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The Iraqi Diaspora in Germany
Structure, Organisation, Activities and Engagement for Development
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Structure, Organisation, Activities and Engagement for Development

Düsseldorf, June 2017

Menderes Candan, M.A.
This study was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and realized by the GIZ Programme Migration for Development (PME).

Shaping Migration for Development
Migrants are bridge-builders between their countries of origin and the countries in which they currently live and work. With their skills, ideas, experiences and contacts, they are key drivers of change in both settings and help to ensure that their countries of origin can also face the future with confidence. Many migrants contribute to their origin countries' development while living elsewhere: some establish diaspora organisations and carry out projects on a voluntary basis, while others set up businesses and build economic ties between countries. A significant number of migrants decide at some point to return to their countries of origin on a temporary or permanent basis, enabling them to share their knowledge directly at local level. We support all these activities of migrants, because we believe in the potential of global migration for sustainable development. We also advise people who are not yet sure whether they want to leave their country. We highlight legal migration options and show them alternatives in their country of origin. Our expertise and advice in the field of global labour migration also benefit institutions such as ministries of labour in our partner countries. PME is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is implemented by the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM) – a joint operation of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the International Placement Service of the Federal Employment Agency (ZAV).

The "Programme Migration for Development" has five components:

>> Knowledge transfer by returning experts
>> Cooperation with the diaspora community (diaspora organisations and diaspora experts)
>> Business ideas for development
>> Migration advice
>> Migration policy advice
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Imprint
Germany is a country that has been a destination for Iraqi migrants ever since the mid-1960s. In the first few years it tended to be student groups that came to Germany. Since the 1970s it has been chiefly refugees, who arrived in various waves of migration. Despite this fact, so far there has been no comprehensive scientific study of Iraqi migrants in Germany. When and why did the Iraqi migrants come here? What are their socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics? What is their ethnic, religious and political affiliation? What organisations exist in the Iraqi migrant community? What structure do their organisations have, and what influence do these organisations have within the migrant community in Germany? What networks do the migrants have in Germany, in Iraq and in the Iraqi diaspora worldwide? Furthermore, the possible participation of Iraqi migrants to Germany in the reconstruction process in Iraq since the change of regime in 2003 has not yet been a focus of German policy, research or public awareness. The specific question arises of whether migrant associations are involved in the reconstruction process in Iraq through development-related activities. If so, how and to what extent? Until now, no research has been performed on any of these important points.

The present study attempts to close this research gap. Moreover, it aims to provide an overview of the Iraqi migrant community in Germany and its associations, and shed light on the influence these associations have both in Germany and in the transnational sphere of Germany and Iraq. It also looks at the role of Iraqis in the reconstruction process in Iraq since the change of government in 2003.

After presenting the methodology (Chapter 2), in Chapter 3 the study traces the history of migration and identifies the socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Iraqis in Germany. It then looks at the history and the structure of Iraqi associations in Germany (Chapter 4). The next two chapters focus on the Iraqi diaspora’s engagement for development in Iraq (Chapter 5) and Iraq’s policy towards the diaspora (Chapter 6). The final chapter summarises the results of the study and identifies key recommendations for actors in the German development cooperation system.
The findings of the study are based essentially on two steps of investigation conducted continuously over a five-year period from 2011 to 2016, as part of the author’s ongoing doctoral thesis entitled ‘The Iraqi diaspora in Germany and its contribution to the reconstruction process in Iraq since the change of regime in 2003’. The first step involved a desk study of relevant scholarly and statistical literature and documents published on Iraqi migrants in Germany. The second step involved conducting expert interviews with representatives of Iraqi migrant organisations (MOs) as well as political decision-makers and other relevant actors in Germany over the period from 2011 to 2016.

a) Desk study

The desk study involved analysing scholarly essays (including essays by Dulz 2004, Shooman 2007 and Salam 2010) on Iraqis in Germany, as well as media reports on returnees to Iraq published in daily newspapers, in news magazines and on websites of broadcasting stations. The websites of individual MOs were also examined and analysed. Furthermore, quantitative data on migration by Iraqis to Germany, information on residency status, naturalisation figures, socio-demographic and socio-economic data and information on the regional distribution of Iraqi migrants in Germany were obtained from the Federal Statistical Office and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), and evaluated. Statistics produced by the Bundesbank on money transfers between Germany and Iraq were also analysed.

b) Interviews with representatives of Iraqi associations

Semi-structured interviews were held with representatives of 18 Iraqi MOs in Germany. The Iraqi MOs in Germany were identified through extensive online research, by searching the common register of the German states, and by means of a snowball procedure in which MO representatives who had already been interviewed were asked to identify further MOs with which they were familiar. Importance was attached to interviewing representatives of all religious groups within the Iraqi community in Germany. This was designed to ensure that the study reflected the perspectives and viewpoints of all ethnic and religious groups found within the community.

All the interviews were conducted in German either face-to-face or by telephone, using interview guidelines. In terms of content the interviews focused on the following three areas: (1) perception and assessment of political, economic and socio-cultural development in Iraq since the regime change in 2003, including assessment of the current status of the reconstruction process, the actors involved and the role of Iraqis in Germany in the reconstruction process; (2) Iraqi MOs in Germany: composition, development, objectives, networks, resources, and activities in Germany and Iraq; (3) networking by MOs: cooperation and links with partners in Germany, in Iraq and in third countries.

To obtain further background information on the Iraqi diaspora in Germany and their MOs, a representative of the Iraqi Embassy in Berlin and a representative of the cultural representation of the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan in Berlin were interviewed.
Table 1:  
List of Iraqi associations in Germany interviewed, with position of interviewee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Irakischer Sozial- und Kulturverein e.V., Essen</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Iraqi Social and Cultural Association – Essen)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Verein irakischer Ärzte in Deutschland e.V., Linz am Rhein</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Association of Iraqi Doctors in Germany – Linz am Rhein)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Verein irakischer Ingenieure in Deutschland e.V., Wuppertal</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Association of Iraqi Engineers in Germany – Wuppertal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Vereinigung Irakischer Studenten in Deutschland e.V., Mainz</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Association of Iraqi Students in Germany – Mainz)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Irakischer Kulturverein Al-Rafedain e.V., Berlin</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Iraqi Cultural Association Al Rafedain – Berlin)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Kurdische Studentenunion e.V., Bonn (Kurdish Students’ Union – Bonn)</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Irakischer Migrantenrat Mitteldeutschland e.V., Dessau</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Council of Iraqi Migrants in Central Germany – Dessau)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Irakischer Kulturverein Al-Multaqa e.V., Leipzig</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Iraqi Cultural Association Al Multaqa – Leipzig)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Babel Kulturverein der irakischen Christen e.V., Augsburg</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Babel Cultural Association of Iraqi Christians – Augsburg)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Irakische Menschenrechtsvereinigung, Bochum</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Iraqi Human Rights Association – Bochum)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Verein unabhängiger Iraker in Deutschland e.V., Berlin</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Association of Independent Iraqis in Germany – Berlin)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Orientalischer Stern – irakischer Christenverein Essen e.V., Essen</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Eastern Star – Association of Iraqi Christians in Essen)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Ost-West Diwan e.V., Köln (East-West Divan – Cologne)</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Verband der kurdischen Ärzte in Deutschland e.V., Berlin</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Association of Kurdish Doctors in Germany – Berlin)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Deutsch-Irakische Mittelstandsvereinigung (Midan e.V.), Naumburg/Saale</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Midan–German-Iraqi Association of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises – Naumburg (Saale))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Avadani Berlin e.V., Berlin (Avadani Berlin)</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Lalish-Zentrum Bielefeld e.V., Bielefeld (Lalish Centre in Bielefeld)</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Berliner Verein Hilfe für den Irak e.V., Berlin (Berlin Aid for Iraq Association)</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the interviews were recorded using a tape recorder, then transcribed and analysed.
Migration to Germany

During the second half of the 20th century Germany became one of the main destination countries for Iraqi migrants. Consequently, the existence of the Iraqi diaspora today is not an entirely new phenomenon, but rather the outcome of a trend that has been ongoing for the last 40 to 50 years. Over this period the Iraqi groups that came to Germany arrived in various constellations, and as the result of various waves of emigration. Nonetheless, today we can identify two broad ‘immigrant groups’ among Iraqis: a) students emigrating to Germany since the end of the 1950s, and b) refugees fleeing mainly to Germany as a result of conflicts within Iraq, wars between Iraq and its neighbouring states, or the international economic embargo in place between 1991 and 2003 (see Shooman 2007; Chatelard 2009; Salam 2010; Candan 2013).

3.1.1 Students

From the mid-1950s onwards small groups of Iraqi students came to Germany in order to study. Most of them were young men who belonged to the country’s social elite and had already obtained a first degree in Iraq. From the beginning of the 1960s onwards, both the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) offered Iraqi students grants for degree courses or further training at their universities or technical colleges. This led to a rise in the number of Iraqi students at German universities and technical colleges from 1959 onwards (see Einax 2008).

The majority of these students returned to Iraq after successfully completing their studies. When the Ba’ath party came into power, events in Iraq unfolded thick and fast. Many students with links to the deposed political parties (e.g. the Iraqi Community Party) or who were members of persecuted religious groups (e.g. Shiites) or ethnic groups (e.g. Kurds) decided they would no longer return to Iraq because they feared arrest. Many of them applied for political asylum or married a German partner and settled in Germany (see Shooman 2007; Salam 2010; the present author’s own research from 2011 to 2016). Many also remained in Germany due to the better living and working conditions here, and their personal adjustment to western norms and values.

Today, after the UK, Jordan, Malaysia and the USA, Germany is the fifth most popular country for Iraqi students. Since the fall of the Ba’ath regime in 2003, some 500 students and visiting scholars from Iraq have come to Germany every year. In 2016 approximately 1,100 Iraqi students were enrolled at German universities (see DAAD 2016). This figure does not include ethnic Iraqis who hold German citizenship.

3.1.2 Refugees

Displacement has a long history in Iraq. When the First World War came to an end in 1918 the Ottoman Empire, which had fought on the side of the German Reich, was partitioned into small parts through the peace treaties of Sèvres (1919) and Lausanne (1923). In 1920 the United Kingdom received the mandate rights to administer the three former provinces of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra. Britain merged these provinces into ‘Iraq’. When the administration and political system of the sovereign state of Iraq were established, the specific ethnic and religious characteristics of the population, their tribal structures and
their local administrations were largely ignored. This is why the 20th century witnessed repeated uprisings by various ethnic groups (e.g. Kurds) and religious groups (e.g. Shiites) against the central government in Baghdad. These uprisings were put down time and time again. The vanquished often fled the country. Political unrest and coups were frequent occurrences in Baghdad. These forced the defeated elites and their supporters to leave the country (e.g. the overthrow of the monarchy during the military coup in 1958) (see Batatu 1978; Vanly 1984).

Seven basic factors causing the waves of emigration from the country can be identified: (1) rebellions by ethnic and religious minorities against the central government in Baghdad; (2) the numerous attempted coups from the early 1930s until 1968, when the Ba’ath party finally came into power; (3) the war between Iran and Iraq from 1980 to 1988; (4) the invasion of Iraq in 1990 by a US-led military alliance, followed by the regime’s campaign of retaliation against the Shiites, the Marsh Arabs and the Kurds, who had sided with the international alliance; (5) the international economic embargo against the country introduced on 6 August 1990, which largely isolated Iraq and led to the deaths of a large number of people between 1990 and 2003 due to shortages of food and medicines (see Dodge et. al. 2004); (6) the Iraq War in 2003, and the subsequent fighting between rival groups within the country; (7) the rise of the so-called Islamic State (IS) since late 2013.

Iraqis often fled first of all to the neighbouring countries of Iran, Turkey, Syria (until 2011) or Jordan. From there they headed for Western Europe or North America, assisted either by illegal gangs of people smugglers (sometimes using forged passports), or by international aid organisations (such as UNHCR). In Western Europe, Germany, along with Sweden and the UK, was one of the main countries targeted by the Iraqi refugees (see Shooman 2007; Salam 2010; Candan 2013). Many of these refugees chose Germany by chance. Often they knew someone who was already in Germany, or had heard that Germany granted asylum to Iraqi refugees more easily than other countries in Europe (see Shooman 2007).

In Germany the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) distributed the refugees across the whole of the country using the ‘Königstein formula’. Fig. 1 provides figures on the applications for asylum submitted by Iraqi citizens between 1991 and 2016.

The rate of approval for Iraqi asylum seekers in 2015 was over 80% (see BAMF 2017). Similar rates of approval were achieved in the years prior to that. Those whose applications were not approved were either deported to Iraq, or left Germany for other European countries or North America (see Shooman 2007; author’s own research from 2011 to 2016).

It is interesting to note that over the last two years many Iraqis have returned to Iraq voluntarily. In March 2016 the German Government’s refugee coordinator, Peter Altmaier, put the number of refugees returning to Iraq voluntarily between September 2015 and February 2016 at approximately 3,000, roughly 500 every month. A number of them had already been acknowledged as refugees, he said, and others had a good chance of obtaining political refugee status (see Zeit Online of 18 March 2016).

The reasons why people return voluntarily are probably manifold. They include the fact that the so-called IS has been driven out of many cities in Iraq, and the desire of Iraqis to return and rebuild their cities. Another reason might be the tighter regulations for family reunification, and the call issued by the Iraqi Government in March 2017 encouraging Iraqis in Germany to return to Iraq.

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8 This embargo was imposed by the United Nations Security Council through Resolution 661 of 6 August 1990.
3.1 Migration to Germany

Figure 1: Applications for asylum submitted by Iraqi citizens in Germany 1991–2016 | Source: BAMF 2016, author’s own graph
As 2015 drew to a close there were approximately 136,000 Iraqi citizens living in Germany. Fig. 2 shows the trend in the number of Iraqi citizens in Germany since 2008.

Of the approximately 136,000 Iraqi citizens, some 85,000 are male and 51,000 female. More than half (74,000) are aged between 20 and 45 (50,000 male and 24,000 female), and roughly a further 45,000 are younger than 20 (see Federal Statistical Office 2016). During the interviews respondents gave two reasons for the high number of men. First of all, young men find it easier to emigrate alone. They and their families believe that they are most likely to gain a foothold in Germany, and support their families in Iraq by sending remittances. Secondly, fathers initially enter the country alone hoping that it will be possible to reunite with their families later on.

According to the Federal Statistical Office, by the end of 2015 approximately 31,000 Iraqis in Germany had been naturalised. Approximately 8,000 of them were Germans with dual nationality (see Federal Statistical Office, Microcensus 2015).

Today the Iraqi community is the 16th largest migrant community in Germany; after the UK (400,000 Iraqi migrants) and Sweden (160,000), it is the third-largest Iraqi community in Europe (both figures are for Iraqi citizens).
3.2 Distribution by region

Today there are Iraqi citizens and Germans of Iraqi origin living in all of Germany’s federal states, and in most cities. The study found that over the last few decades relatively high concentrations of Iraqi migrants have emerged in five federal states: North Rhine-Westphalia (Rhineland/Ruhr region), Bavaria (Munich, Augsburg, Nuremberg), Baden-Wuerttemberg (Ulm, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Pforzheim, Mannheim), Berlin/Brandenburg (mainly the city of Berlin and Potsdam) and Saxony-Anhalt (Dessau/Magdeburg). In these regions where Iraqi migrants are concentrated we see a high density of political, social and cultural organisations and activities by this group (author’s own observations from 2011 to 2016).

3.2.3 Religious and ethnic groups

As mentioned above, no statistics are kept on the ethnic, religious and linguistic affiliation of Iraqis in Germany. The following information is therefore based on estimates made by the interviewed representatives of Iraqi MOs and official Iraqi agencies in Germany. Muslims form the largest religious group within the Iraqi diaspora. This group can be further broken down into Shiites and Sunnis. In terms of ethnicity, the Muslims from Iraq comprise Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens. The religious minority of the Yazidis are a community of ethnic Kurds. The Yazidis – who follow a pre-Christian monotheistic religion – live mostly in northern Iraq, eastern Turkey, western Armenia and northern Syria. Their holy places are located in the Sinjar mountains in northern Iraq (see Dörig 2008).

Christians form another religious minority within the Iraqi diaspora. Iraqi Christians in Germany comprise mainly Assyrians, Arameans and Chaldeans (see Auswärtiges Amt 2017; author’s own research from 2011 to 2016). The Assyrians and Arameans belong to the Eastern Christian communities (which include the Syriac Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East). They live in areas spread across northern Iraq, south-eastern Turkey and northern Syria. The Chaldeans are affiliated with the Vatican (see Dörig 2008).

The Mandaeans, who originally lived in areas located in southern Iraq and the neighbouring province of Khuzestan in Iran, are a further religious minority. Their religion contains elements of Judaism and Christianity (see Dörig 2008).

3.2.4 Languages

As well as ethno-religious diversity, the diaspora is also characterised by linguistic diversity. The languages spoken within it are Arabic, Kurdish, Turkmens, Assyrian, Aramaic, Mandaic and Chaldean. So far no statistics have been produced on the distribution of these languages within the diaspora. However, it can be assumed that the minorities (and their languages) are present in significant numbers, because persecution often led them to apply for political asylum in Germany (author’s own research from 2011 to 2016).

3.2.5 Education, training and economic activity

As of the end of 2015, approximately 13,000 Iraqis in Germany held a university degree. A further 14,000 held a non-university vocational qualification (apprenticeship, technician etc.) As of the end of 2015, approximately 48,000 Iraqi citizens in Germany were economically active. Around 38,000 of these were gainfully employed, of whom 32,000 were salaried employees or wage earners. Some 10,000 Iraqis were unemployed, and 59,000 economically inactive.
4 Iraqi associations in Germany

4.1 History of the associations

4.1.1 Before the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003

Migrants forced to leave their home country for political reasons usually form various political and cultural organisations in their host countries (see Turner 2008). The Iraqi migrants who were forced to leave their country due to political persecution and war also began organising themselves early on, though they often did so informally and in secret for fear of attacks by the Iraqi secret service in Germany and possible reprisals against their families in Iraq. Until the regime change in 2003, the core work of the majority of these organisations involved political measures against the Ba’ath dictatorship, and measures to help maintain free Iraqi culture (interviews inter alia with the Association of Iraqi Doctors in Germany 2012).

4.1.2 After the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003

The interviews revealed that a majority of the MOs arose in the context of person-to-person links and informal networks. In many cases the initiative for establishing the association came from a small number of mature men who were friends and who were actively engaged in their (local) community. Before founding an association, founding members have usually been living in Germany for more than 15 years. They often possess high social and educational status (all the interviewees have at least one university degree), hold German citizenship and have access to sound financial resources. They are also structurally well integrated into their host society. Furthermore, according to their responses they possess sufficient time and the networks to establish organisational structures, and manage and develop these on a long-term basis. They have a crucial influence on the practical work and the public image of their MOs.

Five of the 18 associations interviewed were founded before the fall of the old regime in Iraq. Specifically, these are the Association of Iraqi Students in Germany, Al Rafedain in Berlin, Al Multaqa in Leipzig, Avadani in Berlin and the Iraqi Social and Cultural Association in Essen. The 13 remaining associations were not officially founded until after the regime collapsed. Table 2 shows the years in which the MOs were founded.

Independently of the political, ethnic or religious orientation of the Iraqi MOs, the following types of organisation were identified.

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8 The students who had initially migrated to Germany voluntarily no longer returned to Iraq for fear of political persecution. They applied for political asylum in Germany, and thus also became political refugees at a later stage.

9 A strong social dominance of men within the organised diaspora is to be observed. This is presumably related to the structure of society in Iraq, where most leaders of political organisations are male (author’s own observations from 2011 to 2016).
### History of the associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Year founded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vereinigung Irakischer Studenten in Deutschland e.V., Berlin</td>
<td>1959</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Association of Iraqi Students in Germany – Berlin)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irakischer Kulturverein Al-Rafedain e.V., Berlin</td>
<td>1990</td>
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<td>(Iraqi Cultural Association Al Rafedain – Berlin)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irakischer Kulturverein Al-Multaqa e.V., Leipzig</td>
<td>1995</td>
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<td>(Iraqi Cultural Association Al Multaqa – Leipzig)</td>
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<td>Avadani e.V., Berlin (Avadani Berlin)</td>
<td>1996</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irakischer Sozial- und Kulturverein e.V., Essen</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<td>(Iraqi Social and Cultural Association – Essen)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verein irakischer Ärzte in Deutschland e.V., Linz am Rhein</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>(Association of Iraqi Doctors in Germany – Linz am Rhein)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irakische Menschenrechtsvereinigung, Bochum</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>(Iraqi Human Rights Association – Bochum)</td>
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<td>Deutsch-Irakischer Mittelstandsvereinigung (Midan e.V.), Naumburg</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Midan – German-Iraqi Association of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises – Naumburg)</td>
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<td>Berliner Verein Hilfe für den Irak e.V., Berlin</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>(Berlin Aid for Iraq Association)</td>
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<td>Verein irakischer Ingenieure in Deutschland e.V., Wuppertal</td>
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<td>Orientalischer Stern – irakischer Christenverein Essen e.V., Essen</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>Kurdische Studentenunion e.V., Bonn (Kurdish Students’ Union – Bonn)</td>
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<td>(Association of Independent Iraqis in Germany – Bochum/Berlin)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babel Kulturverein der irakischen Christen e.V., Augsburg</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Babel Cultural Association of Iraqi Christians – Augsburg)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Years in which the Iraqi diaspora associations interviewed were founded. Source: author’s own research from 2011 to 2016.
The organisational landscape among Iraqi migrants in Germany is heterogeneous. The associations are organised primarily along ethnic, religious or political lines. The reasons for this organisational heterogeneity among Iraqis are to be found both in Iraq and in Germany. First of all, as mentioned above the Iraqi people are themselves heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity and religious affiliation. To articulate their political, cultural and economic interests, all groups organise themselves both in Iraq and in the diaspora. Secondly, the conditions of liberal democracy in Germany are conducive to the establishment of self-help organisations of all kinds. There are organisations which define themselves as ‘all Iraq’ organisations. In the majority of cases their membership includes all political and ethno-religious groups within the diaspora. It is interesting to note that these are often so-called professional associations, i.e. organisations in which particular professions such as doctors or engineers come together (author’s own research from 2011 to 2016).

Then there are organisations for the various ethnic and religious groups. The majority of these are Arab (e.g. the Iraqi Social and Cultural Association in Essen), Kurdish (e.g. the Iraqi-Kurdish Sports and Culture Association in Düren) or Turkmen associations (such as the Turkmen Human Rights Association). A further category is associations of religious minorities. This mainly involves the Yazidis (e.g. the ‘Central Council of Yazidis’), Assyrians, Chaldeans (e.g. ‘Eastern Star – Association of Iraqi Christians’ in Essen) and Mandaeans (Association of all Mandaeans in Germany). Finally, yet another category is associations of a political or ideological nature, which cover the entire political spectrum (ranging from right wing, to centrist, to left wing/communist) (author’s own research from 2011 to 2016).

We will now identify a typology of these organisations by form, structure, political orientation, objectives and activities. Here it must be pointed out that it is not possible to draw a sharp and categorical dividing line between the different types of association. This is because whatever the ethno-religious or political background of the associations concerned, their activities are broad. Here is one example: an association with a strong focus on culture might also be involved in keeping up and passing on religious traditions, while at the same time getting involved in development work and setting up links between German and Iraqi companies. This is why it is difficult to list associations by type. Nonetheless the associations do focus their activities on a particular area. The following typology is designed to provide a clearer understanding of the organisational landscape within the Iraqi diaspora in Germany.

### 4.2 Types of association

The work of cultural associations is devoted particularly to the upkeep of Iraqi languages, cultures, literature, art and history. Projects, festivities, readings, art exhibitions and the like often take place. As well as preserving culture and languages, these associations also focus on cultural exchange both among their members and within the entire diaspora. Furthermore, the events held are often open to anyone in Germany who might be interested. By opening their events to the public the associations seek to promote exchange between German culture and the various cultures of Iraq. One example is the cultural association ‘Al Rafedain’ in Berlin, which split into two associations in 2015. Amongst other things, since the fall of the Hussein regime Al Rafedain has staged the ‘Days of Iraqi Culture’ every year in Berlin. These days of culture have been attended by Iraqi artists from Germany, Iraq and other countries, as well as citizens of Berlin. They included readings, film screenings, concerts and other cultural events.
In recent years several delegations from Iraq have made the trip to Berlin to take part in the event. In 2009, for instance, these included Iraq’s Deputy Minister of Culture and representatives of the Kurdish Regional Government.

As well as preserving Iraqi culture and fostering cultural exchange, the cultural associations also support the integration of their members into German society. According to information supplied by Al Rafedain itself, for instance, this association has successfully taken part in numerous integration projects, some of them initiated by the Senate of Berlin. Furthermore, in the past the organisation was also commissioned to take care of Iraqi refugees living in Berlin (information supplied by the association itself 2012).

The work of the Iraqi cultural associations is also designed to influence and help shape change in Iraq in a positive way. When describing itself online, Al Rafedain says: ‘The association [Al Refadain] thus provides Iraqis in exile with something of a sense of home, while at the same time placing in their hands the means to help shape change in Iraq from a distance’ (Al-Rafedain 2011). 11 Other cultural associations include the Baghdad Forum for Art and Culture, the Kurdish association Awadani Berlin, the Chaldean association Eastern Star in Essen and the Council of Iraqi Migrants in Central Germany (based in the town of Dessau).

4.2 Religious associations

Another form of organisation established by Iraqis in Germany is religious associations. As mentioned above, the religious diversity of Iraq is also reflected in the diaspora. With some associations a certain religious orientation is already reflected in the name, such as the ‘Central Council of Yazidis’ or ‘Eastern Star – Association of Iraqi Christians’ (author’s own research from 2011 to 2016).

In their work in Germany these associations focus on two key points. First of all they focus on keeping up and passing on their religious teachings and traditions to the next generation. As mentioned above, some of these associations represent small faith communities that in some cases are at risk of ‘dying out’. This involves chiefly the Mandaeans, Chaldeans and Yazidis. In the diaspora these associations are able to systematically pass on their religion to the younger generation, and preserve it by means of archiving. According to some NGOs (e.g. the Society for Threatened Peoples), in Iraq itself this is sometimes very difficult due to persecution and attacks. This view is shared by the religious minority associations that were interviewed. The associations preserve and pass on their religions for instance by promoting religious instruction, special religious seminars and religious practice, such as attending Friday prayers (in the case of Muslims) or Sunday services (in the case of Christians), or the celebration of religious feasts (e.g. Ramadan for Muslims, or Eida Batzmi for Yazidis).

Secondly, the associations campaign for the rights of their own religious groups in Iraq. The non-Muslim minority associations for instance address attacks on the members of their faith communities living in Iraq. They also publicise the difficult situation of faith communities in Iraq by holding public awareness-raising events. They organise petitions and other campaigns calling on Germany and the international community to help protect members of their faith communities in Iraq. To do so they use...
both traditional channels such as audio and print media, and the internet. One example is the way in which the activities of Assyrian communities in Germany are publicised. The blog shown below – entitled ‘Assyrian Blog’ – reports amongst other things on two conferences held in Germany at which (amongst others) Assyrian academics from Germany and ‘the whole world’ discussed the situation of Assyrians in Iraq and Turkey (see Fig. 3).

4.2.3 Business associations

The work of the business associations revolves around economic cooperation between German and Iraqi companies, and the development of the Iraqi economy. In this connection, until the advance of so-called IS in summer 2014, in cooperation with chambers of commerce and industry in both countries the associations organised visits to Iraq by German trade delegations, as well as visits to Germany by Iraqi entrepreneurs. Since summer 2014 this has no longer been the case due to the security situation. According to the representatives of the associations interviewed, however, these activities will be resumed as soon as northern Iraq at least is safe again. Activities to promote investment in Iraq are continuing at international trade fairs and exhibitions. A representative of the ‘Midan’ German-Iraqi Association of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises made the following comment regarding the foundation of his association: ‘Following the United Nations embargo and Iraq’s wars with neighbouring countries, Iraqi industry needed to regenerate and open up to the West. We established that the embargo and the various wars had led to all links with the West being severed. Reactivating these contacts is our main objective.’ (Interview with a member of Midan, 2013). Founded in 2003, this association states that it has more than 1,200 German and Iraqi members. These include both companies and individuals. At the USETEC 2013 World Trade Fair for Used Technology held in Cologne in April 2013, for instance, Midan promoted cooperation between German and Iraqi companies, and made its stand at the fair available as a platform for discussions (see Fig. 4).

Figure 3: Activities of the Assyrian community online | Source: Assyrianblog.de 2013

Figure 4: Midan at the USETEC 2013 trade fair | Source: Midan – German-Iraqi Association of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises 2011

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13 See Midan e.V., online: http://www.midan.de/ (28 March 2013).
In 2014 Midan organised a visit by approximately 100 Iraqi entrepreneurs to USETEC 2014 in Cologne, where it facilitated meetings between these Iraqi entrepreneurs and potential German counterparts. In April 2015 the USETEC fair was held in Karlsruhe, where the association was once again very busy.

As well as facilitating networking, Midan also advises German companies on tapping into new markets in Iraq, and advises Iraqi companies on their entrepreneurial activities in Germany. These advisory activities include providing platforms for information sharing and networking (concerning matters of law, taxation, funding programmes, business contacts etc.), support with financing and investment projects, setting up local structures, cooperating with professional associations in Iraq, and the representation of members’ interests vis-à-vis government representatives and authorities. Midan has six offices in Iraq – in Mosul, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Duhok, Kirkuk and Baghdad. The purpose of the association is to ‘boost and promote German-Iraqi [economic] ties’ (Midan 2013).

Another example is the Iraqi Economists Network (EIN), founded in 2009 by Dr Barik Schuber, a Berlin-based German-Iraqi business consultant. This network, which comprises chiefly economists and business consultants from the Iraqi diaspora, sees itself as a think tank devoted largely to issues concerning the development of the Iraqi economy. To this end it uses (inter alia) global business structures and policy-making processes to pool the knowledge and know-how of its members, and harnesses this expertise to advise policy-makers, academics and businesses in Iraq. On its website, the network describes one of its aims as follows: ‘The formation of an actively involved group of experienced Iraqi economists offering professional participation in decision-making processes related to policy measures aimed at reforming and rebuilding the Iraqi economy, such as those related to the formulation of sustainable development strategies, programs and economic policy measures, as well as projects related to transparency and good governance.’

4.2.4 Human rights associations

Several human rights associations are also to be found within the landscape of Iraqi associations. The first human rights organisations were founded in the Federal Republic of Germany in the late 1960s. After the Ba’ath dictatorship came into power, particularly those ethnic and political groups that were among the main opponents of the Ba’ath regime began organising more intensively. These included Shiites, Kurds and communists. Working together with the peace movement in Germany, they organised petitions and held demonstrations to draw attention to the abuses in Iraq. Since the fall of the regime these associations have continued to devote their work to supporting respect for human, media and minority rights. By organising information evenings, conferences and visits by delegations to Germany and Iraq, the associations aim to raise public awareness in both countries regarding the current status of human rights and freedom of the press in Iraq. In this connection the associations work with international NGOs such as the Society for Threatened Peoples and Amnesty International.

One example is the Iraqi Human Rights Association in Bochum. According to the chair of the association, the beginnings of the association’s work date back to the 1990s. Until the regime collapsed in 2003, the majority of its current members were organised
within an unofficial association. At that time the association met in secret, because they feared the Iraqi secret service. Members took part in protests and campaigns against the dictatorship, and performed advocacy work in Germany. These activities included raising the awareness of political decision-makers in Germany regarding human rights abuses under Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship. Today the association focuses mainly on democratisation and the promotion of human rights in Iraq.

4.2.5 Professional associations

A further category identified is professional associations. These associations were founded on the basis of their members’ professional affiliation. A large body of diaspora research identifies professional associations as playing a positive role in the development of their members’ countries of origin. Findings indicate that these associations play a crucial role particularly in the transfer of expertise, technologies and educational structures from the host country to the country of origin. Furthermore, most professional associations do not pursue any political interests (see inter alia Baraulina/Borschers 2010).

The professional associations interviewed include the Association of Iraqi Doctors in Germany, the Association of Kurdish Doctors in Germany and the Association of Iraqi Engineers in Germany. All the interviewees indicated that the associations dealt with Iraqi issues on a purely ‘professional’ level, and used the professional expertise of their members to support the reconstruction process in Iraq and provide humanitarian assistance. Both doctors’ associations, for instance, are involved in developing medical infrastructure in Iraq and providing humanitarian assistance.16

The activities of the doctors’ associations include training Iraqi doctors in Germany. The associations are also active in Iraq. These activities include projects in rural areas such as child vaccination, health centre development, advice and assistance for hospital construction, and support for internally displaced persons in Iraq (including those who have fled from IS-controlled areas in Iraq), as well as refugees from Syria in the country’s numerous refugee camps. One association representative described the activities in Iraq as follows: ‘[Our activities encompass] setting up health centres for inpatient and outpatient treatment, establishing an improved monitoring system for patients, and training staff there in handling medical equipment’ (Association of Kurdish Doctors in Germany 2016). Together with delegations including orthodontists, dentists, general practitioners, gynaecologists and orthopaedists, at regular intervals between 2011 and 2016 the association spent periods of several weeks chiefly in northern Iraq. According to the association, during each visit ‘several thousand people were treated on an outpatient basis and provided with medicines.’ (Association of Kurdish Doctors in Germany 2016). This work is also made very important by the fact that there is a shortage of well-trained doctors in Iraq. In 2000 more than 2,800 Iraqi doctors were outside the country – more than 18% of all Iraqi doctors. Between 2003 and 2009 the figure rose very sharply once again, because after the fall of the regime doctors were one of the main targets for attacks by terrorist groups. In 2009 there were more than 5,000 Iraqi doctors in the UK. The Association of Kurdish Doctors in Germany is currently focusing on delivering aid in numerous refugee camps in the north of the country (see Al Juburi 2009).

Alongside its work in Iraq the association also supports refugees in Germany. This involves providing refugees with information on the German health system (e.g. explaining Germany’s vaccination system, communicable diseases, check-ups and preventive medicine). The association also organises training

16 In most poor countries from which diaspora groups originate, health care in particular is deficient. This is why many diaspora groups often have a particular focus on developing facilities for basic health care.
events for doctors in Germany, and seeks to cooperate with health agencies and professional associations. Through these networks the association seeks access to medical equipment, instruments and medicines, which are then transported to northern Iraq and distributed in refugee camps. To this end the association also conducts numerous public information and benefit events. In January 2015, for instance, a benefit concert was held in Heidelberg to raise money for refugees from Sinjar (northern Iraq) and Kobane (Syria) living in refugee camps in northern Iraq. The Association of Iraqi Doctors in Germany conducts similar important activities in Iraq and in Germany.

The Jiyan Foundation, which was founded in Berlin in 2005, is another association strongly committed to health sector development in Iraq. To implement this the association is involved in setting up and running nine rehabilitation centres in northern Iraq: in Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, Duhok, Halabja and Chamchamal, and in the Domiz and Khanke refugee camps. Right now the association is building a therapeutic centre for women and children who are victims of violence and torture. The association is also training therapists in the psychiatric treatment of war victims, and is providing training for teachers and other professionals in dealing with the victims of violence and war in schools and other public facilities.

4.2.6 Student associations

Student associations are another form of Iraqi associations in their own right. Student associations, some of which have existed since the 1950s, are found particularly at universities in major cities such as Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt and Bonn. According to its representative the Kurdish Student Union (KSU) for instance, which was officially founded several years ago at the University of Bonn, is a successor organisation of the Kurdish Student Society in Europe (KSSE). The KSSE was founded in 1956 in Wiesbaden. The Association of Iraqi Students in Germany (VIS) was established in 1959 in Mainz. According to the interviewees, many of today’s high-ranking Iraqi politicians were members of this student organisation when they were students in Germany. As well as performing integration work, and keeping up and presenting Iraqi cultures and traditions (folklore, theatre, literature and art), the student associations devote their efforts to ‘promoting academic exchange and [providing] assistance to Iraqi students and interns in Germany’ (see VIS Mainz 2013). They also organise visits to Iraq by student delegations. Participants in these delegation visits, which serve the purpose of academic exchange, include both students, researchers and intellectuals with an Iraqi background and German students and academics.

4.2.7 Sports associations

Another form of Iraqi migrant association is sports associations. Their activities focus on sports, but these associations also organise cultural events and promote the integration of their members into the host society. Two examples of such sports associations are FC Iraq Munich and the Iraqi-Kurdish...
Sports and Culture Association in Düren. The latter association, for instance, has acted as a project partner in an integration project in the city of Düren funded by the Bosch Foundation. The project focuses on raising the awareness of the parent generation of sportspersons concerning living conditions in Germany (see Aachener Zeitung 2008).
The results of the field study clearly show that all Iraqi associations include a commitment to reconstruction in Iraq as part of their work. The majority of associations have their own premises and maintain their own websites and profile pages on social media, such as Facebook. The number of members varies between the associations. Midan, for instance, has more than 1,200 members. These include not only members with an Iraqi background, but also many German businesspersons. Several other associations have more than 200 members. Six reported that they had more than 50 members. The remaining four migrant organisations have fewer than 50 members. However, if we include the families of their members then all 18 associations reach a total of several thousand people (author’s own research from 2011 to 2016). Each association conducts an activity at least once a month that takes place either on its own premises or on the premises of civil society actors (such as Caritas), at universities or at public venues. These activities include political events that draw particular attention to the political and social situation in Iraq. The associations often invite local politicians, local media and representatives of civil society organisations to these events. The events attempt to raise the awareness of the public in Germany regarding developments in Iraq.

4.3.1 Cooperation and networks of Iraqi diaspora associations in Germany, Iraq and the international sphere

The members of the Iraqi associations interviewed emphasised the lack of a joint umbrella organisation for all Iraqi diaspora organisations. The consensus is that an umbrella organisation would generate several positive effects. Within the diaspora, amongst other things it would improve structures and exchange. Outside the diaspora, an umbrella organisation would raise the profile of the diaspora among political decision-makers in Germany. This would make the associations’ engagement in Germany and Iraq more visible, and enable the associations to more effectively articulate their views with regard to the form and structure of the reconstruction process (see interviews with association representatives between 2011 and 2016).

Members of Iraqi organisations have already attempted to establish an umbrella organisation in Germany. Several conferences have already taken place, for instance, which were attended by members of many ethno-religious and political groups. The first meeting of this kind took place in Essen in 2004, i.e. shortly after the fall of the old regime (see Dulz 2004). Further meetings followed in 2006, 2007 and 2009. So far, however, the organisations have not reached agreement. This is due particularly to disputes and differences of opinion between the largest associations concerning the structure of an umbrella organisation of this kind. A further point emphasised is ‘interference’ by political parties in Iraq. However, associations of individual ethnic and religious groups do already have umbrella organisations, such as the associations of the Yazidis (Central Council of Yazidis in Germany) and Assyrians (Central Federation of Assyrian Associations in Germany). Here we should point out, however, that these umbrella organisations include not only members/member organisations from Iraq, but also members/member organisations of the respective ethnic or religious group from other countries from which the Yazidis and Christian minorities originate. This usually involves Turkey, Syria and Armenia (in the case of the Yazidis), and Turkey and Syria (in the case of the Christian groups).

Civil society groups such as Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO), Caritas, the Churches, NGOs of various kinds (e.g. Amnesty International), small and medium-sized enterprises and business associations (including the chambers of commerce and industry) have already recognised the potential benefits for their work with Iraq that cooperation with Iraqi organisations would offer. This is why these actors are working with Iraqi diaspora organisations within the framework of specific projects in Iraq (e.g. in the health sector).
connection, a representative of the Iraqi Social and Cultural Association in Essen explained: ‘We have twice sent medical equipment to Iraq, as well as donations that we collected from our members. We did all this in cooperation with Caritas Germany, and with their financial support’ (interview with a representative of the Iraqi Social and Cultural Association in Essen, 2011). Not infrequently, the support of civil society actors facilitated the foundation of the association in the first place. In these cases, during the phase of foundation the Iraqis were for instance provided with premises and technical infrastructure at low cost or in some cases free of charge.

Here we should note that due to the advance of the so-called IS, the engagement of German actors (businesses, NGOs etc.) has declined noticeably since 2014, as a result of which many activities involving cooperation with Iraqi associations are not taking place at present. Aid organisations and official development cooperation actors have recently been focusing on the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan in northern Iraq.

Overall, the phase prior to IS gaining strength demonstrates that the Iraqi diaspora can facilitate contacts in Iraq and open doors for German actors in the country.

The diaspora in Germany also maintains networks outside of Germany (both online and offline) with Iraqi diaspora communities in other host countries. Interviewees emphasised that they frequently organise events which are attended by members of the diaspora from other European countries, North America and the Middle East. These include for instance the aforementioned Days of Iraqi Culture that were organised by the Al-Rafedain association in Berlin every year until 2015. In 2012 a member of Al-Rafedain’s board made the following remark concerning participation by the diaspora in other countries: ‘We have many links to many associations in other European countries. Many artists, intellectuals and people with an interest in politics come to our Days of Iraqi Culture here in Berlin. A vibrant process of sharing and exchange takes place, particularly during the Days of Culture here’ (Al-Rafedain 2012). At the same time, delegations from the diaspora in Germany visit the diaspora around the world. The Al-Rafedain board member quoted above said in this regard: ‘We have members who also maintain links in the USA and other countries. They also talk to associations there, attend events there and hold presentations’ (Al-Rafedain 2012).

The study by Warnecke/Schmitz-Pranghe (2010: 199) demonstrates that this was also the case with the Ethiopian associations. Overall, civil society actors at the local level play an important role for diaspora organisations. This is particularly true during the start-up phase.
5 The diaspora’s engagement for development

5.1 Political contributions to development

The study shows that since the change of regime, the majority of Iraqi organisations have been seeking to influence developments in Iraq in ways that they see as positive. For example, all the organisations interviewed indicated that their key concern was the development of a democratic and federal Iraq that would enable all ethnic, religious and political groups to participate in rebuilding the country (see Dulz 2004; author’s own research from 2011 to 2016).

To realise their respective visions of a new Iraq, organisations have been attempting for over a decade to participate in the political reconstruction process. This engagement makes use of relations with returnees, the right of expatriates to vote, the internet and advocacy work in Germany.

5.1.1 Relations with returnees

a) Exchange with the new political elite in Iraq

Iraqi organisations in Germany have links to the political leadership level in the new Iraq. These links often go back to time spent together in the diaspora, because some of the political elite in the new Iraq themselves spent time in the diaspora in North America or Western Europe. The majority of these returnees returned to Iraq from the diaspora once the reconstruction process began in mid-2003 and during the next few years. Today they hold high office within the state and political parties at national, regional and local level, and play an active part in the country’s development (see Salam 2010; Farag 2011; Candan 2012).

The representative of the Iraqi Social and Cultural Association in Essen reported close links between the Iraqi diaspora and the political leadership level in Iraq: ‘Many of the new Iraqi political leaders were part of the diaspora in the UK or Germany, or elsewhere in Europe. We still know them from the time they spent in the diaspora. On the whole we have close links with the new political leadership in Iraq. For example, many political advisers were in the diaspora, and we have links with them – very close links’ (interview with a representative of the Iraqi Social and Cultural Association in Essen, 2011). Table 3 shows several notable returnees who are well known on the national political stage.

Meetings between the leaders of the diaspora organisations and political leaders in Iraq often take place on an unofficial level. These meetings take place either when members of the diaspora organisations visit Iraq, or when Iraqi politicians visit Germany. Interviewees reported that these meetings involve ‘sharing ideas and points of view’.

As well as good relations with the country’s political elite, the diaspora also has important links with diplomats, academics, artists and the business community. This includes Iraq’s top diplomats in Germany, for instance. This is because some of the leading diplomats from Iraq in Germany are former members of the diaspora. The former Iraqi Ambassador to Germany Dr Hussain Alkhateeb, for instance, lived in the Netherlands for more than 20 years. There he founded amongst other things the branch office of the Organisation for Human Rights in Iraq. Before obtaining his PhD in chemistry, he spent some time studying in the UK (see the website of the Iraqi Embassy in Berlin 2013). The first Iraqi Government after Saddam Hussein appointed Alaa Abd el Majideed

21 This is the case in many countries that experience a fundamental change of regime. In 2006, for instance, three ministers in the Afghan Government were returnees from Germany. Some of these returnees still hold German citizenship (see Thranhardt 2007). A similar phenomenon occurred in Cambodia in the early 1990s, for instance. Here Um (2007) tells us: ‘Given the new structure of governance, overseas Cambodians have returned to occupy prominent positions at the national and local level, some as elected officials, others on short-term employment contracts with the government or with international agencies. [...] Of the 20 political parties represented on the ballot in 1993, 8 were led by returning Cambodian-Americans. Others worked from the diaspora to create mechanisms for ensuring accountability’ (Um 2007).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Time spent in the diaspora</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuri Al-Maliki</td>
<td>Prime Minister of Iraq from April 2006 to August 2014</td>
<td>Exile in Iran, Syria and Lebanon from 1980 to 2003, returned to Iraq in 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ali Mehdi Jawad Aldabbagh</td>
<td>State Minister and Government Spokesman until November 2012</td>
<td>PhD in business administration in the UK, returned to Iraq in 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Barham Salih</td>
<td>Former Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq and Prime Minister of northern Iraq</td>
<td>Studied civil engineering in Cardiff, gained a PhD in statistics in Liverpool. Lived in Washington D.C. (USA) from 1991 to 2001,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Husayn Al-Shahristani</td>
<td>Has held various ministerial posts since 2005, including oil and education</td>
<td>BA in chemical engineering London, MSc Toronto, PhD Toronto, spent several years as a university lecturer in the UK and Canada, returned to Iraq in 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Saleh Al-Mutlaq</td>
<td>Deputy Prime Minister from 2010 to summer 2015</td>
<td>PhD University of Aberdeen, lived in the UK during this time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Tawfiq Allawi</td>
<td>Has held the post of Minister of Communications in several cabinets since 2006</td>
<td>Diploma in agriculture in Lebanon, business ventures (electrical equipment, IT and real estate) in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadun Farhan Al-Dului</td>
<td>Founded the Iraq Center for Research and Strategic Studies (ICRSS) in 2003, has held several ministerial posts since 2005, including culture and defence</td>
<td>Lived in the UK from 1986 to 2003, obtained PhD in the UK, worked as a university lecturer in the UK, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, returned to Iraq in 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narmin Osman</td>
<td>Has held several ministerial posts in Baghdad and in Erbil, including education, environment and women’s affairs</td>
<td>Lived in Sweden from 1984 to 1992, returned to northern Iraq in 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoshyar Zebari</td>
<td>Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2003 - 2014, Iraqi Minister of Finance of since 2014</td>
<td>Degree in sociology in Essex (UK), spent over a decade in the UK and USA, Spokesman of the PUK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Roz Nouri Shawes</td>
<td>Former Prime Minister of the KRG, Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq</td>
<td>Obtained PhD in Germany, returned to Iraq in 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hussein Ali Al-Shaalan</td>
<td>Has held ministerial posts for defence and minister of state for tribal affairs in various cabinets</td>
<td>Lived in the UK from 1991 to 2003, returned to Iraq in 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahim Al-Dschafari</td>
<td>Prime Minister of Iraq in the transitional government of 2006</td>
<td>Lived in the UK from 1989 to 2003, returned to Iraq in 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.**

Prominent Iraqi politicians who returned to Iraq from the diaspora following the regime change in 2003 | Source: Author’s own research 2017
Hussein Al-Hashemi, an Iraqi exile who had been living in Hamburg since 1980, as Iraq’s new ambassador to Germany (see Gerhartz 2005). Other examples include current and former senior members of the official representation of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Berlin. They have lived in Germany for the last 30 to 40 years. Some of them completed their university training here (see KRG 2011).

Representatives of the Iraqi Embassy and the Kurdish cultural representation in Germany meet at regular intervals with various diaspora organisations. At these meetings participants discuss current political and social trends in Iraq. They also discuss possible ways for the diaspora to participate in the reconstruction process. On 16 June 2013, for instance, a meeting took place between the ambassador and the Iraqi community in Hamburg. Topics discussed at this meeting were \textit{‘current trends in the Republic of Iraq’} and \textit{‘building a new, federal and democratic system’} (Iraqi Embassy 2013\textsuperscript{22}). To summarise, we can state that diaspora organisations and activists maintain various kinds of links with leading personalities and institutions of the new Iraq.

\textbf{b) Exchange with civil society in Iraq}

As well as exchange with the political elite, exchange also takes place between Iraqi diaspora organisations in Germany and civil society NGOs in Iraq. Following the collapse of the old regime numerous new NGOs started up in central and southern Iraq. In the Kurdish-dominated north this development had already taken place a decade earlier (see Andersen/Vikström 2007). The NGOs newly established after 2003 often devoted their energies to urgent topics such as dealing with mass graves and the situation of prisoners. On the whole, however, their sphere of influence remained limited. The really influential NGOs at that time were those that had been founded or supported by Iraqi diaspora organisations in North America and Western Europe. A study on Iraqi civil society by Andersen and Vikström had this to say: \textit{‘The Iraqi Diaspora NGOs were better organized and well connected and they started to establish offices in Baghdad’} (Andersen/Vikström 2007: 7). One example of a diaspora organisation of this kind is the Iraqi Memorial Foundation. This NGO had already been founded in the USA prior to the regime change, and was devoted primarily to reconciliation between the various ethnic and religious groups in Iraq. Immediately after the collapse of the old regime a branch office of the organisation was opened in Baghdad. Since then, with support from the USA this NGO has been devoted to reconciliation between different groups in Iraq (see Brinkerhoff/Taddesse 2008).

The Green party politician Winfried Nachtwei, who travelled to northern Iraq in 2007 together with a delegation from his party, said the following with regard to exchange between NGOs in the north of the country and the diaspora in Germany: \textit{‘We visited several media organisations and NGOs that have very good links with Germany and that are supported by the diaspora with regard to education, health, media etc.’} (interview with Winfried Nachtwei, 2011).

This exchange holds important potential for the diaspora and NGOs in Iraq. It offers the diaspora an opportunity to communicate their points of view to Iraqi society through the structures and personalities of civil society. In other words, through civil society the diaspora has a further channel of communication with Iraqi society alongside the prominent returnees. Furthermore, the diaspora is better able to implement specific projects in cooperation with the NGOs. This is because in Iraq, NGOs are often better networked.
on the ground than government agencies, and are more familiar with the actual needs and problems of the population. At the same time NGOs in Iraq, which see themselves as part of Iraqi civil society at an early stage of development, can profit from the financial resources, the networks in Europe, and the knowledge and expertise of the diaspora (see Andersen/Vikström 2007; Brinkerhoff/Tad- desse 2008; interviews with Iraqi associations between 2011 and 2016).

5.1.2 The right of expatriates to vote

One way for the diaspora to participate directly in the political process in Iraq is through the elections there, even though this remains very limited due to the small number of people entitled to vote. Since the collapse of the Ba’ath dictatorship, members of the Iraqi diaspora around the world who still possess Iraqi citizenship are entitled to vote. The right of expatriates to vote thus gives the diaspora an opportunity amongst other things to participate directly in the election of members of the Iraqi parliament.

Iraq’s Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) organises the conduct of elections in foreign countries. For the parliamentary elections in 2010, for instance, the IHEC opened polling stations in 60 cities worldwide. It also employs election observers, some of whom are sent from Iraq and some of whom are recruited from the diaspora (see Oberndörfer 2010). Worldwide, the number of Iraqis living in the diaspora who are entitled to vote is around 1.2 million. According to the election managers in Baghdad, the Iraqi electorate in 2010 numbered a total of approximately 19.8 million people. Expatriates thus represent roughly five per cent of the entire electorate. This is a figure that should not be underestimated.

For the aforementioned elections polling stations were opened in Berlin, Munich, Cologne and Mannheim. As well as the voters in Germany, members of the diaspora in the neighbouring countries of Poland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland were called upon to cast their votes in the polling stations in Germany. During the run-up to the first free elections for the National Assembly of Iraq in January 2005, the IHEC estimated the number of Iraqis living in Germany who were entitled to vote at around 60,000. The number of Iraqis who actually voted on 30 January 2005 was about 25,130. In December of the same year elections were held for the Council of Representatives. The number of Iraqis who took part in this election was 27,631. This represents 46 per cent of all those entitled to vote in Germany (see Leidel 2005). Voter turnout for the parliamentary elections in March 2010 was at a similar level (see Oberndorfer 2010). The diaspora organisations use elections to address within the diaspora the political and social trends in Iraq, and thus raise the awareness of Iraqis in the diaspora regarding developments in their country. This means that when elections are being held in Iraq, more awareness-raising events and conferences are held at which the current situation in Iraq is addressed (interviews with representatives of Iraqi associations in Germany, 2011 – 2016).

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23 According to a report by the TV broadcaster Al Jazeera, election observers were also recruited from the diaspora for the last national elections in Iraq (see Al Jazeera 2009).

24 In response to requests from Iraq, the elections in 2005 were organised for Iraqis in the diaspora by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
5.1

Political contributions to development

5.1.3 Online participation

The internet provides Iraqi diaspora organisations and activists with an opportunity to participate directly in national debates on all aspects of reconstruction in Iraq on a daily basis. To this end they use forums and online media such as online magazines and journals, as well as TV and radio. In recent years they have also made greater use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to participate in local and national debates in Iraq. Diane Duclos, who conducted research into virtual cafés in the Iraqi diaspora in 2008, states the following: ‘Despite living in exile and the diaspora, Iraqi intellectuals never tire of discussing the future of their country and thinking about its history. Their passionate debates revolve around building or rebuilding an Iraqi state’ (Duclos 2008: 76) (see also Hunger/Candan/Krannich 2011; Candan 2013).

One example of this is an online forum launched by the Iraqi Economists Network (IEN), where Iraqi economists in the diaspora discuss the potential of the Iraqi economy with their colleagues in Iraq, amongst others. On the IEN website we read:

‘During the last three years, the IEN has established an active online forum for dialogue, which has attracted increasing number[s] of qualified Iraqi economists and oil experts worldwide as members. Views are exchanged in lively debates on present economic issues such as monetary policy, inflation, fiscal policy, oil policy, oil service contracts with the International Oil Companies, trade policy and the introduction of tariffs.’

The Iraqi diaspora in Germany also participates in Iraq’s economic reconstruction process. This takes place largely through remittances (i.e. both individual and collective financial transfers), through the transfer of goods and wares, through direct investment (i.e. both investment from Germany and investment by returnees to Iraq), and finally through the facilitation of business links between German and Iraqi enterprises.

5.2.1 Remittances

Individual remittances are financial transfers sent by individuals or families to other family members, relatives and business partners in their country of origin. Collective remittances are financial transfers made by individual groups or associations that collect money for the realisation of specific objectives (e.g. for infrastructure projects) and send it to their country of origin (see Hunger/Metzger/Krannich 2011; Metzger 2015).

Even before the change of regime, members of the diaspora used to send money to their relatives and friends living in Iraq. The uncertain political situation in Iraq (e.g. during the war between Iraq and Iran from 1980 to 1988), the ailing banking system and the international economic embargo between 1990 and 2003 made official money transfers considerably more difficult. This was compounded by the fact that 90% of payments made in the country were being made exclusively in cash. This is why money was – and is – transferred to Iraq largely via unofficial channels such as the hawala system. Accordingly there are to date no reliable statistics on the amounts of money transferred from Germany to Iraq. Statistics published by the Bundesbank in 2015 indicate that since the change of regime in 2003, the sum total of official remittances transferred from Germany to Iraq rose from approximately EUR 22 million in 2002 to EUR 38 million in 2014 (see Table 4). Here we should note that transfers below EUR 12,500 need not be reported. It can therefore be assumed that the sum total of remittances is probably significantly higher.

Particularly for family members and friends of members of the diaspora, remittances provide important economic support in Iraq. Many invest the money transferred in their own business, in education or in real estate of their own (see Hunger 2009; Salam 2010; O’Hannelly 2013).

The projects of the Iraqi associations interviewed that were realised using collective money transfers include for instance the construction of schools, wells and roads in rural areas. To justify these investments in infrastructure in rural areas, the associations argue that policy-makers and administrators

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The international embargo was designed to exclude the country from global monetary transactions and trade. This is why, between 1990 and 2003, it was very difficult to transfer money from Germany to Iraq by official channels. In exceptional cases (e.g. where the money was demonstrably to be used for humanitarian purposes) it was possible to obtain permission from the authorities. Nonetheless, this special approval was subject to lengthy and strict controls in Germany. This deterred many members of the diaspora from making official financial transfers to Iraq. The embargo was lifted on 22 May 2003 through Resolution 1483 of the United Nations Security Council.

For a number of years transferring money from Germany to Iraq has been easier than it was before the fall of Saddam Hussein. There are now various ways of transferring money. First of all, money can be transferred to the few cities (Baghdad, Erbil and Basra) that have individual banks. A second option is to use international money transfer companies such as Western Union or MoneyGram. A third option is the so-called ‘tabrah system’, which combines elements of the hawala system and conventional international money transfers (see Fiedler 2009).

Transporting money from Germany to Iraq for the agents of the hawala companies was a very risky undertaking. The embargo applied to all financial transfers to Iraq. As a result, between 1990 and 2003 individual Iraqis in Germany were convicted of violating the financial embargo against Iraq (see author’s own research 2012).

This does not include remittances made by Iraqi migrants holding German citizenship (see author’s own research 2015).
in Iraq have only the major cities and urban agglomerations in mind when investing in development. This is problematic in two respects, so they argue, because the rural population are not only amongst the poorest people, but also amongst the least educated in Iraq. Accordingly, the rural population lacks both education and money.

Neither individual nor collective remittances need always be transferred directly from the host country to the country of origin. Particularly in countries where there is persistent conflict, money is often transferred to relatives and acquaintances in neighbouring countries. These relatives are often refugees themselves. They bring the money to their relatives in the conflict country through informal channels. In the course of the research for the present study, it emerged that both individual and collective remittances from the Iraqi diaspora in Germany have been sent to Iraqi refugees in Turkey, Iran and Lebanon. These were often sent to the refugee camps, with assistance from German and international NGOs. One association representative said: ‘We also worked with Pro-Asyl and Friedenforum, and supported Iraqi refugees in the region with money’ (interview with an association representative, 2011). It was also mentioned that money was sent to relatives in Iraq via informal channels involving relatives and acquaintances.

5.2.2 Transfer of goods and wares from Germany to Iraq

The transfer of goods to Iraq is another form of economic contribution made by the diaspora to the reconstruction process. The change of regime and the subsequent lifting of the international embargo in May 2003 made it easier to send goods to Iraq. Members of the diaspora visiting their families and friends since 2003 have been taking countless electronic household appliances with them. The decades of war and the economic embargo mean that virtually no manufacturing industry exists in the country. In the years following the change of regime electronic appliances in particular were urgently needed. The appliances imported into Iraq through dealers were often overpriced and unaffordable for large sections of the population (see Salam 2010; author’s own research 2011–2016).

Entrepreneurs in the diaspora with business acumen recognised this shortage, and from 2003 onwards began importing electrical appliances and cars into Iraq in large quantities and in some cases illegally (see Salam 2010). According to a report published in the taz daily newspaper, in the second half of 2003 alone some 250,000 used cars were imported into Iraq, particularly from Germany (see taz.de of 27 January 2004).

Associations of Iraqi doctors also sent decommissioned ambulances, fire-fighting vehicles, medicines and medical equipment from Germany to Iraq. These were used chiefly to equip health centres, hospitals and fire-fighting facilities in rural areas and in refugee

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30 The official term used by the Bundesbank is ‘Gastarbeiter’.  
31 This happened for instance in Afghanistan during the civil war from 1992 to 2001. Remittances from Afghans in the western diaspora were brought to Afghanistan via refugees staying at the Afghan–Pakistan border (see Koser/Van Hear 2003: 6).
camps. One representative of a doctors’ association said: ‘We also send medicines to Iraq. We send hospital beds and instruments (e.g. surgical instruments) to Iraq. These are instruments that hospitals and doctors in Germany are no longer using’ (interview with a representative of the Association of Iraqi Doctors, 2012). So far no statistics have been kept on the number or total value of the goods, chiefly because the transfer of goods is based on private initiatives by individuals or migrant associations (author’s own research from 2011 to 2016).

5.2.3 Direct investment

Studies show that entrepreneurs from a diaspora are often the first to invest in the reconstruction phase of their country of origin. This means they are often among the first actors to get the private sector back in action in their country of origin (see inter alia Cheren 2003; Mills/Fan 2006).

In 2006 Iraq passed an innovative investment law. Investment Law No. 13, which was further amended in 2010, liberalised the national market after decades of central economic planning. Under the new law, foreign investors are granted amongst other things simplified entry requirements, simple acquisition of commercial and residential property, and support in managing bureaucratic affairs.

The World Bank and the OECD have attested to the presence in the Iraqi diaspora of a strong willingness to invest in Iraq (see World Bank 2012; OECD 2016). Today, entrepreneurs who have returned from the diaspora are operating chiefly in the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan in the north, and in the southern province of Basra. They have contributed to economic development chiefly through their investment. One frequently mentioned example of a successful return is a businessman who lived in Cologne for many years before returning after the fall of Saddam to Erbil, capital of the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan.

There and in Sulaymaniyah he opened two shopping centres named ‘Rhein Mall’32 (see Fig. 5). The name ‘Rhein’ has since become a label in the region. The businessman owns hotels and restaurants that all bear this name. These include the Rhein Hotel and the Rhein Restaurant in Erbil (see the Berliner Morgenpost newspaper of 13 November 2007). The economy of the region has been stagnating since 2014, however. German and other foreign firms have for the time being left the region for fear of the so-called IS, which has also contributed to a rise in unemployment. Like the economy as a whole, the entrepreneurs who have returned are suffering the effects of this development (see Gerner 2016).

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32 According to him, he chose this name due to his particular penchant for the Rhine (German: Rhein).
34 Online: http://imageshack.us/a/img85/7490/89526203.jpg [19 August 2013].
5.2 Economic contributions to development

5.2.4 Facilitating business links between German and Iraqi companies

Diaspora groups also play an important role in establishing and developing business links between companies in their country of origin and their host country. Their specific knowledge of the social, political and economic institutions and customs in their country of origin, and their language skills, enable them in particular to help reduce transaction costs for companies from the host country (Münz et al. 2006).

In the case of the Iraqi diaspora in Germany, the study found that both individuals and organisations from the diaspora play an important mediating role in the establishment and development of business links between German and Iraqi companies. First of all, returnees drive trade links between Germany and Iraq. The aforementioned businessman, for instance, has close links to German companies that supply his businesses with German products. Secondly, Iraqis solicit investment by German companies in Iraq. Members of the diaspora also operate as interpreters and advisers for German companies (author’s own research from 2011 to 2016). These include for instance a German Iraqi who works for an Iraqi business consultancy in Baghdad and advises German companies that wish to invest in Iraq (see Schenk 2011). This way of facilitating business links has now been institutionalised, as demonstrated above by the example of the Midan association.

Mediation between German and Iraqi companies is usually performed in two ways. First of all diaspora organisations that maintain networks in Germany and in Iraq organise trips by Iraqi business delegations to Germany, and by German delegations to Iraq. In the course of these reciprocal visits, investment opportunities are explored and contacts are made among businesses, policymakers and the media. In June 2006, for instance, Midan brought more than 120 Iraqi entrepreneurs and German businesspersons together in Cologne, where business links were explored, and cooperation between German and Iraqi companies was promoted (see Spiegel magazine of 13 February 2006). Two years later the association invited more than 40 entrepreneurs from Iraq to the Leipzig trade fairs AMITEC (maintenance and repair of cars, commercial vehicles and large-scale mobile equipment) and Auto Mobil International (AMI) (both held in April 2008). Similar activities followed, as mentioned above, in 2013, 2014 and 2015. At the same time, since 2003 the association has organised several trips by German business delegations to Iraq, such as the visit to northern Iraq in June 2008. On that occasion the delegation visited business associations, ministries and cultural facilities, and discussed investment opportunities (see Rupp 2008).

Before the Iraqi economy began to stagnate around mid-2014, the chambers of commerce and industry in Germany conducted their own delegation trips to Iraq. The Magdeburg Chamber35, for instance, organised a trip to Basra for a German business delegation from 8 to 11 May 2011. In May/summer 2012 the Osnabrück Chamber36 organised its own trip to northern Iraq for a delegation. This shows that through its own business activities, the Iraqi diaspora encourages German companies and associations to invest in Iraq and explore investment opportunities.

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35 See http://www.magdeburg.ihk.de/System/Veranstaltungen/1248142/Delegationsreise_f_r_deutsche_Unternehmen_vom_08.05.117143364.html [20 June 2013].
36 See http://www.osnabrueck.ihk24.de/international/Aktuelles_International/2429508/18.21.06.2013_Unternehmerreise_in_die_Autonome_Region_Kurdistan.html?jsessionid=EE002529E0D8CCB2E105EF92AF54FAARer1 [20 June 2013].
5.3 Socio-cultural contributions to development

The diaspora also makes a socio-cultural contribution to reconstruction in Iraq. The members of the diaspora do this by transferring knowledge via transnational networks and media, and by returning to Iraq.

5.3.1 Transferring knowledge and expertise via transnational networks and media

Access to scientific, technological and economic knowledge plays an important role for societies that have been cut off from international developments for a prolonged period. From the beginning of the international economic embargo in 1991 until 2003, the Iraqi society was very largely cut off from international developments. One representative of an association of doctors in Germany who was interviewed described the situation of doctors and the health sector as follows: ‘The medical profession is where it was before the embargo in 1990. Doctors in Iraq are unfamiliar with ultrasound and similar developments. The last medical textbooks came to Iraq in 1991, which is why doctors haven’t come any further since then’ (interview with a representative of the Association of Iraqi Doctors, 2011). The isolation came to an end with the change of regime in spring 2003. To align the development status in all areas of Iraqi society with international standards, there was a need for fresh expertise from outside the country. One of the many areas in which the knowledge of Iraqi experts from the diaspora is being transferred to Iraq, is education. For many years lectures in various subjects, which Iraqi lecturers have recorded abroad in Arabic, Kurdish or English, have been passed on to Iraqi universities via DVDs or the internet. These recorded lectures are then played to students. One example is the ‘Iraq Scholar Lecture Series: Live and DVD Lectures’ produced by the Institute of International Education. The institute describes the project objective as follows: ‘To reconnect Iraqi professors in the diaspora to students and higher education institutions in Iraq in order to exchange information’ (Institute of International Education 2016). Professional associations such as those for doctors, economists and engineers in particular translate specialised literature from German or English for their colleagues in Iraq.

A second area in which the knowledge of the diaspora is being transferred to Iraq is the art, literature and music scene. In Iraq, from the mid-1970s onwards thousands of artists, writers and musicians were either arrested, executed or driven into exile due to their critical attitude towards the regime. As a result, the development of a critical artistic, musical and literary landscape in Iraq got stuck in the 1970s. Those who arrived in Germany continued their critical work (often in the underground scene). Thus a vibrant and multilingual art, music and literature scene emerged in the Iraqi diaspora that over the decades brought forth a wealth of important literary and artistic works. These works often address social diversity in Iraq, and arose in dialogue with art, music and literature worldwide. Examples of successful German-Iraqi artists include the band ‘Lagash’, the writers Fadhil Al-Azzawi and Najem Wali, the artist Fahmi Balay and the actress Meriam Abbas (author’s own research from 2011 to 2016). Their works reach Iraq through various channels. Translating world-famous novels, detective stories and political works into Arabic is another of the favourite ‘tasks’ of the Iraqi diaspora. By performing this task the authors seek to provide their society of origin with access to world literature (see Salam 2010). The task is performed by among others the Al-Kamel publishing house in Cologne. Established in 1983 by a member of the Iraqi diaspora, by 2007 alone this publishing house had translated more than 70 German works into Arabic, including works by world-famous authors such as Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche and Günter Grass. Since 2005 the publishing company has maintained an office in Baghdad, and sells both translated works and works by Iraqi writers from the diaspora (author’s own research from 2011 to 2016).

See http://www.lagash.de/musik_d.html [20 August 2013].
5.3 Socio-cultural contributions to development

5.3.2 The transfer of technical and socio-cultural expertise by returnees

Following the fall of the old regime, in central and southern Iraq the old order fell apart completely in the administration, in the health sector, in the legal system and in academia. Civil servants, employees and academics who had previously been employed in leading positions in public service were dismissed as part of the so-called de-Ba’athification process. This created an urgent need for well-trained experts and professionals to run the apparatus of the state across the country (see interviews with representatives of the regional government of Iraqi Kurdistan in Berlin and the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Berlin, 2011). The new political leadership tried various methods to get to grips with this shortage of well-trained experts and professionals. One approach was to re-employ specialists who had been dismissed from public service during the dictatorship due to their anti-government activities. Another approach was to systematically recruit Iraqi specialists from the diaspora to return to Iraq. These specialists included civil servants, doctors, diplomats, engineers and scholars. The specialists were usually recruited through the networks of the political parties and individual political leaders or through international recruitment campaigns such as the United Nations ‘Iraqis Rebuilding Iraq’ campaign (see Salam 2010; Hendow 2010; author’s own research from 2011 to 2016). Today it is no longer possible to reconstruct the actual number of specialists who have returned to Iraq over the last ten years on a temporary or permanent basis. Their numbers were not recorded either in Iraq or in the former host countries. On its official website the German Federal Foreign Office recently spoke of ‘several thousand former Iraqi exiles who have returned to Iraq from Germany since 2003’ (Auswärtiges Amt 2012).

The education and research system did not undergo fundamental reform until 2005. Amongst other things this involved the rewriting of curricula, the modernisation of research methods and content, and the establishment of numerous new universities. Moreover the salaries of teachers, university lecturers and researchers were increased by up to 100 per cent in order to ‘motivate scholars living abroad to return’ (Mandl 2005). Many teachers and lecturers responded to these calls, and got involved in planning and implementing the reforms. They helped design curricula as well as school systems for specific provinces, supported the establishment of public and private universities, and were involved in establishing new research institutions. One former minister of education in the region of Iraqi Kurdistan who had returned from Sweden, for instance, based the design of the school system for the region on the Swedish model (see Svensson 2012). Several academics who returned had a key influence on the planning of the American University in Baghdad and Sulaymaniyah, as well as numerous private schools and universities in central and southern Iraq.

Today many returnees are teaching at universities. With the expertise they brought back with them from the diaspora and their international networks, these professionals from the diaspora made a crucial contribution towards internationalising education and research in Iraq (see Salam 2010).

In recent years returnees have played a key role in modernising the work of municipalities in metropolitan cities such as Baghdad, Basra and Erbil. The mayor of the city of Erbil, a returnee from Germany, has professionalised the work of the municipality in Erbil based on the German model (see Thelen 2009). The contribution made by the diaspora involves not only permanent return to Iraq, but also temporary...
stays. One area in which the temporary return of experts plays an important role is the health sector. Iraqi doctors often return to Iraq for a limited period, and advise doctors and hospital administrators on building a health system that works. They also deliver urgently needed humanitarian support in refugee camps. At the same time doctors’ associations organise temporary stays in Germany for Iraqi doctors. These visits are designed to give doctors from Iraq an opportunity to familiarise themselves with German and European standards and the latest developments in the health sector. These exchange activities, which are designed to provide further training, are often organised in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies and hospitals in Germany. Regarding an exchange activity conducted in 2010, one representative of a doctors’ association said: ‘A company here in the region helped us bring some of our colleagues in the medical profession from Iraq to Germany. The company invited these doctors to visit the company. All visa issues were taken care of by the company itself. First of all the company spent several days showing the visitors their own plants, before passing them on to us. We then allocated the 18 doctors to hospitals around Germany. Most of these were hospitals where our members work, and were chosen so that the visitors would be able to see how far medicine has advanced. There they got to see state-of-the-art medicine before returning to Iraq’ (interview with a representative of an Iraqi doctors’ association, 2011).
Iraq's policy towards the Iraqi diaspora

The Iraqi Government is attempting to make systematic use of links to the diaspora in Germany in order to promote national reconstruction. The Embassy and the cultural representation of the Kurdish Regional Government in Berlin are seeking contact with organisations within the Iraqi diaspora. To facilitate this the Embassy regularly organises Germany-wide meetings with Iraqi communities. The last meeting took place in 2013 in Hamburg (see Fig. 6).

One association representative describes relations with the Embassy as follows: ‘We are in close contact with the Iraqi Embassy in Berlin. The ambassador has been to see us several times. He talked to us about our situation here. We also discussed the political future of Iraq. He wanted to hear what we thought and how we would like to see things develop. But he also wanted to hear about the resources that we could contribute to the reconstruction process. He also called on us to get in touch with German companies, and encourage them to invest in Iraq’ (interview with a representative of the Iraqi Social and Cultural Association in Essen, 2011). The Berlin Embassy also regularly hosts meetings with representatives of diaspora organisations of various kinds, academics, doctors, businesspersons, artists and representatives of youth organisations. Here too the Embassy frequently seeks to persuade those attending to support the reconstruction process (see Embassy of the Republic of Iraq 2013). Often the associations use these meetings to inform the Embassy of their concerns (author’s own research from 2011 to 2016).

This exchange between the official Iraqi representations in Germany and the diaspora reflects the Iraqi Government’s policy towards the diaspora. In other words, cooperation with the Iraqi diaspora worldwide is an important element of the reconstruction strategy of the political administration in Iraq (see UNPO 2013). Consequently, individual ministers and high-ranking politicians of the central government and the provincial governments emphasise that the government approves of and supports remittances, investment, awareness-raising work in the host country, and temporary and permanent return to Iraq (see Zadel/Kakushadze/Tongeren 2010). Among others the Minister of Displacement and Migration made the following specific comments regarding the return of experts from the diaspora: ‘The return of these people is a very important issue which will help Iraq build up its capacities. We are in dire need of them and their experiences and skills’ (Al Musawi 2009).

The Iraqi Government’s recruitment measures have borne fruit in the past. Thus as well as many teachers and lecturers, according to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior between mid-2011 and mid-2012 more than 320 doctors returned to Iraq voluntarily. Most of these are employed in public hospitals and health centres (see Recker 2009).

By participating in international platforms on diaspora and development, Iraq is signalling a vital interest in the contributions that the diaspora can make to reconstruction. The government recently sent a
high-ranking director from the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration to the IOM Diaspora Ministerial Conference in Geneva in June 2013. At this two-day high-profile international conference, representatives of numerous diaspora ministries and diaspora offices shared ideas and experiences with scholars and advisers from around the world on the topic of diaspora and development (see IOM 2013b). In cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the Iraqi Government is currently developing a new policy for cooperation with the Iraqi diaspora (see un.org as at 13 February 2017).
The Iraqi diaspora in Germany is the third-largest Iraqi diaspora community in Europe. Its members are characterised by high educational status, extensive political activities and a high degree of ethnic, religious, political and organisational heterogeneity. The diaspora in Germany has more than 60 associations of various kinds, as well as transnational networks within Iraq (established particularly through returnees and the internet). The regime change in Iraq in 2003 is seen by the majority as an important opportunity for democratising the country. Accordingly, the diaspora is making political, economic and socio-cultural contributions to the reconstruction process. At the political level it is promoting German engagement in the reconstruction process. The associations seek to persuade German actors to engage actively with Iraqi institutions and political decision-makers, and to persuade diaspora members to participate in elections in Iraq. Through the internet and other media, the diaspora also contributes to national debates on all aspects of the reconstruction process. At the economic level the activities of the diaspora encompass remittances sent to Iraq, investment in Iraq and the facilitation of business links between Germany and Iraq. At the socio-cultural level members of the diaspora engage by transferring ideas and expertise of various kinds (e.g. technical know-how) to Iraq.

All in all we can say that the Iraqi diaspora performs an important bridge-building role between Iraq and Germany. So far, this engagement has been implemented for the most part by single associations or by individuals. The associations take a critical view of the fact that the diaspora does not yet have an umbrella organisation that could pool the engagement and the potential of the diaspora and operate as a central body within Germany.

Nonetheless we can say that the Iraqi diaspora in Germany has the potential to support development. Building on the findings of the study, recommendations for actors of the German development cooperation system are laid out below.

**Recommendations**

a) **Reach out to the diaspora**

The study made clear that most Iraqi migrant organisations do not as yet have any links with official actors of the German development cooperation system. This is often also due to the associations’ lack of experience per se in cooperating with state institutions. In Iraq and in Germany, working with Iraqi institutions on an equal footing was not possible until 2003, and was avoided for fear of repression by the state.

First links could be established at events and workshops where the associations and the actors of official development cooperation might meet and get to know each other. These could be organised either by the migrant organisations themselves or by state institutions, and would serve to build mutual trust and develop joint project ideas.

b) **Promote self-management within the diaspora associations**

As already mentioned, the associations of specific religious and ethnic minorities have their own umbrella organisations. It has not proved possible to establish an overarching umbrella organisation for the associations, however, due to differences of opinion among the associations’ representatives. A fresh initiative might at least promote the establishment of networks among the associations actively engaged in relevant work, i.e. chiefly the professional associations. This would provide central points of contact.

c) **Support the professionalisation of association structures**

The work of the associations is often funded through donations made by members, or by NGOs, or by charities. Many associations are also dependent on the voluntary engagement of individual members. In other words, professional structures are for the most part lacking. In many cases professional qualifications, organisational
knowledge, project ideas and networks are already in place both in Germany and in Iraq. However, there is a shortage of financial resources and professionalism in the work of the associations that would enable them to realise specific projects. Consequently, German funding organisations and institutions might focus more on supporting the funding of association structures, as well as on transferring to associations knowledge regarding professional organisation and the possible acquisition of public funding.

d) Promote diaspora activities
The associations are already implementing many different activities for development, even if they are often doing so with only very limited financial and logistical resources. One very good example of this is the engagement for development by the associations of Iraqi doctors in Germany. Members of the doctors’ associations go to Iraq for a limited period, where they provide humanitarian assistance chiefly in refugee camps and in rural regions where medical care is poor. Their activities include vaccination campaigns, medical treatment of refugees and the delivery of medicines and medical equipment collected beforehand in Germany through donations. This engagement by Iraqi doctors has so far been funded by the doctors’ associations themselves – chiefly from donations made by members, fundraising events etc. Interviewees indicated that the doctors’ associations would expand their engagement in Iraq if they were to receive more financial support. Official development institutions could help by providing financial and logistical support in this regard. Iraqi doctors might be particularly eligible for funding to support their temporary return or short-term assignments, because these assignments can usually be carried out anywhere in Iraq, and can be recognised by all groups in the country due to their ethnic and religious neutrality.

e) Advise Iraqis who are thinking about emigrating
Some associations receive online enquiries from Iraqis in Iraq who are considering emigrating. Those submitting enquiries wish to know how they can best get to Germany. Here it would be possible to integrate the association members who are providing the advice into state counselling programmes, in order to advise the Iraqis looking to emigrate more systematically. This makes sense because the association members usually have the necessary linguistic skills and cultural expertise, and often possess experience of displacement themselves. The counselling provided would benefit enormously from the specific knowledge that the association members possess.

f) Respect ethno-religious diversity and avoid preferential treatment for particular groups
It is important, however, with all the aforementioned possible recommendations to keep in mind the ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity within the diaspora associations. The promotion of associations and support of ongoing projects should take place regardless of the ethnic, religious or linguistic background of their members. The focus should be on the quality of the projects and the professional expertise of the association members. Otherwise the impression might quickly arise that state support is only intended for certain groups within the diaspora.
Bibliography


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