



**Managing cross-cultural negotiations in the current
Northern Iraq International Business environment:
An exploratory study.**

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Master of Business**

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Northern Iraq International Business environment: An
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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
List of Tables.....	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Ethics Approval.....	vi
Abstract	vii
Introduction	1
Background of the Study	1
The Land and People of Modern Iraq	3
Latest developments – economic, social and cultural change in northern Iraq after 2003	5
Aims of This Research.....	6
Organisation of the Study	7
Literature Review	8
Introduction.....	8
Negotiation Goal.....	9
Negotiation Attitude.....	10
Communication.....	12
View of Time	14
Emotionalism	15
Risk Propensity	17
Summary	19
Research Design.....	20
Research aim.....	20
Philosophical Approach.....	21
Data Collection	23
The interview questions	24
Interview process	26
Secondary data	27
Participant sampling.....	27
Sample size and demographics	28
Analytic Approach	29
Limitations	31

Ethical Considerations	31
Summary	32
Results and Discussion.....	33
Theme 1. Goal of Business Negotiations: When Negotiating What Are Your Goals?.....	34
Theme 2. Attitude Towards Negotiation: What is Your Attitude Towards Negotiations?.....	37
Theme 3. Methods of Communication: During Your Negotiations, How Do You Communicate With Your Opposite?.....	39
Theme 4. Sensitivity to Time: What Value Does Time Have For You When Negotiating?.....	41
Theme 5. Emotionalism: When Negotiating What Is Your Opinion of Emotions at The Negotiation Table?.....	44
Theme 6. Willingness to Take Risks: Do You Feel Comfortable in Taking Risks?.....	47
Summary of Findings.....	49
Conclusions	51
Limitations of the Study.....	53
Implications and Recommendations for Future Research	54
Reference List	56
Appendices.....	73

List of tables

Table 1: Interview questions	24
Table 2: Details of the participants	8
Table 3: Phases of grounded theory	29
Table 4: Themes identified through analysis of the research data	33

Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

AUTHOR SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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Ethics Approval

Ethics approval for this research was granted by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 24th May 2013, approval number **13/94**.

Managing Cross-Cultural Negotiations in the Current Northern International Business Environment

Abstract

This study investigates factors that impact cross-cultural negotiations in the current international business environment of northern Iraq. In spite of considerable political volatility between the Kurdish regional government and the central government in Baghdad the region has attracted significant attention from Western companies targeting its rich oil resources. Therefore the focus of this small, qualitative study is on cross-cultural negotiations in the current IB environment. Eight in-depth interviews with negotiators from Western and Kurdish-Iraqi backgrounds were conducted to explore the differences in negotiation practices in this interesting region. The data from these in-depth and semi-structured interviews were then analysed through a modified grounded theory approach. The findings of this study showed specific behaviour patterns which are discussed in relation to the extant literature on intercultural negotiation. Major points of difference in the negotiating styles are the differing time expectations, motivational goals, communication approach and emotionalism. The variations in the underlying cultural concepts are explicit in the area of cross-cultural negotiation. These disparities are reflected in the negotiation goals and attitudes which either favour higher economic outcomes or the development of more general positive business relationships. Considering the limited number of studies on cross-cultural negotiations in Iraq, the identified negotiation patterns provide valuable insights into the local intercultural negotiation practices. Knowing these differences in negotiation behaviour shapes expectations of Western and local negotiators in the Kurdistan region. This initial research project should be seen as a first step in the attempt to expand the knowledge of negotiation practices in the area.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In an increasingly global business environment the success of international business relationships depends on effective business negotiations. Managers must interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds and who have different values, behavioural norms and ways of perceiving reality (Adler, 2002). Many misunderstandings and breakdowns in intercultural negotiations result from expectations about the negotiations that were not shared by all parties involved (Adler, 1986). Differences in culture can influence the way people from other cultures conduct themselves in negotiating sessions and how they conceive the very nature and function of negotiation itself (Weiss, 1994). In other words, in international business, cross-cultural negotiations harbour cultural differences which are inevitable between negotiators from different backgrounds. This diversity of values leads to different approaches and styles used in the negotiation process. Most individuals believe that the other negotiator shares their “common sense” assumptions which, to them, are familiar and unquestioned when negotiating inside their own culture. There is also the general perception that when their counterparts act unexpectedly in international negotiations that they are less committed (Kimmel, 1994). Therefore, to develop a less presumptive approach to intercultural negotiations one requires insights into the subjective cultures and communication habits that foreign individuals acquire as a result of their socialisation (Kimmel, 1994.) One has better success in cross-cultural negotiations by understanding the other negotiating party and so it is important to learn about intercultural encounters and recognise their differences.

Background of the Study

When US forces invaded Iraq in 2003 they found, among other issues, a poor infrastructure in an oil industry that produced about one million barrels per day. This was only a fraction of the country’s output in the late 1980s (Walt, 2013). The country was bankrupt due to decades of sanctions and fighting. This was astonishing

in a resource-rich country with a proven 143.1 billion barrels of oil reserves, the fifth largest reserve in the world. Now, more than a decade later, the economic situation in the country is improving. In 2012 Iraq produced more than three million barrels per day which was their highest level of production in decades (Walt, 2013). The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates in their report entitled *Iraq Energy Outlook*, that the daily output could rise to 8.3 million barrels per day in 2035 and exceed the current production levels of Saudi Arabia (IEA, 2012). In addition the IEA expects that Iraq is highly likely to become the biggest contributor to world oil supplies and this has the potential to transform the country into a major power in global trade (IEA, 2012).

Recent discoveries of natural oil resources that are said to exceed predictions sparked interest in the economy of the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan-Iraq (The Economist, 2013). The Kurdistan regional government (KRG) estimates that the oil reserves in their territory at about 45 billion barrels of oil along with about 10 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, with the number of new discoveries being increasingly rare in the world (Walt, 2013). This potential has led to more than 50 international companies, including Exxon Mobil, Chevron, Hess, Marathon, HKN Energy, Gazprom Neft, Total and several Turkish companies, to sign deals with the KRG. The KRG offers more favourable production-sharing agreements than the central government in Baghdad. The region has its own president, prime minister and parliament. The population speaks Kurdish but they are nonetheless still part of Iraq (Walt, 2013). According to the KRG the GDP growth for the economy is likely to increase by eight per cent per year till 2016. Thus, there are good reasons for Western companies to invest in Kurdistan. This is so despite the escalating tensions with the central government that suspects that the KRG is trying to use their new-found oil wealth to create a breakaway state (Walt, 2013).

Recent attempts by the KRG to gain their sovereignty and create a Kurdish state separate from the central government in Baghdad heightens the need to understand how the population in the Kurdistan region differentiates itself from the rest of the country. Considering the differences in culture between the Kurdish and Arab population of Iraq it is important to investigate the cultural factors that influence intercultural negotiations in this region. This study undertakes to examine the

different factors that can be observed in intercultural negotiations in the oil industry of northern Iraq. The aim is to identify patterns of specific actions that enable international managers to successfully conduct negotiations in this region. This study might help to stimulate further research in order to develop effective strategies and tactics to operate in the Kurdish business environment and to make negotiations more successful.

The Land and People of Modern Iraq

The state of Iraq is a creation of the twentieth century, brought into being by politicians and external forces. The area of Iraq includes a few semi-autonomous areas and is home to several diverse cultural groups that all shape the identity of contemporary Iraq. This cultural diversity has been a strength as well as a challenge in harnessing Iraq's rich resources and the mixture of its inhabitants has been a preoccupation of Iraq's leaders in the past as well as in the present (Marr, 2012).

Marr (2012) has suggested that, although Iraq is internationally recognised as a state, it is not possible to speak of an Iraqi nation. The diverse population forms neither a single community in a political sense nor do they have a common sense of identity yet. The different ethnicities cause a fundamental demographic divide which is obvious in the different parts of the population. Arabic speakers constitute of 75 to 80 per cent of the population; Kurdish speakers make up 15 to 20 per cent (Marr, 2012). The Arabs dominate the western desert and the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates from Basra to the Mosul plain, and the Kurds have their territory in the mountain terrain of the north and east and the foothills that adjoin it. It is estimated that in 2011 the Kurdish population of Iraq was just over 6 million. However, the Iraqi Kurds are only one part of the entire Kurdish population with whom they identify on linguistic, cultural and nationalistic grounds (Marr, 2012). So far, the Kurdish population does not have a state of their own and is living in various countries as an ethnic diaspora, a situation where they suffer considerable discrimination. Other areas with a Kurdish population include Turkey – 13 million, or 19 per cent of Turkey's population – nine million in Iran, two million in Syria and smaller numbers in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Europe (Marr, 2012). The population in Iraq is also divided along religious lines between the two dominant

sects of Islam, Shi'a and Sunni. However, as the majority of Kurdish people are Sunni, this division mostly impacts the Arabs; religious differences have segmented into three distinct communities: Arab Shi'a, Arab Sunnis and the Kurds (Marr, 2012).

Over centuries Shi'a Islam has had its stronghold in southern Iraq, as the Arab tribes migrated from the Arabian Peninsula during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Today the Shi'a are the largest single group in Iraq, even outnumbering the Arab Sunnis by a ratio of three to one, and constitute the majority group in the total population (Marr, 2012). During the Sunni Ottoman administration in the sixteenth century, the Iraqi Shi'a were excluded from administrative positions, the military and the educational institutions. As a result, over the course of time, the Shi'a became alienated from the Sunni governments (Marr, 2012).

By contrast, the Arab Sunnis in Iraq tend to be more secular and more urbanised than their Shi'a counterparts and their communal identity is less developed. But, despite their minority status, the Arab Sunnis have dominated the political and social life of Iraq since the sixteenth century (Marr, 2012). It is estimated that the Arab Sunnis account for 15 to 20 per cent of the population. They are almost entirely situated in the cities and towns of the central and Northern provinces (Marr, 2012). Bigger numbers of Sunnis also settled in some selected cities in the south including Basra. The displacement of the Sunni government in 2003 by a new Shi'a leadership was a social and political change of major proportions and sparked hostilities between the two sects (Marr, 2012).

The Kurds, due to their numbers, geographic concentration, cultural and linguistic identity, have always proved the most difficult of Iraq's people to assimilate (Marr, 2012). The Kurdish people speak an Indo-European language similar to Persian. Their development in the twentieth century was based on language, close tribal ties, customs and a shared history inspired by Kurdish nationalist movements. The majority of the Kurdish population is centred in Erbil, its political hub, and the intellectual centre of Sulaymaniya (Marr, 2012). Local wars and actions taken by the Iraqi government under Saddam Hussein forced a migration of the Kurdish population and resulted in the resettlement of the large, country population in cities and towns (Marr, 2012). Aside from the three major demographic groups there are

also several smaller ethnic and religious groups such as Turkmen, Shi'i Persians, Shi'i Kurds, Jews and Christians (Chaldeans, Assyrians, Armenian, Jacobites, Greek Orthodox, Greek, Catholic and Latin Catholic) (Marr, 2012)

Latest developments – economic, social and cultural change in northern Iraq after 2003

Before 2003, Iraq's political, economic and social structure had deteriorated gradually under the regime of Saddam Hussein but the American intervention brought about a complete and immediate political and social collapse. As there was no clear direction for the future, the dismantling of the previous political and military structures led to the creation of a political and social vacuum. Consequently, Iraq soon began to fracture into its different ethnic and sectarian components (Marr, 2012).

While the devastation affected Arab areas, the Kurds strengthened their position in the north. Between 2006 and 2010, the Kurds used their well-developed security apparatus sealing off their area and maintaining a zone of relative peace. In this new-found "Iraqi Kurdistan" political leaders expanded the economy and undertook the development of their political, social and cultural institutions (Marr, 2012). The leaders of Kurdistan deliberately set their region apart from the rest of Iraq and the new Iraqi constitution. This included that the KRG recognized as a region with legal authority.

The discoveries of new oil and gas resources in the three provinces were recognised by the Iraqi constitution as constituting the KRG (Marr, 2012). By September 2008, the KRG had signed over twenty foreign oil and gas contracts. Consequently a dispute with the central government arose over the issue of who has control over the oil resources and whether the KRG has the right to conclude independent oil contracts in its territory. The KRG, driven by the desire to develop an independent oil sector in their territory, had a different attitude towards foreign direct investment. The KRG was more "market friendly" than the central government and was willing to entice international companies with better terms and conditions. After several attempts to reconcile these differences the central government refused to legally

recognise any contracts concluded by the KRG (Marr, 2012). In addition, the central government announced that it would bar any international company with a contract in the north from bidding for their oil fields in the south. In June 2007, the central government and the KRG agreed on a revenue-sharing deal and the central government established a fund for oil revenues, automatically transferring 17 per cent of the revenues to the KRG.

By 2009, economic dependency on the central government had become a dominant issue for the KRG and achieving not only political and military but economic independence had become an important goal. Nevertheless, oil was not the only economic front the KRG advanced and made vigorous efforts to attract direct foreign investments and succeeded in a number of areas. Turkey, Iran and the United Arab Emirates responded, among others, and the Kurds were also assured by the central government of 17 per cent of the national Iraqi budget (Marr, 2009). Kurdish development expenditure went into infrastructure, education, health and services, attempting to establish a northern social and cultural capital.

Meanwhile, the Kurds also continued their efforts to establish an independent identity for their region and underpin it with cultural and historical foundations (Marr, 2012). In order to set itself apart, the KRG altered the school curriculum and substituted Kurdish history and culture for the Arabic content which was compulsory under the regime of Saddam Hussein. This created a younger generation of Kurds that is essentially unable to read or speak Arabic which is the official language in the rest of Iraq (Marr, 2012). The growing ethnic divide between the Kurds and the Arab areas of the country, based mainly on language and growing institutional separation in the north, will make the solution of economic and political problems with the central government more difficult in the future.

Aims of This Research

The aim of this study is to explore how cross-cultural negotiations between Western and Kurdish-Iraqi senior managers are conducted in the international business environment of northern Iraq. In order to attain this goal, the current research focuses on one objective. This objective is to investigate and explore the six factors of

cultural difference that normally impact cross-cultural negotiations elsewhere. These differences will be explored in the social interactions between Kurdish-Iraqi and Western senior managers.

The study involves interviews with eight senior managers from various backgrounds who have experience with cross-cultural negotiations due to their jobs and positions. These interviews will be transcribed and grounded theory and coding technique will be used to analyse the data.

Given the limited amount of empirical research in the field of intercultural negotiation in Iraq, the contribution of this study lies in the gathering of empirical data and subsequent knowledge creation. The study should provide valuable insights into the local intercultural negotiation practices. The implications are of concern to Western and local negotiators when shaping expectations about the differences in negotiation approaches.

Organisation of the Study

This dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter outlines the focus of this study by providing background. It also explains the rationale behind the selection of this region along with describing the context and ethnicity in Iraq and the Kurdistan region.

Chapter two reviews relevant existing literature and elaborates on the cultural factors that impact cross-cultural negotiations.

Chapter three explains the research method and design approach used in this study. The chapter also describes the data collection and analysis process, including the sampling process.

Chapter four presents findings and discusses them in detail in light of the literature review. Six main themes emerged that show how the cultural factors impact cross-cultural negotiations.

Chapter five provides the conclusions of this study. It summarises the findings of this research, discusses limitations and provides directions for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Studies to investigate cultural factors that impact cross-cultural negotiations seem to be complex and the developments in the academic field are dynamic. As suggested by Manrai and Manrai (2012), a great variety of conceptual models and frameworks have been proposed by researchers (Brett, 2000; Foster, 1992; Ghauri & Usunier 1996; Graham, 1985; Salacuse, 1991; Sawyer & Guetzko, 1965; Usunier, 1996; Weiss, 1994) to determine the relationship between culture and international business negotiations. There is a certain density in this research area and a lack of agreement among scholars. This becomes obvious when determining what cultural factors influence cross-cultural negotiations in the current Iraqi international business environment. This research attempts to identify the main themes from cultural factors that impact cross-cultural negotiation.

A single theory or model does not seem to be fully able to cover all the cultural differences that influence cross-cultural negotiation in the current international business environment in Iraq . Consequently, this study attempts to adapt the theoretical frameworks by Salacuse, 1991; Hall, 1989 and Hofstede 2001, in order to explore the cultural differences. The focus is on the comparison of Kurdish-Iraqi and Western senior managers operating in the oil industry of northern Iraq. The researcher expects that combining the different characteristics of these frameworks will assist to uncover cultural patterns of negotiation in the current international business environment of Iraq.

The research design developed here incorporates all of what has been considered by previous studies to explain differences in culture between negotiators. It also investigates aspects that have been neglected by past studies, such as negotiation styles. Following these frameworks the research leads to six characteristics to explain cultural factors in international business negotiations: negotiation goal, negotiation attitude, communication, view of time, emotionalism and risk propensity. I define this as my research model of the cultural factors that have significant influence on negotiation behaviour. More explanations of the proposed theoretical

model are presented in the later sections of the literature review to discuss the connection between the dimensions shown in the model below and the intercultural negotiation process.

Negotiation Goal

Many studies consider negotiations a goal-directed communication process through which interdependent parties seek to achieve a mutually satisfactory outcome (Putnam & Roloff, 1992; Meina, 2011). Negotiators often enter a negotiation with motivational goals, which influence their cognitive schemas such as perception of fairness, information processing and negotiation outcomes (De Dreu & Van Lang, 1995; Van Kleef & De Dreu, 2004; Tjosvold, 1998; Carnevale & Probst, 1998). In general, the previous findings regarding negotiator motivation have noted that it is associated with cultural values but little research has assessed how culture may differ in the ways in which negotiator goals and motives influence their actions in the bargaining process. Moreover, a few studies in relation to negotiation goals have found that cultures influence on cognition and behaviour is complex and contextual (Adair et al., 2003; Brett & Okumara, 1998, Liu, 2008).

Recent research identified that negotiators need to compete and cooperate with each other to maximize their individual and joint profits and tend to pursue multiple and sometimes conflicting goals that are not only oriented towards a tangible benefit but also to attain or maintain a relationship with their counterpart (Keck & Samp, 2007; Meina & Wilson, 2011; Wilson & Putnam, 1990). Numerous studies emphasised that the relationship between negotiating parties often interacts with collectivism and individualism in activating domain specific cultural schemas to guide the negotiator's choice. Cultures that are more sensitive to relationships and subtle changes in situations can adopt different approaches when the relational contexts change (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001; Morris & Fu, 2011).

Several studies found that in conditions in which the negotiator is highly accountable for the outcome, collectivism promotes cooperative behaviour, whereas in low accountability conditions, collectivism is negatively associated with cooperative behaviour (Gelfand & Realo, 1999; Meina & Wilson, 2011). For example, Gelfand

and Realo (1999) noted that for members of collectivist cultures negotiation is a situation that involves openly confronting the other party concerning issues and is therefore inherently competitive. There is evidence that unless a norm-enhancement mechanism – such as a negotiator’s accountability to others – is activated, collectivist negotiators will exhibit the collectivism-based, culturally typical cooperation (Meina & Wilson, 2011).

A few studies found that negotiators also pursue identity and relational goals that may change, impede or facilitate their instrumental goals and are found to have a significant influence on a negotiator’s strategic choice as well as negotiation outcomes (Liu & Wang, 2010; Wilson & Putnam, 1990). Recent research by Meina and Wilson (2011) found these interactional goals arise from contextual features of a bargaining situation; the motivational orientation and strength of these goals are found to have a significant influence on a negotiators strategic choice as well as negotiation outcomes. In addition, goal pursuit may differ across cultures as parties with the same set of goals and motives are likely to prompt different behavioural sequences for members of different cultures (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001; Meina, 2011, Morris & Fu, 2001).

Negotiation Attitude

A large number of studies investigated the individual differences in distributive and integrative negotiation (Neale & Northcraft, 1989; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993; Lewicki et al. 1994; Hermann & Kogan, 1977; Rubin & Brown, 1975; Terhune, 1970). Several researchers theorised that personality characteristics explain why bargainers behave the way they do during a negotiation encounter (Barry & Friedman, 1998; Rubin & Brown, 1975). The findings of Rubin and Brown (1975), suggested that negotiators enter into a relationship with the other party in which they bring variations of prior experience, background and expectations that may affect the manner and effectiveness with which a negotiation is conducted. However, some researchers consider that there is inconsistent support for the personality and negotiation relationship link (Barry & Friedman, 1998; Wall & Blum, 1991; Greenhalgh 1985; Rubin & Brown, 1975).

Previous research has suggested that the inconsistencies in the personality-negotiation research can be attributed to the negotiator's culture as culture provides negotiators with a foundation for managing social exchanges (Brett & Okumura, 1998). Early studies by Hall and Hall (1987), found that meaningful interactions only occur through the medium of culture. Studies indicate that the negotiation behaviour of individuals vary due to the underlying differences inherent in each other's culture that provide order and direction to human interaction (Clark, 1990; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Limaye & Victor, 1991; McCrae, 2000).

In addition Parnell & Kedia (1996) observed that the attitudes, laws, values and traditions embedded in the cultural context of negotiators impact on the various stages of the bargaining activity. There is evidence that Hall's (1989), high/low communication context and Hofstede's (1993), individualism/ collectivism dimensions have decisive implications for the negotiation encounter (Cai et al., 2000; Morris et al., 1998; Graham et al., 1994; Mintu-Wimsatt, 2002).

For example, studies conducted by Gelfand and Christakopoulou (1999), found that individualism refers to the tendency to address self-serving concerns and individualists' elaborate self-knowledge instead of knowledge about others. In a similar vein Cai et al. (2000), reported that collectivists promote interdependence with others and focus on relational harmony and protection of group interests.

The findings of Perdue and Summers (1991), suggested that negotiators are often faced with two basic strategies: problem-solving and aggressive bargaining. Likewise, some studies have shown that problem-solving or integrative strategies yield win-win outcomes whereas distributive strategies typically generate win-lose situations (Goering, 1997; Perdue & Summers, 1991; Walton & McKersie, 1965). Due to the positive outcome generated by problem-solving bargaining numerous studies have focused on this approach and comparatively few studies have been conducted on distributive bargaining (Mintu-Wimsatt, 2002).

Similarly, the research of Goering (1997) identified that, for the integrative problem-solving, strategy communication is a critical aspect. It has been widely observed that the problem-solving approach embodies cooperative behaviours that allow negotiators to gather additional information and to correct misperceptions of the other parties' interests (Barry & Friedman, 1998; Perdue & Summers, 1991).

Similarly, it has been observed that the problem-solving approach represents certain attitudes such as the negotiator's willingness to make concessions or to adapt to the concessions of the other party (Graham et al., 1994; Westbrook, Gosh & Dev, 1996). Most of the research regarding the problem-solving approach suggests that negotiation parties cooperate with each other to secure mutually beneficial outcomes by identification of common goals (Perdue & Summers, 1991; Perdue, 1992; Walton & McKersie, 1965; Goering, 1997). Evidence suggests that the problem-solving approach is beneficial to establish and maintain successful long-term relationships.

Communication

Over the past decade numerous studies examined the meaning and context of negotiations and how culture shapes the substance of communication (Adair et al., 2001; Brett & Okumura, 1998; Cohen, 1997; Fisher et al., 1991; Kopelman & Olekalns, 1999; Leung, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In general, the findings of previous work often defined negotiations as a back and forth communication process with the aim of reaching mutually beneficial outcomes (Adair et al., 2001; Brett & Okumura, 1998; Kopelman & Olekalns, 1999).

Many studies supported the idea that differences in communication styles are often considered as barriers towards integrative processes and negotiation outcomes (Buttery & Leung, 1998; Drake, 2001; Morris et al., 1998; Putnam & Jones, 1982). In addition, the research of Putnam and Jones (1982), showed that communication can serve both integrative and distributive functions in the negotiation process. Some studies reported that, of the many dimensions of cultural variability, the most relevant findings of the negotiation literature have been individualism-collectivism, power distance, communication context and conception of time (Brett & Okumura, 1998; Cohen, 1997; Leung, 1997). Some researchers found that communication is not only concerned with how interaction is shaped by cultural values but also by contextual factors (Hunter, 1998; Kim, Shin & Cai, 1998).

The early findings of Hall (1989) on the cultural context of communication pioneered a vast array of research on the impact of context on the negotiation encounter. For example Hall (1989), discovered in his studies that low

communication cultures use explicit, direct language compared to high communication context cultures that use explicit indirect language. The research of Simintrais and Thomas (1998) indicated that low-context cultures rely on formal communication that is often expressed verbally with the informal context being less important in understanding the message. Similarly, studies conducted by Keegan (1989), suggested that in high-context cultures less information is contained in verbal expression and therefore context variables such as values and position in society need to be considered to comprehend the message. As a result the message is bound to the implicit context in which it is delivered (Keegan, 1989).

In addition, a number of researchers reported that under conflict conditions, low-context communication negotiators are likely to rely more on direct verbal strategies while high-context negotiators may employ more indirect communication approaches including third party intervention for tension reduction (Augsburger, 1992; Cohen, 1997). Moreover, Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1988) suggested that low-context conflict communication aims clearly to state the speaker's true intentions while high-context communication focuses on concealing the speaker's true intentions.

In a similar vein, communication research supports the idea that individualistic cultures tend to stress the value of directness in their communication approach and verbalise their individual wants and needs, while members of collectivist cultures tend to stress the value of contemplative talk and discretion in voicing their opinions and feelings (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kim 1994; Trubisky et al., 1991). Likewise, the findings of Trubisky et al. (1991) suggested that negotiators from individualistic cultures tend to prefer direct conflict communication and solution-oriented styles, emphasising the values of autonomy, competitiveness and the need of control. Whereas representatives of collectivist cultures tend to prefer obliging and conflict avoidance styles that emphasise the value for maintaining relational harmony in conflict interactions.

In general, research on negotiation and communication supports the idea that communication has a positive impact on integrative negotiation as judgment errors are corrected through information exchange aimed at exposing the mutual compatibilities of the parties (Cross, 1977; Pruitt & Lewis, 1975; Tutzauer & Roloff,

1988). For example, Thompson (1990) found that negotiators who sought information about others' priorities achieved higher profits. According to their results, information-seeking was positively reciprocated and, even when only one side shared information, joint profits improved.

View of Time

A large number of studies reported that the concept of time and the value of time vary across different cultures and can have a considerable impact on cross-cultural negotiations (Bhagat & Leonard, 2002; Bluedorn, Kaufman & Lane, 1992; Foster, 1992; Hall & Hall, 1987; McDevitt, 2006; Ting-Toomey, 1999). In general, previous findings regarding the cultural view of time found that time has a direct effect on the negotiation process. The reason for this is that some cultures consider time as a limited resource and therefore a valuable commodity that should be used wisely. Specified time frames are important to these cultures. By contrast other cultures, such as Kuwait, Egypt etc. view time as boundless and plentiful and their approach to the negotiation process may be somewhat slow. For example, Hofstede (1993) found that American negotiators view time as a scarce commodity and thus it should be used with maximum efficiency. In comparison Japanese and other Asian counterparts consider time in terms of the long-term perspective.

The early findings of Hall and Hall (1987), suggested that polychronic cultures take longer to make decisions. They do not discriminate among issues or does they prioritise them according to a Western logical flow. McDevitt (2006) observed in her research that in polychronic cultures all matters receive full attention at the time they come up, which can cause a delay in the negotiation process. According to Hall and Hall (1987), monochronic cultures perceive and use time in a linear way, allowing a person to concentrate on one issue at a time. In addition, some researchers found individualistic cultures tend to be associated with monochronic time, whereas collective cultures embrace polychronic time (Hofstede and Usunier, 1996).

Numerous studies reported that a culture's attitude towards time determines the importance placed on the development of interpersonal relationships in business (Adler, 1986; Boone & Kurtz, 1996; Bovee & Thill, 1995; Foster, 1992; Hall, 1989).

For example, Ting-Toomey (1999), reported that in polychronic cultures more emphasis is placed on forming relationships rather than holding to a tight schedule. The reason for this is that in polychronic cultures time is experienced as much less tangible as in monochronic cultures (Ting-Toomey, 1999). By contrast, some researchers found that monochronic cultures with their time consciousness give less priority to building long-term relationships.

It has been widely observed that monochronic cultures are concerned with causality and argument and communication are based on the need for logic (Adler, 2002; Boone & Kurtz, 1996; Bovee & Thill, 1995; Foster, 1992). In addition, numerous studies reported that polychronic societies are concerned with equilibrium and argument and general communication are based on the need for balance, emphasising the here and now (Boone & Kurtz, 1996; Bovee & Thill, 1995; Gudykunst & Kim, 1992; Harcourt, 1996; Ober 1995). In addition, the above studies found that individuals from monochronic cultures tend to focus on agenda setting, objective criteria and deadlines to accomplish goals. By contrast, several studies found that polychronic cultures focus their attention on improving the relational and contextual elements that frame the negotiation (Boone & Kurtz, 1996; Bovee & Thill, 1995; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Ober 1995).

Studies conducted by Mayfield et al., (1997) found that the preference of monochronic cultures for linearity and logic appears to be one-dimensional and sterile to polychronic cultures. By contrast monochronic cultures have been reported to find polychronic cultures illogical and unproductive.

Emotionalism

Many research studies assessed the role emotions play in negotiation. They report that due to the influence on cognition and communication it has a practical impact on negotiators' behaviour, the negotiation process and outcomes (Allred et al., 1997; Allred, 2000; Butt et al., 2005; Davidson & Greenhalgh, 1999; Kopelman et al., 2006; Morris & Keltner, 2000; Thompson, Nadler & Kim, 1999). A large number of studies recorded the beneficial and unfavourable effect of emotions on joint outcomes but few empirical studies assessed how culture interacts with emotions in

shaping individual behaviour choices in negotiation situations (Carnevale & Isen, 1986; Van Kleef & De Dreu, 2002; De Dreu, Manstead & Van Kleef, 2004; Liu, 2008). However, it has been widely observed that the interpersonal effects of emotions can be used to strategically influence the other party in order to achieve substantive or relational goals in negotiation (Adler et al., 2002; Kopelman et al., 2006).

Early studies identified that the conflict and bargaining that occurs during negotiations has an inherent affective component and emotional reactions such as distress or anger are often experienced during the negotiation process (Purdy, 1967; Walton & McKersie, 1965). The research of Adler (1986), suggested that the emergence of negative spirals in cross-cultural negotiations that cause increasingly negative emotional reactions in negotiators will hurt the negotiation process and often bring it to an end. For example Kumar (1979), found in his study observing negotiations between Japanese and US negotiators that negative feelings in negotiations cause less cooperative and more hostile interactions. This makes it less likely to reach integrative bargaining solutions. Conversely, Van Kleef et al., (2002) found through computer-mediated tests that negotiators with an angry counterpart make more concessions than did those with a non-emotional counterpart.

The research of Mesquita and Frijida (1992) on the relationship of culture and emotion identified important differences in the way emotion is expressed across cultures. According to their results cultures differ in the degree to which emotional expressiveness and emotional restraints are valued and practiced in social interactions around negotiations. For example, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) reported that members of cultures that are emotionally expressive tend to visibly demonstrate their feelings through body posture and facial expressions. They suggested that emotionally expressive cultures tend to value affective engagement and involvement in communicating with others. By contrast, Ting-Toomey (1999), reported in her work that members of cultural systems valuing emotional restraint tend to contain, hide, mask or minimise more overt emotional expressions.

Studies have shown that negotiators respond to expressed anger by their counterparts in either displaying similar behaviour or demonstrating complimentary behaviour that is viewed necessary to maintain the interaction (Butt et al., 2005). According to

recent research by Liu (2008) anger may convey the impression that a negotiator will not settle for a suboptimal outcome by pressing the counterpart to be less committed to original positions but also the counterpart will lose motivation to explore creative options for mutual gains. Research by Allred et al., (1997) suggested that when a bargaining situation has potential for “win-win” outcomes, tendencies suggest a less productive bargaining dynamic with smaller joint gains and less desire to work in the future. Whereas some studies reported that in highly competitive situations it may increase the chance of premature impasses and allow the angry negotiator to gain the upper hand (Pillutla & Murningham, 1996; Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006).

However, the research by Lewicki et al., (2010) supported the idea that negotiators either adopt a distributive approach and focus on claiming more value for themselves or use an integrative approach to create more value for both parties. There is evidence that distributive strategies – including threats, positional commitments and persuasive arguments – tend to yield win-lose outcomes and smaller joint profits (Pruitt & Lewis, 1975). In addition, Thompson (1990) found that integrative strategies such as information exchange, multiple-item offers and relationship-building tend to yield win-win outcomes, higher joint profits and greater desire to cooperate in the future.

Risk Propensity

Numerous studies reported that risk and uncertainty are generally present in the context of negotiations and differences and the perception of risk has direct implications for the exchange of negotiators (Neal & Bazerman, 1992; Deutsch, 1973; Warner, 1995; Weber, 1994; Markowitz, 1959; Weber & Hsee, 1998; Ordonez et al., 2009). In general, previous research supports the idea that uncertainty avoidance describes a culture’s attitude towards risk and uncertainty regardless of whether it embraces or attempts to develop mechanisms to control and limit the uncertainty (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983; Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede & Bond, 1984; Hofstede, 1993; Hofstede, 2001; Bond & Luk, 1993).

The findings of Hofstede (1993) suggested that in high-uncertainty avoidance cultures individuals are motivated by security and desire to control and predict the

future whereas in low-uncertainty avoidance cultures individuals accept the future. They are motivated by success and are more willing to take risks. Douglas and Wildavsky (1983) found that each society has a general preference for certainty versus uncertainty and risk avoidance versus risk seeking. In addition, Douglas and Wildavsky (1983), defined risk as a set of social processes that is understood through cultural analysis and interpretation. The reason for this is that each type of risk is exaggerated or minimised, feared or embraced according to the social and cultural acceptability of the underlying activities.

Early research suggested that certain organisational cultures are found to systematically encourage or discourage risky behaviour of individual members or developed institutionalised responses to risk (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983; Heath et al., 1999). In similar vein, March and Shapira (1992) identified that an organisation's control systems serve to influence the risk behaviour of individual members and reward the outcomes achieved and the processes used in the risky decision-making.

Likewise, some studies at group level establish substantial congruence between a society's value orientation towards risk and the nature and the degree of decision shifts enacted by groups (Carlson & Davis, 1971; Neale & Bazerman, 1992; Stoner, 1968). Generally the above studies reported that cultures that value risk-taking will become more risky in their group decisions and cultures that value risk aversion will become more careful in their group decisions. For example, Teger and Pruitt (1967) observed that the American culture values risk and Americans believe themselves to be risk-takers but have observed that other cultures have similar levels of risk-taking.

Some researchers found that an individual's cultural orientation towards handling risks in specific contexts tends to persist over time, forming a relatively stable pattern (Brockhaus, 1980; Wallach & Kogan, 1965; Slovic, 1964; Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). Conversely, Slovic (1964) reported in his research that risk orientation is not a unified characteristic or trait. For example, Goering (1997) discovered that groups within the same culture were shown to shift in both directions depending on the specific situation or the specific problem.

A few studies found that propensity towards risk is an individual variable that has been found to affect negotiation processes and outcomes (Locke & Latham, 2002;

Neale & Bazerman, 1985; Sherman & Kiresuk, 1968; Shure & Meeker, 1967; Thompson, 1990). For example, Farber and Katz (1979) reported that goals reflecting a risk adverse orientation were found to increase concessionary behaviour and increase joint gains in negotiations, while goals reflecting risk-seeking orientation increased contentious behaviour. In addition, some studies found that negotiators that consider negotiations as a win-win process were found to be more risk averse, while win-lose negotiators were found to be more risk seeking (Neale & Bazerman, 1985, Ordonez et al., 2009).

Summary

Research into cross-cultural negotiation suggests a great variety of conceptual models and frameworks which have helped to determine the relationship between culture and international business negotiations to this date. The complexity of this area and the lack of agreement among scholars are obvious when asking what are the cultural factors that influence cross-cultural negotiations in the current international business environment in Iraq. Despite the lack of agreement in the research, certain key cultural themes have emerged which have been described in this chapter.

In this chapter, the researcher followed the suggestions and theoretical frameworks by Hall, (1989), Hofstede (2001) and Salacuse (1991) in order to structure the literature review and look at cultural factors that influence cross-cultural negotiations. Following these theoretical frameworks, six main factors that impact cross-cultural negotiations were identified: negotiation goal, negotiation attitude, communication, view of time, emotionalism and risk propensity. A close look shows that the majority of these concepts are inter-linked.

For this reason the participants in this study were asked to reveal their attitude towards these cultural factors. It was hoped that the application and adaption of the three frameworks would lead to comprehensive and reliable findings concerning the cultural factors that influence cross-cultural negotiations in this environment. The next chapter will explain how the research project is designed and how the data was collected

Chapter 3

Research Design

This chapter on the research design outlines for the reader the value and validity of the research and its contribution to the body of knowledge (Creswell, 2002). Sekaran (2003) defined research design as an academically established regulatory framework with the intention of collecting and evaluating existing knowledge in order to arrive at, and validate, new knowledge. Mishler (1990) suggested (as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 5), that “No study conforms exactly to a standard methodology; each one calls for the researcher to bend the methodology to the peculiarities of the setting.” According to Cooper and Schindler (1998), the quality and value of research is determined by the extent to which the methodology is articulated, as well as the selection of the most appropriate research approach. Thus, this chapter outlines the research design and justifies the methodology adopted to collect and process the data for this study.

This chapter also introduces and discusses the methodological approach adopted for this study as well as the analytical approach used for the data collection and analysis of the material.

Research aim

Research scholars have identified exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and prescriptive purposes for the research activity (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000). This current research adopts an exploratory approach and aims to match the research questions to the research objectives.

According to Saunders et al. (2000), exploratory research can be conducted through structured and semi-structured interviews with expert informants. The design of the research and interview questions is based on a review of the relevant literature. The main purpose of exploratory research is the exploration of a complex research problem or phenomenon with the intention to clarify the identified problems. It can also investigate the nature of a selected phenomenon while uncovering new knowledge (Robson, 2002). The research intention is explorative: A research

question has been formulated: “How are cross-cultural negotiations managed in the current international business environment of northern Iraq.?” In order to answer this question it was necessary to explore the variables that normally influence cross-cultural negotiations. Thus, the review of the relevant literature has formed the basis of this project. The analysis of the data that was collected will be a primary focus of this project.

According to Creswell (2003) the selection of the research approach is an essential decision that influences the quality of the study. It gives the researcher the opportunity to consider different approaches to satisfy the objectives and limit the study. The approach chosen in this research was to target individuals from local area with Iraqi and Western cultural backgrounds. These individuals are operating in senior management positions in the oil industry of northern Iraq or for the Kurdish Ministry of Natural Resources (KMNR). Participants were selected from a KMNR-issued list of companies, providing oil and gas related services in the Kurdistan region. Participants were divided into two groups, a local Kurdish-Iraqi and an aggregate Western group. All candidates had been working in the region between 7 and 37 years. All participants had experience with the local culture and local negotiation practices. Eight in-depth interviews with members of this target group were conducted. These interviews provide sufficient data to identify themes of concern. The themes showed commonalities with the themes from the intercultural negotiation literature. The researcher identified that there is a knowledge gap concerning research on the impact of culture on cross-cultural negotiations. This is particularly so concerning the international business environment of northern Iraq and little has been published to date. Therefore, the findings of this study are interesting and will contribute new knowledge and to the literature and theoretical developments on intercultural negotiation.

Philosophical Approach

The philosophical assumptions that a researcher adopts shapes the use of abstract ideas and beliefs that inform the research (Creswell, 2013). As suggested by Myers, (2009), the most pertinent philosophical assumptions are those that relate to the underlying epistemology or ontology that guides the research.

Ontology relates to the nature of reality and its characteristics, when conducting qualitative research, the researcher embraces the idea of different realities. Epistemology or the “theory of knowledge” attempts to answer the question what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified (Creswell, 2013). A researcher with an epistemological assumption conducting qualitative research tries to get as close as possible to the participants being studied to minimize the distance between himself and those being researched (Creswell, 2009). Denzin and Lincoln (2011), consider the philosophical assumptions of ontology and epistemology as key premises that are folded into interpretive frameworks. The literature broadly classifies three paradigms for qualitative research: positivism, constructivism and critical theory.

Positivism is the dominant form in most business and management disciplines. Positivist researchers generally assume that reality is objectively given and can be described by measurable properties that are independent of the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As suggested by Myers (2009), the role of positivist research is to test materials for the development of laws to increase the predictive understanding of phenomena. Myers (2009), noted that positivist researchers usually formulate propositions that portray the subject matter in terms of independent and dependent variables and the relationship between them.

Interpretivists hold the view that it is important to explore the subjective meanings that motivate people’s actions in order to understand their socially constructed reality. This cannot be understood independent of the actors who make that reality (Saunders et al., 2000). As a result, interpretivist researchers normally employ qualitative research techniques such as semi-structured interviews with the intention not only to reveal and understand the “what” and “how” but more importantly to place emphasis on exploring the “why” (Saunders et al., 2009). In other words, an exploratory approach allows the researcher to make sense of a social phenomenon. This is not only through interaction with their environments but also by making sense of it through the interpretation of the events and meanings they draw from it (Saunders et al., 2009). Similarly, an interpretivist approach allows the researcher to overcome the barriers that separate him- or herself from the participants. For this reason interpretive researchers do not define dependent and independent variables

but focus instead on human sense making to understand phenomena through the meaning people assign to them (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994).

Critical theory is a philosophy that is based on the interdependency of human values and beliefs (Johnson and Christensen 2010). Critical researchers assume that social reality is historically embedded and that it is produced and reproduced by people. As suggested by Myers (2009), people can consciously act to change their social and economic circumstances but their ability is constrained by various forms of social, cultural and political domination. The main task of critical research is to use social critique with the intention of bringing restricting and alienating social conditions to light. Instead of describing current knowledge and belief the intention is to challenge prevailing belief, values and assumptions (Myers, 2009).

This research takes an epistemological interpretivist stance in order to explore how successful cross-cultural negotiations are conducted in the international business environment of northern Iraq. The researcher believes that reality is only obtained through relationship with the research subject by employing qualitative research techniques. An interpretive approach enables the researcher to reduce barriers between himself and the participants in order to obtain appropriate knowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, this research has taken an ontological interpretive position regarding the participants' perceptions of cross-cultural negotiation. This research embraces the premises that a social world exists which is constructed and shaped by the experiences of the participants (Limpanitgul et al., 2009).

To sum up, this research has taken an epistemological and ontological interpretivist stance in order to attempt to explore and interpret the social interactions between Kurdish-Iraqi and Western senior managers.

Data Collection

This research utilised primary data from semi-structured, in-depth interviews and secondary data from official documents and reports, published scholarly articles. The following section addresses the collection of primary data.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used as a means of collecting primary data in this study. Myers (2009) suggests that interviews are one of the most important

and most useful data gathering techniques in qualitative research. Interviews allow the researcher to collect rich data from people in various roles and situations in order to see what is not ordinarily on view and to examine its deeper meanings (Robson, 2002). Face-to-face interviews enable researchers to establish a strong rapport and to interact and gain more information from the participants (Myers, 2009). In addition, as suggested by Angrosino (2007) (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 166), “Observation is one of the key tools for collecting data in qualitative research. It is the act of noting a phenomenon in the field setting through the five senses of the observer, often with an instrument, and recording it for scientific purposes.” Observations are based on the research purpose and question. The researcher observed the participants during the interviews. Observing the participants during the face-to-face interviews allowed the researcher to arrive at a more complete picture of the phenomenon and its environment, in order to more effectively evaluate the interview data (Myers, 2009).

The interview questions

A set of questions was used in this study. The interview questions aimed to gather useful and relevant information to answer the research question. The research interviews were semi-structured and, as suggested by Myers (2009), involved the use of some pre-formulated questions, but there was no strict adherence to them. Table 1 shows the indicative interview questions adapted from Salacuse (1991), which encouraged participants to share their experience and expertise of the cross-cultural negotiation process.

The interviews were based mainly on the research questions along with some exploratory questions when the initial response from the participant was too short. For example, “Would you please elaborate on the topic?”

Table 1

Interview Questions

Define the research question	
To explore the view of participants about cross-cultural negotiations in the current international business environment of northern Iraq.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you please tell me how you conduct a negotiation? 2. Can you please tell me, when negotiating, what are your goals? 3. Can you please tell me, what is your attitude towards negotiations? 4. Can you please tell me, during your negotiations, how do you communicate with your opposite? 5. Can you please tell me what value has time for you when negotiating? 6. Can you please tell me, when negotiating what is your opinion of emotions at the negotiation table? 7. Can you please tell me, how would you describe the nature of your agreements? 8. How do you build up your agreements? What are the steps involved? 9. Can you please tell me, do you involve other colleagues or employees in the decision making process? 10. Can you please tell me, do you feel comfortable to take risks? 11. Can you please tell me, when negotiating; is protocol or formality important for you?

Note. Adapted from Salacuse (1991)

Interview process

As described by Kahn and Cannell (1957), an interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people and is a useful tool to gather valid and reliable data. Morse (2011) suggested in order to collect sufficient in-depth data for qualitative research a minimum number of six interviewees is needed. For this reason, interviews were conducted with eight participants in semi-public places such as government offices, company headquarters and coffee houses. The interviews were conducted following this particular approach. At first, potential candidates were contacted either via email or by phone depending on the available contact details. After the initial contact with the participant was established they were emailed and provided with the Participant Information sheet (see Appendix A) and a digital copy of the consent form (see Appendix B).

The time and location of the meetings were decided to suit the convenience of the participants in order to fit into their schedules. At the beginning of each interview the researcher explained in detail the participant's rights and asked each one to familiarise themselves with and sign the consent form.

Each interviewee was asked about how he or she reacts in particular conflict and negotiation situations, as well as the importance of particular cultural factors with regards to any negotiation process the participant was confronted with within the last 12 months. The interview consisted of twenty-five questions. Individual answers were measured against a total score based on an interpersonal conflict questionnaire (see Appendix C) with similar questions from the area of applied psychology (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Next, participants were asked to tell the interviewer about an important negotiation process they were confronted with within the last 12 months. This was followed by 11 open-ended questions (see Appendix D) that were adapted from the work of Salacuse (1991). The questions were grouped into the categories of conflict style (competing, accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, and compromising) and the cultural factors influencing negotiation (Rahim & Magner, 1995; Salacuse, 1991). Questions on the category of conflict style were more explicit while questions on cultural factors were more general in order to gain a deeper knowledge on the topic as well as to have the freedom to ask questions that were not mentioned in the interview guide without losing rapport. This approach allowed the

participants to give feedback about the way in which information would be used. On average the duration of the interviews were about one hour and ranged from 20 minutes up to 90 minutes. The scope of the answer was left to the discretion of the participants, however, the participants were encouraged to elaborate and provide more information.

Secondary data

Secondary data sources included official documents and reports, available from the International Energy Agency (IEA), Kurdish Ministry of Natural Resources (KMNR) and publicly available books on the history of the region. For the relevant scholarly articles required for the literature review the researcher utilised online databases and local libraries.

Participant sampling

In this research, the participants were recruited via a strategy of purposeful sampling in order to approach Western and Kurdish-Iraqi senior managers operating in northern Iraq (Myers, 2009). The researcher, started the data sampling by contacting participants based on criterion sampling (Saunders et al., 2000).

This method was appropriate in order to identify individuals who have experience with cross-cultural negotiation in the region due to the involvement of their organisation and the position they held. In the criterion sampling, the following aspects were taken into account:

- Number in sample: Eight
- Gender: Both male and female participants (Note from prior experience working in the area, I was aware that female managers were working in the region.)
- Nationality: Western or Kurdish-Iraqi
- Involvement of their organisation in cross-cultural negotiation
- Job position: Senior manager
- Length of stay in the region: Minimum of four years
- Area: Northern Iraq (Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk)

Criterion sampling is particularly useful because all the individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon of cross-cultural negotiation in the region.

Sample size and demographics

For this research, eight participants were identified through their business presence in northern Iraq. Representatives of the oil industry firms, government agencies and industry bodies were selected due to their expertise; meaning, that is where they have specific knowledge or opinions of this area. All representatives were approached by the researcher based on a publicly available list of suppliers of oil and gas-related services that have been recommended by the domestic Kurdish Ministry of Natural Resources (KMNR). All eight participants had different cultural backgrounds, being American, Austrian, German or Kurdish but were asked to describe their orientation, when asked, as either Western or Kurdish-Iraqi. Their ages ranged from early thirties to mid-fifties with the majority being aged between thirty and forty years. The participants' working experience in the region ranged between four and thirty-seven years. All but one of the participants were male managers due to the Islamic background of the areas; women in senior management positions are only represented in small numbers. Male and female senior managers in this study exhibited similar values and traits. A plausible explanation for this are the findings originating with Ashforth and Mael (1989) on social identity that suggest that female managers in male-dominated organisations adopt behaviours, opinions, attitudes and beliefs typical of male managers in order to minimise differences in perceptions.

At first contact, an email with the attached interview questions was sent out to notify potential candidates of the interview content. The intention was to give potential candidates the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the structure and questions of the interview in order to make an informed decision whether or not they were willing to participate. In addition to these eight interviews in the Kurdistan oil and gas service industry, Petroleum Geologist and adviser to the Kurdish Minister of natural resources, Mr Atruschl Mohamed was contacted with regards to background information on the northern Iraqi oil industry. He and his office were willing to offer their experience and give recommendations on the topic.

The following table lists the details of the participants:

Table 2

Details of the participants

Details of Participants

Organisation / Government Body	Number of Participants	Number of Interviews	Organisational Role of Participant	Approximate Time in North Iraq	Ethnic Background	Gender
International Oil Company	1	1	Drilling and Operations Manager	4 ½ years	Western	Male
International Oil Company	1	1	Country Manager	4 years	Western	Male
International Oil Company	1	1	Country Manager	6 years	Western	Female
International Oil Company	1	1	Chief Financial Officer	5 years	Western	Male
Domestic Oil Company	1	1	Owner / Principal Partner	Born in Iraq	Kurdish/Iraqi	Male
Government Body	1	1	Project Leader	Born in Iraq	Kurdish/Iraqi	Male
Government Body	1	1	Associate Director	Born in Iraq	Kurdish/Iraqi	Male
Domestic Oil Company	1	2	Commercial Manager	Born in Iraq	Kurdish/Iraqi	Male

Analytic Approach

For analysing the interviews grounded theory offered the most flexibility as the research was exploratory (Glaser, 1978). As suggested by Saunders et al. (2009) exploratory research unfolds through focus group interviews, structured or semi-structured interviews with experts and a search of the relevant literature. Thereby exploratory research investigates a specified phenomenon for the purpose of exposition and uncovering new knowledge (Robson, 2002). Grounded theory is useful for analysing data in exploratory studies as it relies on the production of theoretical perspectives derived from data. As suggested by Glaser (2005) grounded theory is a tool in order to discover what is going on within a particular arena. It is a particularly valuable method for studying social and psychological phenomena or other areas about which little is known (Wuest, 2007). Furthermore, the aim of grounded theory is to generate theory that accounts for patterns of behaviour that is important and problematic for all parties involved (Glaser, 1978). It follows that for

this reason, and because “grounded theory captures social process in social context” (Wuest, 2007, p. 244), this method is useful for explaining the impact of culture on intercultural negotiation.

The grounded theory framework is very beneficial in developing context-based, process-oriented descriptions and explanations of social and organisational phenomena (Myers, 1997). According to Urquhart (2001), it offers well-signposted procedures for data analysis and allows for the emergence of original and rich findings that are closely tied to the data. The researcher adopted the grounded theory analysis framework in order to analyse the data, as described by Myers (2001), and as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Phases of grounded theory

Steps of Grounded Theory	Outline of the process
1. Data Collection	Researcher has to collect qualitative data and transcribe it.
2. Open coding	Researcher analyses a sentence or paragraph of the text and summarises this text by the use of a succinct code. Open codes are descriptive, analysis has not proceeded beyond identifying concepts at the level of 'categories'. Constant comparison is most important activity.
3. Selective Coding	Researcher refines the conceptual constructs to explain the interactions that occur between the descriptive categories.
4. Theoretical Coding	Researcher aims to create inferential and/or predictive statements about the phenomena. This is achieved by specifying explicit causal / correlational linkages between individual interpretive constructs.

Being an inductive approach, qualitative data analysis begins with a complete set of collected data in the form of text (Wuest, 2007). In this case, the researcher transcribed the tapes for all the interviews. In the initial stage of the analysis the researcher read through all the data collected in order to stimulate theoretical thinking and analytical strategies. The first step of the data analysis was coding the interview transcripts and this helped the researcher to move away from particular statements to more abstract interpretations of the interview data (Charmaz, 2006). After coding several interview transcripts the researcher identified issues that were important to the respondents and assigned them a conceptual label known as

phenomena. As some codes shared similar characteristics they were pooled together in categories, which were interlinked and used as the basis for an emerging theory. The emerging theory was then compared with the extant literature, in order to improve construct definitions, similar frameworks with the intention to improve external validity. As Dick (2002) suggested, in this way no theory is forced on the data but the data provides the basis for new emerging theories.

Limitations

The research was restricted to Erbil, the main district of Kurdistan which is a unique region of Iraq. This is due to its Kurdish culture which does not exist in the other parts of the country. One of the biggest limitations this research faced was the limited number of interviews with participants. Also, the participants were drawn from only one industry only; other industries were not considered. Therefore the research results might be limited to only the northern Iraqi oil and oil services industry and cannot be generalised to the whole of Iraq. While this study is limited by its small sample size, this, however, is a common problem in intercultural negotiation research (Cai & Drake, 1998). Finally, a potential problem which has to be acknowledged is that the interviews were conducted in English which is a second language for many participants which might have limited the range and depth of the responses.

Ethical Considerations

At the beginning of the data collection the researcher submitted an ethics application to the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) Ethics Committee with the intention of establishing the safety of the participants in the study. After approval (Ethics Application Number 13/94 dated 24 May 2013, see Appendix E) government institutions and international oil companies were contacted and informed about the scope of the research with the Participant Information sheet and a digital copy of the consent form. Before the commencement of each interview participants were made aware of their rights and that in case any confidential information was asked for they had the right to either stop the interview or ask the

researcher to keep the information confidential. Written consent from each was obtained and participation was voluntary and participants were assured of the utmost confidentiality since the researcher was not planning to ask any questions that were of commercially sensitive and that could disadvantage the participants or their companies. After the interview process and the research had been completed participants were offered a copy of the research findings.

Summary

This chapter explains the methodological framework for this research. Utilising an interpretive exploratory method, the research adopted a qualitative approach to collect the data and answer the research question.

Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants. The participants were recruited using a criterion sampling approach. Grounded theory was used to analyse the transcribed information from the interviews. Chapter four presents the data and the findings obtained through the methods and techniques described in the chapter and further discuss them in comparison to previous literature.

Chapter 4

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents analysis of the interviews and the results. This section starts with detailed results of the conflict approach of the negotiation process of Western and Kurdish / Iraqi negotiators. This is followed by the in the data identified themes and subthemes that emerged and are presented under the topic of the interview questions. Some illustrative materials from the interviews are added in italic.

Table 4 shows the key themes that emerged regarding the perceptions of Kurdish-Iraqi and Western respondents in their approach to negotiation. In order to capture the essence of what the participants reported in the research, the information collected is arranged under the following themes:

- “Goal” describes what the participants perceive the very purpose of a business negotiation to be.
- “Attitude” explains the differences in the approaches of the participants to deal-making.
- “Communication” refers to the methods of communication among the cultures of the participants.
- “Time” refers to the attitude of a participant’s culture towards time.
- “Emotion” accounts of the negotiating behaviour of the two groups of participants.
- “Risk” describes the participants’ attitudes towards risk-taking.

Table 4

Themes identified through analysis of the research data

Main Themes	Sub-Themes
1. Goal of business negotiations	Win-win or win-lose outcome
2. Attitude towards negotiation	Economic outcome or relationship.
3. Methods of communication	Direct or indirect methods of communication
4. Sensitivity to time	Monochronic or polychronic
5. Emotionalism	Expressive or restrained
6. Willingness to take risks	Risk-taking or risk-adverse behaviour

The following section discusses the first theme Goal This theme is presented structured into the sub-theme ‘Win-win or win-lose outcome’ and is presented under the research question:

Theme 1. Goal of Business Negotiations: When Negotiating What Are Your Goals?

This question was used as an introduction to the topic and to help to build rapport with the participants. The formulation of the question is open and the respondents did not seem to have any difficulties with their replies. The intent of this question was to explore what the participants perceived as their goal when negotiating. The response was left to the participants own judgement.

Many participants spoke here about the importance of having a good working relationship with the other party, setting yourself goals you want to achieve,

ascertaining the comfort level of the other party, achieving a good economic outcome without hurting the other party in the process, and making both parties as comfortable as possible. Western and Kurdish negotiators stressed the importance of setting themselves objectives they wanted to achieve. This finding was in line with a large number of studies that suggest that many negotiators enter negotiations with motivational goals which influence their cognitive schemas such as perception of fairness, information processing and negotiation outcomes (De Dreu & Van Lang, 1995; Van Kleef & De Dreu, 2004; Tjosvold, 1998; Carnevale & Probst, 1998). For the majority of Western negotiators the objectives were to achieve the best economic outcome without damaging the relationship with the other party. This finding was in unison with recent research that proposes that negotiators need to compete and cooperate with each other to maximise their individual and joint profits and tend to pursue multiple and sometimes conflicting goals that are not only oriented towards a tangible benefit but also to attain or maintain a relationship with their counterpart (Keck & Samp, 2007; Meina & Wilson, 2011; Wilson & Putnam, 1990).

Example of replies from Western negotiators include.

Before a negotiation of course you have to set your own objectives. My primary goal is to achieve the goals I have set and to then find a good comfort level for all parties involved. (Participant B, male, Western senior manager)

I usually set myself a certain point I would like to achieve and then I try my best to achieve it. I also try to put emphasis on forming a relationship with the other party but sometimes it is difficult as many people still have this culture of bazaar heckling, even the ministries and officials. Meaning to say that they always offer you the lowest price, they are always arguing that the service you provide is not good enough. After a while they will slowly, slowly try to reach an agreement with you. (Participant B, male, Western senior manager)

In contrast, Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators put their main emphasis on forming a good relationship with the other party and make sure to achieve a good comfort level for

all parties involved at all times. This finding is consistent with several studies that emphasised that the relationship between negotiating parties often interacts with collectivism and individualism and activates domain-specific cultural schemas to guide the negotiator's choice. Moreover, it is suggested that collectivism is associated with cooperative behaviour and is more sensitive to relationships and subtle changes in situations (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001; Morris & Fu, 2001).

In negotiations you sometimes fail but the goal is to be ending the negotiation in a pleasant way for both parties, to make both happy. (Participant E, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

My first goal is to have a good relationship and second to get as much benefit as possible for my side. (Participant H, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

A good working relationship is important to make the other party to fulfil your demands and to cooperate. (Participant F, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

The findings imply that both Western and Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators enter negotiations with motivational goals that influence their cognitive schemas. The relationship between the two negotiating parties interacts with collectivism and individualism as a cultural schema to guide the negotiator's choice. Therefore, as Kurdish-Iraqi participants are more sensitive towards maintaining good relationships with the other party the behaviour can be associated with collectivism as a domain specific cultural schema to guide their choice. In contrast Western negotiators are more oriented towards a tangible benefit and are less concerned with the relationship which can be attributed to individualism. This is in line with the negotiation literature that suggests negotiation is associated with cultural values, and varies according to the ways in which a negotiator's goals and motives influence his or her actions in the bargaining process (Keck & Samp, 2007; Meina & Wilson, 2011; Wilson & Putnam, 1990).

Theme 2. Attitude Towards Negotiation: What is Your Attitude Towards Negotiations?

This question required a lot more trust in the relationship between interviewer and participants in order for it to be answered honestly. The interviewer believes that he was able to obtain open and honest replies. The choice of response was left to the participants own discretion.

Analysis of the data found that the attitude of most Western negotiators changed over the years working in the international business environment of Northern Iraq. The majority of participants with a Western origin preferred to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes but considered negotiation as a process in which the domestic side wins and the foreign party minimises their losses in order to maintain a working relationship. These findings are in line with the observations of Rubin and Brown (1975), who found that negotiators enter a relationship with the other party to which they bring variations of prior experience, background and expectations that may affect the manner and effectiveness of a negotiation. The findings were also in accordance with Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) work on cross-cultural negotiations that indicated that negotiating behaviour and perceptions of individuals vary due to the underlying differences inherent in each other's culture that provide order and direction to human interaction (Clark, 1990; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Limaye & Victor, 1991; McCrae, 2000). Western negotiators described their attitude towards the negotiation process in the following manner:

I must admit that my attitude changed over the years, when I arrived here my attitude was that negotiations should provide a benefit for both sides. Whereas after having been here for five years and dealing a lot with the locals I see it more as a process in which one side wins and one side loses. (Participant C, male, Western senior manager)

I would prefer to achieve a win-win situation that would be nice but you will lose something per se, it's a relationship based process. (Participant B, male, Western senior manager)

In this environment you are usually not in a position of strength therefore you try to minimise your losses, as you need to maintain relationships to various degrees. (Participant A, male, Western senior manager)

By contrast, most Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators conveyed that it was important to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome, and that it is important to enter a negotiation process with a party that has substantial experience with negotiations. The data suggests that Kurdish-Iraqi participants, due to their cooperative behaviour and their sensitivity to relationships and changes, show characteristics of collectivistic cultures. This finding is in line with numerous studies that have emphasised that the relationship between negotiating parties often interacts with collectivism and individualism in activating domain-specific cultural schemas to guide the negotiator's choice (Cai et al., 2000; Wilson & Drake, 2000; Morris et al., 1998; Mintu-Wimsatt, 2002).

The following statements suggest that Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators prefer win-win outcomes that they perceive as mutually beneficial for all parties involved but they expect their counterparts to have the right mind-set to engage in negotiation with them.

You can't negotiate with uninformed people at the negotiation. They have to be informed or at least have experience with negotiations. Because a negotiation is a giving and taking, if a person doesn't have the skill or mind-set the negotiation will not be successful. (Participant E, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

When negotiating I try always to be constructive as I don't like adversarial negotiations. (Participant G, male, Kurdish / Iraqi senior manager)

It is important to have a good relationship and that both sides get something out of it. (Participant H, male, Kurdish / Iraqi senior manager)

The general findings imply that Western and Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators are often faced with two basic strategies, problem solving or aggressive bargaining. Likewise, Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators, who aim for mutually beneficial outcomes through

interdependence with others and focus on relational harmony, show collectivist features. Whereas Western negotiators show individualistic characteristics such as a tendency to address self-serving concerns but are willing to adapt to the concessions of the other party to maintain a good relationship. In addition, the findings suggest that the attitude of Western participants towards negotiations changed during their stay in the Iraqi business environment from a win-win to a win-lose perception. Evidence suggests that the problem-solving approach is beneficial to establish and maintain long-term relationships.

Theme 3. Methods of Communication: During Your Negotiations, How Do You Communicate With Your Opposite?

This question aimed to fathom the differences or similarities between Western and Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators with regards to their approach to communication. The interviewer was able to obtain some good replies from the respondents, reflecting the individual communication approach when negotiating.

Over the past decade numerous studies examined the meaning and context of negotiations and how culture shapes the substance of communication (Adair, 2001; Brett & Okumura, 1998; Cohen, 1997; Fisher et al., 1991; Kopelman & Olekalns, 1999; Leung, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The analysis of the findings from this study indicate that Western negotiators value directness in their communication and thereby demonstrate the characteristics of low-context communication found in individualistic cultures. This finding was consistent with several studies that suggests that low-context negotiators are likely to rely more on direct verbal strategies (Augsburger, 1992; Cohen, 1997). Similarly, communication research has supported the idea that individualistic cultures tend to stress the value of directness in their communication approach and verbalise their individual wants and needs (Trubisky et al., 1991; Kim 1994; Gudykunst et al., 1996).

Below are four extracts from the Western participants in the study.

That's another thing that changed over the years, when I arrived here I valued directness in my counterpart but this strategy has proven not to be successful. Arab culture values a more moderated approach where you talk a long time, as we say beating around the bush. You talk for an extended period about something insignificant and then maybe after half an hour of just talking you finally reach a point you would like to discuss. (Participant C, male, Western senior manager)

I like face-to-face communication but it depends on the culture, you might have to drink a little tea first, you need to warm up to the subject sometimes. However, as soon as you have warmed up to the subject you should be reasonable direct. (Participant A, male, Western senior manager)

I think in the beginning it has to be a moderated approach, when it comes to the point where both sides feel comfortable and understand that they are not there to hurt each other than you can be direct and put on the table what you want. (Participant B, male, Western senior manager)

I prefer my counterpart, I basically push it, I keep pushing it till I'm sure that they are telling me that this is going to happen. (Participant D, female, Western senior manager)

In contrast, most Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators prefer not to directly approach an issue but rather to create an environment to get to know the other person and to establish trust first. The use of explicit indirect language appears to be in line with Keegan (1989), who suggested that in high-context cultures less information is contained in verbal expression and therefore context variables such as values need to be considered to comprehend the message. This finding was also supported by negotiation literature which maintains that members of collectivist cultures tend to stress the value of contemplative talk and discretion in voicing their opinions and feelings (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kim 1994; Trubisky et al., 1991).

The following extracts confirm that Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators demonstrate the characteristics of high-context and collectivist cultures.

When you negotiate with someone you have to try to create an environment to get through to the person. For example when you meet a French person you have to prepare a few questions over France to be polite, as you are likely to negotiate another time. You have to be polite, as you cannot be straight with that person or be in a hurry to do business. Next time you meet he will have more trust and be more faithful to you and maybe more likely to give in as you have developed a friendship or good relationship. (Participant E, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

You ask a lot of question about unrelated topics and you are polite to your opposite; you get to know the other side and talk about other things first. (Participant E, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

The findings imply that Western negotiators with their direct communication approach show characteristics of low-context and individualistic cultures. Therefore, Western participants rely on formal communication and that is expressed verbally with the informal context being less important in understanding the message (Simintrais & Thomas, 1998). Their low-context conflict communication aims clearly to state the speakers true intentions (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1988). However, most Western negotiators, due to time spent in the region and their substantial experience in the locality, have adapted their communication approach in order to suit their local counterparts. By contrast, Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators, with their use of indirect language and contemplative talk, show characteristics of high-context and collectivistic cultures. Kurdish-Iraqis, with their indirect and high-context communication approaches, focus on concealing their true intentions (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1988). Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators, as representatives of collectivist characteristics, prefer to avoid conflict and emphasise the value of maintaining relational harmony in conflict interactions (Trubisky et al., 1991).

Theme 4. Sensitivity to Time: What Value Does Time Have For You When Negotiating?

This question caused some difficulties since, for most respondents, it was an open and indistinct question. The choice of response was left to the participant's own

discretion. Many respondents talked here how they perceived time and what importance they place on time when negotiating.

A large number of studies have reported that the concept of time and value of time varies across different cultures and can have a considerable impact on cross-cultural negotiations (Bhagat & Leonard, 2002; Bluedorn et al., 1992; Foster, 1992; Hall & Hall, 1987; McDevitt, 2006; Ting-Toomey, 1999). The analysis of the interviews in this study showed that most Western participants consider time as a limited resource and prefer to use it in a linear way and thereby show traits that are associated with individualistic and monochronic societies. This finding is in accordance with Hall and Hall (1987), who suggested that monochronic cultures perceive and use time in a linear way, allowing a person to concentrate on one issue at a time. Hofstede (1993) found in his work that individualistic cultures consider time as a valuable commodity and limited resource that should be used wisely.

Some examples of replies from the Western participants follow.

You want to do it quickly but a lot of times you can't really do it. Well, it depends on the magnitude of the monetary volume. The deal I have discussed before about those \$250,000, I did it in less than 30 minutes. Unfortunately other areas might take smaller meetings over a couple of weeks; you might have to plant some seeds. I personally prefer to focus on one issue at a time. (Participant A, male, Western senior manager)

If you have to reach a critical conclusion then time is of the essence. Under normal circumstances I would connect the value of time to an expected economic outcome but that is a Western and not the local Arab approach. I would like to mention once more that time in these countries has no value. I usually like to focus on one thing but I switch to other things if I see that the process is stalled. (Participant C, male, Western senior manager)

Unfortunately in this area, time is the most important thing and you have to have a lot. You should never enter a negotiation here with the idea that you have to leave if you know that already this is never good. I prefer to focus on [one] point at a time

but if it is required I multitask and sometimes it helps you connect things you haven't thought about before. (Participant B, male, Western senior manager)

In comparison, Kurdish-Iraqi participants view time as plentiful and usually prefer to multitask. Consequently, Kurdish-Iraqi participants show traits that are associated with collectivistic and polychronic societies. This finding is in unison with the early findings of Hall and Hall (1987) who emphasise that polychronic cultures take longer to make decisions and do not discriminate among issues or prioritise them according to a Western logical flow. Polychronic cultures, through allocating a greater amount of time, put great emphasis on forming relationships rather than holding to a tight schedule (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Below are four extracts from the Kurdish-Iraqi participants in the study to demonstrate the above findings.

I don't like time to be limited as deadlines are not good for healthy negotiations. I usually prefer to focus on several things. (Participant G, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

It is important to take as much time as possible otherwise there is no point. I prefer to do several things, in a negotiation I want to talk about several things and if really needed we go into detail. (Participant H, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

You have to have a lot of time for the meeting, in business you always have to plan some extra time otherwise people won't trust you. I usually prefer to multitask and to attend to many tasks. (Participant E, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

It is important to have as much time as needed; sometimes you have several meetings over the same topic. I like to do several things at the same time. (Participant F, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

The general findings imply that time has a direct impact on the negotiation process. Western negotiators perceive time as valuable and like to utilise and prioritise time in a linear way. Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators pay attention to all matters at the time they come up, which can cause a delay in the negotiation process. Western participants

can be associated with individualistic cultures and a monochronic perception of time, whereas Kurdish / Iraqi participants show characteristics of collectivistic cultures and embrace a polychronic perception of time (Hofstede & Usunier, 1996). As reported in numerous studies, a culture's attitude towards time determines the importance placed on the development of interpersonal relationships (Adler, 1986; Boone & Kurtz, 1996; Bovee & Thill, 1995; Foster, 1992; Hall, 1989). Kurdish / Iraqi negotiators with their boundless view of time put more emphasis on forming relationships and getting to know the other party. By contrast Western participants with *their* time consciousness place less priority on building long-term relationships.

Theme 5. Emotionalism: When Negotiating What Is Your Opinion of Emotions at The Negotiation Table?

This question again required a high amount of trust for the respondents to open up to the interviewer. The interviewer believes that he was able to obtain open and honest replies.

Many research studies assessed the role emotions play in negotiation and reported that, due to its influence on cognition and communication, it has a practical impact on a negotiator's behaviour, the negotiation process and outcomes (Allred et al., 1997; Allred, 2002; Butt et al., 2005; Davidson & Greenhalgh, 1999; Kopelman et al., 2004; Morris & Keltner, 2000; Pillutla & Murnighan, 1996, Thompson et al., 1999). The results of this study showed that Western negotiators are less emotionally expressive. Emotional restraints are usually valued in social interactions but not often experienced in negotiations with local counterparts. These findings are in line with Mesquita and Frijida (1992) who identified, in their research on the relationship of culture and emotion, that there are large differences in the way emotion is expressed across cultures. Early research discovered that the conflict and bargaining that takes place during a negotiation has an inherent affective component and evokes emotional reactions, such as distress or anger. These are often experienced during the negotiation process (Purdy, 1967; Walton & McKersie, 1965).

Examples of responses from the Western participants on the subject include,

Once more I have to say that my approach changed over the years, when I came here first my impression [or] attitude was that emotions have no place at the negotiation table. Now after five years I have to learn that around here emotions at the negotiation table are a very common sight. People sometimes get upset, sometimes people even shout at you but these are only superficial things. (Participant C, male, Western senior manager)

There are emotions especially with people over here and you can see if they like it or not, they show that. You can also show emotions on your part but it always should be to the extent that it always leaves a backdoor. I learned here that emotions are okay, you can show strength or you could show that you are disappointed with something. Emotions are definitely there and are part of the culture here even if it is a very easy negotiation like buying something, there will be emotions. (Participant B, male, Western senior manager)

I personally don't believe that emotions are appropriate at the negotiation but some people are really good in expressing themselves. Some people go home and come back but I think it gets worse and worse as in the end something gets in there which was never meant to be in the negotiation. Emotions are definitely something you have to watch and if you realise that the other party gets too crazy you might have to postpone the meeting. (Participant D, female, Western senior manager)

Unfortunately I don't think you can disregard them but you should not put too much face in it. Like a Latino would scream and yell, typically in South America there is no win-win, they have to win. They have to feel like they kick you to death and they scream and yell, pauck and spout. It's quite interesting but you have to swallow your ego and you have to do that a lot but it's all emotions, it's all nonsense. (Participant A, male, Western senior manager)

In contrast the findings for Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators show that they are emotionally expressive and tend to value affective engagement and involvement in communicating with others. This finding is in agreement with the research of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) who discovered that members of cultures that are emotionally expressive tend to voice and visibly demonstrate their feelings through body posture and facial expressions. Studies show that negotiators respond

to expressed anger by their counterparts in either displaying similar behaviour or demonstrating complimentary behaviour that is viewed as necessary to maintain the interaction (Butt et al., 2005). Similarly, anger may convey the impression that a negotiator will not settle for a suboptimal outcome by pressing the counterpart to be less committed to original positions but also the counterpart will lose motivation to explore creative solutions for mutual gains (Liu, 2009).

The following are examples of responses from the Kurdish-Iraqi participants.

If the other person is comfortable it has a positive effect on the negotiation but emotions do not always work. If people have negative emotions during the negotiation you should tell them that you will think about your point, tell them that they might be right and you need more time to reconsider your point and postpone the meeting to another day. Thereby you give him and yourself enough time to come up with a better solution. Emotions are an important part of the negotiation. (Participant E, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

Emotions are important to express yourself at the negotiation table. (Participant F, male, Kurdish-Iraqi Senior Manager)

Emotions can be very helpful, especially when negotiating with emotional people. (Participant G, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

I will try to take emotions into consideration and try to read the other party's thoughts; I will mainly focus on reading people. A negotiation is subjective and emotions are very important for it. (Participant H, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

In general the findings for Western and Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators suggest that Western negotiators in comparison to their domestic counterparts are less emotionally expressive and value emotional restraints. Nevertheless, the majority of Western participants adapted to the domestic environment and accepted that emotions from the other party are usual when negotiating. In contrast, Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators are emotionally expressive and value emotional behaviour in the opposite party when negotiating. However, the emergence of negative emotional spirals that

cause increasingly negative emotional reactions in negotiators will hurt the negotiation process (Purdy, 1967; Walton & McKersie, 1965). There is evidence that distributive strategies including threats, positional commitments and persuasive arguments tend to yield win-lose outcomes and smaller joint profits for all parties involved (Pruit & Lewis, 1975). In comparison integrative strategies such as information exchange and relationship building tend to yield win-win outcomes, higher joint profits and greater desire to cooperate in the future (Thompson, 1990).

Theme 6. Willingness to Take Risks: Do You Feel Comfortable in Taking Risks?

This question caused difficulties for most participants, as it is an open and rather ambiguous question.

Numerous studies reported that risk and uncertainty are generally present in the context of negotiations and differences in the perception of risk have direct implications for the exchange of negotiators (Deutsch, 1973; Markowitz, 1959; Neale & Bazerman, 1992; Ordonez et al., 2009; Warner, 1995; Weber, 1994; Weber & Hsee, 1998). The results show that Western participants are comfortable and motivated to take calculated risks if it helps to achieve their set objective. This finding is in accordance with the study of Hofstede (1993) who found that in low uncertainty-avoidance cultures individuals accept the future, are motivated by success and are more willing to take risks.

The following four extracts provide demonstrate the above finding.

I'm happy to take managed risks. Risk is fundamentally the cause of something happening, so what are the odds of it and what the consequences are. If the odds are small but the consequences are massive you need to manage it carefully, the issue is to understand the consequences. (Participant A, male, Western senior manager)

If information is not properly reported, the risk is not only not to win in a negotiation but not to establish operations in a lucrative area and you have to get

there. Either you manage or you will never get there, so yes I feel comfortable taking risks. You have to take risks, that is a part of your job and makes things more pleasant and easier but that doesn't mean that the problem is necessary solved. (Participant D, male, Western senior manager)

If you are working in countries like Iraq you always have risks and you always try to limit your risks as far as possible but this is difficult in a high risk environment like Iraq. Meaning to say that you sign a contract and after half a year later you find out that people don't feel bound to the contract anymore and all of a sudden want changes which usually involve high costs and lead to problems. You have to take a calculated risk in order to get anywhere. (Participant B, male, Western senior manager)

In contrast, the data on Kurdish-Iraqi participants showed that domestic negotiators are uncomfortable and careful to take risks and show thereby characteristics of high uncertainty-avoidance cultures. This finding is supported by the research of Hofstede (1993), who suggested that in high uncertainty-avoidance cultures individuals are motivated by a desire for security and a desire to control and predict the future. Neale and Bazerman (1992) found that an individual's cultural orientation towards risk in specific contexts tends to persist over time, forming a relatively stable pattern.

The following quotations reflect the reluctance of Kurdish-Iraqi participants to take risks.

Of course I'm not comfortable to take a risk but if it is your responsibility you might have to but I usually don't want to take a risk. (Participant H, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

I don't feel comfortable taking risks, you always run the risk of losing when negotiating but you should try to minimise the risks. (Participant E, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

I usually make sure to avoid taking risks. (Participant F, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

I prefer not to take risks as you may lose business opportunities if you cannot handle the negotiation process properly. (Participant G, male, Kurdish-Iraqi senior manager)

Overall the findings imply that Western participants are willing to take calculated risks and are motivated by possible success. In comparison, their Kurdish-Iraqi counterparts prefer avoiding taking risk as they value security in their decision-making process. Douglas and Wildavsky (1983) found that each society has a general preference for certainty versus uncertainty and risk avoidance versus risk seeking. Risk-taking is a social process that is best understood through cultural analysis and interpretation. The reason for this is that each type of risk is exaggerated or minimised, feared or embraced according to the social and cultural acceptability of the underlying activities. Likewise, several studies discovered that an individual's cultural orientation towards handling risk has been found to affect negotiation processes and outcomes (Locke & Latham, 2002; Thompson, 1990)

Summary of Findings

This chapter has presented the results of the analysis of the study and discusses the findings in relation to the literature review. A total of six themes and six sub-themes emerged from the analysis of the responses of the eight participants who are working in the current international business environment of Northern Iraq. The themes reflect the participants' perceptions of the cross-cultural negotiation process in the region.

The findings suggest that the negotiation goal played an important role in the negotiation process as Western and Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators both enter with motivational goals that influence how they conduct negotiations. The relationship between the two negotiating parties interacts with collectivism and individualism as a cultural schema to guide the perceived goal of a negotiation. Likewise, a negotiator's attitude tends to be an influential element in the negotiation process, as either a problem-solving or aggressive bargaining strategy is utilised. Similarly, communication emerges as a strong theme around the issue of which communication method the participants used to engage in negotiations with each other. Time is

another influential component impacting cross-cultural negotiations in the international business environment of Northern Iraq because either monochronic or polychronic perceptions of time are persistent. Finally, emotionalism is another influential factor that has a practical impact on a negotiator's behaviour, the negotiation process and outcome. The willingness of participants to take risks has a strong direct impact on the exchange between the negotiators.

The next and final chapter completes the study. It draws conclusions from the findings and summarises the findings of the research, discusses the limitations of the study, provides direction for future research and suggest implications for negotiators in the region.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The main aim of this study was to explore the cultural differences in negotiation between Kurdish-Iraqi and Western senior managers operating in the oil industry of northern Iraq. To achieve that purpose this study began with investigating and discussing the literature on cross-cultural negotiations with a special focus on the theoretical models of Salacuse (1991), Hall (1989) and Hofstede (2001). Following this, the researcher developed a set of questions that paid attention to the cultural dimensions that have an impact on cross-cultural negotiations. The categories were discussed in detail in the literature review.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the specific differences in negotiation between Western and Kurdish-Iraqi managers in the current international business environment of Northern Iraq. It also sought to examine the main cultural elements that influence cross-cultural negotiations. The research approach utilised a qualitative method of eight in-depth and semi-structured interviews. Grounded theory was used as a means of analysing the data obtained through the interviews. In the previous chapter the findings from the analysis were presented and discussed in comparison to the literature.

The study is based on a small sample of participants; however, it still makes two important contributions: firstly, the literature on cross-cultural negotiation in the international business environment of northern Iraq is limited and these findings add substantially to the understanding of cross-cultural negotiations in this particular environment. Secondly, it reveals that, over time, there is considerable cultural assimilation by Western participants to the local style in their negotiating behaviour. This is in terms of perception of time, the development of relationships, communication and acceptance of emotional negotiating behaviour.

One of the most obvious findings to emerge from this study was that Western and Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators enter negotiations with different motivational goals that influence their cognitive schemas (Carnevale & Probst, 1998; De Dreu & Van Kleef, 2004; De Dreu & Van Lang, 1995; Tjosvold, 1998). The relationship between the two groups can be best described as interaction of Western individualism and

Kurdish-Iraqi collectivism. This has some implications for the negotiation outcome which is somewhat expected as Kurdish-Iraqi participants are more sensitive towards establishing and maintaining a good relationship with the other party. On the other hand, Western negotiators address their negotiation needs in a self-serving manner and prefer immediate results, while the local group emphasises establishing a relationship with the other party first.

The findings also show that the negotiation attitude of the participants is influenced by variations of prior experience, background and expectations. The author believes that this may greatly affect the manner and effectiveness of a negotiation as suggested by Rubin & Brown (1975). This study shows that Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators, with their aim of mutually beneficial outcomes, show a tendency towards interdependence. They focus on relational harmony show collectivist features. Similarly, Western negotiators demonstrate individualistic features in addressing economic concerns over relational aspects, but have adapted over time to the expectations of the local negotiators in order to establish improved relationships with the aim of improving the results of their negotiations.

One of the noteworthy findings to emerge from this study is that the communication approach of Western negotiators shows characteristics of low-context and individualistic cultures. This is demonstrated by their relying on formal verbally expressed communication with the informal context being less important (Simintrais & Thomas, 1998). By contrast, Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators display characteristics of high-context communication by using indirect language and contemplative talk. The findings suggest that the low-context communication of Western participants clearly aims to state the speaker's true intentions without any disguise. This is in contrast to the high-context communication of Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators which tends to conceal the speaker's true intentions. This feature was identified by Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1988). Western negotiators have adapted their negotiation communication approach to a mix of contemplative talk to suit the local party and direct communication to address their needs.

Another major finding was that Kurdish-Iraqi and Western negotiators differ in the degree of emotional expressiveness and emotional restraints. Mesquita and Frijida (1992), observed that this behaviour is common, and even valued and practiced in

the Kurdish environment. Western negotiators, in comparison to their domestic counterparts, are less emotionally expressive and value emotional restraints. However, the majority of Western participants has adapted to the local environment and accepts that emotions from the other party are part of the domestic negotiation practices.

This study found that the concept of time varies considerably in different cultures. For both the Kurdish-Iraqi and the Western participants this has an effect on how they conduct their cross-cultural negotiations. This is in line with the findings of Bhagat & Leonard (2002), Bluedorn et al. (1992), Foster (1992), Hall and Hall (1987), McDevitt (2006 and Ting-Toomey (1999). Western participants perceive time and prefer to prioritise time in a linear way and thereby show individualistic features and a monochronic perception of time during negotiations. Domestic negotiators embrace a polychronic attitude towards time and pay attention to all matters at the time they come up and delay the negotiation process. This is in line with Hofstede and Usunier (1996). The Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators acted as if they had boundless amount of time and put more emphasis on forming relationships and getting to know the other party.

The findings identified that risk and uncertainty in the context of negotiations have direct implications for the exchanges between negotiators and the negotiation outcome. This is in line with the findings of Deutsch (1973), Markowitz (1959), Neale and Bazerman (1992), Ordonez et al. (2009), Warner (1995), Weber (1994) and Weber and Hsee (1998). Western participants are willing to take calculated risks to advance their negotiation outcome and show increased contentious behaviour. Kurdish-Iraqi negotiators avoid risks and value security in their decision-making process and display increased concessionary behaviour in their negotiation approach.

Limitations of the Study

Like every study, this study has inherent limitations. This study involved only eight participants from a Western and Kurdish-Iraqi background. Although these eight freely shared their experiences with regards to cross-cultural negotiations in the current international business environment of northern Iraq, the small number of

participants and the focus on the northern region of Iraq may limit the extent to which the findings can be generalised.

English was used as a means of communication. English is a second language for the majority of the participants who all have different mother languages. However, all participants use English as the *lingua franca* in their profession and are very capable of expressing and sharing their experiences. It has to be acknowledged that there is a possibility that the participants may have expressed their views differently in their own mother tongue.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

Despite these limitations, this research provides a contribution to the investigation of cross-cultural negotiations. Thereby, this research will serve as a good starting point to further investigate cross-cultural negotiations in this region. Given the limited empirical data in the field of intercultural negotiation in Iraq, this study contributes to the pool of knowledge and provides valuable insights into the local intercultural negotiation practices. The findings of this study have implications for local negotiation practices. These implications centre on shaping expectations about the differences in negotiation approaches of Western and local negotiators when negotiating in the current Kurdish-Iraqi international business environment. Negotiators need to be aware of the relational aspects as well as the likely approach to managing conflict. Assimilating to the local negotiation style can build common bonds and provide indirect ways of signalling interest and goodwill as a means of facilitating beneficial outcomes for all parties involved. It is important to investigate further how negotiations in this international business environment are conducted. However, one cannot generalise or presume that the results of this study apply to other industries or non-Kurdish regions in Iraq.

Future research should focus on comparing the differences between Kurdish-Iraqi and Western cross-cultural negotiators with participants from other industries or Arab regions. This will help to add more significance to the study and expand the knowledge on the cultural factors that influence cross-cultural negotiation in the region. The scope for future research could be extended. For instance, research

could be conducted as longitudinal studies with selected senior managers to observe how their negotiation strategies adapt and change over time. It is recommended that the researcher should use control groups with local negotiators negotiating with participants from an Arab Sunni or Shi'a background in order to make comparisons with cross-cultural negotiations to identify different negotiation processes and strategies. It is hoped that the research will improve the negotiation practice and lead to a better understanding across the cultures in this region.

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Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced: 22/05/2013

Project Title

Managing cross-cultural negotiations in the current Northern Iraq IB environment

An Invitation

My name is Tobias Blechschmidt. I am currently enrolled as a postgraduate student at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand, specializing in International Business and Management. I am looking for volunteers to participate in my study about cross-cultural negotiations.

This research is conducted as part of a Master's of business research project and to obtain a Master qualification. The findings of this research might be used for publication and /or as part of a PhD. Qualification at a later stage.

The purpose of this study is to investigate factors that impact cross-cultural negotiations in the northern Iraqi oil industry. The specific aim is to identify behavioural patterns in negotiation. For this reason I am looking for participants from middle and senior management who operate in this industry and conduct business negotiations regularly to be interviewed for my research.

You have been chosen from a list of service suppliers of oil and gas related services. This list has been compiled and recommended by the domestic Kurdish Ministry of Natural Resources (KMNR). You have been identified because of your business presence in the northern Iraqi oil industry as well as your expertise in cross-cultural negotiations.

The data collection consists of a questionnaire entailing 25 questions and a short interview in which you are asked to reflect on your negotiations that you have conducted in within the last 12 months (please see question sheet attached). The interviews will be audio-taped and then also transcribed for research purposes. Your individual responses will be kept confidential and only the aggregate information will be made public.

Participation in this project is voluntary. I as the researcher will try to answer any questions and address any concerns that you may have at any stage of the interview or data collection. You have the opportunity to withdraw any information that you have provided for this project at any time without prejudice. In the event that you withdraw from the research project all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed. The identity and privacy of you and all other participants will be treated with care and confidentiality. I assure you of high respect at all times.

Thank you very much for your time and help.

Yours sincerely,

Tobias Blechschmidt

PS: If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me via email or read the following frequently asked questions and answers:

Questions that you might liked to have answered:

What are the costs for me of participating in this research?

There are no costs for you involved. Participating in the study will take you approximately 30mins of your time.

Are there any discomforts and risks for me involved?

Your privacy is always respected. You are not placed at any risk in this research, and you are unlikely to experience any discomfort either.

How are discomforts and risks for me alleviated?

If you feel that questions are asked that you are not feeling comfortable to answer you may decline to answer any question at any time. You can also ask for the audio-tape to be turned off, have a response deleted, or choose to have the interview terminated all together. I will make it my priority to treat your concerns with utmost care and respect.

What do I do if I want to participate in the study?

Please inform myself as the researcher of your decision within the next 14 days by email; the email address is provided below.

Do I have to give written consent to participate in this research?

All participants who agree to take part in the research have to provide their written consent. You can do this either by email: please sign and send the signed attached consent form. You can also chose to sign the form at the interview.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

All participants who are interested in the findings of this research will receive a summary of the findings. If you are interested in the findings please tick appropriate box on consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be raised with me.

You can also contact the Project Supervisor, Dr. Sabina Jaeger, <sabina.jaeger@aut.ac.nz>, +64 9 921 9999 ext. 5907

Concerns regarding the ethical conduct of the research should be directed to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Dr Rosemary Godbold, rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz , 0064-921 9999 ext. 6902.

If I want additional information or who should I contact for further details about this research?

Please contact me directly at Tobias Blechschmidt <tblechschmidt@hotmail.com>

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr. Sabina Jaeger, AUT University; Faculty of Business and Law; Auckland - New Zealand

Phone +64 9 921 9999 ext 5907 Email: <sabina.jaeger@aut.ac.nz>

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEK Reference number *type the reference number*.

Appendix B: Consent Form

Consent Form



Project title:

“Managing cross-cultural negotiations in the current Northern Iraq IB environment.”

Project Supervisor: **Dr. Sabina Jaeger**

Researcher: **Research Student – Tobias Blechschmidt**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 10/04/2013.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that collected data might be used at a later stage for academic purposes e.g. journal article, PhD. Thesis.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes No

Participant’s signature:

.....

Participant’s name:

.....

Participant’s Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

.....

Date:

Appendix C: Interpersonal Conflict Questionnaire

<i>When negotiating:</i>	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
1. I usually come up with a plan to influence the negotiation to go my way.					
2. I usually explain myself well to make sure that the negotiation stays friendly and comfortable.					
3. I usually go out of my way to make sure that the outcome for the other party is fair.					
4. I usually make sure that I and the other party can get what we want from the negotiation.					
5. If something needs to be negotiated, I usually volunteer to do it.					
6. I usually compromise in order to get something in return from the person I'm negotiating with.					
7. If the negotiation is not going in my favor, I withdraw from the negotiation.					
8. I usually come up with creative solutions that allow both me and the other party to get what we want from the negotiation.					
9. If it seems important for the other person to have the upper hand, I'll give in to them.					
10. I usually avoid difficult issues to keep the negotiation from getting unpleasant.					
11. If the other party compromises their position, I'm likely to compromise my position in return.					
12. It is important to me to communicate and understand the needs of both parties in order to achieve a satisfying outcome for all people involved.					
13. I usually present information, when negotiating, even if it doesn't necessarily always support my position.					
14. I usually suggest a solution that allows both parties to meet in the middle.					
15. I believe it is important to understand the view of the other parties and accommodate their needs.					

Rate your level of agreement with each of these statements.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16. I hold the view that when negotiating, both sides have to give something up to get rewarded.					
17. What's good for me is really all that matters when negotiating.					
18. I usually avoid engaging in negotiation.					
19. I hold the view that when negotiating, someone wins and someone has to lose.					
20. The feelings of the other party I'm negotiating with are of importance to me.					
21. When negotiating the secret to success is to focus is on common points rather than differences.					
22. My negotiation approach can be aggressive when it benefits me.					
23. I belief compromising in a negotiation is equivalent to losing.					
24. It is not important to me if the other party does not benefit from the negotiation.					
25. When negotiating it is important to me to achieve a good comfort level for all parties involved.					

Appendix D: Open ended interview questions

Indicative Questions for Interview:

“Participant tells the interviewer about an important negotiation process he or she was confronted with within the last 12 months.”

Q1. Can you please tell me about how you conduct a negotiation? What are the secrets of successful negotiation?

Q2. Can you please tell me, when negotiating how important is protocol for you?

Q3. Can you please tell me during your negotiations, how do you communicate with your opposite?

Q4. Can you please tell me what value time has for you when negotiating? E.g. a limited resource that must not be wasted or were you interested in getting to know the other counterpart?

Q5. Can you please tell about the risk that was related with the outcome of the negotiation? Were you willing to take a risk?

Q6. Can you please tell me, did you involve other colleagues or employees in the decision making process?

Q7. Can you please tell is agreement detail-oriented and with specific provisions or open to changes?

Q8. Are you satisfied with the outcome?

Appendix E: Ethics Approval



A U T E C
S E C R E T A R I A T

24 May 2013

Sabina Jaeger
Faculty of Business and Law

Dear Sabina

Re Ethics Application: **13/94 Managing cross-cultural negotiations in the current Northern Iraq IB environment.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 23 May 2016.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 23 May 2016;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 23 May 2016 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sabina Jaeger', written in a cursive style.

Madeline Banda
Acting Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Tobias Blechschmidt tblechschmidt@hotmail.com; dgy3502@aut.ac.nz