Developing a sustainable and adaptable model for the process of nationalisation within a business context in a post-conflict environment: Evolving a model from South Iraq

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Abstract

Previous research on workforce nationalisation has focused primarily on locations within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states (Randeree, 2012). These locations have social order and a governmental structure in place that supports nationalisation projects. There is a gap in research that considers workforce nationalisation in post-conflict countries.

Post-conflict countries such as Iraq, which is the focus location for this research are similar to the GCC states with high levels of expatriates. Iraq is currently stabilising after the second Gulf war in 2003. The country then descended into a violent insurgency that threatened to evolve into full civil war. The sociocultural complexity resulting from this episode remains in the current day reality in Iraq. The lack of employment opportunities for Iraqi nationals continues to fuel discontentment that often erupts in violence. This study considers the additional complexity of workforce nationalisation in post-conflict countries, using the oil industry in post-conflict Iraq to support the research.

The study was conducted with the researcher acting as a participant-observer within the oil and gas industry in Southern Iraq. The observations focussed on Iraqi employees within the workplace; discussing their experiences of conflict and workforce nationalisation. The observations and discussions were developed into a narrative analysis to identify opportunities to enhance the process.

The research thesis contributes a learning opportunity on the social and cultural complexities existing in a post-conflict Iraq. It takes the experiences and proposes a sustainable model for organisations to utilise when considering entering a post-conflict location. The model provides a structured approach to pre-entry planning and research by using the outcomes of this research to enhance success likelihood. It provides a three-stage approach to establishing an international business into a national post-conflict environment. The model provides utility through a heightened level of awareness of the business environment that is yet to come.

Acknowledgements

Table of contents

Table of figures

1. Chapter 1: Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction

The fall of Saddam Hussein began on the 20th March 2003 resulting in an opportunity for international oil and gas operators to enter and cultivate the considerable national crude oil inventories. The people of Iraq initially welcomed the coalition forces and their fight to free them from the grip of a dictatorship. The initial positive reception then descended into a period of internal violence with multiple insurgent groups targeting the military and ethnic divides (Stiglitz and Bilmes, 2008). The high levels of violence did not deter the international oil operators who utilised the vast array of private security services now establishing in Iraq (Pillar, 2018). This situation is not unique to Iraq and instability results in social and economic challenges that endure long after the last shot is fired in anger.

The provision of oil and gas expertise is consistent in the Middle East with a strong representation of expatriates in the workforce. The requirement to remain competitive within a business context-specific to South Iraq is frequently compromised by the enormous costs involved in security provision for expatriates. Here, for example, all non-Iraq passport holders must be transported by private security companies; the cost of this is huge. Part of the restructuring of Iraq, following the warfighting phase was to develop the country's natural resources to enable it to create an effective economy supported by the rich natural resources. Oil and gas companies have now spent many years developing the business model and structures for these operations supported by expatriates in the key management positions.

As previously seen in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Mashood, Verhoeven and Chansarkar, 2009), the typical development model for growing the oil and gas industry was to rely on expatriate assistance until the industry is in a stable state. At which point, the process of nationalising the workforce at all levels is initiated. The transfer of responsibility will be slow, strategic and staged from expatriates to local national[1] workers.

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[1] A citizen of that country.

Waxin and Bateman (2016) researched localisation (nationalisation) in the Gulf States, identifying that the public sectors were at a tipping point in terms of employment of nationals. The public sector was identified as being the sector at the highest saturation point and now struggled to absorb any further nationals. The private sector employed a large number of foreign workers, so the issue of employment of local nationals was considered one of strategic national importance. They also identified the difficulty of managing a local and foreign workforce from a human resource perspective, with often stark workforce segmentation occurring where neither section of the workforce would communicate or work together. These findings concerning the private and public sectors were supported by Dedousis and Rutter (2016), who identified that over 90% of nationals were employed in the public sector.

Foreign workers make up to 90% of the workforce in the private sector in the UAE and Qatar, with Saudi Arabia currently counting around 40% of its workforce as expatriates (Al Maskari, 2013). Programmes within the Gulf States have previously been launched to facilitate localisation or nationalisation of the private sector; however, this was resisted and has seen limited results (Salem and Dajani, 2013). Examples have been seen in Oman where legislation was issued requiring minimum targets for local employees, with fines and legal consequences for those not meeting the targets (Randeree, 2009). Other states have used a different approach; the UAE, for instance, offered incentives to organisations such as tax relief on local employees due to the high local unemployment rate of around 15% in 2012 (Zahran, 2013).

The consequences of the presence of expatriate workers when there are high levels of local unemployment could lead to social difficulties and as such, is one of high importance in the region (Alwasmi, 2014). The presence of oil in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) regions has created an influx of expatriate workers; the need for effective educational packages and policies to create economic diversification and employment for locals is of paramount importance to governments (Forstenlechner and Rutledge, 2010). The expansion of numbers of expatriate workers can have long-term economic, social and political consequences. Therefore, the ability to transition effectively to a national workforce is paramount (Rees, Mamman and Braik, 2007).

This conventional process is now underway in South Iraq, focusing on the oil and gas industry. Drawing on unique access from within the process, the author proposes to document from this normally inaccessible location and capture both (a): how effective the process of nationalisation is, concerning the handover of key business and management aspects in terms of the sustainability of the handover and (b): identify areas of improvement and alternative approaches that could enhance the sustainability of nationalisation using the oil and gas industry located in Iraq. The style and tone of writing within this thesis will change to adapt to the specifics of each chapter or section. Some chapters will embrace the thick description approach of Geertz (1973) to immerse the reader into the situation and reality; thick description will be discussed in detail in chapter 3. There are other chapters where a more formal and academic tone is demonstrated that emphasises the specifics of the chapter or section. This has been undertaken to provide the reader with a dynamic and varied experience; building on the data collected and utlilised in the creation of the model provided in chapter 6.

1.2   Initial journey

To set the scene correctly, the section of this chapter will provide some background and a few examples of the reality of working in Iraq. The first understandable question may be, "How on earth does one end up working in Iraq?" The researcher was previously a British Army Soldier before branching out into Health and Safety Management. This career change resulted in an opportunity to undertake a senior management role for an oil and gas company providing oil field services, located in Basra. The researcher's position concerning the research methods and potential ethical issues are discussed in-depth in chapter three. The early start in Iraq presented some questions on the national workforce based on the researcher's own experiences and thus presented the research problem that later resulted in this thesis. Between 2014 and 2020, the researcher worked and lived with the national workforce and other expatriates, and it soon became apparent that the nationalisation process seemed to be undeveloped. This question prompted the researcher, and subsequent time was spent looking at other locations and the status of nationalisation. The additional complexity of the past and ongoing conflict issues added a further dimension to the researcher, who then committed to undertake a formalised look

into the reality and opportunities for progression. The more expansive locations, as mentioned previously, had more formalised approaches to nationalisation and had even launched government-backed plans to enhance the width and depth of the national workforces in their countries. Iraq, however, seemed to just remain static in this area, more focussed on a day by day reality. The researcher considered the time in-country as an opportunity to understand better how the current reality developed. This created the ability to question what alternative realities could have been presented had the approach been more structured and applied. It may surprise some readers why the researcher, who himself was an expatriate, would seek to question his occupation and employment potential. By doing so, this could ultimately reduce employment opportunities for the researcher and his peers. The response to this is honest and straightforward; it is the right thing to do for the broader good of the social and economic future for locations such as Iraq.

1.3 The first visit – A reality check

The researcher arrived in Iraq and was met with armed security services to move to the base location after having sat in the airport visa office for over four hours. The reception process was unusual and required a copy of a letter in Arabic that had to be handed to the visa officer on arrival. It is mentioned as it allows the reader to take a deeper part and thus to understand the nature and reality of Iraq in modern-day society. This, when compared with first world locations, may shock many but may also help others to understand the wider global employment and social challenges. The airport journey was one of many unusual and unique experiences that the researcher undertook. Faced with a queue of eager Chinese nationals, the researcher avidly made his way to the 1980's style glass booth to be faced with a stern-looking immigration official. Handing over the letter with the name highlighted along with the passport was slightly unnerving on the first occasion; it became a well-known process in the years of visiting the country. The official barked to sit down in a glass fenced area that many named 'The goldfish bowl.' The reason for this name is that you could spend many hours sat there and not remember anything. The sad reality is this was a very accurate reflection of how the early stage was, unstructured and outdated, the process of even entering the country was.

Time spent sat waiting was not wasted, once the current passport and visa holders were processed from the incoming flights. The group of immigration officers would file into the goldfish bowl desk area and start writing, taking phone calls and writing again. The intriguing aspect is that many of the companies that had employees waiting would have Public Relations Officers (PROs). The PROs were usually referred to as 'Fixers' based on the fact that through their connections, they could fix things. Different fixers would come to the side of the visa area and shout to the immigration officers, who would go and greet them. Many quick discussions in Arabic occurred and often ended in pointing to their company's staff sat with wide eyes waiting to be called forward. It was followed by a nod, handshake, and the immigration officer would return to their seat and carry on with their writing. The passports it seems were passed from one end of the office to the other, where the head official was sat. Various activities were occurring behind the desk; sadly, photos are banned in this location, so there was no such option to allow the reader to visualise it further. The passports made their way down to the last and most senior officer who would then use a stamp to forcibly pound each passport, each time it was thumped down it made most of the people seated jump. Taking moments to admire their heavy-handed work, they would then shout out a name, often back to front!

After many hours sat on a school like plastic chair, the researcher had his name called, again back to front, taking a moment to catch on, which seemed to infuriate further the official who cast a disproving look as he arrived at the glass window. The passport was held tight as the official quickly said "Two hundred and two," referring to the cost of the visa. Two hundred and fifty dollars were passed over, which the researcher has been issued at the currency exchange, the official looked up and in perfect English said, "Sorry but I have no change." That was that, and the additional United States Dollars were lost to wherever they were to settle, forever finally. It was one mistake that was never repeated when it came to renewing the one-year multi-entry visa. Two hundred and two dollars exactly was handed over for the coming years with unbelievable efficiency. Passport in hand, alongside two handwritten receipts that allowed the cost to be reclaimed, the journey then started. The initial reception into the country was stern and, if honest, somewhat frightening, taking into context that the researcher had previously served in Afghanistan. However, this time, it was a journey without the support of the British Army.

The stamps were a status symbol that would become more apparent as time passed, the entry booth had a relaxed immigration officer who sat with their hand hanging out of the small opening for passports and would beckon people forward. A standard Arabic greeting was offered by the researcher as the passport was offered at the page with the new visa to the officer, who grabbed the passport and closed it fully! Lots of hand movements later (the strange activities that no one ever gets to see under a covert counter at immigration locations) and a stamp was again heavily added to the passport. The page used was halfway through the passport in the middle of the page, rather than other pages where stamps had been applied previously.

The researcher would quickly learn, would eat up pages in a passport at an accelerated rate. Off to collect baggage from the singular carriage that was sounding near exhaustion. The bag was in sight, and once able to navigate through the people gathered around the conveyor, the bag was retrieved, and the researcher was off towards the inbound passengers' custom checks. It comprised of an x-ray machine (standard process) and a walkthrough metal detector followed by a physical check by a customs official of every passenger entering Basra. The search was more of a pat on various parts of the body, followed by a need to run to the exit of the x-ray machine, as the conveyor belt came to an abrupt end and dumped the contents on the floor. A Russian national failed to reach this in time, and their glass bottles of vodka were no more, reflection showing that alcohol was indeed allowed into the country. Other bags followed that hit the floor and then smelt heavily of vodka for the remainder of their trip.

The fixers were stood with boards of the various companies ready for onward travel, the company fixer was identified, and an approach made, feeling more like a cold-war spy scenario, the researcher sheepishly stated their name to the fixer. "Good, sit there" was the quick reply, and the researcher sat on another seat of equal discomfort levels as had been previously experienced. Two hours passed before the then group were beckoned to follow the fixer, out of the terminal building, and into an extremely hot minibus. Onwards to the 'Dustbowl' the fixer said, named that as it was a bowl-shaped area harbouring only security teams and sand (dust). The minibus came to an abrupt halt and out stepped a large and heavily tattooed security team leader. The team leader was an ex-parachute regiment soldier and had retained the communication approach of a junior commander,

quickly and efficiently briefing everyone on what would happen next. Behind the team leader was a selection of armoured Toyota land cruisers, commonly called B6's. Bags are thrown into one of the vehicles, and the travellers were directed to another vehicle where they were met by a vehicle commander. The commander then ran everyone through an 'actions on' briefing, designed to scare the living wits out of most of us. The vehicle had two security staff in the front; both had tactical vests and body armour on and Kalashnikov variant(s) weapon systems down the side of the vehicle cockpit area. Lots of radio messages bounced back and forth, and the convoy of expatriate workers was ready to head for their new home.

The airport was an old British Army location and still had remnants of this previous military occupation in place. Huge areas had large concrete walls called 'T-walls,' designed to provide protection and segregation to compound areas. The view soon disappeared into the distance as the convoy made its way through a large number of police security checkpoints at the entrance to the airport. Despite many years of self-rule, it was apparent that security was still a concern or indeed a business opportunity for some. The roads were in a state of disrepair, and traffic rules were absent as cars overtook on the inside, outsides, and even the dusty side off the road. The speed limits were not followed, and cars would fly by the convoy taking a disciplined 80KM/H approach to travelling. The barren landscape showed mainly oil and gas operations and rig sites surrounded by substantial security perimeters. Forty-five minutes later, the entry to the oil concession was in sight, as the convoy patiently queued to reach the security checkpoint. The convoy was stopped, and directions were given to pull to the side, bags were taken out as the police checked passports and the bags for alcohol. A slightly strange approach to take when previously allowing it past customs in the airport.

The staff were lined up at the roadside as various other vehicles passed through the checkpoint without challenge, often pointing and laughing at the group stood at the roadside. An early indication that the previous authority and powers enjoyed by private security had long dissolved, and payback was in full force. The bag check identified alcohol smugglers, and the contents of each bottle were poured onto the ground. It was conducted in front of the owner, with a degree of satisfaction by the police official. Six bottles later, the convoy was allowed to move up the road a few kilometres and start the

entry to Rumaila Base, the main base of the company. Passing through under-vehicle mirror checks, metal detector checks on each person, the entry briefing was then offered in the main reception by the Site Security Manager (SSM). Death by PowerPoint was in force, and slide after slide related the doom and gloom of various terrorist activities and responses when on base. Room key issued, pass provided, and the researcher stepped out into the central base community to start his real journey.

1.4   Why research this?

This research is not just an approach to a problem; it is a deep dive into the very culture of this country, its laws, and its people. The very beating heart of the country is founded upon the people and the culture, has it has developed or remained static in some regional areas? It allows the wider academic population to visit and follow the journey into this location, which is beyond reach to most. Assumptions as to the reality of the country can be either confirmed or indeed adjusted based on this research thesis. It offers a unique opportunity to follow six nationals as they find their place in the organisation and observe how the international organisation invests in the future of them and their families. It helps readers better understand the current culture and where it is different from accepted western approaches. The differences can be both frightening and alien but will always remain extremely interesting. The country has seen many conflicts and remains operational, but to what extent has it progressed following the development of its economic lifeblood, that is crude oil. How do the people utilise this resource? Does it allow them to grow and catch up with developed locations such as Dubai? Or are they likely to remain in the status quo? The people are ultimately in charge of their future, and the various levels of authority often influence the direction in a somewhat disorganised manner that seems to work for the larger population. They have faced and continue to face challenges from the younger Iraqi population on the levels of corruption. How little progress has been made in areas many westerners take for granted, such as regular electricity and clean running water. It is resulting in many challenges raised by a beleaguered youth of educated Iraqis. They, in late 2019 (25th October 2019), started to officially protest against the Iraqi government to change their current approach (Figure

1.1). Claims of official corruption that are alleged to have resulted in billions of dollars ending up in individual pockets rather than being invested back into the country.

Figure 1.1 – Iraq protestors in October 2019 (Aljazeera, 2019).

The unique aspect of the protests highlights not only the expectations of the new and younger generation of Iraq but also the unification of men and women who conducted separate but organised protests. The culture and religious beliefs direct that men and women should remain separated even when in protest (Figure 1.2 below).

Figure 1.2 – Iraqi women during Iraq's autumn of discontent (Atlantic Council, 2019).

This example that may appear alien to western culture shows that even when extreme measures are undertaken by society, they still follow the embedded cultural and religious requirements. The culture is so deeply rooted that it could be a thesis on its own, based on its depth and seemingly never-ending scope. The researcher was fortunate enough to be able to speak with some national employees who had travelled to Bagdad to take part in the protests. The stories they retold were dramatic, frightening but also deeply meaningful. They fought through tear gas and live ammunition to protest against the failings of the current regime. It is a flashback to the previous dictatorship times, where established fear would never have allowed this revolt. The option to protest is clear, but it came at a considerable cost to the 700 protesters who died (Reuters, 2020). The internal desire to change the direction of the country is evident, as the core groupings of the protesters were students who simply want a better future. They protest about a lack of employment opportunities, a direct aspect of this research, as well as the high levels of corruption they allege is present today in Iraq. The reality is that they protest to have the same opportunities that many western societies take for granted. They protest for the right to be educated in a safe, healthy, and secure environment that fosters opportunities for them to have a career and earn a living.

Very few can escape the reality that is Iraq; many may seek to escape to the wider world with their families to provide something better. Most have to accept what they have and look to develop it from within the country. The researcher accepted that the ability to get on a flight and leave here at the end of a shift was something that should be appreciated and greatly treasured. The nationals have only the next day to look forward to, and the current protests at the of writing have stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, creating some breathing room for the government. The power and will of the people did ultimately result in the then, prime minister resigning to appease the protestors on the 29th November 2019 (BBC, 2019). Leaving a power vacuum as nominations have been rejected continuously as to a suitable successor. It occurred as the Daish[2] onslaught continues and the assassination of the Iranian General Qassem Soleimani on the 3rd January 2020 (Figure 1.3), resulting in missile strikes into Iraq by Iran and additional

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[2] Iraqi name for ISIS.

Iranian backed militia activity against American Forces located in Iraq (Aljazeera, 2020). Raising calls for American Forces to depart Iraq, that move would see the removal of the support against Daish (ISIS) in the northern parts of Iraq.

Figure 1.3 – Assassination of Iranian General (BBC, 2020).

The present dissatisfaction of Iraqi nationals could be for a multitude of reasons and blame is being apportioned, of which international organisations within oil and gas are included. The country has a high degree of volatility that can see occurrences start and accelerate at a considerable pace, delving into this reality is fascinating and rare. The history of Iraq will be detailed through its journey up to the present day later in this chapter, but the future direction is still unclear. The research journey allows consideration on how the current reality may have been altered had nationalisation been considered earlier in the campaign. The written history cannot be changed, but the future offers learning opportunities to change the trajectory.

The research project covered a period containing many different occasions, from the regular routine with high demand due to high oil price. The oil price crash of late 2014, from which the industry ultimately has yet to recover. The invasion of Daish into Iraq in June 2014 that created a higher degree of instability and security concerns (Wilson Centre, 2020). The assassination of the Iranian General and lastly the impact of COVID-19 inside of Iraq. These are just a few notable events that occurred from the infancy of the research to the final writing up of the thesis. It takes the reader on a remarkable

journey through the history of the country, a delve into broader and individual cultural differences, then landing firmly on the core topics of nationalisation within a nation, that has only known war and poverty despite its considerable natural resource wealth. It is a personal reflection of a core social issue that is faced by multiple nations within the Middle East (Randeree, 2009). The issue may not be unique to Iraq, but the additional complexities are when considering the political and security challenges still present in 2020. It raises the question, if more developed nations cannot resolve the approach to a wider national workforce, then what chance does Iraq stand? It is a fair and balanced question, and this research aims to peel back the layers to answer this and other questions better.

The final comment before moving into the more formal aspects of this chapter is on the perceptions of the researcher. The previous experiences of the researcher have sadly involved conflict, based within the theatre of Afghanistan as a British Solider. This experience may have reduced the risk threshold of the researcher, and as such, could reduce the personal impact of experiences, that may shock others. It is not any form of bravado, more just to clarify the concepts and thoughts that may be argued against later in this thesis. The natural lowering of risk tolerance is a human aspect that does present a higher risk to the individual researcher.

An example of this is when the researcher remaining stranded in Iraq when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, resulted in an acceptance of risk that others may have rejected. The few days before flights were halted, saw a flurry of expatriates moving out of Iraq and returning to the safety of their homes. The researcher decided to remain in Iraq for the as yet unknown period until the pandemic finished. The unfolding of this pandemic saw an impact of a global scale, halting society as we know it, within even the most developed of countries (Chinazzi *et al*., 2020). Remaining in Iraq with sub-standard health care and no access to medical evacuation was considered by the researcher, and a decision to remain throughout the pandemic was taken. This decision could be seen as irresponsible, but it offered an additional research opportunity that was specific to this research project. Namely, the performance of the Iraqi national workforce during the pandemic. The absence of the larger number of expatriate workers and management resulted in a reliance on the national workers to run the business during this crisis. The oil and gas

operational requirements were maintained by the Iraqi government due to the reliance on oil to support the economy. Remaining during this period offered a final opportunity to observe the national workforce when it was most needed. It helped to complete the researcher's journey finishing on a very unexpected situation that created a silver lining from a research point of view. This specific example will be covered in more detail in later chapters of this thesis, but it highlights the variance of the experiences throughout this project. The researcher's background also allows the reader to understand better the reasoning behind decisions made, which may be challenged by those with different life experiences. Ultimately this project offers something very different for those who take the time to review it. The location and access to it and its people are off-limits to most of the world. That should be considered as a valuable and unique opportunity to increase the broader knowledge of many different aspects of Iraq as a nation. It dives deeper beyond the published news and delves each reader deeper into an industry, a country and its people at the heart of the national identity.

The different aspects that make up the society that is Iraq will be detailed and then discussed; many drivers are different from that of other cultures. However, it ultimately allows for a deeper understanding. Religion within the country is a critical issue that is often avoided to ensure that no offence occurs at the hand of those that do not fully understand the culture. The researcher on previous operational training was systematically told never discuss religion, corruption and/or politics in any way; this was drilled into the researcher. However, this journey offered an opportunity to create relationships that allowed these off-limits topics to be discussed. It took time, but it was worth the time and effort to develop these relationships to truly understand how religion, amongst many other topics, work in Iraq. Experiencing corruption is a somewhat surreal experience but knowing how the cultural approach to doing business is very different from that of the more ethical western world. It creates a situation where international organisations are faced with dilemmas when operating in locations where corruption is an accepted part of the daily business dealings. Navigating this is a minefield to international organisations who operate under set ethical standards. The organisation that is the subject of the thesis holds high-level ethical approaches to business. However, the experiences of the researcher identified where corruption occurs in areas that are almost

impossible to control. It is balanced with the nationals who cannot stand the corruption and feel powerless to halt it even when it is known as actively occurring within the business. They express their frustrations on those who consistently follow this approach and are considered untouchable due to broader family connections. It surprisingly results in organisations employing staff whom they cannot then remove, as do so would result in higher-level political issues. Individual expatriates that have challenged aspects have seen their visa suddenly being cancelled or police arriving to speak with them. One expatriate security manager had to move to Kurdistan as they were accused of being part of the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal, despite having never served with the American military. The reality of power within Iraq is strange to the outsider, and indeed, the researcher who was able to better (but never fully) understand how it operates both officially and unofficially.

The research will consider these taboo topics and look to openly discuss them based on individual and personal experiences during the fieldwork. It produces a more developed output and also makes for some fascinating reading that adds depth to the arguments. This journey also looks at the religious aspect and how it influences the national workforce, that can often put the success of oil and gas operations in god's hands. It can and did create frustration for some expatriate employees within management roles and did result in offence occurring. The project allows for some discussion on how religion influences the individual employees in respect of their professional development, asking is it in their hands or those of god? How do they see things once you have developed a deeper and closer relationship? The people of Iraq are hardworking and extremely caring when you get to know them more and are happy to help others understand their society better. They offered the researcher answers to even the most random of questions and spent hours discussing their thoughts. It was clear that individuals in Iraq are precisely that; they are individual. Many discussions would be silenced when another more senior Iraqi joined the discussion or simply stood next to them. It demonstrates that they have opinions that may go against the grain of those who uphold the more traditional approach to life in Iraq. Some openly admit to consuming alcohol, albeit in different locations such as Kurdistan, Turkey and Dubai. It shows that they may follow the cultural requirements on the surface, but underneath they have their desires that they aim to fulfil. Many openly

follow the religious protocols, but when alone, they question the approach of the country and its direction to follow this faith without question. It raises further questions on how religion fits within the social cycle of Iraq, does it work well for all, or is it non-negotiable and the one who does not follow will be cast out? The culture sees families staying as families, and they all live together, literally together in the same house. The researcher had the opportunity to visit some of the employee's homes and interact with their families and gain some first-hand knowledge of how home life influences the individual employee. Do they work for themselves, to better their career? Or is it merely to provide for their family? The salaries are paid into the family accounts and taken in cash into the homes. They then take out loans from the family wealth for items such as cars or phones. There is no hire purchase for vehicles in Iraq, you buy it cash, or you do not buy it is the rule. The variables seem limitless for the social complexities within the Iraq culture; this research offers some answers to what lies beneath those hidden cultural layers.

It provided an introduction to this research thesis as well as some interesting examples of what deeper learning events are to occur within the chapters. The reader can stroll through the thesis and consider how it occurred and the reasoning for starting it in the first place. For social scientists, it is one of the only research papers on Iraq outside of the initial conflict and enduring violence against international forces within the country. It steps past that aspect and entwines only the current reality and how far the nation has come since those darker days. It considers challenges that applied to a specific private sector and also to Iraq as a nation, with broader impacts that occurred as the research was conducted. The first stage in the more formal part of this chapter considers the research aims and objectives, having covered some examples of experiences it helps the reader understand why these were developed and pursued.

1.5   The research aims and objectives

The research topic areas raise some areas that provide an opportunity to investigate potential learning opportunities further. Based on some earlier experiences within the country, it helped to develop the aims and objectives, to focus on some narrower areas that would develop a more robust outcome. The option to delve into the social aspect was considered tempting but had limitless potential and would ultimately detract from the core

focus areas. The social aspect will be reviewed as part of the broader thesis, but it has not been included as direct aims or objectives for this reason. The details listed below were designed to provide a tangible output to the research, a delivery that may, in some small way, offer an opportunity for future improvement. This improvement is limited to the post-research visibility concerning the final thesis of a suggested nationalisation model. The research aims and objectives are as follows:

- Critically examine previous and current models employed for nationalisation and discuss their effectiveness.
- Assess learning points from the context of South Iraq.
- Identify key requirements for an adaptive and easily applied model that can be employed during future nationalisation activities in hostile environments.
- Establish a new model for nationalisation that can be employed in other/new post-conflict locations.

The aims and objectives keep the attention clearly on nationalisation that would support any further development within the social aspect. The aims and objectives now require some consideration of the broader topic of Iraq. Starting with an overview of the nation before drilling deeper into more specific areas of history leading up to the present day.

1.6   Background on location

The section will provide the reader with further information on the research location and industry before moving onto the literature review. The location of South Iraq is well known for the relatively recent invasion by American and British forces to remove Saddam Hussein from power and remove alleged weapons of mass destruction. The country has a long history of instability that does reinforce its selection for this research project. Covering the 20th century and the main events leading up to the current day demonstrates the vulnerability of the location is and why it makes it a challenging research location.

The Mesopotamia Campaign was successfully concluded by the British Army in March 1917 when Bagdad was captured. Iraq was up until this point named the Ottoman Empire, and after the capture, it was subsequently divided up. The British Mandate finished in 1932 when Iraq was declared independent. The Kingdom of Iraq was established and

observed several military coups up until 1936 when the government was overthrown. World War Two arrived, and a subsequent coup by pro-Nazi officials saw them take power in 1941 until the Allies defeated Nazi-Germany (Tripp, 2002).

In 1958 the Republic of Iraq was founded, and Kuwait gained its independence away from Iraq, at the same time the Kurdish took control of the northern regions of Iraq. The Iraq-Kurdish war was in its infancy when the Ba'ath Party established and seized power. The second Iraq-Kurdish war continued up until 1975, and in 1979 Saddam Hussein was declared at Iraq's leader. The Iran-Iraq war started in 1980 and continued for eight years, resulting in further instability in the region. In 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait and resulted in Operation Desert Storm in 2001, with the Iraqi forces being defeated and withdrawing back into Iraq (Abdullah, 2014). The 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 increased the global focus on locations harbouring terrorist organisations leading up to the second Gulf War in 2003. Iraq's forces were defeated by a joint American-British offensive, and Iraq remained occupied up until 2011. The period up until 2011 saw a high level of insurgent activity and violence focussed on the occupying military forces (Marr, 2018). The departure of the American Armed Forces in 2011 did not result in peace and instability continued with the new threat of ISIS[3] in the north of Iraq. It demonstrates the enduring instability that Iraq and its people have sustained over a considerable period. The instability continues, and it is a sad reflection that there are very few occasions where the country has observed peace. It helps to support the location and industry selection for this research due to its unique history. The country relies heavily on oil production to sustain its economic viability and survival. Iraq is a complex sociocultural environment, and the lack of workforce nationalisation adds to the instability. The lack of employment opportunities for Iraqi nationals has a direct impact on the local society, increasing dissatisfaction and tensions.

Iraq is struggling to escape instability and conflict both internally and externally; the lack of employment opportunities only adds to the complexity. The country holds the fifth-largest reserve of crude oil, with a vast number of oil fields remaining undeveloped (OPEC, 2019). The Iraqi people look at the oil and gas industry as the most likely

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[3] Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham.

employment opportunity, attracted by the higher financial compensation. The operating organisations controlling the oil fields could be argued as being obligated to provide employment opportunities for Iraqi nationals. The instability has created an internal skills gap due to the absence of education and training that could facilitate a higher level of national employment. This gap was filled with expatriate workers that were seen as stealing jobs from Iraqi's, further fueling social discontent. The high financial incentives offered to experienced oil and gas expatriate workers resulted in expatriates failing to develop the Iraqi nationals. It was in an attempt to extend and protect their earning and employment potential; by creating a higher level of dependence on skilled and experienced expatriates (RT.com, 2016). The research focusses on a country and industry, both in a state of recovery due to conflict and low oil prices.

1.7 Transition to current day Iraq

The historical development of Iraq offers some background but does not effectively detail the current environment in Iraq for the research. The following aspects need to be covered to ensure that the context of the research is clear early on in this thesis by discussing the following current day elements:

- The people within a social context

- The industry status (Oil and Gas)

It is best applied by producing a detailed PESTEL[4] analysis (Aguilar, 1967) as this tool will help to cover the key areas that create the feeling of the location concerning the research. It provides a review of the macro-environmental in the research location that can then support later chapters in this thesis. It is accepted that this tool is typically employed for marketing research, but the researcher argues that it has strategic management utility beyond this. It will be demonstrated in the analysis that will build a clear and transparent picture of current day life and situations in Iraq.

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[4] Political, Factors, social, Technological, Legal and Environmental factors review.

1.8 Political

The political situation in Iraq at the time of writing was becoming increasingly less stable as the government struggled to maintain a viable control on the population, following the closure of the war footing in the North of the country against ISIS. It improved with the support of American forces in pushing the group back into Syria. The application of income taxation had started only a year before this research and was framed as social security. The implementation of taxation was found to be utterly alien to the local community in Basra, and the research group openly voiced their disdain. The critical aspect seemed to be that there was a real lack of trust between the people and the government. They openly told the researcher that they felt the government was corrupt, and this payment of social security would never reach the population. It was the first sign of developing any form of taxation in Iraq to support the government budgeting. However, the implementation of social security was considered unpopular as no details of end provision were offered to the people. The payments were taken directly from the organisations, so the international organisations were requested to deduct at the source. It resulted in a higher level of friction as the employees were suddenly facing reduced salaries and income to support their families. The researcher was not afforded details on amounts deducted at the source, which was then paid to the Iraq government in the form of social security. The researcher did, however, witness the frustrations voiced towards payroll staff who had to face a barrage of verbal aggression and in one instance, physical violence.

Oil exportation and trading have seen some turbulence due to the war with ISIS. It stalled and interrupted oil trading due to the capture of some of the central processing installations by ISIS. The ongoing and complex relationship with Iran that attracts heavy criticism from the US government, on Iraq's dependency with Iran has largely been ignored as they agreed to free trade with Iran. When coupled with the trade agreement with the Kurdish government on the Kirkuk oil exports, are some clear examples of how turbulent Iraqi politics are. It could raise the question as to how the oil and gas industry can effectively operate when operators are finding themselves stuck in the middle of this type of political challenge? The country is, however, a member of the Organisation of the

Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+) and this does slightly strengthen its position in respect of oil exportation (Clark, 2006). That is, of course, only a reality when they have operational oil field assets and production that is protected and maintained. Continued instability can, in many ways threaten that resource, as it is reasonable to state that oil field assets are a viable target for those with a will to destabilise. The recent invasion of ISIS and capture of production facilities go towards supporting this argument.

Outside of the ISIS consideration the impact of COVID-19 combined with the oil price war that started between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Russia added further challenges to the beleaguered nation (BBC, 2020). The lower global demand for crude oil driven by the worldwide lockdown, linked with the unfortunate timing of the OPEC argument drove the oil price to a record low. The economic impact on Iraq was significant at a point where they were funding medical support and an ongoing offensive on the west coast, complicated with a dropping oil price (Al-Monitor, 2020).

1.9   Economic

Another area of instability is Iraq's economic needs, with oil exports making up over 65% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 85-90% of the government's revenue (World Bank, 2017). The data from Statista, originally sourced from the Central Bank of Iraq (2019) shown in Figure 1.4, details that the GDP growth rate for Iraq showed promising growth between 2014 and 2016. The deceleration in 2017 was down to several factors starting with the Iraqi government's halt in oil and gas investment (World Bank, 2017). It was combined with a considerable reduction in manufacturing, continuation of construction projects slowing and reduced expansion in the agricultural sector.
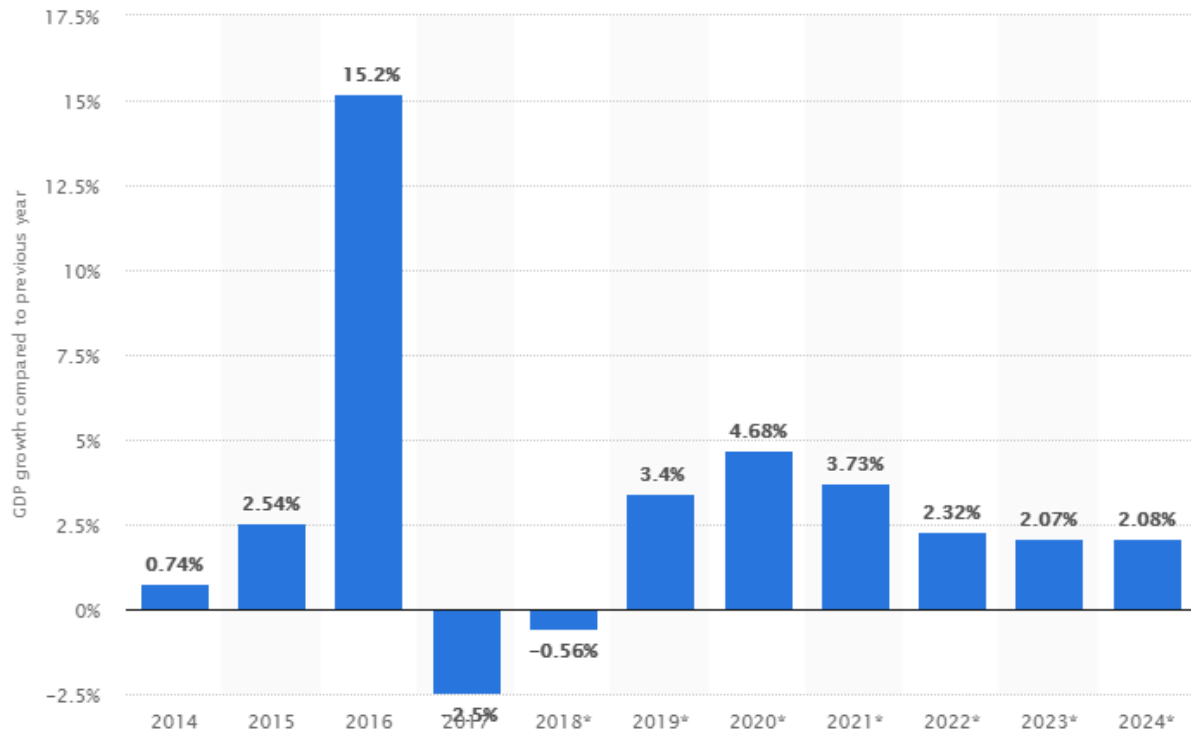
Figure 1.4 - Iraq GDP annual growth data (Central Bank of Iraq, 2019).

Spending on humanitarian aspects also impacted the overall GDP growth over that period, and reconstruction of the areas decimated by the ISIS strongholds added to the depreciation. The increase in crude oil prices in 2019 was complemented by an increase in government investment to develop the oil fields further and increase production up to 3 million barrels per day (World Bank, 2019). The figures showed, however, do not apply any impact felt from the recent production cuts agreed by OPEC of 10 million barrels per day (Reuters, 2020).

It highlights how instability and conflict have impacted on the growth that up until 2016 was showing signs of positive growth. The next sector that supports GDP is the services sector at 33% of the overall output (Central Bank of Iraq, 2017). It is mentioned as it highlights the importance of this research as it ultimately looks to support the transition to a national workforce. It is argued as contributing more to the Iraq economy via holding more money within the country's borders as opposed to expatriate staff who take their funds away. This cut was argued as assisting in offsetting the curb in global oil demand, with storage facilities reaching maximum holdings. Iraq's dependency on oil for revenue

to support the national economy has indeed been impacted by both the required production cuts as well as the economic challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Enabling Peace (2020) researched the broader impacts on Iraq's economy based on the COVID-19 pandemic and related that the government revenue could see steep declines from $6.2 billion per month in January 2020 to as low as $2.5 billion per month. If the impact was to continue over two financial quarters, it could result in national economic losses up to $30 billion. The high level of nationals employed in government posts also increases the demands on the Iraqi treasury, that has multiple demands on the relatively small financial reserve of $62 billion. The request by the Iraq Health Minister for $5 million to support the response to COVID-19 has remained unanswered, demonstrating the nation's weak and worsening financial reality (Enabling Peace, 2020). When compared to other nations government responses that provided support to the health sectors and the wider community, it paints a very concerning picture. It is unclear at the time of writing how the GDP impact will play out once the pandemic ends. It can be relatively easily argued that the projections for the increase in GDP in figure 1.4 are now are null in void. It is the sad reality of the unfavourable outcomes of a steep drop in oil price and a combined global pandemic. The forecasted growth of 4.8% GDP in 2020 now looks to drop drastically; this is a very unfortunately timed outcome for a nation that is screaming for development and social improvements that all require considerable cash injections.

Looking into the macro-environmental aspect that the Iraqi government has recently launched, this is the first approach to taxation that was discussed earlier. The micro-economic consideration was also part of this research via the sample group as the researcher was keen to reflect on the social aspect. However, the sheer depth of the social area could be a thesis on its own. It will be discussed as an overview, and the main expense that the nationals mentioned are the high prices of property in the local area of Basra. They advised that a house purchase is usually a plot of land as a larger family unit. One participant has an area that is shared with parents and siblings. The approach to creating compounds means that larger family units will share areas and build housing on the land to meet the size requirements. The next highest cost is food as importation increases the retail cost, but this has recently seen some drops as manufacturing within Iraq has started to grow, with manufacturing accounting for 8% of the GDP (Central Bank

of Iraq, 2018). However, this has seen a recent decline within 2019. The non-oil economy was forecasted to increase at a rate of up to more than 5% in 2020. However, the impact of COVID-19 will adjust the outcome of that earlier forecast (World Bank, 2019). The real estate costs are reflected in the GDP accounting for 9% and growing, with larger landowners are enjoying the ability to increase prices based on the sample group feedback. The cheaper cost aspects are fuel, which is considerably low at an average of under $1.00 a gallon. The cost of vehicles is higher than western locations, again due to importation and brands such as Kia own 53.2% of the whole market. Toyota was just behind at 33% of the market share, demonstrating that nationals are spending money on cars with 2018 seeing a 52.8% increase in overall sales of vehicles (Gasnier, 2018). The social push to own in-trend items has increased within the vehicle and smartphone market. Nationals will pay upwards of $900 for an iPhone 6s model (Research sample group, 2018). The seller's stocks are unable to meet the current demand for smartphones. It provides some of the micro-economic factors within the economic area. The nationals are also very open that they save a portion of their salary and all focus on ensuring that they have large sums of cash available in the family bank.

1.10 Social

The socio-cultural factors are where the country has an unlimited depth, as the society has a mix of western aspects, while also adhering to tribal and traditional structures. The depth of this focus area requires a structured approach, and as such, this will be broken into separate areas for discussion.

1.11 Religion

The first aspect to discuss is the religious foundations of the country, with the religious history of Islam dating back 1400 years. The nation has two distinct traditions of Sunni and Shia that are practised in Iraq. The Shia population is at around 65% of the nation, with the remaining 35% Sunni (Selengut, 2017). The war against ISIS was well supported with the terrorist group being Shia, openly pushing the nation to adopt Shia ideology or be killed. The divide has been a topic of tension in the nation with Sunni's claiming ill-treatment by government agencies as well as generally in Iraq society. It demonstrates

the complexity of the society that the oil and gas industry operates within. Baker and Hamilton (2006) commented on the challenges in Iraq;

"The challenges in Iraq are complex. Violence is increasing in scope and lethality. It is fed by a Sunni Arab insurgency, Shiite militias and death squads, al Qaeda, and widespread criminality. Sectarian conflict is the principal challenge to stability. The Iraqi people have a democratically elected government, yet it is not adequately advancing national reconciliation, providing basic security, or delivering essential services". (Baker and Hamilton, 2006 p.6).

This reflection in the report, albeit from 2006 when violence was at its highest, does give some depth to issues faced. The insurgency activity may have reduced, but the reality is that social issues still have some way to go if society is to accept each other and increase stability. The sectarian issues are still discussed by nationals, and the move of ISIS into Iraq saw a member of the study group openly consider fleeing the location. Operating companies must understand the social aspects of the religion, to ensure that any plan to nationalise works in the harmony of the best interests of the country. The simple example of this is that by placing more influence on one side could drive more sectarian friction. Employing nationals in positions of authority allows for influence and can result in violence if it becomes unbalanced. The history of the nation shows a trend of friction erupting into violence. The researcher witnessed several sectarian incidents during the period of the research. It is an issue that needs a detailed understanding and careful planning and management by any organisation entering the country.

1.12 Tribal

The tribal structure may be considered by some western people as both ancient and barbaric, having no place in modern society (Turner, Abrahams and Harris, 2017). The first point the researcher would add is that members of the sample group would, in private, agree that the tribal approach is not something they would wish to adopt. They cautiously advised the researcher that it was the need for protection, this they explained as join a tribe and be protected. The country is dangerous and belonging to a tribe is similar to a gang and affords members some protection due to the large tribal numbers. One of the

participants showed a detailed and process-driven approach to tribal membership when he decided to change tribes. The process requires the person to go to the local council office and fill in forms asking to transfer to a different tribe. This application is then sent to the different departments dealing with tribal membership for approval. The applicant is then told that they are free of any previous membership and then applies to join a different tribe. They are then required to attend an acceptance ceremony with the tribal leader (Sheik). The process then requires the applicant to agree to pay a monthly subscription to the tribe for membership. When formally accepted, it allows them to call on support from the tribe if required. The researcher was able to establish that the tribes all had squads that were well-armed and would follow the orders of the Sheikh without question. Inter-tribal violence was a weekly occurrence throughout the research project.

The tribal aspect also has a strong influence on the landownership where operating organisations have had drilling halted by tribal gunmen until they paid the ground rent and also employed tribal members. This type of tribal influence was frequent within oil and gas operations, and it is worth highlighting that the tribal gunmen would threaten nationals from other tribes working there as well as expatriates. The breakdown of the tribal groupings is detailed in Figure 1.5.
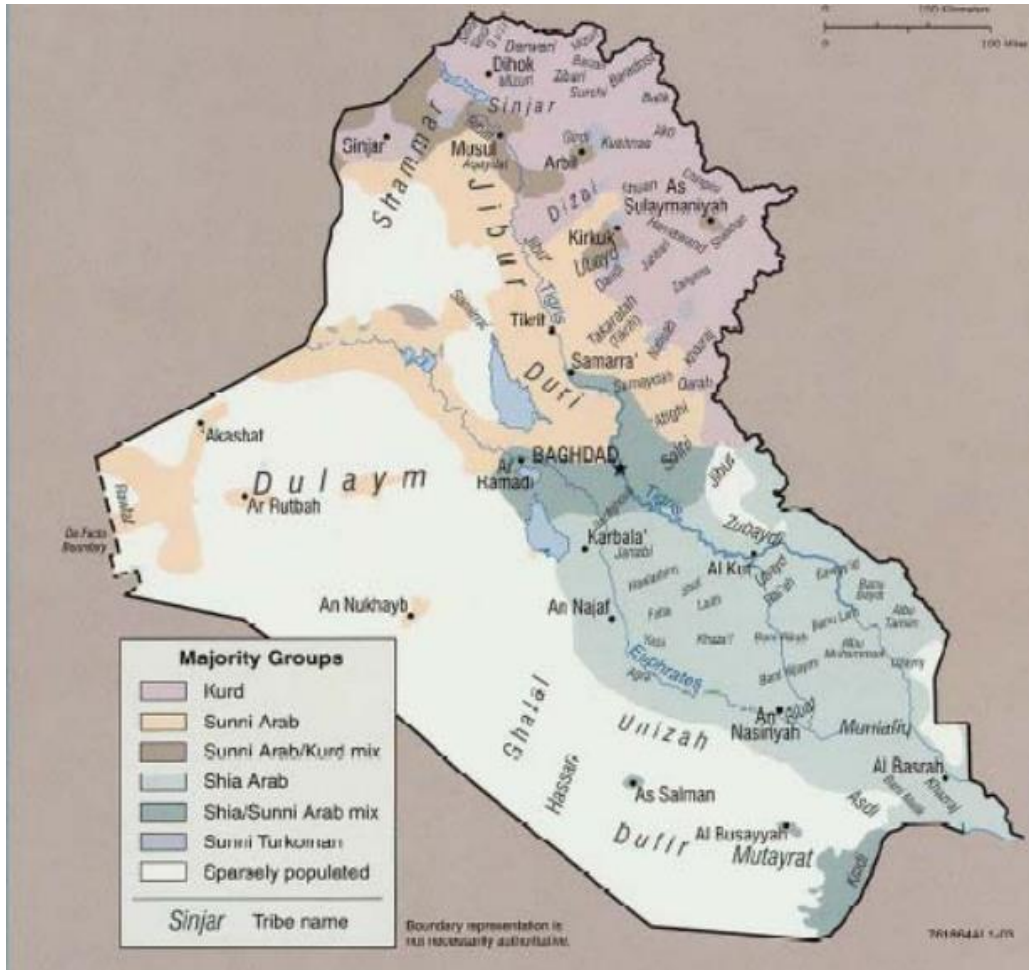
Figure 1.5 - Tribal and ethnic groupings in Iraq (UNL, 2015).

The Sheikh has an ultimate say in settling arguments internally and externally with other factions, but there are occasions where revenge killings are conducted without the approval of the Sheikh. The tribal physical intervention approach is regularly employed, and it is considered as a reasonable method for obtaining property. The tribal traditions require that the death of a tribal member is either avenged or blood money paid, killings will only be resolved via one of these two methods. The more positive aspect of tribal structures (Figure 1.6) is that the group look to support each other for employment via external influence.
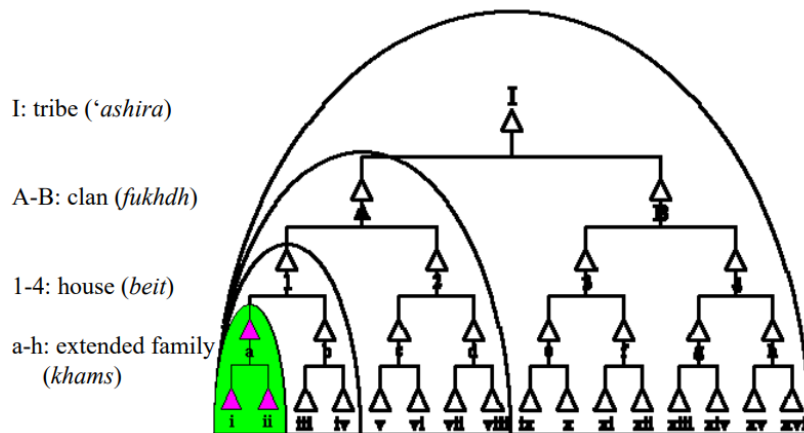
Figure 1.6 - Iraqi tribal structure (UNL, 2015).

The researcher is aware that the details this far may well paint a frightening picture of sectarian violence, corruption and a generally unhappy reality. The important part that the researcher also wants to highlight is how warm and welcoming the people are, once the visitor has made an effort to understand and respect their culture. The researcher was after a short period welcomed into the community and found the people to be warm, considerate and very generous.

Figure 1.7 - Researcher briefing nationals - note the relaxed and smiling group.

The people are supportive of expatriate workers and as shown in Figure 1.7 and Figure 1.8. despite the frequent instability issues that have rocked the core of their society. They

enjoy the opportunity to interact and learn from other cultures. It suggests that the ability of organisations to increase and develop the national workforce is something precious.

Figure 1.8 - Researcher wearing a gifted hat from the Iraqi stood at the back of the photographs (Reseacher, 2017).

1.13 Environmental

Technological advances will not be discussed due to the current status of the country in respect of importing technology; additionally, this factor is less relevant to the discussion. The environmental aspect is worth mentioning as it is a topical issue with the research focusing on the oil and gas industry. Patin (1999) is one of many authors that have researched and discussed the huge impact that this industry has had on the environment. The destruction and additional pollution that occurred during the ISIS conflict, where oil wells were sabotaged, and that resulted in pools of oil (Figure 1.9).

Figure 1.9 - Oil pollution example in Iraq.

Environmental awareness is very much behind other nations, despite operating companies pushing hard to increase awareness. The lack of environmental awareness results in vast quantities of plastic bottles building up at locations, as shown in Figure 1.9. The researcher observed this at multiple locations with empty water bottles in their thousands being left to waste. The awareness of contamination and pollution is simply non-existent, lacking any form of control with evidence of contamination occurring everywhere (Figure 1.10).

Figure 1.10 - Example of local land contamination due to incorrect handling processes.

1.14 Legal

This links with the above discussion, where health and safety control and application is woefully low with the photographs below demonstrating how poor it can be. The infrequent and unbalanced application of laws, applied by a police force that is considered as corrupt by most nationals, creates a less than inviting legal arena for international organisations to enter.

Examples of poorly maintained equipment and working conditions (Researcher, 2017).

1.15 The target organisation/location

The research will be facilitated from within an international oil and gas service company that has an operational footprint in Iraq. The identity of the organisation will be withheld as part of the ethical approval issued by the university for this project. The location and structure of the organisation in the research location will be included to assist with the learning journey. The operating base is located in the southern region of Iraq and is large enough to support all oil and gas service provision, covering a large geographical area.
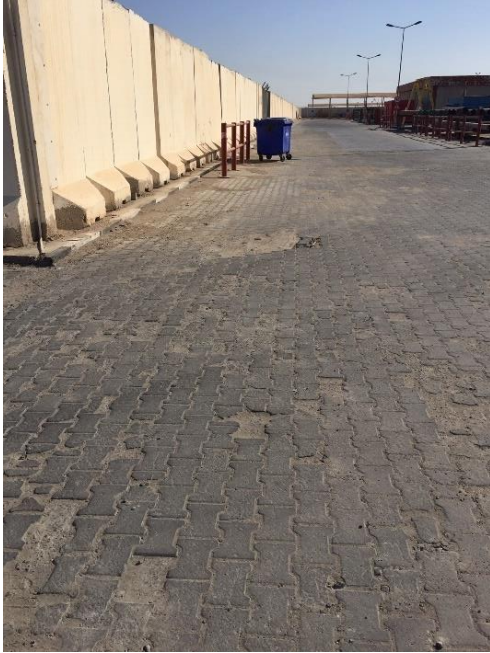
Figure 1.11 – The operating base in Basra (Researcher, 2018).

The photographs (Figure 1.11) show the operating environment that employees live and work in, both national and expatriate. The view of rolls of razor wire placed upon sizeable concrete blast walls (T walls) demonstrates the current and residing security concerns. The location is within a protective ring of oil field police checkpoints that require access passes to facilitate entry onto the field areas. At peak timings, the base can house up to five hundred workers with both nationals and expatriates normally working on a rotational basis. The recent downturn has seen the length of rotations increase from equal time off to an average of six weeks on and three weeks off. The increase was to remove the need for two employees to work as back to backs as well as reduce the number of annual flights for expatriates. It provides the reader with a clearer understanding of the location, its people and challenges. The researcher argues that this adds to the uniqueness and value of the contribution that this research provides.

1.16 Conclusion

The researcher took a gap from being in-country between 2018 and 2019, returning to the location in late November 2019. This gap in field visits offered a period of unobserved progression and development. It provided the opportunity to go back and see what

developments/changes had been made by the participants during a gap of nearly two years. It provides an exciting development concerning how well they continued to develop themselves, alongside any progression within the organisation. It would be a true reflection of how they acted when unobserved and how well received and recognised this was outside of the core research. Outside of the research participants, it also allows the researcher to look at the broader social and economic developments that occurred during this absence. There is no suggestion that the researcher's presence would have or could have changed the various trajectories. However, it allowed for a soak period before returning to complete the research activity.

This thesis is organised into several chapters; this first chapter covers the lead-up to the research. Then some background information to allow the reader to build a more detailed picture of the topic, location and nuances involved. Chapter two will conduct a detailed literature review, as well as reviewing the available academic sources on relevant topics. It also goes towards further demonstrating the unique nature of this thesis. It provides a robust platform on which to argue, that this research has identified a gap and seeks to close it. It will show that there are separate studies on expatriates within the national workforces with focus on nationalisation and research that only covers post-conflict and social impact separately. Chapter three then examines the options for the most suitable research methods. It critically reviews the strengths and weaknesses of the selected methods as well as considering the ethical issues arising from the research. Chapter four will provide the results of the research and look at each participant in detail, as their journey within the business unfolds. It will detail their backgrounds and earlier careers opportunities leading into the current period of observation. It will demonstrate the very different personalities and opportunities with which each Iraqi is provided. The fifth chapter will then present the discussion element of the research, looking back at each research participant to critically discuss the results. Then consider what alternative outcomes/options could have produced a different reality for the participants. It will consider the learnings from the literature review and reflect on what research findings support or argue against the reviewed academic literature. Chapter six will then work towards bringing the research to a clear and concise conclusion. It will present a final review and then propose a model for future approaches to nationalisation consideration.

It considers planning and execution within post-conflict oil-rich locations. The next step is to consider the published literature and review what is available to support the research.

2 Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

"Build an argument, not a library" Rudestam and Newton (1992).

The term nationalisation[5] (or localisation) is employed to describe the process of managing the transition of a country from hosting a workforce mainly or significantly comprised of expatriates, towards one comprised significantly or totally from the citizens of that state (Al-Wafi and Forstenlechner, 2010). This phenomenon may be largely unknown to readers, unaware that some country's workforces are not mainly native. While there are many jobs in Western European states which are filled with expatriate workers, citizens of the UK rarely lack the skills, qualifications or opportunity to compete with them. However, when adopting a broader geographical scope and look towards developing countries that are rich in natural resources (e.g. oil and gas) with economic growth potential, the reality is very different. The majority of the working population are comprised of expatriates, who may be working at different levels from unskilled, manual labour through to very niche skills in management, safety, process engineering.

In such States, there are pressures to radically rebalance workforces and impose nationalisation/localisation policies, to reduce dependency on expatriates and encourage citizens to participate more fully in the economy. There are many countries in the Middle East where policies and processes of localisation have been thoroughly researched. This chapter will systematically review these case studies and research academic journal entries. The approach in this chapter will be to first detail the terminology and central aspects of localisation within the first section. It will then be followed by a further analysis that looks into literature and secondary data that discusses localisation. This thesis is focussed on a specific gap in the literature, namely localisation in post-conflict areas (which can still be experiencing ongoing violence). Conflict countries are often resource-rich in the same way as countries which have pioneered nationalisation/localisation, but with the added complication of high levels of instability and socio-economic rupturing. A

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[5] Workforce nationalisation only.

conflict has vast ramifications for a nation or area and can often see the breakdown of structures and social order. As well as creating displaced populations, a conflict also results in the delay or total loss of educational and training options (such as schooling and university) for younger generations.

The lack of current literature speaks volumes as to how challenging and even unique the approach to nationalisation in post-conflict countries such as Iraq. Having to re-build itself on foundations that are often reliant on international support and investment. This while attempting to ensure security, stability and recovery of infrastructure and simultaneously requiring international companies. They provide the capability, investment and skills to develop and implement rapid localisation/nationalisation strategies. The focus location of this study (Basra in southern Iraq) is rich in natural resources, mainly oil and gas reserves. It has effortlessly attracted foreign investment even during periods of conflict. The established literature on localisation has previously focused on more controlled environments, such as The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The literature review will explore to what extent lessons can be transposed to locations that are moving through and out of conflict.

This focus will allow some interesting discussions to be framed and applied in regards to an indication of differentiators between non-conflict and post-conflict localisation. The literature identified, often solely focused only on the social impact of conflict and the sequence of re-building and the establishment of social order. Research into an international company working in a post-conflict context, attempting to implement government requirements for nationalisation is unique, and this literature review will set the scene for the broader discussion by focusing on different aspects. The chapter will look at oil and gas specifics, considering the business needs that drive demands for expatriate workers. It will then consider the terminology that is regularly utilised within the research material and consider the overall attraction that draws expatriate workers to these locations. The tackling of the contentious topic of perception from both the views of the national and expatriate sides. It is considered very relevant to this research and will, therefore, be included in the review. Nationalisation has been researched in several other

locations such as Qatar. It offers some depth to the nationalisation debate but does not consider the complexity of post-conflict locations. The broader consideration of the difference in culture within the Middle East when compared to the western world also needs debating. To allow for a deeper understating of how crucial cultural understanding is to this research project. The final section will look at post-conflict, this builds the picture further for the reader by then considering how a post-conflict location could have, not just high numbers of expatriates but also an extremely challenging social situation.

2.2   The oil and gas industry in Iraq

Iraq's oil exploration started back in 1920, firstly dealing under the guise of the Iraq Petroleum Company in cooperation with the Turkish Petroleum Company for exportation (Blanchard, 2010). This continued until around 1975 when the country fully nationalised the production and exportation. Iraq retained state-owned operations up until 2003 with the infrastructure suffering heavily between 1980 and 2003 due to the lack of investment and international sanctions. The previous production output was held at the highest level of 3.5 million barrels per day just immediately before the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Iraq is aiming to reach 3 million barrel per day production capability within 2020. Iraq has the world's fifth-largest oil reserves behind Venezuela, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Canada and Iran, of approximately 115 billion barrels of proven reserves (EIA, 2019). The Oil and Gas Journal (2019) argue that the data is outdated and that with advances in technology, it is highly likely that the reserves held in Iraq are considerably higher. It is supported by the independent consultancy HIS (2007) who estimated that based on their research, Iraq could have upward of 116 billion barrels with a likelihood of a further 100 billion within unexplored areas. Blanchard (2010) highlighted the nation's financial dependency on oil exportation to fund the economy, with around 89% of government revenue raised through oil sales. It is considerable in respect of dependency on oil to support the fractured country and economy. Figure 2.1shows the layout and infrastructure of Iraq's oil reserves.

Figure 1. Location of Iraq's Oil Reserves and Infrastructure
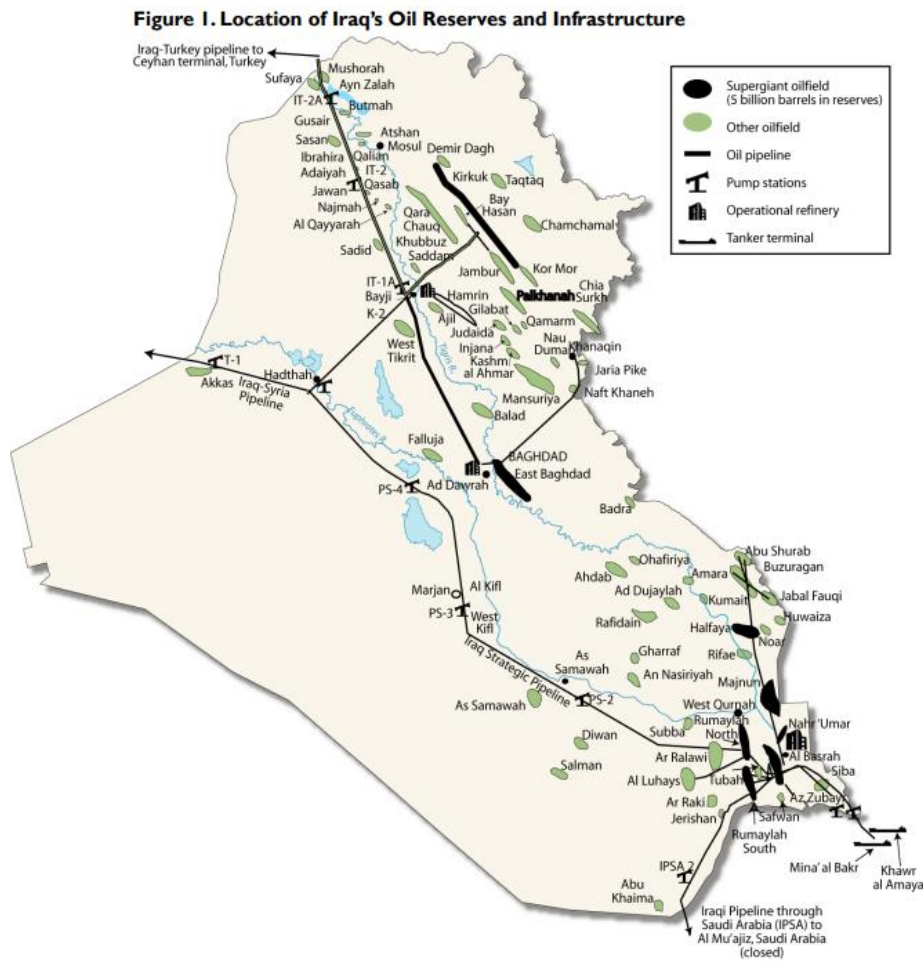
Figure 2.1 – Iraq's oil reserves (US Energy Information Administration, 2003).

The current Iraq government have launched an ongoing expansion of the oil industry by inviting multiple international operators to manage the various oil concessions within the country. Many of the awards were seen to become joint ventures (JV's) with the operator and the national oil company called the Basra Oil Company (BOC) which is directly controlled by the Iraq oil minister in Baghdad. This opportunity attracted many international operating companies such as British Petroleum (BP) on a JV with China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) for the Rumaila fields. ExxonMobil on the West Qurna 1 concession and ENI in a JV with the Korean Gas Corporation for the Zubair Concession (Blanchard, 2010). The increase of production expands the infrastructure inclusive of pipelines, and this creates security concerns. As further highlighted by

Blanchard (2010) that increases the demand for high-quality international security providers and expatriate operators.

Birdsall and Subramanian (2004) looked at the oil industry in Iraq following the change in power. They raised the concern of the historical data that suggests that oil-rich countries can often end up very poor.

"In fact, countries often end up poor precisely because they are oil-rich. Oil and mineral wealth can be bad for growth and bad for democracy since they tend to impede the development of institutions and values to open, market-based economies and political freedom: civil liberties, the rule of law, protection of property rights and political participation" (Birdsall and Subramanian, 2004 p.77).

They go on to label oil as a known 'resource curse' and highlight that 12 of the 34 less developed oil-rich countries still have an individual average income of $1,500. Over half of those populations live on only up to $1 per day. It argues that resource wealth cannot always be felt by the countries citizens and poverty can exist despite the national wealth. The oil and gas industry in Iraq as it is attracts international operators; these organisations look to appoint reliable and competent staff to ensure the business success of the operation. That in-turn opens the door to an influx of expatriate workers, with this in mind, the next section will look to discuss the business needs of expatriate workers.

2.3   The business needs of expatriate workers

It is argued as important first to discuss the requirement for expatriate workers; it could be reasonable to ask why there is a need in the first place. Elbadawi and Rocha (1992) would suggest that this is a direct result of increased global migration. It is a by-product, allowing people to travel to other nations with relative ease. They add that labour exporting countries have continued to fuel the demand for low and high-cost expatriates in nations where the workforce skills are underdeveloped. The labour exporting countries benefit from returning workers spending their salaries directly into the home countries

economy, having the opposite effect on the nation when staff are employed. Naithani and Jha (2009) support the view that expatriate workers are utilised within the private sectors such as oil and gas due to greater levels of efficiency and productivity. Al-Ali (2008) support this and add that; national workers often find the irregular work hours and high levels of expectations within the private sector as less attractive. The national workforces within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) including Bahrain, UAE, KSA, Oman and Kuwait are mainly employed within the public sector. This alternative employment option provides reliable hours within a national setting, considered as less stressful than the private sector. Dito (2008) found that businesses would actively look to employ expatriates as they came with high levels of technical knowledge as well as experience. When applied to the oil and gas industry; it creates a level of understanding of why international organisations would look to employ expatriates to ensure business success.

Naithani and Jha (2009) go on to add that expatriates would arrive fully trained and ready to start, meaning they can hit the ground running and add value with fewer start-up costs. They argue that their research suggested that expatriates were willing to undertake considerably longer hours than national employees. The other aspect that their research identified was that Asian expatriates could be employed on salaries that were half of the cost of employing nationals. It starts to become clearer why organisations may look to employ expatriates as they arrive ready to start, utilising their experience and depth of knowledge. It can improve business delivery, oil and gas service companies rely on well trained and competent staff. The GCC areas gain regular economic benefits from the oil-rich resources that support their broader economy. The international service companies have to provide services to global operating companies that have the western level of expectation for efficiency and productivity. Several other studies such as Forstenlechner (2008) and Keivani, Parsa and Younis (2003) came to similar conclusions when researching the GCC area on expatriate workers. They also found that the government-backed approaches to reduce the levels of expatriate workers failed to gain traction across the GCC states. It can be summarised simply; by saying businesses remain dependant on expatriate workers for pure business success reasons. It suggests that businesses consider that the additional elements discussed above, and it is worth

retaining expatriate workers. It seems to remain relatively consistent in the GCC areas, with expatriates readily available to support the critical industries that these governments rely upon, mainly construction and oil and gas. Business decisions understandably look to maintain the viability and financial health of the organisation, and workers are on the front line of the delivery. If a business feels that it is a sensible choice to employ expatriate workers above nationals, there is little governments can do to halt this. Governments aim to attract business and investment and dictating to organisations whom they can and cannot hire would be extremely unattractive to the private industry. The private industry creates and maintains the new oil wells, serves the production and keeps the crude flowing. Governments find less of a platform on which to stand and direct nationals into the private sector.

2.4   Defining the terminology

The first important step before moving onto the broader discussion is to consider the different terms that will be employed within this chapter. Dealing firstly with localisation or nationalisation (where the latter is often the term used by expatriates, with the reason for this becoming evident below). The Business Dictionary definition states that localisation is: 'The practice of adjusting a product's functional properties and characteristics to accommodate the language, culture, political and legal differences of a foreign market' (Business dictionary, 2018). The Cambridge Dictionary (2018) offers the additional definition of 'The process of organising a business or industry so that its main activities happen in local areas rather than nationally or internationally'. It demonstrates how varied the interpretation of localisation can become even at the definition level, which should provide clarity. The term focuses more on the process and product and makes no explicit reference to how this impacts on labour levels in a location.

Williams, Bhanugopan and Fish (2011) offer a different view on the term and classify localisation as:

"A process in which locals increase their competencies and consequently improve their performance. The main objective of the state and that of businesses is to train and

develop locals to enable them to replace expatriates with competency and efficiency" (Williams, Bhanugopan and Fish, 2011 p.32).

It provides a more suitable definition for localisation that links with this research. Localisation is therefore regarded by the researcher as the policy objective and practice of transitioning workforces from a mix of expatriates to one where local employees are exclusively utilised. The next challenge is to define precisely what an 'expatriate' is and how they fit into the process of localisation. The Cambridge Dictionary (2018) defines an expatriate as: 'Someone who does not live in his or her own country'. It agreed as clear regarding the fact the expatriate is working in another country and is therefore not a national. The addition of the word 'employee' to that of expatriate produces some more focussed definitions as to what expatriate means. Jawad (2012) defines the employed expatriate as 'a person who relocates or rotates[6] to a different location for business purposes'. This definition can be expanded to suggest that this can be temporary or permanent.

2.5   The attraction

It could be asked why expatriates would want to travel to other locations to work, rather than remain in their own country? The travel to locations such as the UAE, Saudi and Oman could be understood as they are stable locations that could be seen as attractive to work and live in. Stable and organised would be considered as having a functioning government and relative structure to the occupants of the nation and those looking to work there. Post-conflict locations would be something very different, and the potential for instability can remain high. At the time of writing this chapter, ISIS was active in the Northern regions of Iraq, close to the borders of Kurdistan. It presents additional security implications for expatriates who travelled to work in the large oil fields in Iraq. Syria was still in a state of war, and issues with Turkey were on-going within the region. It does raise the question as to why people would actively seek and accept employment in such dangerous locations. It provides different opinions on the stable locations that the

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[6] Moves to another country or rotates in and out of a foreign country on a specific schedule.

available literature and research were conducted. What is the attraction for expatriates in seeking and taking assignments abroad, where they are at odds with new cultures and approaches to the business they may be new to? The main reason identified is that of compensation packages on offer, with the opportunity for people to earn high tax-free salaries (Brown, 2008). It could be seen by many as an opportunity of a lifetime with offers of life-changing sums of money. It would help to explain the attraction to expatriates taking up these employment opportunities. There is also the chance to gain rapid promotion or undertake a position that would be unavailable to people within their home country. Lower level qualifications are seen in a different light in developing countries and open positions up to expatriates that would be unattainable in their own country. This research looked to identify what attracted expatriates, as part of the need to developing a clearer understanding of localisation in post-conflict locations. The stable locations are easier to understand from an attraction point of view with post-conflict locations seemingly based on financial compensation offered. It can, of course, again be argued as being personal to each expatriate as every person has different situations in life. However, a deeper understanding of the attraction will offer the research a higher prospect of proposing progression in planning and application of localisation by identifying the aspects of attraction. It is not suggesting that the research will recommend removing any areas of attraction to localise, as that would be uncontrolled and thus present disruption. The aim is more to understand from the research why people travel and work in these locations and how to better transition towards a dynamic and successful national workforce. It is accepted that in the main for expatriates the opportunity to travel the world and build work experience while being financially rewarded for being in positions of responsibility. It continues to offer a real attraction to expatriates across Europe and beyond.

2.6   The alternative perception

Organisations are attracted to offer employment to expatriates for many reasons, and their recruitment is often justified as being essential to business. Reasons such as having to access technical expertise or experience that is simply not available locally. It could be due to lack of available training, experience or only a specific person being headhunted

by the organisation. It can be justified as looking after the interests of the shareholders, requiring someone with citizenship of the country in which the business is headquartered (Hailey, 1996).

The different perceptions of organisations and local staff towards expatriates were discussed by Hailey (1996). He identified that the local staff viewed expatriates in different ways, setting the culture of the working environment that new expatriate worker enters.

"Where international joint venture strategies are implemented, staffing decisions are essential to the success of the operation and often have implications and relate to issues around potential cross-cultural conflict, control" (Hailey, 1996 p.175).

Ziera, Harari and Nundi (1975) produced some now-dated research, but still relevant to this discussion. They identified that some local staff reported that organisations did not trust local staff and that expatriates were there to oversee and control them. However, in contrast, some locals saw it as an opportunity to progress, by learning new skills and a better understanding of the company's ethos from an experienced expatriate. It can result in a requirement for broader and more complex reviews of approaches when managing the business in a different location.

"Differences (Cultural) between the environment of the headquarters and that of the subsidiary impose serious constraints on managerial behaviour. These differences frequently make it necessary for headquarters to reshape its managerial style and content to fit the local branch requirements" (Ziera, Harari and Nundi, 1975 p.69).

The trust issue surfaced in respect of appointments, promotions and opportunities. Nationals were open in stating that they observed expatriates being hired into or promoted into more senior roles rather than nationals. It created a feeling that the organisation simply did not trust them to undertake roles with more authority. 'Local employees were dissatisfied with ethnocentric staffing policies whereby senior management positions were always filled by expatriates' (Ziera, Harari and Nundi, 1975 p.71). This quote

demonstrates this issue found by the research, and this can understandably increase the divide between the expatriates and national workforce. It could be argued as moving towards creating a toxic work environment. It supports Hailey's (1996) findings concerning the reception and individual perception of local staff's views of expatriates. The research of Ziera, Harari and Nundi (1975) can be argued as being outdated, but this research is interested in discovering what commonalities remain today. The issue of differential levels of pay and compensation was also identified in Ziera, Harari and Nundi's (1975) study, as creating a real resentment for some local staff. They openly voiced opinions on excessive packages offered to expatriates, some of whom they suggested offered little productivity. It could be argued as a stalling point for organisations, dissatisfied workers are less productive, and a resentful workforce can also create catastrophic outcomes in developing countries. However, this negative view was countered by the research of Potter (1989), who identified that there were some challenges in regards to the achievement of training national managers to succeed expatriates. Potter (1989) suggests that many of the frustrations felt by nationals against expatriates are due to a lack of suitable training. That would allow local nationals to have a realistic chance at successfully progressing and eventually replacing the expatriates. It adds some variance into the discussion and points at an early stage. The direction of the employing organisation is argued as a key facilitator in achieving the localisation of the country's workforce.

It can be argued that perceptions of nationals are a very personal one and will vary across workforces. It is evident from the earlier discussions and supported by the research of Al-Wafi and Forstenlechner (2010). They highlight that there are additional layers of complexity in the mixing of cultures inside the workforce. The cultural differences they argue will generally result in employees grouping within their own cultures and thus creating workforce divides. It is additionally supported by Milliken and Martins (1996), who added that the draw of social circles in the workplace could even overrule the organisational identification. The employee goes to the group where they have the most in common, and that group grows as more employees from the same culture join. It does present a problematic situation for expatriates and the organisation in ensuring diversity

and opportunity for progression. Al-Wafi and Forstenlechner (2010) do balance this by offering that; a diverse workforce does also offer some considerable positive outputs. The mixed groups can produce high levels of both innovations as well as creativity due to such differing backgrounds. It adds strength to organisations where groups use their differences as a force multiplier. The individual experiences and perceptions developed will form the opinions of each national employee towards expatriates and the organisation. The research would support the theory that some nationals welcome the opportunity to work with and develop from diversity if managed carefully by the organisation.

There are, of course, alternative views, where expatriates are viewed dimly by nationals. They may be viewed as holding the better, more powerful positions, and this creates distrust between them, expatriates and the organisation. Local perception does have a very mixed outcome based on the literature discussed this far, but it is worth noting that the research being discussed was based in non-conflict locations. The review will detail that the national workforce was previously satisfied as public service employment was offered by the governments. This employment had fewer menial jobs considered uninteresting by some nationals. It is, of course, very different when moving away from locations such as Qatar and UAE; where less public service jobs are available. The governments of the established nations such as Qatar are now running out of public sector opportunities, so even these locations require national employment expansion into the private sector. It results in more nationals looking towards the private sector for employment and therefore reducing expatriate levels. Locations such as Iraq have yet to establish a well-resourced and fully functioning public sector, and therefore, opportunities are mainly in the private sector in this post-conflict location. It increases competition for jobs with their fellow citizens and even more so with expatriates. It does present an opportunity for local opinions to become negative towards expatriates, whom they see as taking the jobs that are badly needed to support families and the economy. It relates a delicate situation where tolerance levels for expatriates can change quickly and potentially result in violence. It argues that outcomes from research in post-conflict areas could well be very different, and this adds to the uniqueness of this research. Now equipped with some initial arguments, the chapter will focus on some specific locations.

The aim is to better equip the reader in gaining a more detailed understanding of the complexity of the topic. The chapter has delivered some of the initial concepts and considerations, and the following sections will now conduct a deeper dive into the different areas that make up localisation and expatriate employment. It will provide some additional detail that expands the offering to consider other locations and research that helps to develop the unique approach of this thesis further. The different perceptions have already been discussed, and the review will consider some previous examples. It will look at nations that have high levels of expatriate workers and how this has been both received and adjusted. It is taken from available literature, and it further demonstrates the gap in the literature in respect to this research, specifically the link to post-conflict and nationalisation.

2.7   Expatriates love of Qatar versus Qatarization

The literature review collected several different research pieces, studying localisation in many different locations. At the time of writing, Qatar, despite being a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was under blockade by a number of its fellow GCC members. It gives the reader some idea of the very delicate nature of the Middle East both in politics and conflict. It was considered as worth comparing to other countries that have localisation challenges and was selected as a viable starting point. The literature review identified that Qatar has been subject to some research projects in this area, and this depth provides a solid example to start this section of the chapter. Qatar is located between the UAE and Bahrain and flanked by Saudi Arabia sitting on the Persian Gulf. The country is ranked 13th in the world for the largest oil reserves (EIA, 2015) and the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (PPP[7]) per capita (IMF, 2020). It demonstrates the wealth and growth opportunities in the country. The national speed of growth could only be achieved by importing labour to support the development tempo. It has resulted in the expatriate levels increasing at one point to around 94% of the entire country's workforce, at its peak in 2003 (Al-Najjar, 2013). Expatriates made up 88% of the entire population of Qatar by late 2019, showing a small drop in numbers (UN, 2019). Qatar has

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[7] Purchasing power parity, using calculation of goods and services within a year divided by population numbers.

a population of around 330,000 indigenous people (Qataris) and is one of the world's wealthiest nations, with a per capita income of $70,740 (IMF, 2019). When this is combined with substantial natural reserves of oil and gas, it places the country in a strong global position. The discovery of oil and natural gas created substantial foreign investment, and that brought with it, expatriates. International Operating Companies (IOCs) for oil and gas brought investments of around $100 billion and rising (Reed and Tuttle, 2010) which, coupled with large infrastructure projects, created multiple employment opportunities. The growth and development had to be supported by labour the and migration of large amounts of expatriates started for those with appropriate skills and trades. It became the place to be, for willing expatriates to travel and work in a location that had all the resources available.

Qatari nationals were entitled to generous packages from the government such as free education and health care along with interest-free loans to construct their houses. The national workforce was primarily employed within the public sector, which also offered attractive compensation packages (Forstenlechner and Rutledge, 2010). The population of Qatar is a mix of nationals and expatriates, and it has one of the most unbalanced populations in the world with only 15% of the entire population being made up of nationals (UN, 2019). The influx of expatriate workers has had created the imbalance of social numbers (88% immigrants) as discussed earlier in this section. Although there is an increase in the national population numbers, there is still a gender imbalance created by expatriates, where males make up around 75.1% of the population (Qatar Gov, 2018) mainly comprising of foreign workers. Randeree (2009) highlights that true nationalisation can only be achieved when the national workforce includes both male and female nationals. This key point will be considered and critically discussed later in this thesis.

"Millions of jobs created were not filled with citizens but with expatriates, due to a structural preference for cheap, imported labour and a ruling bargain until recently all but guaranteeing lucrative public sector employment" (Al-Wafi and Forstenlechner, 2010 p.76).

Qatar nationals are mainly employed within the public sector and have less representation within the private sector; some argue this is due to an education system that is 'out of sync' with the labour market (Gonzalez *et al*., 2008). The main expatriate influx was following the increased national wealth. The relatively small population had the funds to develop infrastructure but lacked the skills to create it. It has led to high levels of dependence on expatriates, and this has created some very relaxed rules on foreigners being allowed into the country (Al-Wafi and Forstenlechner, 2010). There was a perception that the levels of expatriates would dissipate over some time Shaham (2009) points out. However, with planned increases in infrastructure combined with a very relaxed immigration policy on expatriates, the balance has remained ever since (Kapiszewski, 2007).

"The deluge of foreign workers that has occurred over the last century in the region has received less attention. In many countries, this influx has accompanied a concurrent process of Asianization: Hundreds of thousands of Asian workers, who do not speak Arabic or wear the dishdasha populate the largest cities in the gulf today" (Kapiszewski, 2007 p.12).

Qatar has a low unemployment rate within the Gulf States, with a rate of 0.15% compared to Iraq at 7.91% in 2019 (Statista, 2019). This rate could be considered as demonstrating an increase in employment opportunities for nationals. That theory is challenged when considering that nationals make up 81% of the public sector and only 10% of the private sector workforces. The private sector is the largest employer in Qatar which suggests that the balance is still out of sync (Qatar Gov, 2017). The reasons for unemployment in Qatar are argued by some as due to the lack of educated nationals (Gonzalez *et al*., 2008). Other research showed that a large proportion of unemployed nationals hold secondary level education or higher. Nationals argued that they remained unemployed due to lack of work opportunities (Qatar Gov, 2017). It is strongly argued against by Forstenlechner and Rutledge (2010); they related that the type of education was not suitably matched to the job market, regardless of the level of education achieved by nationals. The finding is also supported by Harry (2007), adding that the education system needs to align with the

reality of the job market. The education system in place is argued as not being market-driven, remaining traditional and not offering employers the opportunity to integrate nationals within the organisation (Rees *et al*., 2007).

Nationals were open to considering private sector employment; however, an equal amount related they would not consider the private sector. This primarily due to pre-conceived ideas that it offered lower salaries and culturally, the positions did not offer sufficient social status (Qatar Statistics Labour Force Survey, 2018). This research was strongly supported by the findings of Achoui (2009), who researched the perceptions of status within employment in the Gulf States. It suggests that nationals would rather remain unemployed than undertake a function that is considered low in status. It then opens the door to expatriates to fill the gaps in the workforce (Forstenlechner and Rutledge, 2010). The offer of manual labour jobs was found to be the main objection as it was seen as a low-level job (Muna, 1980). This perception is not specific or unique to Qatar and is identified as a trend across the Gulf States (Stasz *et al*., 2007). It also represents some of the opinions voiced by British nationals who remain unemployed rather than undertake well-paid but lower status jobs (e.g. in agriculture), these are then filled by European workers (Janta, Ladkin and Brown, 2011). Unemployment within the female workforce in Qatar is higher than that of males at 0.43% in 2019 (World Bank, 2019) Around 60% of the positions were filled by female expatriates, the positions were considered low statuses such as maids and helpers (Qatar Statistics Labour Force Survey, 2018). In 2009 the number of national females unemployed was 2,400, which showed a decrease, possibly due to more diverse interaction with the western influences and subsequent increases in workforce participation (Williams, Kilanski and Muller, 2011). It has continued to drop annually except for a spike in 2012, subsequently then dropping in 2013. It is unique to Qatar when compared to the other Gulf States, where female representation is significantly underrepresented (Kemp, 2013). Metcalf (2007) also supports on the lack of gender diversity in the Gulf states. Randeree (2009) highlighted the example of Emiratis females accounting for less than 12% of the entire UAE workforce.

The financial growth of Qatar could be credited in some ways to the highly skilled expatriates in the oil and gas industry. They held high-level positions in organisations utilising their experience and education to increase production output. The other end of the scale is the introduction of low skilled workers from Asia who have readily undertaken low-status positions (Berrebi, Martorell and Tanner, 2009). It may have assisted in the growth of the nation but does leave a very unbalanced workforce. With an over-reliance on foreign workers that also introduce different cultural practices, this could place the national identity at risk as a result of low numbers of nationals. Qatar is not alone in this concern, and it has to consider how to move forward with localisation, to develop and retain its own identity while creating highly-skilled national workers (Rees, Mamman and Braik, 2007). The government of Qatar has identified the requirement to localise the workforce. It is making moves towards tackling this issue, starting with the education system. The Qatar education ministry has increased spending on education to 50 times its original level (Oxford Business Group, 2010). It is argued as key to successfully localising the workforce (Al-Dosary, Rahman and Aina, 2006). The step onto the global oil and gas market has allowed Qatar to create agreements with western allies who then subsequently offered access to universities previously unavailable, with many American institutes opening their doors (Qatar Foundation, 2010). It is worthy to note that some researchers identified that exact figures of nationals in Western universities from the Gulf States were not provided. It is creating a lack of transparency which was often a challenge during the research (Williams, Bhanugopan and Fish, 2011). This investment aimed to increase localisation has not achieved the objectives set, due in part to low uptakes of nationals in secondary education levels and above, which is lower than some other Gulf States such as Bahrain (Karoly, 2010).

The Qatar population has its imbalance when it comes to education with older nationals being better educated than their younger counterparts, despite the broader opportunities open for education to the younger generation (Berrebi, Martorell and Tanner, 2009). The female national population has, however, continued to reach higher educational achievements when compared to males, 31% of females hold post-secondary level education compared to 27% of males (Karoly, 2010). The female nationals of Qatar may

be furthering their education to better compete with their male counterparts who traditionally have held management roles. The additional education may well prove to assist in offsetting this when coupled with the drive and ambition of Qatari women. Localisation in Qatar has developed into the term 'Qatarization'[8] , and it was a program developed by the government, designed to enhance national participation in the workforce via a quota and training approach. It started in 2000 along with the other Gulf States who aimed to localise the workforce and reduce the numbers of expatriates. Implemented while ensuring production and business aspects remained unaffected, to maintain the buy-in of international stakeholders (Forstenlechner, 2010). The concept was that incentives would be offered to private sectors for preferential employment consideration of nationals over expatriates; this became a legal requirement for businesses. The government looked to achieve quotas such as 50% of critical positions within the oil and gas industry should be held by nationals.

Additionally, the aim was for 100% of non-specialist roles to be held by nationals in government (Kamrava, 2009). These targets were not met by the private sector and were considered as unrealistic. They were subsequently cancelled as legal obligations for organisations in Qatar (Kamarava, 2009). Some organisations voiced positive progress towards localising the workforce, such as Qatar Gas, which boasted a national workforce of 50% and a low attrition rate for nationals when compared to expatriates (Albawaba, 2009). The concept of low attrition has been considered key when looking to achieve localisation. Careful career planning and developed human resources approaches being argued as the reason for low attrition rates in successful programs (Forstenlechner and Rutledge, 2010). The next section will look at the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the nation's dilemma on expatriate workers.

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[8] *'Qatarization is a strategic initiative by the Government of Qatar to provide employment for its citizens in the private and public sectors. As one of the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030, Qatarization targets positions that are integral to the business plans of private and public-sector entities. The objective is to provide 50% or more of Qatari citizens with meaningful permanent employment'*. (Qatar Foundation, 2015).

2.8   Saudi Arabia and the application of Saudization

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the world leader in petroleum exportation and substantial national wealth allowing for global economic and political influence (Torofdar and Yunggar, 2012). The nation is, however, faced with a challenge of extreme wealth versus high levels of unemployment. It is mostly argued as being due to the relatively young average age of the population. The evidence suggests that amongst the native population, there is a lack of skills and overall low levels of motivation to go to work (Torofdar and Yunggar, 2012). It demonstrates that Saudi Arabia shares similar challenges to Qatar concerning localisation and getting nationals into the workplace.

The term 'Saudization' was best defined by Looney (2004) as the on-going process of replacing expatriates with highly skilled and suitably qualified local workers. The view of the Department of Labour in the government is one of self-sufficiency and obtaining job security within the overall society (Ministry of Labour, 2008). The concept of Saudization is a three-pronged approach to creating increased employment for nationals. Reducing the number and reliance on expatriate workers and as a result retaining income and investment that would otherwise leave the country (Looney, 2004). The Saudi government have undertaken several projects to achieve Saudization; this was started with the founding of the Human Resources Development fund that was linked with a training scheme for nationals. The labour law then followed, requiring organisations to meet a minimum of 75% local workforces adding the requirements for minimum wages for local employees. The labour law even mentions the requirement for organisations to train local workers to actively replace expatriates (KSA labour laws article 45, 2008). It is argued by Torofdar and Yunggar (2012) as enthusiastic, but without any long-term vision and is considered unrealistic.

These policies may be considered as extreme, forcing organisations to employ local employees and keep records to show evidence of localisation. However, when the financial aspect is looked at the reality becomes more understandable. It is estimated that between 1998 - 2008, over $139 billion would taken out of the country by expatriate

salaries (Cordesman and Burke, 2002). These figures were a concern for the Saudi government and played some part in the new policies. The issue of localisation did seem to stem from some previous policies, as discussed by Maimani (1989). Before 1984 the Saudi government forbid national graduates from working in the private sector. Academic discussions also have added to the current issues faced today as identified by Cordesman (2003); where only 10,000 nationals who graduated in engineering, out of 114,000 between 1995 and 1999. It has reduced the number of national engineers available to the private sector and added to the localisation issue. Ramadi (2010) supports this adding that the actual numbers of local graduates possessing both academic and technical training were substantially low. It has hindered the plans to localise the workforce further as unqualified staff cannot be forced upon the private industry.

The Saudi government have now set a forecast of 2020 for a majority local workforce and increased the funds available to the development fund. It shows some similarities concerning incentives offered in the previous section, with options such as the government paying around 75% of salaries while in training (Torofdar and Yunggar, 2012). It is slowly reduced as the local employee reaches the required competency levels, reducing the overheads of the private organisations. Alzalabani (2004) also added that the fund covered the majority of the training costs for the first two years, increasing the incentive to employ nationals. The reality is that the results have been less impressive, and as discussed by Ramadi (2010), they are very modest when compared to the expectations. Ramadi (2010) looked at the main reasons that private industries had no increase in the levels of locals within their workforces, and they were detailed as follows:

- The cost of the local workforce was considered high when compared to the high availability of cheaper migrant labour.
- The local population were very selective on what positions they would accept concerning social status.
- The ability to control expatriates was more manageable, and they were more disciplined on processes and procedures.

- The local population were often hesitant to integrate with a diverse workforce, linking back to social status.
- The process to release a national was difficult when compared to expatriates.
- The lack of technical qualifications and communication challenges due to the low levels of English.
- The local workers were less open to being mobile and were keen to remain close to home at all times regardless of the business needs.

Ramadi (2010) goes on to relate that despite the laws and incentives in place, the private sector has remained consistent in employing expatriates. The general perception of local employees within the private sector was somewhat tainted, with a view that locals were less productive than international employees. The attraction of government jobs remained and is similar to the previous section discussion in that they hold higher status socially and are often better paid (Feulner, 1989). Varshney (2018) supports this adding that middle positions were often considered better paid; there were less low-level positions within the public sector. Several studies have looked at the culture that drives human resource policies at governmental levels. As related by Du Plessis (2007), this is a mixture of beliefs, behaviours and traditions that are then directed into the national policies on employment. The importance of cultural influence is considered critical by Byars (2006), and this adds strength to the social consideration of polices and their reasons for creating them. It is fully supported by Torofdar and Yunggar (2012) who identified the main barriers to localisation as follows:

- Local perception of low skilled positions driving a reduction in availability and opportunity to start within the private sector.
- Manual labour is considered culturally beneath people, and the opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship was viewed negatively when compared to university education.
- Social status within families was the main driver for younger Saudis who would want to retain position and respect concerning employment positions.

It relates some of the main challenges faced by the country if they want to nationalise the workforce further or even fully. When compared to the Oman section, it was suggested by Torofdar and Yunggar (2012) that Oman had been more successful than Saudi in this process. The main factors supporting that argument were that Oman's policies are tightly bound with the educational strategies. The push-in Oman on the vocational training helped with their success when compared to the Saudi approach. They also added that the overall Saudi economy requires further diversification if they are to support the local workforce. The construction industry is considered a critical area that lacks local workers. The final discussion point on Saudization comes from Shediac and Hatem (2010) that goes on to support the overall argument about the challenges of localisation in Saudi. They identified that there are three main areas to consider.

- The need to expand the economic base and create further employment opportunities in areas where the country has a competitive advantage, such as the oil and gas industry.
- The reformation of the educational system to better target the private sectors and provide usable skills.
- Develop effective immigration policies to better support localisation.

They argue that these three elements are crucial to localisation for the country and if applied, can make the concept of saudization a reality. The next section will consider wider parts of nationalisation.

2.9 The concept of a wider reach

This review has already touched on an example of the economic impact of employing expatriates and the level of cash flow that leaves the respective economy. The on-going employment of expatriates can fuel discontent even in established countries such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where large numbers remain presently. The local population can become tainted with negative views on their abilities as identified by Al-Waqfi and Forstenlecher (2009). The stereotyping of nationals can further damage the image of

nationals in the eyes of private employers, therefore, reducing consideration of employment. They even go as far as to suggest that organisations accept to meet governmental quotas by employing nationals in positions that they will fail. This further fuels the tainted image as was evident in the Saudi section, where the research relates that the opinion of locals is negative.

The impact on an organisation which embraces the diverse workforce may be commendable, but it also relates a challenge that is often unseen until it emerges. Milliken and Martins (1996) looked at how a diverse workforce can produce high levels of innovation, but it is fraught with the likelihood of cultural grouping occurring within an organisation. Employees would often group into their social/cultural groups and create an internal division; this impacts negatively on the performance of the organisation. The other side of the argument is the attitude of locals towards expatriates, resisting internal integration and harnessing negativity towards them. Van Oudenhoven and Hofstra (2006) discussed this and labelled it as the 'One-way process' of the larger majority group influencing the minority groups. Tajfel (1982) looked at the grouping aspect and identified that employees would go through a process of self-categorisation. They would then identify with a group that had similar beliefs or characteristics as themselves. It has developed into the self-categorisation theory developed by Turner (1985) but remains relatively ignored by the private sector. It creates different groups within an organisation and the larger group and looks negatively towards the other groups. The dominant group then influences decreasing smaller groups numbers by only employing people they approve. It suggests that more expatriates may continue to employ expatriates exclusively, and more nationals may only employ nationals. It depends on the volume and numbers within a specific organisation of either group; creating a see-saw effect depending on the weighting of groups.

The weighting of nationals in public sector employment can also be a driver to negativity towards expatriates as identified by Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2009). Policymakers can retain a hostile view of foreign employees, and this can spread to the broader national society. It creates an unhealthy environment where negativity reigns and further division

can be developed within organisations. The social impact can be one of frustration where people see expatriates with work. While they struggle to feed their families, leading to the potential for social outcry and even violence. The approach of many countries has been challenged by academics, and most plans have yet to demonstrate viable results. The theories are argued as simply incorrect by Forstenlechner and Mellahi (2011). They relate that instead of legal pressure, they should consider offering preference in the awarding of public sector contracts. It may encourage organisations that have higher levels of national employees. The other option is to reduce the red tape for organisations, Iraq retains a complex and challenging importation process for oil companies. Easing and simplifying processes could encourage the employment of more locals. The outcome would not be without a positive impact on society, and supportive of the local economy, more so in locations that are not long out of conflict. They are very delicate, and consideration to this must be at the top of the agenda.

Nationalisation is not just the filling of a position by a national employee; it is where the position is filled and maintained sufficiently meeting the needs of the organisation (Potter, 1989). He went on to discuss what he considered as the main barriers to nationalisation covering cultural attitudes. Incorrect job assignments, impatience and expatriates desire to maintain dependency on them were listed. Hailey (1996) made some interesting findings during his research into expatriate managers on a global scale. The research compared the thoughts of the organisation's management and that of local employees concerning retaining expatriates. It became clear from that research that the thoughts were opposite, local managers felt there was a lack of trust, and they were stagnating due to fewer training opportunities. The leadership of the organisations were different in justification, relating the need for experts in their fields, coupled with the need to offer expatriates international exposure. The area of salaries was where most resentment was identified in Hailey's (1996) research. The locals were highly resentful of the higher pay and bonuses not being offered to them. When added to a society that has recently left conflict and lacks some of the primary resources, this resentment can be catastrophic.

2.10 The historical considerations of the Arab culture

This section will focus on the research of Muna (1980) who looked at the challenges, lifestyle and social intricacies of Arab executives. This research can be challenged as being somewhat dated, but the approach is not to employ the data towards the analysis but employ it for comparison. The timespan between that research and this thesis offers an interesting opportunity to compare how much has changed for Arab executives, workers and the key aspect of social interlinks. It is argued as enhancing the output of the research by offering evidence of similarities. Progression comparison to the social and employment areas of that research versus the present-day findings. Muna (1980) offered some interesting concepts on the social structure and disregarding the core aspect of an executive within this discussion and focus on the findings of social influences; it offers some intriguing outcomes. The findings identified that there were three distinct social circles within the Arab's world of urban, tribal and rural.

The roots of businesspeople showed an entwined background of both village and tribal roots. Muna (1980) identified that out of the sample group, around 6% came from a tribal background. It demonstrates that social interactions and influences are based on the initial roots regardless of the final high-level position. This link does not evaporate on being promoted or achieving executive-level positions. These roots remain a clear influence, and this provides some additional clarity inside of the culture of the Arab world. The remaining members of the group showed that 48% came from a village background, leaving 46% from cities. It demonstrates how diverse the backgrounds can be, and it could be argued that the background can further influence how well they remain linked with their roots. The influence aspect could be that they have established social processes to which they may well feel committed to adhering. It could be from assisting in employment or as is the case in this research how they view expatriates or choose to provide opportunities to progress nationals. The Arab executive is placed in a position of influence and can direct and control to a larger degree how many national or expatriates are employed. Muna (1980) also identified that the different backgrounds presented different social ties or expectations that included loyalty, pride, as well as promoting their

manliness. It is interesting as it relates to some key expectations that are based on the individual's specific background and roots. It is part of a person's identity within the social circles and forms clear guidelines on expected conduct. It would suggest that nationals within their social groupings could be provided with more opportunities for employment and advancement.

The different backgrounds Muna (1980) researched, showed distinct similarities in culture despite differing experiences and customs. The example provided was how villages and city people might have different lifestyles, but as a society, they share the same heritage as far as customs and social acceptance showed. This part of the social aspect links and suggests that Arab culture is a reflection of society. Muna (1980) argues that Arab cultural norms are in place and direct how people act and what they do, even within a business environment. The social guideline of the importance of family and friendship is held in the highest regard within the Arab culture. It is again a shared value between the three different Arab communities that have been identified by Muna (1980). The cultural expectation that these social groups hold may well call on individuals to assist in gaining others employment or favour. That would suggest that within the context of this research, those high-powered Arab executives may be influenced to provide opportunities for nationals. That would, of course, support the localisation approaches that were discussed in earlier sections of this chapter. It does, however, raise the question, if this does occur then why are the levels of expatriates still so high? With governmental policies leaning on the private sector also supported by well-placed Arab executives, should it not be delivering a higher level of nationalisation?

Muna (1980) discussed the influence of oil and gas within the research and how this discovery has been argued as a significant turning point in Arab history. The research even back then identified that development was hampered by the lack of available national human resources. The specific gaps between managerial and skilled workers were highlighted and support the discussions within this chapter. That shows that historically through to present-day the lack of management positions and skilled labour has not been filled by nationals. The attraction of public sector employment preferences

for many nationals supporting the more recent research findings. Government employment seemed to have a more attractive draw for nationals when compared to the private sector. The sample group remarked that they, as executives faced some considerable challenges in finding human resources that would support business growth. The Egyptian members of the group were the only section that did not face any issues with recruitment at the national level. It shows that there are different findings across the region, and Egypt may offer a future research opportunity for comparison. Excluding the Egyptian executives, up to 84% of the sample group agreed that they faced national workforce issues. It was found to be similar in most industries, and the presence of expatriates was at a high level. It was suggested as influencing the internal organisational culture due to the high levels of different social cultures within the workplace. The mix created what Kelman (1958) described as a 'Double-edged culture shock' that had both positive and negative effects on the people and the organisational culture. The executives also added that while recruiters could organise the expatriates, the retention and motivation required to keep these employees were initially alien to them. The differences in culture found that executives had to adapt their management style to identify how best to encourage and keep the expatriates. It results in the transition of the cultural norms as external influences change approaches and concepts of the national managers.

The mix of up to forty different nationalities in some locations does suggest that cultural chaos is present when trying to achieve a harmonised balance between so many different groups. It did, of course, lead to divisions in the workplace where people grouped where they felt most comfortable. This division offered another new challenge to the sample group, who admitted it was almost impossible to break all the internal divisions down. These findings were very similar to the more recent research studies, that would suggest that not a lot has changed, regardless of government initiatives to increase local content. The different ministries of the governments were also found to be unable to meet the increased activity that oil and gas production had created. The influx of expatriate works with visa and residency requirements swamped the governmental ministries. Up to 64% of the sample group argued that the government systems were not suited to modern business practices and stalled growth just as much as workforce issues. This fact is

interesting when considering that the central national workforce was in public sector employment. The preference for the public sector was also discussed by Muna (1980) and offered some interesting findings. The sample group of executives offered the theory that national employees showed a preference to lone working rather than being part of a team. It would create difficulties in organisations where operations are conducted by teamwork. Manual labour and low-class employment positions were also discussed with the sample group. It became clear that national employees preferred to undertake office work rather than physical work. It reduces willing numbers of national employees for other jobs outside of office-based work. It was suggested that it was a social belief that manual labour was seen as lowly and unmanly. That again testifies to the power of social and cultural influence in the Middle East regarding employment.

The final discussion point in this section is the concept of 'connections'. The access to connections may be less well understood by western people, but within the Arab culture, it is a double-edged weapon. The term is related to people who have connections with others that are in positions of authority or influence. The distance to reach a suitable connection can go on for some considerable time. The person may have to go via several people to reach the person with the power from whom they require support. Connections in the Arab culture allow people to request or receive favours based purely on relationships. The sample group of Muna (1980) openly admitted to using their connections to help push tasks through more quickly with other organisations or governmental departments. These connections are established through relationships either linked by family or social circles. There were examples where family members had connections that the sample group would employ as well as direct connections. It may seem like a random aspect to mention within this research, but it becomes relevant when compared to the research findings and discussions. Nationalisation can be pushed through at a higher pace if the request is made by the right person. It can include the cancelling of expatriate visas to force organisations to transition to nationals. The source of a request is always linked to an initial person requesting help that is then actioned by the powerful connection. The culture promotes power and manliness as part of its ethos and the ability to demonstrate this power finds connections more than willing to help.

The drawback is that these connections work both ways and a favour done is most certainly a favour due! It means that the connection can at any time request their repayment in kind by employing a family relative or providing information. It then puts the requester in a position where they may have to act unethically to return the favour. It could be considered as a form of corruption by some but as Muna (1980) identified, this is part of the social norm and the way the day to day business works. The topic of connections will be revisited within later chapters of this research and does produce some interesting results for comparison. This topic links with nationalisation in this research and demonstrates one of the stronger influencing aspects of transition. There is little doubt that this social norm will remain in place indefinitely regardless of western influences.

2.11 Localisation and stability: Conflict as an additional layer of complexity

This review has looked at two real-life localisation actions for two different countries within the Gulf States; they are both considered as developed countries and yet still have challenges in this area. This section will now add the problem concerning post-conflict countries. It is the reality for countries such as Iraq, and hopefully soon the end of the war in Syria will come soon. It is evident that the employment of expatriates is still high, and adding conflict then attracts staff who are chasing high salaries for working in destabilised locations. The author can testify to that as he is one of those people and at the time of writing is at a desk in the oil fields in South Iraq. The lack of established research on workforce nationalisation in post-conflict locations presents a challenge for this research but adds to its uniqueness. There have been some considerable conflicts in regions such as Iraq, Syria and Iran when looking specifically at the Middle East. It does raise the question as to why there is less research on nationalisation as it is argued as a vital part of rebuilding a nation after conflict? People need money and employment to kick-start the economy, and without suitable employment options, the nation can quickly descend into chaos as the example of Iraq demonstrates. The lack of employment options can result in social distress that eventually leads to further violence. The issues of instability and availability of employment are still present in that location and means that visiting expatriates are viewed more negatively. Snyder (2014) adds that peace has been slowly

occurring regarding physical attacks on locations and people. It has however been replaced with civil disturbances, tribal violence and frustration at the slow pace of development and broader employment opportunities. There is a clear link to the concept of nationalisation and how important this topic is as part of a larger approach to rebuilding post-conflict. The social aspects of Iraq are argued as going beyond the cultural theory by Hofstede (2011). The field research findings will support this statement regarding the seemingly bottomless levels of cultural uniqueness in Iraq. As each cultural layer is peeled back, another is found with no sign of the centre, as this research will show. The theory of conceptual dimensions by Kluckhohn (1962) is not argued as devoid to this research as a concept. However, the true depth and complexity of the social aspects identified in Iraq show some considerable stretch. This depth is why this section will only look to produce an overview as the vast availability of established research on culture and society would result in a tangent. When coupled with the complexity of the social and cultural aspects of the research location, would create and a significant detour that would detract from the focus of the research.

Collier (2003) suggests that violence leaves a fear of reoccurrence about economic development, which then causes frustration and violence reoccurs. This cycle has a considerable impact on developing opportunities for locals in a post-conflict country. The threat of violence means that private-sector organisations may choose only to employ staff that they can fully vet. The international community will often support post-conflict countries with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), that has a history of providing international support. Coupled with this support a potential private industry involvement such as oil and gas, this offers a country an immediate support opportunity. The investment needs to be on a larger scale to stand a chance of success, as argued by Bowles and Gintis (2004). Social interaction development is the product of long-established evolutionary aspects. The removal of slavery in Africa is an example of how embedded an aspect can become in culture, and therefore, how difficult it can be to break the established social constructs (Nunn, 2008). Private sector organisations entering a post-conflict location that provide access to natural resources, need to be more aware of social issues that go beyond that of the provision of security to

its staff. A location where social disorder and violence are more socially accepted presents a challenging environment across multiple spectrums for these organisations. It creates a very complex operating environment for any private organisation to enter, with the financial investment required to establish being carefully balanced against the return on investment. Shareholders expect a return, so this creates a very risk-averse approach to a hostile operating environment. Society looks for stability after a conflict has subsided, and the opportunity to live in relative peace. However, when basic human needs are not met in the early phases, it leads to social unrest and frustration.

International intervention into failed states or post-conflict locations has moved past solely humanitarian consideration following the war on terror (Croft, 2006). These locations are attractive to terrorist organisations due to the lack of structure and opportunity to operate without resistance (Duffy, 2005). It has led to the concept of global security as part of redeveloping a post-conflict country as a critical factor (Rice, 2003). Brinkerhoff (2005) considers the process as still being in its infancy despite the considerable research on the practical aspects of rebuilding governance, leaving nationalisation outside of consideration. Western intervention has looked to develop a democracy out of the conflict area as a way to empower the people of that state and rebuild quicker. The application is, however, much more difficult in reality when moving from one system to democracy in places such as Iraq or Afghanistan is complicated (Bermeo, 2003). Call and Cook (2003) support this, adding that a nation's traditions and culture are often unchangeable and simply do not match the blueprint for democracy. It results in a rejection of the system and further destabilisation of a state; recent events have shown this is a real argument. It may read as somewhat dramatic; however, it needs to be clear what private organisations are undertaking when establishing in a post-conflict country. The lack of security is a crucial concern for any private organisation when entering a post-conflict location, the lack of police or army due to governmental collapse leaves a vacuum of security issues. It is linked with the reintegration of post-conflict fighters back into society; to achieve this, there have to be employment opportunities for them as without this it will lead to re-emergence of conflict. The establishment of security should be considered a prerequisite to stabilisation and the first step towards normalisation (Brinkerhoff, 2005). The absence

of security opens up opportunities for private security companies to support entry and provide an acceptable level of risk to a private organisation.

The difficulties of education and skills were discussed in stable locations, but this remains a requirement even in post-conflict areas. Buckland (2006) suggests that education is considered a contributor to rebuilding a post-conflict society. He goes on to challenge this perception of how realistic it is when considering some areas of post-conflict:

- The standard of teacher's available over availability of sub-standard educators.
- The number of young people who require education.
- In a more extended conflict, the larger gaps in society who have had little or no education and have no enthusiasm to undertake this.
- Resourcing issues in areas where corruption can reduce funding for education.
- Providing a viable option as opposed to remaining in or joining a militia group offering paid employment.

These are agreed as considerable challenges, and the interesting point on the gap in society means a large portion of nationals may have no skills with which to gain employment. They will remain in pursuit of employment but will not be attractive to private industry where no incentives are available due to the lack of governmental structure and funding. Would an international oil company agree to employ a national who has literacy difficulties, requiring a full development plan and considerable investment, when they can employ an expatriate who can go straight to work? It is the reality of a post-conflict location that attracts investment due to high availability of natural resources. The development of adult education is a particular challenge relates Buckland (2006) as the social position of a fighter is higher than a student, trying to offer alternatives can be fraught with difficulties. There is no doubt that education has a part to play in post-conflict locations as a building block of reconstruction, but it must be part of a wide-reaching economic and political effort (Buckland, 2006). This section argues that these areas that can reduce nationalisation for any post-conflict country, only employing locals is not realistic. It is an essential element of the overall argument and has to consider what can be realistically expected

from private organisations willing to establish in these locations. It is different from the findings of the research by Davidson (2009), who suggests that not all expatriate employees are attracted by the salaries being offered. He argues that the mainstay of the issue of nationalisation has resulted from organisations seeking cheaper high volume labour that could be sourced via expatriate employees. It divides the earlier arguments and shows that not all expatriates are paid high salaries and treated well. Davidson (2008) found that the UAE is one example where the government allowed organisations to seek cheap and plentiful labour from abroad, and to reverse this is proving to be much more difficult. The money offered to this cheap labour may be more than an individual may earn at home, and that could explain the attraction. It provides an alternative view to the highly qualified and experienced expatriate who come at a high cost but provide a significant return on investment for the business.

When applied to post-conflict locations such as Iraq, would create some newly formed haziness in regards to the attraction as low wages and dangerous location would not be considered as viable to most people. It raises the question of why would low paid expatriates agree to work in hostile environments that are unstable and offer a reduced financial return? It could be rightly or wrongly assumed that post-conflict locations initially offer higher incentives to attract the levels required, but this has yet to be validated.

2.12 Conclusion

The review has considered several different arguments and research outcomes concerning nationalisation as a concept. It has identified some challenges, and the complexity has considerable depth when looking to achieve a balance. The approaches by many governments have related limited results in achieving 75% or above for employment within the private sector. The reliance on expatriate workers seems to be embedded in the very culture of the private sector, and it is hesitant to change. The challenges for organisations must be considered as they are, after all, in the business of achieving efficiency and making a profit after some considerable investment. The oil fields in Iraq represent some major internal investment by the oil companies, and they are still

challenged by the process of nationalisation. The impact into society has been identified as considerable and more so in an unstable environment, where violence is not far from the thought process of the people. The society is, after all, hardened by their experiences and influenced by their cultural values and beliefs, understanding this is key to successfully achieving a nationalisation process. It is an area that organisations must consider before committing to a new venture, as it may prove more challenging if disregarded, the issue will ultimately always surface.

The cultural consideration and social norms have shown that they lead and direct many aspects of life in the Middle East. The requirement to fuel expansion and growth was hampered by the cultural norm of nationals not wishing to undertake manual labour. It has built massive workforces within the public sector that has now reached saturation levels in most locations. It has undoubtedly created the situation that has resulted in such huge volumes of expatriates that are in place. The way back to achieving balance is, however, less clear. Earlier research (Muna, 1980) has testified to how little has changed within this topic area and suggests this will continue to be a challenge for many locations. The application is even more crucial when considering post-conflict locations were employment is critical to creating broader stability and economic growth. The struggles of stable nations to reduce the numbers of expatriates suggest that post-conflict locations may have even more difficulties in producing employment opportunities for nationals. It is argued that there is a clear problem in stable locations where social unrest is less likely to occur, and thus, the risk is considerably higher in post-conflict areas. Social dissatisfaction driven by lack of opportunities and inability to provide for their families can ultimately descent into violence if left unchecked. The problem is real and particularly within post-conflict is untouched by research concerning nationalisation. This chapter has offered some foundation to the broader research but has additionally highlighted the lack of research into the same issue in more delicate post-conflict locations.

The on-going war in Syria may come to an end soon, and there is little doubt that with its natural resources, there will be keen interest from the private oil and gas industry. Genuinely understanding the society and the culture is an aspect that organisations must

consider as well as how to add employment effectively to assist in further stabilising society. Libya is still very unstable, and organisations have previously left the country, but as it begins to stabilise, they will return to start production again. They will be faced by a population weary of instability and ravenous for opportunities to develop and create an everyday life again. Preparation for this and learning from the global challenges of nationalisation are high on the recommended reading list for these organisations. Reviewing the methods of the research literature employed in this chapter employed primary and secondary data. The next chapter will look at the methods for this research project and will allow for reflection on the further uniqueness of the approach via participant observer. The project was conducted in Iraq over many years; the opportunity to observe from the side allows for a more realistic view of the data provided in the findings chapter.

3 Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research as discussed by Kothari (2004), is where the search for knowledge starts, this is supported by Redman and Mory (1923) who add that it is a 'Systematic effort to gain new knowledge'. This search requires a large degree of organisation and structure if it to be successful in achieving the research aims and objectives (Patton, 1990). Kothari (2004) goes further to support that, by stating that research must be systematic, or it will otherwise fail in this pursuit of knowledge. This chapter looks beyond the research methods as methods or techniques employed to undertake and complete the research. The research methodology is a critical component of the research. It describes the considerations taken by the researcher as part of the early planning approaches towards the output of the activities. This methodology will detail the methods considered and compare them to other options that could be argued as being more suitable. Esterberg (2002) focussed on research within the social sciences and argued that while there are a large number of options for qualitative methods, it is only the researcher that can limit the selection based on the individual imagination of the researcher. This limitation was a consideration of the design and application of the research methods within this thesis. The topic is a unique and rare area of focus and required an imaginative approach to transact the level of detail available fully. When considering that the research is being conducted in a post-conflict location, within a critical industry to maintain the country's economy, it does require an approach that compliments the unique nature of the research.

Bryman (2016) asked the question, 'Why do social research?' It can be argued that it veers away from other topics that could benefit from research activities. He counters this question by promptly suggesting that modern social life has and will continue to hold many gaps that can benefit from research. This gap is the exact reason and purpose of this research project, as there are limited research options and historical activities within the two key areas of post-conflict and nationalisation. When combined, it offers an opportunity

to present some interesting and substantial proposals that could benefit modern society. The methods could be the traditional interviewing of individuals or groups that Gomez and Jones (2010) argue encourages both conversation, debates and a personal reflection of their own experiences. The research methods must consider each project and genuinely seek to complement and justify requirement and benefit to social sciences (Bryman, 2010). This chapter looks to detail this exact journey of research planning and selection that will support the delivery of the research aims and objectives. It covers what options were available within the vast array of research methods available, and why the methods were chosen above other options. The chapter takes the reader through the planning and consideration process of the researcher to help them to understand why the final method selection will hopefully deliver a robust outcome.

RESEARCH PROCESS IN FLOW CHART
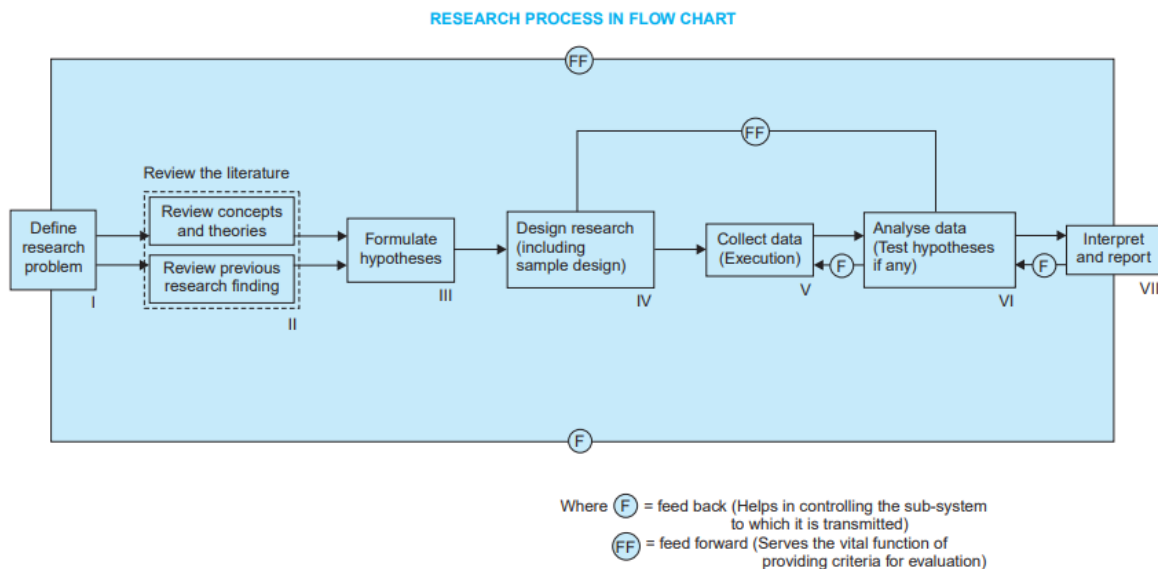
Figure 3.1 – Research flow process (Lastrucci, 1963 p.104).

The methodology chapter will follow the second part of the flow process detailed in Figure 3.1, mainly the IV section of the research flow process (Lastrucci, 1963). The flow process covers a well-known route to a specific research start and finish, but this chapter focusses on the design aspect. Bryman (2016) adds that while each section of the approach is individual, the overall process continuously overlaps. It is fully supported and is an integral part of the research methodology as regular looping as well as re-visits will be made to this and other chapters as the research progresses. It included revisiting the research

problem, was it still viable? Could it be further developed or had it unexpectantly mutated? These questions continued to revisit the researcher throughout the entire project. Bryman (2016) also provided a supportive comment that related the first step can, on most occasions, detail the considered nature of the final step of the research that would need to be taken. The process flow offers a structured approach to the overall planning and execution of this research. However, it does not consider the variations as highlighted by Bryman (2016) that they do not necessarily follow each other exclusively.

The researcher considered many different research methods that had the potential to produce useable primary research data and ensure that the research objectives were met. Lund (2012) suggests considering a mixed-methods approach, which is preferred because it can produce a high level of detailed data that assists during the analysis phase. Looking at the debate on mixed methods Gage (1989) observed that 'The disagreement has been great, in particular to philosophical positions, as illustrated by the 'paradigm wars' (Gage, 1989 p.12). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) also found that the two approaches remained heavily debated by researchers, arguing they are simply incompatible. Lund (2012) goes on to suggest that the combined approach became more formally established in 2000. As part of research evolution, when using different data from a multitude of sources. Researchers found that they had to mix the methods to be able to analyse the data critically. Creswell and Creswell (2017) define mixed-method research as:

"A mixed methods study involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research" (Creswell and Creswell, 2017 p.8).

It suggests that qualitative and quantitative data can be used in a concurrent or sequential approach to the research. The statical data available within the focus topic areas such as workforce percentages were included but would not to the full spectrum of meeting mixed-methods approaches. It resulted in quantitative secondary data being reviewed and

included in the broader consideration, but not being placed as part of the research findings. The study will delve into the frontline details by drawing on research undertaken by the researcher as a participant-observer with employees during their day-to-day routine and non-routine (social) activities. The approach provides a higher level of transparency in the data and a reflection of reality for Iraqi people; in and outside of work rather than just singular interactions and responses. Transparency is defined by Cambridge dictionary (2020) as 'open and honest, without secrets' and this approach aims to produce exactly that. It considers the advice of Rossman and Marshall (2010) who looked at the designing phase of qualitative research, inclusive of options for an approach. They take a defensive stance on qualitative research relating it as worthwhile given the dominance of the positivist approach. The reliance on specific scientific evidence and statistics is highlighted by Rossman and Mitchell (2010) as something to consider when looking at design options within qualitative research; this was noted and applied within this research. Getting to interact with the people who have these experiences will hopefully assist in creating a higher level of primary qualitative data. It would support in producing a viable thesis that can be considered for academic peer-review; this will be developed by creating a 360° approach to data collection. 360° is defined as a holistic view of the journey taken from start to finish, retain an informed and data/observation driven design to the research conduct (Cooper and Schindler, 2006). The term 360 degrees is intended to define that the research will consider and retain every piece of data in a truly holistic manner. This approach will seek to unwrap or unpeel the lower layers of observed behaviour(s). It will also produce a 'thick description narrative analysis' around the topic(s) to support the research aims and objectives. Geertz (1973) points out that this type of research approach allows the researcher to hold conversations within the culture and reality of the people they seek to study.

3.2 Research paradigm

This research will apply an approach rooted in Interpretivism, which Oxford Reference (2020) defines as 'A social approach that emphasises the need to understand or interpret the beliefs, motives and reasons of social actors to understand social reality'. When

reflecting on the earlier chapters, it is argued that this approach complements the research, as looking into beliefs such as Iraq specifics of religion, tribal influences. It does provide an opportunity to understand the social reality in Iraq better. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) offered a suitable research design start point by providing a well-developed research onion model (Figure 3.2). The model is useful because the first layer of the onion offers a selection of philosophies starting with Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology when focussing on Ontology it offers awareness of the true nature of reality. This philosophy encourages the researcher to ask different questions to better understand the world by which they are surrounded. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) go on to add that this philosophy works to provide clarity between the reality when considered against the perception of reality. It then provides a platform to understand and research how this reality influences the behaviours of the people within it.

Epistemology looks to find an acceptable level of knowledge and then addresses the known facts based upon this. Utilised mainly within the scientific fields, it supports approaches that can prove outcomes beyond any reasonable doubt. The final philosophy is Axiology that supports learning on how both opinions and valuables can impact the collection of research data collection and subsequent analysis. The next support from the onion is looking at interpretivism in a little more detail; it provides an approach that assists in interpreting the people who participate in the social life inclusive of the cultural considerations. This philosophical stance helps a researcher to better understand a specific culture and how that culture may change or have changed over time. It is argued as working in-line with this research approach and topic focus area. The choice between deductive and inductive will be discussed in the next section of this chapter in more detail. The research project will also reflect upon the broader debate on workforce nationalisation to hopefully achieve the research objectives. Certain research methods will be more helpful in shedding light on the topic than others. For example, the Interpretivist aspect will support the social and cultural aspects of the research when embedded in a different culture. It will act as a guide for the researcher when observing participants in their workplace and may provide some unexpected supplementary findings to the aims and objectives set.

The approach provides a socially thoughtful design to data collection, that considers the international company's link with the local Iraqi population. Data collection will be conducted by observation and interaction with the sample group, providing qualitative data to support the analysis. Figure 3.2 provides the different layers of research and approaches to consider during the reach design stage. It is highlighted to confirm that a full review of options was conducted as part of the initial research designing before deciding upon the selected methods.
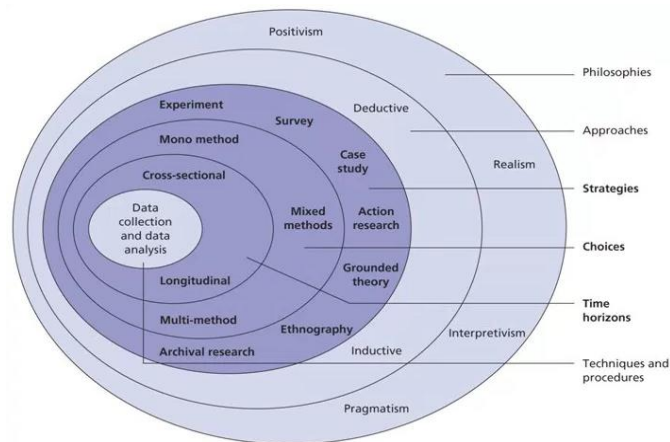
Figure 3.2 – The research onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007 p.108).

Bryman and Bell (2011) suggest that researchers should review all available options during the design phase and consider what method(s) would support the delivery of the aims and objectives of the research. It must fully answer the research questions to an enhanced level that can provide additional previously unknown but relevant data. This research focusses on people within a specific location and industry, and the selection is argued as considerate and mutually supportive of the task (research). The research reviewed suitable secondary data sources to consider available and relevant academic sources. It identified other previous research before drawing the various streams together. Adding to the uniqueness of the research, in that very little information on the combined topics of nationalisation and post-conflict exist. The separate academic sources do, however, provide reviews of the separate topics in substantial detail. There will be no provision of statistical data or analysis within the discussion chapter, as the project will not be considered as drawing on a mixed-method research approach. A systematic approach, which is defined as 'Methodical approach repeatable and learnable through a step by step procedure' (Business Dictionary, 2020). The goal of a systematic approach

is to identify the most efficient means to generate consistent and optimal results (Investor Words, 2018). This process-driven concept is designed by the researcher to validate each stage (layer) of the project before reviewing other stages; distractions can result in the loss of valuable research time. It provides an un-wrapping concept which is a step by step to each layer or stage of the research in a systematic way. This guards against errors or avoidance of required steps, while acknowledging that the steps discussed earlier are not exclusive. This approach provides a more robust methodology by staging the research and avoiding a hap-hazard methodology, that would be inefficient and ineffective. It could be argued as being more suited to the sciences, and that is acknowledged. The systematic approach is not as detailed as a high-level research science-specific project, but the planning and execution of a social science research project also require planning (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The researcher, through industry experience, has utilised this methodology on projects outside of research, and it provides a higher degree of planning and as such success likelihood is greatly increased. Put simply, the research becomes well planned, with clear streams and tasks that avoid multi-tasking and potential inefficiencies.

3.3 Research purpose

The research proposes a blend of both deductive and inductive approaches looking at a complementary approach, which will aim to consider the approach that supports the research aim (Pathirage, Amaratunga and Haigh, 2008). The focus is on answering the research questions, supported by providing a sustainable model for nationalisation. The deductive approach allows for reviewing of current theories and sources and then a gathering of new data. The research will consider academic published theories and seek to deepen any opportunities for new learning that may be identified; testing the theories against reality by living alongside the selected group of Iraqis. It is in addition to having reviewed suitable and available doctrine and academic materials that helped to clarify the researcher's awareness before the fieldwork. This research could be argued as being more suited to the inductive approach that asks the researcher to create their theory. It focusses on the title of the research but notably also advises the researcher to ignore any

available existing theories. It does create a confliction, and as such, the research will look at a complementary approach. It is detailed as data collection of previous academic sources on the two key topics of nationalisation and post-conflict. These can be the deductive aspect of the research and helps support the uniqueness of this research further. The inductive elements will be the observation section of the research plan utilising the observation of the sample group. Therefore, this research will employ both deductive and inductive approaches to complement each other and work towards the effective delivery of the research.

The topic area of countries attempting to deliver nationalisation strategies has been relatively well researched with several published articles. Exploring the strategic aim of nationalisation in the context of countries in a mostly stable geopolitical and economic environment. The introduction of the context of post-conflict locations where nationalisation is intended to be strategic interventions, assisting in achieving stabilisation, has little or no published research available. Stabilisation is defined by Cambridge Dictionary (2020) as 'The condition of being fixed and not changing, or the act of making something like this'. It can be argued as Iraq's move towards fixing the damage caused by years of war and internal tribal conflicts. It goes beyond a simple solution due to the complexities of the country, as previously discussed. It hopefully demonstrates the uniqueness of this research project and its contribution to scholarly knowledge in terms of post-conflict contexts in general and Southern Iraq in particular. This research hopes to go beyond the earlier research on post-conflict, where nationalisation is combined under a focus on post-conflict reconstruction. It delves into the wider reflection and argues that when history is reviewed, was the approach within this country and industry planned or supportive of the broader stabilisation aim?

The research hopes to conduct a triangulation approach, where previously published academic research provides robust secondary data that then supports the primary data set. Triangulation as a term is defined by Cambridge dictionary (2020) as 'The division of a map or plan into triangles for measurement purposes, or the calculation of positions and distances using this method'. In a simplistic term, the research will not only take a

single bearing or approach and march upon that; it will employ multiple bearings to approach things from different angles. It is argued as being supportive of ensuring an accurate and robust depiction of the reality is delivered. The somewhat militaristic term may be considered as strange and have little place within this level of research, which is acknowledged. The example provided on this term by Cambridge English Corpus (2020) helps to clarify its employment by stating that triangulation is, in their definition: "A smooth map is tame if there is a triangulation of the singular set that extends to a neighbourhood'. It ensures tameness is present in a very unpredictable location when entering a relatively new culture, to immerse oneself into it".

3.4   Approach considerations

The research hopes to identify any new learnings on workforce localisation/nationalisation. Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2010) offer advice to researchers that they should retain a completely open mind when entering their research. Kaoru Shinmon (n.d.) stated that 'An open-minded person sees life without boundaries, whereas a close-minded person can only see what is beyond their eyes'. It is not an academic quote, but when considered against the approach of learning new knowledge, it is agreed as being relevant. It is supported by the quote from Malcolm Forbes of 'Educations purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one' (Malcolm Forbes, (n.d.).

"If we maintain the open-mindedness of children, we challenge fixed ideas and established cultures, including our own, we listen to people in other denominations and religions. We don't find demons in those with whom we disagree. We don't cozy up to people who mouth our jargon. If we are open, we rarely resort to either-or: either creation or evolution, liberty or law, sacred or secular, Beethoven or Madonna. We focus on both-and, fully aware that God's truth cannot be imprisoned in a small definition". (Brennan Manning, n.d.)

It would undoubtedly support the thoughts on ragamuffin within education by Bronowski who added that:

"It is important that students bring a certain ragamuffin, barefoot irreverence to their studies; they are not here to worship what is known, but to question it" (Bronowski, n.d.).

It is the reason for this approach in this research, so what is known can be questioned. Grounded theory is argued as being tailored to inductive approaches within the research (DePoy and Gitlin, 2016). Grounded theory was defined as 'An inductive methodology that provides systematic guidelines for gathering, synthesising, analysing and conceptualising qualitative data for theory construction' (Charmaz and Wilson, 2001 p.639). It is supported by DePoy and Gitlin (2016) who add that grounded theory works well in naturalistic research, starting with the research query and collection of data. They go further to state that the theory requires regular comparison on collected data, looking intently at both dissimilarities and commonalities. It develops a level of clarity that supports observations as it developed inductively. Potter (1998) highlights a good point on grounded theory, in that it looks and deals with relationships and patterns that emerge from those relationships. He caveats this by adding that the relationships are not numerical but based on ideas and how to categorise these relationships. Charmaz and Wilson (2001) further discuss the arguments of Glaser and Strauss (1967), on the theory of objectivist and constructivist approaches using grounded theory. They go on to support that there is an objectivist approach within the grounded theory that works on an assumption of the reality on a considered external world. It deepens into views and observations that are derived from the data collected while maintaining a non-problematic view of representation of both subjects and/or data. The alternative constructivist approach within grounded theory focusses heavily on the studied phenomenon rather than the chosen methods being employed for studying it. This approach looks to use the method in a tool like way and not in a prescriptive manner; it does support in awareness of the researchers place within data interpretation and categorisation. Potter (1998) also supports this discussion and adds:

"Like most qualitative approaches discussed here, grounded theory is not well suited to the kinds of hypothesis testing and outcome evaluation that have traditionally been grist to the mill of clinical psychology, because of its open-ended and inductive nature" (Potter, 1998 p.117).

Haig (2010) advises this approach when conducting qualitative research within social sciences. The argument is that 'The methodology provides a justification for regarding qualitative research as a legitimate indeed, a rigorous form of inquiry' (Haig, 2010 p.78). Musoke (2016) finishes this discussion point by reminding everyone that it is a robust approach but is entirely dependant on high quality and rich qualitative research data. A poignant example relating to language translations that are finalised in English and therefore result in a potential gap with loss of data during the translation process. It is acknowledged as a consideration for this research thesis, thus the focus on observation rather than just interviewing. Time restrictions will result in an inability to apply the grounded theory entirely, but the spirit and approach concepts will be embodied in the approach. This approach is highly conducive to qualitative theories and as such, easily compliments an inductive/deductive complementary methodology. This approach has been utilised successfully by Simon (2001) who related that grounded theory gave the research a higher level of attention to the selected social environment. Expanding on this, he goes on to add that this approach takes account of the limits of the human cognitive capabilities, and the reflective social context which he defines as informing human reasoning. Musoke (2016) also selected grounded theory when researching health information in Uganda. She successfully utilised this theory within the data analysis phase of the research and built the research model based on this high-quality qualitative data it provided. DePoy and Gitlin (2016) found that this theory supported broader qualitative research, remarking that it was found to be considerably more investigatory focussed and structure than other naturalistic designs. They also related that the design strategy developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) creates an integration between qualitative and quantitative perspectives within thinking processes and actions. They summarise with a conclusion of:

"The primary purpose of this design strategy is to evolve or "ground" a theory in the context in which the phenomenon under study occurs. The theory that emerges is intimately linked to each datum of daily life experience that it seeks to explain" (DePoy and Gitlin, 2016 p.162).

It works exceptionally well for this research and helps to validate further the selection of the research methods made within this thesis.

3.5   Research methods

This thesis will employ a qualitative approach to field research and subsequent analysis that is grounded in the interpretive paradigm. Walsham (1995) provides some clarity on interpretive research:

"The emphasis on the socially constructed nature of reality, interpretive research acknowledges the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being explored, and the situational constraints shaping this process. In terms of methodology, interpretive research does not predefine dependent or independent variables, does not set out to test hypotheses, but aims to produce an understanding of the social context of the phenomenon and the process whereby the phenomenon influences and is influenced by the social context" (Walsham, 1995 p.377).

It is supported by the findings of Klein and Myers (1999), who added:

"The foundation assumption for interpretive research is that knowledge is gained, or at least filtered, through social constructions such as language, consciousness, and shared meanings" (Klein and Myers, 1999 p.67).

The study will investigate current and previous approaches (where they exist) and seek to identify any known strategies towards workforce nationalisation in Southern Iraq, which is considered a post-conflict location and one which remains unstable. It seeks to identify

what opportunities may have been available or can be developed into a sustainable model for nationalisation within a post-conflict/unstable location. Collins dictionary (2020) defines insecure as 'not safe or protected' and within a security concept that definition speaks volumes. It can be related to the ongoing operation against ISIS on the west coast of the country. Also, the internal tribal fighting and social unrest, as seen during the Iraq protests highlighted in chapter one. The recent incident between America and Iran also saw military action against the two nations being conducted in Iraq. This created reprisals from Iran backed militia who have conducted several rocket attacks on American locations as well as what they saw as viable international targets within the oil and gas industry. It demonstrates the complexities of the country that has only recently changed power from the hands of Saddam Hussien via the international coalition forces. They then quickly became the target of various internal insurgencies that became increasingly more complex in their methods and capabilities when mounting attacks (Hashim, 2011). The ongoing issues and conflict bring some clarity to the employment of the term insecure, with every international company employing private armed security services to transport and secure their expatriate employees. Iraqi nationals are free to move around and operate on sites without the requirement of private security. The country will likely remain insecure for some considerable time, complicated further by the Sunni and Shia ethnic divide (Dawisha, 2005).

The research will capture primary data via participant observation with an identified sample group of employees of an oil services company. The researcher had unprecedented access to in his role as the Country Health and Safety Manager. The ethical considerations for this will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter and were at the forefront of ethical planning. It supports the aim of research triangulation (combining the literature review and research primary data). The research will help to develop a structured plan and execution to the selection and presentation of the data collected as part of the research approach. When considering and applying the advice of Baxter and Jack (2008) regarding its strength, they suggest that for novice researchers, this is a more simplistic method that can be employed with greater ease. When considering the employment of a case study approach, it was concluded that its utility is

best suited for single focus areas or topics. Such as a specific person, event or group and place, or where the research looks to review a historical event from multiple perspectives (Baxter and Jack, 2018). Therefore, it would not be ideally suitable for this research as it focusses on many different aspects such as nationalisation and post-conflict considerations. Rowley (2002) looked at the employment of case studies within academic research, and she related that they have traditionally been considered in lacking a degree of rigour as well as objectivity. This view is in comparison to other research methods considered. However, she counters that point by highlighting that case studies can if designed and correctly applied to achieve results that other methods could not produce. This argument helps to support further the complementary approach that is taken by this research and methods selected. This research will focus on gathering the experience of individuals working in a post-conflict location for an employer that is undertaking nationalisation. It will intentionally avoid the traditional case study approach; however, there were/are events and ethnographic moments. Which are analysed as though they were a case study because they provide a comprehensive and rich picture of the phenomena with which this thesis is concerned. The ability to utilise this at suitable moments during observation allows the researcher to retain and demonstrate a high degree of flexibility to achieve a clearer outcome. Geertz (1973) offers some deeper considerations on anthropological approaches and immersing the reader into reality, and he labels the term as thick description. He borrows this term from Ryle (1971) who offered the example of this approach of the thick description as:

"Consider, two boys rapidly contracting the eyelids of their right eyes. In one, this is an involuntary twitch; in the other, a conspiratorial signal to a friend. The two movements, are as movements, identical, from an I-am-a-camera, "phenomenalistic" observation of them alone, one could not tell which was a twitch and which was a wink, or indeed whether both or either was a twitch or wink. Yet the difference, however unphotographable, between a twitch and a wink, is vast; as anyone unfortunate to have had the first taken for the second knows. The winker is communicating, and indeed communicating in a quite precise and special way: (1) deliberately, (2) to someone in particular, (3) to impart a particular message, (4) according to a socially established code, and (5) without

cognizance of the rest of the company. The winker has done two things, contracted his eyelids and winked, while the twitcher has done only one, contracted his eyelids. Contracting your eyelids on purpose when there exists a public code in which doing so counts as a conspiratorial signal is winking. That is all there is to it: a speck of behaviour, a fleck of culture, and - voila! - a gesture" (Ryle, 1971, p.36).

It is a lengthy quote, but it provides some clarity of how an understanding a detailed (thick) description can provide identity and tell the reader aspects that may otherwise be unknown and therefore untold. The quote will assist the reader in being able to create a clear picture of, in this instance two boys, one winking and one twitching, creating a clear mental picture down to a detailed level of facial expressions and hair colour. Those reading this will have visualised the boys and how they see them in their mind, what they are wearing and creation of a social picture of the surrounding people and environment. The successful employment of thick description was used by Redding (2005), when researching the social systems of capitalism. He makes specific mention to the use of thick description in regards to the same approach as Geertz (1973).

"As a route out of the dilemmas faced, a proposal is made to adopt more complete ways of handling determinacy, including the influences of history, culture, and the societal emergence of institutions. Business systems theory is drawn upon, and a model proposed, developed from the work of Whitley. In this, culture is seen as underpinning formal institutions, which in turn underpin societal business systems. The use of the model relies on the ideas of Geertz on thick description and of Ragin on holistic analysis" (Redding, 2005 p.123).

It supports the use of this approach and harnessing the detail by the provision of a detailed (thick) description. He further supports Geertz (1973) when researching the problem of meaning, this relates to the consideration of culture within his research, which is very relevant to this research. The theory of culture he discusses relates to Geertz (1973) in how to view culture from an observer's viewpoint. Geertz (1973) advises that a researcher should view culture not merely as a set of behaviours, but more as a system that has

been agreed or is acceptable. There is further detail provided, such as looking for symbols or construable signs that work within the world of action. They are not claimed to directly cause or create set processes or specific behaviours but help by acting as a visible context. Giddens (1984) provided an additional theory that through this approach, the researcher can observe the relationship between the culture that shapes action(s). While simultaneously seeing that action inadvertently shaping action; thus, it creates a moment when they both coevolve. Finishing this topic Redding (2005) reflects on his approach to research while using this theory:

"The outcome is a way of access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live, and a minimum of self-reflection will convince most people that influences are multifold. Such penetration of unfamiliar universes, of course, presents a problem, namely the tension between (a) the need to grasp and (b) the need to analyse and move theory forward. My position is that understanding connections between events, even though not always subject to explicit 'scientific' analysis, is nevertheless at the heart of the human studies. It is a necessary complement to the disaggregation that comes with analysis" (Redding, 2005 p.130).

This research seeks to access that conceptual world while relating descriptively to ensure clarity is created for the reader. This research delves into precisely what Redding (2002) classes as an unfamiliar universe, that will present problems but will be worthy of the effort.

Yin (2003) suggests considering case studies methodology within a complementary approach due to high levels of flexibility. As well as large or small organisations, while employing several different sources of data to satisfy the requirements for data supply. It suggests that employing sections of a case study method provides a level of flexibility in terms of Yin's (2003) reflection that case studies are not limited to quantitative research only. He goes on to argue that case studies can and have been used successfully for a mix of qualitative and quantitative research. Highlighting evaluation research conducted by the likes of Patton (1990) and Cronbach (1980) demonstrated that by combining

aspects of case study approaches it can significantly benefit the research. The note by Yin (2003) that related 'The most important is to explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies' (Yin, 2003 p.15). The research hopes to share with the reader in an immersive way/manner, the complex world of the Iraqi nationals that work and live in such a little known and challenging environment. An environment that is further complexified because of the national turbulence that afflicts Iraq. The exposure of the oil and gas industry and its supporting ecosystem of companies to the vagaries of global market changes. The Iraqi government has strong ambitions to implement a nationalisation strategy, to be imposed on companies operating under licence in that state. While it meanwhile has only limited control over the security of its sovereign territory and neighbours such as Iran are ever more deeply involved in shaping the short and long-term directions of Iraq. It was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic; when the Iraq Government issued a letter stating that future relations would/could be very damaging for any international company that releases Iraqi nationals (Figure 3.3).

Further to our letter ref 899 dated 3/18/2020 (Circular no 6), we have received many complaints and letters from the Iraqi local content working with your companies to implement development and service projects for the benefit of our company, that they were discharged and forced to resign, in spite of the service they were providing to your companies. With our understanding of the general and global economic situation and the actions taken by our company in accordance with the directions of the Crisis Cell to reduce all activities and contact in all locations, as well as the actions expected to be taken due to the global economic crisis that hit the oil and gas industry in particular, and all development activities in general; however, the measures taken by you in this regard were unsuccessful and did not take into consideration the social situation and the challenges of work environment, which may negatively affect the long-term relationship between our company and your companies.

Accordingly, you must take significant measures to reduce financial pressure, manage economic challenges for your companies, away from discharges and resignations, and we are waiting for your reply about these procedures in the shortest possible time; or otherwise, our company has the right to change the form and type of its relationship based on the extent of your response and cooperation in crisis situations.

Best Regards,

Ihsan A.Ismaael

D.G. of B.O.C. &

Chairman of Board of Directors

Cc:
- DG assistant for fields, licensing rounds, & welfare affairs/ for your kind attention … with regards
- Operating division & dev. Depts. For the same above mentioned with regards
- Licensing Contracts Affairs Dept./ Third Section
- Filing.

إلى : كافة المقاولين الثانويين المتعاقدين مع شركة نفط البصرة والمتعاقدين مع المقاولين الرئيسيين

م : العمالة المحلية في البصرة

السادة الأعزاء،

إلحاقا برسالتنا المرقمة ٨٩٩ المؤرخة ٢٠٢٠/٣/١٨ (تعميم رقم ٦)، وردتنا العديد من الشكاوى و المناشدات من الكوادر الوطنية العراقية العاملة معكم لتنفيذ مشاريع تطويرية وخدمية لصالح شركتنا، بقيامكم بتسريحهم وإرغامهم على الاستقالة، بالرغم من الخدمة التي كانوا يقدمونها لشركاتكم.

ومع تفهمنا للوضع الاقتصادي العام والعالمي وللإجراءات المتخذة من قبل شركتنا بموجب توجيهات خلية الأزمة لتقليص كافة النشاطات و تقليل التلامس في كافة المواقع، وكذلك الإجراءات المتوقع القيام بها بسبب الأزمة الاقتصادية العالمية التي لحقت بصناعة النفط و الغاز بصورة خاصة، وبكافة نشاطات التنمية بصورة عامة إلا إن الإجراءات المتخذة من قبلكم بهذا الخصوص كانت غير موفقة ولم تأخذ بنظر الاعتبار الوضع الاجتماعي وتحديات بيئة العمل، مما قد يؤثر سلبياً على العلاقة طويلة الأمد بين شركتنا وشركاتكم.

وفقاً لذلك، فإنه يتوجب عليكم اتخاذ أي إجراءات تتضمن تقليل الضغط المالي وإدارة التحديات الاقتصادية لكم، عدا طريقة التسريح أو الاستقالة الإجبارية، وإعلامنا هذه الإجراءات في اقل وقت ممكن، وبخلافه فإن لشركتنا الحق في تغيير شكل ونوع علاقتها بناءً على مدى استجابتكم وتعاونكم في حالات الأزمات.

مع التقدير،

إحسان عبد الجبار إسماعيل

المدير العام لشركة نفط البصرة

رئيس مجلس الإدارة

صورة منه إلى :
- السيد معاون المدير العام لشؤون الحقول و التراخيص و المنافع الاجتماعية/ للتكرم بالاطلاع مع التقدير
- هيئات التشغيل وأقسام التطوير للغرض المعروض أعلاه مع التقدير
- قسم شؤون عقود التراخيص/ الشعبة الثالثة للتفضل بالاطلاع
- الاضبارة المركزية

Figure 3.3 – Formal letter issued to oil and gas international companies (Taken on trust, Researcher, 2020).

The copy is not as clear as could have been hoped, however attaining such documents is only done via established relationships and normally passed via messaging applications. It is added to show how complex the location is and the expectation of ministers in what type/level of the direction they can issue to private organisations. The consideration to reduced global cash flow and market conditions is completely disregarded behind what can easily be interpreted as a veiled threat to future work in Iraq. The researcher was advised that while it reads reasonably soft in English, the Arabic version is much more aggressive. It reemphasises how meanings and terms can be lost in translation and specks go unnoticed during the observation if further enquiries and data validation are not conducted.

It shows that they have to adapt to the market conditions in the same way as the workforces adjust as a reflection on the world economic status. Crude oil demand, which in April 2020 had reduced to a previously unseen level. Continuing to consider the advice of Yin (2003) on approaching a review of case studies and their application viability to any research planned. The researcher will be posing questions to the group of research participants to develop the observations and discussions. Baxter and Rideout (2006) suggest this approach as it considers the reality of the research environment and the opportunity to enhance interactions levels. Baxter and Rideout (2006) argue that the environment and people must be developed and understood if a true contribution is to be made to research (paint the reality clearly). This advice supports the method and approach selection taken by the researcher and considers the people and environment as critical in achieving successful delivery of the research.

3.6 Data collection method

The primary data collection will be via active participant observation sessions, undertaken with an agreed group of research participants. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) compared this method to others and agued that it produces a greater depth of analysis when applied correctly. It also considers the non-verbal side of observations and discussions that may otherwise have been missed. They class it as an almost

unstructured interview but quickly caveats that no interview could ever be considered as entirely unstructured.

"No interview can truly be considered unstructured; however, some are relatively unstructured and are more or less equivalent to guided conversations. The most widely used unstructured interview originates from the ethnographic tradition of anthropology. Ethnographers gather data through participant observation and record field notes as they observe from the side-lines and/or as they join in the activities of those they are studying. During this process, the investigator identifies one or more 'key informants' to interview on an ongoing basis and takes jottings or short notes while observing and questioning. Key informants are selected for their knowledge and role in a setting and their willingness and ability to serve as translators, teachers, mentors and/or commentators for the researcher. The interviewer elicits information about the meaning of observed behaviours, interactions, artefacts and rituals, with questions emerging over time as the investigator learns about the setting. For example, Miller (1992) explored the experiences of two older doctors about their implementation of a family medicine approach to patient care. Unstructured interviews and participant observation field notes were the predominant data collection strategies used to elicit insights into the ways the doctors organised and managed patient encounters" (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006 p.315).

It is again, a lengthy quote and focusses at the health services research as a vehicle, but it adds some depth to the purpose and benefit of a participant observer. As they found, it provides insight into the individual and their place within the chosen society. Delving into the detail of the quote it considers the ability to elicit information when the researcher observes certain behaviours, creating a live interactive learning journey/opportunity for the researcher as they build additional questions that enhance the data and knowledge collected. The flexibility of the participant-observer approach additionally provides alternative options within the researcher's control to enter into other discussion areas. Goodman (1997) argues that the researchers should consider moving outside of questionnaires; staying within that method may reduce the data gathered.

Spradley (2016) makes the point that the researcher goes to where people are, regardless of what that location may throw up against them during research. He adds that observation is the only reliable way that a researcher can better understand another point of view from the native's perspective. Using the words of Malinowski's (1922) to validate the selected method further when reconsidering the people, culture and location of the research;

'The goal of ethnography is to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of his world'. (Malinowski, 1922 p.25). To truly understand the social environment the researcher must be fully immersed into it, despite the inherent dangers of undertaking this, it delivers an opportunity to learn.

This approach adopts learning from the people method that supports this research project as opposed to just studying people and their behaviours, as argued by Spradley (2016). This, when placed into the context of this discussion, supports that, if one is to understand how effective the process of nationalisation is, in a post-conflict location then indeed it is the people that can demonstrate that success or failure. Only the people can fully understand where the opportunities were missed, how it could have been, as opposed to how it is. Allowing them the chance to add to the unknown answers, can and will, only add credibility to the research, they are the ones who have and continue to exist within their/this current universe. Their reality will support the findings and by learning from the people opportunities to improve that process for any future or current conflicts such as Syria may well present themselves. They do, after all, live in reality, and by studying them in the workplace, it would allow the research to learn from the people who are living and working in the location.

The research method will retain the three factors offered by Spradley (2016) when employing the participant-observer method with other cultures that are not the researchers own. He advises that the observer retains three key thoughts concerning human behaviours to achieve success in observation:

- What people do

- What people know
- The things people make and use

He suggests that when this is established, then the group can be observed in a better way of understanding them from cultural behaviour and cultural knowledge already held. These simple aspects will flow into most native's lives in and out of the workplace. He provides a quote from Hicks (1976) that captures the immersing part of being a participant observer rather than an ordinary observer, during his field research into mountain people in an Appalachian valley.

"At least once each day I would visit several stores in the valley and sit in on the groups of gossiping men or, if the storekeeper happened to be alone, perhaps attempt to clear up puzzling points about kinship obligations. I found these hours, particularly those spent in the presence of the two or three excellent storytellers in the Little Laurel, thoroughly enjoyable. At other times, I helped a number of local men gather corn or hay, build sheds, cut trees, pull and pack galax, and search for rich stands of huckleberries. When I needed aid in, for example, repairing frozen water pipes, it was readily and cheerfully provided" (Hicks, 1976 p.3).

Spradley (2016) reflects on this quote and argues that if a researcher truly desires to uncover hidden principles, then they must consider their place within the reality, they as the researcher shall become the student. The teachers are those they share time with, the storekeepers or in this case the Iraqi worker. He supports Hick's (1976) approach to identifying the reality of the mountain people by disregarding the perceived (held) knowledge of the people and discovering the people themselves define their reality. Spradley (2016) also offers his example that considers if the roles were reversed, a foreign national going to study a western location and group of people. This flip does present the reader with a clear idea of why research approaches must be tailored to the location and people if it is to succeed.

"Consider another example, this time from the perspective of a non-western ethnographer. Imagine an Eskimo woman setting out to learn the culture of Macalester

College. What would she, so well-schooled in the rich heritage of Eskimo culture, have to do in order to understand the culture of Macalester College students, faculty, and staff? How would she discover the patterns that made up their lives? How would she avoid imposing Eskimo ideas, categories and values on everything she saw? First, and perhaps most difficult, she would have to set aside her belief in naïve realism, the almost universal belief that all people define the real world of objects, events and living creatures in pretty much the same way. Human languages may differ from one society to the next, but behind the strange words and sentences, all people are talking about the same things. The naïve realist assumes that love, snow, marriage, worship, animal's, death, food and hundreds of other things have essentially the same meaning to all human beings. Although few of us would admit to such ethnocentrism, the assumption may unconsciously influence our research. Ethnography starts with a conscious attitude of almost complete ignorance. I don't know how the people at Macalester College understand their world. That remains to be discovered" (Spradley, 2016, p.4).

This fascinating thought and perspective does provide some reflection on participant observing and its merits and value within the research. Those wondering how the Eskimo woman finally undertook her research would need to take time to read Spradley's (2016) work. When this is considered against the researcher's own experiences, it starts to link with the developing changes with the people being observed as the research progressed. Starting at an unsure distance, alongside some carefully staged discussions to test the thoughts and beliefs of the researcher. Slowly the Iraqis offered invites to 'special meals' where the researcher was the sole expatriate and senior manager. The social events observed from within as the freshly slaughtered and cooked goat was carved up by the hands of senior Iraqi, not a fork nor knife in sight. The unexpected discussions when alone with a participant taking chai (tea) outside; as they reflect on their frustrations of the impact of religious rules and beliefs within the society, only to go immediately quiet when joined by another Iraqi. These moments when reflected upon demonstrate how becoming a participant observer, allows researchers to move past the taboo and off-limits discussions. The relationships built through this method create trust and entry into parts of society and culture that are not written in any book but known only to local Iraqis. The

move from a handshake (outside of the COVID-19 period) to a full handshake, hug and kiss to either cheek as a traditional greeting generally reserved for a male to male Iraqi greeting. It was frightening at first when unexpected, but also a measure of the depth of the research where the researcher is privileged enough to be taken deeper into their reality. The two-year gap seemed to have little impact on those relationships, being invited to a small barbeque of traditional food, eaten with the hands on the second night, reassured that the same relationship depth remained. When compared to western culture, time can often reduce closeness of relationships, in Iraq, it became quickly evident that time makes no difference to relationships, and the bond is held until the dying day.

The researcher considers this as worthwhile to reflect upon, and the advice of the earlier academic sources was challenging to apply in the observation sessions. Creating a deeper understanding of the culture of the national group, but persistence and open-mindedness prevailed.

Jorgensen (2015) argues that this method of collecting data is a truly unique one and uncovers some of the deep and complex problems that other methods would not be able to achieve. He does acknowledge that it requires a degree of expertise on the part of the observer who will have to control the locations, situations and suitability of the sessions. The ability to close a session if required, and make a quick decision is highlighted as critical to success for researchers employing this method. The research does acknowledge the risk of the method as highlighted by Labaree (2002), who suggests that observers will not get quick access to cultural differences. He argues that there are other complications thrown up, such as ethical challenges and methodological issues that can create issues for the observer. Put simply, that an observer will need to take time to gain trust and build relationships with those being observed, however that means that there may be ethical challenges presented based on those relationships. The researcher acknowledges that these issues are real and will be considered at all times during the research project. These issues are supported by Kluckhohn (1940), who identified this many years ago but also balanced the concerns by arguing that the quality and reliability of the field data is considerably higher. The researcher has a broader experience during

military service of working with different cultures, being a mentor of the Afghanistan Army during frontline operations was a steep learning curve. The use of interpreters and approaches to building relationships was developed during this experience. It was applied to this research, with a slow build towards developing relationships that would support the research. Bradburn *et al*., (1979) provided some advice on observing research participants in their environment. The suggestion is to design the best environment for conducting the observations that put the participants at ease. The observation aspect has a requirement of physical presence, and that puts the researcher in place in Iraq. The scheduling of staff on a rotational basis does create a timing challenge that requires consideration and management by the researcher. The research participants volunteered to take part in the research and are employed by the service company where the researcher is placed. During the planning phase of the research, the following criteria were developed in recruiting research participants:

- National management (Iraq) – Participants in a position of country-level management and as such, have entered or progressed away from fieldwork. These participants can offer some interesting data having already progressed within the current organisation, and this experience will be worth discussing further with them during the research
- Country-level employees within the organisation – This will include administration and/or support staff from different product lines within the organisation in South Iraq. They offer the opportunity to understand how they have entered employment and what opportunities were presented since the end of the conflict to the current day (2020).
- Field staff – The group, will be field staff with technical capabilities that conduct the physical operations that produce revenue. They provide the services offered by the organisation. This group will provide opportunities to understand how they developed their current skillset if it has been developed further with the organisation. It will help to understand what investment is being provided to develop and enhance the field capabilities of the technical staff.

The research plans on observing up to 6 Iraqi nationals who meet the selection intent (two from each segment); initially, it was planned for 10. However, as the research developed, it became untenable to be able to develop the required relationships with that number of participants (quality over quantity). The proposed numbers may be considered small. However, the researcher considered the length of time it takes to develop a relationship to the required level to attain trust in discussing topics. The participants were provided with the research details and approaches at the point of inviting them. It included the observation sessions and how they would be held, welcoming suggestions on preferred environments from the participants. There was a reserve of five participants should one of them pull out at any stage. It results in small margins, but again this was restricted by the nature of the relationships required to facilitate effective observations in Iraq.

Participant observer sessions are also argued as helping to validate the reality rather than just the theory as discussed in the literature review. This method, alongside options such as focus groups, is considered as a real deep dive, as suggested by Harrell and Bradley (2009). The researcher did look to consider the theories within the literature review and then compare them to what is in practice in the sample group. Participant observer sessions offered that considered and required opportunity. The observation planning structure part also helped to facilitate buy-in from group members who could see what the plan and approach would be before the observations. The researcher highlights that the recent downturn in the oil industry has resulted in mass job losses and as such people are nervous in voicing opinions and actions. It provides an opportunity to say what is the reality and add some additional value to the research findings. Selection of other methods may not have offered the protection of a one to one with clarity on what will be asked, nor have provided the real-time opportunity to build more developed relationships.

3.7 Data analysis

The researcher considered the method of collection and the fact that the field research data will represent most of the core aspects of the research output. The selection of

narrative analysis is considered as best suited to the project as it allows for the supportive approach of creating and stimulating discussion using the data collected. It also complements the thick description theory (Geertz, 1973) discussed earlier in this chapter, telling it as a story to immerse the reader into the research. The sample group will provide different opinions and theories that then present the opportunity to compare and contrast with each other and then compare with the findings of the literature review. It brings all data aspects together to create the narrative part that can then present the critical part of the discussion. This method offers something different to the reader as it embraces the dynamics of a field research-based ethos and adds strengths that were highlighted by Baxter and Rideout (2006). Ellis and Bochner (2000) also suggest that narrative approaches to data analysis offer something different for qualitative research projects. It immerses the reader in a real environment and allows them to understand reality better when compared to other methods available. It produces a robust approach to the research that ultimately supports the qualitative nature of this topic are and research design. Etherington (2007) also argues that narrative knowing helps to expand knowledge via personal opinions and events told by a research sample group. It builds upon the recommendations of Bruner (1986), who suggests researchers need to consider how they offer the readers the opportunity to know about the research and how it is presented to that audience. Riessman (1993) provides a well-rounded opinion on narrative analysis and refers to it as a family of approaches; she points to the findings of Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) who relate that:

"As nations and governments construct preferred narratives about history, so do social movements, organisations, scientists, other professionals, ethnic/racial groups, and individuals in stories of experience. What makes such diverse texts 'narrative' is sequence and consequence: events are selected, organised, connected and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience. Storytellers interpret the world and their experience in it; they sometimes create moral tales – how the world should be. Narratives represent storied ways of knowing and communicating" (Hinchman and Hinchman, 1997, p.9).

Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) acknowledged that narrative within the human sciences is not well known nor highly utilised by researchers. They argue that a paradigm shift will occur moving away from nomological models and grasping a more humanistic approach to inform the reader better. Geertz (1976) was also a great supporter of this approach, clearly linking and aligning well with the thick description via narrative analysis. A common objection identified by Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) is that:

"Totalizing master narratives by imposing a single plot on the historical process, necessarily exclude the stories and experiences of the 'other' while artificially privileging the stories of powerful insiders' (Hinchman and Hinchman, 1997 p. 1).

This is a fair objection and of course to be found guilty of this approach would reflect directly on the individual researcher, this research will move past this by narrating all aspects and then offer thoughts on how to interpret the data. The concept is that the data will be compared to the questions, responses and activities provided by the sample group and employ these aspects to create a discussion opportunity. The framing of the activity to be observed is argued as the best option to review the output from the data capture exercise. It also to allows for reflection and comparison with the literature review, creating a research loop. The data will be presented as both overviews as well as in detailed forms such as direct quotations based on observations recorded and discussions held and overheard. It aims to immerse the reader into the research, taking part in the learning journey. As opposed to the provision of data in a method that requires the reader to jump between data and figures. The aim is to provide a developed approach to the research project, designed to produce data that supports the narrative concept.

"Narratives do not mirror, they refract the past. Imagination and strategic interests influence how storytellers choose to connect events and make them meaningful for others. Narratives are useful in research precisely because storytellers interpret the past rather than reproduce it as it was. The 'truths' of narrative accounts are not in their faithful representations of a past world, but in the shifting connections they forge among past, present, and future". (Riessman, 2005 p.6).

It allows the data to be considered transparently, which is then offered to each reader for a window into the critical discussions held during the project. It will then be employed to identify any social trends and new areas that were not presented in the literature review. It will contribute towards the new data and recommendations that offer the new theories and progression into the broader nationalisation concepts with a new flavour of post-conflict included. The narrative analysis aspect will be facilitated by developing signposts for activities and then relating the answers and discussions conducted and observed by the research group. Highlighting keywords or phrases that are then critically analysed. It aims to provide that reality step into the research that this method offers and enhance the uniqueness of the research project. The section will finish with the final words of:

"Embedded in the lives of the ordinary, the marginalised, and the muted, personal narrative responds to the disintegration of master narratives as people make sense of experience, claim identities, and 'get a life' by telling and writing their stories" (Langellier, 2001 p. 700).

3.8   Quality criteria and ethical considerations

Bulmer (2001) discusses ethics within social research and defines the term as well as questions to consider:

"The term ethics derives from the Greek word ethos, meaning character. To engage with the ethical dimension of your research requires asking yourself several important questions:

• What moral principles guide your research?
• How do ethical issues influence your selection of a research problem?
• How do ethical issues affect how you conduct your research—the design of your study, your sampling procedure, and so on?
• What responsibility do you have toward your research subjects? For example, do you have their informed consent to participate in your project?

• What ethical issues/dilemmas might come into play in deciding what research findings you publish?

• Will your research directly benefit those who participated in the study?" (Bulmer, 2001 p.59).

These questions were all considered for this research, and he goes on to remind researchers that the history behind the current approach to ethics within research is sadly built upon several disastrous breaches of human ethical standards. The Tuskegee Syphilis study is used as an example where none of the participant group was ever asked for their consent in participating in the study, nor where they informed on the details of the study. This particular well-known example was also researched by Jones (1993) who when interviewing the participants after the issues had been published stated they had maintained a blind trust in the fact that the researchers were government medical professionals. The outcome of this case resulted in the development of the notion classed as informed consent, which ensures participants are fully aware of the details of the research, inclusive of any risks or dangers. Jones (1993) does acknowledge that within qualitative research, this can be a challenge.

"It may be particularly difficult for a researcher using a qualitative approach to approximate full disclosure in an informed consent letter because qualitative research, by its very nature, is open to discovery; a change in research goals may be particularly difficult to anticipate. It may be nearly impossible for the qualitative researcher to account for all of the happenings in the research setting, and it may be hard to go back and forth to a Human Subjects Committee, such as an IRB, for approval each time one's project takes an unexpected turn" (Jones, 1993 p.67).

This finding is supported by Adler and Adler (2002), making specific reference to this consideration for researchers using participant observation method relating that:

"Participant observation has a fuzziness about what is research and what is not, as ethnographers are observers of everyday life and may be generating insights and

gathering data from people in all kinds of situations (a waitress at a restaurant, a fellow passenger on an aeroplane, a person whose child is the same age as one's own). They may not know in advance what information will drift their way, and that may prove explicitly useful, either currently or in the future" (Adler and Adler, 2002 p.40).

This is a critical aspect that is recognised by the researcher and balanced by the approach of allowing all participants to firstly provide their informed consent with a fully detailed briefing sheet. Then get the opportunity to review the final thesis before submission (only their respective sections). This ensures that they remain involved and can at any time highlight any data they wish to have removed from the record.

The sample group selection of Iraqi nationals will contribute towards a clearer understanding via observation within the reality that is southern Iraq. The ability to produce a sustainable model would otherwise have been impossible. The ethics of this research was the highest of priorities, more so when dealing with a live participant group in a dangerous country. The University of Northampton research ethics requirements were applied from the start of the project. The research participant group remained anonymous at all times, and their participation was not public knowledge. It was designed to allow the participants to feel safe and relaxed at all times. Creating a safe area and a high level of confidentiality encouraged the participants to engage more openly with the researcher. This approach was taken on the advice of Josselson (1996), who highlights that the data extraction required for narrative analysis can be intense for the participants. To ensure clarity for the participants, they were individually taken through the research plan and how observation sessions would be conducted. They were also provided with a final draft of their respective sections for a personal review before submission. It ensured they were fully engaged at all times and were provided clarity regularly on their input. This approach was developed on the advice of Etherington (2000), who suggested that the realisation of the participant when reading the data on paper following observation may be unsettling. It faces them with their reality and reading it can be highly impactful for them (Reynolds, 1982). The presence of the researcher in a field setting may result in a degree of nervousness when participants are being observed. When considering this, the

researcher decided to identify the most suitable environment for observations that would negate potential discomfort for participants. The researcher often asked the participants to suggest locations and settings that they felt were better suited. This is mitigated by the selection of staff that are outside of the researchers direct and in-direct reporting chain; they are also nationals that have pre-existing relationships with the researcher. This is an essential point as they were fully supportive of the direction and purpose of the research and felt at ease with being involved in the observations. The researcher is a senior manager within the location and organisation, and the ethical issues raised by that, concerning potential to influence by virtue of position are acknowledged fully. This reaffirms the specific selection of participants who had developed stable relationships with the researcher and were comfortable being observed and discussing topics. These relationships were well established for some time before the concept and formalisation of this research project. They were if anything flattered to be involved and considered a westerner showing interest in improving nationalisation as a positive and valuable opportunity. It is an opportunity to tell their own unique story and reflection on their life experiences and journey through war to the oil and gas industry, offering their thoughts on how this reality could have been much better.

Creswell and Miller (2000) provided advice on both ethical and strategy development of research. They suggest that researchers should consider organising regular academic-based audits with their appointed supervisors. The audits and reviews then consider the ethical stance and application as the research progresses. It was one fo the core reason for maintaining the anonymity of the participant group, considering that they have a career within the company to maintain. The sample groups personal details and identity were available only to the researcher, and details that could identify the participants was held on a password-protected hard drive. The field notes taken by the researcher have also been locked away, and no details that could be used to identify people were included in the notes. The researcher personally destroyed the notes after the fieldwork. Recordings were taken during discussions with the agreement of the participant(s); these were retained on a password protected device. The recordings were then deleted from that device after they were transcribed. These steps were taken to ensure that the research followed a strict and structured approach to ethical management.

3.9 The research limitations

This section was included as part of the learning pathway as a research student, by reviewing and identifying areas of limitation it helped in developing the researcher. Method selection within this project could be a limitation when considering the limited field experience of the researcher. The researcher suggests that it takes practice and experience to become fluid and fully effective in observing research participants. As a research student, the researcher has limited experience within this discipline (observation), having only previously applied observation within a military setting. It is accepted that as a result, some of the observations and discussion management may not be considered as the most efficient or effective. It is considered as being part of the learning journey for the researcher who valued the opportunity and experience to develop these skills. The limitations of participant-observer in aspects such as time, in that, it can be extremely time consuming and as degradation sets in this may reduce the quality of observations and create gaps. The observations may not always coincide with events that would be valuable to the research; as such, some aspects may not have been observed and thus not included within the findings (Jorgensen, 1989).

The sample group is made up of company employees, and this was considered as a potential limitation for the research, with employees possibly acting unnaturally due to being observed. The researcher is a member of the senior management in the company at this location; as such, it may limit transparency or reality of the observations. That could result in employees agreeing with discussions or acting in a self-created manner for the wrong reasons, providing ineffective/unrealistic data or behaviours. This has been mitigated as much as possible by the selection of the group based on existing relationships; however, it still has the potential to limit the research. The size of the research participant group could be considered as a limitation to the research. A larger group would provide more data that could produce a deeper and more comparable outcome. The researcher agrees that a larger group would have improved the comparison and potentially driven the analysis further. The group size was selected based on existing relationships with Iraqi nationals. The environment and rotational basis of the work require some considerable time required with which to build relationships with nationals. The level

of trust takes some time to develop to a level where they will openly discuss sensitive topics with an expatriate. To build these relationships with a larger group would have required a longer time frame for the researcher. Other nationals may have remained distant and uninterested in building a relationship with the researcher. It argues that building a larger pool would be unrealistic and may well have produced a more diluted data set. The process of reflection and identification of limitations is a useful tool as part of the learning journey for the researcher. Having an awareness of areas of limitation also helps the researcher to manage them more effectively throughout the research.

3.10 Conclusion

The chapter aimed to demonstrate the selected methodology while acknowledging other methods available. The approach to planning the method selection is designed to allow the reader to consider the reasons for the final concept. The selection was developed to support the research aims and objectives, whilst considering the environment and people. It aims to mutually support the research by retaining a larger degree of flexibility throughout. The researcher conducted a full risk analysis before developing the research methodology, ensuring all risks were identified and mitigated as much as reasonably practicable. It is hoped that the research can contribute to broader academic debate(s) while supporting the development of a sustainable model for nationalisation in a post-conflict location. The next chapter will show the findings of the research following years of fieldwork and observations; it will retain an ample helping of the thick description approach to take the reader deep into the world or Iraq and the local oil and gas industry.

4 Chapter 4: The study

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will progress the reader into the individual life of each of the research participants, keeping with the approach of the thick description as discussed in the research methodology. The aim is to paint a clear picture of each of these people. This will go to the detail of how the person looks; it is highlighted that the names and personal details are being withheld and participants as they remain anonymous. The physical description has been agreed and reviewed by each of the participants. It is included so that a mental visualisation can be facilitated; how each of the participant's look and act. It helps the journey through their experiences and life story. The narrative analysis will result in it being produced as a story of each person, keeping to the advice of Geertz (1973) on how to bring the description to life. The chapter will work into the deeper details of who was observed, both individually and in group settings. The outcomes of the observations will form the bulk of the discussion chapter looking again at each individual in turn. The concept will be to describe them initially as mentioned and then detail their childhood experiences, education and how the war impacted them dependant on their stage of life. Then consider how they reacted post-war and their employment opportunities as they moved towards the present day. The details provided have been gained from a vast number of observations and interactions that allowed the researcher to be able to understand the person honestly. It helps to validate how the local experience can be better understood by the reader that then provides deeper insights into the culture, and how society delivered for each of the participants. To be able to discuss the data critically, it is argued as essential that a high degree of depth is applied to gaining an insight into the very people who were studied.

It supports the earlier discussions within the methodology where open-mindedness was considered as a critical approach to this research. When returning to Walsham (1995) and the advice that relationships between the researcher and the area of exploration are key. When a researcher seeks to transfer the depth of this exploration, it can only be

conducted by detailing who each of the participants is, moving beyond a simplistic detailing of some background information. Creating a detailed picture of each participant will allow the reader to understand the critical aspects of the discussion chapter. The reader is, as Geertz (1973) highlights, an observer via written context and only by providing a full picture of what was observed through the eyes of the researcher can that observation occur. The researcher did not employ or utilise a translator and this was a conscious decision due to the nature of the topics being discussed; the presence of a third person may have negatively impacted the discussions held. The next section will provide a detailed introduction to each of the participants who took part in the research. It will set the scene for the next chapter where topics that relate to the research aims and objectives are critically discussed based upon the observations. Please note that the narratives have been detailed using the wording and English structure of the participants. It is to retain the authenticity of the research and results in a degree of grammatical errors within the texts. The reader is requested to read the text in the spirit in which it was intended.

4.2 The story of a Baghdad boy – Participant A

Participant A will be referred to as 'A' to retain anonymity; the reader is invited to get to know A in more detail. So, they can visualise the person, his life and journeys that were taken. The description is designed to help visualise A without compromising his anonymity, as has been applied to all the participants.

A is the operating base manager for Basra within the company and it 54 years old, he sports an array of colourful jumpers adding to his charm. A could be described as a 'jolly fellow' mainly due to his character. His face is heavily disguised in a thick growth of dark and greying stubble. It can be felt against your face when greeted with a traditional Iraqi kiss to each side of the face. Dark brown eyes look caringly at those with whom he interacts, hiding a degree of frustration that can occasionally surface during times of stress. His head is crowned with a mixture of grey and black hair that is carefully placed into a smart side parting. His appearance is complemented by a very rough but competent

grasp of the English language. It allowed for conversation, but in a somewhat mismatched manner, but this just added to the charm of the man.

His appearance maps to his personality as he is considered a jolly and relatively cheerful individual. A is looked upon by many of the local and expatriate staff as a father figure; he seems to relish this social placement within the base society. Some words that would link with A's personality would be of cheerful, optimistic and passionate. Looking at each one to describe his personality, he is a cheerful person who greets others at every meeting no matter how many times this may have already occurred within the same day. With a big brimming smile of slightly yellowing teeth, victims of the evident diet selection undertaken by A. His cheerful approach could be what has created this fictional father figure reality, linked with the offering of a bear hug and passionate kiss to those that allow.

Interestingly, A did not offer this traditional Iraqi greeting to all nationals or expatriates, and the researcher was a selected expatriate to be provided with this affection on every formal or casual meet up. A would-be classed as a very optimist person who would look to put a positive slant on every issue or topic discussed with those whom he interacted. He would often be heard to shout to the researcher "We have a huge problem, Gary", to which the researcher would immediately look concerned, but also wondering why his arms where thrown in the air and a smile adorned his face during that unexpected statement. "What is the matter A?" the researcher would reply and would be quickly informed that "You have not come to visit me today, this is a big problem and must be fixed". This quaint and energetic approach to people only helped to elevate A to the higher echelons of most people's hearts. His clothing selection was always an interesting aspect to view, with the wearing of a middle-aged westerner approach to his wardrobe. He held a vast array of colourful jumpers that he could strangely manage to wear during the scorching heat of the Iraq summer comfortably. It would be placed over the top of fading short-sleeved shirts that were losing their control and rigidity in the neck area, matched with grey flannel trousers for workdays and a more relaxed denim jeans approach for the weekend (Friday and Saturday). He would also hold an extensive stock of company clothing that he would regularly conduct an unexpected fashion show up and down the

work corridors of the main office building. Asking people as they passed "Do you like this, I have many if you want one". It demonstrated a degree of generosity on his part as the gatekeeper of these in-demand items. He was often accused of holding an 'Aladdin's cave' of treasures by the expatriate operations manager. He would simply laugh this off even though the operations manager was frustrated that A's office was full of the latest company items such as diaries and stress balls. The operations manager could not seem to take that frustration beyond this remark, and this was considered due in most part to the charm that A held over most. His joyful personality resulted in him never being alone, either in his office or within his room on the base. He attracted people to him, who would enjoy his company and he was the self-proclaimed king of the base. This grouping attraction may well have been partly due to the position of authority and of course, what he could do for people due to his job role. He could be observed in the middle of a crowd at each meal; waited upon by the third-party life support staff and their manager, creating a reality within his reality.

A had an alternative personality with many of the locals; they seemed to fear him due to his position within the company and Iraq society. That aspect will be expanded upon more within the family background section. He would be the local who would conduct the tough talks with disgruntled locals or those that had stepped out of line within the company or social expectations. It created a disparity for A, how he would interact with people and act, seemed dependent on who it was. It showed a slight variance to his personality, where it suggested a slightly darker side of reality within the Iraq society. A was part of the higher-level national peer group within the base and company in Iraq; he was the de facto head of the group. It resulted in internal squabbles as other groups within the base society would challenge things, and the response could be somewhat worrying. The example that was observed was via a recipient of such an event; there are, of course, two sides to each story, but it was robust enough to be included. During an audit of a catering provider, one of the local staff from procurement was tasked to conduct reviews of the suppliers. A had attended all of these audits but one. The one that he did not attend was that of a local and very influential businessman, and the fear people had of this man was evident on their faces when his name was mentioned. The other national conducted the

audit and uploaded the findings onto the system, at which point was called to A's office for a closed-door discussion in Arabic. The researcher was only able to observe outside the office (carefully) and could not understand the detail contained within the guarded discussion. Ten minutes later the national left the office, and the researcher was met by a red-faced A in the corridor, "Silly boy" he said to the researcher who asked, "In what way what do you mean A?" "He will bring a wolf into the base, and then we will suffer, suffer bad and nothing can be done to prevent this when he comes". With that remark, he turned and closed his office door, quickly lifting his mobile phone to his ear and speaking with another person. It intrigued the researcher as it had been an observation of previously unseen behaviour and could show a different side to the personality of A. This, in turn, could potentially show a depth to the culture and enhance understanding. The fact that A had attended all audits bar this one gave rise to an unplanned follow-up to see what resulted in such an outburst from an ordinarily happy person. The national who had conducted the audit sought the advice of the researcher, partly due to his job function. Also, due to the fact, the researcher was well known as a sensible ear that would listen and offer constructive advice. The local national related that he had been sent alone to this audit and was terrified throughout the process. It was due to the reputation of the company owner who had been present. He stated that the findings were reflective of the reality, and it was scored as per the grading matrix, giving the supplier a good chance in winning the contract. He sheepishly said what one should do if asked to adjust the findings to reduce the chances of the contract being won by a specific supplier? The researcher offered advice considering the different potential outcomes to each action and follow the best interests of the company. He nodded and left, and that issue dissolved into the field notes of the researcher for two weeks. It resurfaced with a screaming match between the local businessman and A, the office he used has a large window and showed the physical demeanour of both men during a very agitated discussion. The argument went on for over twenty minutes before the door flew open and the businessman stormed out followed by his assistant (bodyguard). A came stumbling to the door, very red-faced and sweating heavily into his heavy facial growth, his eyes looked less sparkly than usual, and he was breathing heavily. The look he passed to the researcher suggested that now was not a good time to speak about this event that had been observed (again carefully). He called

his assistant into the office and closed the door, evidently keener to discuss this with them rather than the researcher.

The local national conducting the audit had adjusted the results and had been visited at home by a group of men from the local tribe, unhappy with the actions taken. It became clear that A and the businessman were from separate tribes and that business process called tribal politics into action when any unfairness was identified. The national was directed to pay compensation to the businessman of an undisclosed amount, discussing this with the local it was clear he was very shaken up. As most people would be when armed men visit your home, yes even in Iraq, this is outside the norm. The darker side of the personality became further evident when the local national who had conducted the audit then had a compliance case raised against him by the female doctor on the base. The national had only spoken with her on one occasion over a year. The compliance case was then cancelled by the doctor; she confided in the Iraqi national that pressure had been applied by A to raise the complaint. The researcher was initially confused as to why this approach had been undertaken. It became clear that as the Iraqi national was married, the shame within society to be accused of sexual harassment would be huge. It was never discussed with A, as it seemed too topical. The researcher did observe the change in atmospherics between A and base doctor following this. It went some way to confirm that the event had unfolded as detailed. That demonstrates that A's personality had some very profoundly hidden parts. Deep below the surface was the person who had zero tolerance for anyone who did not follow the instructions of A. The ability to plan against the other Iraqi national tactically, showed that there were parts to the personality that retained a local approach. A was willing to utilise modern methods as retaliation with a high degree of hands-off at all times. A could be far more cunning and spiteful than he portrayed to the mass public. He seemed capable of targeted responses in a devastating way, using approaches that would disgrace people and not just impact their employment. The female doctor who was the only female member of staff was dismissed by A shortly after withdrawing the compliant.

4.3 Childhood and growing up in Baghdad

A is not originally from Basra and was born in Baghdad as the son of a baker; his peers called him 'Abu Hadjer' which means son of hadjer, in respect to his father. His childhood was mainly based around his father's business and not a huge emphasis was placed upon education within their family of five boys and two girls, a standard size for an Iraqi family. He would relate tales of the vast playing field that was Baghdad for a child and the structure in place under the rule of Saddam Hussein, offering some stability to the place. The smell from the river was an aspect of his childhood; he would regularly bring up. The smell in the depth of summer was putrid he would advise as people would use the river to dump rubbish. It was the natural waste disposal for the people of the enormous city, this was brought up on days when the base drains were blocked, and a foul stench would be evident. It shows that smells link heavily to deeply rooted memories within people. Imagining A playing around on the side of the vast Tigris, where it joins the Euphrates forming the Shatt-al-Arab, simply call the 'The Shatt" by locals. A and his friends would spend many hours exploring the shipwrecks littering the banks as well as fishing with makeshift poles. A would relate some tales where bodies would be found or seen by him and his friends, and this was an accepted part of life growing up in Baghdad. They were placed there as a result of displeasing some Iraqi entity that A would often claim were government agencies. It was also the outcomes of tribal disputes that had erupted into violence and someone's demise. The fact that children see death as a normal part of life did shock the researcher. Western children often understand death occurs but are not faced with dead bodies in their play areas every week. A was able to describe the details of some of the bodies, retained memories it would seem due to the graphic injuries he observed on the bodies they discovered. He would strangely joke that many would not arrive with their hands or heads and those that did must have suffered a less traumatic death from whoever had undertaken the deed. He could detail the differences in the corpses between government action and that of tribal gangs or criminals, all having a type of calling card. It was almost akin to a London gangster story but transferred from the river Thames to the Shatt. The dark, putrid waters would slowly ebb by A and his friends as they passed conversations on that day's actives and gruesome findings. The question

arises on how these impacted on the perception of the Iraqi youth. Seeing such a regular event and almost become used to it, to accept it as part of the social norm within Baghdad. Does this reduce the perception within society on the value of life? How do these young men develop into adults with that theory on the reality of life within Iraq? Is death a more accepted part of life when compared to western cultures? A would reflect that bodies would not be recovered as it was forbidden by social laws to remove them and bury them. It was almost like the final part of the social disgrace that had befallen the individual and their extended families. He would argue that not to be buried under the Muslim ways would put shame upon them and the family. It was almost like A was supporting the social concept of kill and dump. How was this view applied to adulthood? Did it create a wider society of less compassionate human beings? Did it reflect within their approaches to others? How brutal was the average person deep within?

The young A came from a middle-class family with a well-known name within society in Baghdad; this was mainly due to the public interaction with the family through their established baker business. The father would entertain government officials from the ministries, police and military, who would openly accept the hospitality. It gave rise to the family position within the social reality and the development of what Muna (1980) described as connections. The term connections or being connected has some considerable meaning within Iraq society. When people consider you connected the manner in how you are treated and received adjusts to reflect this awareness. A would happily detail how his father would take him, and his brothers to restaurants and they received luxury service including a private table. Imagine this within the western culture where a baker and his sons were treated like royalty. It demonstrates that the occupation does not dictate the social position within Iraq society. It was evident in the early discussions that A revered this social positioning that was associated with his family name and the benefits that it provided. The connections his father developed were handed down to the sons but not the daughters. It was noted in his tale of the dining experience when the researcher asked if the whole family would go to eat? He would quickly screw his face up and ask why would that be required? The researcher would exchange the cultural norms of the United Kingdom, where families would all go to eat out together. It was

quickly squashed by A who was clear that men and women would rarely go out together and most certainly not eat together in public. It would, of course, shock western readers and appear sexist and arrogant. However, within the Muslim and Iraq culture, it was clear that this was very much socially accepted. It raised a question by the researcher on how A would view an expatriate female in a position of authority? He would laugh and reply "The authority is not hers nor yours when you are here in Iraq. Authority is only what we allow you to have, to hold, and we often create the illusion that expatriates are in charge". It seems that this was the perspective of A, and although slightly off-topic, it was considered as relevant to the social aspect of women within his society growing up.

A left school at 14 and worked within his father baker, acting as a supervisor to the larger workforce of 22, all whom where grown adults, it is hard to picture a fourteen-year-old supervising adults within this environment. He was asked how this worked and if it was successful and he openly said, "They accept, or they leave, my father put me in charge as the eldest son (14) and I was in charge, there is nothing else to worry about". It demonstrated that male Iraqis were brought up to attain the same social standing as their fathers and at fourteen were considered old enough to start that process. The place of the mother and sisters within A's family and youth was of interest to better understand how the culture worked within the house; publicly it was evident that woman was not allowed to interact with the men.

A discussed his childhood as a teenager, and how his family operated behind closed doors, they lived in a villa in Baghdad a well-kept and admired area of the city. The household would follow the mother's direction when within the home, and he would openly remark on how the family would fear the wrath of their mother. It seemed slightly different from the public view. His mother was also from a middle-class background and had married his father though an arranged marriage, which is very much traditional in Iraq. Within the first two years of marriage, they had had two children, and this continued up until the current number of children. The family would all put their salaries into the family held account, it was not kept by any individual, and they could draw from it following a request to the mother and father. It was the mother who would manage the family finances

and agree on who could take money for what requirement. Everything in Iraq is bought cash, no finance or credit cards are used, the family would take salaries in cash and keep it in the house. It could amount to over $100,000 on occasions when asked if this was a worry? A related that the family had protection when probed about what protection meant he listed the firearms that were kept in the house. He related that during the rule of Saddam Hussein, it was forbidden to keep weapons without approval from the government. It was evident from A that his father's connections afforded that right to keep a large number of weapons and also a degree of protection from the social circles in which he moved.

The cash was soon to be taken to the banks as things slowly developed in Iraq, Iraqi Dinar was the core currency. Available up until the fall of Saddam Hussein when United States Dollars appeared and have remained ever since. A would suggest that his father had a distrust of banks, but his mother had made it clear that it was to be taken to the bank from that point onward. It shows a differing reality between what occurs outside of the home and who rules within the home. It was evident that A had a great deal of respect for his mother and spoke fondly of her and how strong and courageous she was. Detailing that going out into the city as a woman was not an easy task, but she would take it in her stride and ignore the preferential treatment that men were afforded when in shops. His mother would wear the traditional headscarf (Hijab) as would the daughters, typically female children, would not be expected to wear a headscarf until they reach teenage years and become a young woman. The family followed stringent Muslim guidelines, and the daughters were adorned with hijabs from a very young age. It was something A was very supportive of and remarked that at the age of 14 and upward they were viewed as ready to marry, as such they should dress according to the required customs.

His mother was the very heart of their home and provided the family with excellent traditional meals. She would avidly prepare while teaching the daughters how to cook almost as part of an apprenticeship before marrying. These meals would generally take the form of rice and meat, accompanied with vegetables and sauces, with a side of flatbread that had been brought from the family bakery. The food was prepared and

placed on a rug in the Livingroom; the family would gather around conducting a prayer of thanks for the food. The food would be eaten with their hands normally taking a flatbread, tearing it up as A would proudly state "My bread was the biggest in Baghdad, you need two hands even to pick it up". The food was accompanied by a thick white drink, that was similar to sour yoghurt. The meal was an occasion for the family to talk and interact and grow. From the outside, it was easy to visualise the family, happily eating and talking with each other, and in that second wonder what difference there really is between families across the world. The basic principles of family time within its core routine is not that dissimilar to that of the western culture. Yes, the food is different, the seating approach is different, but the principle is the same, they are together. The tales of his childhood helped the researcher understand how he had developed and what his influences had been. It may be argued as irrelevant to the research aims and objectives. However, when understanding how each person fits into an international organisation; why one promoted faster than the other? It is argued as critical. To consider the full background, the very fabric of what has made that person who they are. Only when this is grasped can the research fairly critically analyse how nationalisation has or did struggle in post-conflict Iraq.

4.4   Under a regime rule – The reality of dictatorship

A was asked about his experiences as a young man living under the rule of Saddam Hussein, and it was a key discussion point in understanding how the country had been before the changes. Had the change offered opportunities that had been previously withheld? The general perception of westerners, including the researcher, was that people were glad to see the downfall of that regime that was alleged to have ruled cruelly over the country. A had a surprising reflection on the previous management and spoke of structure, control and delivery. He remarked on the fact that there was an order in society, yes there was some crime, but it was less visible to most. It did reflect his comments on bodies he saw in the Shatt, to which he simply replied, "This is the reason for structure, people know the line, and they can see what happens when it is crossed". It made it clear that the execution of people who had broken the rules and laws was socially accepted in

Iraq. The country seemed to have socially accepted an unofficial death penalty approach to punishment. He spoke of a feeling of calm under Saddam. The city would feel controlled and safer than the current day; he reflected that he liked Baghdad much more as a young man under Saddam than he did now. "We had power, water and food and a safe way of life, yes people were scared of Saddam and his group, but there was more a feeling that we respected his authority".

A was very clear in his feelings that were more positive about life in Iraq under this previous regime and was almost bitter and annoyed with the way the country was today. "Would you rather be still under Saddam's rule A" the researcher had to ask. A sat quietly rubbing his facial growth with his right hand, which was making a strange rasping noise and pondering on the question for such a long period that the researcher was close to withdrawing the question. He looked deep in thought; his dark eyes seemed to be reviewing a past once lived, gazing into the distance looking above the head of the researcher. This moment was one where the researcher wished he could know what A was thinking. Was he worried about speaking his mind? Did he consider the impact of the answer to be showing allegiance to the previous leaders of the country? A jumped up out of his seat, quicker than could be expected for a man of his size. He walked quickly to the door and closed it, something he had rarely done. He sat back down and leant forward on his desk, both hands placed together in a prayer-like formation, looking seriously at the researcher.

"Gary, before I reply to your question there are somethings that you need to understand. If I do not explain them, then my answer may well make you think I am a mad man". The researcher nodded and beckoned to A to continue with this highly interesting conversation. "The Iraqi people are very different from the people of your country, they have spent many years under Saddam and often secretly desired the freedom they thought his downfall would bring. The people of this country are good, but they are also reckless when they are allowed to be, they need to have a level of fear to maintain the social order. We still operate as a tribe and many years of peace between the tribes has come from the knowledge that should tribes fight each other then Saddam will step in with

a heavy hand and bring it to an end. He would not tolerate this behaviour. It is fear, and although in your culture, fear is something that would be considered as unacceptable, here in Iraq, it is necessary if we are to avoid violence, as violence here breeds further violence. Without this fear, then the people return to a pack mentality; even those who are educated and have been exposed to western culture. They too have this deep-rooted need to join the pack. The fear part has kept this country operating under sanctions for many years. Now I accept that there are abuses of power by some and it was viewed as a dictatorship by people outside of Iraq. The thing that you need to understand is that there are certain ways that the Iraqi people can be ruled, the way they need and the way they want. They want to have the freedom they see on the internet; they want the choices that they see others having. They want the prize, but the reality is that this does not come from removing the leader of the country. It comes from us as people developing over many years. Our culture is different from others, and it cannot be changed by changing the man who leads the country and labelling it as a democracy. The Iraqi people have deep-rooted brutality that is always there. The way they respond to things can be so quick and frightening that the only fabric that held the country back from this internal fire was the fear, the rule of Saddam. When you remove that without control then you open this up for all to see, we as people need that structure that holds over us to allow us the time to develop.

Your people are ahead of us as a developed nation, and we need time. You can see the same in Dubai, they have vast wealth, roads, high buildings, and welcome the world, but parts of the culture still show themselves. The woman who was arrested for being raped because she was married shows that even when on the surface it seems we Arabs are ready, we are not, and we need that control until we are ready". The researcher sat pondering the statement; it was almost like A was claiming a degree of shame of his own culture but acknowledging the reality of the people from his perspective. "So, answering your question on what I preferred, yes there are parts of Saddam's rule that I feel provided some control to the people. It ensured we had the basics and the people stayed within the required behaviours he directed. The place does not feel safe now. It feels disjointed in many ways, and that concerns me on how the country will progress and where it will

end up. If I could pick a blend of his rule and parts of the freedom, then we may have the right approach, but we both know that this could never be".

This discussion showed that A believed that people needed a stricter rule over them than was provided when the ruler was removed from power. He seemed to be clear that the approach of Saddam was one that better understood the culture of the people he ruled. It was side-lined by a hint that he did, however, want a less rigid approach to his time under that regime, while acknowledging that this is not realistic. Does it suggest that dictatorship has a place in the world for certain cultures? Or is it that people are numb to it when they live it and that they reflect only on the good parts? When considering this mentality and how it could be encompassed into an international company, what would it deliver for the business? Would people adhere to polices, or would they deem them as revisiting dictatorship by being told what to do and how to do it? These are argued as all valid considerations that are worth exploring further in the next chapter to understand better how a post-conflict country can adjust to life within an international organisation.

4.5 The war from an insider's view – The fall into the insurgency

The move of coalition forces into Iraq began on the 20th March 2003 drawn up of forces from America and the United Kingdom, this move was to see the over-throwing of Saddam Hussein and change the direction of Iraq forever (Robinson *et al*., 2016). The invasion was reported globally and allowed those sitting at home to watch the invasion unwrap. The view from the front room was considerably different for those in Iraq and how they felt during this period, what were they thinking? How did they see the end? What is it genuinely like to be invaded and live through that experience? What does it do to the individual character of each person that undergoes that experience? A was happy to discuss this time in his life; he was still living and working in Baghdad with his family. His father was now elderly, and his mother was ten years younger, as is the custom for men to marry younger women. He found himself in the epicentre of the invasion, Baghdad was indeed the focal point for the American forces as described by Hinnebush (2007) when considering culture and ideology.

"What went wrong from a realist point of view was that 'extremists' managed to capture US foreign policy and set it on a path at odds with the national interest" (Hinnebush, 2007 p.210).

A was asked if he saw the coalition forces as liberators or as described by Klare (2002) as being there for the oil? Without intending to prompt a specific answer, the researcher provided the following quote to A. This approach was to create and stimulate thoughts from an insider's view. It was important at the start of this topic as how A perceived the invaders would help clarify how he may also have considered the international companies that followed in their paths.

"No doubt many factors are involved—some strategic, some political, and some economic. But it is hard to believe that US leaders would contemplate such an extreme act without very powerful motives—and the pursuit of oil has long constituted the most commanding motive for US military action in the Persian Gulf region" (Klare, 2002 p.130).

A asked for the quote to be repeated many times, he sat, absorbing its meaning and considering his thoughts on the matter. "Gary, there are of course opinions on why America came here; we know they said Iraq had weapons that were dangerous and wanted to come and stop them being used. The reality is that I am not a military man and had no interest in what the government had or did not have hidden in bunkers in the desert, why would I? I remember thinking that this war could go on for some time when I heard the news that they had crossed the border, while I was sat in the bakery. At that point, they were so far away from us that we thought it might never reach Baghdad as the Iraqi forces would repel them. The bombings were the part that made most of my family dislike the Americans; we were scared in case they made a mistake and hit our home or our business. We as people were stuck between the Iraqi government and the American forces now making their way to my city. There were journalists everywhere, and this was very unusual as we had not seen this before the war. They were filming, interviewing and the police and army did nothing to stop them. Before this, a permit would be needed, and

an escort would be provided. My father was old at this point, and I was running the bakery for the family every day, when I came home each evening, he would update the family on what the news had reported. Before this time, he had shown no interest in television and had argued against having one in the home as it was a distraction to us all. He changed from that moment, becoming obsessed with the events being shown, he would watch the government reports that the Iraqi forces were pushing the Americans back and Iraq would prevail. For the first time that I ever recall, he would watch other reports that showed the coalition forces were making their way up the country at a pace from the Kuwait border. He would ask what the truth is, having never before questioned the government's messages, this made me stop in shock as he was a deeply religious man. He believed that Iraq was his home and he loved his government and was now questioning this message. I would reply to my father and say that God will prevail and whatever god has decided will be the reality that we must all accept. I was worried about his health and his mind as he was distracted and not his normal self. He died shortly after the fall of Saddam, his heart seemed to be lost in the confusion of what he should believe and what he should do. His health was getting worse, and the stress was just too much for him, he would not have approved of what was to come after the war. I am glad he did not have to see that, for he is with god now".

The researcher asked why A had continued to say the Americans as the coalition forces were made up of the United Kingdom as well, why did he see America as the invading force?

"The truth is that America wanted to invade; we all know that Britain would never have done this if America had not said so. The British government are seen as puppets of the Americans, much like how our current government are puppets for the Iranian government. I do not dislike America, but I do not approve of what has happened and how this mess has been left for the country. We were a strong internal country before this, but now we have become a land that others seek to control. You cannot change a country by invading it and then appointing a government and as we know this failed, badly".

The discussion went back to the experience of the war; A seemed to be saddened by the current conversation. The researcher asked about his experiences on what it is like to be invaded.

"It was very strange Gary, we had been used to soldiers and police all of our lives, but now as the Americans approached, they started to flee, change out of uniform and disappear. This part was what made me most concerned as this was unsettling to see the structure just dissolve away in front of my eyes. I remember an army colonel that would visit our baker every day, always in uniform, and we would spend time discussing things over chai (tea). He was a friend of my father that I then entertained out of respect. He appeared in the shop in normal clothes, and I asked where his uniform was, he told me that he was no longer a part of the army and that things were going to change. He thought he would be hanged if the Americans arrived and he was found in uniform. I had long believed that western culture would not do such things, but this made me think maybe this was correct, and we could all be executed for being part of the regime".

The researcher probed on this point and asked if A saw himself as part of the regime or just a person living within it?

"I felt that by being there at that point, that my family and I were part of Saddam's regime, we had after all agreed to his rule by never saying otherwise. I had spoken with and entertained many officials and that part made me worry that I would have my name given to the Americans as a Saddam sympathiser".

The discussion then went back to experiences he had watching the coalition forces move into Baghdad.

"The sounds of battle were growing closer, and we saw that many of the government areas were left unguarded now. They were open to everyone, and much theft started at that point, people taking what they could now that no one was there to stop them. People would be taking cars and trucks into compounds and filling them with weapons and stores.

People were arming themselves and preparing themselves. This goes back to what I told you about the Iraqi people Gary, they need a certain amount of control or they will go back to the ways of stealing and killing. This was happening in front of my eyes, and I also took some time to increase what weapons we had to protect my family. I was now the man of the house and my mother depended on me. I had to close the baker at this point and board it up as people were breaking into shops and also holding people up at gunpoint to take money and food. It showed that things were breaking down now that the security forces had fled from the streets. The day the Americans arrived in the city things slowed down, and people suddenly stopped taking things, I think they were almost waiting to see what the new masters would say and how they would act. They drove up the streets in tanks and vehicles, and I went with my brothers to see them as they arrived. They seemed very cautious, and we were also feeling the same, like people meeting for the first time, not knowing how the other will act. I remember looking in the crowds that had lined the streets and seeing many members of the Iraqi security forces there. The officers that visited our shop, in normal clothes and clapping the Americans. I thought they have given up and accepted this now, so why should we consider fighting back. The Americans moved past and went to set up bases in the city, and we returned home to tell my father what we had seen and then stayed home for a week. I would go to check on the shop every day just to be sure that it was still ok, our family name was well known in the community, and I am sure this helped in stopping people from robbing it. The shop made its way through fine, and after a week, I reopened it and started baking again. Each day I could see the soldiers passing by and looking around as they patrolled the city areas, for me, I was so used to seeing soldiers in the streets before I gave it no real thought. It became the new way of life for us, and the Americans were now part of that. There were celebrations for many weeks after the fall of Saddam, the statues were pulled down, and his palaces had been robbed heavily before the Americans secured them. I felt a little numb at all times as I was very unsure how this would work out, how would we as people act now, and what would we do? It was all bizarre, so I just baked".

This discussion moved onto the internal violence that occurred after the war, the rise of the insurgency. It was part of what created the current reality in Iraq from a stability and security viewpoint (Cordesman, 2006).

"The insurgency[9] is primarily a Sunni Arab phenomenon and is not a national movement; it has a very narrow base in the country. It continues to be comprised of semi-autonomous and fully autonomous groups with a variety of motivations. Measuring the strength of the insurgency in terms of numbers alone does not provide an adequate assessment of insurgent capabilities. Insurgent numbers are a very small fraction of Iraq's population. The vast majority of these groups are connected in some way through members belonging to social networks (e.g., familial, tribal, and former professional) that stretch across Iraq and beyond. Insurgents can also be grouped into several strands: terrorists and foreign fighters, "rejectionists" (mostly Sunni), Saddam loyalists, and criminals. The main threat to achieving Iraqi control of and responsibility for security in the provinces is, in the near and medium-term, terrorists and foreign fighters because of the psychological impact on the population of their terror campaign, which appears to target Iraqi civilians indiscriminately" (Congress Report, 2005 p. 14).

A was asked for his thoughts on this quote that was part of the report to Congress in October 2005, was it a true reflection of the real thoughts of someone who lived inside it?

"It is impossible to say for sure how this came to be the sad reality of Iraq, it was sad to see such shameful actions from our citizens but if you remember we talked about the people before Gary. They were without structure, direction or leadership and they seek this no matter what the leader tells them, they follow it. I would not agree that this was a religious matter; I saw both Sunni and Shia's getting involved in this type of violence. The people were waiting for direction, for food and water and structure and it never came, and people who desire power saw the opportunity to take it and to build their kingdoms and armies. The violence was daily and was a bad way to live, the Americans then became distrusting of everyone, and their personality changed to one of aggression. They helped

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[9] Post war.

to turn people to the other leaders by their actions and dealings with Iraqi people. I understand they had to look after themselves, but they started shooting at people for little reasons. People were driving in the city and would get close to the soldiers, and they would start shooting at them. I had to dive to the floor when they started shooting at a truck in our street. Not just a few shots but so many that we all lay on the floor and I thought my time had come. These actions helped to make this reality, and then the private security companies came to the city. They were wild, like beasts unchained. They drove worse than we did, and I am bad driver, but they would barge cars aside with families in them to move forward and not queue I saw one young girl fall from a car and lie motionless in the street. We never wear seatbelts as to die is to accept gods will, it was gods will that the girl died but at the hands of private security people. The people then started to support the insurgents rather than ignore them, and they were, after all saying they wanted to repel the invaders. When I thought of what would be left if the Americans left, what sort of world would I live in under these leaders? It would be a world where we would die in the street, at the hands of foreigners who had now started to flock to the country to fight America. They would come into my shop and ask the men working there to join the fight, the men spoke in Arabic but were not Iraqi. They were from different places, and the one who led the talk was from Iran. He became angry when no one replied to him and started to quote passages from the Holy Quran[10] almost ranting in my shop. I waved my hands and asked him to be calm. I spoke for my people in the shop and said we were peaceful loyal Iraqis and that violence has brought only bad things to this country. The man I recall had empty eyes that made me nervous like he had no soul. He was over six-foot-tall and had short black hair with a thick black beard, dressed in black clothing, he brought a feeling of being uneasy with him. It was my first discussion directly with people from the insurgency, and until that point, I had only been a witness to such acts.

I offered him chai and food, which he accepted and sat down in the shop. The other men stood in a very guarded way at the entrance, always looking around as if waiting for something. The man asked about my family and what I had seen over the time since the fall of Saddam. He also asked me what my thoughts were on the Americans and their

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[10] The religious text of the Islamic faith.

right to be here. I understood at that moment that this was him trying to decide what side I was taking. I simply said that when the Americans ask me if I have seen any insurgents, I say no when the insurgents ask me if I have seen the Americans I also say no, for I am a baker, not a solider. This made the man laugh, and he leaned back in his chair, I could see he had a pistol in his trousers, and he caught me looking at it. Catching my gaze and linking our eyes, do not worry, he said this is not for you only for the invaders. I asked the man about his life, and he surprised me by telling me he had come to the call of Iraq from Iran. He was part of the groups that were here to liberate Iraq from the west. I asked what would happen if they left and what would we do? He replied we would be a holy state and follow the ways of god and have a way of life that we could only dream of. I could sense the ideology coming from this man and that nothing I could say could temper his views. He finished his chai and wished us well and left and that was the only direct conversation I ever had with an insurgent as you call them".

Moving into the progression to the current day, the researcher asked how things had developed in such a way that he came to Basra and started working for an international oil service company. It was a crucial move towards grasping the core topic of nationalisation before specifically debating this based on his own experiences and views. Building on the details gained on the background and individualism of each participant.

"The move towards where I find myself is fairly straight forward, I had to shut the baker after an explosion damaged it beyond repair, this, strangely enough, came a few days after the men had visited. I would not want to accuse anyone, but I am sure they did this as punishment for not joining them. They punish the people, what craziness is this? I found that I had no employment options and went to speak with the Sheik[11] and ask for guidance as my father had gone to be with god. I asked the sheikh if he could help to guide me to provide for my family, as we had all worked in the baker and now found ourselves with nothing. The sheikh was an older man of about 76 years and was surrounded by his bodyguards, this I noticed had been increased a lot since the troubles had started. He had a thin face and wore the traditional white robes of all leaders in Iraq;

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[11] Arab tribal leader

he beckoned me forward to sit at his side. He talked of the troubles and said that the tribe had made some agreements with the larger tribes in the south of Iraq. I asked why we would speak with those farmers?[12] He laughed and said my son because the oil is there, that is why. He asked of my experience, and if I could move to Basra if needed, where the main work was available. I agreed to do this and spoke of managing a bakery and the staff, ah he said so you could manage a base for a company then? I thought about this question and quickly nodded and said yes, that is something I could do. He picked up his phone and made a call in my presence and spoke quickly with a man, not sure who he was, but they seemed to be speaking as equals. I guessed it must be another sheikh he had called. He asked about operating base management jobs and what could be done to help one of his members in getting work. The call lasted maybe only eight minutes, and when he hung up he looked at me and said, you have a job in Basra".

The researcher, keen to continue this asked how he thought this opportunity had come about and what happened from that point onward?

"Gary, the way things work in Iraq is still very much to do with tribes, my leader knew the leader in Basra, who as it happens had recently been hired by an international service company as the liaison lead. I was given a job because he had asked for this favour, and the other sheikh had agreed and then requested that I was hired for a base management job. I spoke with my family and explained what was to happen, and my mother cried that I had to leave the family home as she was terrified. The violence was always happening, she had seen American soldiers fighting insurgents in the street the previous day, and it had scarred her deeply. I spoke of my responsibilities as the eldest son to provide for them all, and she agreed on the one proviso that I get married before I started in Basra. Mothers tend in even our culture to choose the most inappropriate moments for these types of discussions (He laughed). I will not discuss the marriage side as I consider my wife to be very private. The process we undertake ahead of marriage as something I do not wish to include in this conversation. It took only a few weeks to marry and then move to Basra, on my first day at the company I was met by the sheikh. He had now been

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[12] Baghdad people consider those from Basra to be uneducated people who are mainly farmers.

promoted to country manager for the company, and he told me I was to be a base coordinator for him. I was amazed at life in this area, both in the house I chose in Basra and the mixing of people from everywhere in the world. The people of Basra were different, they were not like my people, and most could not read or write. I found it very easy to build alliances with them as they were stupid and easy to control. I also found it easy to speak with the expatriates in the company. There were a lot of them in the first base; they would often come and ask me for help with getting people through the security checkpoints. I could help as I had many connections in the new security forces that had been in them before".

The researcher wanted to understand what he meant by this and asked, "Sorry A, what do you mean by they were in them before?".

"They were officers in the police and army under Saddam and then came back after this as part of the new Iraqi security forces. They just came back to what they knew, and I had some excellent connections in the headquarters in Baghdad and got introduced to the Basra security leaders through these leaders. I could get people through any of the checkpoints, and then people started to ask me for higher support with getting expatriates visas. Again, I had good connections with the ministry officials who I had known before; it was the same people back in power underneath. I had started as the base coordinator, and then within six months, they promoted me to base supervisor. I was given a team of seven to look after, I would direct them on what repairs and changes to make and manage the deliveries of food, water and fuel. It was still early on, and the oil operators were throwing work as my company. We were on full speed to fix and get the oil production going; this created much money and many jobs. The base manager was a British expatriate called Tim; he never really looked outside of his office and liked to create lots of spreadsheets that he would send to me. I have to admit that I had to hire an assistant to do all the emails and computer work as this was an area that I had no experience. I found that expatriates could take very easy offence to emails, even when no offence was intended. The expatriates did not understand the local politics nor the society and how it

worked; I was leaned upon to help them with these issues. The more I helped people, the more they asked, and within two years, I was appointed as the full base manager.

I was still under Tim but leading the main base team. This was a fast learning curve for me, and I had to be willing to understand other cultures as they were all so very different from my own. Some less favourable than others I have to say. I was managing the team for a year, and we had to move to the new base in Rumaila that was being built and was now completed and ready for us to take over. It was huge and brand new, and I was very proud to be in charge of this facility until they brought in a Russian man. He was placed in the team but seemed to be there to run it all. His name was Vladimir, he was nice, but I often found the Russians to be very direct and they always seemed to shout when you only needed to talk. I felt they did not trust me now to run this new large base; I went to speak with the operations manager John, he was from Canada and was new to his position as well. I asked him what was happening with them, bringing Vladimir to my team. The operations manager was basically in charge of everything and was only under the country manager, the sheikh who was the country manager had much tribal business to attend to so was often absent. I asked John what was happening, and he told me that I needed some guidance on things and how to create a full system for this base that the company had spent millions of dollars on. Vladimir was here to help guide me on how to do things having managed bases before in this industry. I disagreed with him on this way as it disgraced me in the eyes of my team and the other locals. He could not seem to understand that I felt this had been done in reverse, why could this not have been done before at the last base. I had been demoted, maybe not in my title but people saw that I had to go through Vladimir for things and the operations manager would only sign off on it if he had checked it. I am confused by this approach, Gary, why do things in this way? I had to stay in my position with some shame now".

The discussion led into nationalisation; it was not planned in that way but made sense to then move onto his thoughts on how it should be? What was lacking from the organisation in undertaking their part of social responsibility? Supporting the local workforce and subsequently, the economy.

"A, you mention this experience and how you felt about it, so that allows us to consider nationalisation from you own views, what you think of it as a term and how it has been done in South Iraq within your company. It is an important part of this research as you know the result is to produce a model for this, so we can create a learning opportunity from what is known".

"I understand what you are asking Gary, you have explained nationalisation to me on many occasions and what it is, and it has helped me to be able to answer your question in more detail. You have heard on my experience, and how I feel it was done in the wrong order. I do not think any of the companies that came here really planned on how to hire locals and what they needed to do for them. I can explain why I think that if you will allow me".

"Yes, please do continue A; it is your thoughts that I want to hear".

"The companies that have come to this country have followed behind in the footsteps of the Americans and British (he winks at the researcher when saying this). They have entered a world that is new to them, and like all companies, they desire to make money and wealth for the big bosses. They seem to have just come and start with expatriates that have been used before by them in other parts of the Middle East. These expatriates are used to living in tough conditions but never really take time to understand the people or the place that they work in. Imagine you spend half of your year in a country, and you know nothing about it. Not even how to say hello in Arabic, and there are plenty like that in every company. They come with one view, and that is to protect their job, that means they do not wish to pass on any knowledge to the locals. If they (locals) cannot do it, then the (their) job is safe is their approach. I explain this by looking at Vladimir; he was a nice man but kept all the information to himself. Never sitting with me and showing me how to create a maintenance schedule or build a maintenance request system. He would simply give me tasks to do as the local team would not listen to anyone but me, and that used to make him mad. He would say go and do this guys, they would look straight at me, and I would nod, and away they went. He would say to me, why do they not do what I am

asking, I am the manager, and they only seem to do what you tell them to do. I explained to him that I was the senior local, and as such, they would look to me to direct them. This was part of our customs and culture that he simply did not wish to or care to understand. Please do not get me wrong, he was a good man, and I liked him. However, on nationalisation, he put his own job ahead of everyone else, not that I can blame him. The oil was over one hundred dollars, and drilling was effortless here, so the company was happy to bring people in as the cost was not a worry. This did change in 2014 when the price went down, they sent a new vice president into Iraq, and he started to cut the numbers by a huge amount. He looked at cutting many expatriates as they cost the company much money with salaries and flights and he removed a lot of them from the company. Vladimir stayed at this point and still had not shared any of his knowledge with me; our relationship was one of tolerance. He tolerated me as I had many connections he needed, and I tolerated him as he was not going away anytime soon. I was kept away from things like fuel management and not allowed to control the petty cash. We had to pay for local things with petty cash, but he refused to allow me to do this. However, then he came asking me to read the details of the handwritten receipt as it was in Arabic. Back to your question on nationalisation, there has never been any plan or thought to it, from what I have seen and experienced. The companies started to increase only because they got pressure from the government and also the operators who also get pressure from the government. This is too late to be organising this just because they are now asked to meet targets for local staff. I have had no training or any real progress within the company. Yes, I sit now as the base manager, but that is more to do with my connections than what I can do for the wider business. When they let Vladimir go[13] nothing changed, I kept doing what I always had, leading my team based on my own experience rather than what I had learned on a course. I do not feel that there is a career ahead for me with the company and that this is my ceiling here unless I went elsewhere. They started with expatriates, and they will always remain here and that I am sure is down to trust. The company does not and will not ever trust locals to run this for them".

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[13] Reduction in force, where they release staff to reduce headcount and cost.

It raised the question of why he thought that? What needs to change if this was ever to be repeated?

"I hear what you are saying A, so why do you think that the company would not trust the locals with the business and how could things improve? I am asking if we could re-run this again, what would need to change to make things more sustainable?".

"The issue is that of corruption Gary, they see all locals and the Iraq government as corrupt and stealing from them all the time. Now I accept that yes, there are corrupt parts of the country, but there are ways that business is done in Iraq that are different to other countries. People often provide gifts to those who they wish to do business with. These are not looked at as bribes but just a gift and a sign of respect, offering me something to thank me for the time and to consider them for the work".

"I see A, but can you see why in the eyes of an international company such as this one, that this approach may bring issues and claims against them. A gift can be seen as a way to influence people in what decisions they make".

He becomes agitated by this suggestion, sitting up and pursing his lips, clearly not happy with this question, so the researcher opted to clarify further.

"Sorry A, there was no offence meant by the question, I am trying to help readers of the research to better understand how things work in Iraq. If you can explain this and consider both sides, then it helps in writing this up clearly and fairly".

He smiles and eases back into his chair, possibly sensing the degree of discomfort that the researcher is feeling. Some kind of power/control transfer of the interviewer to the interviewee has occurred, and he seems to be very aware of this. He spends what seems like an age before responding, seeming to enjoy this moment where the researcher feels slightly out of control of the discussion.

"Gary, you are my brother (smiling broadly) there is no way I would be offended, this helps me explain why there are trust issues with the company and Iraqi nationals. You are a British expatriate, and even when I explain to you the way that business works here, you ask a question. This is based only on your knowledge and cultural understanding from your country as a westerner. It shows that companies cannot understand or accept how things work in my culture. Say I refuse a gift from a person who is bidding for work then they see that as an offence. I then offend them and many others, in the end, they all provide gifts of food and furniture, as it is custom to do here in Iraq. It would be considered as strange to say no to the offer, and this is why you and the other expatriates can never fully understand Iraq. You look at things from your views, saying what is right and what is wrong in business. Meanwhile, we make things happen here in Iraq as we know how to help the company grow even more. Nationalisation will never see itself here in full as this approach will always be in place, we accept something as a gift, sign of respect does not make us corrupt, do you think I am corrupt?"

This question was unplanned and not expected and demonstrated how fluid the discussions and observations could become. One-minute laughing, the next asking a question like this. It reflects on how different cultures are in how they perceive topics, how they dismiss every idea other than the one they accept and have become accustomed. It is also applied to the researcher who considers the practice of gifts as unethical. The atmospherics in the office had changed; the researcher found himself on the edge of a conversation that was now close to going wrong. The look on A's face had changed, his jovial smile was long gone and replaced by a stern look, and he had deep wrinkles appearing on his forehead. Something that not been observed previously. Was this the aspect that he had discussed before, how the people could change and needed some degree of control. He stared intently into the eyes of the researcher, almost trying to conduct some strange staring competition that the researcher wondered how to finish, should he conclude it and blink, look away or just answer the question.

"A, the purpose of this research is to look at culture and nationalisation; there is no part of this that looks at discussing my thoughts on corruption. We have worked together for some time, and I am wondering why you would ask me such a question?".

The plan was to put the question back to him, to delve into why he would bring up corruption rather than talking about nationalisation failing. Not just through lack of planning but due to an alleged distrust of companies on corruption. He sat rigid, continuing to look into the eyes of the researcher, seemingly reflecting on the topic that had been stumbled upon. He seemed to sense the degree of discomfort that the researcher was feeling.

"Gary, what you think matters to me, others say these things behind my back, expatriates all say that I am corrupt. You have never said anything and have never hinted as to thinking like the others. It seems that we have offended each other by accident; I feel very strongly on this topic as it seems to be the main reason that Iraqis cannot go high in companies. I am telling you right here and now that I am not corrupt, I only take my salary and gifts as part of the custom we have here. It makes no difference to the decision on work that is awarded, and I normally share these gifts out with others in the team. You ask why nationalisation is like it is and I say trust is the word that holds things back. They consider us all to be corrupt and look to steal from them, this may be true of some, but you also have corruption with people in Britain. So, it is a human issue and not one that should only be pinned on us Iraqis. You can improve nationalisation by thinking about it before you start, let people go on training. Invest in us and make us part of the company and most importantly show us the trust. In return, we will love the company for this".

That was the final discussion ever held with A, he moved his family to Jordan and started his own logistic company there while continuing to work for the company until 2019. In 2019 he was part of an internal compliance investigation that found evidence that he was selling off waste oil to local merchants in exchange for cash. The cash was used to pay off the local commander to allow free transit through checkpoints, thus creating the ability to influence movements that he proudly declared. Further enquires identified that A had

set up several agreements with local suppliers in return for cash incentives (level of which was unknown). The concept was that fuel deliveries which he gained control of were transferred through a meter that was broken continuously by unknown parties. What was delivered and signed for was far less than what was billed. It was discovered when the base generators ran out of fuel when they had not long had a delivery of thousands of litres of diesel. The same concept was being applied for the grey water[14], which also ran out and raised questions. Both of these scams had been running for over two years. The requirement to hire cranes for lifting on the base saw the base crane (brand new 50-ton crane) have sand in its fuel tank and was never able to be used. It resulted in cranes being hired from a specific supplier in return for cash sums. This outcome is not mentioned to embarrass A; it is to demonstrate how the reality of operating in an international company as a local is very different. They may be exposed to international influence, but at heart, they retain the traditions and opportunities they wish to. Does the issue of trust go so deep based on this example that it can never be removed nor repaired?

The level of local connections it seems he enjoyed telling people about his ability to show power to expatriates was borne out of bribes to officials that then allowed him to create the illusion of being connected. He is and will always be considered as a lovely man by the researcher, and his smiling face brought happiness to many as a kind and caring person. It is clear he had a hidden life beneath what was observed on the surface, does this make him that different to others? He often calls the researcher and talks of the good old days at the base, eating as a family and being looked after by the king of the base. He considers his time with the company as something positive regardless of the outcomes of his career; he was dismissed in 2019 for corruption. He brought some depth to this research that will be discussed critically in the next chapter, a view that is different to the other participants, different experiences and opinions that adds some real flavour to the discussion. The decision to dismiss him for corruption when discussed on the phone does not seem to register with A, and he replied: "They just wanted to change me out, they have reasons, and it is god's will that I leave now". The researcher decided not to probe

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[14] Non-drinking water that is used for toilets and showers after some basic chlorine treatment.

this any further, as the outcome had long since settled. On returning to Iraq, A was absent from his position, replaced by another local, the son-in-law of the country manager. This fact seemed to be retained by A who felt that this was the reason for being released from his job, the fact that investigators from Houston had spent two months investigating in-country seems to escape his notice. There is and will be no judgement on this as the research never set out to make judgements on people's decisions and conduct, only to understand their journey into being part of the national workforce that it focusses upon to explore nationalisation. A continues to live in Jordan, and he has a large portfolio of property in Basra and Baghdad, he is a millionaire, not bad for the son of a baker. How did he do it? Only he will ever really know!

4.6   The Basra reflection – Participant B

Participant B will be referred to as B for the remained of this section of the chapter; he has a very different background to the previous participant and offers some interesting discussions. B is a 35-year-old Iraqi male with a slim build; he is similar in height to the researcher at 5ft 7inches. His face sports a well-kept dark black beard that he can often be seen stroking when deep in thought. B has a strong almost square jaw that shows some differences from other nationals, a slim well-defined face with clear lines. He has jet back hair that he keeps short and well maintained, placed in a slicked-back style that helps to give him presence when entering a room. His personality is very different from A, he is a quiet and reserved man, who hides a very wicked sense of humour that only those who are close to him ever get to experience.

4.7   Baby in Basra

B is currently a wells service engineer on a multi-rig contract with a large operating client. B was born in Basra and grew up there, and this offered an opportunity to conduct a comparison between A and B. B is not very fond of Basra and while relating a relatively happy childhood under his father. An engineer and very similar in respect to being a reserved person. His father held very high ethics that he passed on to B and his other two brothers, B was the second eldest son in the household. B would speak of the times his

father would sit them down and talk about the correct way to behave when they had a report of fighting with other boys in school. "This is not the way we as a family resolve our issues or problems", B would quote his father as saying. He showed a deep admiration for his father and talked fondly of a high level of affection that was not usually bestowed by a father within an Iraqi household. "He would sit me on his knee and talk of his own experiences growing up in Basra and talk of the way he had dealt with things, how he wanted so much better for my brothers and me". He had a look of happiness as he revisited these thoughts, his right hand gently stroking the short but neat centre of his beard. "The one thing I hated about my father was his smoking, as a child, I hated the smell of cigarette smoke, and it still is something I cannot stand even as an adult". Focussing more on what it was like as a young boy in Basra, B recalled some of his clearer memories.

"Basra is not a good place to be, to grow up or even exist, and you know my thoughts on this country and the city of Basra. There was very little to do as a child other than play football with my friends, it is a very dusty place, and I would always get told off by my mother when I returned home covered in dust. You guys call it sand, but it is, not sand, it is a dust that gets into your skin and makes you feel dirty, my mother hated me playing football as I always came back with cuts and bruises as well as filthy from the many sliding tackles I became famous for. The river was not allowed as my father feared we would fall in and drown, it was filthy as well, and plastic bottles are everywhere as people just dump what they do not want into the river. I followed my father's direction and never once went and played in the river. Some of my friends would go and tease me for being a good boy. I was good at school and did well in mathematics, and it was something I enjoyed and found easy to do; it just seemed to work in my head. My father was very good at maths, and I think I got this from him as he would spend time each evening taking us through some maths problems when he returned from work. I had a good childhood inside our home, but I never liked the city, it was full of people that scared me and still do, it is no place to bring up a family".

The next part looked at the family unit and considered how this setup influenced him as an adult, "B, can you tell me a little more about your family and any parts that you feel have influenced you in how you act today".

Figure 4.1 - View onto the 'Shatt' in central Basra (Researcher, 2017).

"The home was a happy place, my mother and father were married though an arranged marriage, the same as my marriage. They seemed to be a good match, and my mother looked after us all and helped to keep us in line. She is a louder, more outgoing person than my father was, but they seemed to have a good relationship despite being married at seventeen years old. My mother was the keeper of the house, and my father would direct us to help her with household tasks, he was very keen on acting as a family and not excepting just my mother to do these things. I enjoyed helping my mother as it gave me time with her, and when she was not shouting at me for dirty clothing, she would smile wonderfully and tell me stores as we cleaned the house. My father would arrive home and make his way around every one of us and hug us and kiss our faces; I could smell the oils and things he had been handling in work, I still can smell it right now if I try. My

father is an excellent engineer and would spend the weekends with a rusty car that he was trying to build, our home was inside a walled compound with six rooms inside and the gates allowed you to drive into a small open area where my father had built a garage. I loved the weekends, and my brothers showed no interest in this, so I got time with only me and my father, I would hold parts for him as he showed me how an engine worked. I thought you would never get this car working again, he would take me with him to the local market, and we would look for parts that he needed to get this impossible project completed. The market was great fun, and my father would hold my hand, at this point I was twelve years old and thought I was old enough to walk without holding his hand, he always disagreed and said he wanted to keep me close. The Basra market is something else, it has everything you could imagine and ever need from medical drugs to food and clothing, we always went to the same stall for parts, and my father knew the owner very well. It was more than a shopping trip, it was a time to talk, to pass information and discuss things in the city, the market I think represents the people. It was very safe, and the police could be seen taking chai and smoking shisha[15] , and everyone always felt relaxed, as a child, I loved going there with my father. I would sit next to him as he would talk with the stall owner and listen to their discussions, some of it was boring, but I felt like I was a man and felt lucky to be allowed to be part of this experience. My father would ask me to help him choose the right parts, asking me questions about what he had taught me before; it was a great education for me".

B comes from a working-class family that has always lived in Basra, his home is shared now as the family purchased a large plot of land and built three separate houses on the land. One for his father and mother, one for the younger brother and one for his own family. The family share everything, and all put their money into a central account from which the family members can then draw. The brothers have both purchased cars to allow them to get to work. He talks of the barbeque area that he and his father built together and how the family will come together and cook each Friday; his father takes the lead on this, while his mother and their wives prepare the meats, rice and vegetables for cooking. He seems to enjoy these weekly gatherings and would often invite the researcher to

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[15] Tobacco smoked in a traditional hooka.

attend this meal; as it was deep inside Basra, the security provider was hesitant to approve this request. On one occasion, the researcher was permitted to attend for thirty minutes only, entering the compound after calling B to meet him at the gates, and it opened out into a lush green garden area. The children were running around playing games, and, in the corner, an older man could be observed to be focussing much attention to lighting a barbeque. B walked with the researcher showing him the family land and pointing to each single-story home while telling the researcher who lived in each house. The houses were simple in construction, flat-roofed and built from concrete blocks, they were more expansive than most homes in the United Kingdom, and each house had been painted a different colour. The roofs were well maintained and slated with a bright red slate that reflected the sun shining down on the family as they gathered. For such a dry location, there was colour everywhere in the compound, the complete opposite to the road that had been travelled. The garden sported palm trees, grass and some bright purple flowering plants that stood as tall as the average person. It gave way to a pathed area leading to each of the houses and the eating area that had benches and tables at either side of the barbeque. The family started an impromptu gathering, looking at the researcher inquisitively, not threatening but as if they were studying him, trying to figure out why this middle-aged Scottish man was here. B could see this was happening and quietly whispered in the researcher's ear "They do not see many expats here, you are something very new to them and the first-ever foreign visitor to our home". The researcher had negotiated with the security team to allow entry to the compound without an escort, and the team leader was very unhappy with this. It was argued that if they were present, then it would destroy the atmospherics by armed men being present, making the observation pointless.

The father hobbled over, wiping his hands with a towel, muttering under his breath about some annoyance he was toying with. A tall man of over sixty years of age, greying hair, thin face with a short grey beard, he wore shorts a short-sleeved yellow shirt and leather flip flops that made a distinct sound with each step he took. The family almost parted like a wave as he made his way through and thrust his right hand forward, looking purposely into the researcher's eyes "as-salaam 'alaykum"[16]. Gripping the offered hand, which had

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[16] Peace be upon you, traditional Arabic greeting.

a strong grip and callous skin that rubbed harshly against the relatively soft hand of the researcher "wa 'alaykum as-salamm"[17] the researcher replied. The father's eyes widened "Ah Arabic, zain, zain[18]", B quickly spoke to his father in Arabic relating that the researcher was far from fluent in Arabic. It was noted that even the simplest of attempts to speak in the local language could create a much more positive environment. His father nodded as B spoke with him, the children gathering around the researcher, six children in all and an even mix of girls and boys of a relatively young age between five and eleven years old. "Hello mister", the eldest of the children said, "You American?". The researcher looked down to the young boy and replied: "La, la, Britanni"[19]. The boy smiled and shouted the findings to the other children and grabbing the hand of the researcher and taking him to view the properties garden, and the older boy seemed to be delighted to have an unusual guest. The researcher was keenly watching the time to avoid the security team barging in and ruining the research. He gently coaxed the boy back towards B and his father as it was essential to see how the relationship so keenly described by B was in reality. His father had placed an arm around B, beckoning to the researcher to join them. He was speaking quickly to the boy who laughed and started to almost drag the researcher towards them at a considerable pace. The men then took a side each of the researcher holding an arm each just below the elbow and guiding the researcher towards the cooking area. Their barbeque was now well lit, and the father stood proudly to the side showing the researcher the area and speaking through B who would quickly translate his father's words, never once breaking eye contact with his father. The younger brother joined the group and shook hands, a slim almost athletic-looking man who was cleanly shaven and wearing a colourful shirt but this time bright orange. It reflects that the family all seemed to be wearing bright colours as if to create a happier place that was away from the prying eyes of others, the women had bright headscarves so neatly placed that it was almost an art. As they happily chased the children around the garden, for a short moment, it was easy to forget one was in the middle of Basra in southern Iraq. The family in their natural environment was enjoying what they have and spending time with each other. Time was

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[17] And also, with you, traditional response
[18] Good, good.
[19] No, no British.

quickly running out; the radio that the researcher was told to carry was now asking for a return to the gates. B looked down at the ground as the researcher said softly "B, I am sorry, but I must go now, it was wonderful to meet your family, and I am so grateful for you allowing me into your home". B repeated this to his father, who opened his mouth in an 'o' type of shape saying "la, la". B laughed and went on to explain to his father the reason, his father seemed to accept this and quickly turned and proceeded to fill a plastic carrier bag with food, before offering it to the researcher. Catching the eye of B who was telling him to accept the researcher accepted saying "shukrann"[20], taking the bag in the right hand as is the custom of not using the left hand. The father hugged the researcher, kissing each side of his face speaking quickly in Arabic; this was followed by the younger brother, and then B offered to walk the researcher to the gate. Reaching the high black iron gates B looked back and then said, "I want to leave this place, it is not safe". "What do you mean exactly B, do you mean this house or the country?". "The country, it is very unsafe here, and I worry for my family, so I need to find a way to leave here with everyone". The researcher looked back at this small garden of Eden within the city and reflected that while people can create their reality; they do have to step outside at some point and that external environment still needed further investigation. The researcher nodded and asked if this could be discussed further soon? B nodded while firmly holding the researcher's hand. Looking sadly towards the ground, the researcher returned to the somewhat excited security team who gave a disapproving look, and the trip back to the base started.

B spoke of the time he recalls under the regime of Saddam Hussein, he was very supportive of the previous ways, as he put it that things were much safer back then than they are now. It promoted a deeper discussion on his experiences and reflections on the changes that had occurred within his homeland.

"The time under Saddam was always seen as a hostile way of life, that we were dictated to and told what to do. However, there are parts that I miss from that time. The city was under control, there were expectations of us all on how we could act, and I remember

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[20] Thank you.

how many more different nationalities that visited back then. The college had people from India and other places, and they would come to Iraq to study at Basra University. When I look at the university now it is a poor representation of the country, Baghdad has the best university, but I would never go there as it is dangerous. Things back then had an order to them, a way of living, I never felt that the government would hurt you if you were decent and respectful to others, I know they do some things to people, but my family never had any issues. The police were fair, and the army was part of the people, we had a requirement to serve in the army unless you went to university, my brother did three years' service in the army, and he always seemed to enjoy it. That meant that the soldiers were people from the towns and cities in Iraq, I think that the west saw us as under an evil person, but it never felt that way to me. The people seemed to know that there were rules, and if you followed them, things would be fine; it was the people that were bad that would have problems with the government. Under him (Saddam) we had good power, every day with no cuts and water running, now things are bad, and we hardly get a day without long power cuts of two to three hours. The basics we needed were always there, safety and control, I miss feeling that there was control, now I feel like anything could happen. I accept that things were done that were very bad, but when you ask me for my own experiences, I would say it was better then than it is now. The country has no future now and bad people worse than he was run things now, control is lost".

It showed that the perceptions most would have over living under the regime was different from the inside looking out; clearly, B has the before and after comparison that many could never understand. It did demonstrate a theme that the previous rule was not as unpopular as might have been thought, but then that raises the question was it just due to acceptance of what was the reality then? Did the current state offer too much change at an accelerated rate with which people were uncomfortable? Or is it as they thought, worse than before, did the people need to have a level of control, a social guideline that they had to have to remain in an ordered society?

Figure 4.2 – View from a bridge looking into central Basra (Researcher, 2017).

The education part was touched upon, and the researcher was keen to discuss this further, to establish what opportunities B had been given and what he thought about the education provided within Iraq?

"I studied computer engineering at Basra university; it was not exactly what my father wanted me to study as he was keen for a more hands-on engineering area. I love computers and wanted to take a subject that offered something that worked with the advances in technology. I loved university, it was before I was married and to sit in the classes surrounded by girls was something very new to me. I made a lot of female friends and saw that some even went to the university without a headscarf on, this I admired as it showed that they wanted to make a choice no matter what others said. The degree was good fun and as it was a topic I was interested in it was not a chore for me, learning about computers in a level of detail I had not done before. The course was good, and I am glad my family allowed me to go, but I think the value of the degree in Iraq is worthless nowadays. What employer outside of Iraq would consider it, none, I have applied for many

jobs and had no reply to them. I do not regret doing the degree, but I can only wish that I had been able to study in a different country such as Australia or Canada. This degree would then mean something and be of real value. The degree has not helped me in my employment even here in Iraq as I had to start from nothing in the oil industry and take the international courses to get to my current place in the company".

The difference between A and B regarding education was considerable, B was fluent in English that he had learnt in school, had undertaken a university degree but doubted its validity as a qualification. It seemed he was very dismissive of the country he had been born into, while it is easy to judge this as an observer it was clear he had very different views from many of the other research participants. Keeping a similar structure that was in place for A, conversations moved onto the war and transition into the insurgency. "Can you tell me about the war please B, what it was like, what you thought about the invasion and how things changed for you during and afterwards please".

"Man, the war, well, to be honest, it did not feel like a war from my side, yes we heard explosions from the government military locations, but we did not feel like it was an actual war. My family locked ourselves down in our compound as the police and army had told everyone to stay at home as the invaders were coming. It kind of blocked our view of what was happening, but our father gave us strict instructions to stay at home. I remember when the British came to the bridge and stayed there for what seemed like ages, our forces had only made some small attacks on them and then started to leave. It was strange to hear that the army was leaving and not taking their weapons with them. The television news showed our city with the British Army waiting to enter Basra, we all wondered what they were waiting for; they must not have known that everyone that could fight had left already. The city was very quiet, more so than I had ever heard before, I did not think badly of the invaders as they were saying they had come to make our country free and could allow us to open up to the rest of the world. I always wanted to leave Iraq, so I saw this as an opportunity to get that chance, to see the world and take my family somewhere nice and have the life that we saw on the American shows on the television. My father spoke of accepting gods will, if Iraq were to change we would need to know it

is his will and we should never challenge this, we all agreed and were excited about the possible opportunities that could lie ahead. My older brother was a medical doctor at that point, and he worked in Basra General Hospital, he had permission to go in and out each day as he was treating injured soldiers, police and the public. He would bring news home of what was happening outside of the walls of our home, and my father would sit quietly, listening before quietly nodding and saying nothing. The day the British entered Basra, things were peaceful; they all walked in smiling and wearing soft hats, the Americans just seemed to go past heading to Baghdad. The British were nice, they provided food and water to the people, they would play football with the boys, and they treated everyone well. It was what happened next that made me want to leave Iraq for good. The fighting started softly at; first, a few shots from rifles here and there, it then just went crazy. The city filled with people we had not seen before, you find things out from others who saw the new people, they were from other countries. The big groups of vehicles started to bring things in for the army, and they started to attack these vehicles with rockets and bullets, they seemed to know how to build bombs and stated laying them in places around the city. They would warn locals of the location and threaten them if they told the military, slowly the British soldiers started to change. They wore heavy helmets and big amour on their tops; I wondered how they could do this in the heat of the summer. They became less trusting of everyone and would keep their distance now, travelling in small tanks[21] now into the city, sometimes damaging cars and houses as they seemed far too large to be there. The fighting happened every day, and at night you could hear the shots and missiles being fired at the army bases, the soldiers were attacked all the time. The numbers of people joining got larger as there was no work and they offered money to fight, my father, of course, forbid any of us even to consider it. We were running low on money as my father's work had slowed down due to the war and then the fighting afterwards. The city was a war zone, and it was like living in a place that you could no longer recognise, I wanted to leave and take my family far away from this place, it was not home for us anymore".

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[21] Warrior armored vehicles.

B looked deep in thought as he talked about this time in Iraq, he seemed to have developed an apparent hatred for his own country and obsessed over moving away. For a researcher that was able to return to a normal society, it was easy to dismiss this without really considering it from his side. The fighting during the insurgency seemed to have made his mind up, and he was keen to explain how things developed once the British and Americans finally left.

"I felt nervous when we heard that the British were leaving, and even more when we heard that Americans would replace them, this would only make things worse here in Basra. The fighters had become more skilled, and we now saw many security companies moving around in clean white Toyota's, openings in the back window that they could shoot out of. The Americans came in smaller numbers, and the place just went into chaos, explosions everywhere, we could not safely go to the market anymore. I thought that this would be our life now and forever. Then after some time, the Americans were leaving, handing things over to the Iraqi forces, I can understand why they wanted to leave, why stay here and have their soldiers murdered in the street? When they handed over to our new forces, things just seemed to stop, and it was like the fighters just disappeared, like their work was done. That did not stop them firing at the Americans as they left; they were seen to be driving around in pick-ups telling everyone they had driven the American army out of Iraq. The Iraqi army was here, in their new uniforms and vehicles, everything they had was a gift from the American people, they started to sell these things as soon as the Americans left Basra and Iraq. We started to go out and went to the market, there were fewer stalls than before, but I remember seeing a stall where they were now selling weapons, a man stood holding an AK[22] and shouting to people to come and get their revenge. We passed the stall, and I could see lots of rifles, grenades and even rockets were there, many men were gathering around, and the stall owner seemed to be doing excellent business. My father was furious as we had never been allowed such things under Saddam and now everyone was able to buy them, this made him mad, and his face was red for the rest of the trip. I spoke with my brother, and we agreed that we had to get a few weapons for home defence, I thought if everyone has one apart from us then we

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[22] Russian assault rifle.

can be killed. I went on my own and bought two rifles and some ammunition from the same stall, and the man was smiling as I asked him how much. When we were at school, we had been shown how to use these types of rifles, how to take it apart and put it back together, it was straightforward. When I think back that as a child, we were shown this at school, it makes me laugh, I never understood it. Saddam said every person might not own a weapon, but they should know how to use one if they are called by God to protect Iraq. I often think that these lessons gave birth to some of the local men that became fighters. I got home, and we hid the weapons from my father, he would never have agreed to have these in the house, but my brother and I knew it had to be done, we had to be able to protect our families if crazy people came to our home. When the Iraqi forces took over, it just stayed like this. People could do what they wanted, no fear of being caught, the police are very corrupt and would ask for money to pass the checkpoints. Everyone was poor, and we had to find work quickly, I heard that some companies had come to Basra to start working on the oil, I asked around and went to the base asking about any jobs that they may have. The fact I spoke good English seemed to be the thing that got me a phone call the next day. The man sounded Spanish, and I found it hard to understand him, he then passed me to another Iraqi who was from HR[23]. He asked me in Arabic what skills I had, so I spoke of my computer skills and degree, and of course, I could speak English. He said they were looking for some computer people that set-up laptops and could I come for an interview the following week. I agreed and felt I was a little closer to getting some of our life back.

It led into the next phase of discussion on his early career in oil and gas and how he found the experience working for an international company, this would then lead to the focus area on nationalisation.

"Tell me about the early days for you B; as a computer technician, it is very different to your current role, extremely different, this is important to the research as it helps people understand how nationalisation worked before we discuss this on its own".

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[23] Human Resources.

"Well I got the job, it was easy just configuring the new laptops that came in on the air freight onto the company system, this was an easy job for me, and I could get through loads in one day, the guy working with me told me to slow down more as we could make it take a while. I hated to be sat bored so ignored him, the manager was Egyptian, Emad, he was a lovely man who would show an interest in us all, he seemed impressed with my work and asked me to also work with the employees on their computer issues. So, I then became a computer technician, but more to my liking if I am honest, I felt that maybe my degree had been worth doing as I was applying things I had learnt from it for the first time since graduating. The company had many employees from other countries; I had never met so many people from different places. Many of them had been in in the industry for many years it made me feel very young, which was nice. I started doing repairs and work for the rig side of the company, and they seemed to be almost separate from the other Product Lines[24]. There were many people from America on that side of the company, a few of them lived in Texas, and they were so loud. They would shout even when you were stood right next to them. Nice people but loud, for me I am quiet and never shout, so it took me some time to get used to this.

After some time, I got used to it; it made me laugh how animated they were, they loved the job and started to take time to explain to me how drilling an oil well worked. The operations manager was from Canada; he would clear his whiteboard on the wall and say to me to forget fixing the computer and come over and look at this. He would spend much time drawing things on the board and explaining to me how it worked, how they used mud[25] to move down through the different parts of a formation. It was fascinating, and I started to make many friends in that department, they would always ask me if they had computer problems. I would come down and ask what they needed, and they would be sat in a meeting and ask me to join in and learn some new things. The drilling engineers were from Pakistan, these guys were so clever, and their minds just seemed to work through calculations like they were basic sums. I was shown how to do some of the calculations and spend evenings in my home practising them, then taking the findings

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[24] Department within a service company.
[25] Fluid used for the purpose of drilling a well, removes the debris and creates circulation.

back and seeing if I were correct, they would smile and say that it was on the money, unusual term but I thought it must mean I got it right. I went back to my English dictionary and could never really understand what they were meaning, but Google then told me it was a good saying. I enjoyed working on this type of projects, my manager Emad would laugh and say to me that I was part of the drilling team, he never seemed to mind really, he must have thought I was happy. The drilling team always said the IT[26] team were great and praised them to the senior management. The department got bigger, and they put in a request to have their own IT technician, they had over forty employees, only one was an Iraqi I noticed, but that did not bother me. The local guy was from Baghdad and had studied chemical engineering, he was very good at his job, and his English was better than mine, I guess I thought of him as a mentor. He encouraged me to ask to join a course on well control, it was being held in Dubai, I had never left Iraq before, and my father was worried it would show me things he did not approve of, he was a strict Muslim and felt there were bad influences there. I laughed when he said that and told him I was going to learn, if they let me go on the course, I had yet even to ask both managers. I agreed with the local guy to ask, he went into the drilling manager and said to him about sending me on the course, I stood at the door feeling a little nervous and thought maybe I should not be doing this and could get in trouble. After what felt like a long time of them talking I was called into the office, the Canadian manager Corey was sat looking at me, he had a strong black moustache and short black hair. He looked very serious and was staring right at me, I thought to myself to be brave, and I looked him back straight into his eyes. He asked me if this was correct that I wanted to go on the well control course, I nodded and said yes, I did want to go and learn more about this. He made a tight face and then said the problem is that I would need to come and work for them entirely if they spent the money on this course. I replied that I already work for them and do only their computer work, he laughed and said no dummy I want you to join the team and get into drilling, it is where it is at. I was smiling and tried to remain calm, replying that my manager Emad may be mad about this, he waved his hands in a calming motion and said he would sort that one out. All I had to do was agree to join the department after the course as a junior drilling engineer. You would be under your friend here, and if you do well we can see

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[26] Information Technology.

about some more engineering training for you, he did point out that the well control course was tough and many of the expats failed it on their first try, I said I would make him proud, and with that, things had changed".

4.8   Alternate experience – outside influences

It presented an opportunity to discuss the training course and gain insight into his thoughts on exposure to Dubai. Although not directly a target of the core research focus, it provided some further depth to understanding how different cultures see each other.
"So, B, can you tell me about your visit to Dubai, I am interested how you found not only the place but how your experience went when you were there, did it influence you on how you developed as a person?".

"Dubai (Laughing), now that was crazy, I have never left Iraq before, and I was terrified, it took me weeks to get my Iraqi passport. They had only started to make them again after the war, and it takes a long time to get one from the Basra office. It cost me more money to get the officials even to make my application; this annoys me as it is not right. Going through the airport was very strange, I was with two other guys from the department who were expats, and they had done this trip many times, they were laughing as they could see that I was very nervous, they said I would enjoy it. The entry process is mad, there are seven security checks, you go through a scanner, and search, then another and another, it never seemed to end, the police just patted you down, and it seemed pointless to me. When we finally got to get onto the plane, it was Emirates, and as we walked on, I could see two beautiful women who were so smart and stood smiling at everyone as they got onboard. There were wearing skirts that were above their knees; I was amazed as in my culture they always go down and cover even the ankle. I had to stop my mouth from falling open; I do not mean this in a way that is disrespectful to those ladies, just I had never seen this before and was something very new to me. I walked down the walkway and had no idea what I was doing, my friend who was from India showed me where the seat numbers were. Everyone was rushing and pushing hard behind me. I was sweating looking hard for my seat number; I was so relieved when it finally as showing above the

seat, I quickly put my bag in the holder and sat down in the chair. The flight was good fun, and people seemed happy to be leaving Iraq, I understood why they would feel that way, I was happy but knew I had to come back so tried to stay calm inside.

We landed in Dubai and made our way into the huge airport, it was amazing, and I spent more time looking around rather than where I was going, I bumped into lots of people by accident as we made our way to leave the airport. There were people from all over the world, wearing such different clothes, this was so new to me, everything seemed too shiny to me. It took me a little while to get through the immigration as they did so many checks on the visa that I had brought with me, they never smiled once at all, but I got the stamp in my new passport and was allowed to enter into Dubai. I am not a strict Muslim, this part of my life has never really worked for me, and I think this opened me to enjoy the opportunity. Dubai is a Muslim country, but from what I saw, it is not as strict as they may say it is. The place is just shiny, the cars, the buildings and hotels, it was a wonderful sight to me, and I quickly found myself feeling happy to have come here. It was like a different world to Basra, it was clean and fast-moving, and I could not see a single piece of dust. The hotel was out of this world, it was so clean, and the staff were very kind and always asked how you were, my room was like a palace, a large bed all just for me on my own. It had a small bar in the room, and it had treats in it, but when I looked at the price, I closed it straight away, I was never hungry enough to pay those prices. The food was different to what I was used to eating, the guys with me would laugh at the faces I would make as I tried new foods and sweets; I think I must have gone up for more on many occasions. The course was being held in a vast building, with lots of glass and it was so bright and colourful and was so clean. Everything was just so clean as well as the people, all dressed smart and had this clean look. I found the course much easier than I had thought, the calculations I had looked at before I went and practised them a lot before I went for the course. I looked around in the class, and I was the only one from Iraq, everyone else was working in the same company and other than the two guys that I went with they worked in different countries and were all expats. They were all tapping at calculators and scratching their heads; I thought maybe I had done it wrong as I was finished so quick, so rechecked my work. I loved being there; I felt like I was an

international businessman, dressed in shirt and trousers; it made me feel part of something.

The evenings were spent exploring with my friends from work, we tried different restaurants, and I had some drinks, I had never tried alcohol before like I said it is haram[27] in Iraq. As far as my father is concerned, I never felt tied to the faith and wanted to try different things. It is a strange feeling when you drink, I probably tried a little more than I was ready for as my head felt so light, I have continued to enjoy drinking from that point, my wife is very strict in her faith and hates this, but I am allowed to decide my path. I would chat with women and other men, it was so interesting to hear of their ways, and they seemed very interested in what life was like in Iraq, they had only seen what was on the news. I passed the course with a great result, this experience I think changed me forever, it showed me that life is different, and you can make choices in how you want or choose to live it. It changed my career and also made me convinced that I would leave Iraq, I know that was true as even though I had missed my family, I felt dread when I landed back in Basra, I wanted something different".

4.9 The new career and nationalisation

The final conversations looked at B's new career and how this had happened, what were his thoughts on career and how nationalisation had worked, was it in place, was it controlled or just by accident? It could help direct the analysis debates in the next chapter by understanding how each of the participants experienced their careers and opportunities, and the pace and structure of nationalisation after the conflict ended.

"I am very grateful for my job, and it has allowed me to earn more money and get many more qualifications as well as even travelling to Houston for training, who could have even imagined this happening. I do not think it was part of any nationalisation plan; it was just being in the right place and having the right people, the company offers you chances if you work hard, but you are in with everyone else. The Iraq government has no plan other

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[27] Forbidden by God.

than to demand they hire Iraqi people, but they have no qualifications or experience, now I know I was the same, but I did start in a job I was qualified for and then moved but at a slow pace. How can a government just bring people to a company and say hire them, they often ask companies to hire relations of their own family, it just shows how corruption is done in many different ways and not just with money. I have seen this in my company, the person gets into a position and hires their cousin, and then it just goes on and before you know what has happened there is a massive gathering of specific tribes. This is very dangerous as they will control things and create problems using their connections with the local government to do what they wish; the company does not seem to see that this is happening. I see this in the other parts of the company here in Basra, the drilling side does not answer to them and has more nationals but none who are here for such things. The people here in Basra and probably over Iraq just want jobs, and they do not think about what they need to learn; they just say give me a job doing anything. I see them doing admin tasks but cannot work a computer and just use paperwork, they cannot use email or anything and are older, so do not want to learn this way. Iraq has gone backwards as they all rely on paperwork and never use new technology. Nationalisation does help local people get work, but there is no plan to it, it just happens as time passes. The big operators ask companies to increase the number of nationals as they get pressure from the government, reducing the available visas for expats. There is no training available, and the university does push out new graduates with engineering degrees in oil and gas, they come fresh with no experience. My company did start a next-generation plan, and this took people from university when they finished and after some tests and interviews started them as a trainee. I think it is a good idea, but very few ever finish the training and leave, they want to be promoted and earn more much quicker, and if I am honest, the training is not well planned, they just follow others around and get shown somethings. There is no real plan for the learning, so they leave after one year, and it is meant to last three years. Other companies my friends work in have something like this, but they have the same problem, the Iraqi people want everything too quick, they want to be a supervisor before they have learnt how to do the fieldwork and if that happens then they want to be the manager.

I think there are two problems with nationalisation, and the first is that there is no plan and never has been and it only happens when they are forced to hire locals. The other is the attitude of many Iraqis; they expect to be leading and are crazy about having a higher title. What mentality is this to go crazy over the title, in my culture people want a good title more than they want the money, it makes them feel like they have power, power seems to be the main thing people run after. I am not sure Iraq is ready to move forward with this mentality in the people, even the young ones as it is passed onto them by their fathers and it just repeats. They resist the international side of the company and want it to change to their ways; it just does not work that way; things cannot go well if they do. I want the country to recover, and for people to get work as they are frustrated with the lack of progress here, less power and roads are much worse than before, nothing has got better since the war. They see expats coming here and taking their jobs but are not willing to train to take the job, and they just want to sit behind a big desk and tell others what to do. This creates frustration with them, and they hate expats coming here on big salaries even though they have many years of experience. We have problems here with society, and it is where people have everything or nothing, corruption allows people to have much more than they need and then blame the companies to the people. Gary, these people believe what they are told, many just listen and accept it never questioning things, the heads blame expats for the lack of jobs, and they tell the tribe to protest at the gates of the companies. They stay here for days and say they will not leave until they take so many locals on for work. The surprise is that they agree, not knowing this will happen again and again, they just will keep coming back, the people are then inside the company and start controlling what they can for the tribe, it is like a mafia. Some tribes in other areas just come with weapons and threaten the company to pay a land tax as they claim it is the tribes land or leave, even though the company has paid the government to drill wells they and have a contract. They have shot the rigs on many occasions and the people working have had to run away, what way is this and how can we nationalise with this kind of approach. The country has the chance, but I think it needs to change a lot before we as Iraqi people can expect nationalisation to work, we have our part in being professional and enjoying the international experience. I hate to say it, but these people are not ready for nationalisation, it was never planned, and never will be and until people change it will

not happen. They stay and take from companies, then when they are caught they leave and tell their friends in the police, who then go and tell the management to take the person back, they go back, and it just goes this way. How can this work for the longer-term benefit of Iraq and the people, we must be professional and move from the old ways".

Reflecting on B's thoughts, show a person who is grateful but also worried about how nationalisation is occurring within international companies; was he suggesting that they adjust or adapt to the location? Could the international organisations be lowering their requirements just to meet the demand of the operators and government? There are many questions that his feedback leaves to discuss and consider. If there is no plan and it is just a case of stumbling through, then where will this lead for the country and the companies involved? B got his wish, and his entire family moved to Turkey, his father has since been diagnosed with cancer sadly. B has spent some considerable time away from Iraq during this and only recently returned to work. His family live close to a lake, and he shows the researcher many photos of his family spending time by the water, eating ice-cream and enjoying their time in this beautiful surrounding. The family compound sits empty, locked up tight under the eyes of the watchful neighbours they know well, the occasional visit to check is the only signs it now sees of the past. He cannot sell it he made clear, as he thinks that no one will buy the houses or land, as no one would choose to live in Basra, leaving it unclear of what future the little haven in Basra has. It seems that B and his family are willing to leave it to fall to the ground and forget this past life they shared, seems a sad reflection having worked so hard to get it in the first place. Maybe it reminds them of a life they no longer wish to revisit, and it is easier just to lock up and leave Basra. B continues to travel in and out of Turkey to work in Iraq and has a longer-term plan of leaving the oil industry. Finding work in IT in Turkey so that he can return home every night once again; he works for five weeks each shift at present. B has the drive to become something, and it was hard for the researcher to identify what that exactly is or will be, unsure if even B has a plan on where he will end up. He said that Turkey was the first step towards going to live somewhere in Europe. In a place where he feels his family are genuinely safe, remarking on the political issues that still occur in Turkey as well as acts of terrorism. Out of all the research participants, B had the closest relationship

with the researcher and provided some truly unique insights into life and nationalisation as an Iraqi worker.

He spoke openly about his thoughts on typically taboo topics such as religion in a manner that shocked the researcher, openly stating he disliked this part of his life, the pressure placed on him to act in the ways that were accepted as social norms. He pushed back on this pressure and made his own choices, now to most people this sounds normal, but to an Iraqi man in this environment, it shows a deep level of courage, to step outside of what is accepted and potentially place his own life at risk. Some could accuse him of being selfish and only thinking about his desires. However, the pressure was internal within the family as well; in the end, he stood by his approaches ignoring the cultural norms. The researcher still speaks with B regularly and asks about his life and family and did so over the two-year gap, having many long conversations while absent from Iraq. It does as a side-line, show how research can develop into deeper relationships as a byproduct of studying people. It took many years to get inside B's thoughts, to step behind the quiet, thoughtful person and this was considered as well worth the time taken.

4.10 The alternative view from Basra – Participant C

Participant C offers a different view of Basra, and his background was from a wealthy family, a much more distant participant than the previous two, always seemed to keep a barrier between himself and the researcher. Almost like there was some level of distrust between himself and the researcher, it was challenging to get detail from the observations. On some occasions, C was asked why he had offered to take part. Regardless the observations went on, and the notes were taken that have been put together. In some way it shows how different the people of Iraq are, in their approaches, views and interaction with expatriates, this can be said as when observing C with his local team he seemed a different person. To describe C, he has a very piercing presence, and it can often make those who do not know him very uneasy; this feeling was experienced on many occasions by the researcher. C is a 37-year-old Iraqi male who currently lives in Egypt and travels in and out of Iraq for work; he is around five foot ten inches tall and has

a slim build. His face has very defined features, this adds to his presence as his dark brown eyes feel as if they are looking right through you. He sports a short well-trimmed goatee beard that adds to the bone definition of his face, giving him a strong air of power, his short black hair is neatly combed to the side and always cut every week. His personality is hard to describe as he is reserved on some occasions then excitable on others; no real patterns could be observed; he is a deep thinker. He pauses before answering when in meetings or on conference calls. It makes him a difficult character to observe and speak with as he seemed to think there is or was hidden meaning behind questions or topics raised, raising his eyebrows when certain focus areas were brought up. C was open to discuss some of his childhood growing up in Basra, the eldest of four brothers he is the son of a local businessman who as he describes it runs a logistical company amongst some other businesses. C is currently a Product Line[28] Manager for the largest and most successful function in southern Iraq, a fact he is openly proud of.

"My childhood, this was a long time ago and I very rarely take time to think about it as I am so busy with work and then flying back and forth to Dubai for meetings. Basra was fine for me, and my father had some very successful businesses, and I have been lucky enough to learn to from him on how to run businesses. That gave me a very generous childhood, and I went only to private schools along with my brothers, my father was very keen for us to have a good education and to go and study in a good university outside of Iraq. We had some house servants and a huge home that had some nice views over the better parts of Basra, we would take our meals outside in the air, and yes, I considered myself very lucky. I was not allowed to go outside on my own and only went to organised things like sports events at the school, I never really had a large group of friends as I was happy on my own and playing with my brothers when I got home. My father would spend much time at work and then in his study when he came home, and our mother would tell us to leave him alone as he was very busy. We mostly entertained ourselves, we had a huge area outside and would play football, hide and seek and these types of games; we were happy but never spent much time with our parents. My mother would entertain her friends in another room, and we would be told to behave and go and play as well as do

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[28] Service department that provides a specific service within the company portfolio.

the homework we had from school. I think this made me very independent as a person from a young age; I see others who cannot go a single day without calling their mother or father, how will they ever survive in this world if they cannot stand alone. I graduated with some ease, and then my father organised for me to go and study in Australia at a university. He said not to waste time with degrees from Iraq, and if I was going to be a success, I needed to go to a good university and study engineering. He had good contacts, and we got the student visa easy; things were much easier for these kind of things before the war. I was out of the country when this all happened and had to watch it on the news".

Figure 4.3 – Central Basra (Researcher, 2017).

That was the most detail the researcher was ever able to extract from countless discussions with C, and he seemed to hold a tight guard on his family life from his childhood. Was this due to the almost absence of active parenting? Or was it merely that he was independent and felt this was therefore irrelevant? He would often ask why the researcher wanted to discuss childhoods, what does it matter to nationalisation he would snap. The researcher just kept trying and, in the end, got some idea of childhood, very different from the others, so it is considered as worth the work to get at least some detail.

It offered an opportunity to see how the experiences may have differed from the others under Saddam and then into the war and subsequent insurgency period.

"C, I am interested to hear of your thoughts on life under the last leadership, about Saddam Hussien, we can then slowly look at the war and what happened after this. I know you said you were out of the country at the time this happened but would still be great to hear your reflections on this".

"Yes, of course, Gary, you do ask some bizarre things that make me wonder how your research can be on nationalisation when you ask about so many other things?".
"I understand C, to look at something fully I need to reach back and see how upbringing, opportunities such as education were for different people, it helps the research to consider many wider things than just the core focus on nationalisation. For example; your education helps to understand if this supported you when it came to getting work opportunities that others may not have had. Not suggesting you had anything over others just what the different experiences tell us in research on the result of nationalisation".

"I still think it is strange, but as I am a businessman and not a researcher I will have to take your word for this, the war was a distant thing for me, and I saw it happen over the television and phone. My family were still there, and as we lived on the outside of the city they were safer I think than other that were closed in by the city, my father said they had a front seat view of the army coming into Basra. I had no problems with Saddam and the system we had before this and I had started to experience a more western view on things, I never felt like we were under a dictator, I told my fellow students the very same. They seemed amazed when I said it was fine and it had the same type of order to things as they had there in Australia, I did not see what all the fuss was about when I look back. My father and family did very well in business under Saddam, he was the same as any government, strict when needed and our ways are different in Iraq, the people need some stricter rule, or the result will be chaos. The police and army had a discipline about them that made people respect them, not like now where they can be bought for a low price. My father worked with many of the local government officials, and he had good

relationships with them all. They all left power when the war came, and some of them managed to get back in when the new government took over, seems a little strange to stick with the same as before, but the rule was absent. They did not rule, and they just did what paid them more; this helped to destroy the culture and increase corruption that has no place in business. My degree was in engineering, but I also went on to do a master's in business management after the war. Sorry, going back to the time of Saddam, he was fine, and things just worked reasonably well under him, I think he knew the people, the culture and how to keep order in a civilised society. My father told me of the fighting when they came to Basra, how the Iraqi army left quickly, and then the British came into Basra, they visited our home and asked my father questions on the Iraqi army. If he had seen any of them, he spoke excellent English just like me, and he said no, they had left a long time ago. My father's business was used by the British for moving things, he had many trucks, and it started to pay him very well. He was happy when we spoke and told me how work could come from the most surprising places, in this case, out of the war. He was less happy when people started to shoot at the trucks as they had an army escort and in one week my father lost eleven trucks to crazy men. This part I did not understand, I was told not to come back at this point until it calmed down, the fighters had flocked to Iraq, and the place went crazy.

It was not safe to drive anywhere my father told me, they have bombs in the road, then the army shoots at you if you get too close, the people are surrounded by them both. My family car was shot at one point as my parents took my younger brothers to school, it was not far and was very secure, but on the road there the fighters were shooting at the army and it was going everywhere, one went through the windshield of the car. My mother never left the house from that day for over a year; I am not sure she has ever got over this; she still talks of it even all these years later. I was angry hearing of all of this, why were these idiots doing all this fighting, I could not understand what they thought it would bring. My father's business had problems during all the violence; he worried he would lose all the trucks and have to shut down. We talked for some time on the internet and agreed that he should sub-contract more work out to others, that way if the truck got damaged, his fleet was still there. It may sound bad, but we had to protect the business,

we also agreed to move away from the army work as it was dangerous, and he had been visited by men in his office asking him not to help the army. He told me they said they would have to destroy all the trucks as it was helping the invaders. My father knew the new chief of police and mentioned his name to them, he said it was strange how they knew him and then said it would help the cause if he would do less work for them. He offered them money to leave his trucks out of this and not attack them, and they accepted, it was an easy option to take and from that point he was able to move anything as long as he called this man first. He would keep paying each month, but the money from the army still left him with a good profit, and he was able to replace the damaged trucks reasonably quickly. From this point onward, it was fine for my family, they had protection now and connections to keep them and the business away from all the fighting, even knowing where the roadside bombs were and where to avoid, it was worth the money".

It seemed that C's experience of the war and afterwards was very different, not just from the fact he was out of the country but also how he and his father were focussing on the business. It was noted that he mentioned corruption earlier and angrily dismissed it but then seemed to accept it when paying for protection, maybe he considered it a service rather than corruption? The next section is where C opened up much more on his career and thoughts on nationalisation, very clear and concise in what he thinks about this part of the conversation. It was worth working through the short answers on the earlier topics as it delivered some intriguing outcomes. C refused at every stage to discuss religion as he felt it was a topic that the researcher would not understand; this was taken off the focus list.

"C, when we consider your success in achieving a senior management role within your department, it shows you have done very well, considering nationalisation could you please tell me your thoughts on this topic. I am keen to understand if it was planned from the start, how the government supported it and of course, most importantly, your experiences and thoughts on this".

Figure 4.4 – View of the centre of Basra looking onto the Basra Hotel (Researcher, 2017).

"(Takes a long pause) This is something I feel very passionate about Gary, it is the future of this country, and if as the Americans said that they wanted us as Iraq to stand on our own feet then this is an essential part of achieving this. I do not think the companies planned it, they just hired who they felt were needed early on, when things started to settle a little more they considered people who had been qualified before the war. I sent my CV[29] to every large company in the oil industry that had a base here, and I heard from people when I returned that they were swamped sorting out the mess from the war and afterwards to get the oil flowing again. I had no phone calls, or any reply to my emails and this type of behaviour made it clear they were not considering Iraqi people for work or

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[29] Curriculum Vitae.

jobs, why would this be the case I asked my father? He would just say that they only came here for oil and when it is gone they will leave again, and he felt annoyed as he had offered the same companies trucks to move their equipment around the field. My friends had also asked for work, they were all qualified in engineering as we have a strong background in this in Iraq, but no one got any offers or even an interview. My father and I went to the local government offices in Basra and spoke with one of the officials; he was in immigration and talked about this with him. He agreed that work should go to Iraqis as there were fewer jobs available to the people and they had nothing, no food on the table, he vowed to take this up officially. I laughed as only four days later I received a call from every company I had sent my cv to, asking if I could come for an interview, now they had been told off they wanted to creep to the Iraqi people. I accepted all the interview offers and the following week went to each one, the interviews were with expats as we call them, people from outside Iraq. The interviews were easy; they asked about my education, what I had done before and after university and about my family and their connections. Different companies offered me two jobs, and both were for field engineer positions within Wire Line[30] which suited the area I was interested in doing. I took the job from the company that offered me a higher salary as I felt that I had a degree from outside of Iraq and should look to earn as much as possible based on that fact.

The work was straightforward, and it did not take me long to learn how to set the equipment up and start running it on the well site, the supervisor was from Mexico and was not a very strong lead over the crew with me being the only Iraqi out of a crew of six. He had much experience but no leadership over us, I took my time to learn more and spent the evenings at home learning about everything, taking all the online training courses that the company had for my area. My manager at the base was from the UK[31] and was older than me by some years; he asked me to speak with him when I came back from the job, he said he had heard good things about my work from the supervisor and wanted to know what my plans were. I was clear that I wanted his job one day, this may sound arrogant, but if you have no drive then why even get up in the morning. He laughed

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[30] Department within the company providing a specific service.
[31] United Kingdom.

when I said this and seemed to like that answer and said why not, he then asked me if at the end of my first year would I like to lead my crew as a crew chief. I said yes straight away and asked about some more training, and he said that it was really on the job training that I needed and learning how to supervise the work. I was unhappy with this as many of the expats had been on courses in America, so I asked why I could not go. He said that this might come with time, but I had to earn this through hard work, this left me annoyed as he had basically cut this option off. I told my father about this, and he agreed that these things should be open to everyone, and he made some phone calls to people he knew, within two weeks I was called back into my manager's office. He looked upset and said that he had been told to organise me attending a Wire Line engineering course in Houston at the company academy. I started to smile, and he said that this was not the right way to get these things done, I said I had no idea what he was talking about and that Iraqis should have the same opportunities as everyone else. He said that Iraqi people needed time to learn first then train later, I argued back with him that how can we learn as people if we are not taught these things. We could not agree on this, but I am sure he knew that things would have to change, and he had to take me and anyone else from Iraq seriously, they were in our country after all.

Three months later, I attended the course, and it was easy for me as I had been doing the work for nearly a year now and was due to my promotion to crew chief when I returned. I got my visa to go to America with ease as the company-sponsored it, and they processed it without any problem. I did not enjoy the country though, they are very loud and always shout at each other even when they are not mad, they seemed to view me with suspicion just because I was from Iraq that I could not be trusted. There were some nice people on the course who seemed interested in what it was like in Iraq; I was happy to tell them about how the future would be good for my country. When I returned to Iraq I was promoted to crew chief, and it took me only one more year before I became an operations manager, this was a job I was more suited to do, it was to organise the operations and tell crews what wells they had to go to. I had to attend our customers base and talk through the work we had done, and I got to speak with people in big companies such as Shell. I

think this was a good job, and I found it much better being a manager, I was the only Iraqi operations manager in the company in Iraq at that time.

I was then given the responsibility of hiring people, and I knew that hiring only Iraqis was the right thing to do, it is our country and we should have the jobs here. I was able to show the department manager that we could save much money by increasing the number of locals and removing expats as they needed visas and flights. He was not so keen, but if I was to decide on who to hire then it should be my choice to help my people, it offered them work, and I did exactly that, hired my people. When the oil price went down, they were falling over themselves to hire only local people, precisely what I had told them before, so I started to swap everyone over to locals. The department grew to be the biggest we have here, and we have the highest revenue of them all, this is down to my planning and by having good local staff to do the work. The new VP[32] was pleased with my work, he was from Turkey, and I spoke with him to change everyone over to Iraqi people only. When I showed him the cost he was pleased and then promoted me to my current position as the head of the product line, he trusted me to run everything. My department is still the largest and raises the most money, we are entirely local and have no expats here, it shows that they are not needed, and we as the people of Iraq can do the same as them.

I think I will be promoted again very soon to a regional position, and I aim to become a vice president in the next four years. I have shown that I can do the job. I have two degrees and now much experience as a leader. You asked me if the nationalisation was planned, I would say no, but I planned it as others could or would not do so. The government have no real plan, so it is down to people like me to make it happen and show that the people here can do it without the need for expats. I do not dislike you or the others, but I believe very strongly that if the company is in Iraq, then it should be run by Iraqi's, we know our country, our customs and how to do things here. After the war, I could not even get an interview and companies had to be pressured to even speak with us locals, even when we have a good education. This is wrong, and they should come here with open arms

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[32] Vice President, head of the country of operations.

and get the best from the people and provide work and money for them, as many as they can. We as the people forced them and now they can see how we can do the work and lead things here, they just do not seem to want to trust us, why can they trust expats, what do they offer that we do not. I tell all my team the same that we are an Iraqi department and only look to have our people within it, to help build a strong Iraq again. Expats can come here and help us start things, but they should know when the time is right to leave here; still, we have so many remaining here for many years. I only got to my position by fighting hard for it, and I will do the same for others. I will plan it, and it will one day be a company in Iraq run by Iraqi's".

It was a topical discussion with C, and he lit up when we eventually got onto this part of the observations as if in some way he was waiting for this part, while not wishing to expand on the other areas. When invited to talk about this, he could not be stopped, he seemed very passionate about this part, and there are many sides to consider. His viewpoint that he was happy to offer, but there was a lack of consideration of the company's viewpoint within his responses. He seemed to ignore the fact that he had used some connections to get his way on several occasions, seeming to accept this as a standard business practice. Is this part of life in Iraq? Is this something that international companies need to accept? There is little doubt that C has some considerable drive to progress through his company and has his eyes on some serious higher-level achievements, this, of course, is to be respected. It does, however, raise the questions, what would he do if he became a vice president, would he start to recruit only Iraqis? Would his approach change to consider wider communities? It can only be determined when it happens, but worth considering how this could play out long term. He is a well-educated man from a wealthy family that has some powerful connections, and it would be interesting if some of those dynamics were changed, would it provide the same result? Would his drive alone be enough to get him to the same position if those things had been different? It provides a very different view on nationalisation, although somewhat aggressive in his thoughts, C has the right to express them, and very few people can question his desire, just maybe his methods. It is interesting to note that C married an Egyptian woman and lives there with his family of three children, slightly controversial

when considering his stated opinions on nationalisation, where he becomes the expat in Egypt. He was not so keen to discuss this aspect of how he came to marry a non-Iraqi woman and what his family had thought about this.

Ultimately the researcher had to respect his right to privacy, but by tabling these areas, it may well help C reflect on this and consider how it goes against his argument. C continues to lead the largest product line in Iraq for the company, and it has achieved some considerable success under his leadership, showing a 100% local content[33], out of a company-wide 70/30 split for local content. His Iraqi crews have continued to serve the customers requirements but with one rather large issue occurring. In December 2019 a local crew had a surface detonation of an electric detonator that resulted in the crew chief losing three fingers. The full details cannot be published but putting it into some context; it was the only event of its kind ever recorded within the company. The findings showed that standard safety procedures had all been disregarded by the crew. As the crew chief connected the detonator with his bare hands, another member of the crew activated the firing panel.

It did get detailed as a potential act of malice by the person pressing the panel button, and this can never honestly be known. What is clear is that the crew chief failed to have the panel keys with him at the time of setting the detonator and did not use the safety tube that is required should it activate when being carried. The basic argument is that the entire crew and leader disregarded standard procedures, and it could have easily resulted in a fatality had it been connected to the main charge when it occurred. C argued that this was nothing to do with the nationality of the crew and could have happened anywhere in the company; while there is nothing to suggest that this occurred due to the nationality of the crew. However, it did show that adherence to international standards was absent on that day; the blend of international seemed to have missed this crew. C continues to drive his team forward and put this incident behind them, always keen to debate the markets and stocks; he has a keen interest in business strategy and broader management

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[33] Term used in business for percentage of local national employees.

theories. He is an exciting participant and adds some variance to the research, and this can only be a positive thing.

4.11 Delving deeper – Participant D

Participant D, the researcher would consider as a middle ground participant from a research point of view, providing interaction and discussion but not fully engaging with the detail that was sought via observations. It is accepted that not all research participants will remain engaged throughout the project and of course, that every person will deliver heaps of data. D is a 47-year-old male who was born in a village just outside of Basra, where he grew up. He would be described as five foot ten inches tall with a stalky build. He has a rounded face that holds a short grey beard, short on the sides and a small protruding section in the middle of his chin, that he enjoys stroking throughout every observation, almost mesmerising to watch. He has short grey hair that has been shaved short on all sides. He can be seen walking with purpose around the base, and within the research group, he is the highest-ranking Iraqi national reaching the position of director. His personality could be described as reserved but happy, very structured in everything he discusses, offering a much older and wiser head than his younger years would suggest. He is held in very high regard by all the Iraqi staff. They consider him as the prominent leader of the company here, and by virtue of holding the power of attorney[34] of the company, his influence is considerable. The researcher considered D to be an enjoyable person to speak with, his high level of intellect provided some exciting debates throughout the research. His spoken English is immaculate, and it was always impressive to observe him jumping between Arabic and English without even a moment of pause. The first focus area, the same as the other participants, was to discuss his childhood and what it was like growing up in his village.

"It seems like a lifetime ago from when I was there in my village, I was in our home with my parents, my father and mother were both teachers, and I had two other brothers. I would not say we were a wealthy family, nor were we poor as I never went hungry or

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[34] Authorised signatory for company contracts by legal approval, must be an Iraqi national based on local law.

without clothes. Maybe just normal, how would that do? (researcher nods and gestures to continue). When you grow up here in Basra, you do not know what else is out there in the world, what other see and do and what you are missing, my parents would never allow a television in the home as they felt it was a distraction to us all. We are a strict Muslim family who follows the faith without question; it gives me a structure to my life that I have always enjoyed. Our home was a single-story house, it had everything we could need, we as brothers shared a room but were lucky enough to have a bed each, many of my friends all shared one large bed. My parent's room that we never went into unless told to do so, a sort of open plan living room and kitchen, it was nice to be there, and the village was nice and much quieter than the city. The village was around thirty houses together but well-spaced out, the land was much cheaper there, and my parents had bought the land and had the house built soon after they were married. My father's parents were from the same village, so it was nice as we lived next door to them and they would visit us every day, my grandmother bringing food she had prepared with her. The village was safe, and away from everyone else, I think my parents wanted that for us growing up, to away from things and I think this was a good thing.

We were always focussing on our school work, as I am sure you can imagine my parents were teachers and they wanted us to do well in our education, something that has helped me get to where I am now. They would take time each evening to teach us English, and then we as a family would practise it and see how long we could spend talking in English rather than Arabic, my youngest brother would always break the chain (laughing). We had a nice big garden that had a gate that joined our grandparents garden; my mother would catch us playing there and tell us off. I could see my grandmother laughing from her window. We were never allowed to go into the city on our own, and even when I was much older, when we went, it was only with my parents who went together. I liked these trips into the city, it was bustling, and the main market was so much fun, looking at the different things that they were selling. I would always feel like I was getting dragged along, I wanted to stop and look, but we held hands in a chain, and I would go at the back, so I could get extra time to look around. I sometimes wished we lived in the city, but after the war, I was glad we did not as it became so dangerous there. I did well at school; my

parents would push me hard as the eldest to work and make them proud. They said education was the main thing that made us who we would become as adults; I think that is very true even to this day. I think my childhood was a happy one, my mother was very loving with us all, and she and my father seemed to work well as a team, they were very like my father's parents. My father was a quiet and very respectful man, and he taught me to be calm, to think things over before replying, you see this still in me now. They were married as an arranged marriage, I did not do the same myself, but it worked well for them as my mother's family knew my father side for many years before they agreed on the match. They seemed happy together and maybe the fact they were both teachers also helped them to work well, they were kind and caring. My mother was hilarious, and she would tease us all and make us laugh, she would read to us in English at night and then ask us questions on the story, always a lesson in everything she and my father would do. I continued in school and then went onto college, I enjoyed this time as I felt I was older and more responsible, my parents had different ideas as they would drop me off and pick me up every day, saying it was not safe for me to travel on my own.

I got to speak with girls of my age, they brought a different approach to topics, and it expanded my mind, they were also very funny when I got to know them better. Some of the girls wanted to have a career but would complain that their father had already agreed to have them married before they had even finished learning. I felt terrible about this as they should have the choice, the same as we men do, but I could never say anything as it was the custom, and who am I to question such things. I saw one of those girls ten years later, and she was so very different, she had many children with her, she was shopping and seemed very nervous when I said hello to her. She seemed worried that being seen talking to another man may result in some trouble for her, she seemed to have lost that spark in her eyes that I saw when we were at college. I remember feeling sad, where she had landed in life not of her choosing, yet I had been allowed to choose to do whatever I wanted. I think that is why I married outside of Iraq, I wanted an independent woman. My father and mother wanted me to study maths or English at the university, but I wanted to learn about business instead, they were displeased with my choice, but as they had always done, they supported my choices. I know the university here is not that

good, but I enjoyed learning about marketing and different theories and models that could be used, it fascinated me, and that got me to a high mark for my degree. I had no interest in learning about other things as I wanted to go into business, what business though, at that point I had no idea".

It was interesting to make an early comparison between C and D, as D had progressed further than C in the same company but had different experiences as children, different educational opportunities. There is an age gap, but when considered against the level of difference in progression, it raises the question on if D was gifted or had he just had more opportunities than C? D provided a nice outline of his youth and what he wanted to do, this allowed for a reflection on the changes he had witnessed from the transition from Saddam Hussein through the war to the current day.

Figure 4.5 – Typical traffic and street scene in central Basra (Researcher, 2017).

"Life under Saddam, I never really think of it 'under' (emphasising the point with his fingers), it was just life to my family and me. My parents never felt safe either during or after this change had happened, but I think things were not as bad as maybe people

177

thought they were. You never really had much to do with him or his staff, only if you needed to go to the government offices would you see any of them, I never went there as my father refused to take us and said we did not need to go. I would see the police only very occasionally when they would patrol through the village, they seemed nice enough and never did anything bad that I heard. He was more involved up in Baghdad I think, here in Basra it was a small place to him I would say, and he had people here managing it for him. When he did visit, he would just move from the palace to meetings, and we were never allowed to go into the city when he was there. My friend told me that they were lining the street when he came here once. He walked down the road surrounded by guards, but my friend said he was a huge man, very tall and powerful looking. He was smiling and waving at the people who had come to see him, he even spoke to the person next to my friend, a very confident tone to his voice that made us comfortable that he could look after us all, stood in an immaculate uniform. My father stayed in the middle of this and never said any opinions about politics, he said politics was not an area we should get involved in.

I was sad when the war happened as many people died and we as people could not understand why this has to happen. We were lucky to be in the village outside of Basra, the soldiers that came seemed only interested in going there, we did see the Iraqi soldiers leaving and in the distance we could see smoke. At night it was like fireworks, explosions and red and green bullets[35]. My mother would pull us away from the windows when she found us looking out at it happening in the distance, they had made a shelter in the living room from mattresses and furniture, and they were staying home now as the school had closed. After some time, the fighting just seemed to stop, and my father spoke with people in the city and was told that the soldiers from Britain had moved in and were providing food to people. He said people had started to steal from places in the city and the army was trying hard to stop them, beating them with sticks to chase them away. This behaviour would never have happened before, stealing was punished very badly, and people knew that, and it was rare, you would go to prison for stealing anything no matter how little. It was not long until we saw soldiers walking through our village; they wore strange hats

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[35] Tracer ammunition.

with a silver badge at the front. I recall thinking why would you want to wear something like that. We laughed as some of the soldiers had desert trousers, sand-coloured but green tops, it was unusual to see them mixing this up. They seemed friendly, not how I imagined soldiers from other countries to be, and they smiled at the people as they strolled through, they had a local Iraqi man with them who was talking in English and Arabic to some of the village people. They stopped at our home, and my father walked to the front of the house, and the soldier must have been in charge asked a question in English, I could not hear what he asked, but I heard my father say a reply in English, the soldier looked surprised that my father spoke English. The Iraqi man looked angry that he was not needed at this time, he was glaring at my father all the time he was speaking with the solider. We all rushed to ask what they had said when my father came back into the house, he waved his arms in a calming motion and said he was just asking how things were, did we need anything such as food. The solider said they would be dropping off some food and water in the next few days, and my father said they were friendly, polite and respectful. This was the routine for a while, and we started back, I was keen to get a job as I had not worked since finishing university, I had tried a few administration jobs, but they were boring and for small local companies who were always late paying us. This stopped when the war came, so I thought it was an excellent time to try something else in this new Iraq. This was not to be for some time as the fighting started inside Iraq, slowly at first and then every day and everywhere, men would come to our village and hide weapons in people's houses, telling them never to touch them or tell the soldiers. They would leave and come back bringing more and sometimes taking them away; then the soldiers would come and find some in people's houses and arrest them, the quiet village was awful during that time. Once they had found some weapons the soldiers kept coming back, growing suspicious of us all; as I was a young male they would ask me questions, I would answer them in English and say I was never involved in any of these things. I felt like I was accused just because I was Iraqi and a man who they said was of fighting age, what sort of idea is this?

My mother and father went into Basra to get food for us all, they said they would not take us as it was very unsafe there, so they left my brothers with me looking after them with my grandparents next door, they were elderly, so my parents would get them some food.

They never came back (pauses) I waited for them for over three days, and my grandfather was upset, he called some people he knew in Basra to ask if they had seen them. The new Iraqi police came after six days and told us that they had both been killed in an explosion by a roadside bomb, they were next to an army vehicle when it exploded. (Looking at the floor and removing his spectacles) I tell you this only, so you can understand how things were, really were. You wanted to know of these things and many people died, good people who had never done anything wrong. I do not blame the soldiers, they were also being killed every day, I know it is gods will and my parents are with god now, and for that I am thankful.

My grandmother cried every day for weeks, my grandfather and her moved in with us, and I felt helpless, what would become of us now they were gone, we would pray as a family for guidance, never questioning but accepting the will of God. I do not ask for pity, just some understanding of what happened to us and many other families, this is the reality that you are seeking; it is one of pain and suffering. (The researcher suggested a break at this point, agreeing to continue the conversation when D felt ready). Why? We can talk as you wanted to know about things, it was now a long time ago, and I am ok talking about it, this is not something I talk about very often, but it helps me sometimes to think of them and celebrate them by doing this. They would have been pleased by my achievements and of course of taking part in a PhD research, and maybe I will do something like this in the future. Back to the fighting, it just seemed to go on for a long time, and you could hear explosions every day even from outside of the city, an explosion followed by lots of shooting, I thought of the people there and how they must feel when this happens, it was like we had gone to hell. This got even worse when the British like you (pointing to the researcher) left, and the Americans came, the fighters just went crazy, all different groups all attacking them and each other, it was just chaos all the time. We stayed away from there as much as possible, I had to go in to get food for us all, as well as try to find some work, we had been given some compensation for my parent's death, not very much but it kept us until I could work.

The place was damaged everywhere that I went, bullet holes in the walls, it was how I imagined a war zone to be, seemed strange as the war was over, but it was worse here now. I could see the Americans in armoured vehicles driving around and soldiers on the streets, I made a point of keeping well away from them as they seemed to be attracting attacks. They were paired with the new Iraqi army and police who looked uninterested in what was happening, and they were just leaning against their vehicles and smoking, far less disciplined than they had been before. I would make this trip every second week and keep food there in the home for us all, I would ask around for work and was told to go to the army base as they had some companies there looking to start work in the oil fields in the south. I found that strange that regular companies were inside the military bases; I was too scared to go there as they would get missiles fired at them every day. After a few months they had moved out into their bases, so I went to each one asking at the gate if I could speak with anyone for some work, most just said to look on the company website. I did not even have the internet at the house, so this was not possible, but only one of the American companies asked if I could speak English. I started replying in English as the guy who came to the gate was speaking in Arabic; I think he was from Algeria. He smiled back at me and said, ok come back next week and here is my number, call me to arrange an interview as we are looking for some translators to work here. I rushed home and told everyone, and we were all excited and relieved as the money was running low at this time. I knew I had to get this job if we were to survive.

I went back and dressed in the smartest clothes I had, I was met by the Algerian guy again, and he took me to a room where there were two other men sat. They introduced themselves as Derek and Brian, and both sounded American, they said they were after some English, Arabic speakers for the company and would hold the interview in English. This was easy for me as I had always practised my English and they were very impressed and asked where I had learnt such good English, I said from my parents who were teachers. They offered me the job of translating things for the commercial department, and they dealt with the contracts and letters in Arabic from the government. They needed them changed into English, I was so happy, and my family were all nearly crying when I told them. On my first day I met the commercial manager who was called Mark, he was

British and very well-spoken, he explained what he wanted me to do, and I got on with it, I needed some help from him on working the computer, I had never used one before this time. He was very patient with me and showed me some basics and then got our IT department guys to give me some lessons, I took my laptop home and practised every night, in a quick time I became able to use a computer. This was my first job since the problems, and I have stayed with the same company ever since that time, I like to show gratitude as they gave me a chance and I will be loyal to them for this".

The reflections of D were very impactful to the researcher. In contrast, deeper relationships had been developed with other participants, but the experiences he shared during many conversations that make up the replies were touching. The story of his parents was so touching that the researcher was very emotional after this conversation, feeling the pain that D was in when describing this previously unknown event. He is also a happy person and showed the scars that can be carried underneath deep in people's souls, he carries this every day, but one would never know this when speaking with such a positive person that he is. The researcher considers this a very privileged part of any research when people are willing to share such close moments, secrets that they would not typically provide, memories that bring hurt back to the front. The final topic that led on nicely from his transition through the war, insurgency and into his first significant job discussing nationalisation.

Figure 4.6 – The lighter side of Basra (Researcher, 2017).

"Nationalisation, I have researched this many times and think about it a lot now that I am a director, I was lucky to promote from the commercial side, moving to the manager position and into the director position a year ago. I know many other people have strong views on this topic, and that was the main reason I wanted to contribute to your research. I think the current amount is a good balance as I always think if you go above seventy percent local content then you lose the international part of the company, the differences that people can benefit from. I am a strong believer that the international part or influence is essential in helping Iraqis to grow, to learn about things such as the oil industry standard. There are parts of our culture that need this development, to understand things on an international stage, I have learnt so much from this side of the company. Travelling to other countries, into America and seeing how things work in different locations, I adore this side of the business. I have continued my education by getting a master's in marketing, supported by the company. It is clear to me that there was no plan for nationalisation, people had to make their luck and catch a break depending on who you could talk to, I feel I am lucky and just had the right skills that my parents had taught me

in speaking English. It does and has caused frustration with people who want to work, and there is very little for the Iraqi people once the fighting stops, their old trades seem worthless. The expats are seen by most as stealing jobs that the companies could offer to Iraqis, they, of course, need training and that part they do not seem to understand. I have always tried to tell people they must do their part and offer each company something, they cannot just demand a job, not by force or threats, which happens a lot with the tribes here.

I think for other places they do need to think about how these things work, have a plan on having certain jobs ready for locals, and look to build this as time passes, teach and train and invest in the people. I do still say that a company should never go to one hundred percent of nationals, or it just stops being an international company, just a company in Iraq. Not everyone agrees with me, but I can only speak for my thoughts, learning about things outside Iraq from expats is a wonderful opportunity that I value deeply. So, plan, offer, train and invest, retain an international approach and mix, and you have a good solution. The type of expat sent does make a difference, some show you nothing as they want to guard their job, which is understandable, but you cannot improve people by keeping things to yourself. Send experienced expats that want to build local capability, the government has no plan, and neither do the companies, other than keep increasing as they reduce support for expats. This is not a plan; it was just forcing things into a narrow place; it needs structure. If this happens in future for other countries that may have some problems like war, the same as Iraq then they can move forward and heal much quicker, we have and will continue to limp forward when we could have been running by now".

D provided some interesting data for this research, and he was open and very keen to tell of his own experiences as he felt it was a valuable topic. It was interesting to hear that he was very keen to retain so many expatriates in Iraq as he felt it helped to hold an international feel to the workplace. He was the only participant who offered this opinion, and it was workable for both sides of the argument, he felt it provided value and development for everyone expatriates and Iraqis together. He expressed that he was

lucky, but it shows grounded-ness as he has the drive to reach the director level. He is the only Iraqi in the company to reach this level so far, and this cannot just be a stroke of luck, he has drive and humility that makes him a perfect person to work for and with. D currently covers three other counties as well as Iraq and is responsible for representing the company with the Iraq government for all contract matters. He married an Egyptian woman that he met during the time in Dubai. They have their home in Egypt with their two young girls, he travels a lot and still visits his brother when in Iraq. He shows a level of resilience and seemed willing to take on the responsibility for his entire family when his parents died, and this commitment has never ceased since that moment. He explains his choice in living location as wanting something different, but a little similar for his children, Egypt he feels was the perfect option. Having observed D in meetings with clients, they warm to him, his personality and kindness seem to shine through in everything he does, someone the researcher was able to have a deep discussion with on topics outside of this research. He is evidence of what personal drive and determination can achieve, even in the worst of time, he is inspirational to the others and a strong believer in maintaining a balance and linking Iraq to the rest of the world.

4.12 The Iraqi operations manager – Participant E

E is a 38-year-old Iraqi male from Basra was the only Iraqi to be promoted to operations manager for the south of Iraq, and this position oversees all the department operations, a very responsible position. He is married with two children, and he resides in Basra permanently, travelling in and out of work each day, this is his second marriage having divorced from his first wife. He is a strong-looking man with a stalky and muscular looking build standing five foot ten inches tall, keeping himself trim and in shape using the company provided gym. He has a square jawline that has a short well-trimmed goatee beard. He has a calm and confident personality, complemented by a superb level of the English language that gives him a strong but balanced manner when dealing with others. Those closer to him talk of a good sense of humour that he seems to reserve for only a few people, the researcher never observed this part fo his personality, but can see that in the right environment he could well amuse others. He was the central operations manager

at the time of the research and an obvious candidate to approach and ask if he would be willing to take part in the study. It has to be said that he would engage then pull away during the research, often saying he was too busy to discuss anything, this became more frequent as he progressed higher in the organisation. His career history was discussed and offered an interesting study when compared to other, as it will be shown he moved across somewhat unusual paths to reach his current position. He had a clear dislike for A, and they simply did not get on, creating issues when moving between the participants. The researcher had to finish the other participants before spending time with E. He would become agitated when he saw the researcher sitting with A. The researcher considered releasing him from the study; this was offered. However, he said he wanted to remain involved. Born and brought up in Basra E has stayed there for his life up to this date, he speaks fondly of the city as his only home, making his childhood and an interesting one to identify why he differed in this opinion form some of the other participants.

"Growing up in Basra was fun, my family were a happy group, and it was a large family with seven siblings in the one house, five boys and two girls. We lived in a small house in the city, it was small in size, but we had a good amount of land, as my father was a builder, he would work on extending the home when he was back from work. He eventually added almost the same size, and we then had a much bigger home, this meant as the oldest that I could choose my room, my brothers would share, and my sisters had a room they shared. My sisters had one bed they would share, but my brothers had two large beds that they could use, leaving me with my bed. My father was very hardworking, and in good shape, as he would go out on building sites every day and I started to help him when I was older, my mother looked after the home and was helped by my sisters. We all helped to build a nice garden in our compound, the home is surrounded by walls and two huge silver gates that were locked at night. We had a guard dog that was kept outside, he was very grumpy, and we had to keep away from him, my father was the only person the dog would not try to bite. The garden was nice and green, and we had to use wastewater to keep the plants alive, my father would be given these on some of the building projects he was working on. We were allowed to go and play in our neighbourhood, nothing that interesting just playing football with the other boys, we would go fishing on the side-lines

of the river. When I look back at this, we were not poor, but my father had to work very hard to provide everything for us, he was a large and powerful man, but so very gentle with us all. He was like a giant, and his hands felt so rough when he would hold my hand, I can almost still feel his large hands closing around my hand, the texture of his skin (gazing into the distance as if reminiscing). I was grateful for that as some of my friends had fathers that would beat them all the time. They would come to play and end up covered in marks, one of my friends would look mad when he saw me looking at his marks. He would go red in his face and shout that we could not all have good fathers, but I would turn out soft, I ignored this and remained grateful for such a gentle person. My father never had any friends outside of our family, and other men would go and sit and drink chai and talk rubbish; he just worked and came home and spent time with us. He would play football in our garden on the weekends, and he would go in the goal he had built us, it was almost impossible to score a goal past this huge man. My brothers and I worked out a method of distracting him, to get him out from the goal and then a quick pass to me and we scored. My father would laugh loudly and say we were ganging up on him, I was very grateful for the time he spent with us.

My mother was a bit stricter with us, she would be the one who would tell us off, but neither her or my father ever struck any of us as a punishment, this is the same approach I have applied to my children. My dad's brother would often visit with his children, and these were great days as both my mother and my uncle's wife would prepare an area outside and some wonderful food. We were allowed just to play, yes it was football again, but I loved the game so much when I was a child, although I do not bother with it anymore. When we were called for food, it was an incredible sight, so many colours, watermelon cut so neatly and different types of rice, fresh bread and meat, we were always hungry after running around. I can still see the garden, the family around me and the good times when my father would see his brother, and we saw our cousins. The food was just the best, and my mother would sit proudly, watching everyone silent and just eating, she seemed to take great comfort from seeing the family enjoying the moment. In Iraq, the family is the most important thing only below god, they are god's gift to us, and I am very grateful to him for my family. My school time was less enjoyable, and my grades were

never that good, I found it boring and just sat looking out of the window wishing I was running around. I think the local schools were very poor even under the last regime, they were badly funded and had very little equipment, or maybe this was just my school that I went to. I had no real interest at that time on studying, but I did focus on the English teaching side as I knew that was worth doing. For some reason, it seemed to be easy for me, I would start talking away in English at our meals, and everyone would look at me strangely. I know I was grinning at everyone as they did not have any idea what I was saying, my father would smile softly and ask why I wanted to speak English, I just said that it might be helpful one day, not knowing back then how right I would be for once. I had no plans to go beyond college when I was in my teenage years, I wanted to work with my father and start to earn some money and one day purchase a car. We never had a car, and I could see people in theirs driving around, and we just had to walk everywhere, and I mean everywhere. My father walked into the site every morning that was some distance on many occasions, but it helped him keep fit, and well he always said. He seemed happy with my plan, although my mother was saying I should go onto university and learn something more before starting work, for me, I just could not face the idea of years in school that I would be volunteering for. This was what I did, I left school at fifteen and started to go and help my father, seemed like a good idea and then I quickly realised how had this type of work was. I was skinny as a child and lifting the heavy stones and equipment, and cement bags were very hard, I would watch as my father just throw these things over his shoulder without breaking a bit of sweat. I would take a lot longer to try and move things into a position and had a sore back every day, and my mother would lecture me that this was why she wanted me to go to study more, use my brain and not my back. I think that my parents had planned this together, to let me try it and then realise how hard it was. It only raised the respect I had for my father; he would do this every day for us and never once complained then spent time with us playing, what an amazing man he is.

I gave up working on the building sites, the summer heat and backbreaking work were just too much for me, and I had to finally agree with my mother that I needed to use my mind and not my hands. I joined back up and went to college, and found it much better

than school was before, people were more looking to discuss things and not just read from books and fill out answer sheets. I was learning to be interested in the mechanical side; it was fascinating and learning how machines worked. My teacher would encourage me to take more books home and read them. My mother was amazed when she found me in my room reading, shouting to my father that I must be sick as I am reading without being told to do so. She just seemed to be very happy that I had made this choice to continue in my education, she was of course right in what she had said before, but I had to learn the hard way. I was successful in college and got good grades and enough to get a place in Basra university studying mechanical engineering. It was great as I went with my friend Ali who I would later work for as he got a job with a Kuwait operator company that took on a field here in Iraq. It makes me laugh that he calls me nowadays and tells me what to do as the contractor, I have to remind him all the time that I helped him with his university work, he can be hot-headed sometimes, and this normally calms him down. I passed my degree no problem and enjoyed this course and everything I learned during it and the friends I made that I still speak with today, yes my mother was right".

Moving on from this part of the observation E was asked about the time he spent under Saddam. He had seen the change from before and then into the war and the insurgency that followed. It would be interesting to see if the theme of support or even acceptance continued, did his opinions vary or support the other discussion from the participants. It was also interesting to understand how E had secured work and how the path led him into the current high-profile position he held.

"E thank you for all your time so far, you sounded like your childhood was fun and something you look back on fondly, just changing the topic slightly I wanted to talk about time under Saddam Hussein (His face straightened). I ask this as part of the research is the post-conflict element; I need to look back to before this started and then follow it through from those who lived through this. By looking at this, I can consider how to propose improvements, the road map I mentioned before, what gaps you saw at the end and what would need to change if we could rewind history?".

"Sure Gary, I know we would get onto this part at some point, and I am glad we are in my office to discuss this as people get very sensitive when Saddam's name is brought up. They seem to worry that by being honest they may attract negativity, like it is shameful to mention his name, like the guy from Harry Potter, what was he called?"

"Do you mean Voldemort?"

"(Clapping his hands together loudly) yes that is the one, the name no one should say, a part of the past people want to talk about but dare not to. He was here, and we lived under his power for a long time, my father obviously for longer than me, but I do not see why it is a topic that we as Iraqis cannot discuss. I had no issues when he was in power; things were just as they were; we were used to it and saw no difference. It was not like he had people walking around beating everyone; we just accepted his rules and knew there was the punishment if they were broken. I am almost as bad as others as I am only ok to talk about him with the office door closed, I am asking myself why I fall in with everyone else on this man's history. He did do some bad things to the Kurds in the north, but to a simple family like ours, who were we to question such decisions, for us, we had what we needed, and it was a safer place back then. I do not think things were bad under him, and after all these years I think things are now much worse. The war was a scary time for my family, we could hear the bombings and as they moved closer to the fighting that was happening in the distance. My father told us to accept Gods will, and this would be the result, and if we were to change leaders, then this was his will and would happen. We obeyed his words and money started to get very low as he had to stop going to work as building work had stopped with the fighting and people were fleeing, where could we go, nowhere so we just stayed at home, and my father would go and do some jobs for people to get money and some food. I have never been as hungry as I was during that time, we had to share small amounts of food with us all, and I would give most of mine to my younger brothers as they looked thin and scared, I thought that this is what my father would do if he were me. He always taught us the right way to do things, and I felt pleased that by sacrificing my needs for my family, then God would look fondly upon me.

My father told us he had seen the Iraqi army leaving Basra and heading north; I felt like they had abandoned us and left us to the will of the invaders. The fighting just stopped then, and we just waited to see what would happen, the bombings stopped, and it just went quiet, we heard trucks and heavy vehicles moving around outside, my father forbids us from looking out and seeing what was happening. The soldiers came, and we opened the gates, there were many of them in strange uniforms, and the leader was speaking English to my father, who was replying in Arabic. I started to talk in English, I was a little behind as it had been a while, but the soldier smiled when I started to say things. My father put his hand on my shoulder as I translated for him and the soldier; I felt proud that I could do this as a young man; I felt important. The talk was just about what was happening, and that they said the city was safe for people but asked if we could stay at home until they had settled everything down, the soldier said people were looting things, and this was a problem for them. He told us where food would be given out and what time this would happen, and my father was happy when I told him this information, we had almost run out of food by this time. Things were quiet for a while, and my father still could not get back to work so I went and asked if I could be a translator for the British army, they had some Iraqi guys there doing this and thought it would provide some money for the family. I did some interviews with people who were British but spoke Arabic. They had a funny accent when they spoke in Arabic and used some very odd words and none of the terms we use here in Iraq. You can even tell where someone comes from in Iraq as they have an accent, such as Basra people sound different to those from Baghdad. I got a job, and as I was young they asked me to work at the base and do some translating with anyone that came to the base, they gave me some uniform to wear, I felt like I was a soldier. The work was easy, just saying what people wanted, and almost every person was asking for food, work or money from the soldiers, everyone was the same here and had the same needs. It paid good money, and this helped my family during this time, my mother was not so happy as she was worried about me working with the soldiers in case it was dangerous. Again, she was right as things started to get bad after a time, the base would be shot at, rockets would come in and even grenades over the wall.

I started to get scared going into work and stopped wearing the uniform they had given me when I was coming and going from work, they gave us a mask to wear to hide our faces, and I knew this was getting worse now. I stayed for a while, but one evening two men came to our home and warned my father that his son was supporting the invaders, helping them take everything from Iraq. He was calm with them and tried to say it was just for money for food, but they said it was dirty money and should be burnt. I was in my room and could hear the men shouting and my father talking back calmly to them, they sounded crazy saying we were going against the will of God and would be punished. They said at the end that if I went to work, they would consider me as one of the soldiers and their wrath would be upon my family and me. I left the job, I had no choice as I could not let people hurt my family just for some money and that was it for us for a while, we had saved enough to get by for a few months if we were careful with the money. Outside things just went worse, and fighting and explosions happened every day, I was glad at that point I had left as many translators were being killed at home or when they were with the army, it was sad as they were killing their people. They wanted them to leave, but we worried what would happen if they did go, we would be left under these crazy men with guns, it would be much worse. This was our reality for a long time, my father got some work building some of the new buildings that the foreigners had paid for, but he always got destroyed by the fighters, he would just hold his shoulders up and say that they had to start again. This was a bad time in my life and only got better when things started to calm, and I got a phone call from my friend Ali, he had got a job with an oil company that was working in Basra fields, and his father had managed to get him a job. He said he was asked for recommendations for one more Iraqi who could do engineering and said it could only be me. His father was a man who was very well placed in the tribe we belonged to, and it did not surprise me that this had happened.

Ali had always had things and opportunities that his father created for him; I am not speaking badly of him just that is the truth. I went to the base where Ali had told me to go, and he met me at the gate, and I got searched by the security teams there, we walked, and he told me just to be calm, and the guys who would interview me were friendly. I went into a large office with small windows, they had put sandbags everywhere in this base,

and it was like some sort of bunker that they lived in, surrounded by sharp wire and high walls, like an army base. The two men were from Canada and asked me about my degree and skills and where I learned to speak English, I had plenty of practice when I worked for the army, so my English had got much better. They said they needed some trainee engineers for a project they were about to start and that I would have three months to prove myself as hard-working and reliable. I did that, and the money was perfect for a trainee as well, just going out to the wells that had been there before the war and following the guidance of the expat leader, hold this like that, push this that way, it was easy. I asked many questions as I wanted to learn more about it and the leader would take time to explain things to me, he was Spanish and had a bizarre accent that made his English difficult to understand.

After one year I was made a full engineer and got a pay rise, that was good as I was to be married by that time to a woman that my family had agreed for me to marry with. I would need the extra money when my wife moved into our family home, and this was good times that I was much happier with. I kept working and got to supervisor after two years, and then when things got bad in the oil industry, they looked to promote more Iraqis. I had been in many meetings talking through well diagrams and operations, and my manager asked me if I wanted to be trained to become a manager? I said yes straight away and found out they had selected me to train as an operations manager outside of my product line. I would be working under the guidance of the two Canadian operations managers who were back to back[36]. The whole process took three years before I got to full operations manager, it offered the company a big saving as it is only me now and not two people on big salaries and flights every four weeks. I do not think I was trained well for the job, and it was because I had good contacts in some operator companies from my university days, they saw me as useful for this. The two guys never showed me how to do the job, and I was a deputy but never allowed to sign things off without them also signing it, seemed pointless when I look back. It was only when they moved on that I was given the full position and authority to spend money, and that sort of thing, it is a high

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[36] Two people working in a rotation on a back to back basis.

position with much responsibility. I have to meet with lots of clients and get a lot of emails and calls all the time, and this is not a good part of the job".

It led into the focus area of nationalisation and how E felt it had worked for him and what he would change based on his experiences, in such as senior position it provided an excellent sounding board to compare to the others.

"There is no nationalisation here, not in any company and not for a long time have Iraqis been allowed to lead things like I am doing now. It fell apart after the war with the fighting, and the corruption was terrible in the police and government places. I think companies only employ you in a pretend position, they say you are the manager but then double-check everything you are doing, and lots of people report things back to the head office. The people there just believe what they are told, they just do not trust our people with things, and that means that they just pretend to have nationalisation. The government shouts about it all the time and tries to force more Iraqis into companies, but we have no training available to do the work. They have started training in universities, and we take many graduates, but they see no real promotion chances and leave for other jobs. I have to start these courses and welcome the people applying for jobs straight from university, I see hope in their eyes, and this goes away after very quickly when they learn very little and stay in the trainee position. They have the idea but do not plan the training in any way, and this fails the people who need the work, the government cannot focus long enough with all the problems they have. I do not think this will get better for a long time here in Iraq as it has so many social problems and the roads are in bad states and power still goes off, we have no structure to our society. The country is in such a bad way, and even with all the oil we have things have not got better for the people, it is frustrating as money never seems to go where it is needed. I do not see that nationalisation will ever reach here fully like in other countries such as Britain, why can we as the people not run things as you do in your country".

Figure 4.7 – The rush hour in Basra city (Researcher, 2017).

Towards the end of the research, E was dismissed from the company on charges of corruption. He had become embroiled in an internal feud with A, and this consumed them both. E seemed more focussed on this fight than A was, it was difficult to pinpoint what the source of the fight was. The researcher was told by several people; it was a tribal issue that had spilt into the workplace. They were competing for power, E as the operations manager and A as the base manager. A was junior to E 's position but refused to follow his direction. He felt he was socially senior to E. This infuriated E who then became immersed in a battle and did his utmost to have A removed from the company, reporting him to the local police on many occasions. It amazed the researcher to watch the local police officers attend the base and speak with them both, and then take A away to the police station for a few days. He would come back smiling at E as if taunting him and then lodge an accusation that would see E go to jail for a week. The police seemed

to accept being used as a pawn in this game. The researcher stayed outside of this but observed it unfolding and even heard from other participants that they had been asked to take sides. They told of how the police were paid by both of them to come and scare them, the more they paid, the longer they would hold them. Fuel deliveries would be stopped until E was heard to beg A to fix it and get the fuel to the base, A would make a call and the fuel would appear within the same day. It impacted on their involvement with the research as it was drawing to a close. Having only just touched upon the nationalisation part with E, he refused to support unless the researcher supported him and not A. This continued until a report was lodged by an unknown source to the head office in Houston, with evidence of corruption by E. This was to be his downfall, and he was dismissed from the company. A followed him shortly afterwards, the feud came to an end but not by any form of intervention or planning. None of the expatriate management would step in and halt this, the only one who did early on in the fight suddenly was refused entry when flying into Basra airport by the head of immigration. Unclear who could have requested this, but it was clear that one of them had some considerable connections that reached into government officials.

This fact was then a scare tactic for the other expatriates who just stood to the side, watching them battle each other. E still lives locally in Basra and has not secured another job and after leaving the company. It hints towards who really had the connections; in reality, he claims to this day that he is not corrupt and was framed. The researcher does not conclude that aspect as to do so would be highly unethical; it does, however, demonstrate that tribal friction and social positioning work in reverse to organisational hierarchy. It can have a lower-ranked member of the tribe unable to direct someone in work whom he is senior. It does present a tricky situation for anyone and is not unique to the oil industry in Iraq. Demonstrating that social norms and practices will be brought into the workplace and applied as required; this goes against the internal structures of any international company. The company removed the position from the organisational chart when E left, they no longer have a central operations manager, suggesting the managers were keen to avoid any potential repeat of the actions and events that had occurred. This

sad observation did concern the researcher, but it provided data that was unexpected and could be of value in the critical analysis in the next chapter.

4.13 The youthful engineer – Participant F

The final participant was F, who was a younger Iraqi male aged 27 years old who has lived in Australia for several years and holds a residency visa but chooses to remain in Iraq. He is on his second marriage to an Iraqi woman, and they have just had their first child together. F was the least engaged in the research and was very hard to locate and speak with or observe other than on a few occasions, and he became more distant when he remarried last year. He is friends with B, and he did step in to try to get more engagement from F but with little effect. More of an outline will be provided on F on observations during the research, rather than the detailed approach adopted previously.

F was born and brought up in Basra, son of an engineer and teacher, his mother being the teacher and youngest of the three boys they had in the family. F is six-foot-tall and at the start of the research had a very athletic build, being observed doing multiple pull-ups in the company gym. He has a narrow face with a well-kept goatee beard; and a thick head of jet black hair that started to show some greying towards the end of the research. His physical appearance went from very youthful and healthy to an almost middle-aged look, and he constantly looked tired at the end of the three years. He had a positive and energetic personality that made him fun to be around, and he had a good-sized group of friends, attracted by his positive manner. His manner changed in the last year of the research, and he became more stressed and distant, negativity started to make regular appearances with F. It is hard to pinpoint what caused the changes in his personality and appearance, but it was very noticeable.

The F family moved to Australia just before the war broke out, what application they made was a topic F would make a large effort to avoid delving into, possibly sensing some shame for some reason only he can relate. He grew up mainly in Australia and attended educational institutions there, gaining a Bachelor of Science and a master's in

engineering. He married an Australian woman that he met at university and they had a boy before the relationship broke down, he said it was due to being very incompatible as their cultures were so different. He places the blame for the relationship breakdown firmly at the door of his ex-wife, stating she was uncontrollable and refused to agree with him from the moment they were married. His parents had not approved of the choice and wanted him to return to Iraq when things were safer and marry an Iraqi woman from the tribe. He argued that the society was free in Australia, strange to say when the entire family has since returned to Iraq. He rarely spoke about his relationship with his ex-wife and seemed to harbour much resentment towards her, and he has no contact with his son in Australia at any time. He was absent from Iraq since he was a young child and had no recollection of the time before only a rough overview of his home in Basra that was retained when they moved. He disengaged from the country and seemed to remain very attached to his roots, even from such a long way away. His entry into the oil industry was from university and into a graduate scheme in Australia. When his marriage fell apart, he sought to move back to Iraq as his parent were also very unsettled there. He had joined an international company that had operations in Iraq and closer to his home, so he put in for a transfer to the drilling side. The company quickly accepted this, and as an Iraqi national, he could enter without any requirement for a visa. The family returned to Iraq after the American forces had left Iraq, to a country of which he had only distant memories but also a longing to belong. He joined his parents in the family home in central Basra and quickly agreed to marry a local woman as his parents wished him to marry now he was in his twenties.

The researcher linked with F when they worked on a joint project with Shell, F was the engineer for the project. As F was fluent in English, it provided opportunities to cover these areas before he was invited to take part in the research. He initially agreed but as stated has withdrawn considerably as his life changes in the background. Watching F on the well site for a high-profile client it was evident he was highly professional, trusted to manage the on-site running of the services and sit in the client's base offices every day, live with them and represent the company. He showed a willingness to push himself and impress the client's staff who would then refuse to have him assigned to any other project

than theirs. The researcher would sit and watch him present the progress to the experienced audience and answer technical and project management questions; even as a young man he was impressive to watch in a working environment. His project manager became reliant on him and the relationships he had forged with the clients; he made the project a success and remains there now. A Chinese company now operates the field, and this he says is much more challenging to manage.

It was only recently towards the closing of the research that F took some time on the phone to chat with the researcher and catch up on his life and how he viewed things. He spoke excitedly of the political changes occurring relating he had attended Baghdad and took part in the protests with many of his friends.

"I went there protesting about the American influences and companies that were running Iraq, the corruption in the government, and it was exciting as we fought against the police. They fired tear gas at us all and bullets and two friends were killed, but it is worth fighting for a new Iraq. I took all my leave and told my wife I was leaving, and she accepted my will, and we all went together to join this cause, rid us of the world so we can be our own country our own Iraq. We won I think as the prime minister left office and we have since rejected the new one they wanted to offer us all, the police are not able to go against the full will of the people, they have killed many of us, but we have more to offer".

Figure 4.8 – Basra coffee shop (Researcher, 2017).

He sounded almost militant on the phone, and the researcher could feel the pride he felt telling him of his stories of political battle, the worth of the cause as he saw it. It seemed lost on him that he was demonstrating for the removal of American companies such as the one the employed him, he pushed back on this when it was touched upon by the researcher. "I do not mean this company, I mean the others, they should leave, but not my company". It was challenging to offer clarity to the mind of someone who saw himself on a cause that may ultimately render himself unemployed. It simply did not register with F that he was also campaigning for his social demise and self-inflicted move toward poverty. The option to protest seemed a development for the country and had only been seen at a local level previously during the research. This movement caught the gaze of the country, and they protested everywhere, causing locations to close. What he wanted being understandable, less corruption, more jobs and better social services and roads without holes, it is fair and reasonable for a country that has just started to introduce social taxation on people in employment. They want something for the money they pay in the new and strange world of taxation, something that had never been experienced by the

Iraqi people before but followed fully by the international employers there. The protest had gained a large momentum and influence until the start of COVID-19, they stopped overnight, swearing to return once it was gone. F continues to work hard, sending emails at 1 am, showing he has some serious commitment to his work, arguing against earlier reasons local nationals cannot progress in international companies. F has been exposed to western life and understands it more than the other participants, and he knows what international means and how the companies need to operate. He has enormous potential, but from an observer view, he is being drawn back to his roots, tempted to fall away from the life experience he has. He has embraced his life back in Iraq and has no plans to return to Australia, seeming to hate this side of his earlier life. He wants to be an Iraqi in Iraq, and this is something he can be proud of standing up for, it is likely he will be a senior manager in the future and only then his impact can be truly measured.

4.14 The impact of COVID-19 and the national workforce

The findings chapter would not be complete if there were no mention of this aspect, although it is not unique to the country as it impacted the world and all developed nations. It did offer an opportunity to observe how the local workers reacted when all, but a few expatriates remained in-country. When the notification that the last flights were leaving Basra, the researcher considered if it was time to return home, the medical support was limited. The local hospitals were in a terrible condition, a reflection of years of under-funding. It was evident that they would not have the right type or volume of medical equipment required to manage an outbreak. The researcher decided to remain in-country when the others left, only two expatriates remained in Iraq for the company when the last flight left Basra. It was a calculated risk to take but to be able to observe how the business would run when the expatriates bar a few left it was an onetime opportunity to bring the research to a close in a significant manner. The operators also moved international staff back to their home locations, and within a short period, the country was alone, awaiting the inevitable shout of a confirmed case. The national workforce was left to run the operations and maintain a business until after the virus was defeated. It was amazing to observe a culture that had embedded closeness in physical touching in every greeting

desperately try to change and stop what was essentially in their nature to do on meeting each other. Social distancing was abnormal to them; at meals, they would want to gather closer and talk of the day's events. They did apply this after a short time, it was a struggle for them, but they only seemed to understand how serious the situation was when the government closed the country into lockdown. The army arrived and when their families told them this, only then did it seem to register, and habits changed. It will be sometime before people return even to the traditional handshake.

The operational delivery did continue, and the Iraqi staff serviced the client's requirements despite the challenges that this situation had created, they seemed to just focus on creating revenue for the company and keep their salaries coming in. The Iraqi supervisors were impressive and rose to the challenge admirably; they had daily calls with the expatriate managers. However, they would often remark how they had left and were happy to check-in from the comfort of their own home. They recognised that people had fled, abandoned them doubting the country's ability to look after them if it reached the gates of the base. It will take some time for this to be forgiven by the locals, and they consider loyalty as a core part of their social requirements, sadly many of the expatriates have lost face during this pandemic. C and D also remained behind during the pandemic and did not return to Egypt; they both said they could not just leave everyone here and hope for the best. It was leadership in action, and they felt a duty to stay and lead from the front, to move around and reassure people that things would be fine, D took the mantle of leading the location and was impressive in his calm and measured approach to every scare that occurred. He was observed in the middle of a large group who were ready to shove a local out of the base as he had started coughing. D calmed them down and probably saved the employee from some very rough treatment. "They go back to pack mentality when they are scared Gary", he would say and of course prompted a question on what he meant. "I say this as people will group, and when fear drives them, they will listen to the strongest person there, they will follow what is said no matter how ridiculous this action may be. They lose all common sense; this was what we discussed before. They have a deep-rooted part of them as people that react and do not think things through, and it will take many years before this mentality changes". He walked with the

researcher waving to people and stopping to reassure them that the man who was coughing was not a threat, it had got around the base within minutes, the power of the local communication methods. "They just hear what is said, and it changes as it passes from person to person, by the end guy it has so many inaccuracies it is ridiculous. They asked us to spray people coming in with chemicals, to kill the virus, what sort of question is this to ask, we will blind people and create more problems".

He was the measure of calmness that gave peace to his people in the base, the rumours halted by the direct intervention of D, no delegation he went and did it all himself. When this occurred on several occasions, the reaction was always similar, get the person out, throw them in the street in the middle of the night. These were people from Basra that they worked with every day, now suddenly they were happy to throw them out, cast them away from the base to fend for themselves. It was an awaking for the researcher who saw how quickly fear could create irrational behaviour and groups will drive forward to get their will delivered. The international part simply evaporated in an instant, and colleagues were under threat if suspected of having the virus. People would be scared to cough and sneeze, and even sore throats became suspicious, no matter how many times they were informed about how to treat people. The virus became a threat, and if it revealed itself in a friend then that friend became an enemy, it was a frightening experience to watch from the side as D fought to regain control, taking time but he got there every time thankfully.

The pandemic showed that Iraqi nationals could indeed step up and keep the business going, they kept working to help the company survive, the spectacular price drop of oil aggravated this due to lack of demand. They kept going, never asking for anything more than their salaries and to keep their jobs, and this was impressive to observe. The only aspect that brought a question of doubt was the absence of the international feel and employee support when things went wrong, the approach shown by the same hard-working Iraqis when they thought someone had the virus. It was akin to watching an ancient witch-hunt unfold, how would the company view this type of conduct in the eyes of a global organisation on the world stage. The thought materialised on how they might react if one of the few expatriates caught the virus, would they also look to cast that person

out of the base, the security guards were after all Iraqi as well. It was a high-risk situation, and while they worked well and secured the future of the company in Iraq, there were elements of the behaviours that showed cultural trends, patterns of behaviour. Even the Human Resources lead who was Iraqi started to accuse people who had recently travelled to Iran of having the virus. Requesting them to get a blood test and prove it, the guardians of fairness had also descended into a different approach, driven by fear that was evident on his face. It was the closing part of the research, it added some further depth and yes it showed the capability of the national workforce, but some consideration on upholding the values and standards that make an organisation genuinely international.

4.15 Conclusion

This chapter followed the lives of a group of Iraqi participants. It gave an insight into experiences and opinions on the location, as it transitioned out conflict and towards a national workforce. The researcher developed some skills as part of the observations and met challenges that were unplanned and unexpected. The stories were scary, heart-warming and robust, involving every emotion known placed within the many conversations that resulted in the text before this section. The ability of some nationals seems to exceed others, and backgrounds differ, yet the results are not prescriptive of the class level each person finds themselves born. It could be argued as being the same as any country, and people lift themselves out of poverty, humble beginnings into successful careers. While this is accepted as a reflection of many societies, there are factors within a post-conflict location that add additional complexity to the opportunities available. Those with influential parents, connections can reach in with ease in the unstable areas of Iraq, via officials who think nothing of enforcing their will on companies to hire whom they demand. They degrade the ethics of well-developed companies and create compliance issues that are justified as part of doing business in Iraq. People expect fairness in employment, but the social construction allows for adaptation to that fairness, where some get in because of whom they know.

In contrast, others stumble upon opportunities or walk the streets looking for that start. It is very unbalanced within their society, what is accepted and what is right within their

culture seems to clash heads with the ethical expectations and demands of an established international organisation. This chapter provided a vast amount of data for the reader in preparation for the next chapter. The next chapter provides a proposed sustainable nationalisation model, derived out of the historical learnings from this location and its people.

5 Chapter 5: Discussion and findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will take the lessons learnt and extracted from all the research participants and merge it with the broader research work; considering data reviewed within the literature review. This research will conduct a critical analysis of the data and look for trends that can then be utilised within the proposed sustainable model for nationalisation. The research always looked to demonstrate its contribution, which is paralleled by the unique nature of the research study. It is where the analysis will start, and the arguments will be tabled. The absence of planning in any post-conflict country rich in natural resource, the governments dealing with the conflict cannot be relied upon or even expected to manage this critical part of a country's transition. The approach to this chapter will be to table four key topics, each one having further sub-topics that can then be critically discussed and compared to the findings. It is detailed in table 5.0, where each focus areas and subsequent breakdown is detailed. These areas are mutually supportive of the research aims and objectives to validate full delivery of them as well as the production of the model or roadmap. It provides a second level of contribution to knowledge. The model will be based upon the findings from the observations, how the situation evolved. It will also consider separate broader findings from non-conflict locations where nationalisation has continued to struggle being implemented.

The data obtained from the years of fieldwork provides real and tangible opportunities to review the potential gaps. What has not worked in stable locations such as Qatar and when conflict and instability are added, it provides a higher rate of failure likelihood. It can be argued as fueling social discontent. It is creating a breakdown of the minimal grasp held on structure and normality that Iraq has even after all the years since the insurgency ended. Expatriates still need to travel in armoured vehicles under private armed security; elements of the Iraqi society still pose a threat to expatriates and internally to themselves. The research seeks to understand what aspects of culture and history may have created or contributed to these issues. Then helps to plan and apply a more structured approach to nationalisation. It feeds directly back into the society, offering income, meeting the most

basic of needs and helping to retain a desire for moving forward. It contributes towards moving away from chaos, which hangs permanently in the shadow of Iraq. If the national workforce can be developed to conduct business in a manner that increases confidence for international companies. Resisting internal social pressure on traditional methods of transacting business agreements, then the opportunity exists. The chapter seeks to identify and suggest opportunities for learning and progression.

5.2 The critical focus areas

Figure 5.1 breaks the discussion into smaller focus areas that can then be considered in more detail. The areas are mutually supportive of the research aims and objectives and create an opportunity to validate where and if they were achieved.

The topics/themes and sub-topics/themes are all elements that have been shown within the data collection throughout the research project; any trends identified that helped to present opportunities for learning. It is the unique aspect of this research as it bundles together some social challenges that have plagued other middle eastern societies and post-conflict countries. Furthermore, conflict creates considerable challenges for the country, including the breakdown of social structures. It results in the removal of all systems, government agencies, bringing reality to the forefront of this research. There is little argument that people in a desperate position will seek aid from those that can offer it; in this case, the opportunity for employment, the chance to provide for their families. Families in Iraq all work as a linked unit, feeding the earnings into a central fund. Somewhat alien to westerners this is the accepted way of the Iraq culture. The ability of international companies to provide a source of income is critical; it supports the country in repairing damage sustained both in social structures, security and the wider society. The people of Iraq have seen war, economic desperation, corruption and daily violence; they have been caught in the middle of this and continue to remain there. The social challenges are beyond the international company's capability to resolve; there is no stated expectation that they can fix the internal issues that Iraq has. They can contribute to a more stable society, via education and financial support, delivering social content for the right reason and using structured approaches that also consider the business needs. The chapter will also explore the needs of the businesses and how conflict can occur when

different values and cultural ethics collide. It considers both sides and the delivery of a combined nationalisation model may offer a learning opportunity.

Nationalisation progress/challenges data comparison – non-post-conflict locations in the Middle East with post-conflict location; Iraq specific influences/cultural requirements / repetition of conflict internal and external	Qatar
	KSA
	UAE
	Iraq
	Religion
	Education
	Connections and social links
	Security/stability
Identification of key requirements for growth of nationalisation (Post-conflict)	Gaps identified
	Post-conflict influence/blockers
	Specific cultural considerations
	Areas of cultural conflict international/Iraqi
Identified gaps in nationalisation approaches/planning for a post-conflict country	The bridges required
	The preparation demands
	Approach and concept of operations
	Delivery and management

Figure 5.1 – Topic/theme focus breakdown and planning approach.

The topics will continue to employ a narrative analysis approach as detailed in chapter three, and it will take the stories from the previous chapters and apply them to a critical approach (Franzosi, 1998). The chapter will extract meaning from the narratives to develop the discussion. The approach was constructed to provide structure, so the reflection and analysis followed a logical path while considering the findings of the literature review. The focus will be on decoding meanings and learnings from the stories told; following the advice of Josselson (2004), to consider the reflexivity of the researcher. To respect the contribution of the research participants, it will be a pluralistic approach, that utilises different analytic methods. It is agreed as the best approach by Riessman (2005) 'In practice, different approaches can be combined; they are not mutually exclusive

and, as with all typologies, boundaries are fuzzy' (Riessman, 2005 p.2). The responses were analysed, and some key meanings were identified and highlighted for discussion.

5.3 Theme one

Nationalisation progress/challenges data comparison – non-post-conflict locations in the Middle East with post-conflict location; Iraq specific influences/cultural requirements/repetition of conflict internal and external

The comparison locations all demonstrated a state-sponsored move toward 'Isaition'[37], where the locations governments developed progressive policies to encourage the reduction on both reliance and numbers of expatriate workers. The locations considered are all part of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and equally based on the research reviewed shared the same desire and problems in achieving them. Randeree (2009) identified some themes that linked GCC countries and expanded his research outside of the initial focus of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The core trend that was mirrored across all of them was the economic boom created from the discovery, refinement and exportation of oil reserves. It took the countries from trading camels within a tribal structure to international trading as far as Europe. This progression resulted in a lack of available and qualified labour within the countries. Keen to continue the growth the nations sought qualified and plentiful labour via other nations, thus creating a path of entry for expatriate workers. The dependency was initiated across the GCC countries, and receipt of the workers provided the labour that was qualified, willing and able to work efficiently for much longer hours than their national counterparts (McMurray, 1999).

The last available survey of the GCC countries for expatriate versus national workers was found to be at 75%, with the UAE reaching a staggering 91% of expatriates within the workforce (GLMM, 2019). The resolution by the GCC governments to reduce the numbers of expatriates and increase job opportunities for nationals within the private sector also had some clear trends. These can then be compared to Iraq and subsequently to the experiences of the research participants. The drive by the GCC countries to regain national identity by increasing nationalisation within the current workforce quotas has a

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[37] Examples are Omanization and Emiratization.

specific challenge that was identified by Randeree (2006). The absence of Arab women in the workplace reduces the opportunity to realise this by encompassing the entire availability of the human resource available. The research reflected that women in the workplace were never discussed by any of the participants; not even considered as part of the move towards nationalisation. The oil industry was the focus industry, and no women were found to be part of the workforce within the research company. It was put to each of the participants using the data provided by Randeree (2006) and Maloney (1998), who found the same issue of reduced options for women. The question will be shown that was posed by the researcher so that the reader can fully understand the context before conducting the analysis. It is a cautious approach to this topic as women are not typically discussed in work in Iraq, so it is deliberately slow and cautious for that reason. The same question was used for all of the research participants to ensure consistency.

"As part of the research, other locations were reviewed and within the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, and one thing was raised that I would like to get your thoughts and experiences on. The move towards nationalisation means that a country would work towards retaining its national identity; part of this is using all available people within the country. What are your thoughts on expanding the employment to include Iraqi women within this, therefore increasing national representation within the workforce? The answer can be specific to this industry or just your general thoughts on the wider employment market".

Participant A – (Phone discussion)

"(Pauses for some time) This is a difficult question to answer for me (requests the question is repeated, slowly) The *tradition* within Iraq is one that follows the values of our long and historical *culture*. Many of our women seek to marry and have a family when they finish their education. I know we have seen some women on the university selection courses, but none of them has been offered a job as the oil field is very *physical as a type of work*. I respect that they wish to have a career, but this is *not easy for them*. I am trying to be careful in what words I use, so you do not think badly of me as I am not against women working at all. The *traditions* just seem to expect them to look after the home and raise the family. I know of some families in both Baghdad and Basra, where

the woman has a small part-time job, such as cleaning or doing paperwork. The husbands would be angry as they would think other **men were looking at their wives** when they were in a workplace like the company has. I understand that by having women in work it means that a bigger number of Iraqis would be there, and it would be much more of a local workforce. I just think that it would **create a lot of problems** as they would be next to other men and this would not be acceptable to the husbands".

"When you say problems, what do you mean, can you give me an example of what you think may or could happen in this case please".

"I know of this from other companies; the husband has **suspected his wife of relationships with other men in her work**; this is haram and is punished by the tribe. The husbands would also worry that **being next to expats may change the women's thoughts and ways,** and then they bring this to the home, the family and our ways slowly change. There have been occasions where the wife was *thrown out in disgrace* for these things as ordered by the sheikh. This disgraces the family and can be avoided if we are careful in these things. **You have to be Iraqi to understand these things** I am meaning **without taking offence as I know western thoughts are very different".**

Breaking this down by trends, power word(s) by looking at the transcripts and finding wording that brings the discussion to life found the following key areas, each word or words will be analysed. The sentences or words will be placed in bold italics to highlight them within the selected text, and this approach will be applied throughout this chapter

Tradition: A used this word tradition within the context of his reply to the question on Iraqi women in the workplace, this word when defined by Cambridge Dictionary (2020) as:

"A belief, principle, or way of acting that people in a particular society or group have continued to follow for a long time, or all of these beliefs in a particular society or group".

The definition would go towards supporting the views of A; he relates this approach to the absence of women in the workplace as a tradition and whilst he did not term it precisely in those words, it was considered a reasonable reflection of his intent on meaning. Would this mean that women are refused access to workplaces or even the opportunity due to principle or Iraqi beliefs? Could the research consider his view as a more faithful reflection

of the current status of the Iraqi tradition? It can, of course, be argued that the researcher is not Iraqi and as such, cannot understand the opinion that A considers are reasonable. The research of Randaree (2009) and the earlier research that highlighted the absence of women and reduction of the true availability of the national human resource by Maloney (2008) would appear to argue against A's opinion. If the traditions are strictly maintained, then Iraq will find itself in the same predicament as the GGC countries. They will remove a large proportion of the available human resource that is the women of Iraq simply because it is what they have always done. It is so deeply embedded in their tradition; it becomes a block to national identity within workforce representation. Whilst this is the first of the participants, does it demonstrate a robust defence of the Iraqi traditions or is it a method of denying women similar rights to the broader world? It may be a protagonistic suggestion, but it seeks to discuss the deeper topics that may be customarily avoided. A more accurate reflection of the reality would require the expansion of research to speak with Iraqi women, and that would be a considerable challenge for a western male to undertake. Based on the traditions approach of the middle-aged Iraqi male population where A firmly resides; would the women of Iraq seek to have a career, or would they prefer to remain traditional, thus restricting the spread of national identity? The students who attended the graduate days as was explained previously did have women within the groups, around 10% of the mostly male group attending. One of the activities was to sketch your future aspirations within life, and the researcher observed that whilst the male Iraqis pinned sketches of them in a large office leading departments; the women posted sketches of themselves in works but with them holding hands with many children, demonstrating their desire to have a family. Deep meaning and analysis cannot be taken from this short example. However, it does show that the few women that attended and not selected for graduate schemes had a traditional view of having a family. The question would be is that what they want or is it what they are traditionally told they will have as a future? The practice of not speaking to women without a male escort from the family stopped the researcher from asking the women for their thoughts on this matter.

Additionally, it is not accepted for non-Iraqi males to speak with women. It can be argued that based on the feedback of participant A that this will continue to remain in place. Regardless of the broader more futuristic hopes for national identity via workforce

representation. It is a trend that aligns with GCC countries that are not moving out of conflict, and it can be argued as being further ahead in social and economic development than Iraq is. They have the same restrictions on women in their countries, and it remains as a blocker to increased nationalisation. Iraq will take some considerable time to reach their stage, and it is argued that the tradition will likely remain at that point. The speed with which traditions change may be faster today due to the internet, but as Inglehart and Baker (2000) some sections of societies persist in retaining traditional values.

Culture: It was a keyword that A used in the conversation and with some support again from Cambridge dictionary (2020) it can be defined as, 'The way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time'. This definition would go towards supporting A's thoughts on workforce balance within Iraq. However, of course, would then meet the same issues that the GCC countries have further down the road. It can be argued from A's side that the customs and beliefs see the woman and the workforce representation, remain as they are as if waiting for the culture to change in the future. The other side of the argument such as Matters (2008) who links culture with poverty and inequality. That culture can result in blame being assigned to the victim(s), in this case, the Iraqi people and more specifically, the women of Iraq when considering the research of Somers (1994) who also employed a narrative analysis approach. It argued that people within a culture are on many occasions faced with two choices based on their understanding of their environment, in this case, Iraq. The research found that the individuals would be highly likely to follow the approach or action that would align with their understanding of the personal narrative. The alternative action would be argued as more rational to any outsider to this culture but almost untenable to the local nationals such as Iraqi woman. When applying this argument to Iraq, it would suggest that Iraqi woman would ultimately accept that the culture action choice. It would be to marry and raise a family, while the husband goes to work. The idea that they would go and seek employment and balance this with their family demands would be alien to them. It would be the cultural norm of their society or group.

Physical as a type of work: This was a set of words that A employed when seeking to explain why women would not work within the oil industry in Iraq, moving back to the physical differences between men and women. Ross (2008) researched women within

the oil industry in the broader Middle East and was initially met with explanations similar to that of A. There were suggestions that the Islamic culture and a clash of civilisations occur when West meets the Middle East on this topic of women in the labour force. Ross (2008) employs the Dutch Disease model[38] (Corden and Neary, 1982), to argue that previous research failed to consider the impact of this on women within the labour force. He argues that as more men gain employment in oil areas, the income of each household can increase. It reduces the requirement for the women of the household to consider a need to seek employment. The physical side of the oil industry has seen it remain a male-dominated one. However, like Williams, Kilanski and Muller (2014) found many positions within the oil industry suit women and require fewer physical demands that A argues prevent them from entering the industry. Opportunities for scientists such as geologists and engineers provide a suitable and less defendable entry point for females into the industry. It would render the argument provided by A as debunked. However, it would still get traction based on his determination to provide multiple reasons why the representation should remain as it is.

Not easy for them: This was selected as it intrigued the researcher to delve further and analyse it more, what did A mean by not easy for them, instantly creating a group of 'them' within the discussion. The term them was considered as a significant aspect of the response, and it is considered as seeing women as a separate group from the male society within the home and industry in Iraq. It was decided that the next three could be bundled into this discussion area, 'men were looking at their wives', 'create a lot of problems' and 'suspected his wife of relationships with other men in her work'. While analysing, it became apparent to the researcher that they all had the same area of concern that A had voiced. Was it that A felt it would not be easy for women in the workplace because of the reason that other men may be looking at them? Does this suggest that women are more of an object within Iraq that is exclusive to the declared owner, the husband? Amowitz *et al*. (2004) conducted some significant research focusing on the rights of women in Southern Iraq. Putting this in some context, they found that over half of the male and female participants agreed that the husband has the right to beat

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[38] The move away from economic reliance on traded sectors such as manufacturing.

their wife should they disobey them. They also found that the majority of the participants, both male and female, agreed with the stringent dress code and argued it was appropriate for women in Iraq. There has been progression noted by Robben (2010); who found that the opportunity for women to progress to university had greatly increased since the initial invasion in 2003. It was reflected in the number of women in education alongside the men within the research group. It does, however, sound that due to the traditions, cultural norms that the wider male society is not yet ready to allow their women and mainly their wives to attend work within this industry. Possibly this could be due to the high number of male workers. There sounds like a degree of insecurity exists behind A and his male peers. Potentially fearing the gaze of other men could lead to something worse, and this would be a social disaster for their place in Iraq society. Does this fear manifest itself in both the husband and wife? Do they both worry about the difficulty it may pose to their family unit with consideration on the cultural norms of the society in which they exist? It is, of course, easy to sit on a higher level and judge this approach from a western view, but it can be argued that even the West is still working towards full equality (Haile, 2012). The West may be much further down the road than Iraq, but lessons can be learnt from Iraq's GCC neighbours on what true and meaningful nationalisation means and requires from the society that desires it. This consideration would take into account the comment made by A on 'without taking offence as I know western thoughts are very different'. It may be that A is right when he says that one would have to be Iraqi to understand. The researcher accepts he is not Iraqi; as such, may not be able to fully adjust to understand how the traditions and culture mould the current reality of a lack of female workplace representation. To put oneself into the shoes of an Iraqi male who holds traditions close and would consider throwing his wife out of their home should disgrace be brought upon them. To do otherwise would place him in a questionable position within his tribe and social groups. Then when considering the Iraqi women who are also attuned to these realities, customs and traditions. To consider how they could go about being different, wanting something different without placing themselves in danger is an impactful consideration. To analyse A's statement honestly requires consideration from all sides, without taking only one side of the argument in hand.

The final part to critically discuss is the statement of: 'Being next to expats may change the women's thoughts and ways'. Could this be bundled into some of the same areas of concern just discussed? Do men or women fear that expatriate influence may result in changing opinions and life goals? Would stories of golden shores and full equality become attractive to Iraqi women if they heard these tales when at work? Would they want to leave Iraq and seek something different? The first argument against that is that the internet provides access to the world; it offers interaction with facts, figures and other people (Fang, 2010). The external influence factor cannot be solely attributed to the expatriates within Iraq. People of Basra can look at whatever they wish, see other cultures and females in other societies. That is, of course, assuming that women have free access to the internet, devices to use and unsupervised sessions for them to review the topics of their choice. Then if they do, will they wish to look at the world outside of the country's borders, would it be an attraction for them to spend time looking at others? It cannot be answered due to the absence of a female participant group and therefore, will remain only a question to be considered. The absence of any Iraqi women from the current research location also renders any enquiry useless, somewhat of a dead end. The only female that was employed by the company was dismissed as previously discussed. It could be argued that expatriates would not seek to influence women in any way, but that would be down to the individual. It is well known to all expatriates that the researcher spoke with, that women as a topic were taboo. It would, therefore, be unlikely that any significant period would be spent speaking about non-work-related aspects should any women be present. Additionally, based on the cultural requirements of a male escort, any discussion would be under constant observation and potential intervention.

The other participants demonstrated a more open-minded approach to the inclusion of women as part of the broader push towards nationalisation, with a number reflecting on time as a necessity to reach this point.

"I think it would be good to have women involved in this industry, *they have a lot to offer* it, and many of them are *more clever than a lot of the men* we have here (laughing). *I do not know why it is the way it is and always has been;* women seem to get to point where after initial education, they are instructed to get married. They were with me in college and some in university, but they have all now been married, they seem to have

lost that drive they had when they were younger. I think we do need to *learn from other countries* and try to encourage more women to have a career here in Iraq. It is *the older men in the tribes who just will not accept this.* It may take *a few generations to get to the same point as Dubai* and realise we need them if we are to be a true nation of Iraq" (Participant B).

"Well it would bring *more ideas to the place,* we just seem to follow the same ideas here, and we do have opportunities to employ women that leave university. I know *in Erbil[39] they have a lot of female engineers* working in the product lines. I think *we are in a cycle of just doing what we have always done,* to change takes a drive. I think *with all the issues we have and continue to have in Iraq, it is just not there at the moment.* Maybe if things settle and we have less violence and corruption we can see the first female engineer start here. I would feel sorry for her as *she would be alone* maybe, so I think it would have to be more than one woman if we were to look after her properly. I think Iraq needs to settle, *for the country to understand who we are* and *what we want* before we can be a bit more modern and move away from these more *ancient traditions.* I **know** *the older men here would not like this*, but I do think a lot of it is *to do with having power over others*" (Participant C).

"Gary, *we are stuck here at the moment,* in a rut that we need to get out of, we have *an older population that is beyond reasoning with on these types of matters.* So, it sounds bad, but they need to depart this life before things can move on. They *are stuck in history,* but *they are also in positions of power* in the government, and until that changes, we will stay in this hole. When I go to Egypt, I see more women working in the industry, not as many as there should be, but I see progress. I am pushing to try to get *managers to consider some of the girls* that come on the graduate selections. They just *do not want to be the first,* so we end up in a stalemate. We have to create a *safe place* for women if they come to work here, where they do not get *pressure from their families* when they go home. They can make a choice they want rather than *what people around them want them to do*. I see that women just move away from work after university and accept *this traditional path into marriage*; this is their *parents teaching*

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[39] Capital of Kurdistan (North Iraq).

them this and expecting it of them. That goes back to what I said earlier, ***we need new people to be able to change***, or the same lessons and expectations ***just repeat***, and it never breaks out or changes" (Participant D).

"For me yes this is part of full nationalisation and can understand where that research has a point, I am sad to admit that ***I cannot see that there will be a different path for Iraq***. We will find *ourselves in **the same position*** if we ever reach that stage the same as those countries. I am **not defending the culture**, but it is just **not ready for this yet,** we have some areas where the woman is more powerful than before such as I see women or young **women in Basra not wearing headscarves.** This was something ***I never saw before,*** and I think it is great to see them making a choice, it ***must be difficult*** as people stare at them in public. I tell you this, so you can consider how they would then ***be viewed in the workplace.*** They would ***be stared at*** and their ***fathers and husbands***, if they have them, would be ***angry with this***. If they are ***different too much, they may not get accepted*** by the man's family for a wife as to be different means they are ***judged in our society***. They all end up married as that is ***the way things are here***, but the man's family decide if they are ***suitable for their son*** before it is agreed. Most families that I know ***would not accept a woman who does not dress as they would expect here in Basra***. Imagine if they were then also found to be ***working with other men in this industry***, they would ***never be accepted***. It *will change at some point* I would think, we have to change as things always do, but we in our ***culture respect the wishes of our elders*** and they would just ***not think this was correct***" (Participant E).

"I have tried to be with a western woman, you know about this Gary, I found it difficult for these reasons as she wanted to work and ***have a career even when our child was born***. Maybe it is my issue, but I just found this ***difficult to accept***, even though I had lived there for many years, it was different from ***the way my father had taught me***. I can see why women here in Iraq would want to work, to have a career and maybe when they are younger it would be fine. However, when a family starts, it would be ***difficult for both parents to work***, we would have to rely on our parents to look after the children. ***My father is very against this***, and we left Australia for these reasons, ***he would not accept this***. I will have to ***decide at some point what I teach my children***; we are now expecting our second child (researcher congratulates F). Thank you, yes, I think I will have to think

218

this over, but ***I would never disobey my father's wishes on how we keep with traditions***". (Participant F).

This first part of the discussion provided a very topical area, very much something that is often not discussed with expatriates that do not understand Iraq and its society. The literature review identified that there is more than just a social need to consider women within the local oil and gas industry; there is a broader national identity driver that will have to be faced at some point (Randeree, 2009). The remainder of the research group seemed open to broader considerations of the need to expand the reach of nationalisation beyond male Iraqis from Basra. Otherwise, they will reach the same point as other neighbouring countries. Traditions, culture and socially accepted norms that are retained in society by the older relatives are not ready to move on. Nor are the middle-aged groups ready to force the issue beyond the control of the elders. The older generation extends a surreal grip over the rest of the social groups, in a manner that they seem almost scared to challenge. When considering the status of women within the Basra society, there may be suggestions that this is part of the Islamic way of life and will never align with the expectations of western thinkers.

"The real fault line between the West and Islam concerns gender equality and sexual liberalisation. In other words, the values separating the two cultures have much more to do with eros than demos. As younger generations in the West have gradually become more liberal on these issues, Muslim nations have remained the most traditional societies in the world" (Inglehart and Norris, 2003 p.69).

It argues that the Islamic societies have a long-standing approach of retaining their traditions such as those provided by A. There seems a desire to challenge them by the other participants, but this ceases when the reality of what this could require is considered. That would suggest that Iraq will continue along with this approach and reach the same point as the other countries. According to Randeree (2009), it means that Iraq is the same as the UAE and may never reach the goal of Iraqisation or Emiratisation. The national representation would be made up mainly of men, and this would mean that Iraq is currently moving towards a failed goal of perceived rather than true nationalisation of the workforce.

5.4 Theme two

Identification of key requirements for growth of nationalisation (Post-conflict)

This section will utilise the previous chapter and analyse the gaps that the participants ague as being present and then consider some broader research This focusses on the post-conflict impact that creates the differentiator for Iraq when compared to other GCC countries. The first thing to consider is how they perceived the intention of the coalition forces and then the impact of instability following this, and then the core focus on nationalisation. Looking at participant A and extracting some critical texts from the observations that open up the opportunity for a critical analysis. Perception of the invasion is included as it helps understand the current opinions of the individuals and how they may consider expatriates that continue to remain. Asking questions such as does A harbour resentment towards non-Iraqis?

Participant A – Conflict

"Gary, there are of course opinions on **why America came here**, we know they said Iraq had weapons that were dangerous and wanted to come and stop them being used. The reality is that I am **not a military man and had no interest** in what the government had or did not have hidden in bunkers in the desert, **why would I**?"

"The **truth** is that **America wanted to invade**; we all know that Britain would never have done this if America had not said so. The **British government are seen as puppets of the Americans**, much like how our current government are **puppets for the Iranian government. I do not dislike America**, but I **do not approve of what has happened** and how this **mess has been left for the country** to limp through. **We were a strong internal country before** this, but now we have become a land that **others seek to control**. You cannot change a country by invading it and then appointing a government and as we know this **failed, badly**".

The first text would suggest that A had no real interest in the reason that had been used to justify the invasion of Iraq, using the term that he was not a military man. It could be understood as the non-military people within Iraq found themselves with no vote on this. No input to the coalition forces on if the invasion should occur. The text also reflects the

claims that weapons of mass destruction were held within Iraq's arsenal that needed to be removed from Saddam Hussein. The two nationalities did make up the coalition that conducted the invasion America, and Britain were named by A, but with an acknowledgement of the influence of Iran within current-day Iraq. A demonstrates a dislike of the invasion without really stating direct hatred towards nationalities, remarking on the state of the country as a result of the invasion that created instability. The term 'seek to control' is worth highlighting as this could also be brought into the nationalisation aspect. Does A see international companies as part of the drive to seek to control Iraq? It is suggested that there is resentment held by A against expatriates as they are in some way viewed as part of the control. The international side provides that link back to America in most cases, and this link makes them part of the collaboration by virtue of employment and location of assignment.

Participant A - Nationalisation

"The ***companies that have come to this country have followed behind in the footsteps of the Americans and British*** (he winks at the researcher when saying this). They have entered ***a world that is new to them****,* and like all companies, they ***desire to make money and wealth*** for the big bosses. They seem to have just come ***and started with expatriates*** that have been used before by them in other parts of the Middle East. These expatriates are used to living in tough conditions but ***never really take time to understand the people or the place*** that they work in. Imagine you spend half of your year in a country, and you know nothing about it. Not even how to say hello in Arabic, and there are ***plenty like that in every company***. They come with ***one view****,* and that is to ***protect their own job***, that means they ***do not wish to pass on any knowledge to the locals***, if they (locals) cannot do it then the (their) job is safe, is their approach".

This response continues to support the earlier argument that expatriates are seen as part of the follow-up after the war. When focussing on the text 'Followed behind in the steps of the Americans and British,' it suggests that there is disdain for expatriates outside the topic of nationalisation. Expatriates and the international companies are accused by A of being a direct result of the invasion. A byproduct of it that has remained in Iraq since the war. The interesting part of his response is that the expatriates are tough and experienced

but do not seek to interact, to become more understanding of the people. It could see words such as tradition seeping back into the discussion. When coupled with the further accusation by A that expatriates also do not pass on knowledge. It is taking up a defensive position that looks to ensure employment stability through being irreplaceable. It could result in the creation of fiction within the organisation where Iraqi staff become convinced that this is the reality. It can be accepted that there will be expatriates that do take this approach and look to secure their position in this manner. That is, in many ways understandable from their perspective. It is of concern that A takes this view in a sweeping type of statement, and with his level of influence, it could see this extend to other Iraqis under his direct and indirect influence. It would result in some further blockers to progressing nationalisation and is something that any organisation who is entering a post-conflict country needs to consider. To consider how the expatriate staff are perceived, how they are prepared for this reception and direction provided to support the progress of nationalisation. It can be argued that if expatriates are tasked to approach a new location in this way, it starts the process of nationalisation on a positive footing. It reduces progression blocks via individual local national views. The timing between the conflict ending and international companies quickly entering the country has resulted in a link occurring between the forces and the companies. It suggests that a transition period needs to be considered to prevent any potential for association occurring. It can be argued in a conflict, agencies undertaking this need to consider the social and economic atmospherics to be able to advise on a planned process of entry.

Participant B - Conflict

Participant B had some alternative views that provide a balance to the analysis, for brevity sections of text have been bundled together where the researcher considers they are worth further discussion.

"I did **not think badly of the invaders** as they were saying they had come to make **our country free** and could allow us to open up to the rest of the world. I always **wanted to leave Iraq**, so I saw this as an opportunity to get that chance. To see the world and take my family somewhere nice and have the life that we saw on the American shows on the television".

"The day the British entered Basra, things were peaceful; they all walked in smiling and wearing soft hats, the Americans just seemed to go past heading to Baghdad. The British were nice, and they provided food and water to the people. They would play football with the boys, and they treated everyone well. It was ***what happened next that made me want to leave Iraq*** for good. The ***city was a war zone***; it was like living in an ***alien place*** that you could no longer recognise, I wanted to leave and take my family far away from this place, it was ***not home for us anymore***".

The invasion and move into instability have many different causes for B; with an inbuilt desire to leave Iraq for some time, the invasion was looked at positively. The word free showed that B considered himself and his family as trapped. While he was relatively positive on the Saddam Hussein regime, he remained within a carefully placed position during conversations. He was neither negative nor fully supportive of either side of the post-conflict consideration, which could mean that he was reserved and did not wish to commit to a position fully. This neural position can be observed throughout his full text in the last chapter; now, this could be considered as less utilisation from a research point of view. The researcher considered this during the analysis and argues that it can be looked at differently; his drive to leave Iraq would provide a different view. One that he was unaware allowed for analysis on his real thoughts behind the neutrality. B wanted to leave Iraq before, during and after the war. That desire shows that he holds less affection or social connection to his country and city of birth. It could, therefore, be argued that his dissatisfaction with his life could be interpreted as more negative views of the previous and current reality that is Iraq. It offers a different perspective on the findings of Inglehart and Norris (2003) that not all people within Islam seek to retain traditional values. B sought to adopt a different set of values that his peers. B has abandoned his roots to provide a different cultural setting in which to raise his children. It is an example that the broader society within Iraq may also have hidden wants and desires that they hide to avoid persecution.

Participant B - Nationalisation

"I ***do not think it was part of any nationalisation plan***; it was just being in the ***right place*** and having ***the right people****. The company offers you chances if you work hard, but **you are in with everyone else**".

"The ***Iraq government has no plan*** other than to ***demand they hire Iraqi people***, but they have ***no qualifications or experience***. Now I know I was the same, but I did start in a job I was qualified for and then moved but at a slow pace. How can a government just bring people to a company and say hire them? They often ask companies to ***hire relations of their own family***; it just shows how ***corruption is done in many different ways*** and not just with money".

Nationalisation has a less judgmental outcome from B when compared to A, and he highlights that there was and is no plan by either the companies or the Iraq government. The first set of text is a humble acknowledgement of being in with everyone else. Accepting that as a member of the society, you have no greater right to a job than others within your community. It links to the next set of text where the mention of corruption is made and how it extends beyond the act of passing of money, and also enters into the world of human resource capital. B makes some rare open criticism of a specific aspect, seeming to link with his clear disapproval of any form of corruption; mentioning the current approach of the government to increase local nationals in the workforce. The lack of a sustainable plan for increasing nationalisation does create further challenges for a country that wishes to stand on its own two feet. The approach of requesting companies to hire Iraqi males to reduce the numbers of non-Iraqi nationals operating in the country is haphazard and unsustainable. Influence from the right people within the government would likely result in people being hired into jobs where they have no skill-set. That would result in a large population of Iraqis in a low-skilled job such as administration but on greatly inflated financial packages. That then feeds into further internal social dissatisfaction where people are placed in well-paid positions based on their connections with officials. It supports the reflections of Muna (1980) who talked of the external pressures to facilitate employment in return for future favours that could be of benefit to the individual and/or the business. This research found a number of the research

participants had gained employment initially via these established routes of influence. These were openly talked about and as such, socially acceptable to them. The fact that B sees this as unethical and corrupt shows that within the deep layers of the social traditions, there are Iraqi people who wish to remove this from their culture. It again argues against the statement by Inglehart and Norris (2003). It demonstrates a broader and different desire to move away from these traditions, that B suggests creates internal friction. This friction could easily spill over into further instability as seen in the recent protests in Iraq, who were protesting against their own previously accepted traditions.

Participant C - Conflict

"Sorry going back to the time of Saddam, he was fine, and ***things just worked*** reasonably well under him*, I think he knew the people, the culture* and how to ***keep order*** in a civilised society".

"He was less happy when people started to shoot at the trucks as they had an army escort and in one week my father lost eleven trucks to crazy men. ***This part I did not understand***, I was told not to come back at this point until it calmed down. The fighters had flocked to Iraq, and the place went crazy. It was not safe to drive anywhere my father told me, they have bombs in the road, then the army shoots at you if you get too close, ***the people are surrounded by them both***".

C was outside of Iraq at university during the war and cannot provide any reflection that can lead to how the current status quo came to be. He does, however, show open support for the previous regime and how it benefited the country. It could be considered as a benefit of his father's connections and standard of living from which C benefited. Does this give him a different view on reality? It can be argued that many of the participants also looked back and only saw the good parts of that time. The drop into post-war violence seemed only to look at things from a business inconvenience point of view. It was passed to C by his father and demonstrated the influence that Iraqi parents hold over their children. Understandably, C was numb to the reality as he was absent at that point, but it is evident that he returned to a more privileged position than others. That could also influence his thoughts in a more blinkered fashion. His father could relate to Muna (1980) in that he could have seen himself as holding a role in the local community by creating

employment opportunities. It does, of course, attract a degree of criticism when he uses connections to seek a more favourable position for his son. Ultimately it can be argued that most parents in any society would seek to provide opportunities for their children.

Participant C - Nationalisation

"This is something *I feel very passionate* about Gary, it is the *future of this country,* and if as the *Americans said* that they wanted us as *Iraq to stand on our own feet* then this is an *important part of achieving this*. *I do not think it was planned* by the companies. T*hey just hired who they felt they needed to* and early on when things started to settle a little more, *they considered people who had been qualified before* or during the war".

"I was able to show the department manager that *we could save much money by increasing the number of locals and removing expats* as they needed visas and flights. He was not so keen, but if I was to decide on who to hire then it should be my choice to *help my people*, it offered them work, and *I did exactly that, hired my people*. When the oil price went down, *they were falling over themselves to hire only local people*, exactly *what I had told them before*, so I started to swap *everyone over to locals*".

"My department is still the largest and raises the most money, *we are fully local* and *have no expats here*, it *shows that they are not needed,* and *we as the people of Iraq* can *do the same as them*".

The analysis of C's thoughts on nationalisation did produce a very driven response. It could be drive he inherited from his father in that he seeks to be a leader and show he can champion the Iraqi people. C continues the theme of zero planning by international companies, in how to consider the need and central and wider benefits this would provide to the organisation and society. C demonstrated an almost militant approach to nationalisation. He has picked up the mantle and charged forward to full nationalisation. Still ignorant of the need to include Iraqi women to be genuinely nationalised as highlighted by Randeree (2009) in the literature review. He seeks to drive expatriates out of the organisation; the reasons seem slightly diluted but point towards a need to regain national identity. He shows a degree of disdain, similar but also different to A, focusing

on being able to prove that he and his people can do the job just as well as expatriates. He argues that 'they are not needed' This could be interpreted as a form of hatred towards non-Iraqi's. He was boiling over with passion to a blind desire to remove non-Iraqi people from the business. It can be argued that his desire is admirable, but his concepts and approach to the end goal are misguided. C visualises a return to the pre-2003 days where the oil industry was fully nationalised (except for women) due to the absence of the western international organisations as described by Juhaz (2013). The fact that C misses is that he is employed by one of these western companies. To return to the full nationalisation C seeks, he must consider the broader impact of only national crews. C uses the lever of cost to move further outside of his product line and encourage other managers to follow his example. The international side would be lost with only national crews; ultimately, this would result in a local Iraqi company acting almost as a franchise under an international name. C shows a deep understanding of business and what buttons to press to achieve his plans and aims. There is no criticism of his drive to increase employment opportunities for Iraqi people. However, this must be tempered with a balance against remaining international, and that means following processes and required ethical compliance. The gaps are noted and acknowledged on nationalisation. They show a theme of opinions of no planning so far with all the participants, the different views of how to nationalise requires a structure that reaches back to before the invasion. It is more than C would suggest, just get rid and swap expatriates out. There has to be a distant plan that is sustainable and consistent; this may ultimately change the minds of future locals in other resource-rich conflict locations.

Participant D – Conflict

"Once they had found some weapons the soldiers kept coming back, ***growing suspicious of us all***, as I was a young male, they would ask me questions. I would answer them in English and say I was never involved in any of these things. I felt like ***I was accused just because I was Iraq****i* and a man who they said was of fighting age, what sort of idea is this?"

"They never came back (pauses) I waited for them for over three days, and my grandfather was upset, he called some people he knew in Basra to ask if they had seen

them. The new Iraqi police came after six days and told us that they had both been killed in an explosion by a roadside bomb, they were next to an army vehicle when it exploded".

D held a very neutral position on the lead up to the war and the incident that resulted in the death of his parents. Despite this event, he showed only a positive view of the new Iraq. He harbours no negativity towards the events, nor did he suggest a link of the war and insurgency with the presence of the international companies. It is very different from the other views provided. His experiences could have realistically led him towards a very hostile view of expatriates based on his experiences of being viewed with suspicion. The conflict side seems less impactful to him, on how his views have developed over the years since the war. The broader impact into his society seems almost like a reasonable trade to get a link with the western world. It could suggest that D has a deeper drive to reach a higher level and as he has done to leave Iraq. Happy to move in and out but cease to live there outside of his work. That can be argued as demonstrating that people are keen to escape the reality outside of modern-day Iraq.

Participant D - Nationalisation

"I know *many other people have strong views on this topic,* and that was the main reason I wanted to contribute to your research. I think the current amount is a *good balance* as I always think if you go above seventy percentage local content, then you *lose the international part of the company*. The differences *that people can benefit from*. I am a strong believer that the *international part or influence is important in helping* Iraqis to grow, to learn about things such as the oil industry standards".

"There are *parts of our culture that need this development*, to *understand things on an international stage*, I have *learnt so much from this side of the company*. Travelling to other countries, into America and seeing how things work in different locations. I *adore this side of the business* and have *continued my education* getting a master's in marketing, supported by the company".

"The *expats are seen by most as stealing jobs* that the companies *could offer to Iraqis*; they, of course, *need training* and *that part they do not seem to understand*. I have *always tried to tell people* they must *do their part* and offer each company

something. They **cannot just demand a job**, not by **force or threats**, which **happens a lot with the tribes** here".

D had some of the most liberal views on nationalisation and where the fault lines were located within the process. It can be suggested that based on his opportunities, he may well have a more favourable view of the international side of the business. That is considered, but as he has moved out of Iraq, it shows he has grasped these opportunities and seeks a balance. He admits that there are gaps but focusses on the internal cultural gaps that result in the local realisation that expatriates are stealing jobs from local Iraqis. The gaps that the text highlights are the use of influence or even force, such as that used by tribal leaders to pressure companies to employ local people would not deliver an efficient business model for any international organisation. It supports the earlier argument by Al-Wafi and Forstenlechner (2010) that a mixed workforce offers high levels of creativity. That said, the research by Milliken and Martins (1996) suggest that people will naturally group into their social circles, thus reducing development. The research has to agree that observations showed that most Iraqi male employees stay within their groups, and mixing is not a reality. The desire of D to retain the international influence is a good argument and justification to retain a mixed workforce, as he put it 70/30% mix of local and international content. The other argument raises a concern for businesses who have to adhere to stringent regulation of compliance and business conduct. The traditional ways of taking people on from one or two tribes could see this deteriorate and local business traditions being adopted, thus placing the business in jeopardy. The gap of the businesses knowing and expecting this approach by tribal factions has placed them in this position. It highlights a gap in understanding and phased nationalisation.

Participant E – Conflict

"My father told us he had seen the Iraqi army leaving Basra and heading north; I felt like they had **abandoned us** and left us to the **will of the invaders**".

"I stayed for a while, but one evening two men came to our home and warned my father that his son was **supporting the invaders**, helping them **take everything from Iraq**. He was calm with them and tried to say it was just for money for food, but they said it was dirty money and should be burnt. I was in my room and could hear the men shouting and

my father talking back calmly to them. They sounded crazy saying we were going **against the will of God** and would be punished. They said at the end that if I went to work, they would **consider me as one of the soldiers** and their **wrath** would be placed upon **my family and me**".

The conflict side impacted directly on the life of E. It created an initial feeling of abandonment by the state to its people. It would suggest that E and his family were not accepting of the forced change that was to occur at the hands of the coalition forces. E classed them as invaders; this emphasises both his family's and his perceptions. It was that they were being invaded rather than freed as the intent of the coalition forces stated. E did gain employment as a direct output of the war, but this was short-lived. He was forced to leave his job due to threats of violence against him and his family. It does show the hidden side to the insurgency where they would openly threaten any people that they deemed as supporting the military. It could create a more balanced view of society and the actual reality of the military, but this can be hazy due to the social complexities of the situation.

Participant E - Nationalisation

"There is **no nationalisation here, not in any company** and not for a long time have **Iraqis been allowed to lead** things like I am doing now. It **fell apart after the war** with the fighting, and the **corruption** was very bad in the police and government places. I think companies only **employ you in a pretend position**. They **say you are the manager** but then **double-check everything you are doing** and lots of people **report things back to the head office**. The people there just believe what they are told, **they just do not trust our people** with things, and that means that they just **pretend to have nationalisation**".

E had a very aggressive view of nationalisation; he related one of no trust between the employee and company based on nationality. It would reflect the findings of Ziera *et al.*, (1974) as the reality of resentment of the local staff who see over-paid expats. E would strongly support the research of Ziera, Harari and Nundi (1975) that found trust was an issue, and many locals watched as expatriates were hired into more senior positions. It is quickly countered by reflecting upon E's move through the company up to a very senior position. He would, of course, argue that his position was fake and in title only and he

was micro-managed by his expatriate mentors. It would again point towards no planning or apprenticeship for local staff to move through the company. It requires the establishment of agreements on how they will adopt grants of authority (GOA)[40]. The lack of understanding from both sides the local and the company is apparent to the researcher. It has resulted in negativity at the approach that is then criticised by those within it. It adds substance to the arguments within the literature review provided by Ziera, Harari and Nundi (1975). It showed that after some time since their research, these feelings are still in existence in 2020. It does, of course, derail E's argument on nationalisation and trust issues when he has been dismissed for corruption to which he was vocally opposed. Now while the details are unknown, there is little doubt that an international organisation would not send investigators in and find a reason to fire E without evidence. It was likely a result of an internal feud with A; resulting in them both being dismissed on the grounds of compliance violations. E and A will both remain absent from acceptance of any wrongdoing. That goes to demonstrate where trust does become an issue for any headquarters leaders and why a degree of dependence will remain on expatriates.

Participant F – Conflict

F was absent from Iraq with his entire family during the conflict and insurgency side of the history, and as such, the focus will be placed upon nationalisation.

"I went there ***protesting about the American influences and companies*** that were ***running Iraq***, the corruption in the government. It ***was exciting*** as we fought against the police. They fired tear gas at us all and bullets, and two of my ***friends were killed***, but it is *worth **fighting for a new Iraq**".

When considering the section of text above, it again shows an imbalance within F that was observed in others. They are willing to protest and stand against the presence of American companies in their country. The fact that they are employed by such a company seems to be lost upon them. It argues that Iraqis can regularly disregard their reality and seek a unified national reality instead, even if that means seeing their employment ceasing. This almost self-destructive approach to perceptions is remarkable; the staunch

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[40] Financial authority for approval of company funds to be issued up to a set amount.

approach to changing their society to be unified Iraq. The broader economic impacts and subsequent detachment to the broader global economy failing to register with F and his peers. The acceptance of death as justifiable demonstrates a concerning picture on the value of life within the current society of Iraq. How would the new Iraq look in his eyes, would it be freed of western influences that he was keen to rekindle after giving up a life in Australia? It would go to support the research previously discussed by Ingleheart and Norris (2003) that ideology is what differentiates the Middle East from the West. They do not seek to remove democracy. However, they do desire to retain their traditions and as Huntingdon (1993) argued many years ago 'The conflicts of the future will occur along the cultural fault lines separating civilisations' (Huntingdon, 1993 p.25). It has been proved correct, and the fault lines continue to result in conflict and insecurity in Iraq, with the protests showing a drive to retain the separation of influence.

"I took all my leave and ***told my wife*** I was leaving, and ***she accepted my will****,* and we all went together to ***join this cause. Rid us of the world*** so we can ***be our own country*** our own Iraq. ***We won*** as the prime minister left office and we have since rejected the new one they wanted to offer us all. The police are not able to go ***against the full will of the people****,* they have ***killed many of us****,* but we have ***more to offer***".

F seemed to avoid lodging his opinions on nationalisation when analysing his words and considering his actions. It can be argued that he seeks to reduce external influences, and that would push towards full nationalisation of the workforce in Iraq's oil industry and other industries. The resignation of the then Iraqi prime minister has only increased the protesters drive to continue, only halted by the hand of nature in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It remains to be seen how this will move forward once the pandemic ends, will the protests return to the streets? Or will they have lost the drive that was evident at the peak of the protests? F wants to rid Iraq of the world, and that is argued as showing that he wants to retain traditional values and raise the national identity outside of any links with other nations. It results in the potential for a more enforced nationalisation approach going forward. If the new government bends to the will of the younger generation, it could see more streamlining in all organisations. It would point back to an approach that failed to gain traction in the GCC countries, where governments forced organisations to

increase local content (Randeree, 2009). The offer of tax incentives failed to create a change to the local content there, in Iraq, they are merely demanding companies hire more locals than expatriates. This approach is likely to see a similar build-up in the middle-ranged roles of administration within the Iraq oil and gas industry. It is a mirror image of the saturation of placement of local nationals within government positions; more Iraqi men wish to drive a desk than get their hands-on tools on the well sites. The argument raised in the literature review by Cameron (2002) is that legislation required higher salaries for the private sector to match the public sector rates. It resulted in more nationals than there were places for, within an office environment and a lack of field operators. It goes to demonstrate the similarities of challenges in the nationalisation of stable versus post-conflict locations.

5.5 Theme three

Identified gaps in nationalisation approaches/planning for a post-conflict country
Planning and disassociation with the conflict.

The lack of planning for this as a baseline consideration was mentioned and discussed by almost every research participant. Without going on a tangent and detailing the heavily criticised post-war planning issues following the invasion, the research will focus on industry. The private industry that follows after the military will have links that allow for interaction and the requirement to consider the broader social impact of employment in an already unstable location needs to take precedence. Before considering mobilisation, the organisation needs to review historical data that shows how these scenarios have played out. Then combine this with a cultural review of the intended business facilitation. The conflict will play out, and this is when the organisations should be taking the time to consider the culture they would go and meet when starting operations. Review the history and seek professional guidance on the unique nature of each culture. The danger of assuming similarity of cultures within a larger area such as the Middle East would result in an inaccurate understanding of the location and its people. Iraq, as an example, sees the Kurdish people get irritated when they are labelled as Arabs, they see themselves as Kurdish. These baseline facts help the project group understand how to detail an

approach. It is one country, but in the north of Iraq, the people, language and culture are very different. Establishing a focus group of the project team to gather baseline data and compile a profile will place the organisation in a much more tangible position, increasing the likelihood of operational success.

Disassociation with the conflict is another critical area; any form of association will present perception as was observed during this research. Even after some considerable time, this perception of alliance will remain. It would suggest to businesses they need to consider the time and date of an entry concerning the conflict; entry during which will likely result in association and later rejection by the local nationals. The occupying military will, of course, seek to encourage entry to support stabilisation and restarting of industry. However, this would again create an association that would stain the company forever. Delaying entry until a more suitable time presents itself would show that the company enters at a neutral and non-associated time. Chinese companies have done precisely this in Iraq. The western organisations moved in during the conflict and were therefore considered part of the invasion, guilty by association. The Chinese remained on the sidelines until the conflict had completed. They made an entry on a separate plane, and this has seen them being viewed as independent. The same mistake was made during the liberation of Libya; the western companies entered when the country was still in conflict. Then as the society remained in a sustained conflict had to evacuate quickly (Vandewalle, 2018). Libya has since seen re-entry of the western organisations into a very complex situation where internal conflict resumes. It makes their presence an agitation, demonstrating that entry time selection is critical to acceptance and contribution to stabilisation.

5.6   Structure and planning for nationalisation

If a company can enter a location at the right time and achieve disassociation; they require a suitable plan for sustainable nationalisation of the workforce. The evidence from this research argues that this has previously been haphazard in its approach. They were waiting for necessity rather than as part of a structured approach. It could be part of the proposal for license issuance within the location if the government is in a workable position. Regardless of the government's position or status, the plan should be structured

to the location and population. The plan should review the last available skill-set, so using Iraq as an example, the last national workforce that was in place before the war (Juhasz, 2013). It provides access to a potential stream of national workers. Where this is absent, the review and plan must consider the provision of potential candidates. Those that had either completed of been close to completion of suitable educational certification. Conducting a detailed gap analysis on skill sets absent from the location will provide a structure on how to approach the training gaps. Employing a detailed PESTEL analysis will also list out the external influences beyond control (Aguilar, 1967). For locations that have had an enduring conflict resulting in the breakdown of the educational system for an extended period. It needs to be replaced with the required training. It should be part of the approach regardless of access to a previous workforce or recently graduated potential nationals. The gap analysis on workforce requirements based on the planned access and service provision should consider the focus areas for training. What level of initial training and support would be required for a fledgeling workforce emerging from the conflict? The structure should look on a facilitation and growth timeline that considers the increase in local nationals across a proposed timeframe that allows for training, mentoring and transitioning.

5.7   Positional allocation and career progression

The organisation should consider what positions the company are open to allow local nationals to progress towards, in essence, a career planning profile. The ability to set these parameters out during the initial stage will provide clarity for both sides; this will move towards dispelling that trust issue identified within the research. The approach taken based on the research findings argues that this has again been haphazard. It produces a hazy area where the company and the local national employees remain unsure of what progression is viable. The plan can allow for a period of consolidation that allows new local employees time and opportunity to develop the required skills and knowledge ahead of any progression. It links heavily with the training plan as a supervisor, and managerial positions will also require a training and mentoring approach. It will additionally reduce wastage within the local operation due to failure based on advancement ahead of readiness. It will also provide a suitable period to identify high

potential candidates, who with the right training and support would be likely to succeed in higher-level local positions. It then creates a pipeline for the local workforce and clarity for both the employee and the company. On what positions will be available to suitable candidates after an agreed training and mentoring package is completed. The organisation also needs to consider what positions that will not be open to local candidates and the reasons for this block. It will need to be managed in a structured way to avoid any accusations of mistrust or career fouling. It would, therefore, be likely that the closed positions would require specific qualifications or corporate experience. The transparency of this approach would provide the location and operation with clarity, structure and planning.

5.8 Traditions and culture

The requirement to understand the country's traditions and culture and incorporating that into the transitional considerations is argued as critical to success. It develops a deeper understanding through research offerings such as this one. It provides a basis on which an organisation can develop a planned approach, that interacts and acknowledges the traditions and culture of the country of operation. It is argued that some of the traditions discussed within this research will clash with ethical and compliance approaches required by international organisations. The advance identification of these pinch points will allow the company to consider the approach to navigating compliance issues; educating the local workforce in understanding international requirements. It will take time, and hundreds of years of tradition will not change just because they are placed within an international business setting. The companies need to consider this in advance. Recognition goes a long way to preparation, which in turn ensures that the companies are ready to manage these issues before they arise. The appropriate selection of the first expatriate team also needs to consider previous exposure to similar geographical areas (post-conflict) and cultural. Those with experience could hold preconceptions on the culture and as such, may be less suitable than another expatriate who has zero preconceptions. The correct selection of staff who will be open to accepting the approach and their critical part in its success is vital. They must be suitable as a mentor and be fully aware of the details of the transition plan and timelines.

5.9   Conclusion

The concept will be demonstrated in a model that sets out the pre-considerations and requirements and then continues towards a sustainable approach to nationalisation. While the approach detailed in the next chapter does not guarantee success, it ensures that the learnings from failed nationalisation attempts are considered. The lessons learnt are placed into a concise and useable model. It, therefore increase success potential that benefits a company and the country alike.

6 Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus towards the final wrap-up of the initial aims and objectives, key findings and literature identified. It will then propose a sustainable model that seeks to demonstrate an original contribution. The research is argued as a very narrow focusing and unique approach. It hopefully contributes to a broader understanding of the importance and wider-reaching impact of nationalisation. First of all looking at the research aims and objectives. Each one will be listed and supported by discussion points to demonstrate how and if it was achieved. Following this, the proposed model will be listed and discussed to clarify what it contributes to the broader industry within post-conflict locations. The research was conducted within a post-conflict location in real-time, interacting and observing how nationalisation worked within an international company that had established itself immediately following the Iraq war. The research participants were the physical result of nationalisation conducted over a considered period. The participants provided their own experiences, and the observations considered how they operated within the different aspects of work and society. It produced tangible qualitative data that could then be analysed utilising a pluralistic narrative approach. Their stories told with the thick description to invite the reader into the room and get a fulfilled understanding of the data (Geertz, 1973).

6.2 The first step towards research closeout

To validate the effectiveness of the research, it is essential to return and review the research output in comparison to the stated research aims and objectives.

1) Critically examine previous and current models employed for nationalisation and discuss their effectiveness.

   The research reviewed available literature looking to identify model(s) or approaches to nationalisation. It was not inclusive of the post-conflict aspect as a specific requirement for research inclusion. The research reviewed literature from nationalisation investigations across all industries focussing at the geographical

areas close to Iraq. Research conducted by Randeree (2009); Forstenlechner, Madi and Selim (2012); Mohammad (2013) and Alboushi (2015) provided some opportunity to review the challenge of nationalisation focussed in the Middle East locations within the GCC[41]. The review found that there was an absence of any specific model to support nationalisation and the GCC countries governments moved towards policies. These policies directed and encouraged the private sector to increase the level of local content. That also reflected that the private sector had no available models that looked to provide a structured approach to nationalisation. The GCC countries all established 'Isation' projects such as Omanisation, Emiratisation and so on. It was a formal label placed on the approach to increasing nationals within the private sector. Governments such as the UAE directed a minimum quota for private sector organisations. In exchange for meeting set quotas financial incentives such as reduced transaction fees were provided. This carrot and stick also had a negative side (the stick) for organisations that failed to meet the quotas. Classed as uncooperative they could be fined and have increased transaction costs and possible suspensions. There was also a trend identified across all the research reviewed that showed nationals were primarily employed in what had become a saturated public sector across the GCC countries. It is also now reflective of Iraq which employs a large number of nationals within the government-sponsored agencies. The additional aspect of the trend was that there was a standing perception both by nationals and the private sector. The nationals were suspecting the private sector of having expectations on excessive and unbalanced working hours. The private sector perceived that the national employees were less efficient than expatriate workers, creating a clash of equal unwillingness. The labour laws also set specific hours, conditions and salaries for nationals making it even less attractive for private organisations to employ them. The research found that the policies and approaches had yet to provide success in a truly tangible way. The practice of applying a quota system looks to be replaced by the UAE government within 2020. To create positive incentives that attract more nationals to private-sector jobs. The research considers this objective

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[41] Gulf Cooperation Council – Saudi Arabia, The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait.

as completed. The effectiveness of the policies and approaches was discussed, and trends and application issues applied within the research thesis.

2) Assess learning points from the context of South Iraq.

The research employed broader literature to understand and review the impact of the war and insurgency on the current status of the country. The research data extracted from the participant group then helped to gain a deeper understanding of the key learning points based on the Iraq focus area. There was little doubt that the local perception of nationalisation was mostly negative. The absence of a viable plan or approach was commented upon many times. The conflict aspect also identified that the stability issues and association of international companies creates a long-lasting association. The continuation of internal and external security concerns and instability fed directly back into the local workforces in Basra. The needs of the society in observing some form of social progression following the war and infighting (insurgency) period was found to be lacking and therefore creating internal frustrations within the Iraq society. These then manifest themselves into events such as the recent protests on external influences and government corruption. Creating further social instability and flashpoints. It creates opportunities for extremist groups to enter and create further social breakdown pushing the aims of terrorism to become a close reality. The internal tribal structure within Iraq was a core influence on how nationals and the wider population approach challenges or resolve them. The return of seasoned fighters from the frontline with Daish sees trained, well-armed and experienced tribal members returning to the social powder keg. Tribal influence and fighting all create further instability within the local population that are now wary of conflict and the lack of progression. With more power cuts and less provision than before the invasion. It poses a real opportunity for descending into civil war, complicated by multiple factions and cases within an already complex social model. The challenges that a post-conflict and uncertain environment produces are vast. They also add to the cost of operating within these locations, utilisation of security services. The

additional layer of traditions and culture also produces key learning points for Iraq, creating some clashes with international business approaches. The influence of the elders and tribes within Iraq almost forces nationalisation upon companies. Who then can find themselves saturated with tribal groups within the organisation. The approach within Iraq of seeking employment for specific social groups (tribes) who have influence and control within regional areas. It was supported by BOC[42] officials and that steps beyond nationalisation and towards regionalisation. The fallout from COVID-19 as previously discussed saw the Iraqi government approach of placing extreme pressure on companies to retain local employees at all costs. At the time of writing, BOC officials visited the base and directed that the company needs to move towards a minimum of 80% local content. All of which must be from the Basra area only. It pushes further towards regionalisation where Iraqis from outside of Basra should not be retained. Creating a wider impact to the remainder of the regions within Iraq within a social and economic context. It further demonstrates the complexity and approaches not just within the local tribal social groups but also how this extends to government approaches. Awareness of these approaches that are difficult navigate will better prepare organisations to manage and resolve. Based on an approach that meets the right levels of nationalisation within a timeframe that works for the three entities. The three entities are the company, the employee(s) (social groups) and the Iraqi government. To achieve this successfully, the approach needs to synchronise across these three groups, almost as a partnership. The dynamics will see challenges in expectation management by the respective company. It creates an awareness of the type and angle of pressure that could be applied based on the findings of the research. The culture of the Iraqi people is considerably different from other countries, even within the Middle East and GCC countries. The findings provide an insight into this relatively unknown culture. Key learning points are the impact of post-conflict and continuation of internal instability (tribal, militia) and externally (Iranian influence and support for the militia, ISIS enduring conflict). It results in a very unpredictable and dynamic operational environment. Association with the military based on time

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[42] Basra Oil Company – Iraqi Government oil and gas agency.

of entry, creating preconceptions of the organisations by the surrounding population. Culture of the people and variances even within regions and tribes, maintenance of traditions and extant influence of elders within social groupings. These cultural considerations may clash with accepted/legislated business methods/practices for international organisations. Awareness allows for preparation of management of local expectations. The absence of women within the workplace greatly reduces the true nationalisation reality and available human resource capital and is entwined within the culture and traditions of Iraq. The research considers this objective as achieved.

3) Identify key requirements for an adaptive and easily applied model that can be employed during future nationalisation activities in hostile environments.

The critical requirements for the model were discussed in the previous chapter and included planning and disassociation with the conflict. Reviewing previous scenarios and play out of conflict and into stabilisation efforts. The entry point/time as a key consideration as since 2003 locals have continued to associate the organisations that entered immediately as part of the invasion. Suggestive of external influencers as was raised during observations relating to recent protest reasons. Structure and organisation, utilising a gap analysis of skill sets required for the location, previous workforce availability. The utilisation of the PESTEL analysis assists in the validation of gaps (Aguilar, 1967). The building of gap awareness and bridging requirements such as training facilitation, linked with a planned growth timeline for the country. Position allocations and career progression, creation of a transparent pipeline and go/no go criteria of any expatriate retained positions. The adoption of mentoring via suitably selected expatriates that reduce a 'them and us' environment and enhance trust and internal cohesion. Traditions and culture, awareness and briefings for internal communications/training to prepare potential clashes with approved international business practices. Selection criteria for expatriates that avoid preconceived opinions. That can create internal divisions via deeper knowledge sets on the traditions and cultures within the operating environment. The research reviewed

the data and utilised in identifying the key requirements that were then applied to the model that is provided later in this chapter. It shows that the objective set in the research has been achieved.

4) Establish a new model for nationalisation that can be employed in other/new post-conflict locations.

The model will be provided in the next section and discussed to validate its application, utility and sustainability. That marks this research objective as completed.

6.3   Nationalisation model

This section will provide the nationalisation model as well as discuss its employment and where it can be applied by a private company that seeks to establish in a post-conflict country. The model is divided across three-phase or stages; allowing in-depth planning for the many aspects that have been discussed. The model is also located in the appendix and can be removed to parallel these sections.

Phase one in Figure 6.1 considers the conflict, and the association aspect highlighted previously. There is, in essence, a period of observation that can be concurrent with background research and planning application. The utilisation of PESTEL may be argued against, its provisional application was for marketing, but this research stretches its utility beyond this (Aguilar, 1967). All of the steps of the analysis may not be applicable but using this approach ensures the private organisation considers these external influences and forces that are outside the control of the organisation. Some of the factors will increase in respect of impact when applied to the conflict part of the location.

An example being political, with potential for factions establishing within the conflict. This example can be seen in the enduring conflict within Syria, where multiple factions are operating into the broader conflict environment. Establishing these facts is argued as critical to the initial planning for entry into a post-conflict location. Some of these groups may remain active beyond the closure of the main war footing period. The output of the PESTEL analysis will additionally provide data that can then be carried forward to the research phase of the model (Aguilar, 1967). The research elements are focus areas for

the organisation to review and build a picture of the location in preparation for the next phase of execution. It is part of the concept of operations, how it will play out in reality. The data taken from the pre-entry research can then be applied to an operational application gap analysis, using any methodology that is employed within a company. Paralleling this side of phase one is the conflict appreciation section of the model, that works through the stages that could be expected during a war or intervention. The core mission completion then leads into the rebuild phase and provides a window where internal instability can result, as seen during the insurgency in Iraq. The instability output will determine the two paths that can result from the earlier conflict. NGO's[43] intervention can often assist in supporting this critical stage towards the stabilisation-maintained avenue. The model places a robust no entry line down the centre during this phase. It is designed to reduce any association as previously discussed and ultimately allows for a more organised entry into the country. The level of accepted risk tolerance of each organisation will ultimately determine the speed with which they choose to enter the location. It links the international organisation with any ongoing internal instability and in-place international stabilisation forces. The need for security sees organisations initially house themselves within the military locations. It then increases conflict association with the local population. That can have long-lasting internal/external perceptions that can degrade the organisation years later. Thus, the recommendation of the model is to delay while planning to achieve long term success. If enduring instability remains close to the end of the conflict, then the model recommends a delay and hold point, for the same reasons that were just covered.

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[43] Non-governmental organisations – Red Cross as an example.

NATIONALISATION STAGE 01

PHASE ONE APPROACH AND PLANNING CONCEPT OF OPS

Conflict in play/planned intervention declared

Conflict impact assessed

Military campaign underway

Mission complete

NGO assessments

Facilitation of social service(s) rebuild

Post-conflict annulment period

Instability window

Instability output

Further instability

Stabilisation maintained

Enduring

Government in place

Entry hold point maintained

No entry timeline

External business interest identified

Business opportunity validated

Conduct PESTEL
(External influences)

P – Political
E - Economic
S – Social
T – Technological
E – Environmental
L – Legal
Aguilar (1967)

Research application

Traditions

Culture

Tribal influence

Workforce demographics

Previous workforce size and skillset
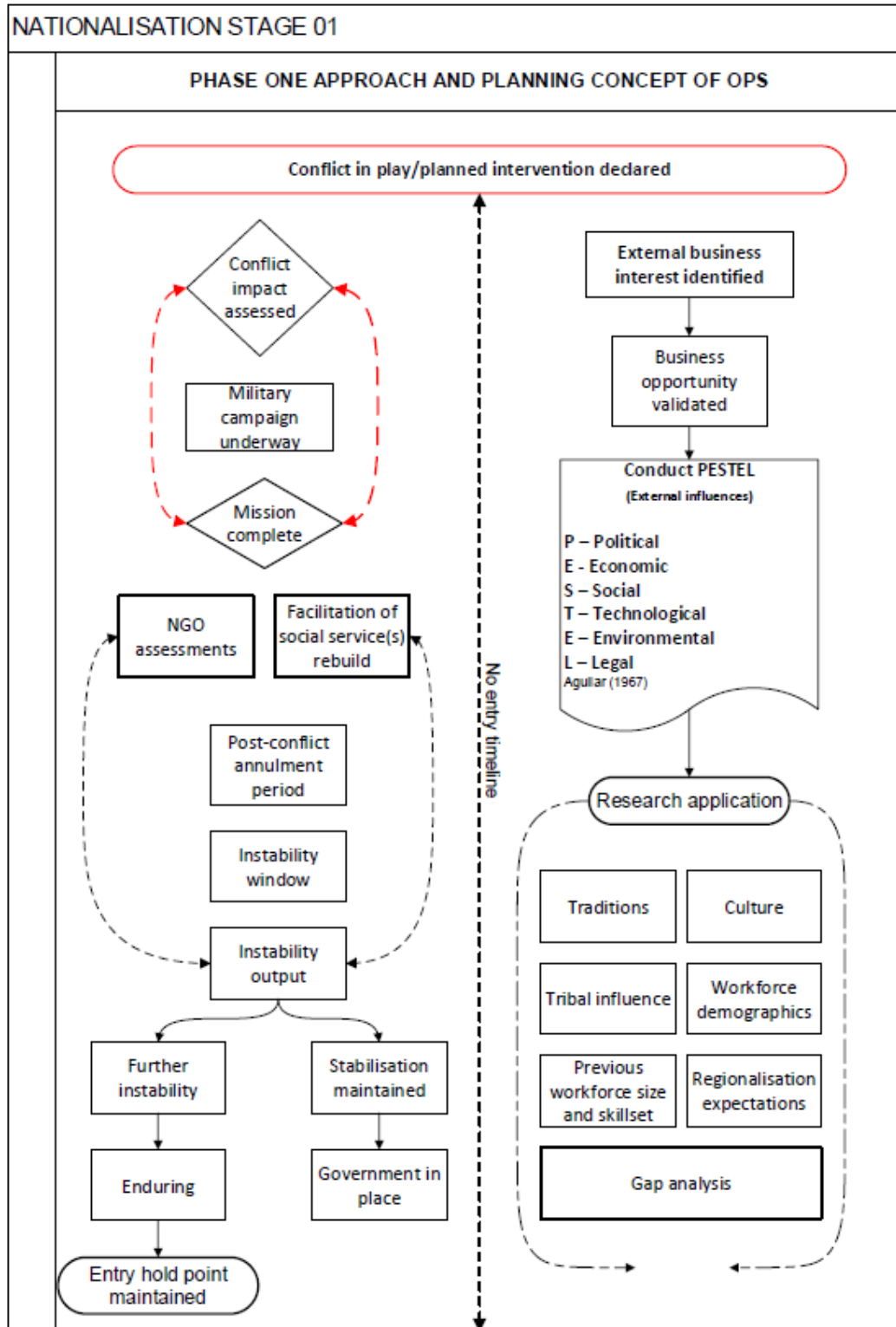
Regionalisation expectations

Gap analysis

Figure 6.1 – Nationalisation model phase one[44].

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[44] Arrows represent a continual review and revisit between the factors/areas.

Phase two in Figure 6.2 starts with a traffic light approach to ask critical questions within the organisation. The answers must be honestly reviewed to identify if they are a reality. The company can, of course, go ahead without considering the recommended questions. They must be willing to accept the risk tolerance and subsequent medium to longer-term impacts. The question set then divides into core business focussed and location-specific questions. The recommendation is that both streams are conducted and thus delivering a validated nationalisation plan. It must be tailored to both the needs of the business and location considerations. Deviation from the question sets will again increase medium to longer-term risk profiles across both streams. The importance of pre-mobilisation training for the execution team cannot be understated. It ensures alignment within the delivery team; any variances will result in the plan failing to be realised. The pre-linking with government agencies presents an opportunity to test the water on expectations versus those of the business. The expectations may indeed be over the levels that the business is willing to undertake, allowing for negotiation before committing to entry. Confirmation of the cultural and business risks within the country-specific stream allows for a degree of strategic viewing of these issues. Awareness of social structures and tribal groupings can allow a business to visualise the reality and temper expectations internally. It leads the organisation towards the entry line and ensures all angles are considered within a sustainable nationalisation plan that can then be delivered within phase three.
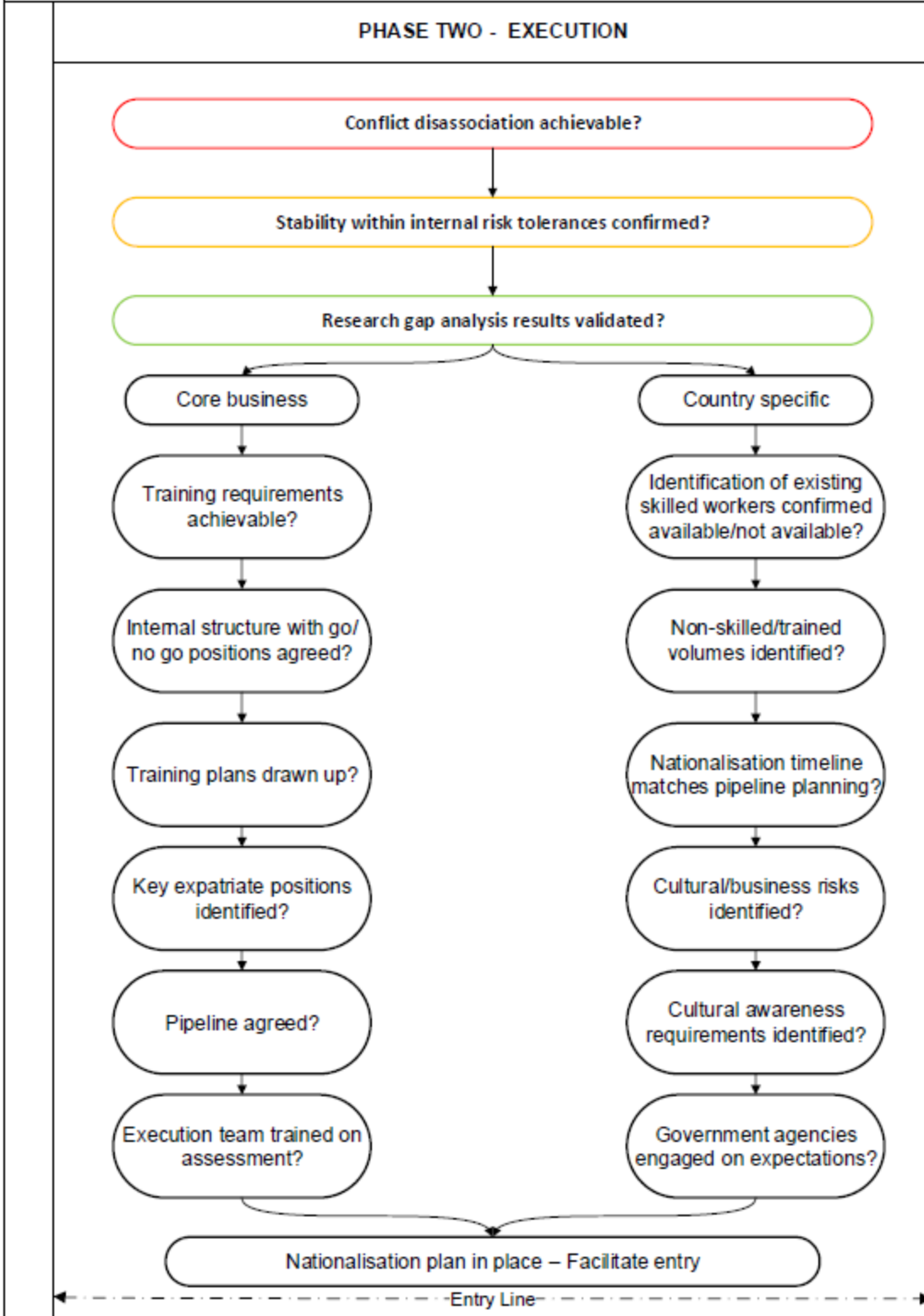
Figure 6.2 – Nationalisation model phase two.

Phase three at Figure 6.3 leads into establishing and embedding on the location of operational delivery; it considers the core business needs ahead of any build-up of national staff. The base routine is vital in the preparation of a sustainable forward-moving operation that applies the data from the previous two phases. The approach is to have all the required support in place, such as training and appointed mentors before conducting a filter of the available local national workers. Allocating an even spread within the known tribes in the area ensures a balance across the local community and prevents dominance occurring within the organisation. It should be anticipated that pressure will be applied from different entities to increase set tribal allocations. It has a negative internal output and will result in control issues at a later stage that will be difficult to reverse. The quotas for national content are a suggestion. The organisation should have clarified the accepted levels of nationalisation at different stages of the fledging operation as it moves through stages of maturity. The best balance that retains the international side of the company needs to be continuously reviewed, losing the blend of local content and international influence will be extremely hard to reverse in later stages. As local nationals move through the organisation, the gaps that will be created as they promote should be backfilled with suitable national candidates, creating a sustainable pipeline. The completion of stage three will see an embedded organisation with a structured and well-prepared approach to nationalisation; aware of the potential political and social pinch points. It ensures that perceptions are aligned, and local nationals can see/witness a tenable structure towards nationalisation. That, in turn, feeds back into the local and national economy and supports the long journey out of conflict, while ensuring the needs of the individual organisation are considered and met.
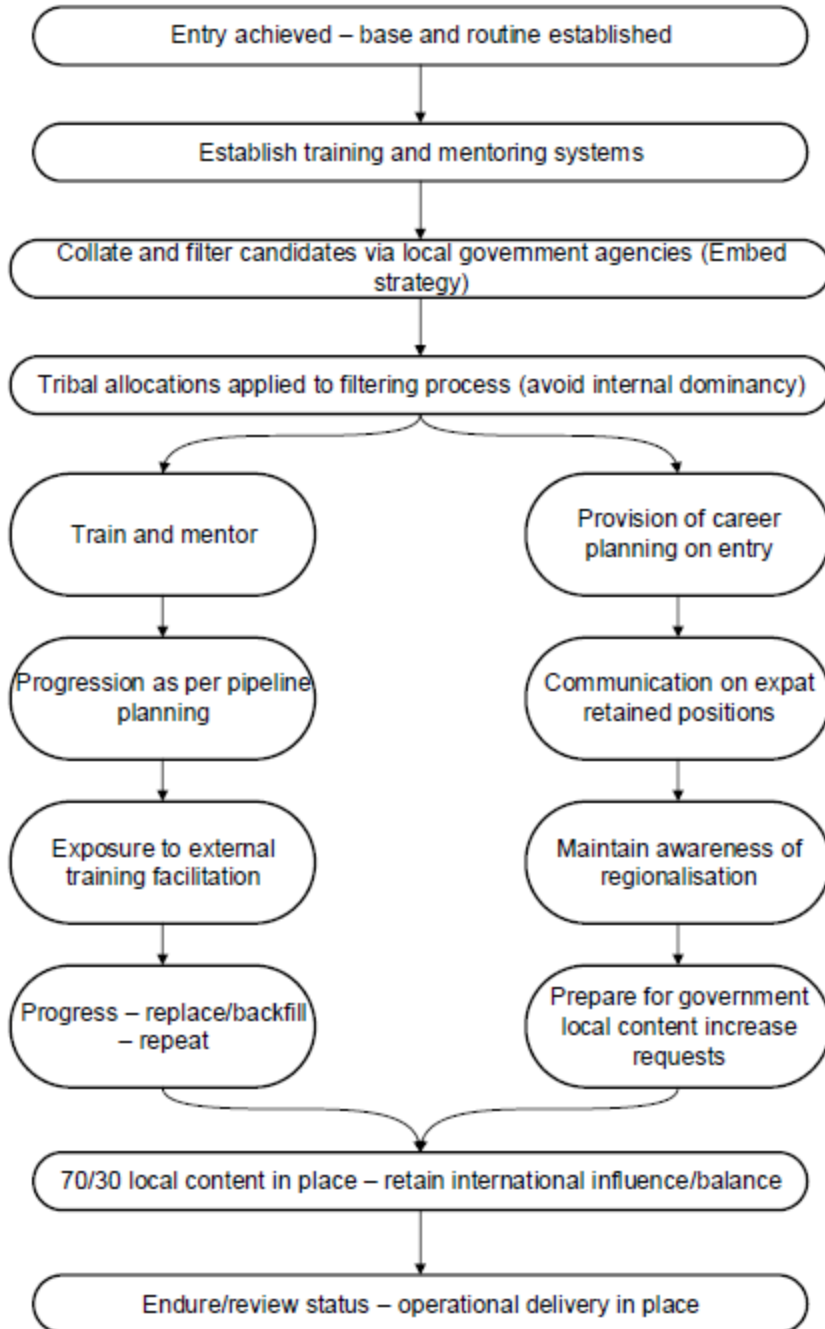
Figure 6.3 – Nationalisation model phase three.

6.4   Recommendations

The next sections will detail the recommendations based on the entire research project, considering both policy development as well as future or further research opportunities.

6.5   Practice

The research considers what lessons can be extracted in the pursuit of further teaching by academic practitioners within the field of social sciences. Culture and tradition have been the focus of multiple research activities and establishes how it exists within groups and individual environments. The theory provides an adequate level of understanding but veers away from the reality of application within a business context. Muna (1980) did offer some insights into this, focusing on the Arab culture and traditions from a business angle. The differences based on the specific cultures within Iraq. It demonstrated macro-cultures operating within tribes that have and continue to impact on businesses operating within Iraq. It argues that cultural differences are not specific to broader cultural labelling such as Arab culture is understood as demonstrating specific traits. When reviewing the differences identified within the Iraq regional cultures and traditions, it argues that they differ even within the country. It also argues that assumptions on Islamic traditions as being universal, they are considerably more unique as you reach the macro level within separate social groups in a country. It is more than the religious adaptation that develops differences within a culture; this is mutated further by tribal traditions that differ from higher-level findings. It provides some further opportunities for additional teaching considerations within this topic area that academic practitioners can debate within a learning environment.

6.6   Policy

The United Nations provides articles that consider the rebuilding of nations the following authority to facilitate military action. They consider the social and economic requirement to rebuild those locations internal structure and society. The needs are clear and are not argued as evasive or lacking detail; however, the application of a more formalised approach to external facilitation of nationalisation is required. A higher-level policy that

guides and sets clear parameters for private organisations entering a post-conflict country on nationalisation. A pre-prepared approach would greatly benefit the broader rebuilding efforts by the provision of employment and money into the new economy and society. It helps to widen the potential for partnership between the population, the private company and the fledgeling government to now include the higher authority at a broader national level.

6.7   Further research opportunities

This research was very narrow in its focus but the threads that it explored as extensive in their length and direction, providing a considerable number of options for further research. There is an opportunity to map the differences in culture within the different tribes and how the culture and traditions vary, within each city regionally and nationally. The culture and traditions offered a real depth to any future researcher to explore and compare with other neighbouring countries. It shows how varied the culture and traditions are within the Arab nations. Post-conflict social recovery is also an area that offers some avenues for further research. The stalling of progress since the war occurred that has now resulted in social disorder and nationwide organised protests. The enduring security instability and lack of infra-structure progression have created social friction. The intricacies that are unique to Iraq also add tribal fighting, post ISIS fighters returning to regions within Iraq as well as Iranian backed militia. American forces are placed in the middle alongside other nations support for Iraq's battle against ISIS, creates all the required ingredients for a steep and rapid descent into chaos. It provides an opportunity to research further into the conflict and cross-society challenges that could deliver further steps toward civil war. The other research opportunity is on wider private industry nationalisation, taking this research to a broader stage and looking at other industries to conduct a comparison. It would build on the understanding of nationalisation as a broader issue. Helping to validate opportunities to develop further solutions and reduce dependency on expatriate workers; otherwise, skills gaps will remain. It would likely look at the issues created by over-inflated public sector establishments. As well as the encompassing of females into the employment market, thus increasing the true level of nationalisation. This further research

would complement both this research as well as the older research projects that centred around similar nationalisation hold points.

6.8   Conclusion

The years of fieldwork provides some shocking revelations on the reality within South Iraq. Some of them show multiple levels of embedded corruption. Confused by entwinement of traditions and cultural norms. This side of the story is not reflective of the entire picture. The researcher has enjoyed the opportunity to develop a deeper relationship that facilitated interaction on a unique scale. The research is a contribution to both the academic community as well as the people of Iraq. An opportunity to tell their story as well as providing improvements to enhance any future nationalisation inside and outside of conflict. The people provide warmth and affection for those that take time to understand their culture, to embrace their ways and make a gesture of interest. The researcher considers himself as lucky to have had this rare opportunity to live and work alongside the Iraqi national teams. The return on investment is provided with gratitude and optimistic hope for the future of their nation.

'Culture is the ethnographer's never-ending onion' (Latta, 2020).

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9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1a – Nationalisation model phase one

NATIONALISATION STAGE 01

PHASE ONE APPROACH AND PLANNING CONCEPT OF OPS

Conflict in play/planned intervention declared

Conflict impact assessed

Military campaign underway

Mission complete

NGO assessments

Facilitation of social service(s) rebuild

Post-conflict annulment period

Instability window

Instability output

Further instability

Stabilisation maintained

Enduring

Government in place

Entry hold point maintained

No entry timeline

External business interest identified

Business opportunity validated

Conduct PESTEL
(External influences)

P – Political
E - Economic
S – Social
T – Technological
E – Environmental
L – Legal
Agular (1967)

Research application

Traditions

Culture

Tribal influence

Workforce demographics

Previous workforce size and skillset

Regionalisation expectations

Gap analysis

9.2   Appendix 1b – Nationalisation model phase two

NATIONALISATION STAGE 02

PHASE TWO - EXECUTION

Conflict disassociation achievable?

Stability within internal risk tolerances confirmed?

Research gap analysis results validated?

Core business

Training requirements achievable?

Internal structure with go/no go positions agreed?

Training plans drawn up?

Key expatriate positions identified?

Pipeline agreed?

Execution team trained on assessment?

Country specific

Identification of existing skilled workers confirmed available/not available?

Non-skilled/trained volumes identified?

Nationalisation timeline matches pipeline planning?

Cultural/business risks identified?

Cultural awareness requirements identified?

Government agencies engaged on expectations?

Nationalisation plan in place – Facilitate entry

Entry Line

9.3 Appendix 1c – Nationalisation model phase three

NATIONALISATION STAGE 03

PHASE THREE – ESTABLISH AND EMBED

Entry achieved – base and routine established

Establish training and mentoring systems

Collate and filter candidates via local government agencies (Embed strategy)

Tribal allocations applied to filtering process (avoid internal dominancy)

Train and mentor

Provision of career planning on entry

Progression as per pipeline planning

Communication on expat retained positions

Exposure to external training facilitation

Maintain awareness of regionalisation

Progress – replace/backfill – repeat

Prepare for government local content increase requests

70/30 local content in place – retain international influence/balance

Endure/review status – operational delivery in place

9.4 Appendix 2 – List of abbreviations

AK – Automatic Kalashnikov

B2B – Back to back

BOC – Basra Oil Company

BP – British Petroleum

CNPC – China National Petroleum Corporation

COVID-19 – Corona Virus Disease 2019

Expat – Expatriate

GCC – Gulf Cooperation Council

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GOA – Grant of authority

HR – Human Resources

ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

IT – Information Technology

JV – Joint Venture

KSA – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

OPEC – Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

PESTEL – Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal

PL – Product Line

POE – Power of attorney

PPP – Purchasing power parity

PRO – Public Relations Officer

RIF – Reduction in force

SSM – Site Security Manager

UAE – United Arab Emirates

UK – United Kingdom

VP – Vice President