A SILK ROUTES PARTNERSHIP
FOR MIGRATION

BUDAPEST
PROCESS

# Understanding and explaining attitudes to migration in the Silk Routes and South Asian countries

## The state of the art and recommendations for next steps

Dr. James Dennison

Funded by

Chair Co-Chair

Secretariat

ICMPD
International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

**International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)**
Gonzagagasse 1
A-1010 Vienna
www.icmpd.com
International Centre for Migration Policy Development
Vienna, Austria

# Contents

*This report is prepared for the Budapest Process dialogue and its participating states and partners. In follow up to a webinar in 2020 on the topic of migration narratives, this report provides recommendations including for further research with a focus on the countries in the Silk Routes Region. It responds to the wish to strengthen the research and knowledge base of the Budapest Process, as endorsed by the Budapest Process Senior Officials in the Implementation Plan of the Call for Action.*

# Executive summary and recommendations

- Understanding and explaining attitudes to migration in the Silk Routes countries is key for policy-makers to better ensure safe, orderly and regular migration, both by discouraging irregular migration and reducing xenophobia to immigrants.

- This report is concerned both with understanding and explaining propensity to emigrate and attitudes to immigration in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

- The report presents a theoretical and empirical overview of what is known in the region and beyond, relying on the state of the art of social science and the latest data.

- We overview the key drivers of emigration as shown by the academic literature: political and economic context, socio-demographics of would-be emigrants and facilitators of and obstacles to emigration, such as migration networks.

- We suggest that the literature has so far overlooked the psychological profile of migrants that are likely to both explain propensity to emigrate and offer guidelines to policy communicators about what type of communication works.

- There have been extensive studies into the drivers of emigration in most of the Silk Routes countries, particularly Afghanistan and Bangladesh, producing insights that are listed in the report.

- Empirically, we show, using the latest data, that trends in propensity to emigrate vary greatly by country, with notable upticks in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2008, strong declines in Pakistan and Bangladesh and relative stability in Iran. However, there remains a paucity of data in most countries.

- Our in-depth data in Iraq shows that around 67 per cent of citizens have not thought of emigrating while 33 per cent of citizens have: 20 per cent who would not emigrate without papers and 12 per cent who would.

- The reports presents results from an logistic model showing that the key determinants of wanting to migrate–regardless of regularity –are: youth, education, unemployment or low income, being less religious, feeling unsafe of insecurity, having experienced depression in the last six months and holding more pessimistic views of Iraq's economic and political situation.

- Of those willing to migrate, the key determinants of being willing to do so without papers are: being male, being unemployed or with a low income, being pessimistic about the future economic situation of the country, social media use and trust, receiving remittances and not feeling stressed by life.

- We then move to attitudes to immigration, which we show are typical of the developing world in that they are driven by economic concerns of competition over employment and the threat of social conflict.

- However, in terms of the socio-demographic and psychological differences between those who are pro- and anti-immigration, we do not see the clear polarisation witnessed in "western" countries. However, greater studies should be made of attitudes to immigration in the region, particularly in those areas with large scale recent migration flows.

- This initial overview report leads to four recommendations:

  - **First, there is little high-quality publicly available data on propensity to emigrate in the region—this almost certainly has held back our understanding of the causes of emigration in the region and its rectification via investment in and collaboration with academic social surveys (e.g. World Values Survey, South Asian Barometer) should be a top priority for policymakers.**

  - **Second, thereafter, the efficacy of current and future interventions, which attempt to correct misperceptions about irregular migration—a major driver of irregular migration—or about immigration, should be tested via impact assessment or experimental social scientific methods leading to causal inference. These can be based on previous theoretical arguments, empirical findings and future findings based on improved data. In the long-term this will improve the quality of such interventions.**

  - **Third, researchers should consider the psychological profile of potential emigrants and host populations when designing interventions; this will require more data and in-depth studies.**

  - **Fourth, the drivers of attitudes to immigration are partially distinct in the Silk Routes countries to those in "western" countries. As such, assumptions regarding the transferability of findings should be avoided and, instead, new studies should be made identifying the key causes of variation in the region which can then be linked theoretically with previous findings.**

# Introduction

Migration is likely to remain one of the world's most important and complex political challenges throughout the 21st century. Not only does migration have vast economic consequences, but its governance raises profound legal- and rights-based questions for millions of people worldwide. Public attitudes to immigration and propensity to emigrate increasingly represent major parameters for policymakers when setting migration policy. The debate is granted further gravity and complexity by the highly charged questions of identity, values and community that discussing the topic of migration engenders. As such, understanding what public attitudes to migration are, how they are formed and what interventions are likely to affect them—negatively or positively—is of overwhelming practical importance for advocacy organisations, governments, communicators, policymakers and those working in politics who either want to know what is likely to be a sustainable migration policy framework or how to communicate effectively on migration.

Furthermore, explaining variation in attitudes to migration can offer deeper insights into key social scientific questions, providing evidence in support of, at times, competing scientific theories that see public opinion and behaviour as, on the one hand, volatile, irrational and prone to manipulation or, on the other, the result of deep-seated and stubborn psychological predispositions or early-life experiences. More sophisticated, contemporary theories consider the interactions between these forces.

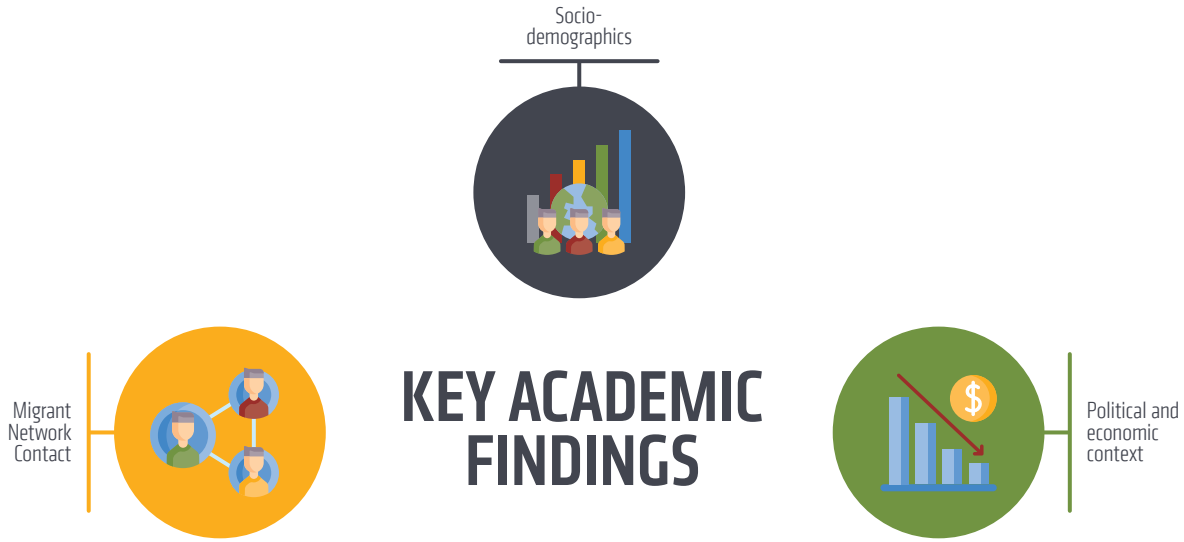
Unsurprisingly, the Budapest Process therefore sees understanding attitudes to migration amongst the five Silk Routes countries as vital to achieving its broader objective of ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration, most obviously in terms of preventing and counteracting irregular migration, understanding public opinion on propensity to emigrate and supporting the integration of migrants and counteracting phenomena of discrimination, racism and xenophobia. Therefore, this report asks: (1) what are attitudes to migration in the region, both in terms of attitudes to immigration and propensity to migrate, (2) how are these changing; (3) why do individuals vary so much on these issues; and (4) what should we recommend to policymakers based on this report? Overall, however, this report represents a 'lay of the land' of public attitudes and what is known about them in the region, from which more specific research questions can be asked.

As such, the report proceeds as follows. The first part asks who wants to emigrate and why? To answer this, it first overviews the main academic theories of emigration and suggests a number of shortcomings that remain the literature, before summarising the country-specific literature from each of the five Silk Routes countries. This section continues by overviewing trends in propensity to migrate in the last decade in each of the countries before investigating the causes of emigration, based on the early theoretical findings, further in one country—Iraq—in which raw data is publicly available. The second part of the report concentrates on who thinks what about immigration and why and includes three sections: first, a brief overview of previous research on attitudes to immigration; second, descriptive statistics of trends across the region in the attitudes to immigration; and third, based on the previous theoretical considerations, asks what are the correlates of attitudes to immigration in the region.

# Who wants to emigrate and why?

In terms of *emigration*, policymakers and social scientists are typically more concerned with understanding rates of behaviour and planned behaviour than they are with attitudes to policy. Although one recent study (Kustov, 2020) has analysed the key determinants of attitudes to emigration as a societal issue (i.e. "'Do you think that emigration is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, not a serious problem, or not a problem at all for your country?") the literature on attitudes to emigration overwhelmingly seeks to describe, explain and predict one's propensity to emigrate. This is in clear contrast to immigration attitudes, which we naturally conceive of as policy attitudes, perceived effects, etc. As such, social scientific findings on 'who wants to emigrate and why?' are highly distinct from 'who thinks what about immigration and why?'. In this section we first overview the key academic findings that explain who wants to emigrate and why, before performing our own analyses using data from the Silk Routes countries.

## Key academic theories of propensity to emigrate



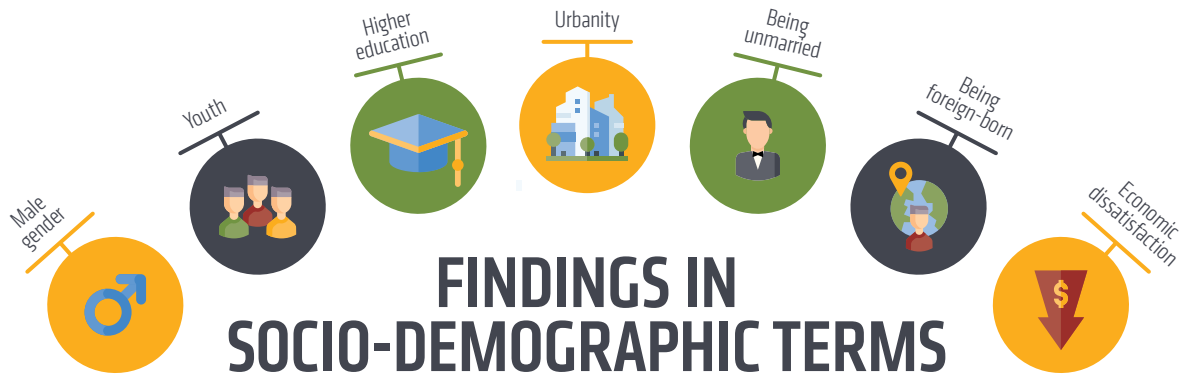

Key academic findings on the determinants of propensity to emigrate can be broadly placed into three groups: the political and economic context of the origin country; the socio-demographics of the individual; and whether the individual has contact with an existing migrant network.

Beyond existing work, this report also proposes that an individual's psychology is also likely to be a major cause of variation, as well as potentially partially explaining the gender gap in willingness to emigrate irregularly.

Perhaps the most well-known explanation regarding propensity to emigrate is the so-called inverse U-curve, or "migration hump", which postulates that, as a country's level of development increases, so does the propensity of its citizens to emigrate due to increases in their structural and material capability, partially in terms of access to credit, skills composition and macroeconomic conditions. The same theory suggests that at a certain level of economic development—as of 2018 around $6000 GDP per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP), i.e. around the level of Angola, Uzbekistan or Vietnam—that propensity to emigrate peaks and thereafter begins to fall. The empirical reality of this curve, particularly in causal terms, has recently been contested (Benček and Schneiderheinze, 2020) even if in, descriptive terms, it remains fairly self-evident. Similarly, development economists have debated at great length the *exact* reasons for the relationship, which are almost certainly highly complex (see e.g. Dao *et al.* 2018 for recent summary). At this point it is worth pointing out the GDP PPP per capita of the Silk Routes countries respectively according to the IMF (2020) are: Afghanistan ($2,073); Bangladesh ($5,139); Iran ($11,963); Iraq ($9,952); and Pakistan ($5,160). As such, based purely on levels of economic development, we would expect citizens of Bangladesh and Pakistan to be close to peak propensity to emigrate since they are more likely to have the economic ability to do so than citizens of Afghanistan and they are more likely to have the desire to do so for material reasons than citizens of Iran or Iraq. This inverse U-curve relationship between development and propensity to emigrate has been shown to be exacerbated by greater education and greater unemployment (Esipova, Ray and Pugliese 2011; Migali and Scipioni 2018).

Other findings based on host country context include: the quality of the democratic system, the government's capacity to provide services (including education, social security, pensions and ability to impose law; e.g. Van Dalen and Henkens, 2007; Dustmann and Okatenko, 2014), perceptions of neighbourhood safety, perceptions of corruption, evaluations of government effectiveness, being a victim of crime, and satisfaction with democracy (e.g. Begović et al, 2020). This leads Hiskey *et al.* (2014) to summarise that 'the emigration decision of certain individuals in authoritarian regimes is without a doubt in large part a function of the political system and one's assessment of their future within that system.' Most pronounced of all is the effect of war on propensity to emigrate regardless of development levels (Cohen, 1987).

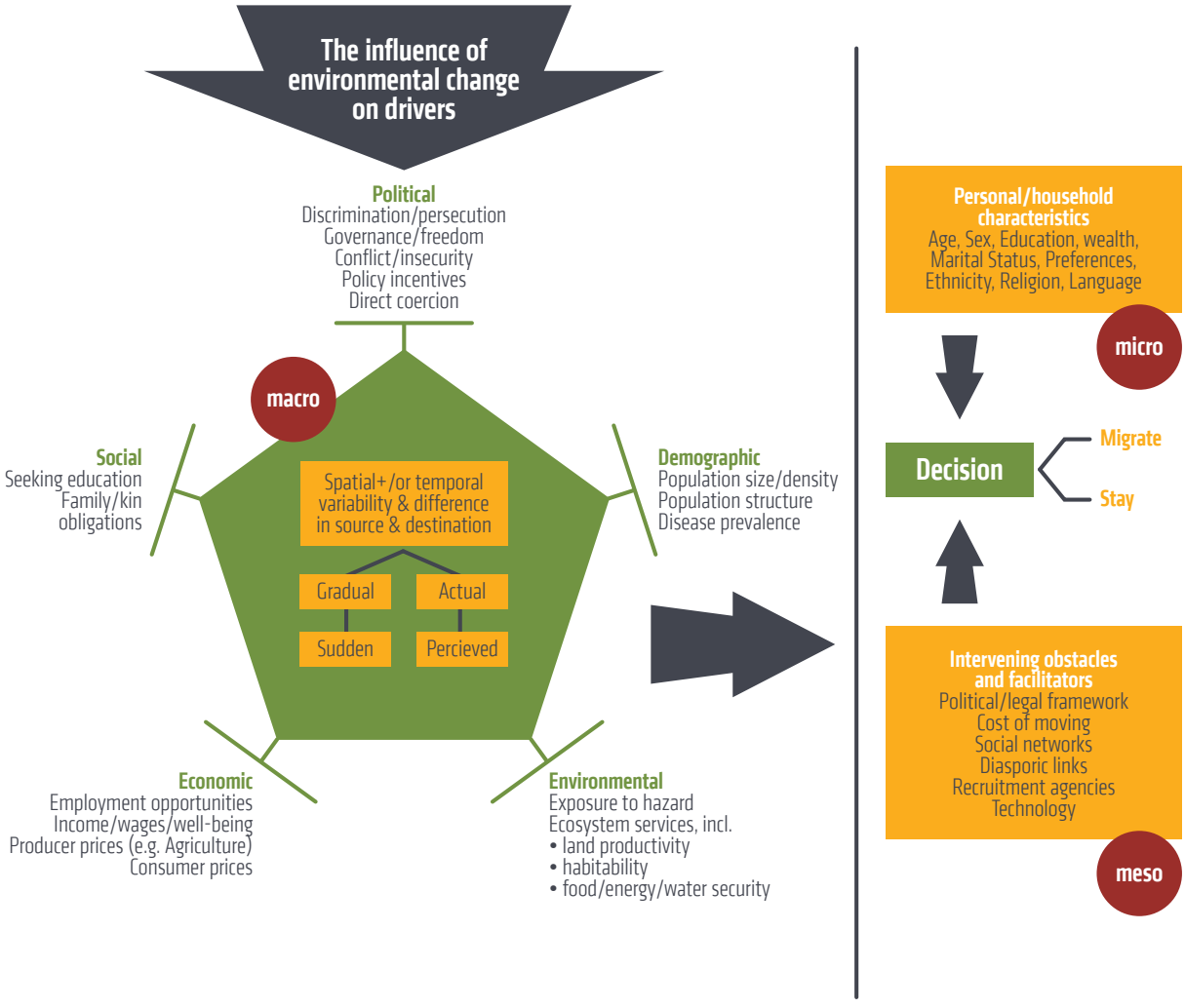
Aside from contextual (and perceptual) determinants, there are a number of consistent findings at the individual-level in socio-demographic terms. Male gender, youth, higher education, urbanity, being unmarried, being foreign-born and personal economic and life dissatisfaction (though these are perceptual) have all been repeatedly shown to increase one's chance of emigration (e.g. Hiskey *et al.*, 2014; Migali and Scipioni, 2018).



Finally, awareness of migrant networks and having contacts who are migrants is one of the most consistent findings in the literature on propensity to emigrate, with proposed causal mechanisms including increased informational, logistical and social support as well as lower perceived risk (e.g. Bertoli and Ruyssen 2016; Migali and Scipioni 2018). Such effects have been shown to be enhanced with greater geographical and cultural proximity (Dao *et al.* 2018; Mai, 2005) and social media use (Dekker and Engbersen, 2013).

Overall, the above findings lead Black et al (2011: S5) to produce a theoretical model of the decision to migrate (see Figure 1 below) that combines macro contextual factors (politics and economics, but also environmental, social and demographic issues) with the individual's socio-demographic characteristics and 'intervening obstacles and facilitators' (see also, Carling, 2002, on the effects of barriers and constraints to migrate and Carling and Schewel, 2018, on the two-step model of aspirations and abilities).

**Figure 1. 'A conceptual framework for the 'drivers of migration''**




*Source: Black et al. (2011: S5)*

In addition to these well-established findings are a number of novel findings that are worth mentioning. Uprety (2017) shows that trade between low- and high-income countries encourages emigration from the former to the latter, but only for those with high skill levels. David and Jarreau (2016) show that informal employment, along with unemployment, leads to emigration. Recent studies testing the proposition that foreign aid reduces emigration have found little evidence to suggest it does, particularly in the short-term (Dreher and Fuchs, 2019; Clist and Restelli, 2020)

Finally, I argue that psychological indicators have been overlooked in the literature on propensity to emigrate (though see Carling and Collins, 2018, for recent insights into emotions and desires). Indeed, as Hiskey et al (2014: 93) note 'very little work exists on the cognitive process that precedes the actual act of emigration'. Furthermore, we already know that the perceptions about democracy and politics that have been shown to have effects on propensity to emigrate are, in turn, partially determined by more deep-seated psychological forces. We can expect a number of key psychological concepts to have effects, including:

- Personal values, i.e. one's broad motivation goals in life that dictate more specific attitudes and behaviours, should affect propensity to emigrate. For example, in the terms of Schwartz' basic human values (1992) we can expect valuing self-direction, stimulation as well as, potentially, achievement and universalism to increase propensity to emigrate, whereas valuing tradition, conformity and security plausibly reduce propensity to emigrate. A number of other values-schema could also be applied (Dennison et al, 2020).

- Identities, i.e. one's self-assessed in-group, as well as its conception, intensity or commitment. Those holding extra-national identities (e.g. European, Asian, Arab, etc.) are plausibly more likely to emigrate than those holding particularly strong national identities.

- Personality types or traits, i.e. one's pattern of thoughts, emotions, social styles and behaviours that affect their self-perceptions, values and attitudes, with more open-minded and less agreeable individuals more likely to emigrate and more neurotic and, perhaps, conscientious individuals less likely to do so.

- Moreover, self-conceptions, meta-cognitions, and psychological health all plausibly may have effects.

## Previous findings from the Silk Routes countries

This section briefly overviews key findings explaining propensity to migrate on a country-by-country basis for each of the Silk Routes countries.

## Afghanistan: escaping insecurity and poverty

In general terms, Garrote Sanchez (2018) projects that the socio-demographic profile of Afghan migrants during the 2020s will largely support that found in the general literature–that is young men with at least some basic education and from middle-income backgrounds–while insecurity, conflict and natural disasters will contribute to over time variation, averaging at around 200,000 people per year. Various sources (e.g. UNHCR 2013) suggest that the main two destination countries of Afghan emigrants are Pakistan and Iran, with an estimated maximum of 2,500,000 Afghans residing in each, while the United Arab Emirates (around 300,000) and Germany (125,000) are estimated to be the third and fourth most common destinations.

More theoretically novel are the findings of Loschmann and Siegel (2015) suggest that Afghan emigration is less driven by the search for alternative sources of income and more about scattering familial presence to provide alternative locations in case of a deterioration of the security situation. Similarly, Dimitradi (2018) analyses the 'declared reasons' for emigration of Afghans both from Afghanistan *and* from Iran–often returning to Afghanistan, though also in both cases migrating to Europe via Turkey and Greece. She argues that (2018: 26) 'those fleeing Afghanistan tend to put forth pervasive insecurity, lack of safety, the Taliban and IS, as well as poverty.' Those leaving Iran focus more on the more prominent role immigration plays in the current political and geo-political situation, and their feelings of insecurity in that regard. They acknowledge that their journey was fragmented suggesting that there are likely to be multiple and dynamic motivations throughout the emigration process–a reality by no means dynamic to the Afghan situation. She argues that if legalisation were possible, most Afghans would have stayed in Turkey, from which the desire to emigrate on to Greece and Europe is dictated by employment.

In other cases, individuals and families were unable to work and support their families because of rules that were imposed on them, most notably by IS. More than a quarter (28%) of respondents said that the activities of IS were a significant factor in their decision to leave, particularly in Syria but also in Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen: 'When you are a civil servant in Kabul you receive death threats by the Taliban. Now there is also IS in Afghanistan, and the situation has deteriorated. IS and the Taliban are collaborating. I have received many death threats. I was forced to leave Afghanistan. Otherwise, I would have never left my country. I was scared about my daughters' and my personal safety. Before I left, the last threat I received said that either I quit my job, or myself and my whole family will be beheaded.' (Afghan Tajik man, aged 50).

## Bangladesh: environmental pressures, rural-urban domestic migration and low-skilled emigration

In terms of general migrant profiles, Sharma and Zaman (2013) analyse the characteristics of individuals from the 11 per cent of Bangladeshi households with members who had migrated abroad in the last ten years: showing that they are young (average of 31 years old) but not as young as internal migrants overwhelmingly male (over 90 percent) and typically moved to the Gulf as low-skilled workers who had not completed secondary education. The most common destinations were: Saudi Arabia (42 per cent); United Arab Emirates (16 per cent); United Kingdom (10 per cent) and Kuwait (10 per cent). They also use regression models to show that age and education both bear non-linear relationships

with propensity to migrate—first increasing and then falling after age 44 and nine years of education. They also show that relatively wealthier households are more able to finance migration—supporting the inverse U-shape theory at the household level. However, households with non-farm businesses are less likely to include migrants, again supporting findings on quality of work and findings below on the importance of environmental pressures in explaining Bangladeshi migration (Carrico and Donato, 2019) as well as costly high-return emigration as a source of capital to be invested in productivity-enhancing modern farming technology (Mendola, 2008).

Studies using Bangladeshi data have been particularly concerned with two phenomena. The first is investigating the effects of environmental change on migration, which is often of a reactive, temporary and domestic nature (Joarder and Miller, 2013) as well as being a 'last resort' (Penning-Rowsell et al., 2013) with thresholds for climate-induced migration dictated by residential satisfaction and mobility potential (Adams and Kay, 2019). The latter authors conclude that, as a result, early migration can be expected in Kanthaltali and late migration can be expected in Aslampur. However, others (Etzold et al, 2013) suggest that such migration is not so much the result of climate change but overwhelmingly rainfall variability, food insecurity and seasonal demand for agricultural workers, all within the context of regional inequality and pre-harvest seasonal famines (Chowdhury et al, 2009). The second phenomena is rural-urban domestic migration in the country, which has been shown to result from economic disparities including income, employment opportunities and absorptive capacity, as well as joining relatives (Ullah, 2004; Lagakos et al, 2018).

## Iran: highly educated and politically motivated

Compared to Afghanistan and Bangladesh, there have been far fewer studies of emigration from Iran, not least because it is a much less prevalent contemporary phenomenon. However, since the revolution Iranian emigrants have been characterised as 'highly educated or skilled managerial level' often motivated politically and in some cases bringing large amounts of capital to Europe or North America (Zangeneh, 2004) or leaving research and educational institutions (Ashourizadeh, 2017). However, in the twenty-first century there has been a second track of emigrants leaving, mainly for economic reasons, who were typically were working class with less education and skills than previous emigrants (Hakimzadeh, 2006).

## Iraq: war, insecurity and ethnic tensions

Iraq, though slightly more so than Iran, has received relatively little scholarly attention when considering the drivers of emigration, described by Chatelard (2012: 359) as a 'significant blind spot'. This may be due to its only relatively recent transformation into an emigration country. Regardless, it is beginning to change, with recent IOM reports on Iraqi emigration (IOM, 2016) finding war and insecurity to be the most common reasons for migration. Sirkeci (2005) argued that international emigration from Iraq resulted from ethnic tensions between Kurds, Shiites, Sunnis and Turkmen, while we know that a number of outflows dramatically increased in the years 2006 and 2007, driven by the breakdown of security and resulting in the establishment of a number of migrant networks such as Iraqi-Kurdish communities in Sweden. The advent of IS exacerbated these pressures, with Crawley and Skleparis

(2018: 54) concluding that the primary motivations of migrants based in Greece that are originally from Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere are war and insecurity. Eklund and Pilesjo (2012) consider the standard theoretical explanations for emigration in the context of Iraqi domestic migration within and from Duhok, concluding 'economic reasons to be the main motivation for migration, closely followed by family/marriage … Environmental migration is low and can be explained by the low dependence on agriculture in the region.'

### Pakistan: at the peak of the inverse U-curve

Compared to Iran and Iraq, the determinants of emigration from Pakistan are somewhat more well-known, not least because it is one of the 10 major emigration countries of the world. Aqeel (2012) notes that the socio-demographic profile of the 60 per cent of Pakistani emigrants who move to the Middle East countries is markedly different from those who move to OECD countries, with the latter more educated and more likely to travel with families, and both divergent trends exacerbated by migrant networks. However, most findings regarding Pakistani migrants are typical of the broader literature: low wages, poor working conditions, lack of amenities and unemployment all contribute to Pakistani emigration (Lakha and Azizi, 2011).

## Who wants to emigrate? Evidence from the Silk Routes countries

With the above theoretical expectations and empirical findings in mind, we now turn to producing our own analyses of the determinants of propensity to emigrate. Unfortunately, the major international social science surveys that cover the Silk Routes countries—notably the World Values Survey and the South Asian Barometer—do not include questions that capture propensity to migrate. Instead, we can turn to two sources, only one of which is public. The first is the Arab Barometer, which has asked citizens of most countries of North Africa and the Middle East about their propensity to migrate in multiple waves of surveys throughout the twenty-first century. This very high quality source of data also includes questions on a large range of variables that, theoretically and following the above discussion, we can expect to affect one's propensity to emigrate. This includes one Silk Routes country: Iraq. The polling company Gallup has also asked citizens in scores of countries around the world about their propensity to emigrate, including each of the five Silk Routes countries, since 2008. However, this data source is private, making analyses of raw data difficult beyond basic over time trends by country, gender and age group, presented below. This essentially leaves us with Iraq as our main case and the Arab Barometer as our main data source for the purposes of in-depth analysis. Although this is a disadvantage to producing broader conclusions for the Silk Routes countries, that is partially offset by the fact that, hitherto, Iraqi emigration has been relatively understudied, despite being of a considerable scale. Survey questions measuring propensity to emigrate in both the Arab Barometer and Gallup World Poll are shown below in Table 1.

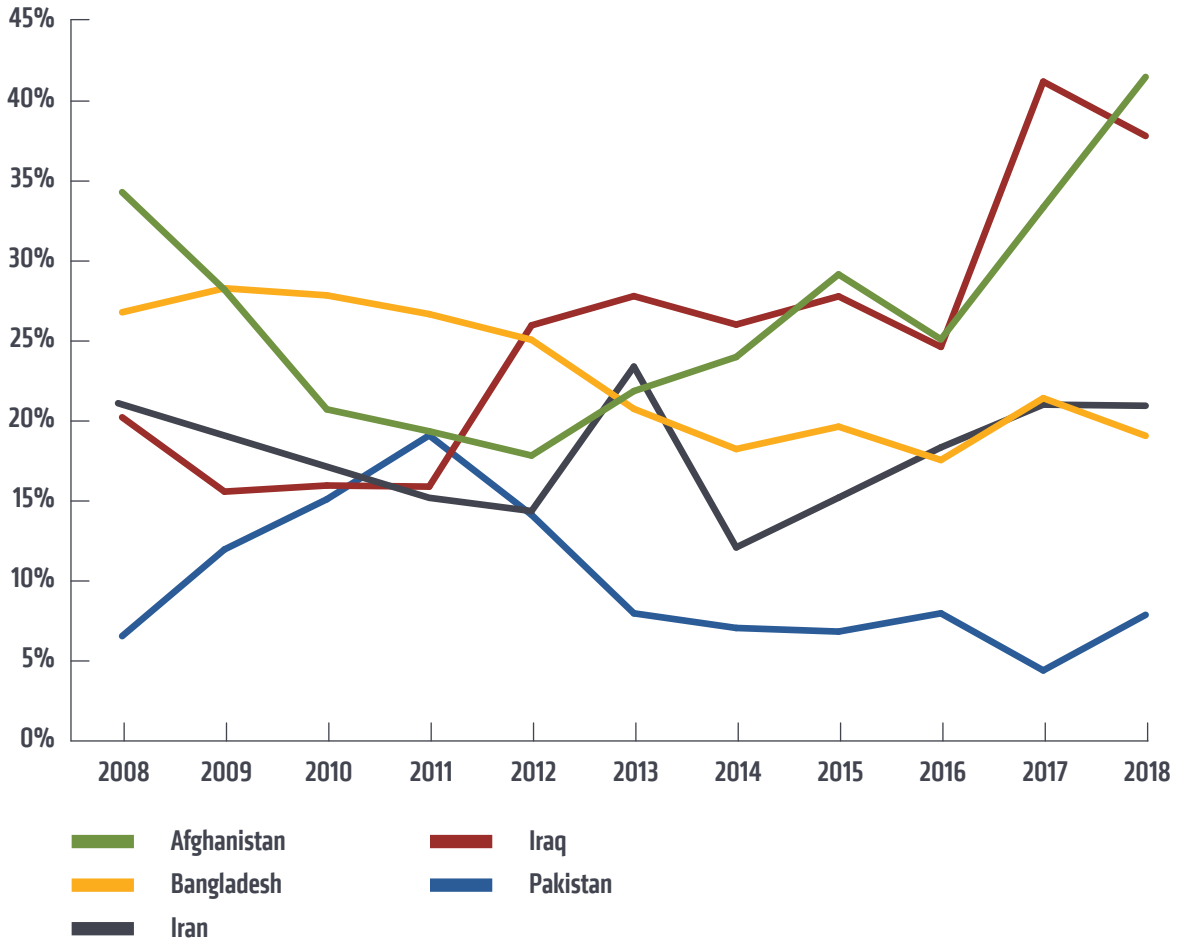
## Table 1. Questions on planned emigration

| Source | Question | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Arab Barometer Wave V | "Some people decide to leave their countries to live somewhere else. Have you ever thought about emigrating from your country?" | 1. Yes<br>2. No |
| | "People want to emigrate for different reasons. Why have you thought about emigrating?" | 1. Economic reasons<br>2. Political reasons<br>3. Religious reasons<br>4. Security reasons<br>5. Education opportunities<br>6. Reunite with family<br>7. Corruption<br>8. Other |
| | "Which country are you thinking of emigrating to?" | 1. Saudi Arabia 2. The United Arab Emirates 3. Qatar 4. Bahrain 5. Kuwait 6. Oman 7. Egypt 8. Jordan 9. Lebanon 10. Morocco 11. Algeria 12. Tunisia 13. Turkey 14. The United States 15. Canada 16. The United Kingdom 17. Eastern Europe 18. France 19. Germany 20. Spain 21. Italy 22. Other Western European countries 23. Sub-Saharan Africa 24. Other |
| | "Would you consider leaving [COUNTRY] even if you didn't have the required papers that officially allowed you to leave?" | 1. Yes<br>2. No |
| Gallup World Poll | "Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move permanently to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?" | 1. Yes<br>2. No |
| | "Are you planning to move permanently to another country in the next 12 months, or not?" | 1. Yes<br>2. No |
| | "Have you made any preparation for this move?" | 1. Yes<br>2. No |

## Evidence from the Gallup World Poll on how propensity to emigrate is changing

During the eight-year period covered by Gallup, we see significantly different trends in desire to emigrate across each of the five Silk Routes countries. In 2008, Afghanistan had the highest proportion of citizens expressing a desire to emigrate–34 per cent, a figure that fell gradually so that, by 2012, just 22 per cent wished to do so. However, since then the figure has risen fairly continuously so that, by 2018, the figure was again even higher, over 41 per cent. Bangladesh has witnessed a more steady decline, from 27 per cent in 2008 to 19 per cent in 2018. Iranian citizens have been even steadier in their desire to emigrate, with about 20 per cent expressing a desire to do so throughout the time period. Iraq has seen the sharpest and most consistent increase in desire to emigrate, from a low of 16 per cent in 2011 to 38 per cent in 2018, a similar figure to that of Afghanistan. The strongest decline in propensity to emigrate is seen in Pakistan, down from 19 per cent in 2011 to 8 per cent in 2018.

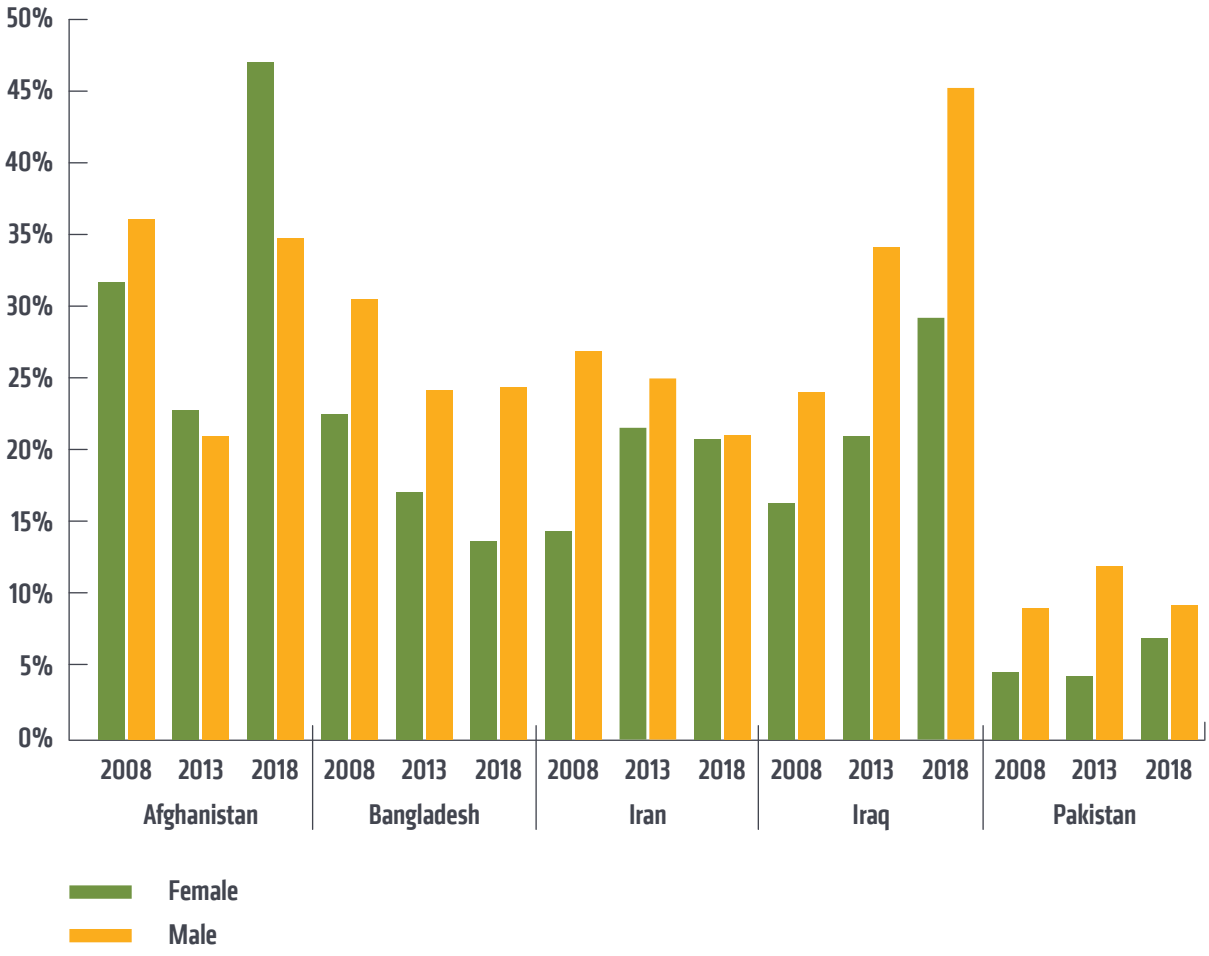
### Figure 2. Percentage reporting that they would like to emigrate, 2008-2018 in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan




*Source: Gallup World Poll. Responses to "Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move permanently to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?"*

In Figure 3, we can see desire to emigrate again by country, but this time broken down by gender. Unlike *actual* emigration, the gender differences in the desire to emigrate are much smaller. In Afghanistan, we see that women are by now in fact more likely to desire emigration.

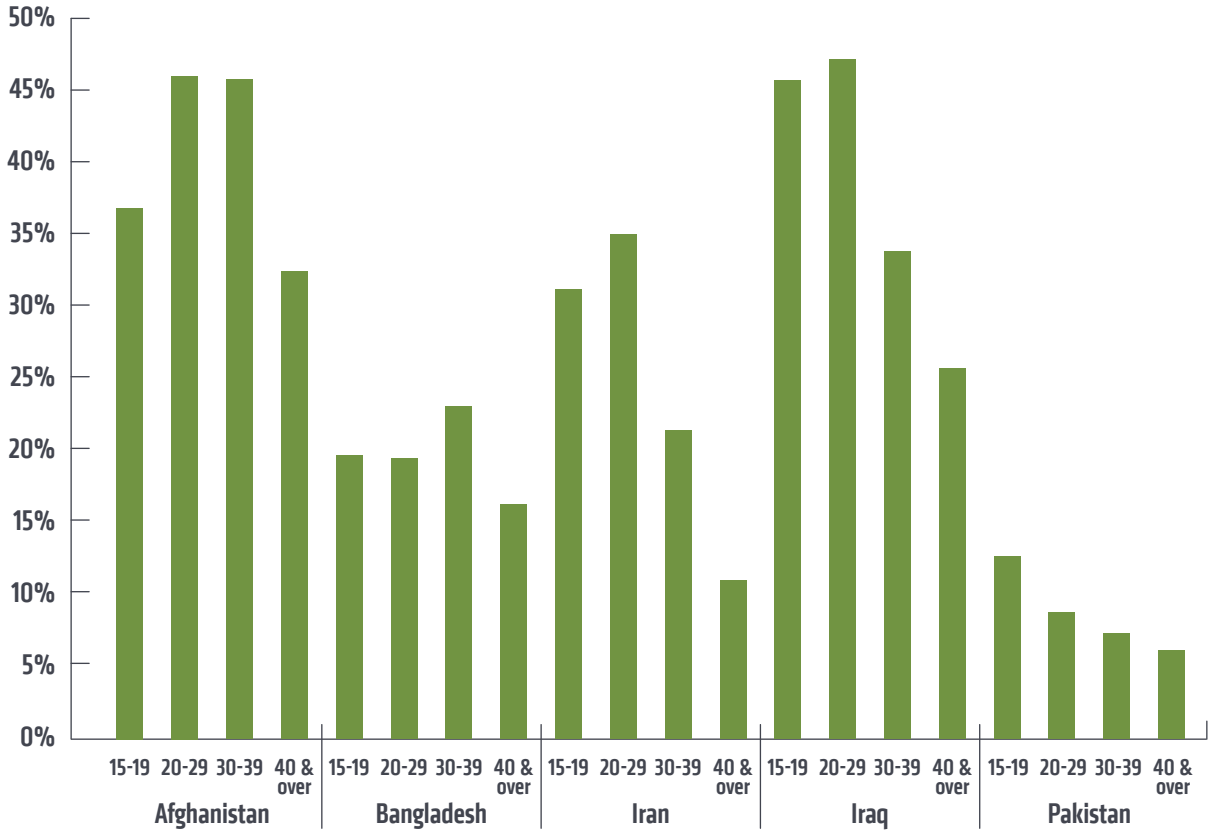
## Figure 3. Percentage reporting that they would like to emigrate by gender, 2008, 2013, 2018 in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan




*Source: Gallup World Poll. Responses to "Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move permanently to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?"*

Finally, the breakdown by age group is presented in Figure 4. Again, age correlates less strongly with *desire* to emigrate than *actual* emigration so that we still see high proportions of those over 40 wanting to emigrate, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq.

## Figure 4. Percentage reporting that they would like to emigrate by age group, 2018 in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan




*Source: Gallup World Poll. Responses to "Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move permanently to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?"*

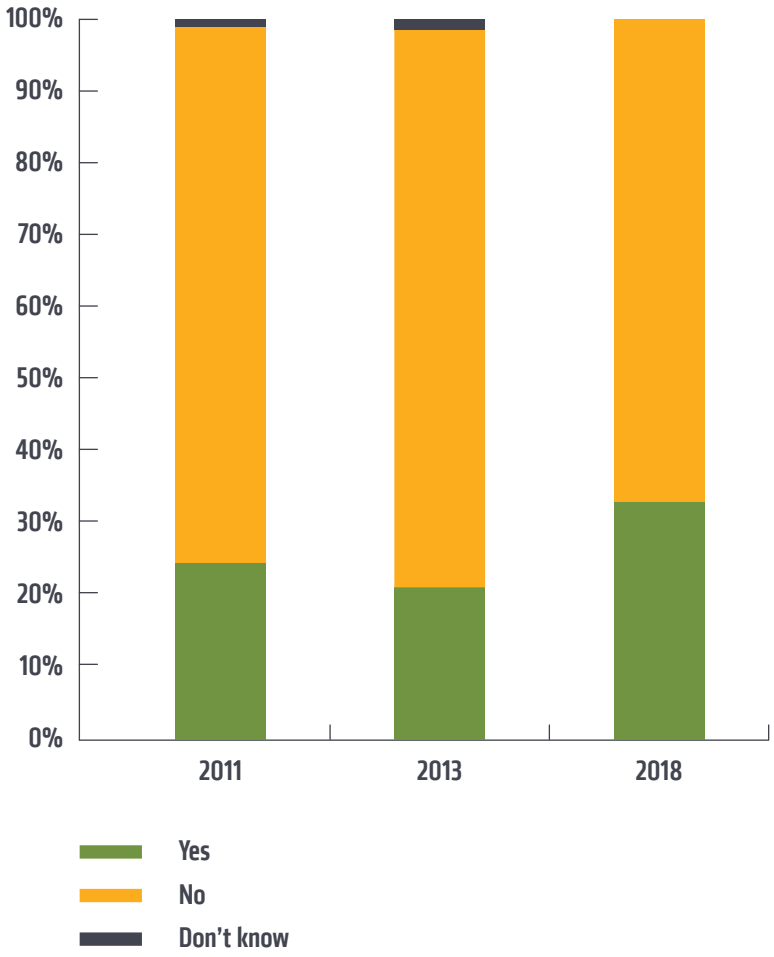
## Evidence from the Arab Barometer on how propensity to emigrate is changing

The Arab Barometer has conducted international standard social scientific surveys across the Middle East and North Africa since 2006. Iraq has been surveyed in three waves: 2011, 2013 and 2018. The sample design is area probability sampling—making the surveys representative at both national and governorate level—and the mode is face-to-face interviews in the respondent's home. Each survey includes around 2400 respondents. More methodological information can be found on the Arab Barometer's website.[1]

Before performing our own analyses to consider the determinants of emigration in the region, we can briefly consider some aggregate-level data on how propensity to emigrate has been changing in Iraq. As we can see in Figure 5, the proportion of Iraqis who had thought of emigrating remained stable between 2011 and 2013, dropping slightly from 24.5 per cent to 21.1 per cent. However, by 2018, the figure had risen sharply to 32.9 per cent.

1 https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/methodology/

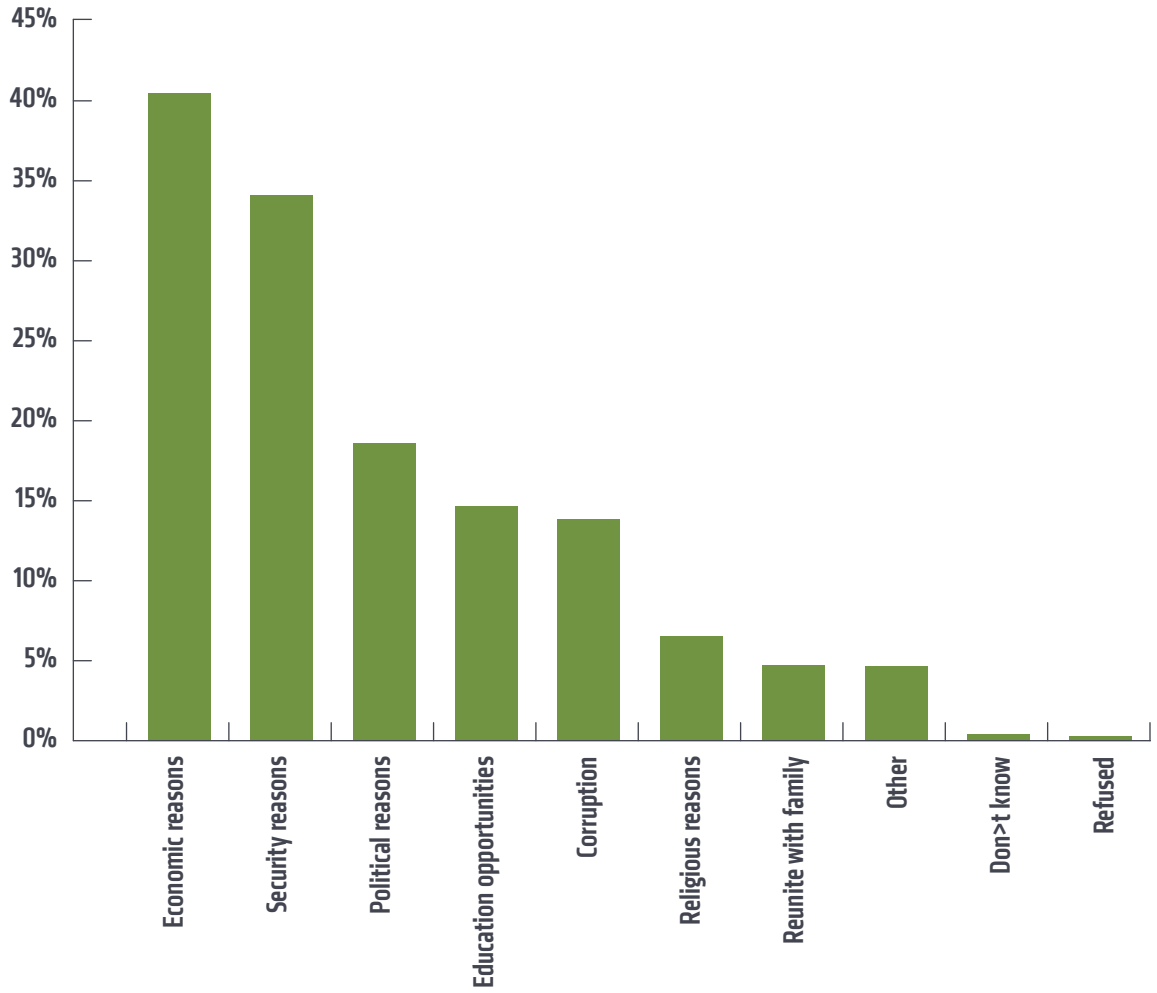
## Figure 5. Propensity to emigrate over time in Iraq




*Source: Arab Barometer II, III, V. Responses to "Some people decide to leave their countries to live somewhere else. Have you ever thought about emigrating from your country?" in Iraq.*

In all three waves, those who responded that they had thought of emigrating were also asked for what reason they had thought of emigrating. Unfortunately, the Arab Barometer changed the format for responses across the three waves, making diagnosing of over-time trends difficult. As such, we first present the 2018 responses, in Figure 6, followed by the results in 2011 and 2013, in Figure 7.

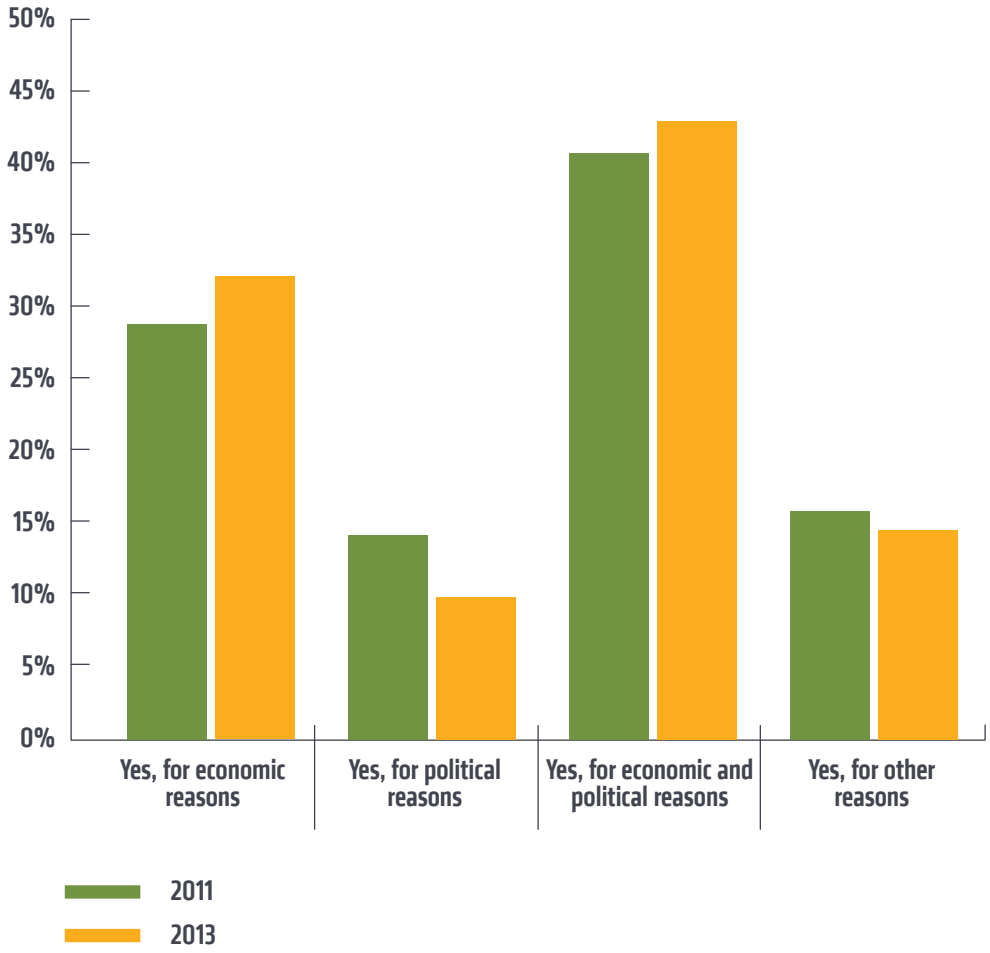
## Figure 6. Reasons given for wanting to emigrate from Iraq, 2018




*Source: Arab Barometer 2018.*

As we can see, by some distance the most common given answers in 2018 were economic and security reasons. This largely supports the findings of the literature that emphasise the security motivation for emigration from Iraq, in addition to the typical economic motivations. In 2011 and 2013, the Arab Barometer offered less specific responses that were largely the same in both waves. As we can see, a plurality of respondents in both waves stated that they wished to emigrate for *both* economic and political reasons, highlighting the complex nature of motivations to emigrate.

## Figure 7. Reasons given for wanting to emigrate from Iraq, 2011 and 2013

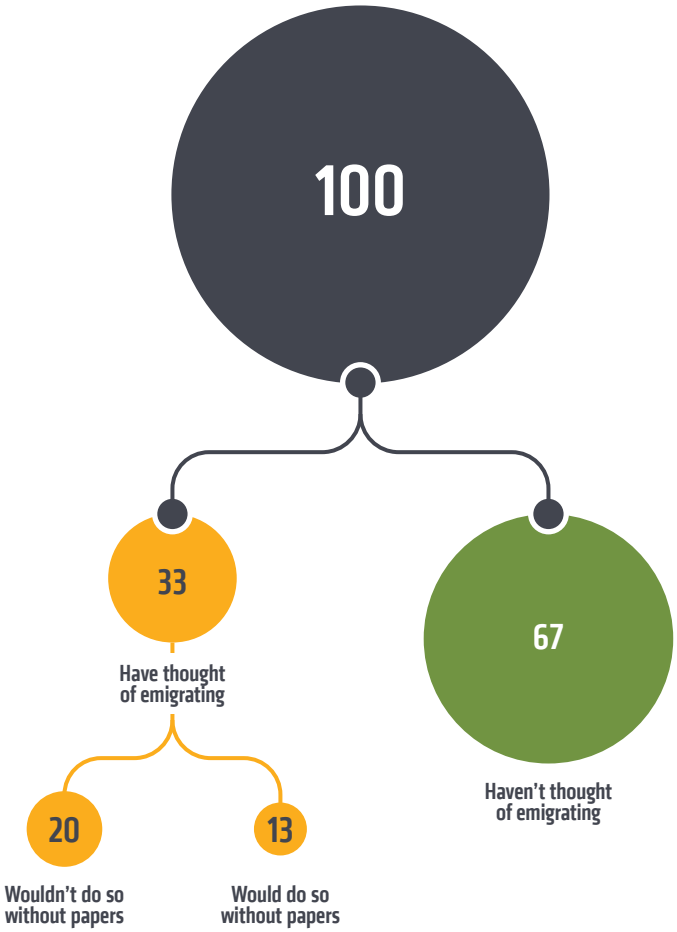



*Source: Arab Barometer 2011 and 2013*

## Evidence from the Arab Barometer on the correlates of Iraqi propensity to emigrate

We now turn to analysing the determinants of propensity to emigrate in Iraq. The 2018 Arab Barometer offers a number of novel questions regarding emigration beyond the past questions about desire to emigrate, in particular, whether the individual would do so without papers and to which country they would like to emigrate. As such, the below analyses consider the differences between three groups: (1) those who have not thought of emigrating (67.1 per cent of Iraqis); (2) those who have thought of emigrating but would not do so without papers (20.2 per cent of Iraqis); and (3) those who have thought of emigrating and would do so without papers (12.6% of Iraqis, see Figure 8).

## Figure 8. Distribution of desire to emigrate and willingness to do so without papers in Iraq




*Source: Arab Barometer, 2018*

We consider the differences between these groups in terms of the variables that have been shown to be determinants of emigration, as discussed above, grouped into: (1) socio-demographics; (2) economic and political attitudes; (3) and psychological, media and remittances.

Starting with socio-demographics, as shown in Table 2, there is no gender difference between those who have not thought of emigrating and those who have but would not do so with without papers. By contrast, those willing to do so without papers are overwhelmingly male. In terms of age, there is a clear linear relationship across the three groups, so that those who have thought of emigrating tend to be older than those who have not, and this is even more the case for those who would be willing to do so without papers. There are also numerous trends between the three groups and the individual's governorate of residence: Baghdad stands out for an overrepresentation of those only willing to emigrate with papers, while Sulaymaniya has a disproportionate number of those who would do so without papers. In general, those thinking of emigrating are more educated, though this is less the case for those willing to do so without papers. Those willing to emigrate without papers stand out from both groups for being disproportionately likely to be unemployed and to be single. Both are equally less religious than those not thinking of emigrating.

## Table 2. Socio-demographics by propensity to migrate and willingness to do so without papers in Iraq

| | Haven't thought of emigrating (N=1,633 ; weighted 67.1%) | Have thought of emigrating (N=827 ; weighted 32.9%) | | Sample (2,461 ; weighted 100%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Wouldn't consider doing so without papers (N=501 ; weighted 20.2%) | Would consider doing so without papers (N=323 ; weighted 12.6%) | |
| **Gender** | | | | |
| Female | 51.5 | 51.7 | 30.9 | 48.9 |
| Male | 48.5 | 48.3 | 69.2 | 51.1 |
| **Age group** | | | | |
| 18-25 | 27.9 | 33.2 | 40.1 | 30.6 |
| 26-39 | 31.1 | 35.4 | 37.8 | 32.8 |
| 40-59 | 30.9 | 25.8 | 18.5 | 28.3 |
| 60+ | 10.1 | 5.7 | 3.2 | 8.3 |
| **Governate** | | | | |
| Baghdad | 21.4 | 27.5 | 21.4 | 22.6 |
| Salahaddin | 4.0 | 5.1 | 5.9 | 4.4 |
| Diyala | 4.0 | 8.4 | 1.2 | 4.6 |
| Wasit | 4.6 | 2.4 | 1.7 | 3.8 |
| Maysan | 3.5 | 1.7 | 2.8 | 3.1 |
| Basra | 9.1 | 5 | 7.7 | 8.1 |
| Dhi War | 7.0 | 3.2 | 3.6 | 5.8 |
| Qadisiyah | 2.5 | 6.6 | 4.6 | 3.6 |
| Babylon | 5.8 | 5.2 | 6.2 | 5.7 |
| Karbala | 3.3 | 4.9 | 1.6 | 3.4 |
| Najaf | 4.3 | 4.2 | 2.5 | 4.1 |
| Anbar | 5.2 | 4.1 | 4.6 | 4.9 |
| Nineveh | 9.9 | 11.7 | 10.8 | 10.4 |
| Erbil | 5.9 | 2.5 | 5.8 | 5.2 |
| Kirkuk | 4.1 | 4.9 | 5.2 | 4.4 |
| Sulaymaniya | 5.5 | 2.7 | 14.4 | 6.0 |
| **Level of education** | | | | |
| None | 8.4 | 4.0 | 4.1 | 7.0 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary/ Basic | 52.2 | 27.9 | 41.6 | 50.0 |
| Secondary | 15.1 | 13.7 | 20.6 | 15.5 |
| Tertiary | 24.4 | 34.4 | 33.9 | 27.6 |
| **Employment** | | | | |
| Employed | 13.7 | 14.5 | 9.3 | 13.3 |
| Self-employed | 9.7 | 13.7 | 16.9 | 11.4 |
| Retired | 8.1 | 5.4 | 4.3 | 7.1 |
| Housewife | 40.3 | 34.4 | 20.7 | 36.6 |
| Student | 10.8 | 14.9 | 14.8 | 12.1 |
| Unemployed | 9.6 | 9.3 | 21.8 | 11.0 |
| Other / don't know | 7.8 | 8.0 | 12.1 | 8.4 |
| **Marital status** | | | | |
| Single | 26.1 | 30.8 | 40.4 | 28.9 |
| Married / Widowed | 71.3 | 66.9 | 55.5 | 68.4 |
| Other / refused | 2.6 | 2.3 | 4.1 | 2.7 |
| **Income** | | | | |
| <300k | 20.6 | 19.7 | 22.3 | 20.6 |
| 300-600k | 31.5 | 29.9 | 33.8 | 31.5 |
| 600-1000k | 28.4 | 32.3 | 28.2 | 29.2 |
| 1000k+ | 15.6 | 14.7 | 12.2 | 15.0 |
| Don't know / refused | 4.0 | 3.4 | 3.5 | 3.8 |
| **Religious sect** | | | | |
| Sunni | 31.5 | 35.3 | 41.9 | 33.5 |
| Shia | 48.9 | 44.0 | 38.9 | 46.6 |
| "Just a Muslim" | 17.1 | 17.3 | 16.5 | 17.1 |
| Other / don't know / refused | 2.6 | 3.5 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| **Religiosity** | | | | |
| Religious | 53.3 | 41.3 | 41.1 | 49.4 |
| Somewhat | 40.8 | 51.7 | 51.3 | 44.3 |
| Not religious | 5.0 | 6.1 | 7.3 | 5.5 |
| Don't know / refused | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.3 | 0.8 |

*Source: Arab Barometer, 2018*

We now move on to considering how economic and political attitudes vary between the three groups of interest, as shown in Table 3. Both of those groups thinking of emigrating are less likely to believe that Iraq is heading in the right direction, are more likely to evaluate the current economic situation as "very bad" and more likely to believe that the future situation will be "worse" or "much worse". In terms of politics, both groups of would-be emigrants are: (1) more likely to prefer non-religious political parties to religious ones; (2) more likely to assess Iraq's democratic credentials as poor; (3) more likely to see freedom of expression as unprotected in Iraq; and (4) more likely to see the Iraqi national government as corrupt; even more so in every case for those who would emigrate without papers.

## Table 3. Economic and political attitudes by propensity to migrate and willingness to do so without papers in Iraq

| | **Haven't thought of emigrating** (N=1,633 ; weighted 67.1%) | **Have thought of emigrating** (N=827 ; weighted 32.9%) | | **Sample** (2,461 ; weighted 100%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Wouldn't consider doing so without papers** (N=501 ; weighted 20.2%) | **Would consider doing so without papers** (N=323 ; weighted 12.6%) | |
| **Direction of country** | | | | |
| Right | 20.5 | 12.2 | 11.5 | 17.7 |
| Neither | 75.3 | 86.0 | 88.1 | 79.1 |
| Wrong | 3.7 | 1.7 | 0.4 | 2.9 |
| Don't know / refused | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0 | 0.3 |
| **Current economic evaluation of Iraq** | | | | |
| Very good | 1.6 | 0.9 | 0.2 | 1.3 |
| Good | 22.3 | 14.2 | 16.2 | 19.9 |
| Bad | 42.9 | 42.2 | 40.7 | 42.5 |
| Very bad | 32.6 | 42.1 | 43.0 | 35.8 |
| Don't know | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0 | 0.5 |
| **Future economic situation of Iraq** | | | | |
| Much better | 16.1 | 12.6 | 7.0 | 14.2 |
| Better | 30.4 | 28.4 | 30.1 | 30.0 |
| The same | 23.9 | 24.4 | 23.7 | 24.0 |
| Worse | 13.2 | 16.4 | 17.0 | 14.3 |
| Much worse | 10.1 | 15.7 | 18.0 | 12.2 |
| Don't know / refused | 6.3 | 2.6 | 3.6 | 5.2 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Prefer religious or non-religious party?** | | | | |
| Religious, strongly | 38.0 | 33.7 | 23.6 | 35.4 |
| Religious | 11.7 | 13.6 | 12.5 | 12.2 |
| Non-religious | 23.5 | 24.5 | 36.1 | 25.3 |
| Non-religious, strongly | 12.2 | 13.8 | 14.6 | 12.8 |
| Don't know / refused | 14.6 | 14.5 | 13.4 | 14.4 |
| How democratic is Iraq? (0-10; mean) | 4.2 | 3.7 | 3.2 | 4.0 |
| **To what extent is freedom to express opinions protected in Iraq?** | | | | |
| Great extent | 11.7 | 10.1 | 8.4 | 11.0 |
| Medium extent | 23.2 | 21.0 | 21.5 | 22.5 |
| Limited extent | 15.4 | 11.2 | 13.7 | 14.4 |
| Not at all | 47.7 | 57.0 | 56.3 | 50.7 |
| Don't know / refused | 2.0 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 1.5 |
| **To what extent is there corruption at national level in Iraq?** | | | | |
| Great extent | 70.2 | 80.0 | 85.3 | 74.1 |
| Medium extent | 20.5 | 17.3 | 11.7 | 18.8 |
| Limited extent | 4.8 | 1.7 | 2.0 | 3.8 |
| Not at all | 2.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 2.0 |
| Don't know / refused | 1.8 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 1.4 |

*Source: Arab Barometer, 2018*

Finally, we look at the psychological, media use and remittance profiles of the three groups, as shown in Table 4. Both groups thinking of emigrating are less likely to feel that their personal safety and security is ensured, particularly those willing to do so without papers. Those willing to emigrate without papers are by some distance the heaviest users of social media amongst the three groups and are the only group for whom a majority trust social media more than traditional news outlets. In terms of psychology, both groups of would-be emigrants expressed a greater sense of control over their own lives, those unwilling to emigrate without papers especially so, and both groups were also more likely to express having experienced high levels of stress as well as depression. Finally, those willing to emigrate without papers were particularly likely to regularly receive remittances, suggestive of their proximity to migrant networks.

## Table 4. Psychology, media and remittances by propensity to migrate and willingness to do so without papers in Iraq

| | Haven't thought of emigrating (N=1,633 ; weighted 67.1%) | Have thought of emigrating (N=827 ; weighted 32.9%) | | Sample (2,461 ; weighted 100%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Wouldn't consider doing so without papers (N=501 ; weighted 20.2%) | Would consider doing so without papers (N=323 ; weighted 12.6%) | |
| **Evaluation of personal safety / security** | | | | |
| Fully ensured | 25.9 | 17.3 | 15.7 | 22.9 |
| Ensured | 56.4 | 51.4 | 45.0 | 54.0 |
| Not ensured | 13.3 | 20.3 | 26.7 | 16.6 |
| Not at all ensured | 4.3 | 10.9 | 11.7 | 6.6 |
| Don't know | 0.5 | 0.1 | 0 | 0.6 |
| **How much do you use social media per day?** | | | | |
| Not at all | 5.0 | 4.2 | 3.8 | 4.6 |
| up to 2 hours | 52.3 | 50.1 | 38.1 | 49.7 |
| up to 5 hours | 28.0 | 29.9 | 31.4 | 28.9 |
| up to 10 hours | 6.3 | 8.2 | 15.3 | 8.0 |
| 10 hours+ | 7.6 | 7.7 | 11.5 | 8.2 |
| **To what extent do you trust information on social media more than in newspapers or TV?** | | | | |
| Strongly agree | 13.3 | 18.4 | 25.2 | 15.8 |
| Agree | 24.8 | 28.1 | 33.6 | 26.6 |
| Disagree | 30.0 | 27.2 | 22.2 | 28.5 |
| Strongly Disagree | 25.7 | 23.2 | 16.6 | 24.0 |
| Don't know / refused | 6.2 | 3.2 | 2.4 | 5.1 |
| **To what extent do you feel free to make decisions for yourself on how to live your life?** | | | | |
| Strongly agree | 52.7 | 61.8 | 51.3 | 54.2 |
| Agree | 29.9 | 24.8 | 35.8 | 29.7 |
| Disagree | 12.4 | 8.0 | 9.7 | 11.2 |
| Strongly Disagree | 4.1 | 5.2 | 3.3 | 4.2 |
| Don't know / refused | 0.9 | 0.2 | 0 | 0.7 |

| In the past six months, how often did you feel so stressed that everything seemed to be a hassle? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | 13.3 | 6.5 | 11.5 | 11.8 |
| Sometimes | 39.3 | 42.2 | 33.9 | 39.2 |
| Often | 34.8 | 35.2 | 43.4 | 36.0 |
| Most of the time | 12.1 | 15.6 | 11.1 | 12.7 |
| Don't know / refused | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.4 |
| **Life is overwhelming at times. In the past six months, how often did you feel so depressed that nothing could cheer you up?** | | | | |
| Never | 19.7 | 11.5 | 9.3 | 16.8 |
| Sometimes | 40.5 | 36.9 | 33.8 | 39.0 |
| Often | 27.6 | 37.6 | 40.8 | 31.2 |
| Most of the time | 11.3 | 13.6 | 13.6 | 12.0 |
| Don't know / refused | 0.8 | 0.3 | 2.5 | 1.0 |
| **Receive remittances?** | | | | |
| Monthly | 1.3 | 1.5 | 4.7 | 1.7 |
| A few times a year | 1.0 | 0.4 | 3.2 | 1.1 |
| Once a year | 2.0 | 1.9 | 2.8 | 2.1 |
| None | 93.9 | 93.8 | 87.0 | 93.1 |
| Don't know / refused | 1.7 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.0 |

*Source: Arab Barometer, 2018*

## Why do some want to emigrate? And why are some willing to do so irregularly?

We now move on to more sophisticated analyses to understand exactly which of the above relationships are maintained when the effects are tested by a logistic regression model. Rather than present the lengthy models–based on the same Iraqi data as above–here , I simply list those effects that are found to be statistically significant on (1) wishing to emigrate rather than not emigrate and (2) be willing to emigrate without papers rather than not being willing to do so. Those variables are shown in Table 5 below.

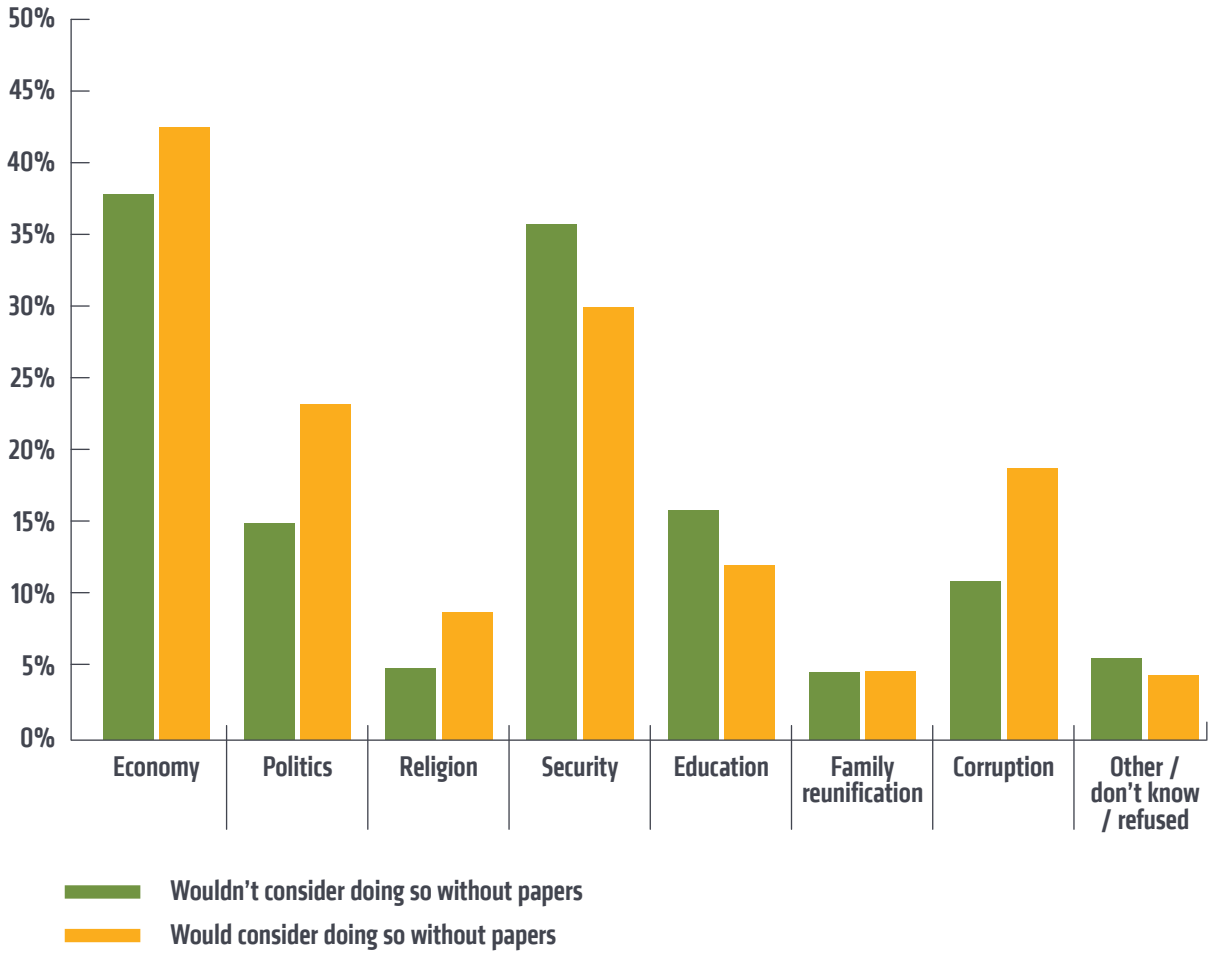
## Table 5. Variables with statistically significant effects in models predicting desire to emigrate (left) and willingness to do so without papers (right)

| Those thinking about emigrating more likely to be: | Amongst those willing to emigrate, those who would consider doing so without papers are more likely to be: |
|---|---|
| • Young<br>• Highly educated<br>• Unemployed or with a low income<br>• Sunni rather than Shia<br>• Less religious<br>• Feel safety and security is not ensured<br>• Have experienced depression in the last 6 months<br>• Believe country is heading in the wrong direction<br>• Believe the future economic situation will be worse<br>• Prefer non-religious political parties<br>• Believe country is not democratic<br>• Believe there is corruption at national-level | • Male<br>• Unemployed or with a low income<br>• Believe the future economic situation will be worse<br>• Prefer non-religious political parties<br>• Trust and use social media a lot<br>• Not feeling stressed by life<br>• Already receive remittances |

Overall, we see that, amongst Iraqis, being young, highly educated, unemployed or with low income, Sunni and less religious makes one more likely to want to emigrate, as does less personal, political and economic satisfaction. By contrast the determinants of being willing to do so without papers, rather than being unwilling to do so, are fewer. Male gender is overwhelmingly important, as is a worse economic position, including pessimism about the future. Social media use and trust and receiving remittances also make would-be emigrants more willing to do so without papers.

Beyond econometric modelling, we can also consider how the stated reasons for wanting to emigrate vary between those unwilling and willing to do so without papers and how their desired destinations vary. In Figure 9, we can see that those who would only emigrate with papers are more likely to be motivated by security and education, whereas those willing to emigrate without papers are more likely to be motivated by economic, politics, corruption and for religious reasons.

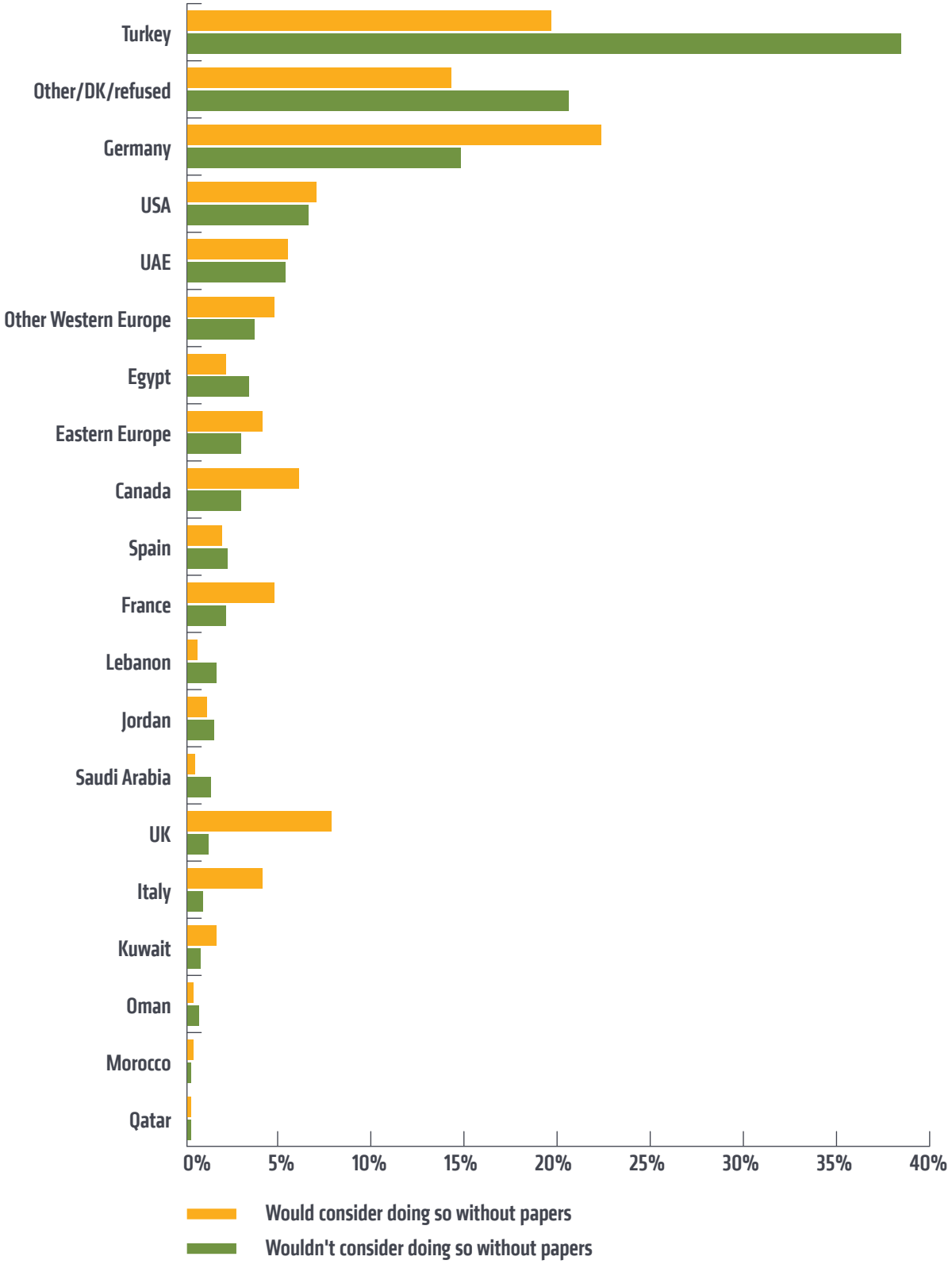
## Figure 9. Stated reasons for wanting to emigrate by willingness to do so without papers in Iraq




*Source: Arab Barometer, 2018*

Finally, we compare the desired destination country of both groups in Figure 10. As we can see, those who would only travel with papers overwhelmingly have Turkey in mind as their destination country. Those willing to emigrate without papers are more focused on "Western" countries, particularly Germany, the UK, the USA, Canada and other western European countries.

## Figure 10. Desired emigration destination by willingness to do so without papers in Iraq



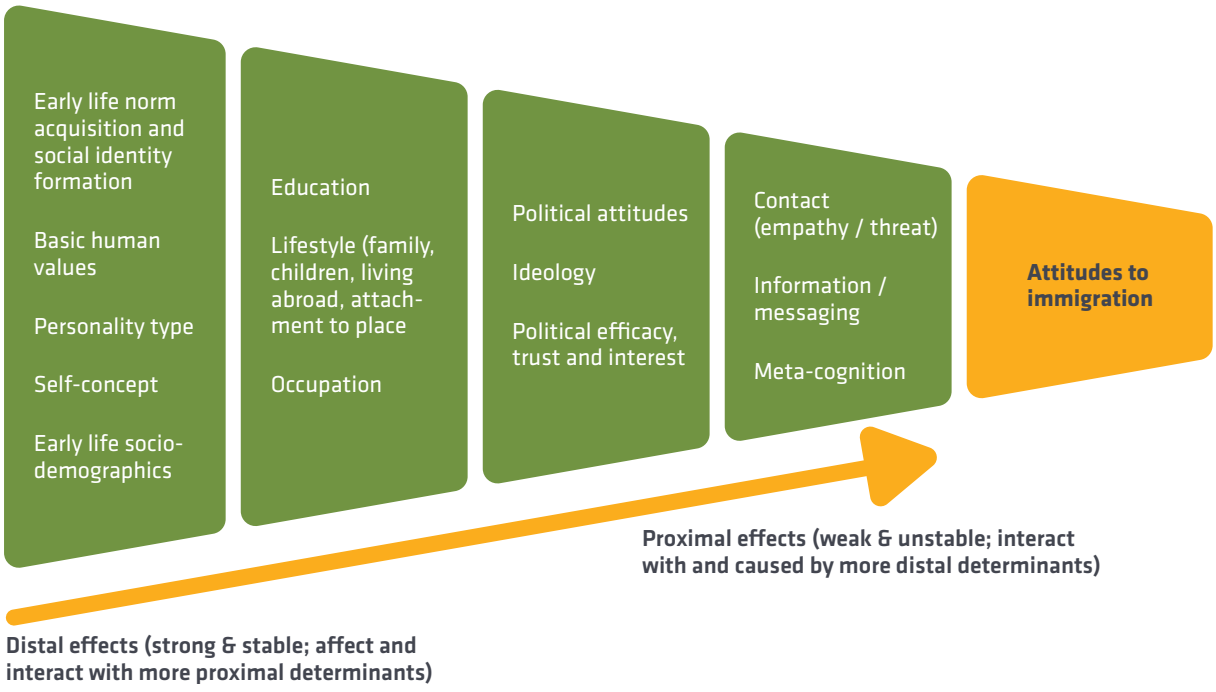

*Source: Arab Barometer, 2018. Notes: 0.0 for both groups for Algeria, Bahrain, sub-Saharan Africa and Tunisia*

# Who thinks what about immigration and why?

## Academic explanations for variation in attitudes to immigration

There has been a vast academic literature attempting to explain variation in attitudes to immigration. Rather than attempt to summarise the entire literature here, I display a proposed "funnel of causality" (Figure 11; see Dennison and Dražanová, 2018, for earlier version) that combines previous explanations and attempts to order them, so that more 'distal' effects (such as the effects of early-life socialisation), which are more stable and have large effects throughout life, are placed on the left, whereas more 'proximal' effects (the effects of day-to-day events such as the receipt of new information), which are more short-term and weaker are on the right. Crucially, an individual's more fundamental characteristics *both* shape the short-term variables (for example, via the choice of the newspaper they receive) and the effects of the short-term variables (for example, the reaction that they have to different forms of messaging).

**Figure 11. Theoretical 'funnel of causality' of attitudes to immigration**



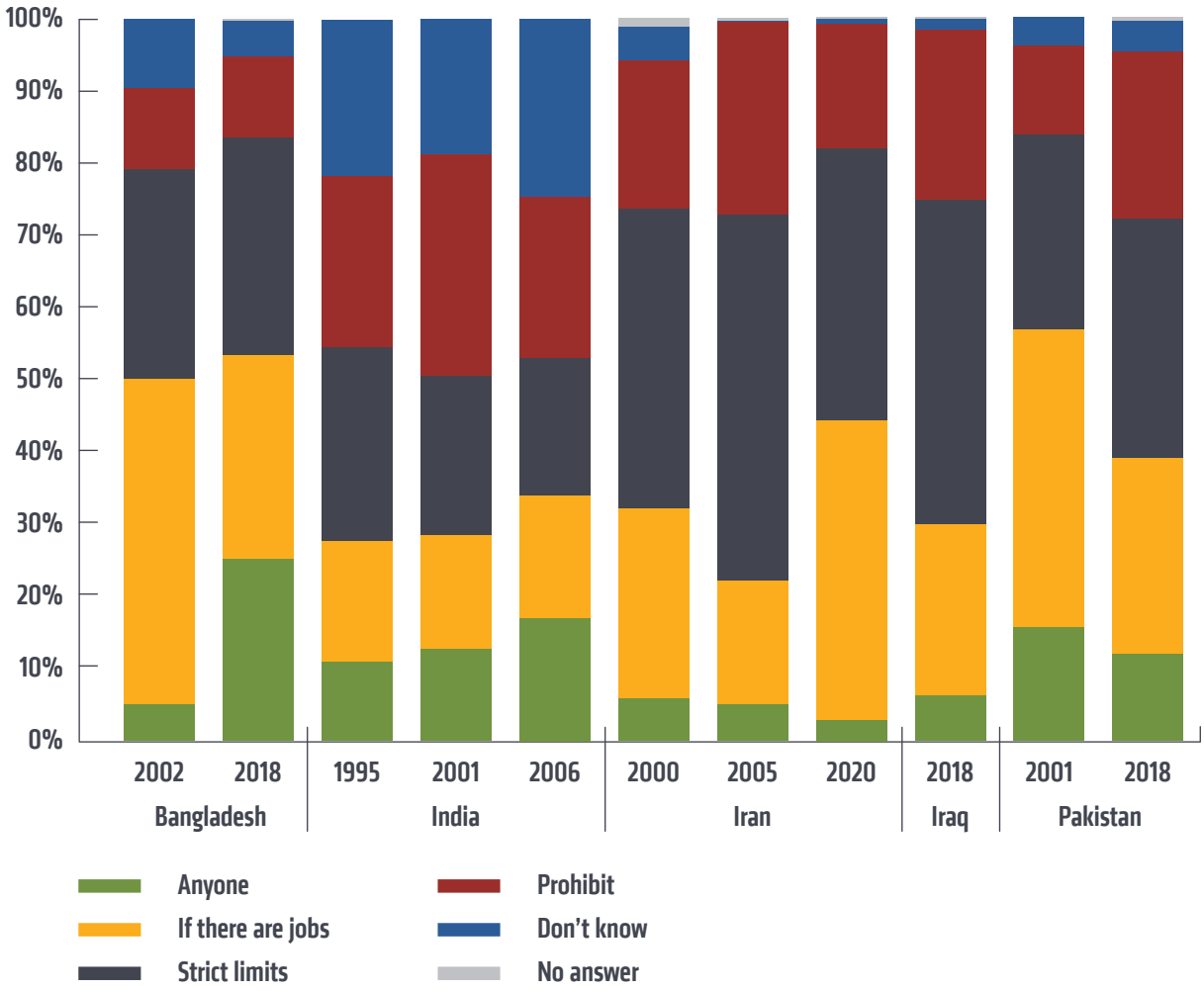
However, although there is a vast literature explaining attitudes to immigration, it is almost entirely based on studies of individuals in developed countries, overwhelmingly in Europe and North America. There are very few studies specifically looking at any of the Silk Routes countries. This is because: (1) there is greater funding for studies in developed countries; (2) immigration is a far more politically salient issue in these countries (whereas in the Silk Routes countries issues of insecurity and unemployment dominate); and (3) there is relatively less data on attitudes to immigration in the Silk Routes countries. A notable exception to this is the World Values Survey, which has asked respondents in a growing number of countries across the world about their attitudes to immigration since the 1980s. Intermittently and increasingly, this has so far included four of the Silk Routes countries: Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan. Below, we consider how responses to questions asking about attitudes to immigration have changed in the region in each wave of the World Values Survey, which uses face-to-face in-home interviews of representative samples of a minimum of 1200 individuals from each country based on a combination of probability and stratified sampling. Full details can be found on the World Values Survey's website.[2]

## How are attitudes to immigration changing in the region?

In Figure 12, we see the main variable of interest when measuring attitudes to immigration, responses to the question 'How about people from other countries coming here to work. Which one of the following do you think the government should do? Let anyone come who wants to; Let people come as long as there are jobs available; Place strict limits on the number of foreigners who can come here; Prohibit people coming here from other countries.' Included are responses from four of the Silk Routes countries as well as India, given its geographical proximity. As we can see, as is the case elsewhere in the world, the distribution of attitudes to immigration is relatively stable across time: with a slight increase in positivity over time in Bangladesh, India and Iran, but a slightly decrease in positivity in Pakistan. Iraq was only surveyed once, in 2018. Of the four Silk Routes countries, by 2018 Bangladesh was the most positive to immigration, followed by Iran, Pakistan and Iraq.

2 http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp

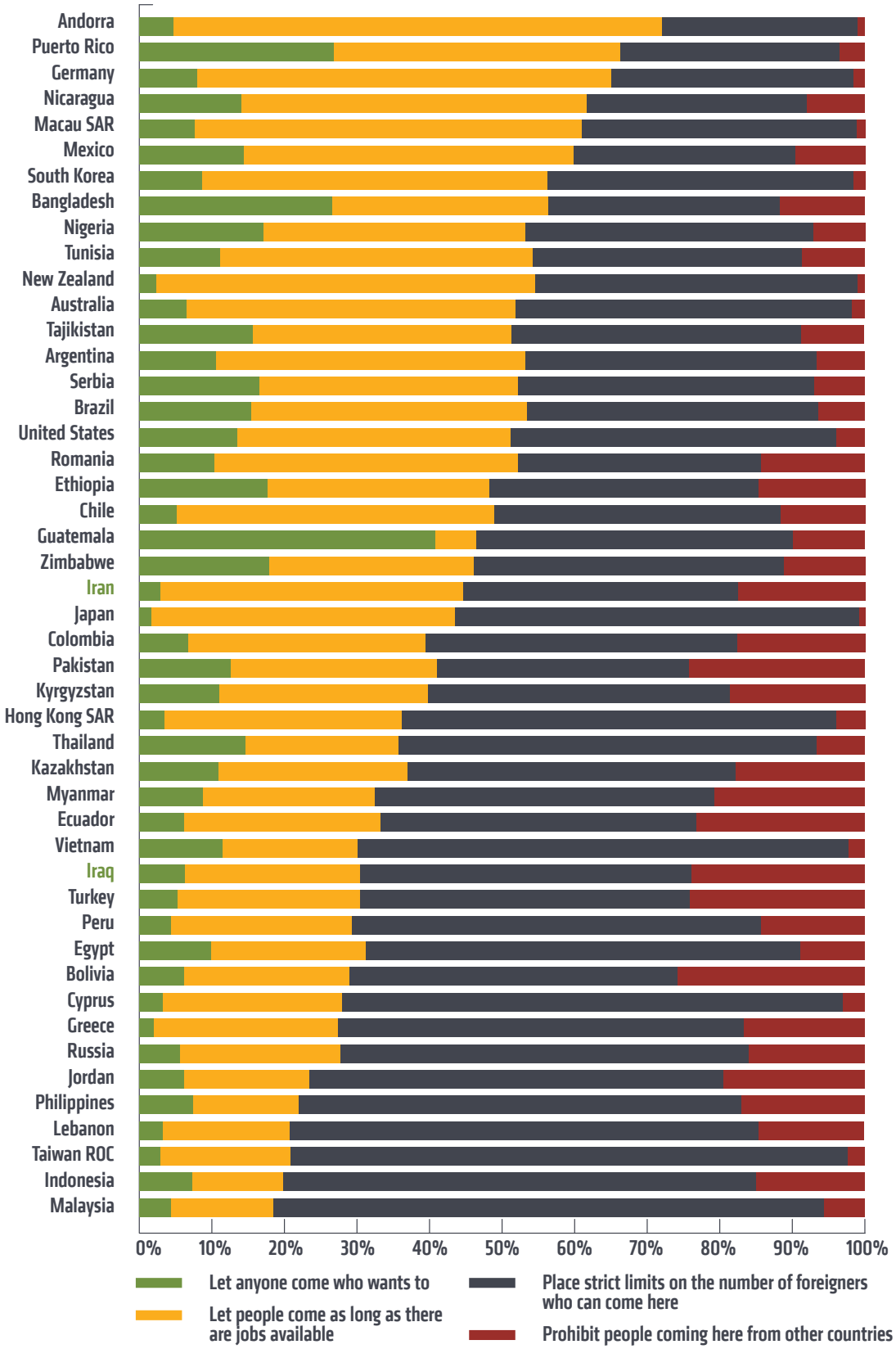
## Figure 12. Immigration policy preferences over time in Bangladesh, India, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan




*Source: World Values Survey*

In Figure 13, below, we can also see how the four Silk Routes countries compare globally in their immigration policy preferences. As we can see, Bangladesh displayed some of the most open attitudes to immigration policy in the world, Iran and Pakistan were around the middle, while Iraq held relatively closed attitudes.

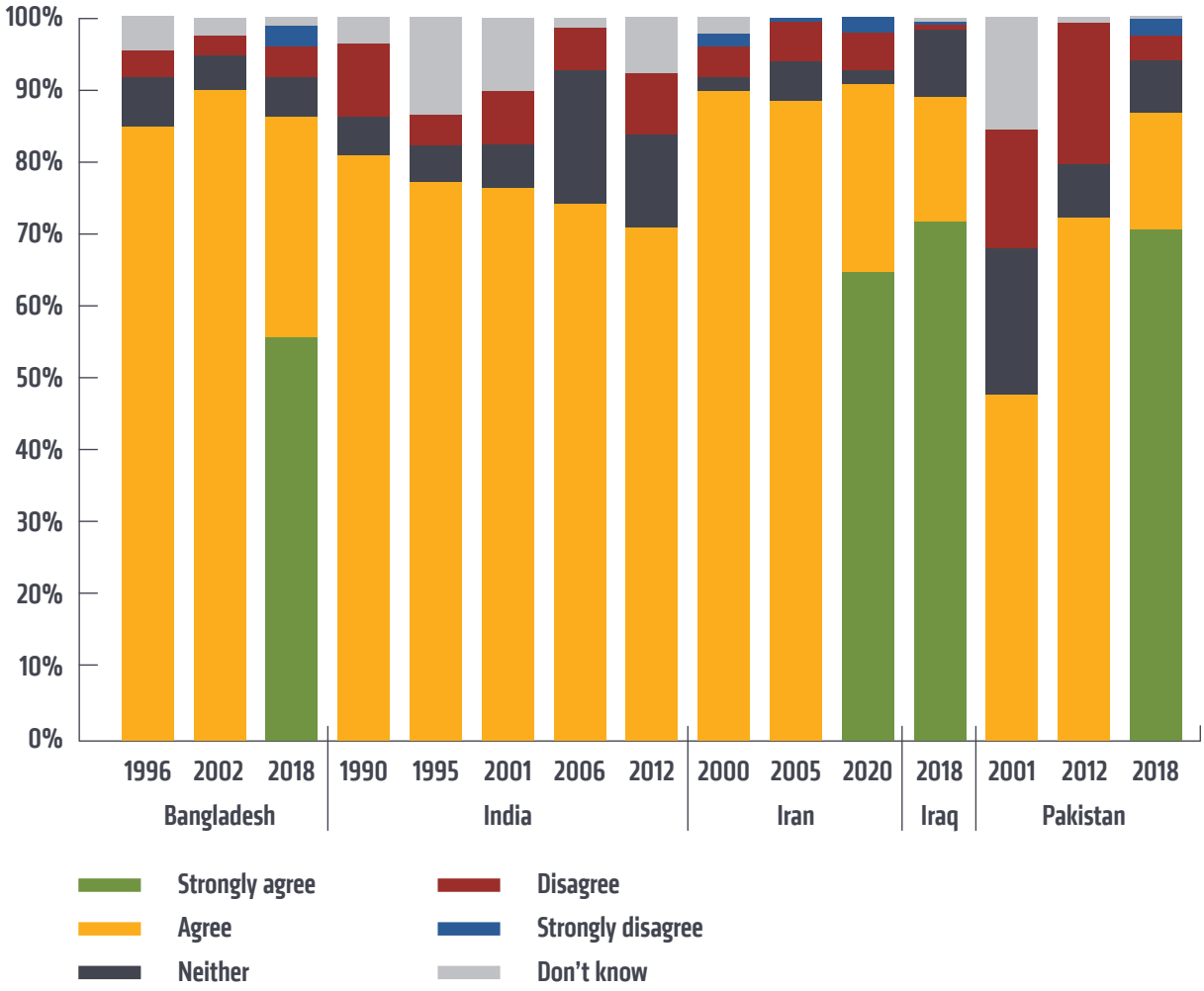
## Figure 13. Immigration policy preferences globally




*Source: World Values Survey, 2017-2020*

We now turn to considering how attitudes to immigrants' participation in the labour market has changed over time in the Silk Routes countries. As shown in Figure 14, there is widespread belief that employers should give priority to nationals over immigrants across all of the countries and across time, something that is a standard trend in the developing world.

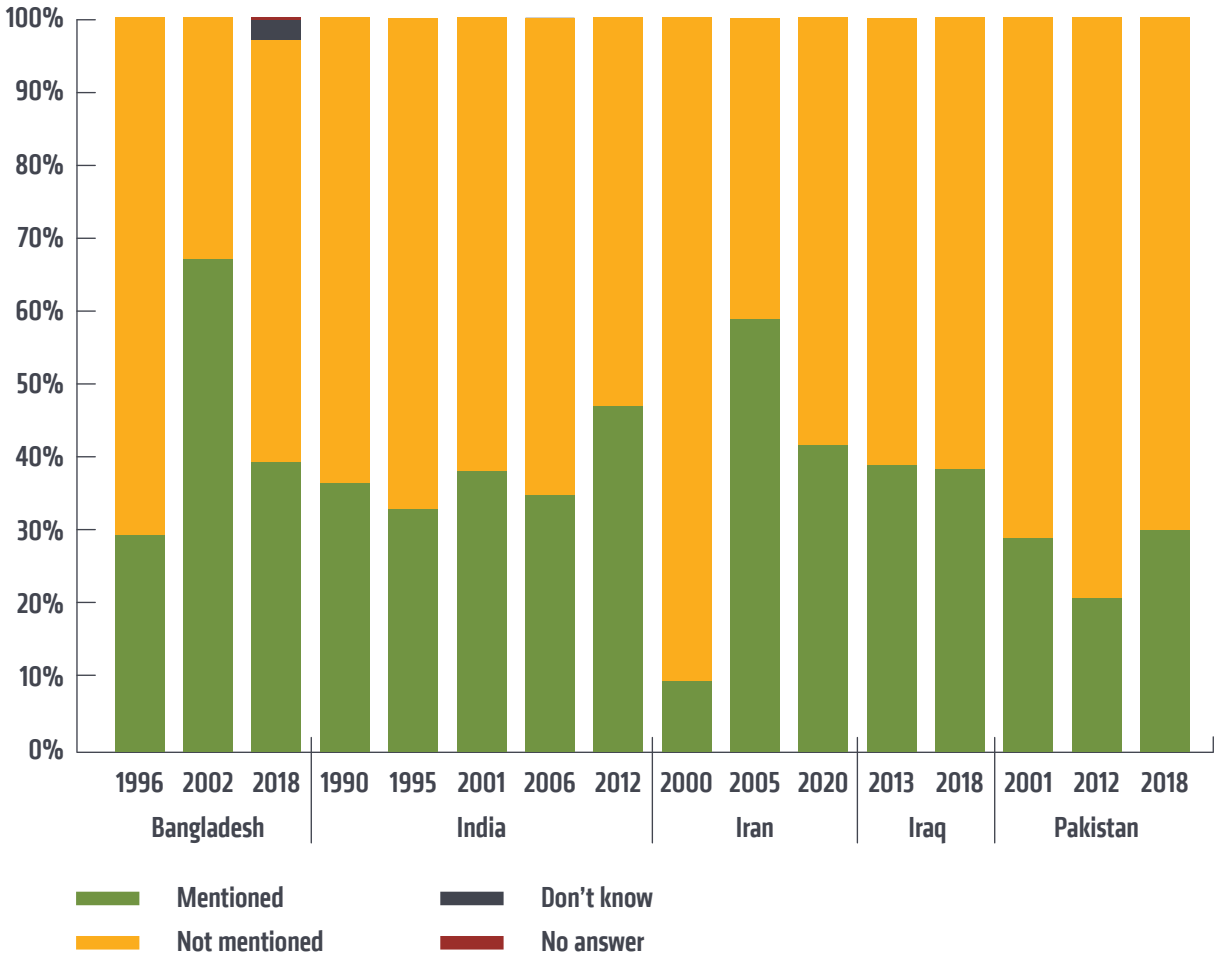
## Figure 14. Belief that employers should give priority to nationals over immigrants in Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, India and Pakistan




*Source: World Values Survey*

Below, in Figure 15, we also consider change over time in attitudes to immigrants in social terms. In every country considered, except Pakistan, there has been a decline the percentage of citizens that state that they would not like to have immigrants or foreign workers as neighbours.

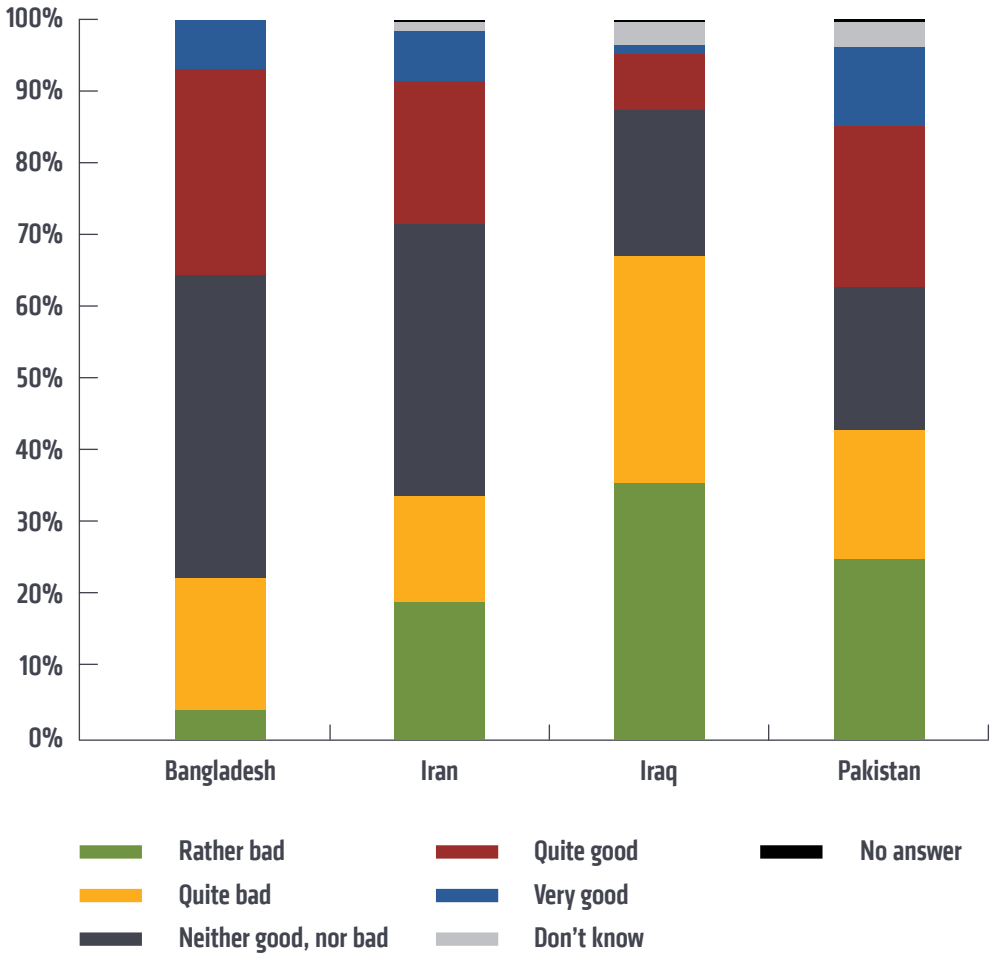
**Figure 15. Proportion mentioning "immigrants or foreign workers" as a group that the respondent would not like having as a neighbour over time in Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, India and Pakistan**




*Source: World Values Survey*

Again, as shown in Figure 16, we see that Bangladeshis are the most positive about the impact of immigration on the development of their country, while Iraqis are the most negative, with Pakistan and Iran somewhere in the middle.

## Figure 16. Perceived impact of immigration on development

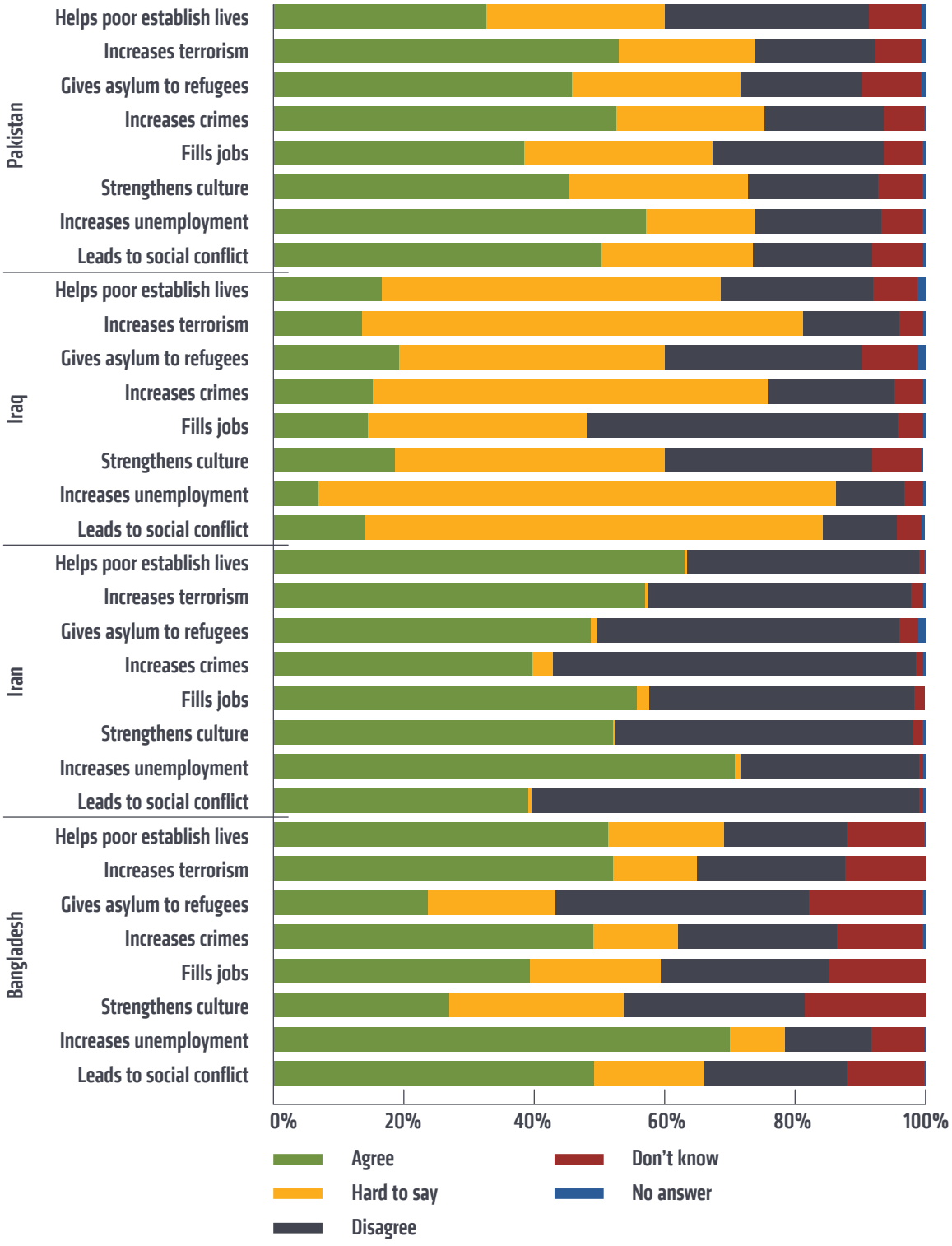



*Source: World Values Survey, 2017-2020*

Notes: Now we would like to know your opinion about the people from other countries who come to live in [your country] - the immigrants. How would you evaluate the impact of these people on the development of [your country]?. Source: World Values Survey (2017-2020)

Finally, in Figure 17, we see the perceived effects of immigration in each of the four countries.

## Figure 17. Perceived effects of immigration in the Silk Routes countries.




*Source: World Values Survey (2017-2020)*

## Evidence from the World Values Survey on the correlates of support for immigration in Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan

Having provided overviews of attitudes to immigration, including change over time, we now turn to analysing the correlates of preferred immigration policy in the four countries. The variables we consider are derived directly from the funnel of causality above, and so are built on previous findings of the determinants of attitudes to immigration, primarily based on studies in Europe and North America. However, the use of 'freedom versus equality' and 'freedom versus security' values and the use of feeling of closeness to country, continent, world and village are relatively novel. For each of the four countries, we compare the socio-demographic, values and identities, political and media profiles of two groups based on the responses to the question 'How about people from other countries coming here to work. Which one of the following do you think the government should do?' On the one hand are those who reply *either* "Let anyone come who wants to" or "Let people come as long as there are jobs available", who we can characterise as relatively pro-immigration, and on the other hand are those who respond "Place strict limits on the number of foreigners who can come here" or "Prohibit people coming here from other countries", who we can characterise as relatively anti-immigration.

As shown in Table 6, unlike the strong age divide that has been demonstrated in "Western" countries, in each of the four Silk Route countries those opposed to immigration are only marginally older, while gender differences are extremely minor. Similarly, tertiary education is only associated with more positive attitudes to immigration in two of the four countries. However, more similar to advanced democracies is the relationship with income, in which those with higher incomes are more pro-immigration in each of the four countries. Even in terms of employment status, only in two countries are those opposing immigration more likely to be unemployed.

### Table 6. Correlates of attitudes to immigration in the Silk Routes region.

| | Bangladesh | | Iran | | Iraq | | Pakistan | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Anyone / with jobs | Strict limits / prohibit | Anyone / with jobs | Strict limits / prohibit | Anyone / with jobs | Strict limits / prohibit | Anyone / with jobs | Strict limits / prohibit |
| | 56.4% | 43.6% | 44.6% | 55.4% | 30.4% | 69.6% | 41.0% | 59.0% |
| **Socio-demographics** | | | | | | | | |
| Age (mean) | 36.5 | 36.7 | 38.5 | 40.1 | 35.8 | 36.8 | 34.0 | 36.9 |
| Gender (% female) | 51.9 | 47.6 | 48.8 | 49.0 | 48.0 | 49.7 | 52.4 | 42.8 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Education** | | | | | | | | |
| Primary | 46.7 | 44.9 | 12.4 | 15.5 | 31.5 | 32.7 | 39.4 | 45.4 |
| Secondary | 44.7 | 44.7 | 13.1 | 16.4 | 41.3 | 34.4 | 34.5 | 34.8 |
| Post-Secondary | 0.8 | 1.6 | 44.9 | 44.0 | 13.2 | 13.1 | 15.3 | 11.3 |
| Tertiary | 7.8 | 8.9 | 29.6 | 24.1 | 14.0 | 19.9 | 10.9 | 8.5 |
| Income (mean national decile membership) | 5.7 | 5.4 | 4.1 | 3.8 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.7 | 4.3 |
| **Employment status** | | | | | | | | |
| Full-time | 10.8 | 12.9 | 16.5 | 17.6 | 22.8 | 22.4 | 27.5 | 37.6 |
| Part-time | 7.8 | 6.1 | 8.0 | 7.3 | 12.3 | 6.5 | 8.2 | 8.4 |
| Self-employed | 24.0 | 26.4 | 14.7 | 13.8 | 14.0 | 12.1 | 11.4 | 11.0 |
| Retired | 1.9 | 1.0 | 6.2 | 5.6 | 10.8 | 6.0 | 1.8 | 1.6 |
| Housewife | 44.1 | 41.3 | 22.5 | 27.6 | 22.2 | 34.5 | 42.1 | 35.7 |
| Student | 7.6 | 7.9 | 14.2 | 8.8 | 7.4 | 7.5 | 4.1 | 2.2 |
| Unemployed | 3.9 | 4.4 | 16.3 | 19.0 | 10.5 | 10.2 | 4.9 | 3.6 |
| Children (mean) | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.4 | 1.7 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 2.8 |
| **Values and identities** | | | | | | | | |
| Would fight for country? (% yes) | 94.9 | 96.4 | 70.8 | 76.0 | 78.9 | 81.2 | 83.6 | 81.4 |
| % say freedom more important than equality | 73.2 | 75.6 | 31.1 | 32.1 | 39.1 | 37.6 | 66.4 | 66.3 |
| % say freedom more important than security | 24.5 | 29.1 | 18.6 | 12.2 | 11.1 | 9.3 | 44.3 | 45.6 |
| Feel close to country? (% very) | 40.1 | 48.4 | 80.5 | 83.2 | 70.6 | 79.0 | 74.9 | 79.1 |
| Feel close to continent? (% very or close) | 35.9 | 48.3 | 52.1 | 58.1 | 62.6 | 61.0 | 79.0 | 80.2 |
| Feel close to world (% very or close) | 37.2 | 37.9 | 76.6 | 75.7 | 67.0 | 60.7 | 80.6 | 78.1 |
| Feel close to village, town, city (% very) | 82.8 | 83.9 | 70.7 | 76.0 | 71.8 | 85.6 | 81.4 | 84.6 |
| % say that most people can be trusted | 16.9 | 8.7 | 16.5 | 13.5 | 13.9 | 10.1 | 27.2 | 21.6 |
| **Politics** | | | | | | | | |
| Left-right self-placement | 7.2 | 7.2 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Confidence in Parliament? (% a great deal / quite a lot) | 75.2 | 78.9 | 59.5 | 68.9 | 16.2 | 10.6 | 52.7 | 57.0 |
| **Media** | | | | | | | | |
| Social media use (% daily or more) | 15.1 | 17.7 | 65.8 | 57.7 | 47.3 | 58.4 | 15.1 | 11.4 |
| **Immigration perceptions** | | | | | | | | |
| Leads to social conflict (% agree) | 50.7 | 66.7 | 23.3 | 52.8 | 20.5 | 11.7 | 42.9 | 63.5 |
| Good for culture (% agree) | 40.9 | 23.1 | 56.7 | 47.5 | 19.0 | 21.3 | 45.1 | 52.2 |
| Increases unemployment (% agree) | 68.5 | 87.3 | 56.7 | 83.5 | 12.2 | 4.6 | 49.1 | 68.8 |

*Source: World Values Survey (2017-2020)*

Onto values and identities, in three of the four countries, those opposed to immigration are more likely to say that they would be willing to fight for their respective country. However, the differences are small. Onto deeper values, there is practically no difference in any of the countries between the two groups in belief that freedom is more important than equality, or *vice versa*, nor do we see consistent differences between the groups in propensity to believe that freedom is more important than security. Only when we look at attachment to country do we begin to see consistent patterns emerge, with those opposed to immigration more likely to feel close to their country, as we would expect from the extant literature. Similarly, in Bangladesh and Iran we see large differences between the two groups on feeling close to their continent and, in three of the countries, those who favour immigration are more likely to feel closer to the world. In every country, those opposed to immigration are more likely to feel close to their village or town. Those opposed to immigration tend to be less trusting of people in every country, a finding consistent with the literature.

Politically, those opposed to immigration tend to have more confidence in parliament, in three of the countries, clearly in contrast to the findings on 'populism' in western countries. There is no consistent relationship with social media use and attitudes to immigration across the four countries. Finally, in every country except Iraq, those opposed to immigration are far more likely to believe that it leads to social conflict and that it increases unemployment, while the relationship with belief that it is good for culture is considerably more ambiguous, suggesting the former two concerns drive opposition.

# Conclusion

Understanding and explaining attitudes to migration in the Silk Routes countries is key for policymakers to better ensure safe, orderly and regular migration. By explaining both propensity to migrate and attitudes to immigration, policymakers can better design interventions and sustainable policy frameworks that help to discourage irregular migration and reduce xenophobia to immigrants. As such, this report offered an initial description and explanation of propensity to emigrate and attitudes to immigration in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan by drawing on scholarly theoretical advances, studies in those specific countries and original empirical analyses.

In terms of propensity to emigrate, this report offers a number of key findings. Theoretically, it suggests that, in addition, to existing political, economic and socio-demographic factors, a further avenue of research that should be explored is the extent to which psychological factors—in terms of values, personalities, identities, mental health and anxieties—affect one's propensity to migrate. Given their intimate relationship with the other factors, isolating psychological factors would require more advanced research methods. However, such findings would be extremely useful in the creation of more effective interventions, particularly those that seek to correct misperceptions about either emigration or immigration. Empirically, this report considers the key trends in the region, which are already reasonably well known. In short, there have been notable upticks in propensity to emigrate in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2008, strong declines in Pakistan and Bangladesh and relative stability in Iran. However, there remains a paucity of data in most countries.

We then move onto an in-depth study of Iraq that shows that around 67 per cent of citizens have not thought of emigrating while 33 per cent of citizens have: 20 per cent who would not emigrate without papers and 12 per cent who would. The reports presents results from an logistic model showing that the key determinants of wanting to migrate—regardless of regularity –are: youth, education, unemployment or low income, being less religious, feeling unsafe of insecurity, having experienced depression in the last six months and holding more pessimistic views of Iraq's economic and political situation. Of those willing to migrate, the key determinants of being willing to do so without papers are: being male, being unemployed or with a low income, being pessimistic about the future economic situation of the country, social media use and trust, receiving remittances and not feeling stressed by life.

In terms of attitudes to immigration, the report also overviews the key theoretical findings from the literature before empirically showing that attitudes in the region are typical of the developing world in that they are driven by economic concerns of competition over employment and the threat of social conflict, rather than the cultural issues more typical of 'western' countries and East Asia. However, in terms of the socio-demographic and psychological differences between those who are pro- and anti-immigration, we do not see the clear polarisation witnessed in "western" countries.

The above findings lead to the following recommendations. First, there is little high-quality publicly available data on propensity to emigrate in the region—this almost certainly has held back our understanding of the causes of emigration in the reason and its rectification should be a top priority for policymakers. Second, thereafter, the efficacy of current and future interventions, which attempt to correct misperceptions about irregular migration—a major driver of irregular migration—or about immigration, should be tested via impact assessment or social scientific methods based on causal inference. In the long-term this will the quality of such interventions. Recent impact assessments by the IOM can be used in this sense as examples (e.g. Dunsch et al, 2019). Third, researchers should consider the psychological profile of potential emigrants and host populations when designing interventions; this will require more data and in-depth studies. Fourth, the drivers of attitudes to immigration are partially distinct in the Silk Routes countries to those in "western" countries. As such, assumptions regarding the transferability of findings should be avoided and, instead, new studies should be made identifying the key causes of variation in the region which can then be linked theoretically with previous findings.

# References


Adams, Helen, Susan Kay. 2019. Migration as a human affair: Integrating individual stress thresholds into quantitative models of climate migration, Environmental Science & Policy, Volume 93, Pages 129-138

Aqeel, Anjum, 2015. "Determinants of Migration in Pakistan," EcoMod 2015 8588, EcoMod.

Ashourizadeh S. (2017) Iranian Entrepreneurs at Home and in Diaspora: Entrepreneurial Competencies, Exporting, Innovation and Growth-Expectations. In: Rezaei S., Dana LP., Ramadani V. (eds) Iranian Entrepreneurship. Springer, Cham.

Begović, Selena, Lejla Lazović-Pita, Velma Pijalović & Bojan Baskot (2020) An investigation of determinants of youth propensity to emigrate from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja, 33:1, 2574-2590, DOI: 10.1080/1331677X.2020.1754267

Benček, D. and C. Schneiderheize. 2020. Higher economic growth in poor countries, lower migration flows to the OECD – Revisiting the migration hump with panel data. Kiel Working Papers, 2145 https://www.ifw-kiel.de/publications/kiel-working-papers/higher-economic-growth-in-poor-countries-lower-migration-flows-to-the-oecd-revisiting-the-migration-hump-with-panel-data-14974/

Bertoli, S. and I. Ruyssen 2016. Networks and Migrants' Intended Destination. IZA Discussion Papers, No. 10213. Bonn: IZA.

Black, Richard , W. Neil Adger, Nigel W. Arnell, Stefan Dercon, Andrew Geddes, David Thomas. 2011. The effect of environmental change on human migration, Global Environmental Change, Volume 21, Supplement 1, S3-S11

Carling, Jørgen. 2002. 'Migration in the Age of Involuntary Immobility : Theoretical Reflections and Cape Verdean Experiences'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28(1):5–42

Carling, Jørgen and Kerilyn Schewel. 2018. 'Revisiting Aspiration and Ability in International Migration'.*Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44(6):945–63

Carling, Jørgen and Francis Collins. 2017. 'Aspiration , Desire and Drivers of Migration'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44(6):909–26

Carrico, A.R., Donato, K. Extreme weather and migration: evidence from Bangladesh. Popul Environ 41, 1–31 (2019).

Chatelard, Géraldine. 2012. The Politics Of Population Movements In Contemporary Iraq: A Research Agenda. Writing the Modern History of Iraq, 359-378

Chowdhurt, S., Mobarak, A. M., Byran, G. 'Migrating Away from a Seasonal Famine: A Randomized Intervention in Bangladesh'. Human Development Research Paper 2009/41

Clist, P, Restelli, G. 2020. Development aid and international migration to Italy: Does aid reduce irregular flows?. *World Econ*. ; 00: 1– 31.

Cohen, R. 1987. *The New Helots: Migrants in the International Division of Labour*. Aldershot: Gower.

Crawley, Heaven & Dimitris Skleparis (2018) Refugees, migrants, neither, both: categorical fetishism and the politics of bounding in Europe's 'migration crisis', Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 44:1, 48-64

Dao, T.H., F. Docquier, C. Parsons, Giovanni Peri 2018. Migration and development: Dissecting the anatomy of the mobility transition, *Journal of Development Economics*, 132: 88-101, availableon: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S030438781730113X.

David, A and Jarreau, J. (2016) Determinants of Emigration: Evidence from Egypt. Economic Research Forum. Working paper series no. 987. Accessed at https://erf.org.eg/app/uploads/2016/04/987.pdf on 2 December, 2020

Dekker, R. and G. Engbersen 2013. How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration, *Global Networks*, 14: 401-418, https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12040.

Dennison, J. and Dražanová, L. (2018) Attitudes to Immigration in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean. ICMPD report. https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/62348

Dennison, J., Davidov, E., and Seddig, D. (2020) 'Explaining Voting in the UK's 2016 EU Referendum: Basic Human Values, Attitudes to Immigration, European Identity and Trust in Politicians' in Social Science Research

Dimitradi, A. 2018. Irregular Afghan Migration to Europe: At the Margins, Looking in. Palgrave Macmillan: ebook.

Dreher, Axel & Fuchs, Andreas & Langlotz, Sarah, 2019. "The effects of foreign aid on refugee flows," European Economic Review, Elsevier, vol. 112(C), pages 127-147

Dunsch, F., D. Tjaden and W. Quiviger (2019): Migrants as Messengers: The Impact of Peer-to-Peer Communication on Potential Migrants in Senegal. Impact Evaluation Report. International Organization for Migration, Geneva.

Dustmann, C. and Okatenko, A. 2014. Out-migration, wealth constraints, and the quality of local amenities. Journal of Development Economics, 110:52-63

Eklund, L., Pilesjo, P. 2012. 'Migration Patterns in Duhok Governate, Iraq, 2000-2010', The Open Geography Journal. 5: 48-58

Esipova, N., J. Ray and A. Pugliese 2011. *The Many Faces of Global Migration*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Etzold, Benjamin, Ahsan Uddin Ahmed, Selim Reza Hassan & Sharmind Neelormi (2014) Clouds gather in the sky, but no rain falls. Vulnerability to rainfall variability and food insecurity in Northern Bangladesh and its effects on migration, Climate and Development, 6:1, 18-27,

Garrote Sanchez, D. 2018. Managed Labor Migration in Afghanistan: Demographic Profile, Short-Term Projections, and Supply of Migration in Afghanistan. World Bank, 'other papers'. Accessed at https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/29278 on 4 December 2020.

Harpviken, K, 2009. Social Networks and Migration in Wartime Afghanistan. Palgrave Macmillan: ebook.

Hiskey, J., J.D. Montalvo and D. Orcés 2014. Democracy, Governance, and Emigration Intentions in Latin America and the Caribbean, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 49: 89-111, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-014-9150-6.

Holland, A., & Peters, M. (2020). Explaining Migration Timing: Political Information and Opportunities. *International Organization, 74*(3), 560-583. doi:10.1017/S002081832000017X

IMF (International Monetary Fund). (2020). "World Economic Outlook - GDP per capita". International Monetary Fund. October 2020. Retrieved 13 October 2020.

IOM. 2016. Migration Flows from Iraq to Europe: Reasons Behind Migration. Accessed online at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CMFS%20-%20IRQ%20-%20Reasons%20for%20Migration.pdf

Joarder, Mohammad Abdul Munim, Paul W. Miller. 2013. Factors affecting whether environmental migration is temporary or permanent: Evidence from Bangladesh, Global Environmental Change, Volume 23, Issue 6, Pages 1511-1524

Kustov, A. (2020) 'Bloom where you're planted': explaining public opposition to (e)migration, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2020.1754770

Lagakos, D, Mobarak, A. M., Waugh, M. E. 2018. The Welfare Effects of Encouraging Rural-Urban Migration. National Bureau of Economic Research. Working Paper 24193, accessed at https://www.nber.org/papers/w24193 on 5 December 2020.

Lakha, I. A. and F. Aziz. 2011. 'Trends of Manpower Migration from Pakistan'. Interdisciplinary Journal Of Contemporary Research In Business, 3(4): 489-499

Loschmann, C. and Siegel, M. 2015. 'Revisiting the motivations behind remittance behaviour: evidence of debt-financed migration from Afghanistan'. Migration Letters, 1:38-49

Mai, N. 2005. The Albanian Diaspora-in-the-Making: Media, Migration and Social Exclusion, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31, 543-561, https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830500058737.

Mendola, Mariapia. 2008. Migration and technological change in rural households: Complements or substitutes?, Journal of Development Economics, Volume 85, Issues 1–2, Pages 150-175,

Migali, S. and M. Scipioni 2018. A global analysis of intentions to migrate. JRC Technical Reports, JRC111207, Ispra: European Commission.

Penning-Rowsell, Edmund C.  Parvin Sultana, Paul M. Thompson, 2013. 'The 'last resort'? Population movement in response to climate-related hazards in Bangladesh', Environmental Science & Policy, Volume 27, Supplement 1, Pages S44-S59,

Schwartz, Shalom H. 1992. "Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 25 (January 1, 1992): 1–65. doi:10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60281-6.

Sharma, Manohar, and Hassan Zaman. "Who Migrates Overseas And Is It Worth Their While? An Assessment Of Household Survey Data From Bangladesh." The Journal of Developing Areas, vol. 47, no. 1, 2013, pp. 281–302., www.jstor.org/stable/23612270. Accessed 12 Dec. 2020.

Sirkeci, I. (2005), War in Iraq: Environment of Insecurity and International Migration. International Migration, 43: 197-214. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2005.00338.x

Ullah, A. 2004. Bright City Lights and Slums of Dhaka city: Determinants of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh. Migration letters, 1: 26-41.

Uprety, Dambar (2017) The impact of international trade on emigration in developing countries, The Journal of International Trade & Economic Development, 26:8, 907-923

Van Dalen, H.P. and K. Henkens 2007. Longing for the Good Life: Understanding Emigration from a High-Income Country, Population and Development Review, 33: 37-66, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2007.00158.x.

Zangeneh, H. 2004, "Socioeconomic Trends in Iran: Successes and Failures", The Muslim World, vol. 94, no. 4, pp. 481-493.