland conditions, while pull consists of satisfying new land conditions.³³ Moreover, the emigrants who migrate were being pushed out of their homeland while the new land was pulling them inward. Migration is a constant action taken by individuals in hopes of beginning a new life. Migration is the mobility of humans and includes refugees, asylum seekers, family migrants, migrant workers, migrant students, and many others.³⁴ Migration takes place when people are denied the basic rights of humanity. Although past literature on migration does not specifically identify these as factors influencing waves of migration, they are relevant in the case of the Assyrians and Chaldeans from Iraq to U.S.

Past studies and research link justice, human rights and migration. Research shows the impact of justice and human rights abuse has on migration.³⁵ The role of human rights abuse is extremely relevant in the migration of the Assyrians and Chaldeans.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Sirkeci, Ibrahim. "War In Iraq: Environment Of Insecurity And International Migration." *International Migration* 43, no. 4 (2005), 201.

³⁵ Ibid.

2: History

Part I: Mesopotamia, 4000 B.C.-1930 A.D.)

When one hears the name Iraq, naturally we think of September 11, Saddam Hussein, oil, Middle East, Islam, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism. These are a few terms that are used synonymously with the name Iraq. However, before Iraq came to be associated with these types of terms, it was associated with the terms, such as Assyrian, Chaldean, Sumerian, or Mesopotamia. Iraq was originally named Mesopotamia, which means “the land between the two rivers.” The name Mesopotamia can be traced to its origin in the ancient Greek root words, “meso,” which means middle, and “potamia,” which means rivers. In Aramaic, a language spoken by Assyrians and Chaldeans, Mesopotamia was known as Bait Nahrein, which also means “land of two rivers.” The reason Mesopotamia (Bait Nahrein) is known as the land between two rivers because it is located between the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers. According to the Biblical story of creation, the Tigris and Euphrates were two of the four rivers that surrounded the Garden of Eden.³⁶ However, research is still being conducted on the names and location of the other two rivers. Nevertheless, the Tigris and Euphrates are two rivers that draw a connection between a Biblical story and practicality. In his book, *The Assyrians and their Neighbours*, W.A. Wigram explains that even for the Arabs, Mesopotamia was known as the land between the two rivers, for they called it “the Island.”³⁷

³⁶ "Genesis." in *New American Bible*. Canada: World Pub. Co., 1987, 9.

³⁷ W.A. Wigram. "National Stocks in Mesopotamia." in *The Assyrians and their Neighbours*. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1929, 1.

This land between the two rivers not only had a unique name and location, but civilization as well. Wigram notes, “we all know of Mesopotamia as one of the original hearths-quite possibly the oldest of all-from which the fire of civilization was distributed about the world.”³⁸ According to Wigram, “civilization begins in Mesopotamia with a “Hamitic,” or possibly Mongolian race, viz. the “Sumerians,” at about 4000 B.C.”³⁹ Not only did civilization began in Mesopotamia four thousand years before the birth of Christ, but humanity began as well with “the Sumerian Kingdom of “Nimrod, son of Cush, son of Ham,” which was Babylon and Ur (Babel and Erech), in the land of Shinar.”⁴⁰ The Sumerians are the indigenous people of the ancient land of Babylon. Nimrod’s kingdom included cities such as Babylon, Erech, Accad, and Asshur, which were all in the land of Shinar.⁴¹ The cities of Accad and Asshur were established by the Accadians and Assur, who were Semitic groups.⁴² Throughout time, various Semitic groups migrated throughout the Mesopotamian region.

In the book of Genesis the descendants of Shem are the Semitic people of Mesopotamia, Syria and Arabia.⁴³ Thus, it was not long before that one of Shem’s descendants by the name of Abraham migrated from Mesopotamia to the land of Canaan. Abraham, originally known as Abram, was a leader of one of the migrating clans; when he settled in Mesopotamia, he left a mark on the history of the religion.⁴⁴ Abraham was considered to be the founder of three religions that have dominated the world throughout

³⁸ Wigram, 2

³⁹ Ibid., 4

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ "Genesis," 16

⁴² Wigram, 4

⁴³ Genesis, 16

⁴⁴ Wigram, 5

time. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are three ancient and historical religions that are not only linked through Abraham and Mesopotamia, but through their texts as well. These are three very different religions but they are connected and share a historical origin. Mesopotamia is the place, where one of the first organized religions began; a place known as the cradle of the Abrahamic faiths. Thus, it was a nation known as the cradle of civilization, humanity, and the Abrahamic faiths.

Political System: Ethnicity Governance

Over the years, Mesopotamia not only became the founding nation of various ethnicities and religions, but has also experienced governance through the different ethnicities and religions. The area was governed by various cultures, and groups. After the fall of Ur, which was one of the cities of Nimrod's Kingdom, the Assyrian Empire began to rise.⁴⁵ However, it was not long before the Assyrian Empire fell and the Chaldeans and the Babylonians took control, and gave rise to their empire.⁴⁶ It was not long before, the Medo-Persians came from the North and East.⁴⁷ Wigram argues that Mesopotamia was a nation governed by ethnicity, and each ethnicity differed from the other.⁴⁸

The Sumerians were a non-Semitic group, who spoke a language that was not only different from other languages, but had no connection. The Accadians, Assyrians, and Babylonians (Chaldeans) were Semites who spoke the language of Aramaic. Although, the Accadians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans spoke the same language, they still

⁴⁵ Ibid., 4-5

⁴⁶ Ibid., 6

⁴⁷ Wigram, 6

⁴⁸ Ibid.

spoke a different dialect and their religions differed as well. The division between the Assyrian and Chaldeans allowed the people within the communities to recognize their location and the religion. For example, the Assyrians consisted of both Orthodox and Catholic religions, resided mainly in South Iraq among the Arabs, and their ancestors originated from Iran and Turkey. Whereas, the Chaldeans originated from Babylon and were only Catholic, residing primarily in Northern Iraq among the Kurds.

According to Wigram, the Kurds come from an Aryan stock, and their language is derived from Persian.⁴⁹ Their history begins around the same time as the history of the Sumerians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans (Babylonians). From the beginning of their history until now, the Kurds continue to inhabit the mountains of Kurdistan. Kurdistan is currently an area of land that comprises four countries: Northern Iraq, Eastern Turkey, Northwestern Iran, and Northeastern Syria. Although, the Kurds were non-religious at the beginning of their history, they eventually became followers of the Islamic religion, specifically Sunni sect. Like the Sumerians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans (Babylonians), Kurds were another group that trace their history, origin, and roots to Mesopotamia.

Another group that have been influenced by Mesopotamia are the Armenian people. The Armenians are a group that originated in Armenia, a country located North of Iraq; however, throughout time various conflicts and conquests led Armenians to migrate out of Armenia, and to the Middle East, especially Mesopotamia (Iraq).⁵⁰ Over the years, generations have inhabited the land, a small number of them; however, their inhabitation influenced their history, which is linked to Mesopotamia. In addition to Armenians,

⁴⁹ Ibid., 6-7

⁵⁰ Wigram, 8

Mesopotamia is home to two other groups known as the Yezidis and Sabaeans, which are defined in accordance with their religion. Yezidis' religion traces its origins back to primitive paganism. Sabaeans continue the gnosticism from the first Christian century.⁵¹

Lastly, the Arabs, a group of people, who came from the Arabian Desert, which is South of Iraq.⁵² Since pre-historic days, the Arab people have been migrating out of the Arab desert to places and to areas that offer a better chance of survival. Throughout time, Arabs eventually migrated to neighboring nations, especially the nation of Mesopotamia. Until this day, the Arabs inhabit and control a major part of Mesopotamia or present-day Iraq, especially Southern Iraq.

Eventually, Arabs settled in Mesopotamia and developed a culture and language known as Arabic, part of the Semitic languages family. The Arabs were heavily influenced by the Islamic religion, they brought that in 633 A.D. when they conquered and migrated to Mesopotamia. Through their migration to Mesopotamia, the Arabs brought the Islamic religion, which came to influence and transform the nation and people to this day.⁵³

Political System: Religion Governance

Islam introduced governance through the Islamic religion into the nation of Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia was transformed from a nation comprised by various ethnicities, cultures, languages, traditions, and religions into a nation that was defined by the same ethnicity, nationality, language, culture, and most of all one religion.

Mesopotamia was transformed into the country of Iraq and came to be defined by the

⁵¹ Ibid., 10-11

⁵² Wigram, 12

⁵³ Ibid., 14

Islamic religion. However, the concept of governance through the Islamic religion was not popular among all the Arab people. Even within Islamic religion there consisted tensions between two Islamic sects: the Sunni and the Shi'a.

The religion of Islam began in the town of Mecca located in Saudi Arabia by a merchant named Mohammad. According to Islam, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mohammad, and recited in the name of God. This revelation was the beginning of his Prophetic career as well as the beginning of the Islamic religion, which began roughly around 610 A.D. However, it was not until 622 A.D. that the Islamic calendar and Islamic movement began. In 632 A.D. the Prophet died and conflict began and changed the face of Islam for generations to come.

After the death of Mohammad, the Islamic religion had no successor, which created a problem. Eventually, there were four individuals, who succeeded Mohammad, and came to be known as the four Caliphs. In his book, *Understanding Iraq*, William R. Polk explains that when 'Ali succeeded as the fourth caliph, there were already tensions, since there were past tensions between 'Ali and Uthman. During 'Ali's ruling, his enemies included fundamentalists, which were rivals from Muhammad's followers, and the Umayyad clan.⁵⁴ Now there were tensions between the fundamentalists and the Umayyad clan.⁵⁵ The fundamentalists requested that 'Ali justify Uthman's death by labeling him a tyrant.⁵⁶ 'Ali refused the fundamentalists' request, which resulted in their

⁵⁴ William Roe Polk. *Understanding Iraq: the whole sweep of Iraqi history, from Genghis Khan's Mongols to the Ottoman Turks to the British mandate to the American occupation*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005, 45.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

leaving his army and movement.⁵⁷ In the meantime, the Umayyad Dynasty's leader, Muawiyah had begun his movement to replace 'Ali. In order to recruit followers for his army, 'Ali migrated to Iraq; however, his migration and struggle was ended when he was assassinated.⁵⁸ 'Ali's assassination led the Umayyad clan and Muawiyah to declare that Yazid (Muawiyah's son) to be the successor.⁵⁹ However, tensions arose and Muhammad's descendants, and supporters of 'Ali-known as Shi'at 'Ali- declared that Yazid did not have blood relations to Muhammad, whereas Husain (the son of 'Ali) was the grandson of Muhammad.⁶⁰ Conflict arose between Yazid and Husain, resulting in Husain's death in 683 A.D., an important date for the Islamic Shi'a sect.⁶¹ This marked the creation of the Shi'a sect.

Since the creation of the Shi'a sect, there has been a division between the Sunni and Shi'a leading to conflict, tension, and violence between the two sects. This conflict took place, and continues in Iraq where the Shi'a sect originated.

Part II: Iraq, 1930-2003

Saddam's Iraq

Through the Arab migration into Iraq, and the division between the two sects, Mesopotamia came to be known as Iraq and governed by the Islamic religion. Throughout time, various empires and rulers have seized control and governance of Iraq. However, each and every empire and ruler throughout history has been temporary. The

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Polk, 45

⁵⁹ Ibid., 46

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

various empires, parties, and rulers were never considered to be permanent in Iraq, until the Ba’thist Party and Saddam Hussein seized control.

The Ba’thist Party began in Syria in the late 1930s by four individuals with different backgrounds. Ba’athism originated from three groups.⁶² The first group was led by Zaki al-Arsuzi, whose purpose was to spread Arab heritage. His political party was divided into two groups: The Arab Nationalist Party and the Arab Ba’th Party.⁶³ The second group was founded and led by Michel ‘Aflaq and Salah-ud-Din al-Bitar, who focused on communist and socialist ideology. Lastly, the third group was led by Akram al-Hurani and consisted of peasants who were in opposition to the landlords. These four individuals and their constituents became the foundation of the Ba’th Party. However, as leadership shifted, so did the principles of the party. Prior to this, Michel ‘Aflaq’s Ba’thist principles greatly influenced the Arab countries, especially Iraq. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the principles of the Ba’th Party were introduced to Iraq.

The Ba’th Party began in the 1950s and lasted through the early 1960s. They created a revolution, which triumphed over the monarchy. Batatu points out that “the Ba’th party that has since 1968 been uppermost in the affairs of Iraq differs in important respects from the Ba’th party that took the power in 1963.”⁶⁴ The Ba’th party continued to transform, especially when Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr and Saddam Hussein came into power. These two individuals changed the face of Ba’thism, but they still maintained one

⁶² □ annā Ba□ā□ū. *The old social classes and the revolutionary movements of Iraq a study of Iraq's old landed and commercial classes and of its Communists, Ba□thists, and Free Officers*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1978, 722

⁶³ Ibid., 724

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1077

important aspect a “unified Arab socialist society.”⁶⁵ During this time, Saddam Hussein rose to power, and surpassed al-Bakr. According to Batatu, al-Bakr and Saddam share a number of traits: they are very reserved, and, on the whole, not prone to hasty judgments or rigid attitudes. Saddam, however, surpasses al-Bakr in boldness, strength of will, and nimbleness of mind.⁶⁶ Before he rose to power, Saddam Hussein was labeled as an individual who should be feared. Eventually, Saddam Hussein and his ba’thist party seized complete control of Iraq and transformed the image of the nation. His purpose was to create a nation that would be ruled and governed by one nationality, Arab, and one religion, Sunni Muslims.

Through the use of his despotic personality and the Ba’thist principles, Saddam Hussein ensured his position and government was permanent in Iraq. Saddam Hussein’s despotic regime became involved in various conflicts and wars. However, no previous conflict or war threatened his position and government like the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. The U.S.-Iraq War may have begun in March of 2003; however, the tensions between United States and Iraq can be traced back to the Gulf War known as Operation Desert Storm.

The Gulf War was a war between Iraq and the United Nations, led by the United States and was a response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, a neighboring country. The United States considered Saddam Hussein’s Iraq as a nation that threatened American supremacy.⁶⁷ Tensions between the United States and Iraq escalated further when terrorists attacked New York City’s Twin Towers and the Pentagon on September 11,

⁶⁵ Batatu, 1077

⁶⁶ Ibid., 1084

⁶⁷ Polk, 166

2001. Although, the United States had identified the Taliban, Osama Bin Ladin, and his Al-Qaida as the perpetrators behind the attacks, they considered them a “sideshow.”⁶⁸ As Polk claims, “the ‘Neo-Conservatives’ soon began to implement the American ‘crusade’ they had advocated over the previous decade...Iraq was what really mattered.”⁶⁹

It was to be the first step in a perpetual war against any group or nation-state that contested American supremacy.”⁷⁰ The plan was supported and launched by President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld who convinced the United States along with the rest of the world that Saddam Hussein’s Iraq was armed with weapons of mass destruction.⁷¹ After extensive research and investigation, there was no evidence that Iraq was armed with weapons of mass destruction; however, that did not stop the United States and Britain from launching an invasion of Iraq. Polk notes that “Many Iraqis believe that the underlying purpose of the American invasion of Iraq was not fear of Iraqi danger to America but greed for its oil.”⁷² The oil not only in Iraq, but in the entire Middle East region has been one of the three main objectives for the United States since the early nineties.⁷³ Although, there is uncertainty about Iraqi oil and its role in the invasion, it is still unquestionable that “American policy on oil” will impact the shaping of Iraq.⁷⁴ Polk, who interviewed Iraq’s Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, who claimed that ‘America has long since decided to

⁶⁸ Polk, 166

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 167

⁷² Ibid., 202

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

attack Iraq and nothing Iraq could do would prevent it’.”⁷⁵ On March 20, 2003, United States and Britain attacked Iraq and launched the U.S.-Iraq War, which lasted for an approximate of eight years, ending in December 2011.

⁷⁵ Polk, 169

3: Literature Review

When researching the influence of justice and human rights on the migration of Assyrians and Chaldeans, I found a limited amount of literature on the migration of Assyrians and Chaldeans that incorporated human rights issues in Iraq, its influence on migration, or its relationship with Iraq's minority communities. However, there are United Nation's Human Rights reports that cover conditions in Iraq between 2004 and 2005 to the present. In this chapter, I review the literature that discusses human rights and its influence on migration in Iraq. Then, I turn to the literature that explores the relationship between human rights and Iraq's minority communities, the Assyrians and Chaldeans.

Human Rights and Migration

In his article "Reflections on Human Rights Issues in Prewar Iraq," Roger Bartram examines the topic of human rights in Iraq before the War during Saddam Hussein's reign. Bartram interviewed three Iraqi males in their twenties, who fled Iraq and were residing in Jordan 1991. Each interviewee shared their story of living a life under Saddam Hussein's reign. According to Bartram, all three interviewees agreed that during Hussein's reign, Iraq was a police state. All three interviewees noted being arrested, beaten, and subjected to all different types of torture conducted by the agents of the security organizations affiliated either with the Arab Socialist Party or other official power.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the interviewees agreed that fear is common, interrogation is brutal

⁷⁶ Bartram, Roger. *Reflections on Human Rights Issues in Prewar Iraq*. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 20, no. 3 (1991), 90.

and execution methods are arbitrary.⁷⁷ One interviewee was half Kurdish half Shiite, another one was full Shiite, and the third one was full Kurdish,⁷⁸ whereas, Saddam Hussein, and his government were Arab Sunni. Although, the ruling government is Arab Sunni, Bartram states religious division has never affected the ruling of the government. In fact, he states, Iraq has created and developed institutions and practices that enforce respect for freedom of religion and women's rights.⁷⁹ Saddam Hussein's Iraq may have lacked in certain areas of human rights, they did not in freedom of religion and the rights of women.⁸⁰ However, Bartram also states that freedom of speech, press, or assembly does not exist, and the media imitates the Ba'athist regime.⁸¹ For Hussein freedom of religion and rights of women did not cripple his power and control, whereas freedom of speech, assembly, and press were obstacles and needed to be restricted.

Laith Kubba presents a different aspect of human rights in Iraq in his article, "Human Rights, Sanctions and Sovereignty." He discusses the sanctions that the United Nations imposed on Iraq as a result of their violation of human rights. After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the United Nations imposed a series of sanctions on Iraq;⁸² "SCR (Security Council Resolution) 688, adopted on 6 April 1991, called on the government of Iraq to desist from committing human rights violations against Iraqi citizens," while SCR 706 and 712 allowed Iraq to sell limited number of oil for food in accordance with UN

⁷⁷ Bartram, 91

⁷⁸ Ibid., 91-93

⁷⁹ Ibid., 94

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 97

⁸² Laith Kubba. "Human rights, sanctions, and sovereignty." In *Iraq since the Gulf war: prospects for democracy*. London: Zed Books, 1994, 147

supervision.⁸³ However, at the time, Hussein did not comply, and argued that the resolutions were a “violation of Iraq’s sovereignty.”⁸⁴ Thus, maintaining his power and control over the country, Hussein stood firm in his position, and “against the raising of revenue through oil sales in order that food, medicine, and other non-military necessities be bought for the long-suffering people of Iraq.”⁸⁵ By threatening to starve the Iraqi people, Hussein maintained his power and control, which increased by the imposed sanctions.⁸⁶ Thus, the Iraqi people were caught in the middle between Saddam Hussein and the United Nations, as the abuse of human rights increased. Kubba notes that Hussein’s rejection of UN’s supervision of the oil revenue gave him the power to deny Iraqi’s access to their oil in times of need, thus leading them to migrate. He portrays Iraqi’s migration as the result of the imposed sanctions.⁸⁷ The imposed sanctions led to an increase in human rights abuse, which lead to migration after the Gulf War.

In “War in Iraq: Environment of Insecurity and International Migration,” Ibrahim Sirkeci notes that Iraqi migration to industrialized countries increased after the Gulf War. He reports that from the 1990s to 2001, the number increased from 8,140 to 52,500 Iraqi migrants.⁸⁸ Citing a UNHRC report, Sirkeci notes that “530,000 of 12 million refugees in the world were from Iraq” before the U.S.-Iraq War.⁸⁹ Between 1990 and 2002, there were 393,670 Iraqis seeking asylum in developed countries.⁹⁰ Sirkeci’s research

⁸³ Kubba, 147

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 148

⁸⁸ Sirkeci, 204

⁸⁹ Sirkeci, 204

⁹⁰ Ibid., 206

identified Iraq as unstable country, and the socioeconomic conditions and ethnic tension were added to the instability, thus leading Iraqi's toward migration.⁹¹ The start of the U.S.-Iraq War and the ethnic tensions between ethnic and religious groups are important factors in migration. However, the U.S.-Iraq War did not create the instability and insecurity of the country, but rather Saddam Hussein's despotic regime and the long-term ethnic tensions were the cause.⁹² The war played the role of resurfacing these tensions. Another factor that influenced Iraqis to migrate is networks which are established immigrant communities in Europe and North America.⁹³ Sirkeci concludes his study by predicting that the number of Iraqi immigrants will only increase in the coming future.

Sirkeci's prediction is correct. According to the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) in cooperation with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in their 2011 human rights report states "it is estimated that around two million Iraqis left Iraq mainly to neighbouring countries as refugees as a result of conflict and sectarian violence since 2003."⁹⁴ The human rights abuse during Saddam Hussein's reign only increased and lead to division and conflict, which increased further after the fall of Saddam Hussein and throughout the U.S.-Iraq War.

Minorities in Iraq

According to Shak Hanish, the human rights abuse and sectarian violence greatly impacted Iraq's minority groups, especially in the area of migration. In "Christians,

⁹¹ Ibid., 198-199

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Report on Human Rights in Iraq: Jan/Dec. 2011," 34.

Yazidis, and Mandaeans in Iraq: A Survival Issue,” Hanish discusses Iraq’s most vulnerable and targeted groups, and the factors behind their exodus. According to Hanish, the Christians, the Yazidis, and the Mandaeans are some of Iraq’s oldest minority communities. Since April of 2003, the number of these minority communities has been decreasing, thus they have left for safer areas and conditions.⁹⁵ During Saddam’s rule, “the status of Christians and [Yazidis and Mandaeans] was not troubled, as long as they did not oppose the Ba’th regime.”⁹⁶ After the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, the outlined minority groups were targets of violence and human rights abuse because of religious sectarian tensions.⁹⁷ According to Hanish there was a wide range of freedom being spread, which resulted in both positive and negative changes. The positive change was that the Iraqi people were free from a despotic corrupted regime. However, the negative change was the freedom for extreme Islamic fundamentalist groups to act upon their beliefs.⁹⁸ Through this newly achieved freedom, the Iraqi people experienced more separation than unification. This tension eventually lead the minority groups to migrate to different parts of the world. Hanish focuses on the reasons that perpetuate the migration of the minority groups, and the reasons behind their experience of violence and human rights abuse. Hanish concludes with the statement that eventhough there are the Iraqi constitution acknowledges freedom of religion, assembly, association, and expression, the minority communities are still being persecuted by various religious extremist groups.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Shak Hanish. "Christians, Yazidis, And Mandaeans In Iraq: A Survival Issue." *Digest of Middle East Studies* 18, no. 1 (2009), 1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1

⁹⁸ Hanish, 3

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12

Case of Assyrians and Chaldeans

Although there were many minority groups in Iraq that were vulnerable, targeted, and migrated, the Assyrians and Chaldeans still remain the primary focus. Joseph Alichoran writes that “the Assyro-Chaldeans have been victimized by a succession of tormentors...yet, today they are forgotten and all but unknown to the world.”¹⁰⁰ Hanish reminds us that this religious targeting is new. He notes that eventhough there has always been a history of persecution in Mesopotamia, Muslims and Christians have always lived peacefully with their rights intact.¹⁰¹ The opportunity for Christians and Muslims to “live peacefully” was even recognized during Saddam Hussein’s reign. Saddam Hussein’s dominant ideology throughout his reign was Arab nationalism.¹⁰² For Hussein, conflict and tension would arise when there was opposition against the Ba’athist regime.¹⁰³

Nevertheless, life for the Assyrians and Chaldeans and other minority groups was difficult and a struggle. Hanish points to the United States Department of State religious freedom report of 2002 which indicated that the Iraqi government has sought to diminish the identity of the Assyrian and Chaldean Christians.¹⁰⁴

Although there was conflict and tension toward Assyrians and Chaldeans during Hussein’s reign, after his fall from power, the situation escalated further and the conflict increased. After the fall of Saddam Hussein and at the start of the U.S.-Iraq War, Hanish explains that during the 1991 Gulf War, many Christians were associated with the

¹⁰⁰, Joseph Alichoran. *Assyro-Chaldeans in the 20th Century: From Genocide to Diaspora*. Journal of the Assyrian Academic Society 8, no. 2 (1994): 45-79, 46

¹⁰¹ Hanish, 2

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 3

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

American military, which caused them to be “collaborators” with the enemy. Thus, now extremists believe that Iraqi Christians are linked with the U.S. and its coalition forces.¹⁰⁵

However, it was not long before, the Assyrian and Chaldean community faced numerous targeted attacks. According to the Iraqi Ambassador to the Vatican, “‘Christians fear for their lives like other minorities trapped in this policy of ethnic cleansing’.”¹⁰⁶ Consequently, Christians choose to migrate out of Iraq: “in 1987, there were about 1.4 million Christians in Iraq. It is estimated that half of all Iraqi Christians have fled their country since April 2003.”¹⁰⁷ If the sectarian violence and human rights abuse for the Assyrians and Chaldeans and other minority groups continues, Iraq will lose the entire Assyrian and Chaldean community.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 4

¹⁰⁶ Hanish, 4

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 8

4: Assyrian and Chaldean Migration Stories

My migration to the United States in the mid-nineties was heavily influenced by Iraq's economic condition at the time and Saddam Hussein's control over the country. Even after the United States entered Iraq in 2003, and the U.S.-Iraq War began, migration still continued. My research focuses on the factors that influence migration from Iraq to the United States between 2003 and 2013. I specifically focus on the influence of justice issues and human rights on migration throughout that time period. This chapter focuses on my personal experience and ten interviews conducted between the years of 2012 and 2013. Although, my research is on migration from Iraq to the United States, I specifically focused on the Assyrians and Chaldeans who migrated from Iraq to the United States during the time period from 2003 until 2013.

A total of ten men and women from over the age of eighteen, were interviewed. Two of the ten interviewed, migrated between 1995 and 1996; the other eight interviewees migrated in the following years: 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, and 2013. The interviews took place at Arizona State University, Tempe campus. The interviews last from thirty minutes to one hour. The interviewees were interviewed voluntarily and were given a brief overview of the research project. Three of the ten interviewees were females between the ages of early to mid-twenties. The other seven interviewees were males, whose ages ranged from early twenties to late sixties. Two interviewees were Assyrians and the other eight were Chaldean. One of the interviewees is a member of my family. These ten interviewees are members of the Mar Abraham Chaldean Catholic Church and part of the Assyrian and Chaldean community in Arizona.

Before Saddam's Fall, 1995-1996

I began research by interviewing two individuals who migrated to the United States in the mid-nineties. They both migrated before the fall of Saddam Hussein and the U.S.-Iraq War. The first person was a male born on July 01, 1946, who graduated from University of Baghdad from the College of Education. He describes his background as follows: states,

I worked as a foreign language teacher, English as a foreign language, from 1967 until 1993, when I retired, and the same year I left the country as a refugee to Turkey, illegally of course. Then, I crossed to Greece, where I applied at the Embassy of the United States for asylum, a humanitarian asylum for me and my family; that was granted! We arrived in America on June 7, 1995.¹⁰⁸

This sixty-eight year old man was in his late forties, when he had to leave his life in Iraq and had to recreate his life and career in the United States. The second interviewee who left in the same period was only seven when she left. Now in her mid-twenties, she describes her migration:

We went to Turkey stayed there illegally until we were able to, about a year and half; we stayed there, until we were able to get accepted to another country. We preferred to go to Australia, cause that is where my family, my dad's side was residing. But, the United States accepted us first. Thus, we arrived in the United States in 1996.¹⁰⁹

Even though she was very young when she migrated, she still remembers her migration to the United States in detail. While these two Chaldeans migrated at different stages at their life, the reasons behind their migration are similar.

¹⁰⁸ Interviewee #1. Interview by author. Personal interview. Arizona State University, November 5, 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Interviewee #2, Interview by author. Personal interview. Arizona State University, April 7, 2013.

According to the first interviewee, he states, “in 1990, after the invasion of Kuwait, and the collapse of everything. I was sure, it would be broken...I had no choice; I had to leave.”¹¹⁰ For the first interviewee, Iraq’s situation and state of condition in the nineties forced him to migrate and flee the country. Similar to interviewee one’s experience, interviewee two states, “we fled Iraq...not financial reasons, more of political reasons, and for safety.”¹¹¹ Thus, the Iraqi government and regime did not create a safe country for the Iraqi people in the early to mid-nineties.

In response to my question of the differences between United States and Iraq, they responded with a yes without hesitation. The older male interviewee noted “it is very different. Individuality is very clear in America. Equality between people! I mean in the system. The government does not differentiate between people because of color or religion...Freedom! Not only freedom, as I told you, equality with no racial differentiation.”¹¹² He identifies freedom and equality as the two factors shaping his migration. The young woman was too young to remember life during Saddam’s reign but nevertheless notes that “back home, they are not as open minded, I would say here, they are more open-minded that’s why I like it better...Back home, we have more culture than we have here.”¹¹³ Both interviewees focused on various aspects and differences between the two countries.

When asked about the idea of “justice” or (hoqooq), their answers were similar:

Justice (hoqooq) as a word means everyone gets what they are supposed to get without racial discrimination. Many times, many many times, especially, when we

¹¹⁰ Interviewee #1

¹¹¹ Interviewee #2

¹¹² Interviewee #1

¹¹³ Interviewee #2

pass Mosul, the guards at the border would ask me if I were a Christian. It was easier to live among the Kurds because they were being discriminated against as well.¹¹⁴

He was constantly asked to confirm his identity as a Christian. Furthermore, it was not only the Christians, but the Kurds as well that were being discriminated against. Thus, when asked if “justice” was an influencing factor in his migration, he states, “it was not the motive, no, we needed financial stability and freedom. Then, comes justice.”¹¹⁵

The younger woman has a degree in criminal justice, and states, “they don’t have a strong government, and there is no such thing as justice. If one community decides to kill the other for their beliefs not because they committed a crime, there is no justice.”¹¹⁶ Although both individuals, have various views of justice, they still agreed that any type of justice was inexistent in Iraq during Saddam’s reign.

When both interviewees were asked about their long-term plans, and whether they would remain in the United States or return to Iraq. They both replied that they plan to continue to live their life in the United States:

Christians are never considered to be citizens. Even before Saddam, this is something related into the society itself. Especially Christians, we are considered to be citizen number two, not number one. So, I would never think of that because nobody leaves paradise and goes back to hell.¹¹⁷

After interviewing these two individuals, I found that the reasons behind their migration were different compared to my migration. My migration was necessary, but involuntary, since threats were made against individuals involved with the U.S. governmental or non-governmental organizations. Whereas, for these two individuals,

¹¹⁴ Interview #1

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Interview #2

¹¹⁷ Interviewee #1

their migration was influenced by Saddam's despotism, but the Gulf War and economic conditions played a larger role. After I recognized different influencing factors of migration in the mid-nineties, I wanted to explore this research further.

U.S.-Iraq War, 2003-2011

I decided to interview individuals, who had migrated between 2003 and 2011. The time period from 2003 until 2011 represents, the eight-year war between the United States and Iraq. For this time period, I interviewed a total of six individuals, who each had a different migration story. My first interview was with a male in his mid-twenties, who came to the United States as a foreign exchange student in 2004. After finishing a year of a program of study, he could not return! He states, "They [United States] wanted me to stay. They told us to stay, cause it was not safe to send us back. They did not want us to risk our lives."¹¹⁸ Not long before Saddam Hussein was captured and the war began in 2003, the country was not a safe space, especially for individuals, who were involved with the United States.

Similar to this individual's experience, interviewee four, a female in her early twenties came to the United States in 2005 with her family. She states, "My grandpa had done our papers. It was getting dangerous in Iraq, and also we had family here, and we thought it would be safer for us to leave Iraq."¹¹⁹ Even both individuals migrated through various ways, the reasons behind their migration was that Iraq was unsafe.

¹¹⁸ Interviewee #3. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, April 3, 2013

¹¹⁹ Interviewee #4. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, November 18, 2013

However, for interviewee five, Iraq was unsafe at the start of the U.S.-Iraq War. A male also in his early twenties, migrated to the United States with his family in 2007. According to him, he fled Iraq with his family at the start of the war, and took up refuge in Turkey for four and half years, before arriving in the United States.¹²⁰ He states,

If we stayed in Turkey the country I was in before coming to the USA, I wasn't going to be able to go to school, and if we went back to Iraq, I would have been kidnapped and killed, like they threatened my family and me.¹²¹

For this individual Iraq was unsafe and Turkey provided no stability for the future.

For interviewee six, his migration experience differs in many ways from the previous interviewees experiences. Interviewee six, a male in his early sixties, came to the United States in 2008.¹²² He came with his wife to visit their son, who was a foreign exchange student. During his visit to the United States, he was constantly comparing the U.S. to Iraq. He states, "In July 2008, we arrived in the U.S., a very different country!"¹²³ When asking him, what he meant by different, he said, "It was a breath of fresh air!"¹²⁴ He further elaborated that the differences between the two countries was in relation to the type of life, one can live in the United States, which influenced his decision to emigrate to the U.S.

Similar to the individual, who migrated in 2004 as a foreign exchange student, and he was not able to return due to Iraq's situation, interviewee seven migrated through

¹²⁰ Interviewee #5. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, December 6, 2013

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Interviewee #6. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, December 2, 2012

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

a special immigrant visa and was not able to return due to Iraq's situation.¹²⁵ A male in his mid-forties migrated to the United States with his wife and three kids in 2009.¹²⁶

In 2003...I started working with Department of State through American company called Ronco Consulting Corporation. Due to the risks and dangers of the work, and working with Americans, I was granted a special immigrant visa for my family and me. I came to the United States.¹²⁷

For interviewee seven, his involvement with the United States during the U.S.-Iraq War created risks, leading him to leave the country. Thus, when he was given the choice to migrate to the United States, he seized the opportunity.

Interviewee eight seized the same opportunity, when his future wife, a U.S. citizen asked him, if he would move to the United States. In his thirties, he migrated to the United States in 2010 through a marriage visa.¹²⁸ However, before he came to the United States, he had migrated to Sweden and then back to Iraq when he was unable to obtain legal residence, thus he migrated back to Iraq.¹²⁹ He states,

When, I married her...I did not marry her to migrate to the United States. I married her because of her personality. I was attracted to her, and loved her, and we used to be neighbors during our childhood. So I married her! All of these factors played a role in our marriage.¹³⁰

However, when asked, if he had not married her, would he have still stayed in Iraq. He replies, "honestly, I probably would have not stayed in Iraq, and moved back to

¹²⁵ Interviewee #7, Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, November 11, 2012

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Interviewee #8. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, October 28, 2013

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

Sweden.”¹³¹ He preferred to live in Sweden without any type of permanent residence, instead of live in his country of origin.

Similar to the responses of the two interviewees’ who migrated in the mid-nineties- responses, these six interviewees agreed that there were differences between United States and Iraq. These six individuals agreed that Iraq has strong family and social relations; however, United States has freedom, equality, open-mindedness, variety of resources and justice.¹³² Thus, I asked if the idea of justice was an influencing factor in their migration. There were various responses; however, four out of the six individuals viewed justice as an influence in their migration. For the other two individuals, there was only a lack of justice in Iraq.¹³³ However, when asked to define justice, all six individuals linked the word to safety, security, freedom to speak, equality without differentiation, fairness, and rights.¹³⁴

Furthermore, when the question about their future and long-term plans was asked, all six individuals stated they did not have any plans to return to Iraq. One interviewee stated, “I have thought about it, and I don’t know how the situation will turn in Iraq, but I’m certain that Assyrians and Chaldeans will not have any hope in Iraq.”¹³⁵

¹³¹ Interviewee #8

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ Interview #3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

¹³⁵ Interviewee #7

Post U.S.-Iraq War, 2012-2013

After interviewing the individuals, who migrated to the United States during the U.S.-Iraq War, I realized that I needed to interview individuals, who migrated after the war had ended.

Thus, I interviewed two individuals who migrated in the years of 2012 and 2013.

Interviewee nine is a male in his mid-thirties who migrated to the United States in 2012 through the International Organization for Migration. He states, “I went to Jordan, and applied to IOM (International Organization for Migration), and had interviews. I stayed in Jordan for 1 year and two months! The explosion at the Sayadat Al Najat Church on October 31, 2010, forced me to leave Iraq.”¹³⁶ He had not planned on leaving Iraq, but after the explosion took place at the Sayadat Al Najat Church, a Church he attended, he felt that he had a no choice, but to leave.¹³⁷ Interviewee nine stated that the war was coming to an end but Iraq was still the same. It was riskier to take a chance, remain in the country, and wait to for change and stability, than to migrate.¹³⁸

Unlike interviewee nine, interviewee ten migrated two years after the war had ended. This women in her early twenties migrated to the United States in 2013 through an immigration petition filed by her uncle.¹³⁹ When asked if her uncle had not petitioned for them to migrate to the United States, would they still have migrated? She answered, “well, thinking of migration was in our mind already! Even if we could have not chosen

¹³⁶ Interviewee #9. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, October 18, 2013

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Interviewee #10. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, October 20, 2013

United States because it's far and difficult, but we would have still chosen some place else to migrate! Other people in my country are trying all the best to find a place to just go out!"¹⁴⁰ After the U.S.-Iraq War ended, this individual, and according to her many other people were and are searching for a way to migrate out of Iraq.

When asked about the differences between the two countries the male individual interviewee said, "there is respect for the human being here in America, in Iraq there is not respect for the human being."¹⁴¹ The female stated, "you have to be part of the majority in order to live there (Iraq), otherwise, you will face difficulties. Whereas, here (US) everyone is equal! Back over there, there is constantly differentiation being made."¹⁴² When I asked about the role that justice played in the decision to migrate, the male stated, "no human being has the right to take away my rights as a human! How do you feel you are a human being? You feel you are a human being with these rights."¹⁴³ The female answered that she "imagines equal scales, where everyone is equal in everything, even in living their life."¹⁴⁴ Both individuals define justice with equality and rights, specifically human rights. Furthermore, when asked if they would return or remain, both stated that they would build their lives here in the United States; however, the female interviewee stated that she will always consider Iraq her home.¹⁴⁵ As for the male, he believes that "home is a place, where you feel safe!

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Interviewee #9

¹⁴² Interviewee #10

¹⁴³ Interviewee #9

¹⁴⁴ Interviewee #10

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

For 35 years, I lived in Iraq, and I never felt like a human! However, America made me feel like a human in one day!”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Interviewee #9

5: Analysis

All ten interviewees migrated to the United States through various ways and were influenced by many different factors. However, their identity as a Chaldean or Assyrian impacted their migration. Furthermore, past literature and the ten interviews show that justice and human rights influenced migration. Past literature describes Iraq during Saddam's reign and the U.S.-Iraq War as a conflicted country. It is apparent throughout Saddam's reign, during and after the U.S.-Iraq War, migration is a constant phenomenon. Justice and human rights were significant factors in deciding to migrate throughout all three time frames. However, the interviewees noted that justice and human rights are influenced by various circumstances.

When all ten interviewees migrated in each of various time periods, they all described Iraq as unsafe, I wanted to know what made them feel that the United States was safer. So, I asked them, if there are any differences between Iraq and the U.S. When asking this question, all ten individuals initial reaction was surprising. All ten interviewees stated that there are no similarities between these countries. They are very different from each other. For all ten individuals, some of the important differences between United States and Iraq are: "pride, equality, open-mindedness, opportunity to speak, culture, beliefs, more freedom, variety of resources, organization, respect for the human being, and separation between politics and religion."¹⁴⁷ These are the qualities that the United States possesses, and Iraq lacks.

¹⁴⁷ Interviewee #8

However, there were also traits that Iraq possessed, which the United States lacked, such as: “the idea of community, family relationships, and social relations.”¹⁴⁸

Nevertheless, they all stated that they would rather adjust to the idea of individuality, rather than not having justice, which they called “haqooq.” The term “haqooq” comes from the Arabic language, and is translated as rights. Interestingly, all ten interviewees used this word for justice. When asking them to define justice, all ten interviewees’ responses’ by providing incidents in their past when they were denied justice. The interviewees synonymously used the term justice with freedom, equality, and rights. One interviewee stated, “the people here have rights, and they are respected. In Iraq, we hear about rights, but they don’t really go by them.”¹⁴⁹ For two out of the ten interviewees, justice meant, “everyone gets what they are supposed to get without racial discrimination.”¹⁵⁰ Another two interviewees stated that justice does not exist in Iraq, especially in the case of minority groups.¹⁵¹ Overall, the interviewees did not experience the real meaning of justice until they arrived in the United States.

Saddam’s Iraq: Mid-Nineties

In the mid-nineties, when Saddam Hussein was still in power, Assyrians and Chaldeans migration was influenced by economic and political injustice, and human rights abuse. After the Gulf War, the United Nations imposed sanctions on Iraq.¹⁵² In response to the imposed sanctions, Hussein’s regime did not comply with the sanctions,

¹⁴⁸ Interviewee #8

¹⁴⁹ Interviewee #5

¹⁵⁰ Interviewee #1, 6

¹⁵¹ Interviewee #7 and #8

¹⁵² Kubba, 147

and instead threatened to starve the Iraqi people.¹⁵³ This type of economic injustice and human rights abuse, caused migration. Saddam Hussein as a leader influenced migration in the nineties through his actions. Interviewees, who migrated in the mid-nineties, characterize Saddam as a feared dictator .¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, literature and history describe his fearlessness as a systematic technique to maintain his power and control over his people.¹⁵⁵ Scholar Roger Bartram brings forth the stories of three Iraqi males who fled Iraq due to fear and political reasons.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, when they registered with the United Nations for the refugee resettlement program, they noted fear of returning, injustice and human rights abuse as reasons.¹⁵⁷ Although, migration was taking place during Saddam's reign, it was still very minor.

U.S.-Iraq War: 2003-2011

After the U.S.-Iraq war began in 2003, and Saddam Hussein fell from power, there was hope that Iraq would change. The Iraqi people hoped that liberation and fall of Saddam can bring forth positive change. However, that was not the case,

There was no question that Saddam to me was the worst person. I was always dreaming will there be a day, when we will live without Saddam. Now the situation is different, now there are fears...when America liberated Iraq, they made a country free, where everybody was allowed to express their freedom. Well in Iraq, the majority were able to control the country and government, leading to the minorities to be victims and targets.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Interviewee #1 and #2

¹⁵⁵ Bartram, 91

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 90

¹⁵⁷ Interviewee #1 and #2

¹⁵⁸ Interviewee #7

According to Shak Hanish, Iraq's population suffered a substantial decrease at the start of the war in 2003.¹⁵⁹ United States entered Iraq and liberated a country that was oppressed; however, with that freedom came consequences. According to Hanish, the lack of power, control, and a stable government, allowed various fundamentalist, extremists, and terrorists groups began to rise.¹⁶⁰ Conflicts and tensions during Saddam's reign were escalated during the war. Historically, there has been sectarian tension and violence between the Islamic Sunni and Shi'a groups.¹⁶¹ Since Saddam was a Sunni Arab, the Shi'as suffered injustice, and after his fall, violence erupted and escalated. The United Nations Human Rights report for the year 2006 found that the Iraqi government, political parties, religious and tribal leaders, and entire civil society need to bridge the gap between the Sunni and Shi'a.¹⁶² The sectarian violence taking place between the Sunnis and Shi'as affected the entire country of Iraq; dividing the country in half. Thus, injustice and human rights abuse increased, which increased migration. According to the United Nations Human Rights report, migration within the country began. Assyrian and Chaldean groups residing in Baghdad were beginning to migrate to Northern Iraq (Kurdistan), which was relatively safer.¹⁶³

Since Iraq as whole was an unsafe country, migration to neighboring countries increased. The six interviewees, who left during the U.S.-Iraq war, migrated through the

¹⁵⁹ Hanish, 3

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 4

¹⁶¹ Polk, 45

¹⁶² United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Report on Human Rights in Iraq: March/April, 2006, 2.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

United Nations refugee resettlement program.¹⁶⁴ One of the six interviewees, fled to Turkey, registered for the refugee program, and resided in Turkey for five years before finally migrating to the United States.¹⁶⁵ Another individual received a special immigrant visa because he was working with the Americans during the war, which made him a target.¹⁶⁶ Even Hanish states that Assyrians and Chaldeans suffered injustice and human rights abuse due to their involvement with the United States government throughout the war.¹⁶⁷

The major injustice suffered by the Assyrian and Chaldean community was the bombing of the churches throughout the war. Hanish states Iraq's Christian community suffered their first attack in 2004, when five churches in Baghdad were bombed. Since the beginning of the U.S.-Iraq War in 2003 until November 2007, more than 27 churches have been attacked.¹⁶⁸ The attack on these churches heavily impacted the Assyrian and Chaldean community's migration. According to one interviewee, who migrated in 2012, he states, "the explosion at the Sayidat al-Najat church (October 31, 2010) forced me to leave Iraq."¹⁶⁹ According to the United Nations Human Rights report that throughout the year 2010, Iraq's Christian minority community suffered attacks which lead to their displacement. The most significant attack was that on the Sayidat al-Nejat church in Baghdad.¹⁷⁰ When this type of injustice took place, the Assyrians and Chaldeans

¹⁶⁴ Interviewee #5

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Interviewee #7

¹⁶⁷ Hanish, 4

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Interviewee #9

¹⁷⁰ United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Report on Human Rights in Iraq: Jan./Dec., 2010, 42.

international migration increased. However, as time passed, and the U.S.-Iraq was coming to an end, Iraq had established a government. For many, Northern Iraq (Kurdistan) was a relatively safer providence. The United Nations Human Rights report stated that “the Council of Ministers in KRG (Kurdish Regional Government) approved the transfer of Christian/other students from different religious and ethnic groups from other parts of Iraq who fled due to security reasons to the Kurdistan region.”¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, migration was still taking place. As mentioned earlier, UN Human Rights report for 2011 estimates around two million Iraqi’s migrating due to conflict and sectarian violence.¹⁷²

Post U.S.-Iraq War: 2012-2013

Migration did not stop after the U.S.-Iraq war, if anything it is still ongoing. Assyrians and Chaldeans suffered a greater amount of injustice and human rights abuse during the war than during Saddam’s reign. According to a male interviewee, who migrated in 2012, states, “before 2003 maybe my country was best time! Because, in Saddam Hussein’s time, there was one murder! Now there is many murders! And, everything happened, and we didn’t know why.”¹⁷³ The injustice and human rights abuse was targeted towards the country as a whole. However, during the war it was targeted towards the minority communities of Assyrians and Chaldeans. Nevertheless, after the U.S.-Iraq War ended, the conflict continues. As this same interviewee explained:

Now is worse! But, the problem that is that it began with Saddam! But, now, the problem has expanded, and its bigger! For the Yazidis and Mandaeans, they are a small group, so they don’t have that big of a problem or tension! For the

¹⁷¹ UNAMI/OHCHR, Report on Human Rights for Iraq: Jan/Dec. 2011, 32

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Interviewee #9

Christians, they are not connecting with the rest of the Iraqi people! The problem of today is between the Sunni and Shi'a, and the Kurds as well.¹⁷⁴

When Saddam was in power, he had control; when, the United States occupied Iraq, they were in control; however, now, there is no control, and the major groups, such as the Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurds are fighting for control of the government.

Lastly, when asking the interviewees which country they consider their home, three out of the ten interviewees between the ages of mid-forties to mid-sixties, answered Iraq will remain their home.¹⁷⁵ Six individuals between the ages of early to mid-twenties considered United States as their new and permanent home.¹⁷⁶ One individual, late thirties stated that he did not have a home. Iraq was not his home, and United States can never be his home.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Interviewee #9

¹⁷⁵ Interviewee #1, #2, and #6

¹⁷⁶ Interviewee #3, #4, #6, #7, #9, and #10

¹⁷⁷ Interviewee #8

6: Conclusion

The Assyrian and Chaldean community in Iraq has experienced a very major transformation from the beginning of their civilization to the year 2013. As history has shown, they were once the rulers of Iraq. However, with the migration of the Arabs, the Assyrians and Chaldeans became a minority community, and tensions began. However, even the Arab community had tensions, especially within the Islamic religion. History attributes the death of the Prophet Muhammad as heavily impacted the future of the Islamic religion, creating a division within the religion, separating it into two sects, the Sunni and the Shi'a. This division created tensions, which influenced and impacted the shaping of Iraq. This division was evident when Saddam Hussein, an Arab Sunni, seized power and control of Iraq. Like the division within Islam, Saddam Hussein's power and control affected Iraq as well. The nineteen nineties marked the beginning of a very conflicted relationship between Saddam Hussein's Iraq and the West, specifically the United States. From the Gulf War to the U.S.-Iraq War to the post-war era, the relationship between Iraq and United States was another influencing factor in changing the country. All these transformations not only shaped Iraq, but also impacted justice, human rights, and migration.

Past literature describes these events as the factors that influenced the idea of justice, human rights abuse and migration. It is evident that the only objective for all parties was power and control. Everything from the division within the Islamic religion to Saddam Hussein's despotism to United State's occupation of and interference in Iraq. All involved parties wanted to obtain power and control over the country. With no stable government to provide safety and security, human rights abuse increase, which

influenced migration to increase as well. The three time frames show that a new event is taking place; however, it is not one that fixes the past problems but rather increasing the problems. This is evident in the interviews with the ten Assyrian and Chaldeans, who describe the human rights abuse and their migration during the time they migrated. Although, they each have a different story and perspective, they are still linked by the factors that impacted their migration and traced back to the major events that took place in Iraq.

It is evident that these transformations impacted many minority groups, such as the Kurds, Yezidis, and the Mandaeans. Due to the time constraint, this research only focused on the case of the Assyrians and Chaldeans. However, even throughout the research conducted on the Assyrians and Chaldeans, there were still limitations. One of the limitations was the number of individuals interviewed. It is evident that if more Assyrians and Chaldeans were interviewed, the analysis would be more detailed. Nevertheless, this research is still extremely important and significant for a variety of reasons.

This study improves and expands the body of literature on justice, human rights, and migration by providing a better understanding of the migration of Assyrians and Chaldeans. It examines how justice and human rights affect migration. It also brings awareness to the limited body of literature on Assyrian and Chaldeans. Nevertheless, there is more research needed to understand the consequences of justice and human rights abuse, and the way these abuses influence migration not only in the case of the Assyrians and Chaldeans, but other minorities such as the Kurds, Yezidis, and Mandaeans. This research draws attention to justice, human rights abuse, and migration of the Iraqi people.

Lastly, this research is extremely significant for the Assyrian and Chaldean community not only in Arizona, but in other places as well. The interviewees' stories bring light to the justice and human rights denied to the Assyrians and Chaldeans currently residing in Iraq. Lastly, it helps law makers create solutions to problems concerning not only this groups still residing in Iraq.

For me, this research provides further detail about my origins and my migration from Iraq to the United States. As for the individuals who were interviewed, and the entire Assyrian and Chaldean community in Arizona, this research explains the reasons behind their migration to future generations. Although, the Assyrian and Chaldeans currently residing in Arizona have created a community, their new "home" is still different. For the majority of the Assyrian and Chaldeans, the culture differentiation is impacting the communication between old and new generations. The hardships and struggles they experienced in Iraq leads them to wanting to assimilate in the American culture in order to prevent it from happening again. For many Assyrians and Chaldeans, the language Aramaic and culture traditions are only being practiced among the older generation. The younger generation is adopting the American culture more than Assyrian and Chaldean culture.

Thus, it is important to recognize the problems facing the Assyrian and Chaldean community in order to create solutions, and prevent this ancient civilization and their ancient language to be eliminated.

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United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Report on Human Rights in Iraq: Jan./Dec., 2011." 1-39.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEWEES

- #1, Interviewee. Interview by author. Personal interview. Arizona State University, November 5, 2012.
- #2, Interviewee. Interview by author. Personal interview. Arizona State University, April 7, 2013.
- #3, Interviewee. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, April 3, 2013.
- #4, Interviewee. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, November 18, 2013.
- #5, Interviewee. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, December 6, 2013.
- #6, Interviewee. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, December 2, 2012.
- #7, Interviewee, Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, November 11, 2012.
- #8, Interviewee. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, October 28, 2013.
- #9, Interviewee. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, October 18, 2013.
- #10, Interviewee. Interview by author. Personal Interview. Arizona State University, October 20, 2013.

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

- 1) Introduce yourself (exclude your name)
-Tell me about yourself. What do you do? Do you have a family? Etc.
- 2) Where are you from originally?

History Questions

- 3) From the fall of Saddam Hussein, which is approximately the year 2003, until now, has Iraq changed? If yes, how? If no, why?
- 4) What is the relationship between Chaldeans, Kurds, Arabs, and/or other groups?
 - 4a) Has it changed since the Fall of Saddam? If yes, in what ways? If no, explain?
- 5) Can you please provide a brief description of Iraq during Saddam Hussein's reign, after his fall, which is also during the U.S.-Iraq War, and after the War?

Migration questions

- 6) When did you migrate to the United States? How old were you?
- 7) How did you migrate to the U.S.?
- 8) Why did you choose the U.S. as your migration destination? Were there other countries or places you were considering?
- 9) What are your thoughts on Iraqi Chaldeans, Arabs, Kurds, and/or other groups migrating out of Iraq, specifically to the United States?
 - 9a) Does each group have different factors that affect their migration?
- 10) Is U.S. society different from Iraq society? Why or why not?
 - 10a) What are positives and negatives in the US? In Iraq?
- 11) What has been the biggest challenge for you since migrating to the US? Do you have any regrets migrating to the US? Would you go somewhere else now if you could? Why, or why not?
 - 11a) What are some of the challenges Iraqi Chaldeans and/or other groups may face after their migration?
- 12) How has your life changed (positively/negatively), since your migration?
 - 12a) Is migration a positive or negative choice? Why or Why not?

Justice questions

13) What does 'justice' mean to you?

14) Is justice a factor that played a role in your migration to the U.S.?

14a) Does 'justice' play a factor in the migration of Iraqi Chaldeans and/or other groups?

15) How do you think the US defines or views justice (basic liberties and rights)? How does Iraq?

15a) What do you think are the differences/similarities between the 'justice' in Iraq and the U.S.?

16) Can you provide a brief overview of the religious affiliations found in Northern Iraq or all over Iraq?

17) Do you think your religion impacts how you personally define or view justice? Do you think that religion impacts how justice is defined or used in the US? In Iraq?

18) Do you think that the concept of justice has changed in Iraq (since you've migrated)?

Future Plans

19) What are some of your long term plans?

20) Do you plan on staying in the US? Or do you plan on returning to Iraq permanently in the near future? Why, or why not?

APPENDIX C
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

To: Mary Romero
WILSN

From: Mark Roosa, Chair *MR*
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 04/16/2013

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 04/16/2013

IRB Protocol #: 1304009068

Study Title: Migration Stories

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.