Iraqis on the Move: Displaced Professionals, Protection/ 'Aman Space in Jordan and Memories of a Destroyed State

Laura Adwan

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD)
University of Bergen, Norway
2020

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

Iraqis on the Move: Displaced Professionals, Protection/ 'Aman Space in Jordan and Memories of a Destroyed State

Laura Adwan

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD)
at the University of Bergen

Date of defense: 23.10.2020

© Copyright Laura Adwan

The material in this publication is covered by the provisions of the Copyright Act.

Year: 2020

Title: Iraqis on the Move: Displaced Professionals, Protection/ 'Aman Space in Jordan and Memories of a Destroyed State

Name: Laura Adwan

Print: Skipnes Kommunikasjon / University of Bergen

Before, times like these
have come before
Times when we witnessed
hurricanes that never stopped uprooting trees
We thought that we had learned
how to travel the road
to the gods' gate
How to carry the burden
and rise up again after the flood
How to go, again
If days come when we see hurricanes
that never stop uprooting trees

By Sargon Boulus[1]

[1] Extract from "Times: The song of a Sumerian who lived for a thousand years," a poem by Sargon Boulus, translated from Arabic by Sinan Antoon. From *Azma Ukhra li-Kalb al-Qabila* (Another Bone for the Tribe's Dog). Beirut/Baghdad: Dar al-Jamal, 2008.

Contents

MAP OF IRAQ AND SURROUNDING COUNTRIES 1

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 3

ABSTRACT 6

CHAPTER ONE 8

INTRODUCING THE THESIS – THEMES, CONCEPTS AND ARGUMENTS 8

- THE FIELD SITE OF 'LEARNING EXPERIENCE(S)' 10
- ON *ʾAMĀN* أمان AND ITS LACK OR ABSENCE AMONG DISPLACED IRAQIS IN THE FIELD 13
- THE GENERAL ARGUMENT 15
- THEORETICAL APPROACHES ON ʾAMĀN OR 'WELL-BEING' UNDER CONDITIONS OF STRUCTURAL CHANGE 17
- ON AGENCY IN CONDITIONS OF REDUCTION 19
- LIMITED AID STRUCTURE: THE 'FORMAL' PROTECTION SPACE IN JORDAN 23
- AN IRAQI HISTORY OF CRISES – LESSONS IN SURVIVAL 26
- BIG QUESTIONS AND ANTHROPOLOGY 27

CHAPTER TWO 30

IN SEARCH OF UNDERSTANDING – COMPARISONS, METHODOLOGIES AND REFLEXIVITY 30

- ENGAGING WITH LITERATURE ON IRAQ AND ETHNOGRAPHIES ON SOCIAL CHANGE, DISPLACEMENT AND WELL-BEING IN REDUCTIONIST CONDITIONS 30
- METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS 39
- SMALL THOUGHTS ON 'POSITIONALITY' 45
- FIELDWORK 'AS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE' 48
- OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS 53

CHAPTER THREE 56

HIGHLY SKILLED IRAQI PROFESSIONALS AND ACADEMICS IN SEARCH OF *ʾAMĀN* AND WELL-BEING 56

- DR. SHARIF'S STORY- A FUGITIVE AND DOCTOR VOLUNTEER 57
- THE EXPULSION OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS FROM BAGHDAD 58
- 'WORKING' TO EXTEND THE SPACE OF *ʾAMĀN* IN COMPLEX CONDITIONS TO THE POSSIBLE 61
- FOUR POSSIBILITIES OF 'WORKING' AS HIGHLY-SKILLED IRAQI PROFESSIONALS IN THE ABSENCE OF STATE INSTITUTIONS 66
- POSSIBILITY 1-FROM HIGHLY-SKILLED PROFESSIONALS IN BAGHDAD TO TEMPORARY CONTRACTED WORKERS IN AMMAN 67
- -PROFESSOR NAIM: A FOREIGN WORKER IN JORDAN AND AN IRAQI IN EXILE (*AL-MANFA*) 69
- -PROFESSOR BALQEES: A FUNGIBLE WORKER 71
- -PROFESSOR WALEED: A MIGRANT WORKER 72
- POSSIBILITY 2-FROM HIGHLY SKILLED PROFESSIONALS IN BAGHDAD TO "CIRCULAR MIGRANTS" WHO WORK (AND LIVE) BETWEEN IRAQ AND JORDAN 75
- -PROFESSOR SALIM: RETURNING TO WORK IN HIS FORMER UNIVERSITY IN BAGHDAD TO SUPPORT HIS FAMILY'S EXPENSES IN AMMAN 78
- -DR TAREQ: A TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE IN JORDAN LOOKING FOR BETTER POSITION IN HIS MOTHER'S HOME-CITY ERBIL 82
- -SHAIMA: AN IRAQI STUDENT IN AMMAN PLANNING TO RETURN TO WORK IN BAGHDAD WITH HER FATHER, UPON HER GRADUATION 83
- -UM-TAI: UNEMPLOYED ENGINEER SUPPORTED BY HER FATHER, A MEDICAL DOCTOR WHO RETURNED TO WORK IN HIS TRIBAL TOWN IN IRAQ 84

Well-being as perceived by Iraqi professionals in conditions of circular migration 87
Possibility 3- Working as 'de-valued professionals'- outside their fields of competence.......... 90
Possibility 4 – Searching for ʾamān in Europe and Jordan- The experience of Lutfiya al-Dulaimi, an Iraqi author 93
Moving between different labels and places 97

CHAPTER FOUR 104

IRAQIS STUCK IN AMMAN: ON THE CONDITIONS OF '–LESSNESS' AND HOW TO BE 'MOST VULNERABLE/ ELIGIBLE FOR AID' IN THE FORMAL SPACE OF PROTECTION 104

House-visits and the production of –lessness 107
The 'production' of refugees 110
Drawing the boundaries of the protection space...111
Case 1: Making need visible 113
Case 2: The production of documented evidence of need 116
Quantifying the need 119
Outreaching refugees- The aid organizations' part of the story 124
Reflections on –lessness as a precondition of inclusion in humanitarian aid 132

CHAPTER FIVE 135

ONGOING CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM OF AID AND ACCESS TO WORK IN JORDAN............135

The first context -of work for Iraqis in Jordan 136
The rumor of a 'secret pardon' 138
Working in conditions of "permanent 'temporariness'" between rumors and 'royal' exceptions/decrees 143
ʾAmān in conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity 145
The second context -of aid systems and dynamics in the formal protection space 147
The 'refugee'- an unsettling notion...148
Transformation of aid: From centralized humanitarian protection managed by the UNHCR to developmental programs managed by contracted organizations 150
The problems with the development-oriented approach 152
Refugees as an important source to attract 'additional' international aid 155
Iraqis' attempts to extend the limited formal protection space by sharing stories of their 'lack of ʾamān' 158

CHAPTER SIX 165

BAGHDAD 1960S-1980S: LIVING WITH PROMISES OF A BETTER FUTURE 165

General features of the rising government bureaucracy in Baghdad: 1960s-1980s 167
The 'good old days'...170
Being a member of the Iraqi state bureaucracy in 1970s 172
Well-being in 'retrospective awareness' 175
On being excluded by the Iraqi regime in the 1970s 182
1980s- liberalizing the state and gendering the militarization of society 185
The militarization of Iraqi space- "the internal front" 186
Um-Amjad: Living as a soldier's wife 191
Gendering Iraqi public space(s): recruiting male bureaucrats in the military service and feminizing the civil service 194
Effects of militarization and liberalization on households and family relations 197
Liberalizing the state economy and the privatization policies 203
Nagham: Learning to live with reduction in one's well-being and 'happiness' 206
The decline of well-being among Baghdadi communities and the rise of longing to 'old good days' 209

CHAPTER SEVEN **212**

BAGHDAD 1990S-2011: FROM FILLING FREEZERS TO COUNTING CALORIES **212**

THE DECLINE OF THE STATE INSTITUTIONS AND INTER-MIXED URBAN COMMUNITIES **212**

THE INVASION OF KUWAIT- PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE LOSSES 216
FIRST GULF WAR: THE DISILLUSIONMENT WITH STATE OFFICIAL NARRATIVE AND PRACTICES 219
THE DECLINE OF THE HEROIC IMAGE OF IRAQI WARRIOR (OF 1980S) AND THE RISE OF *AL-ḤIṢĀR* VICTIM 222
FROM FILLING LARGE FREEZERS TO COUNTING CALORIES 223
THE EFFECTS OF PROLONGED WAR AND ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON FAMILY RELATIONS AND WOMEN'S CONDITIONS 228
BEING A MEMBER OF THE IRAQI STATE BUREAUCRACY CLASS IN 1990S 230
THE DECLINE OF THE 'OLD' STATE BUREAUCRACY AND THE RISE OF NEW BUSINESS ELITES AND THE 'BLACK MARKET' 234
POSTINVASION IRAQ- THE DISMANTLEMENT OF STATE INSTITUTIONS AND LOSS OF *ʾAMĀN* 238
EXPULSION OF IRAQI STATE-BUREAUCRATS AND PROFESSIONALS 242
I.FRAGMENTATION OF A FORMER INTER-COMMUNAL BAGHDAD — THE SPREAD OF ANOMIE 244
II.THE DECLINE OF INTER-COMMUNAL RELATIONS AND THE RISE OF SECTARIANISM 248
IRAQIS ON THE MOVE- COMPLEX JOURNEYS SEEKING ASYLUM AND *ʾAMĀN* IN A SAFE STATE 258
THE STORY OF AN IRAQI FAMILY'S LONG JOURNEY WITH SMUGGLING ATTEMPTS TO REACH EUROPE 263
THE COMPLEX JOURNEY OF SUNDOS' FAMILY IN SEARCH FOR *ʾAMĀN* IN A NEW *STATE* 266
CONCLUDING REMARKS: WELL-BEING/ *ʾAMĀN* IN THE ABSENCE OF A STATE 271

CHAPTER EIGHT **274**

CONCLUSION **274**

MAKING *ʾAMĀN* IN CONDITIONS -OF REDUCTION AND -A COMPLEX RELATION TO THE POSSIBLE 279
MOVING BETWEEN DIFFERENT LABELS AND PLACES: RE-THINKING THE 'REFUGEE DISCOURSE' AS A FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCHING FORCED DISPLACEMENT 287

APPENDIX A — COPY OF THE MOU BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE UNHCR **298**

APPENDIX B – A SAMPLE COPY OF THE UNHCR ASYLUM SEEKER CERTIFICATE **300**

APPENDIX C — A SAMPLE COPY OF THE UNHCR REFUGEE CERTIFICATE **301**

APPENDIX D — A SAMPLE COPY OF A NOTICE OF INELIGIBILITY FOR RESETTLEMENT **302**

BIBLIOGRAPHY **304**

Map of Iraq and Surrounding Countries

Map from UNHCR/ Satellite Image Map ©1996-2004 Planetary Visions, http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/source_images_oldsite/iraq-map-large-sep07.jpg

Note on Transliteration

The thesis uses expressions and words in three forms of Arabic: classical Arabic; the form of Iraqi Arabic spoken in Baghdad; and the form of Jordanian Arabic most commonly spoken in Amman (among both Jordanians and Jordanians from Palestinian origin and few Iraqis). I have tried to maintain this variety of forms in the transliteration of Arabic terms and expressions. In general, the transliteration of Arabic words and phrases follows the simplified rules of *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES). All Arabic words, except for proper names and standard English forms, are italicized, while I used common English spelling of proper names and place names.

To make it simple, I followed the IJMES transliteration symbols, except for the article "al-" which I kept as it is, and the final "ة" for which I used "a", instead of the symbols "^{3}" and "a^{2}" respectively. In addition, I used "g" for the Iraqi common pronunciation of گ.

Acknowledgements

This thesis was another long learning journey in my life. I learnt a lot from all Iraqi women, men and children who have shared their stories, jokes, tears, songs, poems and food with me. Without their generosity and kindness, I could not have achieved this in *ʾamān*. I am indebted to all of them and cannot convey my gratitude in words to every single person here. I owe also a debt of gratitude to my friends who assisted me during my stay in Amman: Maysoon al-Otoom, Vivian, Hareth and Omar, Abu-Haitham (may Allah have mercy upon his beautiful soul) and Um-Haitham and Waddah Mahadeen.

I am grateful to my supervisor Professor Leif Manger, for guiding me through a long and stressful writing process, without losing patience, and especially for his insightful comments and discussions that helped me reframe my ideas and field observations into a more ethnographic piece. I am also deeply indebted to Professor Nefissa Naguib for her meticulous comments and valuable feedback that guided me to find my way through relevant anthropological literature. Needless to say, responsibility for any shortcomings is my own.

This thesis has also benefited from many individuals, in many ways. I express my thanks to my friends and fellow Ph D students in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Bergen with whom I started this academic journey, including Reshma Bharadwaj, Carmeliza Rosario, Mehmonsho Sharifov, Tord Austdal, Thomas Sajan, Samson Abebe Bezabeh, Espen Helgesen (and little Casper), Thor Erik Sortland, Mellese Gatisso, Jessica Mzamu, Thomas Mountjoy, Rita Isdal Cunningham, Alexander Manuylov, Bård Kårtveit, Berit Angelskår, Janne Bøe, Mads Solberg, Mathew Varghese, Iselin Åsedotter Strønen and Hilde Kjostvedt; it was great to meet all of you and get inspired by the discussions we had in the writing seminars and during our walks and food gatherings. I especially thank my friend Jayaseelan Raj for taking the time to read and comment on previous versions of my thesis chapters and for the arguments we had about the dehumanization experiences of our peoples in India and Palestine resulting from racism, imperialism and colonialism.

To the professors in the University of Bergen who contributed positively to enhance my work during seminars and casual discussions in the corridors and kitchen of the department: Kjetil K. Fosshagen, Ståle Knudsen, Andrew Lattas, Bjørn Enge Bertelsen, Tone Bringa, Mary Bente Bringslid, Christine Jacobsen, Ørnulf Gulbrandsen, Bruce Kapferer, Olaf Smedal, Randi Håland and especially Prof Anh Nga Longva for always paying interest and suggesting readings on the Arab region. I am very grateful for all the input I received from Thorvald Sirnes, Lorenzo Canas Bottos, Knut Mikjel Rio and Christina Toren during training events, and I especially thank John Chr Knudsen for his support and critical comments in the Department's writing seminars and for sharing his in-depth knowledge and experience with refugees and displacement. And special and warm thanks to professors in Birzeit University: Lisa Taraki and Amira Silmi for their comments and feedback on parts of my writing.

Thanks are due to Pavla Jezkova, Kristin Holst Paulsen, Inger Sofie Thorsen, Anne-Kathrin Thomassen, Gro Aase, Line Fjellhaug, Yngve Brynjulfsen and Marianne Soltveit for their support in administrative and financial matters.

I would like to give special thanks to Prof. Kirsti Koch Christensen who granted a scholarship for a Palestinian female student; her generosity allowed me the chance to complete my PhD studies and covered my living expenses during my stay in Bergen. This research has been also helped by the support of the Norwegian Program for Development, Research and Education NUFU-funded collaborative project "Enabling Local Voices" between the University of Bergen and the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University, which funded six months of my fieldwork and my participation in three academic workshops. In addition to the Department of Social Anthropology, for funding the six-month extension stay at Bergen allowing me to benefit from the great library resources and research facilities at the University of Bergen.

I want also to thank my dear friends for their kindness and support during distant and close conversations: habibti Sajwa who could still sing and recite beautiful Iraqi songs and poems after living three decades in cold exile. Rania in Bergen, Hanan Abd al-Hasan in Berlin, Lamis Huwayen in Florida, Yasmine Abu-Shkheidem in Dublin, and in Palestine Aiche Ahmad, Raida Khuffash, Raida Faqih, Nour Salim, Reem Kanaan, and Khadra Dweib. And my two friends who were displaced in 2012: Maysa Haj Ahmed Zarura in Germany and Khozama Rasheed in Sweden in memory of *Mukhayyam al-Yarmouk* in Syria, the home that had sheltered us all once, hoping to meet again in Safuriya.

Last, but not least, I want to thank my family: Aneta, Ibrahim, Lina, Waleed, Laila, Zeina, Dana, Wahib and Ibrahim Wahib for pushing me to focus on writing and completing my thesis. And Ahmad Ashkar for his love, care and also for his critical listening to my thoughts.

To the memory of Fatmeh Huwayen: a dear friend who was shot dead in August 2015 trying to cross the other side of the Syrian border in her journey to safety further away from al-Shajara village from which her parents were uprooted in 1948

Abstract

Recent events of forced displacement in the Middle East are compelling millions of people to *move* within the borders of their country, while forcing many others to become strangers in other lands. In the modern era categorized by the nation-state rise, the military and disciplinary power of 'national' and 'enemy' states has been the main factor in controlling the movements of people. Forced migration has marked the Iraqi state-building history since the early twentieth century, when various colonial and post-colonial regimes used population movement as an instrument of rule, at various scales. What is unique in the phase of postinvasion Iraq (post-2003) is that displacement has not only affected certain segments of the Iraqi society, but has extended to displace the whole system of rule with its state institutions, causing a rupture in the former urban inter-mixed communities. This has led to sweeping the Iraqi space of many of its original communities, the members of which have felt, as expressed in the observations and stories in this thesis, that they have had little or no space in the *New Iraq*. These include whole sections of the Iraqi society, in addition to professionals and academics from various sects and religions, leading to a sharp decline in the former Baghdadi urban inter-communal way of life, education and work.

The thesis is based on ethnographic fieldwork in Amman, among Iraqi state employees and highly skilled professionals during 2010 and 2011, the majority left after 2003, specifically between 2005-2009, and few had left during 1990s and were still unable to return. Their lives have been shaped by a once wealthy oil developmental state severely affected by three wars within two decades and thirteen years of comprehensive UN-economic sanction. The destructive US-led war and invasion of 2003, the military occupation and the new ruling sectarian regime resulted in a large flow of Iraqis across the borders into neighboring countries.

The international and regional response has been limited and restricted to the provision of temporary space of protection/*himaya* within the region which has addressed the developmental needs of host state institutions more than addressing the urgent needs of Iraqis in the Jordanian Kingdom (who is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention that defines the rights and obligations of refugees and the host country). Getting resettlement in a third country was restricted to limited numbers of Iraqis (able to provide a well-founded story of

fear of being persecuted), although until the end of my fieldwork, Iraqis were still crossing their country's borders in growing numbers in search of *ʾamān* (the state of feeling safe). Iraqis— formerly state-employees and professionals who experienced personal and collective losses and on top of that became jobless and status-less— were torn between waiting in conditions of uncertainty in Jordan for assistance that was pre-conditioned by the ability to present a strong evidence of 'need' (usually 'visible' need) on the one side, and on the other side, they were actively responding to their urgent need to make spaces of *ʾamān* as they perceive *ʾamān* for themselves and their families (and households).

To understand this complex condition of displacement and protection, this thesis explores the stories and experiences observed among Iraqis within relevant historical, political and socio-economic contexts. Making *'amān* in conditions of war– or "well-being in a world of want" as Michael Jackson (2011) described it in another region and context– was not a new experience for these Iraqis who lived through longer events of social transformation during times of state development, wars and economic sanctions.

I argue, using ethnographic details that the displacement of this group of Iraqi professionals and state-employees following the destruction of several aspects of their social and cultural life provides a space to re-think forced displacement in the wider context of structural violence. The thesis uses *'amān* as a generative concept, to explore different meanings and possibilities of being-in-the-world among this group of Iraqis "in its relation to what is possible". In the fragmented spaces in Iraq and Jordan, *ʾamān* was a term shared collectively by Iraqis to explain how they relate to the world around them, their memories of good old days, pain, suffering during times of displacement and wars, and their dreams to reach a safe State.

Chapter One

Introducing the thesis – themes, concepts and arguments

Dr. Omar, who was in his mid-sixties when I met him in his apartment in Amman in March 2011 left Iraq in 2005. As an Iraqi cardiothoracic surgeon, and former dean of higher studies in cardiology in Baghdad, Dr. Omar is one of many health sector professionals and academics who were made redundant as part of the post-war and reconstruction process that would "lead to a 'new', 'free' and 'democratic' [*sic*] Iraq" (Barakat, 2008: 3). While his son, a physician, had gained resettlement to a third country through the UNHCR and left for the USA, Dr Omar said he preferred, at his age, to stay and work in a country close to Iraq where he could practice his profession and provide medical help and treatment to Iraqis and Jordanians, despite the limitations imposed on Iraqi professionals and workers, since Jordan, as he said, had enough doctors and exports medical experts to other countries. Eventually in the years following 2003, Jordan (and other neighboring countries) received many Iraqis seeking medical treatment, education and other services that were disappearing from Iraq.

Dr Omar recalled vividly his last day in Ibn al-Bitar Cardiac Surgery Hospital, 8 April 2003; it was the day when he and some of his colleagues were at the hospital. They all watched as the American army invaded Baghdad. When their tanks reached close to the Iraqi museum, one of the tanks pushed the entrance gate of the museum, opening a big hole in one of its walls that allowed easy access to the looting gangs who emptied the museum in front of the American army's watching eyes.

Another tank headed towards the hospital, pushed the gate at the main entrance, and broke it allowing other groups of looting gangs to steal, and destroy the hospital that once provided comprehensive high standard care, including transplant and cardiac surgery to patients from all over Iraq and nearby countries for a minimal flat rate. "The doctors and health workers did all they could to protect the hospital, but the American soldiers who supervised the looting operation made sure that everything was destroyed; one of the soldiers, an Arabic speaker, used some kind of adhesive ribbon that set the hospital building on fire,"[2] as Dr Omar recalled angrily: "In one hour the American tanks attacked the museum and burned the

[2] Interview with Dr Omar, Amman, March 2011.

Cardiac Surgery Centre. When I asked the American army officer why are you destroying a hospital? He replied: we will construct better hospitals than this."

The burning of the Cardiac Surgery Centre, also known as Saddam's Cardiac Surgery Centre, and other similar incidents indicate that the so-called "US reconstruction plans in Iraq" envisaged replacing, not building on existing conditions. There was no recognition of Iraq's achievements as a modern secular state, as Sultan Barakat explained in his introduction of the edited book *Reconstructing Post-Saddam Iraq*, the contracting—out of reconstruction— and the rapid privatization of key industries that followed, marginalized Iraqi middle class professionals and the general public (2008: 13). Dr Omar explained that most of his colleagues had been forced to leave too, some were killed, others were kidnapped and released after paying a high ransom, and some were threatened and arrested.[3]

Dr Omar had not only lost his job, home and the aspirations he and his generation of Iraqi professionals and former state employees cultivated to ensure better future for their children and younger Iraqi generations in general. The conditions imposed by the US invaders meant that it became almost impossible to realize his and his offspring aspirations to work and live in Iraq. The story did not end here. While his son chose, among other limited possibilities, to accept 'the refugee label' and resettle in a third country, Dr Omar's reflection on the losses he experienced following the destructive conditions that forced him out of Iraq led him to perceive Jordan as an alternative for him. What was important to him was the ability to work, even though on voluntary basis, and assist in the provision of medical treatment to Iraqis who were coming in large numbers to Jordan seeking medical services that had become scarce in Iraq after 2003. As perceived by Dr Omar, this was the only possible solution, because returning to Iraq posed many threats, partly due to his name[4] and his affiliation to the former government, in addition to the absence of former ways of working and living in inter-communal neighborhoods in Baghdad. There were little chances for him to return to live in his Baghdadi neighborhood and do what he used to do as a surgeon and university lecturer without risking to be kidnapped or killed.

[3] Dr Omar's eldest son, who is also a doctor was imprisoned by the US-led occupation army.
[4] 'Omar' is one of the 'Sunni' names that was often described as the most dangerous names in Iraq after 2003. In one single incident in 2006, the bodies of 14 Omar(s) were found in a Baghdad garbage dump. (See the article published on 10 July 2006: "Where your name can be a death sentence" by Bobby Ghosh available online: http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1212291,00.html , retrieved in April 2019.

The field site of 'learning experience(s)'

The case of Dr. Omar represents several issues I shall discuss in this thesis. The basic ethnography is based on my interaction with around 90 Iraqis, both male and female, and 21 representatives of local and international NGOs and community centers during one year of fieldwork in the Jordanian capital Amman, from June 2010 – May 2011. The majority of Iraqis I met were former civil servants (I refer to them as 'state or government employees' as they were part of the civil and military services) and professionals who escaped the conditions of destruction and chaotic violence following the 2003 US-UK led invasion of their country. Most of them used to live in the capital Baghdad and had left during the period 2005-2009 (although I met few who left Iraq before and after these years). In addition, I met a few Iraqi academics and doctors, who had fled Iraq during the UN economic sanctions period (1990-2003), which is known among Iraqis as *al-ḥiṣār*, and who were unable to return to Baghdad despite all the promises of the 'liberating' forces. The majority were members of the urban middle and upper-middle classes in Iraq, hailing from different backgrounds and religions.

They were medical doctors, academics, engineers, teachers, lawyers, artists, journalists and authors and some few younger workers in various careers including carpenters, hairdressers and tailors, as well as some religious and political leaders. And they represented the socio-cultural complexities in their homeland, Iraq. The people I met were Sunni, Shia, Christian, Yazidi, Sabean-Mandean, Kurdish or half Kurd, half Shia or half Sunni. The majority of them had lost their salaried jobs and several individuals and households experienced impoverishment and unemployment in Jordan. But there were differences. Some of the Iraqi professionals I met had managed to obtain employment in Jordan at universities and hospitals. This did not solve all their problems, and as we shall see in Chapter Three, some individuals in this group felt marginalized and struggled with how they could maintain a decent living standard for themselves and their families. Other Iraqis found themselves in a more difficult situation. Some, who had no access to remittances became dependent on the limited aid provided by the UNHCR and other local and international NGOs. And as we shall see in Chapters Four and Five, the status of 'refugee' and the 'protection space' provided by the UNHCR and other organizations for such refugees did not meet the requirements or expectations of the Iraqis.

But the problems all Iraqis faced had not started in Jordan. They were all victims of the transformations in the crises in Iraq that date back to the 1990s following the first Gulf War and the comprehensive and devastating international economic sanctions following that war. This disaster destroyed large parts of the material and social fabric inside Iraq. The situation got even worse with the attack on the Iraqi space and former state institutions after the 2003 invasion and the US-led occupation of Iraq. The failure of the new 'democratic' political process based on the American vision of a free neoliberal Iraqi economy ruled by a system of ethnic-sectarian quota-based governance created increased levels of violence and chaos. The post-US-invasion-government was supposed to be more inclusive than the previous regime which brutally excluded all its opponents. However, the 'new Iraqi' governors represented competing interests of certain sects, ethnicities and global powers while the collective Iraqi national interests receded with the exclusion of many qualified Iraqis who used to constitute the former state bureaucracy, and had no place in the new Iraq being labeled as 'unwanted regime people'. Former professionals like Dr. Omar were expelled from the new Iraq for belonging to undesirable professions or factions affiliated to the former regime. And state run institutions, like the Cardiac Surgery Center, were destroyed. All originated in the so-called de-Baathification order issued by Paul Bremer, the American leader of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) after the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

One of the most visible segments of Iraqis who sought refuge in neighboring countries, during 2010-2011 when I did my fieldwork were precisely the type of people I describe above. They were former government employees, like Dr. Omar and his son, who had become redundant. With the rising violence in 2003 thousands of them were forced to flee the country to different parts in the world. Their experiences were dramatic. Houses of hundreds of university professors were stormed and hundreds of them were arrested. The range and numbers of academic staff killed indicate a systematic physical elimination of Iraqi academics by assassination, torture and arrest as described by a senior Iraqi academic living in Amman: "*They [the occupation authorities and the new Iraqi government] don't want us. They say that they'll prepare a new generation of academics and professionals, people of our own coloring. In order to understand why we ['refugee' academics] are here [in Amman] you need to know that it's a clear-out of people like me, for whom there is no place in the new Iraq*" (Baker et al, 2010: 212). The expulsion of these former government employees and professionals led to further deterioration in the provision of health and education following years of wars and economic sanctions (*al-ḥiṣār*), and, with the level of violence emerging,

more and more Iraqis decided to leave (Marfleet, 2007; Chatelard, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, De Bel-Air, 2009; Adriaensens, 2010; Baker et al., 2010; Campbell, 2016; Hoffmann, 2016; Chatty, 2017b). Sources indicate that in the years following the US-led invasion the number of teachers in Baghdad fell by 80% and "up to 75% of Iraq's doctors, pharmacists and nurses have left their jobs since the invasion in 2003."[5]

The chaotic violence which spread in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq was also combined with another development. This was the general privatization policies of the post-invasion Iraq. Privatizing the Iraqi economy and selling off its industries led to the expulsion of several Iraqi bureaucrats from their jobs in the public sector, where most of them used to work. Many of the private contractors' projects were funded by the USAID and once the money was disbursed, it ended up in the hands of private companies, most of which were American. Eventually, the vision of the US authorities and that of the CPA, promising a 'New Iraq' as an oasis of democracy and free market economy, was far from realized. Instead of economic development the result of the deteriorating security situation made any investment in Iraq a risky business.

Ismael and Ismael explain how the political process after 2003 excluded many former social groupings and forces from participating in the developments. As a consequence of the privatization programs, private contractors were hired but the process was all dominated by the USAID. The aim was to recruit staff that could oversee their reconstruction of Iraq, and what they were looking for was "the most appropriate 'legitimate' and functional leaders—that is, educated Iraqis, particularly expatriate Iraqis who were residents of the US, or those leaders that [they] can work with" (2015: 31-32). Obviously, this meant individuals not opposed to the US occupation and Iraq's westernization. The ultimate aim was to create a *New Ira*q based on a neoliberal model. Thus Ismael and Ismael concluded that: "The first elected government would be starting fresh, without the bureaucratic legacy of the Baathist regime, barring great swaths of Iraqis from participating in the reconstruction" (2015: 22-23).

[5] In the early years of Saddam Hussein, the health care system in Iraq was a showcase, with most Iraqis receiving excellent, inexpensive care. Iraqi doctors often studied in England, and Iraq's medical schools, based at hospitals, had high standards.
From http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/30/international/middleeast/30doctor.htm?_r=1, accessed on 6 July 2010. See also Dewachi (2017) for further details.

On *ʾamān* أمان and its lack or absence among displaced Iraqis in the field

In my conversations with the members of the groups who had experienced the developments described above, they all expressed a lack of security and safety as a basic reason for their escape from their home country, and that they were in search of such safety in their new places of residence. In Arabic this was expressed as a search for *ʾamān*. During my conversations with Iraqis in Amman they repeatedly explained their leaving home in Iraq by referring to a lack of *ʾamān*. "*Mākū ʾamān fil Iraq*" was a much used expression – "in Iraq there is no *ʾamān* anymore."

ʾAmān[6] literally translates into feeling safe among one's family and community, away from danger, and as explored among middle-class Iraqi professionals in the following chapters, it is related to having the means to work and live a dignified and stable life. As a result of the social transformations this group experienced in the last four decades, *ʾamān* did not have a fixed meaning for all Iraqis all the time. The following chapters present different attempts I observed and heard among Iraqis about their past and present experiences of producing spaces of *ʾamān* in both Iraq and Jordan. The meanings of *ʾamān* varied in relation to access to means of life and labor in both countries. There are also generational differences; the perceptions and practices of older Iraqis are different from younger generations when it comes to potentials of producing *ʾamān* in times of war and forced displacement. In the coming chapters, we meet Iraqi professionals and state employees who had lived through various wars under oppressive state-regime. For most of them, being able to work in one's profession, and access relatively good governmental services such as free health care, education and employment, and enjoying rich social life used to formulate the sense of *ʾamān* which they missed when they described their life in Baghdad prior the economic embargo.

Lack of *ʾamān* did not start in Jordan and in the post-invasion Iraq. The older generation of Iraqi government employees described how they gradually lost access to decent salary and had to suffer severe deterioration in accessing health and educational services, and became dependent on a ration system to meet basic nutritional requirements, after the US-led bombing of the Iraqi state infrastructure in 1991 and during the 13 years of economic embargo. There were various reactions among this generation of Iraqi professionals to the lack of *ʾamān;* while some perceived themselves as engaging and practicing their capacities

[6] It is derived from the Arabic root A-M-N, the same root for the term *ʾamāna*, which means integrity, and *ʾimān*, which means faith.

as professionals in making a limited space of *ʾamān* inside Iraq, others were struggling to leave the conditions of destruction (and lack of *ʾamān)* in an attempt to extend the space of *ʾamān* for themselves and their families, as expressed later by some Iraqi professionals and academics who left Iraq during the 1990s and were still unable to return during my fieldwork time. All Iraqis I met in 2010 and 2011 shared feelings of the absence of *ʾamān* in the post-invasion Iraq with the spread of violence and the rise of daily killing by explosives, kidnapping and torture, sticky bombs and silencers. They talked extensively about the absence of *ʾamān* in their home country as the main reason for their presence in Jordan.

One of the biggest sources of *ʾamān* for this group of professionals and state employees was related to what they labeled 'order'. They referred to the absence of *ʾamān* in relation to lack of order and the spread of conditions of lawlessness and destruction of state-institutions: "It is chaos/ *fawdā* فوضى in Iraq"; or "The US got rid of one Saddam to replace him with 100 Saddams"; "*mākū niẓām/* there is no order." The use of *niẓām* here refers to the absence of order and regulations or rules in general not only the former regime. The details presented in the coming chapters show how the absence of order forced many Iraqis to leave their homes; they referred to the loss of order which enabled them to live and work in inter-mixed neighborhoods and institutions, despite many other types of difficulties. The informants described the lack of *ʾamān* during the oppressive rule of Saddam's dictatorship and what they called "his crazy decisions to involve the nation in one war after another." However, when they compared what they described as 'Saddam's Iraq' to post-invasion Iraq, they often referred to how they missed the strict order and regulations imposed by the former police and army in their control of the Iraqi space. The dismantlement of the Iraqi police and army apparatus following the invasion led to the rise of *fawdā*/ chaos. While there was agreement on the absence of *ʾamān* in post-invasion Iraq, the meanings of this absence were connected to what these Iraqis miss most. The following expressions were most commonly shared with me:

- "*mākū ʾamān*/ there is no safe place in Iraq: Going to school or work can get you kidnapped, burned alive or beheaded. It became normal to say goodbye to my family members in the morning when I leave to work with tears and hugs fearing that we might not meet again",

- "there's no future, no water or electricity in Iraq, the weather changed, the air is full of dust and sand, and poverty and misery increased",[7]
- *"mākū ʿilaj*: there is no medical treatment and health services in Iraq."

In postinvasion Iraq, the absence of *ʾamān* was also often narrated in relation to one's sectarian, ethnic or religious affiliation and the increasing level of violence among various groups. An Iraqi woman I met in Amman narrated the story of the killing of her two brothers who were violently pulled from their neighborhood together with other Shii men. They were found dead by the police later, with signs of torture all over their bodies which had been tied together, shot and burned with chemical acids. The woman said that members of her family in Iraq could recognize one of her brothers because his face was covered by his hands and thus partly preserved its shape. The police and several families who could identify their sons indicated that among the piles of dead bodies, there were both Sunni and Shii men.[8] Another woman had this to say:

> We thought that we will feel safer in Jordan. At least, not threatened to be slaughtered or die in an explosion if I leave my home to buy food or just to have a walk. My kids can go to school alone, I do not have to accompany them in the morning and hire a taxi driver to pick them up in the afternoon so that they won't get kidnapped, they can play outside freely. In Baghdad [after 2003] we had to stay at home, and even home did not feel safe at the end; at first, Americans used to raid at night and after 2006, the militias' business thrived. Our biggest problem in Iraq today is that you don't know who is your enemy, you don't know from where or by whom you'll be attacked.[9]

The general argument

This dissertation thus explores the complex process of what I call "learning to live again in *ʾamān*" with social transformations that affected the possibilities of being in the world and also affected the perceptions of *ʾamān*, as experienced by Iraqis I met in Jordan. A basic part of the discussion is to show that the adaptation of this group of Iraqis was not only a result of the context of Iraqis as 'refugees', constrained by the rules and regulations of the institutions, of which UNHCR is a major one, providing assistance to the Iraqis labeled as refugees. It was that too, and I shall discuss it in greater detail in Chapters Four and Five. But what I found was a much more complex situation in which the Iraqis I met also developed adaptive

[7] This is not restricted to state employees who lost their means of labor, the Financial Times declared Iraq "the most dangerous place in the world to do business" (Klein, 2004).
[8] Interview with Nadia on 20 November 2010.
[9] Interview with Um-Mazen in her rented home in Amman on 13 January 2011.

strategies that challenged the definitions of the international humanitarian system. I argue that this capacity of the Iraqis to circumvent the limitations of the aid-based system has to be seen also in a historical context in which the economic and political changes during four decades of war conditions in Iraq had affected all the former state employees and professionals I engaged with, whether they were affluent or not. From listening to the stories they told me, and in observing the way they presented their memories, and also observing them in specific events, it became clear to me that the "life-worlds" of the Iraqis in Amman could not be reduced to a narrow understanding of their experiences with displacement in Jordan. In order to understand the observations collected during my fieldwork, it became important to explore the social and political transformations governing their lives in earlier years. This included previous events of great social change and transformations such as the rising class of government employees and state-welfare services during the 1965-1980s, the regime despotism and its prolonged war with Iran, the 1991 US-led bombing (desert storm war), and the 13 years of the UN-led infamous economic sanctions (*al-ḥiṣār*). These parts of the story are discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

It is in such a broader perspective that I refer to the *ʾamān*-making experiences as 'learning experiences' to describe how these former Iraqi state bureaucrats had to constantly find new ways to cope with the socio-political and economic transformations in their home which also led to a history of displacement. To understand the learning experiences and the social roles members of this group aimed to preserve, I argue with Stephen Lubkemann that it is important to consider the historical and economic contexts that constituted this group of professionals and state bureaucrats. This is what Lubkemann argued in his book *Culture in Chaos* (2008) in which he explored developments among Machazians, a group of people in Mozambique: "[t]he analysis of war as a social condition must be rooted in a history of the social processes that precede war." In my case, such a perspective helped me see that in order to understand how the Iraqis negotiate the effects of forced displacement, war-time displacement needs to be understood as shaped within "complex array of culturally scripted life projects and social interests" (Lubkemann, 2008: 5). The ability of Iraqis to survive the two recent Gulf Wars, the crippling 13 years of sanctions, and the violence and deprivation after the invasion is an indication of the 'learning process' involved. This was, most of the time, a difficult and painful process which did not necessarily lead to positive ends, and as the current ethnography documents, it involved and indeed does involve loss, suffering, courage, relentless battling, and most important "talent for life" (to borrow Scheper-Hughes' term,

2008). But again, while this is true for all Iraqis at a general level, it remains a fact that the experiences of the Iraqis varied, and that different groups, with different types of competences and levels of affluence could pursue different strategies and adapt in different ways. My presentation in Chapters Three to Five show how different individuals and families adapted. Iraqis in Chapter Three had more access to financial and symbolic capital (being highly skilled professionals as medical doctors and academics) and were able to secure temporary employment in Jordan, or in Iraq, while Iraqi individuals and families in Chapters Four and Five did not have such resources and were left to adapt as 'refugees' and thereby also adapt to the internationally accepted rules and regulations for the treatment of refugees. The key institution for promoting such rules and regulations was— apart from the Jordanian government itself— the UNHCR. The details will come in the chapters, here it suffices to say that for all Iraqis met during fieldwork, the search for *ʾamān* was key.

Theoretical approaches on ʾamān or 'well-being' under conditions of structural change

In order to understand this notion of *ʾamān* it is important, as I argue above, to understand the dynamics of social survival in conditions of violent structural change. In search of such an understanding I link this notion of *ʾamān* to anthropological research on well-being. Well-being is not normally explored in contexts of wars and displacement, where survival is many times reduced to and dependent on 'humanitarian' aid. In an edited volume by Alberto Corsín Jiménez titled *Culture and Well-being*, Wendy James explores the concept of well-being in understanding the problems involved in managing refugee protection in Darfur in Western Sudan. James makes an interesting distinction between 'welfare' and 'well-being', linking welfare to wider context of care of the social whole, such as the states, while well-being includes subjective ways individuals follow to achieve their sense of the good life that might be in conflict with the state, or other centralized aid systems (2008: 69-76). Well-being then is linked to notions of agency and having some degree of control over one's life course (Harper and Maddox, 2008: 36). According to my observations in the field, this distinction is important to understand the rising tensions in most humanitarian aid encounters. The 'popular' neo-liberal perspective which links humanitarian aid to developmental aid led to a deeper gap between mass welfare programs that could provide adequate care for the social whole(s) and the limited project-based aid geared 'to help individuals to help themselves'. As I argue, with my ethnographic descriptions from the field, the limited formal protection space

and absence of welfare programs forced many individuals to re-define their well-being within the possible limits.

Another insightful research on well-being or "Well-being in a World of Want" are Michael Jackson's two works: *Life Within Limits* (2011) and *The Wherewithal of Life* (2013). Jackson presents an impressive account on the tension between established rules, roles and people's desire to reconfigure their lives outside of these constraints―between hierarchy and humanity. In his account, Jackson relates human agency to inventiveness, resistance and competence. In the life stories he presented in *The Wherewithal of Life*, he manages to describe the crushing weight of circumstance without effacing human agency and to convey the competence of his informants in a way that is legible, as the following quotation indicates:

> "These life stories bring home to us the subtle interplay between what we accept or submit to and what we cannot accept and seek to change. For Hannah Arendt, we are all caught up in an existential dialectic between suffering—in which we are subjected to the actions of others—and agency in which we appear to be the authors of our own lives. Because the actor always moves among and in relation to other acting beings, he is never merely a 'doer' but always and at the same time a sufferer. To do and to suffer are like opposite sides of the same coin. Paradoxically, therefore, action is often contingent upon yielding conscious control over one's life, as in that desperate moment in the vineyard when Roberto [one of Jackson's informants] prayed for a chance to go to college"[10] (2013: 223-224).

What I take from this is that agency is a central concept to explain how people obtain well-being or engage in the process of making *ʾamān*. Furthermore, in "a world of want" and under conditions of "structural violence," suffering and agency are like opposite sides of the same coin, as Jackson indicates. While humanitarian aid tends to focus on the suffering part of humanity (Fassin and d'Halluin, 2007; Fassin, 2008, 2011), individuals and communities tend to struggle to find other means of living according to their perception of well-being or good life. This is precisely what I experienced with the Iraqis. They had all experienced conditions of structural violence and had lost access to 'order' and the ability to control their own future. In the absence of adequate humanitarian aid after displacement to Jordan, Iraqis

[10] I use double quotation marks "x" for indented quotations when the text is copied from a secondary resource, to distinguish these texts from indented excerpts taken from my interviews in the field, which are not marked unless quoted in the text (not indented). The single quotation marks 'x' indicate my emphasis on a word or phrase, while the use of double quotation for short phrases or terms "x" indicate that the term or phrase is copied from another source, usually included or cited in the relevant section.

could hardly think of the 'good life' or well-being. Rather, what the Iraqis in Amman experienced was what I call conditions of '–lessness'. The concept of -lessness is a common suffix in the terminology of refugee-related literature: homelessness, statelessness, powerlessness, helplessness, speechlessness, hopelessness, rootlessness, rightlessness, meaninglessness and other such terms comprise a lexicon that describe human existence in conditions of deprivation; they are present in the visual, verbal and written presentations of the people who were forced to flee their homes to survive. But again, for the Iraqis in Amman there was internal differentiation between them. The most visible cases of such conditions of -lessness were found among Iraqis who were labeled as refugees, and must be sought in the failure of the humanitarian system established to assist them. As we shall see in my discussions, the tension between Iraqi refugees and the UNHCR was precisely linked to the difference in understanding of what being a refugee should mean. For the Iraqis it meant a temporary assistance until they could sort out their problems. For the UNHCR and other international and UN-based refugee systems, a refugee was only a refugee if the person was in a category of poverty and marginality that could be visible. If a person did not fit into this definition, that person did not qualify for the UNHCR limited aid in Jordan. For others, who did not become asylum seekers or refugees, the marginality and poverty linked to conditions of –lessness was not as visible. The reason for this was that among the non-refugee Iraqis they pursued individual strategies that were more problematic for me to observe. In these cases I depended on interviews and collecting narratives about the experiences of the Iraqis in this latter category.

What I got out of all this was that becoming a refugee was only one mode of survival for the Iraqis I met in Jordan during 2010-2011. They might have needed the resources they obtained by the refugee status, but they often expressed resentment about the demands they had to face within this refugee system. Those who had the resources to stay out of this protection space certainly preferred to do so. But for all what they were concerned with all the time was to learn how to establish their space(s) of *ʾamān*.

On agency in conditions of reduction

As mentioned above, Iraqi professionals and state-employees had a long history of dealing with conditions of structural violence and therefore also creating spaces of *ʾamān* where they could be as capable as possible to lead a dignified life as professionals. Thus, Iraqis were

developing new patterns of agency in which they developed new ways of dealing with their problems. Such an 'agent' is more similar to Bourdieu's agent who seems bound to act in ways that reproduce structure; the agent, in this sense, tends to internalize structure. Bourdieu refers to this internalized structure using the term habitus, which is a system of dispositions that are both structured and structuring. In this way dispositions embody and reproduce external structure. Bourdieu's agent is restricted by habitus (as structure) and gains the ability to act only through the generative properties of the habitus, while other actions, outside the boundaries of the habitus seem undesirable or not possible. Yet, what is interesting in Bourdieu's agent is that although, restricted by habitus, the agent can transcend these restrictions because habitus is generative; it has an endless capacity to engender thoughts, perceptions and actions in his and her relation to "what is possible":

> "The relation to what is possible is a relation to power; and the sense of the probable future is constituted in the prolonged relationship with a world structured according to the categories of the possible (for us) and the impossible (for us) [sic], of what is appropriated in advance by and for others and what one can reasonably expect for oneself" (1990:64).

As an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted, the habitus, according to Bourdieu, engenders the thoughts, perceptions, and the actions consistent with those conditions, and not others. Because the habitus is an endless capacity to engender products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it secures is as remote from a creation of unpredictably novelty as it is from a simple mechanical reproduction of the initial conditionings (ibid., 1990).

Bourdieu's perspective is useful also in my attempt to understand the situation of Iraqis I met in Amman. I have outlined a general situation in which agency among Iraqis in Jordan was limited by the possibilities allowed by different systems governing the formal space of protection. The way humanitarian aid was managed by quantifying the need in the temporary space of protection forced many Iraqis to adjust their needs to fit the possible limits. This forced Iraqis to explore other thoughts and actions to think of other probable possibilities to produce *ʾamān.* The production of *ʾamān*, in this sense, is, to speak with Bourdieu, a learning process in which thoughts and actions are generated within the historical and socially situated conditions of their production. The ability of people to cope cannot be explained by a short-

term adaptation to the constraints and possibilities related to the status of 'refugee' in Jordan. Rather, the ability (and sometimes inability) to deal with their existence in Amman was linked to what might be labeled a habitus of 'making *ʾamān*' that had been generated through processes of learning and processes of trying and failing which Iraqis had developed in order to deal with restricted conditions in Iraq throughout four decades of war (1970-2010s). Obviously the two situations are very different, but what is common in both is the ability of the Iraqis to seek solutions to their problems. And the aim of this search for solutions is to arrive at a situation I have labeled '*amān*. I find this a useful concept to explore the experiences of Iraqi state-bureaucrats and professionals with the declining state-infrastructures in Iraq and the life situation they experienced in Jordan. In both situations, searching for *ʾamān* opened up a wider perspective to explore the various social spaces created by Iraqis in an attempt to extend their survival in conditions of structural violence.

One central question that connected Iraqis' stories and experiences, in this thesis, with social transformations in their country during the last decades (1965-2010s) is: how do Iraqis learn to live again and reformulate a sense of well-being (or *ʾamān*) after the destruction of many aspects of their familiar social world? Iraqis had to learn how to live with large transformations over a relatively short life span. The effects of the rise of state public sector after the revolution of 1958 with its relatively good welfare services, especially between the mid-sixties and mid-eighties, and the various levels of restrictions imposed by the state coercive policies on its subjects could be observed in the different reactions among members of former Iraqi state bureaucracy. These reactions are generated "within the historical and socially situated conditions" of the production of state institutions. Differences were observed in relation to generational, economic and political backgrounds and personal experiences with oppressive policies of the former regime, but the shared elements, during times of the rise of state public sector created some similar reactions and patterns.

As indicated before, well-being is usually measured against its absence (Jiménez, 2007: 22). Well-being or *ʾamān* as presented in the stories and practices of Iraqis in the field is measured against their past experiences of access to good-quality-free education, stable employment and good health services and infrastructure as part of their role in the collective institutions governed by the Iraqi state. *ʾAmān* is also measured against their past experiences with wars, *al-ḥiṣār* and oppressive regime policies, as well as the limited state protection and possible communal social life. Among the old generation, *ʾamān* was measured against their

experiences with the rich social and cultural life they enjoyed within inter-communal Baghdad. These various and rich experiences were perceived as their 'share' of well-being as Iraqis, who were part of the Iraqi space with its wealth of human and natural resources. This included various possibilities of being, not restricted to being part of the ruling Baathist regime. In addition, the perceptions of Iraqi professionals and state employees of well-being were not restricted within the neoliberal limits[11] of well-being, which governed the post-invasion Iraqi space (and oil resources),[12] and the limited development-humanitarian aid in Jordan.

A brief perspective on space: In my description of the space of *ʾamān*, I use space here, not as a static entity but rather as a social product that involves the interaction of various types of spaces characterized by different sources of power. Examples of such spaces include the Iraqi state space characterized by its violent history. The Jordanian state, UNHCR and other organizations all engaging in a protection space. And within these spaces we find the Iraqis in search of a space of *ʾamān*. The spaces represent different contexts that have helped shape the responses of the Iraqis. This ongoing process of dynamic interaction— presented as a learning experience in conditions of structural change during the last four decades— takes place at various levels: local, trans-local (within the same region), transnational (among Jordan, Iraq, Syria and other neighboring countries), and global.

I am leaning here on the inspiring discussion of Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*. According to Lefebvre, the space as produced within specific conditions serves as a tool of thought and of action. In addition to being a means of production, it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power (1991, 26). In this sense, the production of space is a process that involves forces of production and relations of production in addition to history (ibid., 46). Social space, according to Lefebvre, is the outcome of a sequence and set

[11] There is no one definition of neoliberalism, and I do not use it in this thesis as a theoretical perspective, but I refer to neoliberalism as a descriptive concept that I think is important to explain the political economic practices and policies governing post-invasion Iraq on the one side, and the international development (and refugee) aid business in Jordan, on the other side. Neoliberalism, as defined briefly by David Harvey (2005) "proposes that human '**well-being**' [emphasis added] can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade." The state, in this case, plays an important role only in allowing the system to work, "by force if needed," as the US did in Iraq and other places (see Doran, 2012), but the state should not intervene in markets as per the neoliberal doctrine.

[12] One of the jokes Iraqis exchanged in the field was that the new governing bodies in Iraq "don't govern the population of Iraq but its oil."

of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object; it is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things: objects and products (ibid.: 73, 83).

In the thesis, the ethnographic details presented will describe how Iraqis produced their own spaces of *ʾamān,* during different periods, by learning how to live with social change and transformations. The space(s) of *ʾamān,* is a productive concept in Lefebvre's sense, it serves to explore the experiences of the Iraqi Baghdadi urban communities with the changes they had to endure in the period between mid-1960s–2010. It generates more in-depth understanding of the complex processes of survival under conditions of structural violence than other concepts such as refugee, homeland, refugee camps and protection policies.[13] This is not to say that I ignore the 'refugee' experience, but as indicated earlier I address this experience as part of a larger process through the concepts of 'learning' and *ʾamān* spaces.

Limited aid structure: the 'formal' protection space in Jordan

The –lessness of people who were classified as refugees was a basic criteria for obtaining aid. But as suggested above, this aid came at a price. The price was a dependence on various institutions that defined the access people had to different types of services. In their dealings with such institutions the Iraqis met with many problems that were related to the mandates and bureaucratic operations of the institutions and Iraqis' everyday needs. One example is the UNHCR.

The UNHCR was one of the main official actors in the field, though its role was limited in the daily realities of many Iraqis I met. Many reasons can help explain why this was the case. The early contingency planning undertaken by UNHCR in 2003 was based on a false assumption that any Iraqi refugee exodus [as a result of the US-led attack] would be managed in a traditional manner, by accommodating the new arrivals in camps in the border areas of asylum countries. However, the UNHCR's response to the crisis was delayed (UNHCR, 2009: 8). The UNHCR lists various factors that caused its late response to the Iraqi refugee crisis. Such factors were dealing with a largely middle-class refugee population in middle- or lower-income countries (according to the categorization followed by international organizations); and the interest of states who were directly involved in the crisis in addressing the refugee situation, not least by delays in providing high levels of funding and resettlement

[13] I elaborate more on this in the methodology section in Chapter 2.

places. Furthermore, the neighboring countries of Jordan and Syria, and also Lebanon already had the challenge of the Palestinian refugee populations within their borders, a fact that tended to overshadow the focus on the situation for the Iraqis. Neither Jordan, Lebanon nor Syria are signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, they lack refugee legislation and institutions, and have strict internal security forces. As a result the response to the crisis was slow. And when action was taken it became clear that the prevailing policies relating to Iraqis had to be modified (ibid., 9-10).

An important concept the UNHCR developed in the Iraqi context was "protection space." The concept of protection space was discussed in a report called "the Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) Report" of July 2009:

> "The notion of 'protection space'[14] is a relatively new one, and one which has become particularly associated with the Iraqi refugee operation. It is not a legal concept, has 'no formal' or agreed definition. [According to a PDES paper prepared by Anne Evans Barnes in January 2009] the protection space can be understood as an environment which enables the delivery of protection activities and within which the prospect of providing protection is optimized. [..] It means the extent to which there is a conducive environment for the internationally recognized rights of refugees to be respected and upheld. […] The most 'critical' elements of protection for Iraqis arriving in neighboring countries and seeking refuge […] regardless of the formal status conferred included: (a) access to safety and non-refoulement; (b) non-penalization for illegal entry; (c) permission for temporary stay under acceptable conditions; (d) registration and the identification of protection vulnerabilities; (e) access to durable solutions, including resettlement; (f) availability of 'humanitarian assistance' to persons with 'specific needs'; and (g) access to 'essential services and opportunities' for 'self-reliance'" (ibid., 14).

An important element in the description of the "protection space" as quoted from the UNHCR report above is the absence of formal or agreed definition of what is meant by the concept. The seven conditions listed from a-g, that were considered "critical" are vague and broad; for example what are the "specific needs" that would categorize some Iraqis as eligible to "humanitarian assistance" in point (f) above? What are the "essential services and opportunities" provided for Iraqis to help them achieve "self-reliance"? And if many of the Iraqis in Jordan belong to middle class professionals, how can they be assisted to resettle in a third country if that option was limited to the Iraqis who were classified as most vulnerable?

Such ambiguities and unclear limits were often questioned by Iraqis I met in the field in their

[14] Emphasis added.

encounters with UNHCR and other custodians of the formal "space of protection" such as the Jordanian authorities, in addition to various local and international organizations who provided services and assistance to Iraqis according to previously assigned conditions of "specific needs" (see Chapter Five).

Given the limited opportunities for Iraqis within such a protection space in Jordan, people I met had to carry the burden of creating their own spaces of *ʾamān* and well-being. Many times this meant moving among different categories and labels in search for services and opportunities: 'guest' or Iraqi 'investor/resident' in Jordan; 'migrant worker' between Amman and Baghdad; 'asylum seeker', or 'holder of refugee certificate' in Jordan. This meant a constant moving beyond the formal protection space in which assistance was limited to individuals carrying the 'refugee' label. This also included travelling between Baghdad and Amman when possible for different purposes, a fact that also was in violation of the bureaucratic and political definition of the victimized refugee and status.

It was very clear then that the dynamics within the protection space were not managed by a centralized force such as the UNHCR, nor was it (the protection space) defined by boundaries of a refugee camp. At the time, the international organizations and hosting states introduced a new model of 'humanitarianism' in crisis situations. The model linked the governmentality of refugees with efforts to govern the rising poor by addressing the host communities' capacities to provide health and education services forming "a nexus between humanitarian aid and development" (Castles et al., 2014). The limited humanitarian aid funds targeting "persons with specific needs" were channeled through several parties: international and local NGOs and host state institutions. Most of the time, this protection policy tended to place the burdens of the crisis onto the Iraqis' shoulders, telling them that they have to be "self-reliant" (as indicated above by the UNHCR PDES report, 2009). This encouraged the Iraqis to engage in activities outside the aid oriented context of the protection space. They did not regard themselves as refugees nor did they –at least the people I mostly interacted with– adopt the attitudes and types of behavior that were expected of a refugee. Rather, the Iraqis engaged in many different income bringing activities in Amman, including pursuing the kind of occupations they had left in Iraq. In many cases they also tried to produce their spaces of *ʾamān* by being engaged in activities that made them move between Jordan and Iraq.

An Iraqi history of crises – lessons in survival

While the thesis empirically looks at the effects of the absence of a 'formal' refugee-status and minimal aid on the survival of Iraqis, conceptually it expands the study of survival beyond the category of 'refugee' to include a broader perspective which sees the Iraqi adaptation over time as a 'learning experience'. For this group of Iraqis, producing spaces of *ʾamān* was not something that had started with their experiences in Jordan. Rather the search of *ʾamān* had been going on for a long time. During the last four decades, they had to learn how to live with social transformations also back home in Iraq. Thus the thesis had to move beyond the period of my fieldwork in Amman and the problematic refugee-like experiences there. Based on the narratives of my informants it became increasingly clear to me that the time-frame had to be extended so that I could explore deeper into the stories shared in the field about Iraqis' learning experiences in conditions of structural change in their home country during the last four decades from the 1960s to 2010. In summary the change can be characterized by the titles of two of my chapters, from 'living with promises of a better future' during times of prosperity in 1960s-1970s (Chapter 6) to 'learning to endure the privations of war and *al-ḥiṣār'* or as reflected in their daily life 'from filling freezers to counting calories' (Chapter 7).

As my informants were trying to deal with their problematic situation in Amman (the capital of Jordan), they remembered and drew on their memories of these learning experiences of how to live with large change. The experience and the change they stressed in our conversations were related to how they had to live with the displacement that came as a result of the destruction of what used to be the state of Iraq. This required complex processes of learning that also benefitted their lives in Amman. In the good old days in Iraq, Iraqis were subjects of a nation-state where 'learning' and 'disciplining' was done in a more collective way, as part of national policies and various disciplinary practices by the regime, including developmental policies, dictatorship, forced conscription and long years of military service, and resistance to the UN-led economic sanction. But with the deterioration of the situation, the collective grip disappeared and the Iraqis had to find new ways of living their lives. After 2003, Iraqis had to handle the transformations in their lives, as dispersed factions of communities: no longer Iraqis but Shia, Sunni, Yazidi, Christian and others, in the newly divided Baghdadi space according to politicized sectarian identities. Others had to leave and learn how to live simply as individuals, deprived of the assets that seemed essential in their earlier lives at home, such as a regular salaried work. What they also discovered was that

education and professional expertise which earlier had been a sign of prestige and which had provided access to a stable life no longer was the same. Thus, also, those who left Iraq experienced that their competences were not valued in the way they expected, and found themselves marginalized, seeking employment that had little to do with their level of competence.

My overall impression from my fieldwork is that while the dynamics of interaction with the formal protection space in Jordan that I could observe might have been relatively new to this group of Iraqis, through the narratives and stories I also learnt that they had longer experiences in dealing with processes of marginalization in times of insecurity. These experiences were related to earlier periods of Iraqi state decline resulting from prolonged war conditions and the general repressive policies of the regime. But in both cases, in Amman and in Baghdad, the lesson taken away by the Iraqis I interacted with was that, during times of crises, they had to learn how to solve their own problems.

Big questions and anthropology

Following my observations of Iraqi refugees' encounters in Jordan with host country NGOs and international organizations, and hearing their stories about living in Baghdad in good and bad times, a central question that connected these stories and experiences is: How do we learn to live again in conditions of social transformation?

This is one of those big questions that can be important to human beings regardless of culture. It belongs to that field of anthropological research that turns to big questions, or "Zafimaniry questions" in reference to Maurice Bloch's theoretical project as it has developed over the years. I refer to the edited volume *Questions of Anthropology* in which Jonathan Parry's preface provides an interesting discussion of Bloch's project and its influence on shaping our questions in the field:

> "The Zafimaniry are one of the Malagasy groups with whom Bloch has done intensive and prolonged fieldwork. Though few of them have had much formal education, and a good many are illiterate, Bloch has been at pains to point out in a couple of recent publications (2005) that they are often intensely interested in, and spontaneously speculate about, anthropological questions of a general theoretical sort – questions, for example, about what aspects of human behavior are learned and what is innate; […] questions about the relationship between language and culture […]. In this, the Zafimaniry are probably no different from people in any

> other society and Bloch's message has been that it is to these fundamental questions that ordinary people ask that anthropology must return" (2007: ix).

The questions posed in Parry's preface helped me realize that in order to deal with my experience with this group of Iraqis I would have to think outside the ready-established concepts and theories in studies on refugees and displacement. *How can we learn to live again?* was one of the questions that echoed in the field. The complexities in the Iraqi case which I attempt to introduce in this thesis made it difficult to ignore this persistent question and focus solely on conceptualizing their experiences in the legal refugee framework. Instead, this ethnography attempts to explore other meanings Iraqis gave to their experiences with loss and expulsion from home. And in this a dynamic understanding of different spaces became important.

My learning experience among Iraqis' in Jordan started through my observations in the field, when I noticed their attempts to cope with the changes after being displaced from home, I could follow it further through their stories about having to learn how to live with wars, dispossessions and ruptures during the last four decades inside Iraq. In each of the chapters that follow, we encounter learning experiences of Iraqi attempts to make new space(s) of *ʾamān* in the context of the dynamics in other spaces.

In the encounters with several impoverished Iraqi state employees, we see them learn how to cope with the reductionist conditions in the protection space in Jordan. They attended training events and they took on voluntary tasks, and in order to make these activities fit into their self-understanding, they 'pretended' that the activities represented a situation in which they were 'employees/ workers' who received a 'salary' for what they did. But, what they liked to call 'salary' was in most of the cases the transportation allowances they received to cover expenses while doing voluntary work. We see cases in which Iraqis had to adapt to the expectations of what a refugee should look like and behave. As in the case of a former Iraqi librarian who had to learn that to be included in the formal space of protection, she would have to dress shabby and keep a low profile, hiding the fact that she was a quite educated person. And, even worse, the family was excluded from the limited protection space (cash assistance) when it was revealed that the female librarian and her husband had a daughter enrolled to study in a college in Jordan. This clearly was in violation of the reductionist and

bureaucratic understanding carried by operators within the protection space of what a refugee situation was supposed to be.

We will also see how some Iraqi professionals kept their professional titles, thereby refusing to play into the various expectations embedded in the refugee title. Rather than being refugees they–academics as well as doctors– insisted to practice their professions, most often with a minimal income. They operated under various labels: migrant worker, investor, fugitive doctor, exiled poet or foreign lecturer. And they perceived themselves as engaging and practicing their capacities in order to help other Iraqis and Jordanians. Being able to work in one's profession clearly extended their feelings of dignity and self-worth, and allowed them to preserve their privacy and follow their responsibilities as parents. But this option was possible for some Iraqis only. The highly skilled Iraqi professionals, especially academics and doctors, were the ones who could secure means of living from additional sources. Others had to adapt to the 'refugee status'. The above examples are from the Iraqis living in Amman, it was interesting to observe that there were some doctors and academics who decided to return to Iraq in order to carry out work under tribal protection in their original towns (and not in their former neighborhoods in Baghdad), while their families continued to live in Amman and enjoy the services missing in Iraq. A third option was to seek employment in Europe and the US. Some were offered resettlement legally, while others had to use smuggling services in long and dangerous journeys. One of the experiences is narrated by Lutfiya al-Dulaimi (an Iraqi author) who sought asylum in France, and how she decided, after a painful journey, to return to Jordan, where she was hoping to live in *ʾamān* and "accept the life of ascetics with dignity and writing" (see Chapter 3).

The motivation for all the people mentioned above is *ʾamān*, they sought *ʾamān* and found it in various ways, all of which pointed beyond the protection space established. Rather, what we shall see is that the Iraqis in their search for *ʾamān* did not necessarily seek a pleasant and unproblematic life, but rather sought to reconnect with the reality they carried with them from the old Iraq also in cases where this implied to expose themselves to risks. The protection space offered in Amman might have secured a physical safety, but what we see is that the search for *ʾamān* takes us beyond minimal physical safety and points towards some more existential dimensions of the lives of these Iraqis. In this the Iraqis join the Zafimaniry in the quote above, in returning to fundamental questions that ordinary people ask and that anthropology must try to understand.

Chapter Two

In search of understanding – comparisons, methodologies and reflexivity

Engaging with literature on Iraq and ethnographies on social change, displacement and well-being in reductionist conditions

My search for a deeper understanding of the choices made and the stories told by Iraqis I came to know in Amman started with a search in Iraqi history. The establishment of an Iraqi state bureaucracy was not merely a local affair. It evolved as part of broader regional and global changes since the end of the 19th century, with the arrival of the Ottoman empire reform (Tanzimat) policies to the three Iraqi provinces of Mosul, Basra and Baghdad, especially under Midhat Basha's brief rule of Baghdad (1869-1872). The nascent Iraqi bureaucracy was further restructured by the colonial effects during the British mandate imposed on several territories in the region and its involvement in the Iraqi oil business and the 1948 colonization of Palestine. These colonial effects and other local changes led to the rising political debates on Arab nationalism vs. Iraqiness (Davis, 2005; Tripp, 2007). The enhancement of modern state institutions in Iraq is often described as a troubled project (Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001; Dodge, 2003; Davis, 2005; Rohde, 2010; Dewachi, 2017); this shadowed several aspects of the Iraqi state-society relations (Rohde, 2010).

Like other neighboring states, the rise of secular education with particular investment in professional higher education, and salaried employment opportunities, in addition to other welfare 'socialist-like' services offered by the state were perceived by the Iraqis I met as important aspects of building the nation, as well as allowing its subjects to enjoy good living standards (especially after the mid-20th century and until 1980s). These elements are only partially addressed in research studies which focus on displacement and refugees among similar groups. The time I spent among Iraqis in Amman presented other aspects of being a displaced Iraqi professional and state-bureaucrat, a status many of these Iraqis were trying to reclaim in the space(s) of *ʾamān* they tried to establish between Jordan and Iraq.

The older generation of Iraqi state employees I met in Amman described the 1970s as the good old days, with the oil boom and the development of the state social and welfare

services, while their stories of the 1980s focused on the gradual decline in the living standards with the militarization of Iraqi society during the Iraq-Iran war and the liberalization and privatization of the state starting from the mid-eighties. Two stages could be described as "transformative moments"[15] in terms of their effects on the living potentials of this group of displaced Iraqis: the first moment was the dismemberment of the state institutions by the US-led Gulf War of 1991 (after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait), and the following 13 years of *al-ḥiṣār*. The second transformative moment was the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003 when former national state institutions, figures and symbols were eliminated in the process of de-Baathification; and several institutions were burnt and looted in what appeared to be a 'random' spree of violence. The elimination of the former state was not restricted to the attack on public institutions; Iraqis I met told various stories of the way border control was loosened which allowed the entry of all kinds of military gangs and groups. Eventually, these global and local events contributed to the demise of modern Iraqi bureaucracy that was schooled in "secular nationalist tradition" (Marfleet, 2007: 409).

To analyze the experiences of Iraqis in coping with social change in war times I engaged with relevant empirical studies and more than one theoretical approach to help explore the decline of state role in times of economic and political change, in addition to recent anthropological scholarship on well-being. In aiming to recast anthropological approaches to displacement, I engaged with relevant ethnographic studies on refugees and displacement in the region (Chatty, 2010, 2017a, 2017b; Peteet, 2005a; Chatelard, 2003, 2005, 2008; Feldman, 2009; Hoffman, 2016), in addition to Dewachi's (2017) recent study of the exodus of Iraqi doctors. I find Lubkemann's (2008) theorization of displacement insightful, especially the way he traces different lines of social, cultural and political transformation throughout the context of structural violence in Mozambique civil war and how this historical perspective provides a standpoint from the relationship between agency and social change.[16]

In ethnographies of displacement and refugees, anthropologists tend to focus more on meanings of home, identity and belonging and structures of humanitarian aid. These are important concepts to understand the problems facing displaced individuals, families and

[15] I am borrowing this term from Joseph Massad (2001) who refers to certain historical moments as transformative moments that are definitional of the Jordanian identity in his study of the making of national identity in Jordan. I use the term here to refer to moments of radical change that altered the living possibilities among these Iraqi urban state bureaucrats.
[16] See chapter 10 in Lubkemann (2008).

communities in their attempts to search for survival opportunities and cope with the changing living conditions away from home. However, these concepts do not offer adequate understanding of the daily experiences of this group of Iraqi professionals with displacement. My observations among former Iraqi professionals and state employees in Jordan revealed that survival involves much more than becoming a refugee, although some Iraqis eventually tried to gain the label to get access to the limited protection aid it offers. The refugee label was used by Iraqis as one practical step to increase their access to essential resources, rather than adopting it as part of a new identity reflecting their displacement as in other cases I observed during my MA research among Palestinians in refugee camps in Syria and Palestine (Adwan, 2011). The observations of coping among Iraqis in the region show different routes and mechanisms, which did not match with the UNHCR initial preparations to respond to the crisis (Chatty, 2017b; Chatty and Mansour, 2011). Dr Omar's decision to emphasize his professional identity by staying in Amman, where he could continue to treat Iraqi patients and stay in close contact with his community was not uncommon among other Iraqi men and women, who were struggling, in various ways, to deal with the rupture in their daily lives after 2003 by connecting and reconnecting to the recent past. Access to work for this group of displaced professionals seemed to play an important role in creating more familiar spaces of *ʾamān* through sustaining social relationships within the limited formal protection space (see Chapter 3).

The experiences explored ethnographically in the following chapters present multiple scales and complex routes of survival in times of big changes. When systems of protection provided by nation state or international bodies receded, individuals and groups had to learn how to create their conditions of *ʾamān* to survive. Anthropological attempts to engage in broader forms of political violence in which state power is at stake is a rather recent phenomenon, as described by Lubkemann in his study of prolonged war conditions (in the case of Mozambique). Lubkemann described the anthropological literature in that field as "related both to the dramatic decolonization struggles that erupted in so many societies and to the discipline's growing preoccupation with theorizing social change" (2008: 104).

During fieldwork in Jordan, Iraqi former bureaucrats were constantly referring to the effects of the destruction and collapse of state institutions on their personal living conditions and wider social relations, not only after 2003, but during the 1990s, the decade in which other societies witnessed the decline of state role as employer and services' provider, as a result of

liberalization policies and regime change (in the case of Eastern European countries). Ethnographies exploring regime change in the ex-socialist bloc, or the Eastern-European transitions provide insightful analysis of survival experiences and coping or lack of coping strategies among individuals, families and communities who were affected by big structural change and social transformation (Agardi, 2012; Maček, 2009; Parsons, 2011). Despite the differences in historical and political contexts between post-socialist countries and post-'Saddam' Iraq, similar conditions and experiences are presented when it comes to losing access to state-salaried jobs and state-sponsored services which resulted in drastic change in social status and conditions of living. Some of these works present relevant insights on the way individuals and families experienced the structural transformations with the changes in state structures. Though I do not often refer to these works in the current thesis, reading ethnographies on other experiences of social transformations as a result of regime change was insightful and thought-provoking. I find several similarities in the literature that explored the experiences of former professionals and bureaucrats with the collapse of single-party states in former so-called Eastern European countries. One common theme is experiences with the promises and losses before and after the regime change.

Parsons in her Ph D dissertation: *Death and Freedom in Post-Soviet Russia: An Ethnography of a Mortality Crisis* explores experiences of losses among middle-aged post-Soviet women and men following the collapse of the Soviet regime order. With the loss of order and work, these men and women lost the sense of collectivity and integration that they formerly achieved through social relations and connections at work, as Parsons explains: "This generation not only lost their work and savings—they lost their lives. The experiences and expressions of those most at risk of dying reveal a generation who felt unneeded" (2011: 11). Several Iraqis expressed this feeling of losing the future they dreamed to achieve through their hard work as students and state employees and sacrifices in prolonged military service to build the state and protect its institutions. In the case of Iraqis, unlike the above case among the middle-aged Russian generation, the losses, resulting from the regime change, were not intensified among one generation. The experiences shared show how losses extended to their descendents and this augmented the feelings of loss among the older generation who worked hard to secure better future for their children in Iraq. One case is Dr Omar whose son had to search for his future in the USA or Europe, as the postinvasion Iraq did not only exclude members of the former regime and party (as in the case explored by Parsons), but their descendents became unwanted too.

The exclusionary policies related to members of the one state party are highlighted by Agardi in her PhD research among women from Hungary, Romania and Serbia. Party membership has become a social taboo after 1989, and this as she indicated was confirmed by other researchers of former single-party states (2012: 275). Similarly in my meetings with Iraqis, none of them talked of her/his membership in the Baath party. I realized that it was a sensitive topic and therefore avoided asking direct questions about the meaning(s) of being part of the Baath party in their former Baghdadi life. Complicity with Baathist or Saddam regime is not a topic discussed by Iraqi state-bureaucrats and professionals, as reflected in the coming chapters. Rather they preferred to focus on their high educational merits and professional expertise and celebrated the high cultural and social life they enjoyed in Baghdad. Few mentioned the topic when they described the interviews for resettlement at the UNHCR and IOM (International Organization for Migration), in which they were repeatedly asked about their role and membership in the Baath party: "we all had to join the Baath party at some stage, as students and professionals, membership was not a personal choice." They insisted that there was pressure at their work place to become a member in the party. After 2003, membership in the Baathist party was criminalized, especially with the dick of cards members announced by the US-led occupation authorities as part of the de-Baathification process. Although members with lower-status were not strictly followed, in general, Iraqis preferred to distance themselves from the Baath party and military. However, when they felt comfortable to talk about their experiences as military and state-bureaucrats during times of wars, most of them used to recall the hard days in Iraq during the 1990s and the sacrifices they endured for the future they believed will come. Some of them tended to describe their sacrifice for the nation with feelings of pride and honor. I found similarities when it comes to Agardi's description of the experiences shared by women about their lives in three former east European countries; their narratives of that period "testify that just because politically a whole period may be scorned by some, it cannot be dismissed or written out from history. For these women narrators [interviewed by Agardi], this period involved personal sacrifices, arduous efforts, proud achievements, financial successes, and a sense of historical agency" (ibid., 273).

In the Iraqi case, unlike former eastern bloc countries, the levels of destruction seem omnipresent due to prolonged conditions of "structural violence" resulting from the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, in addition to the despotic rule of the country resources and

people throughout the period following independence. In the stories Iraqis tell of wars and sanctions during 1990s-2000s, loss was not a passing experience, it accumulated by time — whether exposed to state oppression back in Iraq for refusing to take part in the state wars as a soldier, or having to lose loved ones by getting involved in the wars initiated by the state or losing one's former professional status and job following the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003— loss in the life stories told about those who are alive or dead seemed like a structural condition with which Iraqis had to learn how to live.

By making the above comparison, with other studies of regime change in single party states, I am not trying to establish the Iraqi case as a unique case globally or regionally. What is unique is the way the Iraqi problem is often presented in relation to Saddam's or Baathist dictatorship. While the changes and transformation of ruling regimes in other states were presented in different paradigms and terminology such as post-colonial or post-socialist, the 2003 war on Iraq with all its destructive effects is often reduced (in mainstream media) to regime change or the Baath party annihilation termed as 'de-Baathification,' and most commonly linked to the personal removal of a dictator as indicated by the common use of post-Saddam Iraq to refer to postinvasion Iraq.

The memories and stories shared by urban professionals and state bureaucrats in the field reflect various aspects of living inside Iraq during the last four decades. They identified with the former state apparatus as a national frame in which they worked and lived as Iraqis from various religions, sects and ethnicities, rather than as a single Baathist ideological frame. In most of their stories of the 1970s and 1980s (chapter 6), they remembered the former state in relation to what they were missing in their supposedly 'temporary' shelter in Jordan. Their memories of those days felt more nostalgic than ideological. The nostalgia was more related to a former Iraqi state in its national model juxtaposing the current sectarian Iraq. They described the order that they missed in the postinvasion chaotic Baghdad; and what they missed including: social security, access to career, education, health and other services, and even the ration card during the times of *al-ḥiṣār* (Chapter 7). They juxtaposed these former aspects of living as Iraqi middle class Baghdadi communities against the 'lack of *ʾamān/ mākū ʾamān'* conditions, which they described as a result of the changes in postinvasion Iraq: killings on identity, explosions, lack of adequate education, lack of health and other essential services such as electricity and above all the reduction in social and national status as

qualified Iraqi professionals and government employees, which this thesis follows using the expression most commonly used by Iraqis in the field: *ʾamān*.

To explore aspects of the social change in relation to Iraqi state growth and decline, this thesis engaged with studies addressing the relations between the rise/decline of state institutions and society. One of the recent studies which addressed the State-Society Relations in Iraq is Achim Rohde's book *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship* (2010). Rohde presents and evaluates various parts of the former Iraqi governing system with particular focus on a "gender perspective to research on the contradictory dynamics of political, economic and social developments affecting Iraqi society at large" (ibid., 13). Rohde argues that the evolution of the Iraqi state was part and parcel of the socio-economic transformations Iraq underwent along the 20th century and he aims, as he presents in the introductory chapter of his book, "to move beyond the dichotomous conceptualization of liberal vs. totalitarian polities, of state vs. civil society etc. that are prevalent in the studies on Baathist Iraq" (ibid., 12). In this attempt, he uses Gramsci's and Foucault's conceptualization of the state as not simply an instrument of coercion in the hands of ruling class but also refers to "the productive role of power for the creation of individual and collective identities for the functioning of modern societies" (ibid., 14). He argued that the violent and oppressive character of regimes in the region is a sign of its inherent weakness and failure to attain the active consent of its subject citizens to its rule, or hegemony, in Gramscian terms, as Rohde elaborates further in the following excerpt:

> "The longevity of Saddam Husayn's rule implies the efficacy of his system despite lacking hegemony. […] It would thus be simplistic to assume the "fierce" state personified in Saddam Husayn to stand as the sole subject agent over the rest of the society. In this vein, the present study [Achim Rohde refers to his study] produces evidence concerning a degree of debate and political bargain both within the party and state structures as well as between wider sections of the Iraqi public and the state that should not be glossed over as insignificant ephemeral phenomena. Focusing on the microphysics of power allows us to reach a deeper understanding of state-society relations in Baathist Iraq than would be possible by limiting our scrutiny to the repressive state apparatus" (ibid., 16).

While I agree with Rohde (and other researchers, I engaged with)[17] when it comes to understanding the inner workings of the state-society relations in this alternative focus that moves away from dichotomies, it is not enough, as Rohde himself states, to rely on archival

[17] See also Eric Davis's *Memories of State: Politics, History and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (2005), Dina Khoury's *Iraq in Wartime: Soldiering, Martyrdom, and Remembrance* (2013) and Omar Dewachi's *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq* (2017).

official documents and interviews with former high ranking officials to understand the state-society relations. It is important to explore other methods such as field research among Iraqis who used to constitute part of the former state professional and bureaucracy class. The current study focuses, in particular, on the transformation processes of the state-bureaucracy based on fieldwork and participant observation among groups of former state employees and professionals who were displaced in Jordan.

This study is not unique in its use of fieldwork among Iraqis outside their home-country, there are various recent attempts to explore the society-state relations and write the Iraqi history from below such as Nadia Al-Ali's work *Iraqi Women: Untold Stories from 1948 to the Present* (2007) in which she explores the relationship between experiences, memory and truth using the method of oral history among Iraqi women from educated middle-class urban backgrounds. Al-Ali's study presents rich data on the experiences of former educated middle-class women from urban backgrounds with state authoritarian policies. Other debates from different disciplines are compiled in Tejel, Sluglett et al. *Writing the Modern History of Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges (2012).*

Omar Dewachi's study of Iraqi medical doctors is the most relevant to the current thesis research, in the sense that it refers to the role of colonial and post-colonial regimes of control in socialization and the processes and modes of governance of its professional subjects, specifically medical doctors. In his description of Iraqi state control, Dewachi states that it is possible to "sketch an alternative account of state making in Iraq—one more in tune with the changing relations of state power and its modes of rule" (2017: 10). Dewachi's particular interest was in the development and decline of state medicine, through which he partly explored state-society relations:

> "[G]iven the country's contested colonial and postcolonial histories, the regimes' shaping of institutional life and population politics has been dynamic, multifaceted, and enmeshed in global processes of knowledge making and power relations. As I [Dewachi] demonstrate throughout the book, medical discourses and practices have been central to the country's architectures of governance. Medical schools, state hospitals, government ministries, and overseas educational missions have been sites where state building has been contested and subjects and citizens fashioned" (2017: 11).

The current study presents another attempt to understand the experiences of Iraqi educated urban middle class with system-changes during shorter times of relative stability and long

periods of wars and displacement. By following the experiences of Iraqi professionals and state-bureaucrats with the making of *ʾamān*, this thesis explored ethnographically how humans deal with social transformation as active agents, not only as victims of oppressive regimes and wars. In my meetings with Iraqis in the field, I listened to the stories they tell about various levels of coping with humanitarian aid and wars and state violence inside Iraq, and observed their encounters in the limited formal protection space where they were struggling to create their spaces of *ʾamān* in Jordan.

The social conditioning of working and living as government employees from mid-60s until mid-80s had been transformed by several local, regional and global events which reduced the capacities of enjoying the former middle and upper-middle class living standards. Later, during the 1990s and 2000s, Iraqis had to learn how to survive the ongoing transformations resulting from prolonged wars which transformed many aspects of their daily lives during *al-ḥiṣār* period and the US-led occupation of Iraq.

The current study positioned the displacement and expulsion of Iraqi government employees within broader literature about social change during war-times and regime change. The transformations and changes in the institutional structures had affected the lives of once prosperous Baghdadi professionals and middle class government employees. Lubkemann's description of structural violence can be useful to think about the changes this group of Iraqis had to live with during prolonged wars: "Structural violence occurs when changes in the broader social, economic, and political environment render everyday and strategic life projects dramatically more difficult or even impossible to realize" (2008: 112). Most of these Iraqi professionals had to learn how to cope with different levels of dispossession, whether inside Iraq during long years of wars and economic sanctions, or outside Iraq in their search of safety when their neighborhoods turned into dangerous places and most of them lost their means of labor with the dismantlement of several state institutions.

Iraqis are presented as "agents in war-time violence" (Lubkemann, 2008), whose stories reveal complex experiences of learning to live during times of prosperity as well as times of wars. The subjectivities produced as a result of the social changes are explored beyond the two most common references of victims and heroes, or nationals and traitors. The following chapters present several other experiences to survive the conditions of structural violence, between the two extremes of nationals and traitors, which have been widely used to

categorize Iraqis in the political discourse of the former regime and several current Iraqi political factions. As defined by Lubkemann, structural violence is less about what happens to different social groups or actors when they cross the same threshold of conditions than it is about the experiences of living through and reflecting on the deterioration of whatever conditions each social actor or group starts with and expects to confront (2008: 346). Structural violence is thus "***a function of how far one has come from where one once was***", rather than a common destination that is reached (ibid.). This perception helps to think of Iraqis' attempts to create their own spaces of *ʾamān,* as explored in the coming chapters. In the next section, I will turn to describe the methods used to understand these Iraqi experiences during my fieldwork in Jordan.

Methodological concerns

This thesis explored ethnographically the experiences of Iraqi professionals and state employees with state policies, wars and displacement. Iraqis had to learn how to live with social transformation enhanced by internal and external factors. They had to cope as members of state bureaucracy with state-development policies and their decline, under the oppressive policies of Saddam's regime that fiercely sanctioned, killed and displaced his opponents- regardless of their ethnicity, religion or sect-[18] and squandered human and material resources during long years of costly wars. In addition, they had to learn how to live with the destruction of the country infrastructure that started in the 1991 first Gulf War led by the US (and allies) as well as the radical decline in economic conditions resulting from *al-ḥiṣār*, followed by the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003.

My journey with Iraqis did not start with the current thesis. As a Palestinian who grew up in Syria, Iraqis were present as students and exiled political activists. The songs and stories I used to hear from Palestinians and Iraqis in that period were a combination of the suffering resulting from the disconnection from family and loved ones and a nostalgic description of the life they missed in a homeland from which they felt distanced by several forces.

Given my background as a Palestinian refugee when I used to live in al-Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria and my former research among Palestinian refugees, initially, I took it for

[18] As several Iraqis described Saddam's regime: "he killed anyone who opposed him, even his sons-in-law and second cousins."

granted that Iraqis who were forced out of their homes and crossed the borders of their country would fall under the category of refugee, while those who remained displaced within the borders of their homeland would technically be called internally displaced persons (IDPs). These were common labels used in describing Iraqis by other researchers and report-writers. However, I realized, from my observations in the field which I shared with Iraqis in Amman that Iraqis (who were not considered refugees by the host country) refused also to be known as such. This forced me to rethink the common legal categories we, as researchers and professionals, usually use to describe displacement—refugees, asylum seekers, forced migrants, IDPs— especially as these categories do not reflect similar meanings to those who are labeled by them. Another important realization, which was expressed earlier by other anthropologists, is that these categories are not static and acquire different meanings in changing conditions. In her insightful book (2005a)[19] and article (2005b),[20] Julie Peteet explored ethnographically the concept of "refugee" as a constructed category: people are not born as refugees, as I and my peers in the UNRWA school in al-Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria used to think. Several years later, while in the field with Iraqis, I had to further reflect with Peteet's description of refugees, when I first noticed that several Iraqis did not like to be labeled as refugees, others used different categories to describe their presence in Amman: migrant worker, asylum seeker, refugee, stranger, being 'there' in Baghdad or 'here' in Amman or elsewhere in the region or in the wider world.

According to my observations and discussions with Iraqis during the time we spent together at their homes or during informal social gatherings and more formal training events sponsored by the UNHCR, this group of Iraqi state bureaucrats did not share the same perceptions of their current presence in Amman. The absence of unified governing regulations in Iraq and Jordan in 2010-2011 and their diverse access to resources led to different patterns of livelihoods. The common denominator in most of the stories and experiences observed was the loss of *ʾamān,* as a result of the gradual decline of their former middle-class status linked to their relation to the Iraqi state as professionals and government employees.

Being part of the Iraqi professional and bureaucratic class does not represent a stable condition as per Weber's explanation of the role of modern bureaucracies. The Iraqi

[19] *Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps* (See chapters 3 and 4 of Peteet's book).
[20] "Words as Interventions: Naming in the Palestine: Israel Conflict."

bureaucracy was not a product of local affairs, it was related to several internal and external forces and capitals which shaped and reshaped the structure of the Iraqi "bureaucratic field" (Bourdieu, 1999 [1991]), over the last two centuries. The majority of Iraqis I met (about 68 of the 90 males and females) were between 35–65 years old; they were born between the years 1946–1970s and thus they grew up and lived in Iraq during the period extending between late 60s and 2003 when they witnessed various stages (and scales) of social transformations. Eighteen of the participants came to Jordan before 2003, mainly during *al-ḥiṣār* times in the 1990s and remained in Amman since then, while the rest (72 Iraqis) came after 2003, and the majority, around sixty five of them only left Baghdad after 2006.[21] I met 61 females and 43 males, in group interviews or interviews at family houses in which most family members participated, but I counted the main narrator(s) only. Most of the informants had a degree from a college or university including 14 PhD holders and 15 with Master degrees in various disciplines. The majority had a working experience in Iraq, but when I met them, only 25 explained that they had a chance to work in Amman, on temporary contract basis. The rest were dependent on multiple resources including remittances from relatives in Iraq or abroad, or pension salary from Iraq. Others relied on illegal work that was not regular, or limited 'voluntary' work for international organizations.

In this respect, the thesis draws heavily on the life experiences of Iraqi governmental employees and professionals as 'constructed' in their Ammani temporary 'protection' space, aiming to understand how they coped with the social transformations during the last four decades as part of the rise and decline of the state bureaucracy and institutions. I spent time with Iraqis in their rented apartments in Amman, or at their work places in the case of some doctors and academics, and during training events as part of the developmental-humanitarian- aid targeting Iraqi 'refugees' by local and international NGOs based in Amman.

This study extends the displacement experience beyond the limits of the refugee label to explore the practical experiences of these groups of Iraqi government employees to secure their well-being/ *ʾamān* in conditions of –lessness. The learning experiences and coping

[21] The escalation of violence during the US-led occupation of Iraq reached an unimaginable point (for many Iraqis, as expressed in the field) with the attack on al-Askari Shrine in the city of Samarra which marked an escalation of sectarian tensions that spread throughout previously sectarian-mixed Baghdadi neighborhoods. As sources indicate: "Nearly 4 million Iraqis fled their homes in 2006 and 2007 with 1 to 1.5 million crossing national borders into Syria and Jordan (Chatty and Mansour, 2011: 98).

strategies Iraqis turned to in managing the current crisis need to be addressed in the wider contexts of local and global changes which produced increasing uncertainty. The thesis explores Iraqis' interactions with conditions of structural change between the presence and absence of state regulatory policies in the various periods discussed and the presence and absence of development and humanitarian aid in Jordan.

As explained earlier, *ʾamān* is the concept used to 'follow' the experience(s) of this group. The complex experiences did not start in Jordan; Iraqis shared parts of their life stories during the economic boom and 'socialist' state-style services, the war-time(s) and *al-ḥiṣār*. I followed the personal experiences in the stories Iraqis shared about these events with the aim to explore how they affected their lives and what strategies they used then and now to survive and extend their *ʾamān*. The life stories collected in the supposedly 'transit' space in Amman were taken in unstable conditions, some of the narrators were trying to search for new means of survival, and the life-story served as one of the tools to achieve this (Chapter 4). The insecurity in their lives was reflected in the unstable life stories they tell in the formal protection space, certain events and details were silenced, or changed in a way that serves their survival needs in the formal protection space.

The personal stories shared by state bureaucrats and professionals in both the formal protection space and the space of *ʾamān* present several aspects of the troubling state formation and destruction from the perspectives of this group of people who took part in the "state-making and un-making" (Chatty, 2017a) processes as agents and witnesses. To understand the effects of wars on middle class urban Iraqis displaced in Amman and how they reacted to them, it is important, as I explained above, to analyze them within the wider historical and political contexts.

The stories shared among Iraqis in the field tell how these events transformed the lives of individuals and households in times of war and state transition. Whereas, the stories of the 70s and 80s and 90s tend to refer to collective gains and losses as part of being Iraqi national subjects, the stories of the postinvasion period are more focused on the losses of Iraqis as individuals or as part of minority and ethnic groups. Analysis of the accounts of the events does not serve to represent one collective version of the story of the current war and US-led invasion. As al-Ali presented in her work, the processes of construction and selection of the stories are affected by various factors, memories and stories told are not static and frozen in

time, they are alive, rooted in the present as much as in the past, and linked to aspirations as much as actual experiences (al-Ali, 2007: 2).

To understand the complex dynamics of the social changes, this ethnography presents the experiences of the current wave of Iraqis beyond the officially designated label of refugees. It explored how Iraqis experienced their expulsion from the state not only in the stories they tell in the formal space of protection to be eligible for aid. Observations among Iraqis in the field show different ways through which Iraqis bring meaning to their war-torn lives, through practical experiences in direct encounters with aid in the host country and the social relations they develop in the local, transnational or global space to ensure wider space of *ʾamān*.

Another insightful ethnographic research on experiences of war survivors[22] that is relevant here is Lubkemann's critique of the way "war-time migration of refugees has typically been theorized in terms that starkly differentiate it from, and fail to explore potential connections with, labor and other forms of migration" (2008: 4). Lubkemann further elaborates that: "[w]hile many anthropologists have critiqued such reductionist framings of refugee agency by exploring how war-time migrants negotiate the many *effects* of displacement as socially positioned and culturally embedded actors, there have been very few investigations of how refugee agency shapes the social organization and dynamics of the *migration process itself*"[23] (cf. Wilson 1994 in Lubkemann, 2008: 5). I agree with Lubkemann on the necessity to explore displacement and migration from a wider perspective that takes refugee agency into consideration.

The question of agency, is another important question which emerged from the field: What possible agencies can exist when everyday life projects get impossible to realize in conditions of structural change? Thinking of the living experiences of the members of former Iraqi state bureaucracy within four decades of changing conditions from prosperity to prolonged wars, I draw insights from the work of Lubkemann (2008) and his argument about ethnographic approaches that originate in "the historically informed and culturally expressed understandings of local actors and how this may offer a better understanding of the social conditioning of political agency" (ibid., 108). I explored the agency of Iraqis by following the

[22] In his rich ethnography *Culture in Chaos: An anthropology of social condition in war*, Lubkemann uses the term "warscape inhabitants" to refer to war survivors and refugees.
[23] Emphasis in the origin.

metaphor of *ʾamān*-making within the wider historical and social experiences as narrated and shared by the Iraqis I met; in this sense I observed the coping experience –making of *ʾamān*– as a process embedded in history, in which the past experiences functioned in a similar way to what Bourdieu described as habitus.

To explore agency in relation to well-being/ *ʾamān*, I decided to follow the Iraqi experiences and stories regardless of the labels or categories used to refer to their presence in Jordan. The labels, as I discuss in Chapters Four and Five serve different meanings when used by different actors in the field: to pledge aid, identify its distribution and identify the duties and responsibilities of Iraqis. However, the interest of the current research was in the experiences of learning to live in times of structural change, and the meanings Iraqis give to these experiences. The current ethnography includes descriptions of different settings in the protection space and spaces of *ʾamān*: training courses, house-visits, social gatherings to celebrate a birthday or commemorate death of a loved one, shopping, in addition to few conversations with Iraqi professionals in their places of work at universities or hospitals.

The content of the stories, in this sense, are "multi-sited", moving back and forth between Amman, Baghdad and other cities in the region and other parts of the world. However, the main fieldwork site was fixed, in Amman; due to resource, time and mobility limits, I was not able to follow Iraqis in their journeys among different localities and labels. Yet there were other means of doing multi-sited research as Marcus has told us: "follow the metaphor, follow the narrative or story and the life or biography and the conflict" (1998: 90-95).

The meanings of being here and there, not only in more than one locality but within different assigned spaces resulting from complex legal and political contexts "cannot be presumed but are themselves a key discovery of ethnographic enquiry," as Marcus expressed when he discussed how multi-sited imaginary explores the distinction between life-world and system by which "classic ethnographic authority" has been conceived (1998: 117). Multi-sited research provides a space to rethink categories and perceptions that are otherwise taken for granted. In the time spent with Iraqi individuals and families, I came to understand the need to step forward and look beyond the institutionalized or 'normalized' categories of refugees or forced migrants and IDPs, by listening to the Iraqis' stories, songs, tears, jokes and silences and observing their encounters in the space of *ʾamān* and formal protection space.

Small thoughts on 'positionality'

Being a displaced person or 'refugee' is part of my personal life story. I spent part of my childhood and youth in al-Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria in the 1980s and 1990s. Later, things changed with the culmination of the infamous Oslo Agreements that gave a fraction of Palestinians a chance to return to Palestine. My family was among those who 'returned'. I will not get into a discussion of the insider vs. outsider perspectives, as it is not the criteria, in my opinion, to judge the value of academic research. Whenever this issue was brought up regarding my research among Palestinians, I could hear an old quote I read once by Benjamin Cardozo (1921): "We may try to see things as objectively as we please. None the less, we can never see them with any eyes except our own."

My choice of researching Iraq did not come by chance. It was driven by my interest in the broader context of the refugee question, which started with my own experience as 'refugee' and was enhanced during my research for my Master thesis among Palestinian refugees in Syria and occupied Palestine. It was not an easy decision to choose Iraq as a research area for my PhD, considering time and budget limitations; it would have been easier to resume my knowledge journey in a field which I have already researched. Yet I decided, as a challenge and compromise, to continue within the field of refugee studies but move to exploring a different case, where I could claim some "distance", which I have been previously accused of lacking. Actually, the time I spent in the field and the new experiences I observed during this journey pushed me away from the refugee question in general and closer to the specific Iraqi experience with the rise and decline of the 'modern Iraqi nation-state'. I discovered that I share many other experiences with Iraqis, besides the experience of being a refugee or displaced. When they allowed me to participate in their learning experiences in the limited protection and *ʾamān* spaces in Amman, I was able to observe other common historical and current experiences of loss, hiding, escaping and confronting despotic regimes, deprivation of freedom of movement, walling of the homeland space, uncertainty and fear at checkpoints and war-like conditions; although, some of the Iraqis I met kept making me feel that it is easier to be Palestinian than Iraqi today when they repeated: "at least you know your enemy, you have one enemy but we don't know who our enemy is?" This is another story which I was not interested in bringing to the field, though sometimes it jumped into our conversations.

During a workshop at Birzeit University in 2012, I was criticized for using the term ‘forced migration’ and ‘displacement’ in the title of my presentation of the Iraqi experience in Jordan and have been almost accused of complicity with a system that deprives Iraqis of the ‘refugee’ label and the rights assigned to it. I might have said the same before I went into the field, having in mind the conditions of Palestinian refugees for whom the refugee label, the UNRWA ration card, and the camp became integral parts of an identity which resists the Israeli colonial project (Peteet, 2005a, 2005b; Feldman, 2009). However, my journey among Iraqis in Jordan forced me to rethink the common use of the refugee label. In my very first encounters with Iraqis where I rented an apartment in Tlaʿa al-ʿAli (a district in the so-called western Amman), my Iraqi neighbor told me that I would not find Iraqi refugees in this neighborhood: “there are no refugees here, we are self-dependent, the Jordanian government does not provide us with food or shelter.” That made me rethink my research terminology and boundaries: was I looking for Iraqis who were legally classified as refugees (those who gained the UNHCR refugee or asylum seeker certificate)? Or Iraqis who call themselves refugees? What about those who were excluded or decided to exclude themselves for various reasons: the limited protection space provided by the UNHCR and host country; a preference to rely on their own resources, mistrust of the UNHCR and other aid authorities, etc.? In addition, I noticed that Iraqis tended to link the refugee label to the other most popular refugee context in the region, namely the Palestinian settler-colonial context. Several Iraqis mentioned that they are not “Palestinian refugees”; usually they emphasized that Iraq still exists and that one day, when conditions change, they might be able to return to their homes, while the Palestinians were deprived of this possibility because their homes were occupied and their land are colonized by Israel, (there was not a Syrian refugee crisis when I did my main fieldwork).

The Palestinian refugee case developed in different historical and political contexts in which the refugee label was not only used as a legal term. It evolved, among the Palestinians, into a political identity that was the basis for the Palestinian Liberation Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s. According to my observations and earlier research among Palestinian refugees, the ‘refugee’ label that turned into a collective carrier of the Palestinian struggle for liberation is not as static as it appears in the political speeches of Palestinian officials and the oft repeated slogans by various political parties leaders, or as it has been constructed in some literary works. The label has experienced several levels of transformation due to the drastic turn of the Palestinian political project following the signing of the Oslo Peace Agreements with

Israel on the one hand, and the changes in the living conditions among Palestinian refugees in the camps, specifically in refugee camps which have experienced severe destruction leading to new displacements of its inhabitants: Jenin in the West Bank; al-Nahr al-Bared; and previously Tel al-Zaatar in Lebanon; al-Maghazi in Gaza and al-Yarmouk in Syria are some examples.

However, in the Iraqi case, the terms exile, emigrant and diaspora are more common to describe the displacement of Iraqis in academic written works and talks. Among the Iraqis I met in Jordan, the term exile was used by academics, authors and poets or artists, the term diaspora was not common, while the refugee label in Iraqis' narratives seemed to function–for some Iraqis but not for all– as an instrumental tool that would offer them protection rights and resettlement in the US or Europe; the term refugee tended to have a pragmatic function in the official space of protection while it usually disappeared in their private space of *ʾamān*.

In the field, being a Palestinian who lives in occupied Palestine made it easier in some cases for Iraqis to share their time and stories with me; as they used to tell me we were both "guests" in Jordan and shared experiences of insecurity and uncertainty (though my experience as a second generation refugee did not seem as drastic as theirs at that time). This allowed better understanding of issues of authority control, deprivation and anxiety when it comes to gaining residence permits and access to work, health and education. Iraqis who relied more on aid often expressed feeling less comfortable in the presence of a Jordanian or Palestinian Jordanian researcher who they feared to be connected to the authorities. Thus, being a Palestinian who lives inside occupied Palestine was positively received by many of the Iraqis I met; in some cases, they tended to identify with the Palestinians' experience of losing their land and belongings. It also might have been easier than being an Iraqi and having to prove that as a researcher I was neither affiliated nor aligned to a particular sect, religion or political party. Another advantage was a shared language; though I did not master the Iraqi dialect, knowing Arabic made it easier to understand the conversations around without the need of a translator.

This does not mean that I was considered an insider among Iraqis. They called me *al-filistīniyya*/ the Palestinian woman, and some chose to put me under test before they agreed to welcome me into their private space of *ʾamān*. In real life, where most of the things are not

simply black or white, it was not always easy to establish a favorable relation. There was an incident when I was introduced by a Jordanian friend to an Iraqi family. The father and his son seemed quite welcoming during our first meeting, and invited me for lunch at their house. We had a short conversation and exchanged our mobile-phone numbers to set up the meeting. However, when I called them, they apologized for being too busy, and in the next call, the father ended the call furiously screaming that they did not have time to waste with me. When I mentioned this to my Jordanian friend, he explained that he noticed how they were trying to test my 'loyalty' (to the former regime) in the short conversation at his office, a test which I had failed, as my friend explained.

In addition, I encountered situations in which being a Palestinian, Jordanian or Iraqi did not seem so important. In those cases I was perceived as an aid agent probably for having a foreign name with a pen and notebook. In certain instances, it felt egoistic as much as painful to go around and observe people's suffering and pain while they were desperately waiting for help to save their own or their family's lives. For instance, a woman told me that she would be willing to share her story with me if I could help her collect the extra Jordanian Dinars (JD) 1500 (US$ 2115) she needed for the chemotherapy session which she had to take two-weeks-before my meeting with her. Despite my experience of reading and living among refugees, I found the levels of performance that Iraqis were demanded to exert to prove their eligibility for humanitarian aid disturbing and incomprehensible.

Fieldwork 'as a learning experience'

The learning experiences presented in this ethnographic research carried out among Iraqis in Jordan in the period 2010-2011 are not presented here as just experiences of another group of refugees with conditions of reduction.

During the first three months of fieldwork, I spent most of my time contacting Jordanian acquaintances and friends to introduce me to Iraqis they know in Amman. I met Iraqis in their homes (most of the time the home was a rented apartment, although I met few more affluent Iraqis in their own apartments in Amman), some of them agreed to introduce me to other Iraqis while the majority were reluctant to do so. In these home visits, I usually observed and listened to the story of Iraqi survival narrated by various members of the household, I asked them questions about how it felt to live in Baghdad during different periods. They talked of

their school and university days, work and professional life, travels and consumption style, wars and military conscription, *al-ḥiṣār* and family life and social events and gatherings full of music, jokes and poetry. With the passage of time and the growing pile of field notes, I realized that there are several stories and experiences in their responses to the major changes and social transformations they witnessed and took part in over the last four decades. Eventually, I came to realize that these rich experiences cannot be captured solely within the framework of the 'refugee' label that was 'awarded' to some of them.

Towards the midpoint of my fieldwork, I discovered that the label 'researcher' which I used seemed to have had another meaning among Iraqis. I was advised by an Iraqi friend to use the label *ṭāliba*/ student instead of *bāḥitha*/ researcher, as the latter was used to refer to the Jordanian social worker (or known as 'social researcher'). Jordanian social workers used to visit Iraqis who had made claim at the UNHCR for financial assistance to assess their needs and quantify them in a report form with recommendations upon which the decision to support or not would be made. My presence with the Iraqi volunteers and my mixed accent (Palestinian-Syrian-Jordanian), and foreign name was not the best combination for some Iraqis who had had a bad experience with aid representatives.

Another factor that played a part in the field was my gender, which made it easier to meet women than men especially when it comes to the official space of protection where I established my initial contact with Iraqis. The majority of the training events, except those concerning legal issues or small business initiatives, were not mixed, and I was welcomed by NGOs to attend courses with women. The courses followed the common gendered divisions of labor: women attended courses designed to teach cooking, embroidery and other handicrafts, and lectures on topics concerning child care, early child education and domestic violence; while men attended courses on mechanical engineering for airplanes, carpentry and metal works. I could meet Iraqi men usually in the presence of other family members and during the house-visits through Iraqi contacts and through my voluntary work in teaching English, where all students (in my section) were males. However, I spent more time with women, and this is reflected in the thesis chapters in which women are more represented than men. I see this now as a positive factor, though during the fieldwork I was trying to keep a gender balance.

The data collected include interviews[24] and field-notes of my observations. This involved careful editing and interpretation and I had to translate my interviews and observations from Arabic into English.[25] The stories in the context of this research serve the goal to understand how the events affected the lives of Iraqi people and how they reacted to those events. In my analysis of the collected stories I was interested in how the personal accounts— whether shared in informal gatherings or prepared and written for the more formal protection space— related to the wider historical events. To achieve this in my presentation of my observations and the stories shared in the field, I consulted relevant historical writings and other ethnographic studies of similar contexts. In addition, I followed Iraqis' stories about specific events in the past with the aim to find out how this group of Iraqi former state-employees and professionals perceived well-being in conditions of peace and war and how they dealt with their personal (and collective) suffering and losses. Most of my informants lived through the Iraq-Iran war, the first gulf war in 1991 and the 13 long years of *ḥiṣār* and the 2003 invasion and occupation. Few elder informants also talked of earlier events during the 1960s and 1970s. Most of the Iraqis I met came from Baghdad, the majority were in their middle ages (35–60) when I met them.[26] The few who were over 66 years when the interview took place, were adults during the decades of the semi-socialist development program of the Iraqi state (Chapter 6), and have spent few years in Baghdad as retired pensioners, while some of them were deprived of the pension as part of the de-Baathification law.

As explained in chapters Six and Seven, the personal stories of social transformations inside Iraq in the period from 1970s–2003 reflected shifts in identity and perceptions of good life *ʾamān*: the state regime enforced certain identities of strong working women, mothers of fighters, heroes, martyrs' and soldiers' wives, strong military men, fighters and martyrs, while the conditions of wars, *al-ḥiṣār* and refuge enhanced the victim identity as presented in the official UNHCR categories: "single women in danger", "trauma survivors", etc. In my analysis of the fieldwork data, I followed the most common themes observed during my fieldwork among these former Iraqi state-employees: the attempts to create conditions of

[24] Few interviews were recorded, as I noticed that several Iraqis were reluctant to talk when I asked for permission to record. Therefore, I stopped recording and relied on note-taking, when convenient, and had to write down the detailed transcription from memory.

[25] I am not referring to literal translation or the linguistic effort of conveying the "exact" meaning, other challenges were involved in presenting the meaning within the context as explained in earlier studies. An interesting discussion of translation in fieldwork time is done by Nadia Jones-Gailani (2013) in her study among Iraqi women in Jordan. See "Third Parties in 'Third Spaces': The Multifaceted Role of Translator in Oral History Interviews with Iraqi Diasporic Women."

[26] As I mentioned earlier (68 participants out of 90).

safety and stability as explored through the concept of *ʾamān*, and the search for means of labor to be able to regain one's former status and live in dignity through finding a job.

Working with communities of war survivors makes it harder to control one's presence in the field. Many times it did not go as planned and I and the Iraqis could not swim against the tide, as we so wished. We were forced to discipline our presence and limit our conversations to control what should be revealed or hidden in certain times and places.[27] The introduction I had by mutual friends meant a lot. I was also keen to explain my research and ensure how I will observe confidentiality. Except for few political activists, professionals or artists who demanded the use of their real names since their experiences are known to the authorities because, as they explained, they were 'public figures' and exposed to the media, I decided to use pseudonyms rather than actual names. Some of the Iraqis I met were threatened from home and were too afraid to be identified, while others whose resources were dwindling and had to turn to international organizations for assistance at some stage did not want to share openly all the details in the stories they tell in their private spaces of *ʾamān* which –as they thought– might harm their chances to be included in the formal protection space (see Chapter Four). To the other Iraqis who expressed their interest in having their actual names next to their stories, I explained that this research is more concerned with understanding the relationships and dynamics of survival and that experiences counted more than names.

I also contacted several Jordanian organizations working with Iraqis in Jordan. It was easier to gain access to Iraqis through organizations where they meet or volunteer, but this applied to some organizations not all (few organizations did not like to have researchers around). Sometimes, I had to visit the organization several times and meet with different employees to explain my research and listen to the services and encounters with Iraqis before I was allowed to take part in the organizations' activities and training events. I attended several activities, mainly with women participants, during which I introduced myself, as participant researcher. Through these activities, I preferred not to take excessive notes to avoid disrupting the interactions which included conversations among women about the situation in Amman or Baghdad. I used to write down as much of my observations in my field notes at night. During these training events and activities, I met women with whom I spent later more time in social gatherings and less formal activities. We spoke at some length about my research and their

[27] I present details of these incidents in Chapters Four and Five where I discuss the conditions of story-telling and sharing in the protection and safety spaces in the field.

experiences and I accompanied them sometimes in their visits to hospitals and aid organizations. We attended training and awareness raising events and in the evenings did shopping together, drank tea with friends and prepared meals while listening to Iraqi songs and music.

In the period between November 2010 and March 2011, I joined other volunteers to teach English to young Iraqi men (17–34 years old) who were preparing to travel to the United States, as part of a voluntary aid NGO that was run by a foreign woman in Al-Hashimi Al-Shamali with assistance of other Iraqi volunteers, this association offered a space to contact more Iraqis, as 'beneficiaries' and students, which helped me understand how other forms of aid are designed and distributed and how subjectivities as 'persons eligible for aid' are formed.

The easiest way to meet Iraqis was in the public space of protection. I attended training courses, recreational events (mother's day, picnics). This gave me a chance to observe the Iraqi encounter with aid. Following the courses, I was sometimes invited to social gatherings. In these gatherings, I avoided asking direct questions that would channel these personal events into the aid or research mood. Usually the TV would be turned to Iraqi channels, its volume turned down to be increased when a song is played. The participants would join in singing. Some songs would bring back memories about particular incidents from Baghdad, sometimes narrated in a joke-format and other times in between tears: stories about the long compulsory military service during the Baath time; exchange of funny incidents about the time they spent hiding in shelters during the first Gulf War (or the so-called desert storm operation); or survival during *al-ḥiṣār* and incidents from the last war; and stories of smugglers and asylum journeys to Europe. Another story shared in these gatherings was Food. Cooking and food was another opportunity to connect with home, one which became a rich cultural journey that I experienced at the provision, consumption and production levels (and after a year among Iraqis, I gained 10 kilos!) Iraqi food presented aspects of variety, diversity and rich Iraqi history— Dolma, Biryani, Kubbeh— the names of some famous Iraqi dishes have Turkish, Persian, Indian or Shami/ Levant origins.

I realized that to understand the specific coping experiences of these Iraqi professionals and former state employees with the limited formal protection space and their attempts to create *ʾamān* in Jordan, it is important to follow the stories they shared of well-being and *ʾamān* in

earlier encounters with state policies, wars and *al-ḥiṣār* inside Iraq. Instead of following a chronological order, I decided to follow the order imposed by the conditions of my fieldwork, and to start with my ethnographic observations among Iraqis in Amman. The first three chapters present the Iraqi experiences in Amman, while the last two chapters explore the social transformations in the lives of these former professionals and state bureaucrats in the last 4 decades.

Outline of the chapters

Chapter Three focuses on my key group of Iraqis in Jordan, the qualified professionals and academics who explored various routes to establish *ʾamān*. Rather than being confined to the rights and duties relating to the label refugee they sought other alternatives. Four strategies of adaptation are discussed. First I present information on individuals who move from being highly-skilled professionals holding permanent positions in Baghdad to becoming temporary contracted workers (within fields of their competences) in Amman; second, I discuss a group of people who move from being highly skilled professionals in Baghdad to becoming "circular migrants", meaning that they chose to operate between Iraq and Jordan trying to secure better living standards for their households; third, working in Amman as de-valued professionals, outside their fields of competence; and fourth, leaving the region altogether, searching for *ʾamān* in Europe or elsewhere. We see that their existence in all categories was a constant struggle and that the new experiences all the time were seen in the context of what they had lost; mainly the experiences of these Iraqi professionals and state bureaucrats after losing their jobs back home in Iraq. The chapter presents the struggle and efforts exerted by members of this group to save their former social status as qualified professionals, and their search for their lost past.

Chapter Four extends the focus from the individuals presented in Chapter 3 to examine further the problematic process involved in managing the limited aid and services provided for those Iraqis who qualify as 'refugees'. The qualification was depending on the degree of –lessness that characterized the potential refugees, meaning that only people defined as the poorest and most needy would get support. The chapter presents ethnographic cases that show how people attempted to appear "as if" they were destitute. Also, the chapter deals with the tension between the requirements of aid and protection structures and Iraqis' perceptions of *ʾamān*. By this the chapter explores the interactions observed in the 'formal' space of

protection created by humanitarian aid following the change from humanitarianism to developmentalism. A key idea was to promote entrepreneurial thinking and to offer training workshops to help individual Iraqis learn new skills on how to help themselves. The chapter shows that the outcomes were full of contradictions and tensions.

Chapter Five explores two key contexts for Iraqis' adaptive strategies discussed in the previous chapters. The two relate to first, the possibilities of work in Jordan, and second, the context of aid organizations related to local Jordanian authorities and the international aid system. By focusing on these contexts the chapter discusses the general legal, social and economic implications of being an Iraqi in Jordan. One clear aspect is that being an Iraqi in Jordan was characterized and understood using several different and confusing labels: asylum seeker, temporary refugee (waiting for resettlement to a third country), guest, visitor, fellow Arab, stranger, foreigner, emigrant, migrant worker, exiled, expatriate. The chapter presents ethnographic cases that show how Iraqis had to deal with these unclear and 'ambiguous' conditions in which their basic human existence seemed to be made invisible by the demands and the policies of the dominant organizations dealing with them.

In **Chapter Six,** I change from the adaptations in Amman to a focus on Iraqi middle class employees and professionals, and their perceptions of well-being as they experienced it in Baghdad in the 1970s and 1980s. In this, I change from the field based observations of Chapters Three, Four and Five, and focus more on analyzing the narratives and stories Iraqis told me during my fieldwork. These narratives and stories help us understand better how these state employees and professionals were affected by the Iraqi state economic development programs during the 1960s and 1970s, a period described by them as the 'good old times'. The basis for this was the government investment at the time in the provision of education, rewarding job opportunities and welfare services.

Chapter Seven continues the discussion started in Chapter Six by examining the big social transformations in Iraq during the 1990s-2003. The accounts and stories from this historical period show how Iraqis learnt to live in conditions of structural violence during prolonged war and severe economic sanctions. The deterioration in economic conditions produced many effects. An important one was the emergence of a new patron-client system that produced a new class of traders and business elites. This new class benefitted from the problems in the country, while the well-being of the majority of state bureaucrats was reduced, and they and

their families were left to rely on the governmental ration-system and minimal levels of state services and protection. On a general level this produced new state-society relations in Iraq. The Chapter proceeds to discuss the transformations in the Iraqi space and society following the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003.

Chapter Three

Highly skilled Iraqi professionals and academics in search of ʾ*amān* and well-being

Dr. Sharif had been considered a top specialist in Baghdad, but in Amman he worked as a volunteer for minimal or no salary in a clinic affiliated with one of the local community centers. He considered himself luckier than his colleagues, who were specialist physicians and had to work at Jordanian hospitals and clinics to be treated as junior non-specialized doctors, whereas he could still practice his career as he used in his clinic in Baghdad and survive from his savings and the support of his son who himself was a doctor based in London. News spread quickly among Iraqis who knew Dr. Sahrif from Baghdad and they started coming from different neighborhoods in Amman and other Jordanian cities to this clinic located in a western Ammani district, where they hoped to be diagnosed and treated by Dr Sharif. In his book, Joseph Sassoon indicates how in certain Jordanian hospitals, such as Al-Essra private Hospital in Amman, Iraqi doctors constituted the majority of doctors. In addition to their normal load and responsibilities, Iraqi doctors saw a large number of Iraqi patients who tended to trust them more than other doctors and whom the doctors treated outside their hours of work (2009: 47).

I spent Sunday 27 march 2011 in the clinic. I met a few Iraqi families; some accompanied by volunteers and others who came for a regular check-up. An Iraqi woman waiting with her son told me that since they had come to Amman, whenever somebody was sick in the family, they consulted Iraqi doctors: "Dr. Sharif was the most famous in Baghdad, holding a PhD as an ENT specialist [ear and nose and throat]." I could feel it from the flood of Iraqi patients in the clinic. Dr. Sharif had been contracted by an international medical NGO to work as volunteer three days per week for four hours per day. I was hoping to hear more about his working experience in Amman and displacement form Baghdad, and sneaked into his office after he had finished with the first appointment to introduce my research and ask if he would be willing to talk to me. He agreed but we were interrupted by one of his patients and I had to wait, and continued to wait as the patients kept coming in the following three hours. I still had some hope as the doctor kept comforting me every time he left his room in the clinic to

wash his hands in between the check-ups that he would give me more time after his official working hours were over, although, as I learnt later, he usually continued to examine patients as long as they kept coming, and many times his work extended beyond the initially scheduled four hours. It was around 7 p.m. when the waiting room in the clinic was finally empty.

Dr. Sharif's story- a fugitive and doctor volunteer

The following extract from my interview with the 73-year-old physician presents various aspects shared among Iraqi professionals in their struggle to work between Baghdad and Amman:

> We stayed in Baghdad in the period 2003-2005 and lived through it all: the occupation, and the fall of Baghdad. These were sad and confusing times: we saw the fire in the sky of Baghdad, but I stayed there, and used to go to work every day; to both the university where I teach and to my clinic. The clinic was busy as usual, my working day used to end at around 11 p.m., there were 8 km between my house and clinic in al-Mansour. I had to drive carefully because I never knew if the car behind mine would target me, I used to slow down for seconds and then drive faster to check, I became more cautious after several killing incidents of academics and doctors. My work was stable in the clinic but life in these conditions of fear was stressful and we left for a short visit to Amman and then to London where one of my sons lives. Two days after my leave, they sent a threatening letter to my home, but it was good that we were not there then.
>
> After spending six months in London, I decided to return to Baghdad hoping that things would have changed. Unfortunately it felt worse, and they continued to target doctors. I was afraid to drive my car, sometimes my daughter would drive but I had to come back home early and close my clinic at 9 p.m. We might have exaggerated our fears then; gradually I stopped leaving the house and only went to the clinic if there were very urgent medical cases. I stayed one year and a half without work and in the summer of 2006 we decided that we had to leave. I left with my wife, my widowed daughter and my granddaughter to Amman. The same day on which we left Iraq and on our way through the borders, I received a phone call informing me that my brother had been killed, he was retired, they said it was al-Mahdi army who killed him and that I might have been their initial target.
>
> I was planning then to stay for a short while in Amman just to relax and take some fresh air, but since 2006 I have not returned to Iraq. My wife and daughter went to my brother's funeral, I could not go. My case is similar to the cases of other Iraqis. We went to the UN, my son got resettlement to the States [USA]. I got resettlement too, but I do not have any intentions to go there, I am a doctor and can still practice my profession here, but in the States I would become an old retired man, and I was told that the American system does not recognize our degrees and in the best case I could only work as paramedic.
>
> I never thought I would stay in Amman this long, every time we used to come here, it was enough to spend two weeks or ten days to decide to return to Baghdad. But Baghdad has turned into a waste land (*arḍ kharāb*) أرض خراب, the streets, pavements and the city features are lost with all the walls and controlling

> check points (*sayṭarāt*) سيطرات and the random killings and killings on sectarian basis. I am a doctor, I used to treat everybody, many times free of charge, never thought of my patients as Sunni or Shia, this is a recent development, initiated by these new politicians.

Dr. Sharif refused to be called a refugee and described his new status in two words: "*ana harbān* أنا هربان I am a fugitive." When I asked him about his professional life in Jordan, he responded that although the Jordanians welcomed Iraqis in general, he still feels like a stranger and avoids any unnecessary discussions in public space to stay out of trouble. To extend his and his family space of *ʾamān*, Dr. Sharif paid JD 50,000 (US$ 70,500) as bank deposit to obtain an official residence permit that would allow him to stay and work legally in Amman. He tried to apply for a teaching position at a Jordanian university but his application was rejected for being too old. He seemed content that at least he could practice his career and examine many of his Iraqi patients in Amman and explained that every time the UNHCR called the family to complete their resettlement interviews, they tried to postpone it so as to keep their file open just in case things got worse: "we mention our granddaughter's education as a justification for our stay here." I had to leave at this point as few patients were still waiting to be examined by Dr. Sharif though his official working/volunteering hours were over.

The story of Dr. Sharif is similar to other stories of Iraqi professionals: academics and physicians for whom *ʾamān* and well-being were linked to being able to preserve a professional life and symbolic status through practicing their career. Many of them left Iraq only after receiving direct threats to their lives, but they still have close connections to Iraq, either through relatives managing their belongings which some of them chose not to sell, hoping to return one day, or via the pension that some of them receive.

The expulsion of highly qualified professionals from Baghdad

Some Iraqi academics and professionals had greater access to symbolic and material capital than others, which allowed them more possibilities to lead a life closer to their perceptions of *ʾamān*. And here lies the paradox as the same source of this symbolic capital that enabled Dr. Sharif to live closer to his expectations, turned into a source of threat which reduced his actual possibilities of living in Iraq. After 2003, professionals were targeted–like other groups of Iraqis– for different claims, some attacks were sponsored by sectarian militias, others were part of the de-Baathification project. Several professionals turned into hostages as part of a

proliferating kidnapping business; while some were released alive, the corpses of others were delivered to their families after they paid large ransoms.

Anthropologist Omar Dewachi presents more details of the expulsion of Iraqi doctors: Hundreds of physicians have been murdered or kidnapped by militias and criminal gangs for ransom—some killed in reprisal for their past affiliation with the Baath Party, others murdered as a means to further destabilize Iraq's infrastructure (following the effects of the US-led bombing in 1991 and the 13 years of *al-ḥiṣār*). Numerous doctors have been assassinated in their homes or clinics. Others have been targeted with car bombs. In parts of the country, doctors refuse their government assignments or do not show up for their jobs because of insecurity and deterioration of hospital conditions, especially in Baghdad. Across Iraq, doctors have also been subjected to other forms of violence from patients' relatives. Families and kin have taken matters into their own hands, mobilizing party militias or tribal thugs to negotiate with—and if necessary coerce—doctors to pay reparations for a lost life (2017: 3-4). Eventually, the attacks targeting highly qualified professionals created sharp shortage in qualified and experienced educators and medical staff, while Iraq turned into a country plagued with horrific birth defects and cancers.

An earlier wave of Iraqi professionals left Iraq in the 1990s, when the working conditions and salaries deteriorated sharply during *al-ḥiṣār* (the UN-imposed economic sanctions), while many of them managed to reach Europe, the USA or other Arab countries, some were still working in Amman. I met few of them who managed to visit Iraq after 2003 hoping to find better working conditions, but they were shocked by the levels of destruction and lack of essential services and the anticipated danger and decided to leave again with the intention to return when safety conditions improve.

For many Iraqi professionals I met, leaving Iraq has not been straightforward or the final decision. As in the case presented above, Dr. Sharif had to learn how to live in conditions of uncertainty, in both Iraq and the new places he moved to, and eventually he chose to stay where he could lead a familiar life partly through being able to practice his profession at an accepted level. The restrictive structure at home meant that Dr. Sharif had to reduce his active presence in the public space as a specialist physician, by resorting to hiding at his home in Iraq and gradually giving up his career as an academic in the university of Baghdad to work only for few hours treating urgent cases in his private clinic. In Jordan, where he fled to

escape direct death threats, *ʾamān* was not restricted to gaining access to the essential services which Iraqis lost in Baghdad, and it was not perceived as gaining resettlement in the USA; the solution designed by the UNHCR to save few eligible Iraqis from "a well-founded fear of being persecuted." In Amman, Dr. Sharif perceived his and his family *ʾamān* in relation to his understanding of well-being that is linked to his ability to practice his career as a specialist physician and/ or academic, as he had been doing in Baghdad.

This does not mean that Iraqi physicians and academics were immediately admitted in medical centers or hospitals and universities in Jordan. During my fieldwork in 2010-2011, it was possible to locate Iraqis in these two sectors still practicing their career. In the engineering faculty at one of the Jordanian universities I visited, I noticed that more than half of the academic staff listed on the board hanging in the entrance were Iraqis who graduated from different European and American universities in the seventies and eighties with PhD degrees in electrical, chemical, mechanical or civil engineering. I met a few of those academics, either at their offices in the four universities I visited or at their rented (and sometimes owned) apartments and listened to their stories about being a qualified academic professional in former Iraqi public universities and becoming an academic on a temporary contract in a private university in Jordan. Most of them anxiously expressed that after 2003 it became hard to accommodate the huge number of Iraqi academics in the limited vacant positions in the Jordanian universities. This forced few of them to take the risk and return to work inside Iraq to be able to support one's family members who remained in Jordan, where their sons and daughters could enjoy better services in terms of school and university education, health services, access to clean water and regular electric power and the ability to walk around and play without fear of being kidnapped or killed in an explosion. Iraqi students were visible in the cafeterias of al-Isra and Philadelphia universities, one could hardly miss their Iraqi accent. I met with dozens of Iraqi female and male students; few students came alone or accompanied with their siblings to study at Jordanian universities, while their parents (living and working in Iraq or elsewhere) supported their tuition fees and study expenses. Some of the students I met have moved to live in Amman with their families following 2005, they often referred to the problems their generation expect to face in finding a job upon graduation.

In this chapter I present the complex survival strategies and experiences of former highly qualified professionals, like Dr. Sharif, in their attempts to secure employment opportunities

following the destruction of former state institutions and infrastructure and their expulsion from Baghdad. The ethnographic details present how different Iraqi professionals had to negotiate the terms of losses and gains in complex conditions to the possible in Amman, and Baghdad. They had to negotiate with several local and global institutions which affected their will to pursue their former career lives or start a new job in a deregulated market; that was not governed by a centralized state. The unclear and constantly changing policies concerning their presence in Jordan meant that Iraqis had to learn how to cope with various levels of risks involved in securing resources for survival in increasingly uncertain contexts. Securing a job for this group of former qualified professionals was not only presented as a necessity to attain their livelihoods, but also as an attempt to reestablish a lost social status and regain a daily routine. To understand the processes of making *ʾamān* among this group of former Iraqi state employees, I draw on the anthropology of well-being in conditions of –lessness or "well-being in a world of want" as termed by Jackson (2011).

'Working' to extend the space of *ʾamān* in complex conditions to the possible

In the process of searching for work opportunities outside the scope of the Iraqi governmental sector, Iraqi professionals and state employees had to learn how to adjust to new working conditions in postinvasion Iraq and in Jordan, or between the two countries. I will first identify the meanings of well-being (or what Iraqis called *ʾamān*) in restricted and restrictive structures, before exploring the experiences of these former middle-class (and upper-middle class) professionals in negotiating the terms of losses and gains associated with their attempts to proceed their career life in the absence of Iraqi state institutions.

The majority of Iraqi government employees I met in Amman lost their positions. Highly skilled professionals including university professors and medical doctors who were able to find work in their field in Amman had to work in restrictive conditions under temporary contract terms in the private sector without further benefits; many of those professionals were seeking work in Amman as an attempt to extend their space(s) of *ʾamān*. In their descriptions of their new conditions, they referred to the good life they once enjoyed compared to the present losses they had to endure. In practice, the decisions they took to secure better well-being take into account the future of their household and other extended family members and in some cases the future of the Iraqi society.

In the stories shared by Iraqi professionals in the field, they often discussed their losses and well-being in relational terms (Joseph, 2012, 1994, 1993; Al-Mohammad, 2015) as family members rather than presenting individual losses or suffering. Several anthropological works exploring well-being in various cultures focus on the idea of "proportionality" or "balancing" what is measured as well-being for different communities or individuals in various conditions (Jiménez, 2008). The concept of well-being (or *ʾamān*, as Iraqis described the 'good days' when mentioned in the field) helps understand the survival experiences involved in the complex process of choosing among various possibilities in conditions of deprivation, threat and impoverishment. Dr. Sharif could have simply chosen, as his son did, to accept the UNHCR 'refugee label' and the solution it offers to few Iraqis to resettle in the USA where he would be further away from threats and could eventually gain citizenship rights instead of depositing the $ 50,000 to receive an annual residence permit in Jordan. But the resettlement solution that seemed the most appropriate solution for several other Iraqis, was not perceived as the best possibility for him (and his wife, daughter and granddaughter), at least not at this stage, as long as he could practice his career and treat Iraqi patients in Amman. Dr. Sharif explained that he kept his file at the UNHCR 'open' as an attempt to extend his survival if things became worse in the future; which he realized might be the case considering the local, regional and global changes that his generation witnessed in the last four decades. Well-being and *ʾamān* for this professional physician was related to the possibilities of creating safe but also familiar conditions of living with his own family. Familiarity here means the ability to make a choice to practice his profession and treat patients as he had done for years in his clinic in Baghdad, even if this meant reduction in his entitlements to payment and other work benefits. In the process of making *ʾamān* in Jordan, Dr. Sharif realized that his will to choose is not entirely free and that he might be eventually forced to desert this possibility of working as a medical volunteer in Amman to the resettlement solution in the USA, supported by the UNHCR, so he decided to keep his UNHCR file open and postpone resettlement for another year. Well-being in this sense became "a matter of finding the right balance between the visible and invisible elements of social life" (ibid., 180).

An inspiring and interesting study on Iraqi experiences of living and survival in conditions of threat and impoverishment is Hayder Al-Mohammad's anthropological work in the city of al-Basra. Al-Mohammad moves the ethnographic accounts about life in postinvasion Iraq beyond destruction and collapse to understandings of the ways in which Iraqis in their everyday forms of dwelling are not only making and remaking a world for themselves but

also each other amid tremendous daily pressures and struggles (2015: 114). In his ethnographic description, Al-Mohammad turns to the everyday in Iraq; to what he describes as "small gestures, moments of kindness and care, that are not simply positive tales contained within the destruction of postinvasion Iraq but are the very grounds by which many Iraqis have been able to survive and live through the terror and uncertainty of the last decade" (ibid., 111). In this account of Iraqis' lives and survival in al-Basra, Al-Mohammad describes well-being as contingent on one's relationships with others; what he calls the ethics of being there. Similarly, in the stories about the changes in their living and working conditions inside and outside Iraq, the Iraqi professionals I met in Jordan related well-being to ethics and moral connections in relationships with others (family members, tribal fellows, neighbors, Iraqi volunteers, as well as Jordanian friends) which became essential for survival after the destruction of former collective institutions especially governmental jobs, institutions and mixed neighborhoods, and more importantly the former social code to share the Iraqi space regardless of ethnic or sectarian origins as reflected in Dr Sharif's comment "never thought of my patients as Sunnis or Shias."

Jackson reflects on the relational aspect in well-being, not as a default set of social relations but as an ongoing achievement characterized by commitment, as he further explains:

> "By locating the ethical in the field of inter-subjective life, we call into question the assumption that existence is a struggle to bring one's life into alignment with given moral norms or a mere enactment of moral scripts, and become more fascinated by our mundane struggles to decide between competing imperatives or deal with impasses, unbearable situations, moral dilemmas, and double binds. […] The ethical quandary lies in how to redress a situation in which there is considerable moral ambiguity, for there are always two sides to every story and several possible ways of restoring order or seeing that justice is done. That is to say, ethical dilemmas are never resolved by simply laying down the law, invoking a moral principle that covers every situation, or passing judgment; the dilemmas require collective discussion, in which people attempt to come up with the best solution possible, given the complex circumstances, even though it is understood that any solution may make matters worse and no one is ever in a position to know the repercussions of his or her actions" (Jackson, 2013: 11-12).

The dilemmas involved in the attempts to come up with the best solution possible for the lack of *ʾamān* is observed in the negotiations involved in the case of Dr. Sharif's attempts to reach a solution among possibilities: to stay inside Iraq or move to Jordan or accept resettlement in a third country and move to live with one of his sons in the USA or London; he was not sure of the repercussions of the choices he made for him and his family, therefore he decided to keep other choices 'open' to discussion. The temporary choice which he made– to stay in

Jordan as long as he could practice his profession– is a complex one and should be examined within the larger historical, political and economic contexts in which these former Iraqi state employees sought survival.

Being an employee, professional, house owner, citizen, and even a father or a mother, in some cases, became less possible for this group of professionals inside Iraq, after 2003. In the absence of a collective response to their current refuge outside their country, each Iraqi had to search for ways to control one's life. There were little possibilities for collective initiatives. This meant that each Iraqi family had to depend on the resources and relations they had access to in their hiding space in Iraq and temporary space of protection in Jordan to create the best possible conditions for their family survival. The conditions of war and refuge had imposed on this group a complex structure of human relations to the possible(s). The Jordanian government carefully observed any attempts to formulate associations or groups and the protection space managed by the UNHCR was limited. In addition, several Iraqis refused the 'refugee' label and the conditions it imposed by quantifying the needs of an "exemplary victim," instead they went through a longer process to learn how to satisfy their needs according to their perceptions of well-being.

Regardless of the imposed solutions by actors in the field, well-being (and *ʾamān*, in this context) is related to the ability to make one's choice according to what is perceived as the best possible for him/ herself and his/her family; it is related to shared responsibility. Similarly to Jackson's perception of well-being in relational terms, as an ongoing achievement characterized by commitment. Rather than passively accepting the Jordanian government's various classifications of the Iraqi presence in Jordan as a guest, Arab brother, migrant worker, foreigner and the UNHCR categorizations of Iraqis who registered in the organization as asylum seekers or refugees, Dr Sharif perceived his presence in Jordan as a volunteer Iraqi physician; he appreciated the chance this category (volunteer) offered to practice his former role in treating needy Iraqi patients.

However, Dr. Sharif did not abandon completely the possibility of accepting the refugee label entitlement of resettlement to the USA that might bring some relief to his family in the future. Becoming a refugee might be one possibility, in the near future, that Dr Sharif did not consider as long as he could afford to preserve his expectations of living in dignity and practicing his career, despite the reductionist conditions in Jordan (and during the previous

decade in Iraq). This complex relation to the possible as an agent in restricted structure is similar to the agents who tend to "cut their coats according to their cloth," as described by Bourdieu in his exploration of agents' adjustment possibilities within restrictive and restricted structures:

> "[T]o adjust to the objective chances of satisfying need or desire, inclining agents to 'cut their coats according to their cloth', and so to become the accomplices of the processes that tend to make the probable a reality" (1990: 64-65).

As an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted, habitus, according to Bourdieu, engenders all the thoughts, all the perceptions, and all the actions consistent with those conditions, and no others. This paradoxical product is difficult to conceive, even inconceivable, only so long as one remains locked in the dilemma of determinism and freedom. Because the habitus is an endless capacity to engender products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it secures is as remote from a creation of unpredictably novelty as it is from a simple mechanical reproduction of the initial conditionings (2010 [1977]: 95).

In the absence of collective responses to their expulsion from their country, these former Iraqi professionals had to satisfy their needs by adjusting to the structural constraints imposed in postinvasion Iraq, and Jordan. Dr. Sharif and other Iraqi professionals I present in this chapter have lived through reductionist conditions before in Iraq, especially during the 1990s (Chapter 7), and as Bourdieu explained, they seem to have the capacity to engender thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production.

In the coming sections of this chapter I present various cases grouped within four patterns of adjustment processes, which Iraqi professionals from various generations and economic backgrounds explored in their attempts to create their space(s) of *ʾamān*. The ethnographic details discuss how these Iraqis had to adjust with several dilemmas involved in their attempts to come up with the best solution possible to work in their profession and realize their well-being and *ʾamān* as they perceived them in the absence of collective solutions.

Four possibilities of 'working' as highly-skilled Iraqi professionals in the absence of state institutions

The Iraqi state investment in development during 1960s–1980s focused on preparing highly qualified professionals to support the nation-state building project; they had to learn how to cope with various changes in state policies throughout the last four decades. Most of them experienced de-valuation in their former status, due to the decline of state support in providing professional training and rewarding conditions of employment. As explored through their stories in Chapters Six and Seven, the deterioration in their conditions did not only start in 2003, these professionals had to constantly negotiate new terms of losses and gains with authorities of power. They had to learn how to cope with changing policies introduced by the Baathist regime which turned from 'socialist' development to heavy militarization, privatization and liberalization, to be followed with the destructive attacks by the US-led bombing campaign in 1991 Gulf war and the impoverishing UN economic sanctions.

The invasion and occupation of Iraq destroyed the state symbols including governmental bodies and law. Previously, of little significance, sectarian parties and networks started to exert a much stronger influence in the absence of a strong central state (Marfleet, 2007: 409). The years 2004 and 2005 (and later 2006-2008) evolved in terror tactics including assassinations, disappearances, killings by death squads and imprisonments that were directed to minorities and also professionals such as doctors, lawyers and academics. Common phrases shared among professionals in the field to describe their exit from Iraq during that period include: "Iraq changed, we don't have a place there anymore"! "I am a stranger inside Iraq as much as I am outside, here in Jordan."

While the employment conditions and bad salaries of the 1990s, which drew out many of the Iraqi academics had improved in the years following 2003 (after lifting the UN economic sanctions), an increasing number of academics and doctors were still forced to leave Iraq following waves of killings and targeting of professionals. These were usually professionals who used to belong to the upper-middle professional class in Baghdad, i.e. they were well-established in their home-country and could survive better in the initial months after moving to Jordan from their savings or through remittances transferred by relatives who already migrated abroad, as in the case of Dr Sharif in this Chapter and Dr Omar in Chapter One. The number of highly qualified Iraqis who could find work in their original professions in

Amman became limited. In their struggles to create better working conditions without a state, we can observe four patterns in which these highly qualified professionals generated various coping strategies and resources within the limited structures created by the new conditions of war and complex displacement journey(s).

Possibility 1-From highly-skilled professionals in Baghdad to temporary contracted workers in Amman

In general, Iraqis tend to see themselves proudly as coming from a society that was the cradle of civilization in its ancient contributions to the development of writing, legal systems, libraries, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, technology and so on (Herring, 2011: 345). Higher education and health are two sectors in which Iraqi skilled professionals were visible in Jordan. This dates back to the 1990s. Iraqis belonging to these two professional sectors got work permits thanks to the flourishing of private universities business and medical tourism[28] in Jordan. I met academics, doctors and artists who had come to Jordan during the nineties to escape the evils of the UN economic sanctions and look for better living opportunities; they too complained that their possibilities to work were shrinking every year following the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq and the ensuing destruction which led to the expulsion of more than two million Iraqis who have fled to Jordan, Syria and elsewhere.

In their attempts to keep practicing their former professions and gain access to more regular salaried jobs, these highly skilled and qualified Iraqi professionals, who used to have regular jobs at universities and hospitals in Baghdad, had to compete for few vacant positions which were not filled by Jordanian professionals. I met several Iraqi academics and doctors who had completed their education at Iraqi universities and/or European and American universities through scholarships and fellowships funded by the Iraqi government. Most of them had been employed in Baghdad for different periods ranging from four to forty years, but eventually had to move out of Iraq to search for *ʾamān*.

ʾAmān had different meanings, depending on the period in which these academics moved out of Iraq; feeling safe (*ʾamān*) in the late eighties meant the ability to work in less oppressive conditions when Iraqi men were forced to serve for long years in the army on the war-front and women had to secure family survival by exerting double efforts as employees in the state

[28] Jordan has been described during the late 2000s as a medical tourism hub in the region, see (Alsarayreh et al., 2017).

bureaucracy as well as single mothers taking care of the household and children. In the nineties, the oppressive state rules increased with drastic deterioration in the living conditions and state services due to the UN international sanctions (*al-ḥiṣār*) and the increasing restrictions on travel imposed by the Iraqi state. According to the stories of Iraqi professionals, *ʾamān* in the nineties had been reduced to searching for better living conditions in terms of health and education services and infrastructure, in addition to higher salaries (Chapter 7). After 2003, *ʾamān* for many professionals, like Dr. Sharif's case described above, meant not being threatened, kidnapped or killed. The threat in 2003 was not coming from an identified source such as Saddam's secret police, serving on the war-front or the UN sanctions regime but as many Iraqis tended to describe recent conditions of threat and fear prevailing in Iraq after 2003: "the US got rid of one Saddam to replace him with 50 or 100 Saddams. In today's Iraq, one never knows who will target him/her and why"!

Initially, Iraqis who criticized Saddam's regime and "crazy decisions" (as some used to say) that led to wasting the country material and human resources and involved the Iraqi society in one war after another had expected that their working and living conditions would improve after lifting the US economic sanctions, some expected that their living standards would rise to a level similar to other neighboring gulf countries. However, the bad conditions they survived in the last decade and a half only turned worse. In addition to lack of economic security, the political and social conditions after 2003 deteriorated and the personal safety of many Iraqi academics and doctors was at risk. Several professionals had no choice but to seek living opportunities in the job markets outside Iraq, where other professional acquaintances and relatives sought jobs in earlier periods. Being highly skilled and qualified— especially if one was holding an academic degree from an accredited higher education institution abroad with strong work expertise— Iraqi professionals expected that their qualifications would be transferable elsewhere to secure them good working opportunities, as they used to hear of Iraqi doctors and academics who left their country during the 80s and 90s. However, this was not the case experienced by the current wave of Iraqis; the few highly qualified Iraqi academics who managed to secure jobs at Jordanian universities after 2003 were employed in private universities with short term renewable contracts. The focus was on certain disciplines including business administration, accounting, engineering and medical sciences, since not all academic specializations were taught at private universities, therefore Iraqi Professors in humanities and other fields like social sciences, religious studies and education had little chance to gain an academic position.

I present below a summary of my meetings and interviews with few Iraqi academics who succeeded to get employment opportunities in Jordanian private universities, and as reflected in the stories' titles, each of them described his presence in Jordan using a different label: foreign worker, exiled Iraqi, fungible or disposable worker, migrant worker or fugitive and Dr. volunteer (as in the case of Dr Sharif above). These various labels reflect the different perceptions of their displacement experiences and individual attempts of making space(s) of *ʾamān* in conditions of reduction in Jordan.

-Professor Naim: a foreign worker in Jordan and an Iraqi in exile (*al-manfa*)

Professor Naim, who was advised to leave his position at the university in Baghdad in 2005 to avoid assassination for being considered affiliated to the former Baathist regime, spent two years at home in Amman before he got a position at a Jordanian University on a temporary annual contract basis, after being nominated by one of his former Iraqi students who moved to work in Jordan during *al-ḥiṣār* period in the 90s. He described the reductionist conditions from a highly qualified professor and dean of the engineering college in Baghdad to a temporary contracted university lecturer in Amman:

> Back in Iraq I had an authority that allowed me to hold students accountable; I had the right to evaluate their level of work using higher academic standards but here in Amman I have been advised to keep silent, I am reminded every day that I am a foreigner and a guest: *Yā gharīb kun ʾadīb* يا غريب كُن أديب (Stranger be Polite). I had a larger space to work in my role as academic in Iraq to build human capabilities and support building the nation, but this is not appreciated in the limited role assigned to me to teach students at this private university which competes for gaining more students regardless of quality. Therefore, I resume the serious academic work as a freelancer, mostly on voluntary basis, through my role as editor in two international journals in my field, lecturing Iraqi students online and designing e-learning programs.

Professor Naim measured the reduction in his well-being by comparing his former academic achievements in Baghdad that were not taken into consideration in his present employment contract in Amman. He talked of his high achievements at school in the sixties, upon which he had been awarded a governmental fellowship at the age of 17 when he left Baghdad to study engineering in Britain. In 1973, he returned after completing his post-doctoral research at the age of 29, to teach in Iraq and after two years he was assigned the role to establish the University of Technology in Baghdad and the School of Control and System Engineering. Since then, he proceeded with teaching and research until he was forced to leave his

academic position in 2005. He described his presence in Amman as "an Iraqi academic in *al-mahjar* المهجر (exile) and expressed how minimal his contribution at the private Jordanian university has been compared to his previous job as the dean of the Engineering College in Baghdad: "I am only a guest here, *ʿarabi bas ʾajnabi* عربي بس أجنبي (I am an Arab but foreigner). In Iraq I used to enjoy a wider space for teaching and academic research, here according to my contract, I am only expected to give my lectures and go home. I am not allowed to suggest or introduce any developments to the curriculum, because if they find my suggestions strange, they might not renew my contract next year." Professor Naim's earlier academic achievements in building educational programs, curriculum design and research and his high qualifications as an editor of two peer-reviewed journals were reduced to limited academic role in teaching and lower salary as contracted worker.

However, he still considered himself lucky to gain a position at a Jordanian university where he could practice part of his daily academic routine, though at reduced level. To cope with the reduction in his academic role, he adjusted to do what he described as "serious academic work" on voluntary basis. This included working with Iraqi academics and universities from a distance to develop their teaching and research programs. He did not seem interested in discussing details of this work when I asked him, but he mentioned that following thirty eight years of academic experience, he considered his role as academic to contribute to the production of qualified human beings to be capable of building their nation, instead, in his current position, he was struggling to preserve a limited space of *ʾamān* by teaching on a temporary basis in the Jordanian academia. He explained that academic life for an exiled foreign worker, though important for his survival and well-being, was no longer providing the space he needed to achieve his aims of graduating qualified and well-disciplined professionals. To keep his position at the Jordanian university, he had to learn how to discipline his presence as obedient worker with limited role in teaching and research in the public space of the Jordanian university, where he was officially employed, while he arranged to exercise his former academic role in research and curriculum design on a voluntary basis through working with Iraqi students and lecturers online.

When I asked him if he had considered gaining resettlement in a third country through registering in the UNHCR, he explained that he could have moved to live in the UK, the home-country of his wife, but instead he preferred to stay in Amman, close to Iraq, as long as he could practice his career. He refused to be categorized as refugee and would never contact

any UN body which "brought misery to his nation through imposing a brutal system of economic sanctions." Instead, he perceived himself as being an Iraqi in *al-mahjar* المهجر (exile). The use of *al-mahjar* might be affected by his love of literature and poetry,[29] as Prof. Naim told me: "In Baghdad, I used to read poetry in the little free time between my administrative duties as a dean and my teaching and writing as an active member in two refereed academic journals. In Jordan I have more time to enjoy poetry." Professor Naim offered to read me few lines of a poem he had recently written about Iraq. The rhythm felt familiar; it was another version of Al-Jawahiri's: *Yā Dajlat al-Khīr* يا دجلة الخير (O blessed Tigris): "I greet you from afar, O greet me back, O blessed Tigris, river of gardens green," but Professor Naim, in the poem he wrote, had replaced the Tigris in Al-Jawahiri's poem with Baghdad and added his own poetical metaphors.

This seemed like another tactic to compensate for the devaluation of their former status in the 'refuge' place, some Iraqis evoked what they described as a latent talent. Professor Naim seemed to recall his love to poetry as another possibility he considered to extend the limited space of *ʾamān* in Jordan, and deal with the reductionist conditions in his former status and "more serious roles" as academic.

-Professor Balqees: a fungible worker

Professor Balqees, holding a Ph D in industrial pharmacy, explained that since she moved to work in Jordan in 2001, the employers at the two Jordanian private universities, where she was offered work, kept reminding her at the beginning of every academic year that her contract would be renewed as long as there was no Jordanian applicant who could fill the position:

> This year, the university had already renewed my contract, but I was on the waiting list until they had received an official letter from the Civil Service Bureau with names of Jordanian academics in Pharmacy. There is no job security and my husband who holds a Ph D degree in engineering could not find a position in a Jordanian University after the expiry of his former contract; he started working as an engineer in an Iraqi company, he too might lose his job if the company decided to move to Syria or return back to Iraq.[30]

[29] *Adab al-mahjar* (literature of exile) refers to the writings of Arab poets and authors who migrated in the period between the end of the 19th century- the beginning of the 20th century, that marked the end of the Ottoman Empire to Northern and Southern America, such as Jibran Khalil Jibran, Iliya Abi Madi, Mikhail Naima and Amin al-Rihani.

[30] Interview with Professor Balqees at her parents' home, where she lived, on 18 April 2011.

At the age of 36, with 11 years of teaching and research experience, two academic awards and several publications, Professor Balqees described her and her husband's feelings as "disposable" or fungible workers who could be easily replaced by another Jordanian academic regardless of their credentials and academic achievements. She considered her well-being in migration to Europe and had explored various options until she heard from Iraqi friends in Syria of the skilled worker migration program in Canada.[31] She had to travel to Syria in 2008 to apply, the main condition was not to enroll in any other scheme of resettlement or migration, so they did not register in the UNHCR in Jordan.

Highly qualified Iraqi professionals who managed to secure jobs in their fields of specialization, had to work in Jordan at reduced conditions of their perception of well-being. Depending on their access to social and material capital, they negotiated the terms to improve their space of *ʾamān* in Jordan. Professor Balqees' parents were both academics in Baghdad. They had retired and could survive in Amman by relying on the pensions they received from Baghdad. Her father, a retired history professor, explained that he considers Amman a better place for a retired Iraqi couple, where he had access to Arabic books and could spend 4-5 hours in the public library daily reading and writing another book on the Arab history in the Abbasid period (he already published several history books and articles). To extend his living opportunities in Amman, he had to sell most of his properties in Baghdad to be able to purchase the house he rented in Amman, where he lives with his wife and his married daughter and her family.

-Professor Waleed: a migrant worker

Professor Waleed, was 53 years old when I met him on 14 April 2011. He had been one of the students of Professor Naim in Baghdad. In Jordan, he enjoyed more authority, than other Iraqi academics, through his role as a dean of the engineering college in a private Jordanian university. He described his presence in Amman as part of the loss of academic capital (or brain-drain) during the last twenty years in Iraq:

[31] Canada, contrary to other European countries migration policies, had more welcoming policies when it comes to receiving highly skilled migrants and allowing them to work in their professional career following the necessary accreditation of their certificates and reintegration programs. See the article by Danielle Edwards: "Canada playing major role as safe haven for at-risk academics from strife-torn countries." On 23 April 2019, accessed online: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/education/article-canada-playing-major-role-as-safe-haven-for-at-risk-academics-from/?fbclid=IwAR1ld2YEId2nqaekmukK9TbRbtP25eSf6Nrrd2h9pjbJ4V3K6zbIkka52AE.

> Many Iraqi academics, from my generation, had been forced to leave in the 90s. Due to *al-ḥiṣār*, we had then [during the 1990s] better opportunities to work at foreign universities than Iraqi universities. In 1996, my monthly salary was equivalent to $ 5, the cleaner who was a Baathist used to receive, then, twice more than me.

Professor Waleed explained that he feels settled in Jordan, having a job and residency permit, but he too is contracted on a temporary basis and migration is one of the options he is considering if his contract is not renewed. He explained that he would delay his migration decision as long as he could work in his profession, even if he is paid half the amount of his Jordanian academic fellows, because he feels at home with his family in Jordan, an Arabic country. Like most of Iraqis who left in the 90s, Professor Waleed had visited Iraq after 2003, but seeing all the destruction in Baghdad, he did not consider Iraq as a good possibility where he could move with his family, if his job contract was not renewed:

> I am a migrant worker in Jordan; I had been living here for 15 years. I got my PhD degree in Engineering from a prestigious British University and I am an editor in a high ranking academic journal in my academic discipline, but I do not think that I would be valued in Iraq as I have to compete with the new Iraqi comers— in a corrupt environment— some of them work with fake certificates.

Professor Waleed seemed more satisfied with his current working conditions, than other Iraqi academics I met. In addition to teaching, he was appointed as a dean of the engineering faculty and this allowed a wider space for his academic development through research partnerships with European universities. Among the possibilities to ensure his family well-being, he considered that staying in Jordan is a good option as long as he could preserve his job as qualified academic, and ensure good education for his daughters. The university administration took care of renewing his work permit, based on which he could obtain a residence permit for his family members. To increase his well-being in the future, Professor Waleed did not consider returning to Iraq, which was not among the possible solutions for him, especially after following the news of the assassination and killing of highly skilled professionals:

> One week ago, they killed the dean of the medical school in al-Mustansiriyah university. Imagine! When Iraq is in high need of qualified human resources in the reconstruction stage, they kill qualified doctors and academics. One month ago they also killed an expert physician in cancer treatment, Dr Zaid al-Ali, 36 years old had been assassinated by a sticky bomb attached to his car, although he was Shia. Instead of rebuilding the nation, they are eliminating the Iraqi society when the academic and educated class is targeted. There is no hope with this corrupt government! Did you hear of the new Iraqi Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research? There are hundreds of qualified Iraqi academics holding

> PhD degrees from respectful academic institutions, and they appoint a person who just graduated from al-Mustansiriyah University in 2009 with an MA degree. I also heard that his certificate is fake.

Unlike other Iraqi academics I met in 2010-2011, Professor Waleed who had established a good career profile in Jordan since the mid-nineties, did not describe himself as a foreign worker or stranger who needs to stay within limits and keep a low profile. Instead, he felt more comfortable with the category of migrant worker, which he used to label his presence in Jordan, as well as his future plans, if he moved to work in Europe when the Jordanian university stop renewing his contract.

When it comes to medical doctors who reached Jordan after 2003, they either do not work or when they find a job it is at a lower scale compared to their previous positions in Iraq; as support to a Jordanian Doctor. Some of them realized these employment conditions in Jordan and seemed to appreciate the limited possibility of working on a voluntary basis for minimal financial returns:

> Jordan is not in need for our expertise, it's a country with limited population and they have their local professionals and export doctors to the Gulf and other places in the world, they don't need Iraqi physicians to work in hospitals or training centers. Iraqis are not allowed to form social or professional networks in Jordan. Those who organized small networks to help other Iraqis, rely on personal efforts through informal and personal contacts, which is nothing compared to the heavy need (From an interview in March 2011 with Dr Omar, see Chapter One).

Iraqi professionals who managed to secure work in Amman do not share similar or unified views concerning their presence in Jordan and tend to ascribe different subjectivities to that presence. Those who were familiar with Amman and spent longer years working in its institutions (since the 90s) and enjoyed more regular employment status described themselves as migrant workers. While the most recent comers described their presence as foreign workers (a term more commonly used to describe non-national workers in Arab countries especially in the Gulf). The labels of refugee or asylum seeker were used occasionally when these professionals expressed interest in third country resettlement. All agreed on being guests in Amman, although they were not sure when and how they will end their visit and stop being called as guests, especially that they were many times reminded by the Jordanian hosts that as strangers they should be polite. The less common descriptions where "exiled" which I heard from a poet-nurse and Professor Naim, a poet-academic teaching engineering, while Dr Sharif described his presence in relation to his flight from Baghdad as a fugitive.

Migration to a European country seemed a more probable possibility as expressed by younger Iraqi academics in certain disciplines. Both Professors Waleed and Balqees expected that with their qualifications and academic experience, they could find a job in the academia abroad, as skilled migrant workers, and secure the well-being of their families in Europe.

These various labels do not only reflect the lack of collective response to address the needs of Iraqis in Jordan, but they functioned as part of the coping strategies to extend the space of *ʾamān* for one's family and adjust with the changing working conditions between Iraq and Jordan. In the cases of Dr Sharif and other academics and professionals who were working in reduced conditions in Jordan, they used to recall their working experiences with students, patients and the rich professional and social life they had enjoyed in Baghdad. It is in these complex entanglements and life stories through relationships with others that I observed the well-being of these groups of former Iraqi highly-skilled government employees.

Possibility 2-From highly skilled professionals in Baghdad to "circular migrants" who work (and live) between Iraq and Jordan

Amman has been described, in previous studies as the preferred location for more privileged Iraqis: some professionals and their families moved there in large numbers following 2003 (Marfleet, 2011: 282; Chatelard, 2009). In addition to Iraqi politicians and parliament men, who were not included in this research, most used to live and work in the Green Zone in Baghdad while their families lived in Amman or elsewhere in a safe country (see Roald, 2011). When finding a job in Jordan has become too complicated, going back to work in Iraq has been a solution some Iraqi professionals turned to despite the risks involved.

I use the term "circular migration" to describe this Iraqi worker experience rather than transnational migration. Transnational migration is usually explored in relation to globalization and its effects in increasing "the ability of migrants to maintain network ties over long distances [...] and foster multiple identities to travel back and forth, to relate to people, to work and to do business and politics simultaneously in distant places" (Castles et al., 2014: 41). Anthropologist Ruba Salih describes transnational migrants as being: "more and more able to construct their lives across borders, creating economic, social, political and cultural activities which allow them to maintain membership in both their immigration country and their country of origin" (2002: 51). The risks involved in the circular movements

of these qualified Iraqis between Amman and Baghdad make it a dangerous migration experience, rather than increasing abilities and network ties among migrants and different communities, as described in the case Salih researched among Moroccan female migrant workers in Italy. Iraqis in the cases I observed had to move, settle and work in increasingly restricted conditions in both countries; Baghdad turned into a working place where they could secure a job opportunity providing more stable income, but within insecure living conditions: professionals required protection from one's tribe or the institution guards, usually armed militias affiliated to one of the ethnic or sectarian ruling groups. While Jordan was considered, as Chatty described Syria– another host country of Iraqi refugees during my fieldwork time– a "site of permanent 'temporariness'" (2017a: 208), where Iraqis used to live 'temporarily' with their families and spend the income earned in Baghdad. These Iraqi workers do not perceive themselves as migrant workers in their country of origin, where they returned to work in disguise or under the protection of their tribal or sectarian and ethnic group. I borrow the term "circular migration" from Dawn Chatty's description of Iraqis movements between Syria and Iraq (before 2011) as "circular migrations into and out of Iraq to make money or collect rents" (ibid., 208). According to my observations in Jordan among Iraqi professionals in 2010-2011, this kind of circular migration for work was more common among certain professionals, such as academics, engineers and medical doctors, some of whom had left Iraq before 2003 to escape the harsh conditions of the economic sanctions by looking for work in neighboring Arab countries, which became less possible with the political upheavals that started in 2011 in several Arab countries.

Several of these professionals left Iraq between 2005-2008 following the targeting of doctors and academics, in addition to the lack of electricity and health and education services and the destruction of state infrastructure. They feared risking the safety of their family members in Baghdad when one or more of its members were targeted: they had either received a direct threat (as a written notice with one bullet or more in an envelope), or endured a kidnapping experience and other losses.

I met few Iraqi families who had adjusted the terms of their survival by moving between Amman and Iraq (back and forth). This strategy secured higher living standards for the household members who remained in Amman. Well-being for these families meant the ability to secure a middle class or upper middle class life style in a safe environment, especially in terms of consumption and access to services which are missing in Iraq such as

education, health and electricity. The remittances sent by the family member who returned to work in Iraq ensured comfortable housing conditions for the household, often in western Amman, in addition to educational opportunities for their sons and daughters who were able to obtain a university degree, usually from a private Jordanian university, and the ability to consume branded clothes and enjoy the former social life-style of celebrations and gatherings with family and friends, shopping and eating in (Iraqi) restaurants in Amman. Access to higher financial resources from their work in Baghdad made it possible, for these Iraqi families, to purchase an expensive annual residence permit which allowed the household members to commute more easily between Amman and Baghdad. This circular migration living style seemed like other known cases of foreign workers in Arab countries. Like other households (Palestinian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Syrian) living in countries with poor economies, when a family member, in working age, would move to work in one of the Gulf countries and secure the living needs of his/her family through financial remittances.

The living style of these Iraqi families shared many aspects of the foreign workers' families' life style, where the family breadwinner worked in another country to support his or her family who remained settled in their country of origin. What makes it a strange case of foreign-worker or migrant worker was the fact that the 'foreign' workers in this case were Iraqi professionals who had returned to work in their country of origin, Iraq, in order to support their families who were seeking safety in a foreign country (Jordan); in this case leading a middle class or upper-middle class life style was more possible in Amman than in Baghdad. In the cases explored for this ethnographic research, it was the father, brother, son, daughter or, in a few cases, both parents who had made the necessary arrangements to return to work in Iraq and send the greatest part of their salaries to the family in Amman. As in other cases of foreign workers, the money earned in the state of migration was transferred and spent in the form of remittances in another state, but the paradox in this case was that the Iraqi professional— who turned into a forced migrant or refugee waiting for resettlement in Jordan due to being threatened or kidnapped in his country—decided to return to Iraq, this time not to 'live' there but to work and support the hosting costs of his (and/or her) family members who live in Jordan.

Despite the risks involved in returning to work inside Iraq, this seemed like the best solution for some professionals, especially physicians "to avoid starting from zero," as Iraqi professionals used to say) when they described how some of their colleagues had to go

through a long process for licensing and accreditation to be eligible to practice medicine in the new country. Migration to Europe or the USA did not seem the best possibility for Iraqi doctors who were interested in practicing their profession, especially for older generations of physicians, and sometimes among the middle aged, who learnt about several obstacles other Iraqi physicians were facing to practice their profession abroad and, thus, decided to return to work between Baghdad and Amman within more familiar limits. This applied also to other professionals, such as academics and engineers, who realized the difficulties involved in practicing their professions, in western countries due to the high competition, not only with qualified locals but also with other qualified migrants.

The decision to stay in Amman or move back to Iraq depended on their access to capital: both financial and social. Being able to pay the deposit of $ 50,000 (and freeze $ 25,000 in a Jordanian bank) allowed easier circular mobility for the transient worker and his/her family. Another factor was having the right social connections in Amman and Baghdad. Iraqi professionals had learnt from their previous experiences with wars and living with an oppressive regime that establishing strong social networks with influential figures in the government is important to protect one's life, family and property. One of the academics who returned to work in Baghdad expressed that he feels safer to stay in his house because the young son of his old neighbors was appointed as a guard for a high ranking officer in the Ministry of Defence and he could rely on him to protect him and his house.

In other cases, to reduce the risk to their lives, some Iraqi returnees, Dr Sabah (um Tai's father, mentioned later in this chapter) moved in with members of their extended families or *ʿashīra*/tribe in relatively peaceful areas, or among their sectarian group in a different street, district, town or city, away from their original home residence in Baghdad where they had been threatened or attacked. Others, who could not rely on influential figures or their tribal connections, arranged for accommodation in their working place (the hospital in case of some doctors).

-Professor Salim: returning to work in his former university in Baghdad to support his family's expenses in Amman

At the age of 61, Professor Salim who had been working in Amman since 1998, decided to move back to work in an Iraqi university in 2010 just few months after he had been informed

by the UNHCR that his resettlement file to the USA was accepted. Resettlement seemed one possibility to gain citizenship rights and ensure better future for his three daughters, but after several visits to Iraq where he met with relatives and friends and observed some improvement in the conditions of living, he realized that if he accepts resettlement in the USA, he will not be able to practice his profession abroad while he still had a chance to work as academic in Baghdad and secure higher living standards for his family in Amman, where his daughters study:

> After several visits to Baghdad in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2009, I noticed that the salary rates were improving compared to the sanctions period when I left to work in Amman, despite the deterioration in the security situation. Age was one factor for turning back to Iraq as a better choice than resettlement in the USA. In addition to the higher wage and better benefits. I am 61 years old, and I managed to return to work at my former university in Baghdad with a higher salary than the one I used to receive here in Jordan. Unlike the times of *al-ḥiṣār*, when I left Iraq, the economic situation of Iraqi academics and other workers' families is better today: Salaries in Iraq are improving like in the old times, people are more capable of covering their living needs, working women are able to buy gold as they used to do before *al-ḥiṣār*. But the security situation is still risky, especially for my daughters who got used to different way of living in Amman. In Iraq they will have to wear *ḥijāb*. I decided to go back alone as a migrant worker in my country while keeping my family house in Amman where security conditions and services are better. But eventually, we will have to move as a family! I hate to mention this, but being Shia played a role in my decision to return. Sectarian identity was not present in our former life in Baghdad, it was not a factor in my earlier decision to migrate to Amman. But with the growing sectarian culture in the region and inside Iraq, it became an important factor to consider. Despite improvements in living conditions and the reductions in killings on identity, I think that as a Shia academic, I and my family members would have better future in Baghdad especially when it comes to my daughters' chances of marriage.

In addition to gaining higher salary and better working conditions in the Iraqi academia, Professor Salim's decision to return to work in Baghdad is another example of the complexity involved in preserving the family well-being and extending the space of *ʾamān*, without a state or other formal protection bodies. In this case, several factors were involved in Professor Salim's decision to live temporarily between Amman and Baghdad and eventually move back with his entire family to Iraq. These factors include the actual improvement in the salary and wage levels in Iraq to a level similar to the pre-*ḥiṣār* conditions in addition to his perception of his family well-being in the future. He perceived his return to work in Baghdad as an opportunity to raise his family living standards in Amman, as well as paving the way to his daughters' eventual return to live and work in Baghdad upon completing their higher education. Another factor related to his perception of his family future well-being is what he

called to solve “his daughters’ problem”, approaching marriage age, in conditions of rising sectarian thinking in the region, he anticipated that they have less chances to find a Jordanian partner.

The politicization of sectarian belonging was another problem which he observed in his earlier visits in 2004 and 2005: “the current Iraq does not seem a safe place for my daughters who grew up in Jordan and tend to speak Jordanian accent. They are used to a different style of life here, to spend time with their friends and go out unveiled.” Only in 2009, with the decrease in killings on identity, he decided that he could finally return to work in Baghdad and considered the possibility of his daughters’ return. The paradox is that although Professor Salim refused what he called “sectarian thinking” but he used it when he considered his family’s future life in Baghdad, as he explained that being a Shia and qualified academic he was able to gain a good job in his former university in Baghdad, while he managed to preserve the family property in Baghdad during his absence for years, thanks to his wife Sunni family relatives who moved in their house that was in a mixed neighborhood, and this is another factor that supported his decision to move back, having a house in a relatively secure area where he felt safe and protected by the family good neighbors and relatives.

Professor Salim referred to the sectarian problem in relation to its regional dimension. According to his and his daughters experiences, people in Amman are less tolerant when they learn of their Shii origin. Although his wife is a Sunni Iraqi, he thought that a Sunni Jordanian would not be willing to marry a Shii Iraqi. He described this development in sectarian thinking as one of the main factors that led him to decide to return to Baghdad. In his negotiations of the possibility of finding a good job after the age of 60, he considered the well-being of his family members, especially his three daughters who could enjoy better living standards, with the support of their father’s salary from Iraq to continue their university education in Amman. However, well-being is not restricted to the present, he thought of his daughters’ future well-being as he perceived it in the ability to find good career and marriage opportunities. Eventually he moved to Baghdad alone, with the intention to move the entire family in the near future. He believed that his daughters’ chances of finding a job and suitable marriage partner will be easier in Baghdad: “I think that my daughters’ life will be easier with an Iraqi man, no matter whether he was Sunni or Shia.”

Returning to Iraq was perceived as the best possibility for extending the space of *ʾamān* and well-being not only for his family, but also as part of renewing his national aspirations of rebuilding a strong Iraq:

> I am optimistic because things cannot stay bad forever, maybe I will not live to see Iraq turning into United Arab Emirates or Japan, but Iraq as country and nation has capabilities: we have land, water, oil, people and history; these are all success factors, for me I believe in facts, forget about recent history, we have historical roots in the land but as Iraqi people we have another distinctive characteristic: we are persistent and hard-working people, we work with our own hands, we do not rely on others to work for us. We do not have the culture of importing domestic workers or foreign workers like here in Jordan or in the Gulf [he referred to the exploitation of domestic service and other Asian workers]. If the security situation improves, many qualified Iraqis will go back. I have already seen the improvements. Amerika is not a good option for me [he referred to the possibility of resettlement in the USA]: first, because it is the country which destroyed my own country, and second: because I learnt from friends who went there that refugees do not lead a good life, they are not treated as original citizens. I know medical doctors and specialists who were denied a working permit because they did not obtain their degrees from American universities.

Work, in the case described above, gains a collective meaning of survival and opportunity to improve the well-being of the Iraqi collective through the anticipated return of qualified Iraqis and their persistence and hard-working nature, as described by Professor Salim. It is not only a ticket for his own return but it could be seen as a way to revive a Baghdadi society who can enjoy a prosperous life thanks to the country wealth, as he explained above. This optimism towards the future of Iraq was not common in my interviews with other Iraqis who had little connection with home. Having a regular job in Amman, and an official work permit allowed Professor Salim several chances to visit Baghdad, without fearing the denial of visa entry into Jordan. The changes he observed in his visits in 2004, 2005 and 2009, were another factor to support his decision to return to work in Baghdad in 2010, even though he still considered it unsafe for his daughters but he was optimistic about the future of Iraq in 2011 when I met him. One of the factors that he mentioned briefly was being Shia that feels safer than being Sunni professional in postinvasion Iraq. Although he refused what he called the rise of sectarian factional thinking, but it was one of the factors by which he judged the feasibility of his return to work in Baghdad, within a region where sectarian affiliation is increasingly politicized.

-Dr Tareq: a temporary employee in Jordan looking for better position in his mother's home-city Erbil

Dr. Tareq, 38 years old, a specialist in nuclear medicine, was in the process of moving to live with his family in Erbil, where he had been offered a position in his specialty. He left Iraq in 1999 shortly after his graduation from the medical school in Baghdad. He works and lives in Amman with his wife and two daughters. His wife, an anesthesiologist, came to Jordan with her family in 2006 when killings on identity in their Baghdadi neighborhood increased. They married in 2007 in Amman. When I met him he was working in one of the largest hospitals in Amman where he completed his specialty, on temporary contract basis, like most Iraqi doctors employed in Jordan. He also received resettlement to the US, but when he explored the possibilities of working in his profession, he found out that many of his friends who were trained as specialist physicians failed to find a job in their profession in the USA:

> I decided that I won't start from zero. At this stage, Iraq requires more specialists than ever, I will try to go back to invest my knowledge and expertise in Iraq, currently Erbil, my mother's home-town, seems like the safest area to practice my profession but I hope to return one day to Baghdad– where I grew up– when living and security conditions improve. Resettlement to a third country is not an option for me or for my wife. My best friends, both doctors who graduated from Baghdad could not find a position to practice their profession; one works in a super-market in the USA and he keeps changing jobs. The other, who was a surgeon, works as a butcher, he is making good money and decided to stay there where he could ensure better education opportunities for his children. I think that it is not enough to live but one has to live with dignity.

"Living with dignity" is another factor that Iraqi professionals were missing in their new places of survival among Amman, Baghdad and elsewhere. Dr. Tareq criticized the corruption and chaos in Baghdad when he described his wife's attempts to withdraw her certificates from the Ministry of Health. After several attempts of contacting officials to facilitate the mission, his wife had to pay 'formalized' bribes to get her certificate but was not able to obtain any recommendation letter or certificate of service. He described the bad situation which he observed in a recent visit to Baghdad while he was visiting family members and examining jobs announced in Iraqi hospitals as "unhealthy" and corrupt:

> In my visit in 2009, I witnessed the same bad conditions which I experienced upon graduation in the nineties during the time of *al-ḥiṣār* (UN economic sanctions). Worst is the living situation in Baghdad; in our old district al-Khadraʾa, our neighborhood changed completely and my family house was occupied by a Sunni family from another area. Baghdad looked like a wasteland and corruption prevailed, that is why I decided to move to my mother's city in Erbil where life is safer.

It was not always possible to return to Baghdad without risking one's life, Erbil, the capital city in Iraqi Kurdistan seemed like a better option for Dr. Tariq, who did not give up the idea of returning one day to Baghdad and like Professor Salim above his ambitions extended to gain a chance to contribute to improving the health conditions in his country: "Iraq provided me with free education and health services, I am hoping to return to serve my country as a specialist in nuclear medicine, and hope that one day my children will have similar opportunities to receive free quality education and good health services in their country, as I did."

-Shaima: an Iraqi student in Amman planning to return to work in Baghdad with her father, upon her graduation

Returning to work in Iraq was not restricted to former Iraqis who left during the 90s. Several Iraqi professionals who were forced to leave more recently considered return as a better option to improve their family well-being and extend their space of *ʾamān* in Jordan. However, this group of Iraqis (who left after 2005) could not return most of the time to their original home and neighborhood. This is what happened to Shaima's father, he is a surgeon physician, 51 years old. Shaima and her family left Baghdad in 2006 following the release of her father who was kidnapped on his way from the hospital to his house in al-Jadiriyah. His family had to pay a ransom of $ 30,000 for his release. Shaima's family fled immediately to Jordan. Her father spent two years unable to find a relatively stable job in Amman; the position he managed to get at a private hospital had been sponsored through a Jordanian physician but the salary was too low to provide for his family needs. He decided to return to the hospital in Baghdad where he was working and living at the time of my fieldwork.

Shaima, who told me her family story, was studying pharmacy in a private Jordanian university where I met her. Her father's job in Baghdad secured her study fees JD 1500 (US$ 2000) per semester; her biggest concern was that her chances of finding a job in Jordan upon graduation were quite limited:

> Last year 400 Iraqi students graduated from our university, half of them as pharmacists, none could find a job in Jordan. My father works hard to support my studies. I miss him a lot; he comes to visit us few days per month. I want to go to work in Iraq when I graduate but my father says that it is still unsafe.

Like Shaima, other Iraqi university students expressed similar worries of ending up as jobless in Amman. Some were hoping to gain a third country resettlement and migrate to live and

work abroad while others, like Shaima, were looking for a suitable time to return to Baghdad. Most of these students belong to families who enjoy relatively affluent living standards in Western Ammani neighborhoods.

-Um-Tai: unemployed engineer supported by her father, a medical doctor who returned to work in his tribal town in Iraq

The following description of my meeting with Um Tai— whose father like Shaima's father returned to work in Iraq— provides further details of the living conditions which more affluent Iraqi families could afford in Amman. I visited Um Tai in her owned apartment in Khalda (another affluent neighborhood in western Amman). Um Tai was 31 years old and she had worked as an interior design engineer in Baghdad. Being unemployed, it seemed that she used her skills and ideas to decorate her and other relatives' apartments in Amman. She welcomed me and my Iraqi friend Aseel in a big open hall which seemed to serve as a large living and guest room with a dining space in one corner and an American-style kitchen in the other. She invited us to sit in what she called the red corner: dark red leather sofas with black cushions, red and black carpet matching with a standing lamp and framed wall paintings with the same colors, while the opposite space was decorated in a zebra-color motif (a mixture of white and black). She asked if we would be interested to watch the video of the *ṭuhūr* (circumcision) party of her baby-boy who was seven-months-old:

> The circumcision operation was done in the clinic, but we celebrated the occasion the Iraqi way: early in the morning we had a sweet breakfast of *kahī* and *giyymar* **كاهي وقيمر** and *ḥalāwa dihīna* **حلاوة دهينة**. The family, relatives and friends joined us and *al-muṭahir* (the physician who did the circumcision) and *al-muzayyin* (the barber) were invited. The barber cut the baby's hair, we dressed him in white robe "*dishdāsha*" **دشداشة.** [On the large flatron TV screen fixed on the dark red painted wall facing us, we saw a crowd of people, women and men and kids clapping and singing alongside a group of musicians. She pointed at the little baby]. This is Tai and my husband. In Baghdad we usually organize a bigger *ṭuhūr* celebration and we sacrifice more than one sheep, a share is distributed among the poor, and we cook the other share and have a big meal for the friends, family and neighbors. [The guests, whom she said were her sisters and cousins who lived between Amman and Baghdad, were distributing money which she called **شوباش** (*Shubāsh*: she explained is a term used to refer to the contribution of gifts by guests). There was a big tray covered with shades of green and white]: The guests throw the money [gift] in the tray and it is divided among the musicians, the barber and *al-muṭahir* [the physician], and all guests are invited to eat lunch afterwards.

In what seemed as an attempt to distance her family from other so-called rich Iraqis who could be seen in expensive restaurants, hotels and shopping centers around, um-Tai criticized

how some Iraqis she met in Amman, were exaggerating in their celebrations by adding extra and unnecessary expenses to their occasions and consuming higher amounts of money. Compared to other Iraqis I met in eastern Amman, I thought that this exaggeration applied to her family as well. But she explained how odd it felt when they were invited to an engagement party, one week prior our meeting, at the Royal Hotel in Amman: "The mother of the bride had prepared a distinguished golden tray, the tray and the other materials were made of real gold, they placed it at the entrance of the party hall." Um-Tai mentioned cynically the show-off style among whom she described as "nouveau riche" Iraqis in Jordan; referring to the Iraqis who hold no university degrees and were "unknown" in Iraq, but suddenly grew visible among the Iraqi community in Amman as rich businessmen and investors.

Um Tai, who exerted an obvious effort during our meeting to distinguish her family from these nouveau riche Iraqi families– seemed quite settled in her spacious and heavily decorated apartment to the extent that I was surprised when she informed me of her decision to move to the USA through the UNHCR third country resettlement solution. She described her stay in Amman as a dull and boring life when compared to her memories of a beautiful Baghdad that had been destroyed. She showed us pictures of social gatherings and events in her spacious family garden in Baghdad and described how all the promises of a comfortable life disappeared when their life turned upside down after 2003:

> In Baghdad, my parents used to live in Zayouna [al-Rusafa side of Baghdad] and I lived in al-Qadisiyah [al-Karkh side of Baghdad]. Visiting my parents became a big terrifying mission, when you go out of your home in Baghdad you might be killed for any reason. I stopped driving because driving became dangerous for women; some women were killed in Baghdad just because they were caught driving. Once I almost got a heart attack when they shot very close to warn me against wearing pants. To visit my parents, we had to go through a journey of fear among concrete blocks, barriers and check-points where you did not know which identity to show if you were stopped.

Eventually Baghdad turned into a strange place, as described by this group of former upper-middle class professionals and state-bureaucrats. Um-Tai described how her parents' family and her own had made the final decision to leave in November 2006 when her father, a medical doctor, received more than one death threat, and her husband's store was attacked and robbed: "Our homes became like prisons, Iraqis are not used to this life, we enjoy social gatherings and are used to visit family and friends and eat out in restaurants and clubs." She explained that her father later decided to return to Baghdad to support their living expenses in

Jordan: “My father, Dr. Sabah, who was a famous surgeon in Baghdad, could not find a good job in Amman. He could no longer live in our family house in Zayouna; he returned to work in a private hospital outside Baghdad where he was protected by his tribe.” She explained that her father’s work helped provide for her sisters’ university education and the family’s expenses in Amman.

Well-being for this family of a qualified professional who returned to work in Iraq was perceived as the ability to work and live in relatively high standard conditions which allow them to share celebrations and happy moments the way they used to celebrate them in Iraq with their relatives and friends. This meant having access to resources and a larger space of *ʾamān* to enjoy the company of extended family members and friends. In general, they seemed more settled and at home in Jordan than the impoverished Iraqis I used to meet in rented small apartments in eastern Amman. However, unlike her parents who considered their stay in between Baghdad and Amman as the most reasonable possibility, um-Tai perceived her well-being elsewhere: “It is safe here and I like to stay close to my parents, but there are no chances to find work in the future.” Like Professor Balqees who was sharing the apartment with her retired parents to cut on expenses. Um-Tai explained that they were able to live well in Jordan, thanks to the support of her father with whom they share living expenses. I learnt that her parents owned an apartment in the lower floor of the same building with a small garden. Much smaller than their family garden in the pictures she showed of their Baghdadi houses.

Families like Um-Tai’s fled Iraq due to the changes imposed on former living conditions that had made them feel like strangers in Baghdad and reduced their well-being, in addition to the threats targeting her father, a famous surgeon. Their access to material and social capital—the money they brought from selling her husband’s business and properties in Baghdad and her father’s financial support from his work in the private hospital in Iraq in addition to her husband’s job, which he secured through his relatives who were running a private business in Amman—had enabled them to buy a house and enjoy good standards of living in Amman. However, she decided that she had to search for other possibilities to secure the well-being of her nuclear family in the future: “In Jordan, there is no future for my generation or my son’s generation, I do not expect to be able to find work here. Iraqis in Jordan are treated as foreigners, and they would always be restricted by the annual residence permit: Either you

pay the JD 50,000 (US$ 70,500) or you'll be crippled, even your car driving license is conditioned by the residence permit and you need a Jordanian sponsor's name to register it."

On our way out of Um-Tai's house, she pointed at the small green space in front of the entrance of the opposite building where an old woman was sitting on a white plastic chair: "Our Jordanian neighbor is a kind lady, she put this plastic chair for my mother who spends the evenings under the neighbors' palm trees." I looked at the three little palm trees standing at the entrance of the neighboring house opposite Um-Tai's building. Recently large and small palm trees had become a popular decorative plant in the streets of Amman, I do not remember seeing dates on them in any season; it seemed part of the fashion and keeping up appearances among the residents of western Amman areas who planted them in front of their houses' entrances, but for Um-Tai's mother, the palm trees were part of Baghdad to which she longed to return, they constituted a small space of *ʾamān* in her exile.

Well-being was partly associated with social relations among Iraqis and restoring the good old days of the past. For the older generation, this could be the familiar presence of objects, smell and people, as well as the ability to enjoy the social life they used to have in Iraq, as Um-Tai and other Iraqis expressed. The weight of loss among older Iraqis felt harder to release. I noticed that during home visits, where older people were present, they were usually the most silent. It was common to observe them listening silently to their story narrated by younger members of the family, while a vague non-expressive look would cover their faces: it seemed they were living in another world, less capable of coping with the conditions of strangeness in Jordan than those in Iraq. Some insisted on going back home, their house in Amman, even when they owned it did not feel like home. Some managed to survive economically thanks to their pension payments which were transferred from Iraq or to a skilled professional or younger member of the family who sent remittances from Iraq or elsewhere, but life was harder for those whose sources were diminishing, especially if sanctioned by both the Iraqi state and the programs of international organizations for being categorized as part of the former Baathist regime.

Well-being as perceived by Iraqi professionals in conditions of circular migration

I spent less time among these seemingly well-to-do families (like Um-Tai's) than the time I spent among impoverished Iraqi families in eastern Amman. However, the stories they tell

about their expulsion from Baghdad were similar to the ones told by Iraqis in the space of aid that will be my focus in the following chapter. For all of them they were stories of missing or murdered family members on sectarian claims or for reasons related to their profession, as in the case of Dr. Sharif and other professionals presented above. This rather more affluent group of Iraqis generally seemed more settled, and some could afford to purchase a house in affluent neighborhoods in western Amman. But the houses never became real homes, the Iraqis talked about them as 'guest houses'. The members of those households were living in these houses in Amman as foreigners; they paid for their daily stay and their children's education fees at private schools and universities and other living expenses. Well-being, as expressed by members of this relatively affluent group of Iraqi professionals was related to having access to jobs in their profession, better services and higher ability of consumption. In this, Amman was a better and safer place to be in than postinvasion Baghdad, with access to safety, health and education, and other basic services including electricity, freedom to move around and dress the way they pleased. The greatest part of the resources necessary to sustain these living expenses were provided through the financial support and remittances transferred by family members working inside Iraq or in the form of pension in the case of older family members.

I met professors, doctors and other qualified professionals from different generations who were thinking of going back to Baghdad they had been postponing their return due to lack of needed services as well as a lack of security. The dilemmas were summarized in one interview:

> I came to work in Jordan in 2002. I submitted a file with the UN and I had received an appointment for resettlement in the USA, but in the end this was not an option which I would consider. My options in Iraq as an academic after the government has passed the civil service law in 2005/2006 would be better, the salary scale had raised; the only problem today is lack of services and security.[32]

It is possible to find some similarities among the tactics adopted by these highly qualified professionals (upper-middle class urban Baghdadis) to cope, but in the absence of state employment and protection back in Iraq, each of them had to negotiate the best possible ways to achieve their well-being. Well-being as explained above is realized in relational terms; it is related to the well-being of their household members and sometimes to the wider Iraqi

[32] From an interview held on 24 November 2010 with an Iraqi academic, born in 1968, and moved to Amman in 2002.

society. According to professionals who could not return physically to Baghdad (like Professor Naim, Dr. Sharif and Dr. Omar), well-being and the space of *ʾamān* were perceived as creating a possibility of practicing their profession in Amman as volunteers or hired employees on temporary contract. They saw this choice as acceptable as it establishes some connection with their professional life and Iraq because they could treat Iraqi patients and teach Iraqi students. This compensated for low returns, and was considered better than the possibility of third country resettlement, where they expected to end up sitting alone at home.

In addition, perceptions of well-being among these highly qualified people varied according to their age and generation. Older highly skilled professionals, above 65, had experienced living abroad, as students or earlier employment, but now, considering their age, they realized that resettlement to a third country would mean inability to practice their profession. Thus, they decided to live and work in Amman or between Amman and Iraq. On the other hand, it was more common among the younger generation of skilled professionals, like Professor Balqees and Um-Tai (in their thirties) and Professor Waleed (early fifties) to think of migration and resettlement as the best possibility to move ahead in their personal and career life and to secure better future space(s) of *ʾamān* for their children. But there were few cases of highly qualified young professionals who still dreamed of returning to Iraq, as in the case of Dr. Tareq, who was in his late thirties and applied for a position in Erbil-Iraqi Kurdistan with the aim to assist in improving the health sector in Iraq. He liked to think of the well-being of his two small kids as gaining access to free and good quality education and health services as his generation and his parents' generation experienced in Baghdad during the 80s and 70s. He indicated that, eventually, he and his wife plan to search for jobs in Baghdad, when security conditions improve as they were before 2003 and state services and infrastructure would be restored, at least to their former levels, prior 1991.

For other Iraqi professionals who had less sources of financial support and who wanted to preserve their former life style as members of middle- and upper-middle class, going back to work in Iraq had been a solution some turned to despite the risks involved, especially when finding a job in Jordan had become too complicated. Chatty and Mansour described such a movement of Iraqis back and forth as an important mechanism for improving life opportunities and reducing family risk (2011: 104). According to my observations in the field, this was more common among professionals: academics, engineers and physicians, in

addition to politicians and businessmen as earlier research indicated (Roald, 2011). These professionals left Iraq initially because they were targeted under the pretext of belonging to a professional or sectarian group. They had either received a direct threat as a written notice with a bullet; or, loss and damage had been caused to the person, his relatives or possessions (see Baker and Ismail, 2010). This reality had to be considered when making choices about what to do.

Possibility 3- Working as 'de-valued professionals'- outside their fields of competence

The experiences of the third group of skilled Iraqis present cases of professionals who were not able to find opportunities to work in their former career and had to work instead in poorly paid jobs and sometimes degrading conditions. They are engineers, academics and doctors. Although they used to work as qualified professionals in their home country, in Jordan they had to accept any available work as secondary labor. Having less access to material resources and factional, sectarian or tribal support in Iraq, their economic conditions deteriorated and eventually some were forced to accept any available working task to increase their access to *ʾamān*.

Iraqi professionals with dwindling resources could not afford to live and work between Amman and Jordan. They had to learn how to accept the reductionist conditions in Jordan where they were constantly reminded that they are foreigners and strangers who should be polite, and watch the limits. One interesting case was an Iraqi nuclear engineer who eventually decided that it would be best to quit his former profession that was perceived as a dangerous profession. He decided to become an artist, with the aim to gain resettlement. In his late thirties, Firas seemed very enthusiastic about his new profession:

> My life changed two years ago, when I was invited to attend the opening of a painting exhibition by a friend-artist. I decided then that this would be my new profession. I knew an old Iraqi painter who had lost everything after the fall of the regime. I used to visit him in his small rented room in downtown Amman where he lives from selling his paintings. I was determined to learn painting and spent long hours daily watching him until I mastered the Art.

There was a big wall painting (almost 2x1 meters) hanging in the sitting room; the nuclear engineer-artist said that this was his latest work. I had already noticed the painting in the living room: a mixture of neatly arranged colors isolated by straight lines with a high dose of orange, which was also the color of the artist's sweater and the greater part of his furniture. I

could relate this painting more to his original profession than to any school of modern plastic arts. He seemed interested when I first told him about my research, but refused to talk until I put my notebook aside. He said that he was always fond of chemistry and physics and got an MSc in nuclear physics and worked in his profession for 11 years in both Baghdad and Libya, but he preferred not to talk much about the past saying that it was high time to move on and do something else. Firas used to spend his days working as a part-time volunteer in an international organization in Amman, but it was his painting work in the evenings which kept him busy and satisfied, as he explained. He was proud of one of his drawings which had won a prize from one of the international organizations, and was planning to run a big exhibition at the end of the year.

Unlike other Iraqis who attended training events and courses designed by aid providers to assist former Iraqi state bureaucrats and professionals to develop new skills that would help them establish their own small projects, this engineer arranged for his rehabilitation program alone by asking a former Iraqi artist and academic who used to teach Arts in the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad to teach him drawing. In the limited protection space offered by the UNHCR, Iraqis had to explore strategies and tactics to extend the constantly shrinking limits. In his attempt to expand the spaces of *ʾamān*, Firas decided to change his profession: “no foreign country would accept the resettlement of a former Iraqi nuclear engineer,” as he repeated.

The most difficult cases among former highly skilled professionals were those who did not have adequate access to resources from family members elsewhere and could not return to work in Iraq due to high threats to their lives. They had to learn how to extend their safety space by selling their skills and expertise to other junior professionals and students. Such as highly qualified Iraqi doctors who had to work under the sponsorship of junior Jordanian doctors and earn low wages.

I met an academic holding PhD in pharmacy, in her mid-forties. She complained that the Jordanian private university where she worked earlier did not renew her contract when she asked for an unpaid leave to proceed the difficult stages of her cancer treatment. She was not interested to share her story with a researcher when I met her and cynically mentioned that she can meet with me later if I could help support her next cancer treatment session. The limited support she could secure from different sources including her brother who lived

abroad and the UN cash assistance was not enough to cover the costs of her stay in Amman and pay for the expensive cancer treatment. So she started giving private courses in chemistry and mathematics for both school and university students for (JD 5-10 per hour; which equal US $7-14), in addition to writing assignments for university students who pay her JD 20 (US $ 28) per assignment. After working as a university professor for years, she had to turn to limited aid provided by international and local organizations including an Iraqi welfare association which provides support for cancer patients.

Another Iraqi woman, a doctor, 43 years old, who used to work as a medical researcher in a governmental project, designed to examine the devastation caused by depleted uranium (DU) weapons used against Iraq during the 1991 US-led Gulf war. When I met her, she described angrily the serious threats which she experienced in Iraq after 2003, including the rape of her 13-year-old daughter. Being a general practitioner in medicine, she failed to find any good-paid jobs in her profession as a medical doctor in Amman. Using her former research experience and writing skills, she could do irregular academic writing tasks, in which she sold her copy-right for the books and research papers she composed on behalf of academic medical students and doctors teaching at Jordanian Universities. The largest amount of money she received per book was JD 500 (US $ 700) and sometimes she was only paid JD 200 (US $ 280). She explained her reluctance to contact the UN for aid: "The last thing I wanted to do in my life was approaching the UN who were involved in destroying my country." However, when her conditions deteriorated, she was advised to contact the UNHCR for assistance. But she was told that in her case resettlement was a weak possibility, due to her involvement in the DU weaponry research as she told me: "I had to turn to them to protect my children, they give us JD 160 (US $ 225) as cash assistance but resettlement is out of question, because I worked for the regime of my country, if I worked with the Americans I would have been eligible. I would do anything to secure better future for my daughters, who might be eligible for resettlement. It would be painful to live separated but they have no future prospects to find good education or a job here even if they manage to complete their education."

Possibility 4 – Searching for *ʾamān* in Europe and Jordan- The experience of Lutfiya al-Dulaimi, an Iraqi author

The chaos in Baghdad gradually spread, deterring many possibilities Baghdad's inhabitants had known in their former lives. Al-Badr brigade militia published online a death threat with list of names of authors, artists and journalists who were still living in Iraq. Lutfiya al-Dulaimi's name was on the list.

Lutfiya al-Dulaimi, is an author who has dedicated her life to writing and has published 30 books including fiction, drama and literary essays. She was 67 years old when she had to learn how to live a new life as a refugee in Paris. In December 2010, I met her at a publishing house in Amman. We had an interesting conversation about her life in Jordan and asylum experience in Paris. Following the meeting, I asked if I could interview her for the purpose of my research. She did not mind but preferred to put her responses in writing. She wrote about her recent experience living in between Amman and Paris, and much less about her former Baghdadi life. The longest part was about her asylum period in Paris which she described as the hardest stage of her life:

> A sudden, strange and completely groundless stage of my life for which I was not prepared. I felt as if being struck violently on my head to fall into an endless cycle of dizziness. I used to lead a good and relatively stable life in Baghdad; in my home: a large two-storey house with a lovely garden. I had a driver who used to assist me. I spent my early mornings taking care of the flowers and other plants in the garden where I liked to eat my breakfast in front of a beautiful fountain while listening to music. Then I would be ready to start my daily tasks of writing from eight a.m. till two p.m. in my spacious home library that faces the garden. I enjoyed my solitude at home and the only times I left my house were to prepare the new issue of the cultural magazine that I was editing. Halā is a periodical journal published every two months, concerned with texts on place and space. I prepared the fourth issue and it was ready for print before I left Baghdad in 2006.

In my meeting with her, she told me that she had come to visit her daughter who had settled in Amman in 2005 following an attempted kidnapping of her husband. Al-Dulaimi's plan was to return to Baghdad in a week's time. However, this was in February 2006 when the explosion of Samarra mosque turned Baghdad into a sectarian killing zone. Her friends and relatives in Iraq advised her to stay in Amman for a while as her district, al-Amiriya, had turned into a battleground, as she described:

> I waited for the situation to improve, but the sectarian killings increased and al-Qaida entered the neighborhood. I submitted an application to the Jordanian authorities for opening an office for Halā Journal in Amman, but the authorities refused. In the summer of 2006, I received the news from Baghdad that the American Marines accompanied with Iraqi armed forces were searching house-to-

> house in al-Amiriya and since my house was locked, they smashed the doors down and broke into it. They crashed the computer and the piano and destroyed the library and broke the antiques and dispersed our family photo albums and the clothes. When some of the neighbors tried to stop the destruction by telling them that the house belongs to a well-known author, the soldiers screamed at them: “Shut up, you are all terrorists.” I arranged with one of my relatives to repair the doors and lock the house, and he arranged later for relatives to stay in the house to protect it from an Islamic militia who wanted to accommodate the families of *mujāhidīn* (fighters) there.

Lutfiya al-Dulaimi was attending a conference in Paris when she and other authors were threatened by an Iraqi parliament member from one of the religious parties. It was then that she first thought to apply for asylum in France and is “when a new stage of my life started” to use her words. She describes her experience as a refugee in Paris as a big disaster. She would stand in the long queue with other refugees from six o’clock in the morning till four o’clock in the afternoon to renew her monthly residence permit: “I was standing in the rain trying to be patient, but soon my tears would fall when I remembered how my life had been turned upside down. I was lost and did not know what to do, having been deprived of my Iraqi passport after getting myself stuck with asylum and refugee applications; as a refugee applicant I had no documentation except a temporary residence permit with my number on it. I was reduced to a mere number. I cried every night until my left eye started bleeding and they refused to treat it because I had no medical insurance.

The French authorities did not care. I was invited by several French TV stations to present information about the Arabic and Islamic culture according to a discourse that presents Arabs and Muslims as backward or even terrorists. I refused to be used by the media to serve others’ interests and discourses; I refused to allow them to take advantage of my critical situation and force me to attack my culture and memories.

Getting a permanent residence for ten years did not make it easier for her: “what can I do spending ten years in France without accommodation or passport?” She described the pain she had gone through in her attempts to find a room to rent. In the end, she rented a room on the eighth floor in a far suburb of Paris which she preferred to the room she had been offered to rent in a shelter for sick old people in Paris. She used to leave her rented apartment in the suburb in the mornings and spend two hours commuting to school where she attended lessons to learn French language: first she had to take a bus, then a train and finally the metro to reach the House of Journalists in Paris where she attended French language lessons. Every

evening she would take the same journey back to her rented room in the Parisian suburb, until the day when she was attacked by three men who pushed her, one trying to steal her laptop and another pulling her handbag. She was screaming when they managed to grab the laptop and run. An Algerian man intervened to help her and called the police. The police officer informed her that this was not an uncommon incident, especially in that suburb where they recorded 15 criminal cases daily. She spent the rest of her second year in Paris moving from one friend's house to another while they were away to take care of their pets. She was cut off from her previous routine and life with no time to write and without a valid travel document. Her visa applications to attend cultural events in Qatar and Egypt were turned down because she had a refugee passport:

> Finally, I decided to put an end to this hell, it was on the day when we, as refugees, were invited to attend an event by the Migration and Integration Department to prepare us to integrate in the French society, another experience with racism to add to previous experiences that are too many to mention and I do not want to remember them now. I went to the Jordanian Embassy in Paris and they promised that the visa would be ready in two weeks. I was so happy when I got the visa. I carried only one of my bags which I had already packed and kept the rest of my things with friends. I had to save my soul and couldn't believe it when the airplane took off from Charles de Gaulle airport and flew to al-Aqaba airport, it felt as if I had been saved from a death sentence in the last moment.

To my question about how she thought of being in Amman, she replied:

> I consider myself a migrant in a homeland where I was offered residence and *ʾamān* after living through unbelievable suffering. My soul settled here and because I feel secure in a familiar place I have managed to publish two books in two years and I am working on a third one. I cannot return to Iraq and I will never think of it although I left all my belongings there. My children are in exile and I have no one in Iraq except a few friends who visit Amman every now and then. My daughter and many of my friends live here and I can write freely and leave my home anytime and meet with friends whenever I want. I prefer to spend most of my time alone to be able to work and write. For many years, homeland was a real hell, even before the US-led occupation, but after 2003 the hell turned into an inferno. The European exile was a disaster and it felt like another hell, I managed to find the cure from the emotional idea of homeland. My homeland is the place where I can live with dignity, and where I feel secure and respected. Homeland becomes sometimes an enslaving concept that forces us to behave in a sick fetishism: I have escaped this state when I decided to deal with the idea of homeland in a different logic. I have not abandoned Iraq; I write in an Iraqi newspaper for Iraqi readers and I am interested in the Iraqi cause and constantly address its problems through my writings. I am always in contact with my friends in Iraq. But in the end: writing became my homeland and Amman is the house of this homeland. I worked in the worst conditions and have tasted the bitterness of life in Iraq and France; I learned to live in *ʾamān* and to accept the life of ascetics with dignity and writing.

Loss -of balance -of daily routine and -of dignity is another bitter taste of the asylum experience. Establishing a space of *ʾamān* in the above long story that this well-known Iraqi author shared with me was linked to restoring the balance and life routine that Lutfiya al-Dulaimi used to enjoy in her former Baghdadi life. Amman in this case offered her greater potential to stay in contact with her networks of readers and friends and most importantly to save her dignity through writing despite the poor living conditions compared to her former life in Baghdad.

Lutfiya al-Dulaimi's painful experience of exile in Paris force us to rethink asylum in a global age. Globalization, among its supporters, promises an era of increased prosperity and decreased obstacles to the movement of capital, information and people. According to this prescription– the dominant account of globalization– mass displacement of people is likely to become less significant and the tragedies of refugees in the twentieth century will be remembered as a mark of the tortured decades that preceded a new era. As Marfleet, using various examples from the European Union, states in Refugees in a Global Era: The more that the world system fails to conform to the model of growth and global harmony, the more eager are those in authority to displace responsibility onto the victims of conflict and social breakdown. Refugees are reviled and rejected, becoming the focal point of campaigns through which they are made to carry more and more of the historic burden of racism (2006: 2-5). Matthew Price tells us that there are over nine million refugees recognized by the UNHCR in the world. Only a small fraction of these refugees receive asylum in western states; the vast majority are unable to make their way to Europe or North America where they would be able to apply. Asylum, therefore, neglects those refugees who arguably need protection the most: those who lack the resources and mobility to remove themselves from the zone of danger (2009: 12).

Gaining refugee status and resettlement in a third country seemed like the most practical choice for Iraqis who did not have other means to support themselves and their families in Jordan. Iraqis who have remained well-connected and networked with relatives at home and elsewhere have learnt from those who had already got refugee status that one should not expect to keep the professional and family status he and she owned in their homeland: "To be offered a new homeland, gives one a place to be. But these achievements do not guarantee respect and dignity, and a certain yearning persists", as Knudsen describes the experiences he

observed among Vietnamese refugees in Norway (2005: 21). Dignity is what Lutfiya al-Dulaimi could not feel in her Parisian asylum but managed to regain through writing in Jordan, as she expressed.

During my fieldwork in 2010-2011, I met other Iraqis who had registered with the UNHCR and gained resettlement to the USA, but chose to return after spending several months in what was supposed to be their new home. Some blamed the US resettlement system which did not provide adequate assistance equal to the European System. Others complained that they did not have families or friends to help them start a new life in the USA. A third group simply felt insecure raising their children in a society with different values.

Losing one's professional status and dignity was another concern among highly qualified Iraqi professionals. This sense of loss did not only result from losing one's material belongings, it felt painful and hard when one thought of the reduction in his/her social status or symbolic capital. Back in Baghdad, Iraqis were members of various professional, highly skilled state employees and social networks. Today in Amman or elsewhere, they have been reduced to foreigners or alien individuals struggling to survive between Iraq and Jordan or waiting to become refugees in a third state.

Moving between different labels and places

Most of the highly skilled professionals and state-bureaucrats I interviewed belonged to middle aged and older generation Iraqis, those aged from 40-80. Most of them completed their university graduate studies abroad (in European Universities), and benefitted from the Iraqi government system of fellowship. In Jordan, they had to go through a longer coping process to create their space(s) of *ʾamān*. While some would contemplate returning to Iraq (Professor Salim and Dr. Tareq), or gain resettlement in a third country (Professor Balqees and Professor Waleed), others, like Dr. Omar (whose case opened the Introductory chapter) and Dr. Sharif (in this chapter), who were both well-known medical doctors among Iraqis I met in Jordan, preferred to stay in Jordan in connection with their Iraqi patients, as long as their lives are threatened inside Iraq. This applies as well to Lutfiya al-Dulaimi who went through a longer journey to decide that, at her age, being close to her readers in Jordan and Iraq allowed her more space— than the space she could gain by becoming a refugee in France— to feel safe while being able to write and publish.

Bourdieu's metaphor of "cutting one's coat according to one's cloth" can be seen in the complex practices adopted by these Iraqi professionals, through the various labels they tended to use to describe their presence in Jordan. Dr. Sharif who chose to work temporarily as volunteer instead of accepting the UNHCR solution of resettlement in the USA described his presence in Jordan as a 'fugitive' and Dr. volunteer rather than a refugee. While Professor Naim who could secure a temporary job at a private Jordanian university with reduced academic roles but increased interest in reading and writing poetry, described his condition as an Iraqi living in exile, which reminded me of the Lebanese poets of exile in the early twentieth century. These Iraqi professionals were aware of the reductionist conditions of displacement that had turned them from highly skilled professionals in Iraq to volunteers or 'fungible' workers in Jordan, however they did not passively accept these conditions, as observed in the field, most of them acted as agents in "a complex relation to the possible." Dr. Sharif, in his seventies, while denied a position as academic, tried to prolong his professional life by working as a volunteer doctor, while he kept the refugee label as a reserve strategy of *ʾamān* (in case the conditions change in Jordan). Professor Naim, at the age of 63, could still find an academic position at a Jordanian private university, where his former role as dean and researcher was reduced to teaching, yet he managed to extend this role by establishing contact with Iraqi academics through distance learning and academic research and curriculum-design cooperation.

Unlike younger professionals such as Professor Balqees and Waleed, who considered resettlement to a third state, and Dr. Tareq and Professor Salim, who planned to return to work in Iraq, for Dr. Omar and Dr. Sharif their choices were restricted within the possible limits of what they perceived as the best choice. They made a decision to stay in Amman as long as they could afford living there. For them *ʾamān* was related on the one side to self-actualization by preserving one's former social status and career that would not be possible if these professionals accepted to resettle abroad, and on the other side, the well-being of these Iraqi doctors (and other cases of professionals presented in this chapter) is relational; related to the well-being of other fellow Iraqis. As elaborated by Jackson (2011) and al-Mohammad (2015), well-being is related to their ethical commitment to share *ʾamān* with others; family members, friends and fellow Iraqis. At this moment, the option of taking up voluntary work or working in low-paid jobs seemed essential for these physicians as they perceived their well-being in relation to the well-being of sick Iraqis who required urgent medical assistance.

Their intention to help was achieved by prolonging their stay in Jordan. Both physicians were aware of the limitations of this possibility, as they explained that one is not supposed to exploit the space of protection in Jordan beyond its limited capacity. In their attempts to extend *ʾamān*, Iraqis, like Dr. Sharif and Dr. Omar could fill the little vacant spaces that were less attractive to local Jordanians in terms of salary or the type of work or employment benefits.

In general, Iraqis belonging to the older generation who had been part of the state bureaucracy during the sixties and seventies and had contributed to the construction of the modern Iraqi state referred to deeper levels of loss. In the stories of Iraqis from this older generation, Iraq is presented as a place linked to high cultural and educational opportunities and a secular life style where Iraqis from different religions and sects could enjoy free education, rewarding employment opportunities and live a rather good life in inter-mixed institutions and neighborhoods. Such a vision was less present in the stories of younger generations about the late eighties and nineties. They grew up during wartime and had to witness the decline in Iraqi educational and cultural life, health services and infrastructure during the 90s, and the politicization of sectarianism in Iraqi neighborhoods and government after 2003, eventually migration seemed more appropriate solution for the majority of younger professionals.

The individual cases presented in Chapter Three bring us to the issue of possibilities which agents create in conditions of increasingly restricted opportunities. Former Iraqi qualified professionals had to learn how to find a space to work with several structural problems resulting from the decline in state development programs and eventual destruction of state institutions. The cases present various levels of constraints these professionals had to deal with in their attempts to identify possibilities to work in Jordan, Iraq and elsewhere after 2003. Eventually they had to adjust to the new conditions, and work in jobs that were below their level of education and expertise.

Making a space of *ʾamān* in the long run, with dwindling resources, many times involved the strategy of sacrificing one's former role as professional, father, or mother. As presented in the two cases within the third group above, the doctor and pharmacist-academic who had to sell their skills and knowledge in the cheapest private market, while the young engineer decided to quit his former profession as nuclear engineer (that might harm his migration file) hoping

to gain better chances as an artist. These professionals seemed to have less chances to extend their well-being by practicing their former jobs, they had to learn how to work within reduced limits or what Jackson described as "the ethic of living within limits rather than struggling to transcend them" (2011: 150).

The ethnographic details in this chapter presented part of the complexity involved in the decisions and choices Iraqi professionals considered to extend their space(s) of *ʾamān* and well-being. There are multiple factors involved that are usually ignored by international organizations in their decisions to classify asylum seekers running from war. The details of the cases described above indicate how individual Iraqis— in the absence of a collective body to govern their protection in Amman and Baghdad— had to consider complex choices for survival including circular migration and going back to work in Iraq under the protection of one's tribe or sectarian faction. Earlier experiences with wars and survival during economic sanctions seemed like points of reference that Iraqis appropriated in their search to make their spaces of *ʾamān* after 2003. In his study of warscapes in another troubled region (Africa), Lubkemann found similar trends:

> "Warscapes and other crisis contexts are full of individuals who decide to stay, to resist, and to risk the worst consequences, making choices that to outside analysts seem "self-evidently" the worst ones to make. Yet far from demonstrating poor judgment, such choices usually demonstrate that the terms in which warscape inhabitants evaluate and interpret their life circumstances differ in substantial ways from those of the analysts who theorize their behavior. […] Rather, war-time movement reflected the complex ways in which warscape inhabitants sought to realize culturally imagined life projects and negotiate the meaning and configuration of social relations as socially positioned and differentiated actors" (2008, 20-21).

One of the strategies observed among this group of qualified Iraqi professionals in their attempts to deal with their expulsion from their former jobs in Iraq on the one hand and the lack of job opportunities in Jordan on the other hand, was to keep a low profile in the public space and increase one's professional role through private channels. Keeping a low profile in the public space was the first step in extending their space of *ʾamān*; several Iraqi professionals, like Professor Naim, Dr. Sharif, Dr. Sabah (um-Tai's father) and Shaima's father tried actively to pursue their careers by extending the limits to practice their professions between Amman and Iraq, and using the tactic of keeping a low profile or what they described as 'politeness' in the often repeated phrase shared by Iraqis in Jordan: "stranger be polite." Being a "polite" worker— in both Jordan and postinvasion Iraq— means

to stay within the shrinking limits that govern foreign workers, while their "stranger" position, i.e. not being defined strictly as refugees or asylum-seekers with clear rights and entitlements allowed them more space to constantly negotiate their limited conditions of existence and explore other ways to expand their spaces of *ʾamān* among different labels.

Personal achievements and well-being, especially among the older generation of Iraqi professionals were presented as part of their hopes to enhance their country health infrastructure, in addition to realizing their personal professional and material aspirations. As indicated by Professor Naim and Dr. Tareq, they tended to perceive their employment and academic training in Baghdad (or abroad funded by former Iraqi governmental scholarship) as part of building a strong and modern nation-state. This was not restricted to Iraqis who had left Iraq recently. Some of the academics and medical doctors, like Professor Salim and others had come to Jordan in 1990s to escape the harsh conditions of *al-ḥiṣār*; they too complained that their possibilities to work as qualified academics in Jordan were shrinking every year and turned to search for ways to return to work in Iraq.

In their positions as 'stranger workers' in Jordan, these Iraqis were careful with how they operated in public spaces. This was part of a strategy of self-protection and a protection of their ability to extend their *ʾamān* potentials. Thus Professor Naim kept a low-profile as he was advised to do in order to keep his job at the Jordanian university. His academic work was reduced to giving the required lecturing hours without further tasks, to avoid any unnecessary confrontations with students, their parents or the Jordanian university administration. Yet, he did what he called "serious academic work" from home by working from a distance with Iraqi academics and universities to assist in developing their teaching and research programs.

On the other hand, Shaima's father and Dr. Sabah, decided to take the risk and return to Baghdad as an option to work in their profession and ensure more rewarding employment conditions and higher standards of living for their families in Amman. Dr. Sabah, formerly a famous surgeon in Baghdad could not return to his house and neighborhood in Baghdad, instead he moved to work in a private hospital in his original town in Iraq, where he was protected by his tribal family. Similarly, Professor Salim was counting on his "Sunni wife's family and good neighbors protection" to return to his house in Baghdad in a neighborhood re-populated with a majority of Sunnis after 2003, while he relied on his sectarian affiliation as a Shia; he expected that being a Shii academic would be safer than being Sunni academic

in Iraq today. Shaima's father, however, had no access to factional, sectarian or tribal protection, and he kept a lower profile by choosing to live as a stranger or foreign migrant worker, in the Iraqi hospital where he used to work before. For all three, they were living as "polite strangers", in lower-profile than their previous status, whether in Amman or in Iraq.

Working conditions in Jordan were better during 1990s, as Iraqi academics were paid according to the Jordanian academic scale taking into consideration their former expertise and qualifications. With the acceleration of privatization and the opening of several private universities in Jordan, many non-Jordanian academics were dismissed from governmental universities, despite the role they played in establishing some colleges in the fields of engineering, medicine and other scientific fields. Following the 2003 war, former Iraqi professors who were employed at Jordanian governmental universities had to move to work in private universities on temporary contract basis.

Generational differences affected the decisions of these Iraqi qualified workers concerning their current and future professional plans, when it comes to their different perceptions of their past and future well-being and their access to resources. However, in cases of increasing impoverishment, the distinctive patterns were less clear in the attempts observed among members of the older and younger generations to locate employment opportunities after 2003. The generations concerned here are the older generation of professionals who had joined the state bureaucracy during the sixties and seventies and those who graduated and were employed by the Iraqi government during the late eighties and nineties and the younger generation who were born during the 1980s.[33] The processes to negotiate the terms of survival were more related to their professional specialization, personal experiences with state destruction and the ensuing losses (and gains) they and their families had experienced during the last four decades than generational differences; Iraqis from the same generation learnt to handle losses in different ways depending on their access to material and social capital inside and outside Iraq, and their perceptions of well-being.

In their attempts to expand the limited space of protection provided by international organizations, these displaced Iraqi professionals merged all available sources from their local and global networks. Having access to material and/or symbolic capital made Iraqis

[33] In their studies of various features of Iraqi society, Khoury (2013), Davis (2005) and Campbell (2016) use another classification by distinguishing between the revolution generation and the war generation.

look ‘less vulnerable’ than the exemplary vulnerable victims who would ‘normally’ deserve the UNHCR support. To answer my question about the discrepancies between the high numbers of Iraqi “refugees” announced by the Jordanian government in donor conferences and the low numbers of Iraqis who had actually registered in the UNHCR, the UNHCR spokeswoman responded that: “Iraqis are resourceful.”

The cases presented in this chapter show that this is not a special talent or ability restricted to Iraqis. In the absence of formal protection programs, Iraqis who had been successful professionals and state-employees in Baghdad had to learn how to be resourceful, through complex and risky processes of negotiations, in order to extend their spaces of *ʾamān* within the limited structures created by the new conditions of war and the absence of the Iraqi state with its oppressive and protective apparatus. They gradually realized that their educational and professional capital was no longer transferable or valuable as it used to be perceived during the state semi-socialist development plan in 1960s-1980s. The possibility to live as Iraqi professionals who were excluded from the new Iraq was associated with being able to practice their profession and making good living. What made it easier for some of these highly skilled professionals is that they had more access to capital through an indirect relationship with Iraq, which enabled them to act as agents exploring new potentials of existence in Jordan by becoming volunteer workers or turning to a latent talent or becoming a migrant worker in one’s former home country.

As explored in the various cases, several factors were involved in the decisions of these Iraqi families to stay in Amman, or return to work and live between Iraq and Jordan and/ or wait for resettlement. One of the important factors include: former experiences with state rise and decline, ethnic and sectarian affiliation, access to financial resources and social connections in Amman and Baghdad, and access to symbolic capital. The former experiences of learning to live with structural change affected these professionals’ choices and the decisions they made. This will become clearer in the next chapter which explores other means of survival among impoverished and less affluent Iraqis in the limited formal space of protection in Amman.

Chapter Four

Iraqis stuck in Amman: On the conditions of '–lessness' and how to be 'most vulnerable/ eligible for aid' in the formal space of protection

1.
Um Muhammad, the fortuneteller,
the woman from whose thin neck
dangles what initially appears to be a necklace,
but is nothing but a black leather pouch.

2.
She said it contains a handful of the homeland's dirt.
She sat on a stone bench,
at the Hashimiyya Square, in Amman,
with thousands of others,
waiting for a visa, to any country.

3.
She said that when
she crossed the border,
she knew that she might never see it
again in this world.

4
Therefore, she will carry it,
like a yoke, wherever she ends up.
Wherever she ends up,
she will carry this black pouch of dirt.

by Sargon Boulus[34]

*"To attract money, refugees must be **visible**"* (emphasis in original)
-Harrell-Bond (1986: 8)

In 2010-2011, when I did my fieldwork, Iraqis were still crossing the border from Iraq to Jordan, officially termed as 'guests', 'Arab fellows' or 'Iraqi brothers' when mentioned in governmental reports and local media. In reports from UNHCR and their partners, they were labeled as 'asylum seekers' or 'certified refugees'. In academic reports and also reports from various NGO institutions they were referred to by the terms 'exiles' and also 'refugees'. I observed how Iraqis, in the process of creating their spaces of *ʾamān*, constantly had to negotiate among these different labels and the realities they implied. While, as we saw in the former chapter, affluent Iraqis were able to buy residency permits, which secured them rights to reside, work, travel and gain access to public and private services in Jordan, those who could not afford these services found themselves in limbo, with no legal status, no jobs, and little to no health care or (higher) education for their children.

[34] From 'Azma Ukhra li-Kalb al-Qabila (Another Bone for the Tribe's Dog) by Sargon Boulus (Beirut/Baghdad: Dar al-Jamal, 2008). Translated by Sinan Antoon.

Iraqi women and men, who were like Um-Muhammad in Sargon Boulus' poem, seeking *ʾamān* in Amman, or waiting to move ahead in search of *ʾamān* elsewhere through a visa, smugglers' services or the UNHCR's assistance to resettle in a third country. Many of them were running from war conditions, while they carried memories from home that was no longer safe, "like a yoke", that accompanies them in their search for other possibilities to live according to their perceptions of well-being.

In this chapter I leave the explicit focus on individuals with a professional competence as part of their adaptive resources, and look at other Iraqis who possess fewer individual resources and therefore also had difficulties in earning their own living. This group had different experiences from the experiences of the professionals I presented in Chapter Three. A major difference was the fact that these Iraqis were seeking to obtain the status of 'refugee' which meant that they would belong within the 'formal protection space' organized and run by the UNHCR and other aid organizations. The positions of formal asylum seekers or refugees were obtained by different strategies. I observed how they did their best to prove that they were eligible to the rights and benefits provided by the UNHCR system. The aim was clearly to qualify first as an 'asylum seeker' and, more importantly, to qualify to the status of 'refugee' eligible for protection and resettlement in a third country. But to succeed the person had to be classified among the 'most vulnerable'.

As we know by now, other Iraqis made different choices. They seemed to ignore the formal UNHCR protection systems, such as in the cases presented in Chapter Three. Several highly skilled Iraqi professionals relied on their own resources. Others gave up on UNHCR after several experiences of interviews in which they realized that they did not have much to gain by engaging with those systems. In such cases the people involved turned to explore other possibilities of making their *ʾamān* space. But in all cases that I observed Iraqis were struggling to understand and learn how to respond to this complexity of labels that were applied to govern their presence in Jordan. Whatever happened to them, the one thing they understood was that in Jordan they were and would remain 'strangers'.

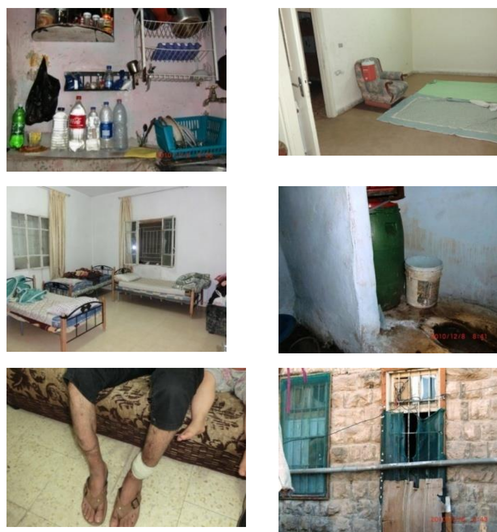
This variation in the understanding of the labels assigned to Iraqis in Jordan also implied that they were treated in different ways, according to the different bureaucratic and political rules and regulations that applied to the different terms. In the context of this chapter my focus is on those who carried the label of 'refugee' which also meant that the term "-lessness"

becomes particularly relevant. In general, and as indicated in the title of the chapter, I use the term "-lessness" to express a situation of reduction in being. Obviously –lessness is a suffix, and as explained in the introductory chapter it is a common suffix used in the terminology of refugee-related literature: homelessness, statelessness, powerlessness, helplessness, speechlessness, hopelessness, rootlessness, rightlessness, meaninglessness and other such terms which describe human existence in conditions of reduction.

The current chapter is an ethnographic attempt to understand how this -lessness and reduction in being and well-being is reproduced in the encounter of 'refugees' with humanitarian aid in the case of Iraqis in Jordan. This -lessness is one stage of what I will call the ontological conditions of reduction in well-being that the majority of Iraqi professionals and state bureaucrats had to undergo in the long years of wars, economic sanctions and forced displacement, though some experienced more losses than others. As indicated in the former chapter, some members of the relatively affluent professionals had failed to continue working in their former professions. Such a failure could result in a process of economic decline that landed them in a situation in which they felt compelled to enter the formal protection space to be discussed in this chapter. To do this they joined many other poorer Iraqis who also tried to be accepted as refugees to become eligible for the UNHCR limited aid and protection services. For them all this implies that they joined a "race to the bottom", meaning that they all had to present themselves as 'poorer than the poorest Jordanians' to be eligible for the cash assistance and other in-kind and financial aid in Jordan. While resettlement in a third country, which became the aim of many impoverished Iraqis was limited to only a few who had to enter through formal screening and selection process to determine their eligibility for this solution. This increased the waiting time in the transit for many Iraqis, who had to learn how to deal with economic deprivation, because of the rules and restrictions which did not allow these groups of Iraqi former professionals and state employees to take up any legal employment in Jordan. The tension produced by this situation led to feelings of insecurity and lack of *ʾamān* among Iraqis, in addition to rising frustration among both Iraqis and aid workers as expressed in the spread of rumors about future possibilities for employment (Chapter 5).

House-visits and the production of –lessness

I start this chapter with some visual images of –lessness, to move on to explore ethnographically the complexities involved in managing humanitarian aid by referring to cases from my informal observations and formal meetings with aid organizations' workers.



While in the field, there were many cameras around capturing the faces and places of Iraqis in various states of –lessness. The pictures above were taken by a private aid organization and distributed through a mailing list to potential donors. Such images of -lessness of Iraqis were not made visible in the public space but they were presented in fundraising campaigns, during donors meetings and in the correspondence between institutions involved illustrating what was to be meant by the category of 'most vulnerable'.

To support the 'most vulnerable' Iraqis, the UNHCR and its partner organizations (international and local NGOs, local community centers including a few private initiatives) developed what is termed as an 'outreach service' with the aim of helping Iraqis get access to healthcare, education, training for income generation skills, legal protection, and other in-kind services and cash donations. In order to evaluate who should be accepted into the formal 'protection space', the outreach service initiated the 'house-visit' as a key mechanism in their methodology for selecting who should get support. I was present during several visits to Iraqi households observing both new arrivals, and families and individuals who had spent years waiting in Jordan for an improvement in their situation.

The house-visit (*ziyāra manziliyya*) was usually conducted by a volunteer who was her/himself an Iraqi and who was paid for this type of activity a minimal monthly wage ranging between (JD 160 – 250, approximately US $ 225-350). The paid-volunteers (generally called volunteers) collected data to fill the forms they were asked to complete by the relevant organization they worked for. During the house visits some of the volunteers represented more than one organization and would fill in more than one questionnaire/report. In addition, they also usually took pictures to support the data in their written reports.

Pictures were important evidence to document the house-visit. Iraqis were sometimes told by the volunteers that: "The photos will be added to the visit report and support your need for assistance." I noticed that some volunteers focused on capturing the faces of the household members, while others took pictures of some details that showed visible signs of need among household members. Volunteers rarely bothered to explain why they would have to take pictures and Iraqis did not ask either. Actually, the house-visit evolved in ways that gave me the impression that everybody knew what roles they were supposed to perform, as if they were on a stage, in this case the stage of aid.

Iraqis knew that in order to be considered for the 'cash emergency assistance'— what is commonly called by most Iraqis in the field as 'salary/ *rātib'*— they would have to provide 'strong' or 'well-founded' evidence(s) of need. And volunteers, who were most of the time Iraqis, knew that in order to receive their remuneration (which they also called salary/ *rātib*), they would have to submit complete reports with consistent data on the families under consideration.

Again, the photos played an important role. It was commonly accepted that the strongest evidence is the evidence that can be presented in the most visible way. For instance, during one of the home visit I observed, a father who called his 15-year old son and lifted up his shirt:

> Look what they did to him. They [he referred to one of the several sectarian militia groups in Baghdad] sent us a threatening letter to leave our home in Baghdad. In the beginning, I did not consider it a serious threat. They kidnapped my daughter and we never found her, she did not come back and we still have heard nothing about her till today, God only knows what happened to her! [He hands a paper to the volunteer, with eyes full of tears] This is my story, in detail; there are things that I cannot tell in front of everyone. They came again. In the

> second time, they tried to kidnap my son […] no, not to kidnap him; they wanted to kill him, openly, in the daytime. He stepped out from our home door, they pulled him, tightened his body with a rope to the back of their Jeep-car and dragged him for miles. The rope, it seemed, was not strong and was cut. Our neighbors rescued him. Every part in his body was torn, we did not expect him to live after this incident, but here he is, still alive and half insane.

The volunteer asked if he could take pictures of those parts of the boy's body, the legs and the chest where the skin was severely damaged. He got the permission and he reassured the Iraqi man by telling him: "you have a good case here."

The above pictures do not differ much in their -lessness from the images that pop up on the screen if we do a simple online search. When one types the word 'refugee', the image section of the search engine will show pictures of people, both in groups and as individuals, especially women and children, in what seems to be a constant display of –lessness. The images create an instant impression of people in need of help, and stands in stark contrast to the look of Angelina Jolie, the Hollywood actress who is one of the UNHCR special celebrity envoys. Her photos appear alongside the photos of the refugees, thus adding to the effect of the photographs.[35] Photos taken in refugee situations anywhere, at different times, all express a similar story, a story of –lessness. Taken together, the general impression from photos of this type is that they reflect an understanding of the concept of –lessness that functions in the same way as "brand names." In this logic, –lessness plays the role of "branding" in marketing.

Pictures, documents and stories were and are important means to attract aid money and donations, as Harrell-Bond observed in her seminal book *Imposing Aid* (1986). In the Iraqi case the management of aid was not centrally controlled by the UNHCR. The UNHCR and other international organizations certainly played an important role but different local NGOs and private initiatives were also involved. Iraqis in need would turn to all aid providers who claim to offer assistance. A woman who was desperately approaching aid organizations to ask for money she needed to pay for her cancer treatment described her negative experiences with aid providers whom she called "abusive beggars, whose only task was to collect stories about Iraqis in order to get access to more funds." She elaborated on her criticism by telling me her story: "I did not hesitate to give them copies of my medical reports because I thought that

[35] For a critique of celebrity humanitarianism, see (Kapoor, 2012).

they would provide assistance for my treatment, but I was shocked when a friend who did not know about my illness called me to tell me that she saw my medical report on Facebook."[36] I discovered later that this woman, my informant, who had a Ph D in Pharmacy, was referring to a private aid initiative run by a foreign woman in coordination with other Iraqi volunteers. They followed similar procedures as other organizations, in collecting dramatic information and then contacting wealthy Iraqis to ask them to contribute with money which is then distributed to the families they visit. In my brief meetings with people involved in a few of these initiatives I could notice that many of them seemed well-organized, with well defined duties for volunteers to make them more efficient in bringing in money. And for all of them the organized efforts at fund-raising seemed to be more profitable for the organizers than the Iraqi families they claimed to assist.

The 'production' of refugees

This chapter presents my observations of the design and practices of humanitarian assistance provided to Iraqis who successfully proved their –lessness and were thus deserving of the cash assistance and in-kind aid. I refer to ethnographic cases from the field to illustrate the encounters between Iraqis and aid organizations. My impression was that this system of aid did not serve to protect Iraqis in need. On the contrary, and paradoxically, it reproduced their existence in a condition of -lessness. The paradox lies in the idea of humanitarian aid that is embedded in a universal discourse on international law and more recently on human rights, while, in practice, the provision of aid (in this Iraqi case) reduced human *rights* into *needs.* With reference to Agamben (1998) I argue that part of the problem results from the persisting humanitarian ideology that designs its protection programs based on the logic of dividing human life into the *bios*, or qualified life "which indicated the form or way of living proper to an individual or a group", and the *zoé*, or unqualified life "expressing the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals or humans)" (Ibid., 1-4). The following sections present observations from the field that give ethnographic substance to what effects this line of thinking had on humanitarian protection in general and the protection of Iraqi refugees in this case.

[36] Interview on 6 April 2011.

Drawing the boundaries of the protection space

To be counted for aid, Iraqis had to constantly reproduce themselves in the standard visible image of –lessness and being in need. In an interview with a UNHCR representative I asked about a case of an Iraqi family whose emergency cash assistance was stopped because their conditions of living were "not considered poor enough." The reason for this was that UNHCR discovered that one of daughters in the family was attending college. The answer of the UNHCR representative came immediately: "You know that many Jordanians cannot afford to send their sons and daughters to college? Do you want me to give this Iraqi family money to send their girl to college while others don't find money to feed their kids? Iraqis, you know, have this culture of dependence on aid, regardless of their real need."[37]

His question is an important one, not because it answered my question, but because it forces us to rethink the meaning of a refugee. The term refugee was fixed by the international bodies who have claimed the legal responsibility to protect man's basic rights or more accurately, in this case, man's basic needs. This family whose monthly cash assistance was stopped for having a daughter in college presents one example of the different boundaries and meanings of needs among refugees and aid institutions. In his discussion of Vietnamese refugee experiences, Knudsen (2005) uses what he calls "technical terms" to refer to the encounter between refugees and relief workers. He refers to two terms: the first term "therapeutic strategies" refers to the ways relief workers base their help on pre-conceptions about refugees, while the second term "coping strategies" refers to the ways refugees handle the uncertainties that face them. Knudsen explains that "Coping strategies, especially, involve a process, a hope for better times and, perhaps, for peace. Ironically, new ways of coping are introduced through the relief workers' 'therapeutic' paradigm, and these imply a promise; a conviction that, having sorted everything out, the past will fall to rest; for a person in pain, such sense making is senseless" (ibid., 88).

Knudsen observations of the tensions in the encounter between relief workers and refugees involves future hopes and past experiences of refugees and the latter, I agree with him, cannot be ignored. In the above encounter, the Iraqi family's insistence on offering higher education to their daughter did not only reflect their "hope for better times" to borrow from Knudsen, as higher education represents— for this generation of middle class Iraqi professionals and state-bureaucrats— an integral part of securing well-being. The parents of the girl who were

[37] From an interview with a UNHCR manager on 23 February 2011.

university graduates spent long time and efforts to collect the necessary money to cover the college fees for their daughter. The mother explained how they had to accept the fact that their girl, who got high scores in her secondary education, would join a two-year college because the study fees and expenses are lower than a four-year BA University program which they would normally choose if they could afford it. Still the family explained that they were dependent on remittances from relatives in Baghdad to cover the college fees for their girl, and they were looking for other sources to cover other households' expenses. However, according to the UNHCR's "therapeutic" strategy, which is based on quantifying the need of refugees to provide cash assistance to the most vulnerable, the family was not considered vulnerable enough if they could afford to send their girl to college. Iraqis had to gradually learn that education— which was free in Iraq and most Iraqis took it for granted—was no longer easy to secure.

In their new situation, and as refugees in Amman, many Iraqis experienced that affording to educate a daughter or a son disqualified them from other types of assistance, such as cash assistance that, according to the aid standards, is designed to cover the essential needs that would sustain a "bare life." Which, as explained by the UNHCR representative, consisted of assistance to cover basic needs for shelter or food. In practice, this meant that, in order to obtain cash assistance to cover their basic needs, many Iraqis had to reduce their needs to those basic needs. In this race to the bottom, their needs should be comparable to those of the poorest Jordanians, which is what Barbara Harell-Bond explained: "Aid should be evenly distributed on a per capita basis and assistance should not be so generous that refugees seem better off than their hosts" (1986: 19). The obvious reasons were to prevent present refugees from settling down as well as discourage new groups of potential refugees– to be attracted to cross the borders.

But this equalization in poverty is not unproblematic. First, because the poorest Jordanians are national citizens, they are not required to pay a fee to obtain a resident status, and, regardless of their level of education, the Jordanians had the right to freely compete for jobs with their fellow Jordanians even though the job market was poor. Iraqis, on the other hand, even the highly-skilled and most well-educated were officially denied this right and had to deal with the daily threat of arrest, payment of fines and deportation if they were caught working 'illegally'. When it comes to the right to work, Iraqis were considered by the Jordanian host country authorities as foreigners, and therefore their legal status did not allow

them to work unless they had a valid residence and work permit. The two permits (residence and work) were interrelated, and some Iraqis who worked in high positions at international organizations or at Jordanian universities and hospitals (as we saw in the previous chapter) were eligible for an annual residence permit. Others had to pay JD 50,000 (around US$70500) in 2010 and 2011 as bank deposit[38] to obtain the annual residence permit which would allow them to work legally and travel freely between Amman and Iraq and other countries.

Iraqis who were forced to flee their country following the war in 2003 were not treated as refugees in neighboring host countries. In their attempts to make a space of *ʾamān*, they had to explore various routes, the protection space offered by the UNHCR and other aid organizations seemed as one important source for several impoverished households. However, the limited protection offered could also end up increasing the hardships of Iraqi households. In the absence of adequate humanitarian aid, many Iraqis, like the family with the girl in college, have been excluded from the space of protection and left to negotiate the terms of their space of *ʾamān* alone.

The following cases from the field present further examples of how the limited protection space offered by humanitarian agencies produced effects among the applicants of the refugee status who were striving to appear as needy as possible. By doing this they came close to transforming their efforts into what Agamben characterized as a splitting of human life into the *bios*, or qualified life that would be excluded from aid and the *zoé*, or bare-life, that might be eligible to aid and assistance. What we see is that the boundaries between the two are fluid.

Case 1: Making need visible

I was with an Iraqi paid-volunteer during a house-visit tour in Jabal al-Hussain, a neighborhood in Amman classified as neither poor nor affluent. We could not find the next house on his list easily although the streets in Amman are relatively well marked, especially if compared to other Arab cities in the region. We followed the street name and house numbers, but failed to locate the building. The volunteer, who looked tired following four house-visits, had to call the family to check the address. I could feel the impatience in his

[38] A fee which I heard had cost much more earlier (JD 100,000).

voice as he explained to me when he finished the telephone conversation: “You see how they waste our time, they don’t give us a clear address, there is a street name and a house number, why do they make it difficult?” A few minutes later, a middle-aged man came running to meet us next to a barber shop where we were standing. The man apologized for the confusing location of the building in which he rented an apartment; it appeared that we had been looking for the building number on the opposite side of the street as we were counting the side with even numbers while his house ended with an odd number.

This was one of the first house-visits I participated in and I was surprised by the way it evolved. I could not understand it when the man’s first comment upon meeting us in the street was the following: “I don’t want you to get the impression that we are rich, just because we rent this apartment in Jabal al-Hussain. We can hardly afford the rent (JD 150 around US$212) and the owner of the building increases it every month. Sometimes he takes extra JD 5 (US$ 7), sometimes JD 10 (US$ 14) for the tax and electricity. The volunteer I was with told him not to worry, because he himself was an Iraqi and was also renting an apartment, so he knew how the landlord might treat Iraqi tenants. But the man continued “please don’t look at the sofa set, we just got it from my wife’s sister, they got resettlement to America [USA] and left.”

We reached the apartment, which was on the first floor of a five-storey building. I noticed that it consisted of two rooms: one bed room and a hall that seemed to have once been a balcony or terrace which the owner had apparently turned into a room by adding a windowed wall. This event of the visit took place in February 2011, and it was one of those hazy cold days. Both the Iraqi volunteer and I were feeling cold following a long day of house-visits. We were invited to sit on two plastic chairs when I noticed that the room’s temperature actually seemed much lower than that of the street. There was a gasoline heater around which the man’s wife and their three children gathered. It felt a little bit warmer when I saw the heater though I could not sense its heat as much as I could smell the gasoline odor. The man reminded us again not to record the new sofa set or the small table: “my wife’s sister gave us their furniture when they left for the United States. You can see that this chair is broken. [He put his hand on the seat next to his and its fabric sank deep] We use this hall as a bedroom for my kids at night, it was better when we didn’t have the sofas, the kids keep complaining that it is now too narrow.”

He invited us to come and take a look at the kitchen. The volunteer went with the man while I remained in the hall with the wife and the children. I explained to her that I was not from the aid organization but a Palestinian student doing research about Iraqi refugees in Jordan. She did not seem interested in knowing what I was doing and stopped me upon hearing the word 'refugees': "You can see how we turned into refugees, like you. No, not like you. The Palestinians were living well in Iraq, even better than many Iraqis in those times, they were respected by all and we loved them. Look how they treat us here."

I tried to apologize for the situation and asked her about the reason that made them leave Iraq. She explained that they had to leave Baghdad and their home "a separate big house with a garden" when their son was kidnapped and killed. The father came and continued the story, but the volunteer seemed interested in other data for his report. He asked to see their documents (passport and UNHCR document). The volunteer jotted some notes in his booklet and asked to take a picture of the family for the report. He took pictures of the kitchen, the bed-room corner where the clothes and mattresses were piled, and a portrait picture of the family members sitting on the sofa set in the hall.

During my presence in this and similar house-visits, I tried to make it clear that I was not part of the aid regime in order not to raise expectations or fear. Therefore I avoided taking any pictures and did not ask about "the story" and "the file", nor did I ask to see the UN paper (Iraqis normally call it *warqit al*-UN) or any other official documents that Iraqis, both individuals and household members used to bring, usually in arranged files and a few times in plastic bags. I do not think that my attempts to disassociate myself from the aid workers/volunteers made a big difference to the Iraqis I met. But with the passage of time, I could feel the tension these encounters with aid workers produced among all parties involved, be they Iraqi applicants or volunteers and aid workers in general. They were all engaged in producing results that were demanded by the aid organizations, results that were defined in the standardized practices that defined the space of aid assistance to refugees. I came to realize how hard it was for the volunteers to follow all the refugees all the time to ensure that the assistance would reach those who really needed it. On the part of the applicants for aid I realized that they were engaged in a constant process to present visible proof of their vulnerability to be allocated the aid they mostly needed.

This feeling of tension was further strengthened by my knowledge about the background of these applicants. From my engagement with the Iraqis I presented in Chapter Three I knew that many of the Iraqis who had to turn to aid organizations in Jordan came originally from middle class income backgrounds in their country.[39] The majority were educated and had been employees in the ex-Iraqi state institutions. Some of them talked about horrible experiences of direct or indirect violence and personal losses that forced them to leave Iraq. Initially they had to survive in Jordan on their savings and remittances and transferred income: 42% of the households who had relied on transferred income received transfers from Iraq, according to a study done by FAFO (Norwegian Institute for Applied International Studies) in 2007. But after a long time in transit some had to turn to the limited formal space of protection in Jordan in which the entry ticket was defined by the evidence they could produce of their own vulnerability. Most of these Iraqis initially contacted the UNHCR hoping to get the right to resettlement in a European state, where they had relatives or friends. In my meeting with the UNHCR spokesperson, the woman officer explained that they constantly had to repeat to the Iraqis that resettlement was a limited solution for some, but not a right for everyone. However, in the absence of survival potential in the temporary protection space in Jordan, while the dangers in Iraq persist, many of the impoverished Iraqis started to think of resettlement as the best solution and they strived to prove their eligibility for it. The following case presents one example.

Case 2: The production of documented evidence of need

It was not uncommon to see households composed of groups of Iraqi males or females who had ended up sharing an apartment in Amman.[40] In a less formal house-visit to an apartment shared by five young men, I went with an Iraqi volunteer (a woman whom I had met during a training course). She introduced me to the men— two of whom she knew from Baghdad. One of the men made Iraqi tea and we ate the sweets I had bought on our way. I asked them about their living conditions and how they had ended up together in this three-room apartment with

[39] Although, many families experienced economic deterioration during *al-Ḥiṣār* period in the 1990s, they had to learn how to cope with drastic decline in their income. What made it possible to survive is their access to residence back at home and a governmental job (despite hyperinflation making a regular monthly salary worth no more than two dozen eggs), and free education and health services, in addition to the ration system. I explore this transformation through the stories Iraqis narrated about that period in Chapter 7.

[40] In the household presented in this case, I learnt that the four single men were sharing the living costs. Each paid JD 40 monthly to cover his share of the house rent which cost them JD 160 including water and electricity. Three of the men used to receive emergency cash assistance JD 75, while the fourth was dependent on the money sent by his family from Iraq, and the fifth who just fled from Iraq had no regular source of income. Four of the men had university degrees but they all had to work as porters carrying heavy materials or waiters in Iraqi restaurants or tailors.

a small hall in the middle and with two small bed rooms. I could see from the open door of one of the bed-rooms that it had no beds but mattresses and blankets on the floor.

One of the young men was particularly interested in telling me his story, while another man commented: "He will now bring *al-taqarīr/* the reports; millions of reports." I learnt from the man's long and detailed story that he had left Iraq at the end of 2005 after the killing of one of his brothers on 28 September 2004; a taxi driver, the 32-year-old brother was killed by a militia gang who took the car and all the money he was carrying. His other brother was kidnapped in 2005, and he himself had been threatened into leaving his job at one of the Iraqi Ministries if he did not want to face his brother's fate. He left for Syria where he lived for four years in Aleppo and worked with a Syrian engineer, "who loved Iraqis": he explained how lucky he felt then to have met that Syrian man who helped him a lot. Still life was not easy (as he expressed) and he decided to apply for resettlement to a third country, but when his file was raised to "*al-wafd al-amrīkī*/the American delegate" as he called it, his resettlement application was rejected. His file in Syria was closed, and when he moved to Amman the UNHCR office in Amman opened a new file for him. He could survive thanks to the support he received from his family in Iraq. His father was a martyr who had died in the Kuwait war in 1991. He continued to narrate his and his family's stories supplying details of exact dates and names while pulling out documents and pictures from a big file hoping to convince me that he deserved aid and resettlement.

He brought out one of those large files (usually used by professionals to store and organize documents) full of papers and hardly able to fit additional documents. I noticed that he had everything laminated, including the brochures and information pamphlets of some organizations. He started narrating his life story in episodes: 1. running away from Iraq to avoid conscription during "Saddam's time"; 2. the years he spent in one of the Gulf countries working in a business company; 3. his return to Iraq after the expiry of his job contract and residency permit in the Gulf; 4. his kidnapping and torture experience: he said that he had been kidnapped from the Ministry office where he worked in Baghdad 5. how his resettlement file had failed in Syria and then in Jordan after three years of waiting. He kept pulling out documents, ID cards and papers (all laminated) as a visible evidence of all the episodes of his life story. Finally, he gave me a CD that he said was a video recording of the torture he had endured during his kidnapping. He asked me to take one CD and watch it at home (as he showed me that he had several other copies), apologizing for not being able to

show it to me in the presence of his flat mates. He kept pushing me to take the CD while I kept refusing and apologizing for not being able to watch it.

I found myself again in a position where I had to emphasize my status as a student/researcher who could not provide assistance (in aid or resettlement). However, I asked him if I could take a copy of the resettlement rejection letter. He immediately agreed, but while I was preparing myself to go to the nearby bookshop, he offered to do the photocopying and refused to take money in return. I did not insist as I had learned that in the Iraqi space of *ʾamān*, the conditions of giving and taking change from those in the formal space of protection. I was their guest as the men told me; they made more Iraqi tea and talked about the marriage arrangements for one of them. Suddenly they all started laughing at the sight of the man coming out of the other room elegantly dressed in a black suit, black shirt with black tie and shiny black shoes. It felt embarrassing but I could not help laughing myself. The volunteer I came with was more sensible when she said: "Why are you laughing? Sometimes I put on my best clothes, like we used to dress for work back in Baghdad, and I just go out for a walk in Jabal al-Hussein." Even the man in the suit started laughing when one of his flat mates asked him: "Are you going to a wedding party? You are just going to the bookshop to photocopy a paper; you see how Iraqis are getting crazy while sitting and waiting here in Jordan." And in seconds, the joking mood had filled the room.

In the spaces of *ʾamān,* away from aid workers, Iraqis tried to preserve their habits in dressing, listening to Iraqi songs, dancing, reciting poetry, sharing stories from the past and cooking. Even when they did not have access to extra resources, they tried to appropriate the little resources they had managed to secure in a way that contradicted with the visual image of -lessness they strived to portray in the formal space of protection. During social gatherings, most Iraqis were well dressed. I am not describing here a specific fashion, but during my fieldwork, I do not remember seeing many Iraqi men unshaved, it was a sign that "something was wrong", as I heard them commenting when this happened. I could also see this care to dress and appearance in pictures (taken back in Baghdad) which were placed in the corners of some rented apartments I visited or hanged on the walls in the houses owned by more affluent Iraqis.

Coming from a refugee background where visibility of need was not a condition of the refugee label and lacking interest in fashion, I would not have normally paid attention to

these dress codes if they had not contrasted so sharply with the standardized conditions of –lessness created in the encounters of Iraqis with the formal space of protection. I was invited by an Iraqi friend—who wanted to see me in more 'chic' clothes— to go to the Friday market in Amman where they sold second-hand clothes. In the market I could hear the Iraqi accent around the tables and hangers where shoes and clothes were displayed in an open yard in the busy Ammani centre al-Abdali. Considering the urban background of the Iraqis I had met in the aid space and their educational and professional experiences, this issue about their dressing style might seem redundant. However, in the process of getting access to the refugee entitlements, I observed several incidents in which these Iraqis were struggling to learn how to produce an image of need that would help them to get access to the aid assistance they needed.

The aim of this chapter is not to discredit the aid services provided by different organizations to impoverished Iraqis who were pushed by dwindling resources to turn to the UNHCR and other organizations to receive aid and protection. Rather I present details of these encounters with aid to provide better understanding of how, in the majority of cases I observed, as the ones presented above, it was a basic part of the behavior of people to present themselves as in need. This was in anticipation of the conditions of aid provision which were based on the visibility of need and –lessness. What I observed was that the attempts of producing documented evidence of need produced more uncertainty than protection. What produced uncertainty was the lack of understanding among people about the logic in the decision making process within the aid organizations when they decided who would be eligible for aid and who would be excluded. Gradually, Iraqis learnt that they need to fix their experiences as 'a good story', which provides brief and strong evidence that their lives are in danger, so that their case will be prioritized by the UNHCR for assistance. It was not uncommon to receive printed versions of the family or individual story during house-visits. The next section explores the main characteristics of the formal procedures used by aid agencies. A procedure based on quantification of needs.

Quantifying the need

"To attract money, ***aid*** must be *visible*" [with apologies to Harrell-Bond].

While Iraqis were disqualified as collective recipients of the refugee status, they were deconstructed into quantifiable categories and turned into 'targets' in aid project documents and aid reports. The quantification of Iraqis as asylum seekers and refugees served the organizations (and Jordanian government) in their appeals for funds, more than they seemed to change the quality of Iraqis' lives. The only official reference to Iraqis as collective refugees (by the Jordanian government) was when they were presented as numbers submitted to international donors for financial support. However, when it came to the distribution of aid, Iraqis who were looking for support had to compete for the available aid on the basis of vulnerability that was measured by quantifiable indicators. I argue that these practices of quantification tended to reduce Iraqis in the discourse of aid to "bare life" (the opposition between *bios* and *zoé* as explained by Agamben). Rather than seeing the Iraqis as bios representing 'qualified life', but in need of urgent assistance due to the loss of their homes, salaried jobs and social status, they were reduced into 'bare life' as fixed in the quantified representation of loss in the pictures and 'brief bullet-point-style stories' collected by aid agencies to provide evidence of need, to attract aid. Iraqis re-emerged as defined by –lessness, and by a quantification of such –lessness one could obtain support. The dilemma is illustrated by an Iraqi woman who had first qualified for support, and then had lost this right:

> I left Iraq in 2006 when I got a threatening letter. They sent it with a list of other people's names who were already slaughtered and shot in our neighborhood, and my name was the seventh on the list. We lost everything and had to start from zero in Jordan. Today we are below zero. The UN [UNHCR] stopped our "salary" [emergency cash assistance], because they discovered that I have a daughter at college. We are stuck here in Jordan and I can't return to Baghdad to be killed or die in an explosion. But they want us all to be beggars, or they'll stop the aid.[41]

The conditions of aid created more uncertainty than protection, as perceived by this family who attempted to extend their space of *ʾamān* by the provision of higher education to their daughter, but they had to suffer from further reduction in their living conditions. In the following semester, the family was planning to suspend their girl's studies to be able to cover other urgent household expenses, and her education would be on hold until they could find an Iraqi welfare association which used to support the tuition fees of Iraqi students with high academic records. However, according to UNHCR representatives, as explained earlier in this chapter, the quantification of need was designed to ensure that refugees did not abuse the aid system, which indeed happened as I was sometimes told by both Iraqis themselves and by aid

[41] From one of my several meetings with an Iraqi friend, 54-year-old woman whom I met during several training events I attended during my presence in Amman in 2010 and 2011.

workers and Iraqi volunteers. There were cases in which 'rich' Iraqis would hire a shabby house in poor eastern Amman areas and put in some cheap furniture and dress up like 'beggars' in order to be considered for the cash assistance or what Iraqis (and some Iraqi volunteers) called salary. To protect the space of protection from abuse, the system of aid developed parallel systems of control and surveillance. In previous cases of refugees management, the physical space of the refugee camps allowed more possibilities for direct practices of discipline and control. In their description of attempts to prevent cheating, Voutira and Harrell-Bond mention night-time invasions for accurate census— taking and daubing refugees with gentian violet so as to avoid anyone getting double rations (1995: 219). Peteet describes similar techniques where UNRWA aid workers resorted to early morning census visits at 4 a.m. to avoid double counting of children who otherwise used to slip under the tent wall into the next tent to be counted again in order to increase families share of the rations (2005:72).

Seen in light of such huge efforts to stop misuse, it is relevant to mention here that the number of Iraqis who used to receive financial assistance was 5000, according to an interview I did with the UNHCR spokeswoman in May 2011. In a cost-benefit perspective we see that the numbers of those who received cash assistance was small when compared to the announced number of Iraqis in Jordan (5000 versus around 500,000 Iraqis) and below the number of registered asylum seekers in the UNHCR (5000 versus 21,857 Iraqis) in 2010. The monthly cash assistance amount was JD 70 (US$ 99) per individual, JD 180 (US$ 254) for a family of 3 members and did not exceed JD 260 (US$367) for larger families.

In several encounters (with aid) which I observed, I could see the performance efforts both Iraqis and aid workers had to exert to quantify the households' needs in a visible and measurable form. With an increasing number of impoverished Iraqis arriving, especially after 2007, mostly settling in the less affluent neighborhoods in East Amman and staying there without residence or job permits, the aid agencies saw an increase in the number of people applying for refugee status. In this situation more Iraqis were forced to compete for aid and in this competition they used all possible means to become eligible for cash assistance, including the use of deceit and trickery. In some of the events I observed it felt like there was a kind of collusion between the two parties when the aid workers would make the effort to inform incoming Iraqi families, directly or indirectly, of the ways to attract aid and avoid future uncertainties as much as possible. In one of the house-visits to an Iraqi family who had

recently arrived from Baghdad, the family, that was composed of the husband, his wife and three children, hired a furnished apartment in the Gardens, a neighborhood that was categorized as one of the affluent areas in West Amman. The discussion between the volunteer and the family seemed like a practical training session on how to prove that one deserved the help and assistance of the UNHCR and other organizations.

In the following house-visit to a family who had recently came to Jordan, during March 2011, with the hope to secure medical treatment that was not available in Baghdad for their autistic child, the volunteer presented practical advice on where to go for shopping or medical care, how to behave, and what the family needed as evidence to support their stories. She tried to explain to them how to present their story within the limits that would ensure they could fit the conditions for aid. Here I present the conversation which provides more details on how this evolved. I refer to the volunteer by 'V' and use 'F' for the newcomer family:

> V: When you go to the market, be careful! Don't you ever speak Iraqi [he means Iraqi accent]. This country [Jordan] is for women, women can get what they want here. When a woman cries and shouts at them they keep silent, but if a man objects an abuse they will immediately attack him. You should take the lead [directing the talk to the wife, then turning to the man]: Don't tell anyone that your wife is Shii. And you should go to the UNHCR and apply for a refugee certificate.
>
> F: This won't help; if the situation in Iraq improves they will put you back on the first plane flying to Baghdad.
>
> V: No, it's [referring to resettlement] much easier now, you'll get out quickly.
>
> F: I heard that this is only possible for Iraqis who worked for the Americans as journalists, contractors, cleaners and guards but not others.
>
> V: No, this is not true, just go to the UN and make up a good story.
>
> F: We have a story, a good story, the story of our son [who suffers from autism], we knocked on all the doors in Iraq and did all we could do for him but there are no specialists. We heard that here they have good institutions, or maybe we can go to Europe or the US?
>
> V: No, make up a good story, this story won't help you.
>
> F: But a good story needs proofs and supporting documents or badges [to prove that they worked for the Americans in Iraq after 2003]. We read about it on the Internet, that lies won't save us. But I have a story that I fled the army once and I have a "red card", and I was never a member of any political party.

> V: I know someone who told them that he worked for the new government and he is now in Canada, a story that is well-themed and not too long.
>
> F: But if I register in the UN, I won't be able to travel to Baghdad.
>
> V: Of course, you can't return to Baghdad. Considering that you are threatened, how could you return? He who wants to get resettlement should not try to go to Baghdad so that he won't mess up his file.

In this and other house visits I observed, not necessarily with new-comers, information and stories that were sometimes described by officials as gossiping or cheating run in the space of protection where Iraqis have had to learn how to extend the space of *ʾamān*. One of the UNHCR representatives commented: "It's part of being Iraqi, they are like this, they are used to aid culture [referring to the 13 years of the UN economic sanctions and the food ration system] and they will always complain and demand extra aid." While an Iraqi politician and activist described it: "Deceit and lying are not part of our genuine culture, such behavior if it exists today, it serves as the weapons of the weak or the afraid." However, my extensive observations of the aid encounters in the field reveal that there are other factors involved in the encounters than simply a cultural characteristic or weapon of the weak. These encounters with aid were part of a larger learning process about how to live in conditions of crisis, and avoid further losses in the future. These families have already experienced several losses during three decades of wars and sanctions and they were now (at the time of my observation) trying to rebuild their sense of well-being and *ʾamān* that in many cases was linked to the existence of an Iraqi state that no longer was there (for them).

The cases presented in this chapter thus aim to show how *this group of Iraqi professionals and state bureaucrats had to learn how to become refugees.* It was not about culture or weapons of the weak, it was about a pragmatic series of choices in order to regain some of the life qualities that had been removed from them, following their expulsion from Iraq. They had lost access to their jobs and salaries and were searching for information that could help them find some relief in the formal protection space in Jordan. To obtain this they quickly learnt that they had to manipulate the minimal aid provided in a way that served their needs.

If culture was involved, it can be observed in the Iraqi attempts at preserving their dignity and status as former state employees and professionals. The simple act of perceiving any form of

financial aid as "salary"; including the emergency cash assistance or wages paid for voluntary work and any form of transportation allowance were all parts of a self-deception; the aid money were called by most Iraqis (who relied on aid) as salaries and thus were perceived as if linked to an honorable employment. The participation in many of the aid related activities that most Iraqis also criticized was itself part of a self-deception. As explained by one of my friend-volunteers:

> These courses and training events, and when I get work [she referred to the voluntary tasks she is contracted to do on behalf of an international organization] saved me from sitting at home, doing nothing. The simple act of waking up in the early morning, and putting on my formal clothes, and spending part of the day outside this narrow apartment and meeting other Iraqis, this makes me feel alive.

I also noticed that some Iraqi women tended to refer to their participation in training events as "going to work", and almost all the Iraqis who used to receive the monthly emergency cash assistance called it a salary or *rātib*. In their conversations, it seemed that they considered the emergency cash assistance as a right, although, according to the aid organization: "It is meant for only few Iraqis, the most vulnerable." Most of the Iraqis in the cases presented above have experienced reduction in their sense of being and well-being, but when they had to prove that they are as poor as the poorest Jordanians, some had to turn to deceit to make their need into a convincing evidence, and get what they considered their right from the limited temporary space of protection. These Iraqi attempts can be seen as a critique of the system of aid designed to protect them, but only if they could provide strong evidences of the conditions of –lessness. This problem is not unique to the Iraqi case in Jordan. Didier Fassin explores a similar "paradox" that asylum seekers had to handle in France and Europe in general:

> "As asylum is disqualified both quantitatively and qualitatively, states develop increasingly sophisticated instruments to scrutinize the "truth" of the applicants who, in the great majority of cases, will be rejected and end up added to the pool of illegal aliens after they have exhausted every possible appeal" (2011: 221).

Outreaching refugees- The aid organizations' part of the story

The tension described in encounters among aid organizations and asylum seekers and refugees can be explored ethnographically in an attempt to understand how such a situation evolves on the ground. I have discussed the matter from the perspectives of the people seeking a status as refugees. To discuss this further let me now turn to the UNHCR part of the

story, based on observations in the field. My focus is on what the UNHCR and its partner organizations called their "outreach or needs assessment services."

I have already mentioned that several international and local aid organizations were employing Iraqi volunteers to assist in the provision of services to other Iraqis in Jordan, usually funded by the UNHCR.[42] This served more than one end. It allowed the organizations to benefit from the strong social ties among Iraqis, and thus to obtain easier access to both newly arrived and unregistered Iraqi families. This is not my conclusion but rather what I was told by individuals working in UNHCR. They made no secret of the fact that having Iraqis at the delivery stage facilitated communication and allowed better understanding and trust during training and other aid events. Obviously 'communication' here does not refer to the linguistic level, as Arabic is the shared language among Iraqis and their hosting community in Jordan. Although there are slight differences in pronunciation and the use of some words, according to my experience being a non-Iraqi myself, this did not seem an obstacle. Appointing Iraqis as aid workers— on voluntary and temporary basis— was one way to deal with the invisibility of Iraqis dispersed throughout various neighborhoods in Amman. As the UNHCR spokesperson commented: "Iraqis are well connected and they normally tend to gather and form networks."

The concept of 'volunteer' was also a conscious decision. This was to conform with the host country's regulations, as the Jordanian authorities did not permit Iraqis to work in jobs that could be done by 'unemployed' Jordanians, and thus it was difficult for Iraqis to obtain a formal work permit. Voluntary work, on the other side, was possible. And it was attractive to the Iraqis who got that chance as it provided an informal employment opportunity and an income source which seemed essential for the survival of several Iraqi families I met in the field. Volunteers were paid the minimum wage-rate in Jordan (per month) JD 200-300 (US$ 282-423) by international organizations, though the rate paid by few local organizations was much lower JD 50-70 (US$ 70-99). The financial returns Iraqi volunteers called "salary"

[42] This is not an uncommon practice in centralized international systems designed to provide welfare for refugees, especially in the case of the UNRWA refugee camps, the W in UNRWA, which stand for "works" projects was "central to rehabilitation; through work, refugees would acquire a new sense of self and come to terms with permanent displacement" as Peteet explained (2005a, 48), but in the case of UNRWA, it was official and salaried employment, not voluntary work, as in the case of the Iraqi refugees contracted to do work-tasks on behalf of the UNHCR (through the IRD or Care International or other organizations). In the Palestinian case, this practice was also used by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in their relief work which started in Gaza in December 1948 (see Chapter 3 in Peteet (2005a) for further details).

were called "remuneration" *mukāfaʾa* by the humanitarian organizations, again strengthening the point that this was to avoid colliding with Jordanian official policies or with the international organization employees' salary rate that was much higher.

A key strategy of the outreach services was the series of house-visits by volunteers, as described in the cases presented in this chapter. And the UNHCR was not alone in pursuing this strategy in their needs assessment. To mention but a few from a longer list: IRD (the International Relief and Development Organization), IMC (International Medical Corps), Care International. There were also the so-called Jordanian Royal Foundations: Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Institute for Development, Jordan River Foundation, Queen Nour al-Hussein Foundation, as well as other local community centers. I had a chance to observe a meeting organized for the IRD volunteers, in which a group of volunteers, both males and females participated, and in which the strategy of the outreach services was discussed.

The meeting was organized by the International Relief and Development Organization (IRD), one of the UNHCR partner organizations, to arrange the dissemination of the outreach service among a large group of volunteers, formally linked to local organizations such as CAC (Community Action Committees), CBO (Community Based Organizations), and CHV (Community Health Volunteers).[43] The big hall was packed with Iraqis and a few Jordanians. There were between 70-80 males and females, with a large majority of women. Project managers and employees who coordinated the delivery of this international organization outreach services to Iraqis on behalf of the UNHCR— to which I will refer by the abbreviation IOR for International Organization Representative— each addressed the group in turn. The IORs included 5 Jordanians and 2 Iraqis. I will present some of the information that was passed along during that meeting which I think, clarifies some parts of the troubled encounters during the house visits presented earlier in this chapter between aid workers/volunteers and potential Iraqi aid recipients.

The meeting started with one of the Jordanian employees in the IRD addressing the volunteers:

[43] CACs called *Allijān almujtamaʿiyya* in Arabic are a number of committees established to coordinate the provision of aid in different geographical areas where Iraqis have settled in Jordan. They are linked with the so-called local community based organizations (CBOs) in each area like (Al Naser and Marka, Al Ashrafiyeh, Al Hashimi Al Shamali, Sweileh and Jabal Alhussain, Zarqa and Irbid). A group of outreach volunteers are assigned to work in each area and one of the volunteers takes the role of a coordinator.

> Our requirement from every volunteer is 30 home visits minimum per month plus 5 visits to new Iraqi families who just entered Jordan. If you do not make (30 + 5) per month, we will deduct from your remuneration [*mukāfaʾa*]. The definition of a new family is one that came to Jordan from Iraq during the current month and has not been visited by any volunteer; we do not enter data on families that were visited 3 months earlier. We have set up a "target" [she used the English term]: 3000 visits in 9 months. In this meeting with you, we are setting the general outlines. Your remuneration and how much will be deducted from it will be decided by the administration. You should know that we do not have a system of follow-up visits, there will be deduction on your remuneration [salary as Iraqis called it] if we discover repeated cases.

Most of the time, the flow of information in the meeting went in one direction. The Jordanian representative of the IRD (or the IORs: International Organization Representatives) were speaking, showing forms and giving instructions while the volunteers and other aid workers were listening, except for few minutes when some volunteers interrupted with questions. At this point one of the two Iraqi IORs interfered to explain the distribution of roles and duties:

> The newly arrived Iraqi families are very important and you should work as one team, you should share information on new families among yourselves, each in his/her own area if you hear of Iraqi families who arrived in other areas. You should exchange this information among yourselves both volunteers and committees, and distribute the visits among yourselves: you are all part of one team: the IRD. We will distribute a description of the volunteer activities, take a look at it and sign it. Community committees [he addressed the other group]: your role is to run courses and organize awareness dissemination activities and other events. We will provide each of you with a list of the community committees and volunteers' names and mobile numbers to enhance better coordination among you as a team.

While the IOR was listing the service outlines, I heard one of the volunteers next to me asking: "Where are we going to find all these new Iraqi families?" Another answered her sarcastically: "Along the borders." A Jordanian IOR explained with a questionnaire in her hand how volunteers should complete the information, during house-visits, and fill in consistent data:

> The most important data is fixed, you should know it by now: date of entry to Jordan, information on health and social conditions, if you put a tick next to the field on special needs, you have to provide explanation from your observations during the visit and give some information and evidence on the case. The UNHCR prepares lists of the Iraqis who require support based on the data that you collect. Many of you write long descriptive details, like composition essays, we want you to present the data in the form of condensed bullet points, so that it will be clearer for the data entry department when they check the information and enter it on RAIS [stands for Refugee Assistance and Information System, a centralized online database managed by the UNHCR and shared among local and

> international organizations to allow the coordination of aid services]. Iraqi volunteers are required to present only brief notes in bullet-point format, Jordanians should write detailed reports. [I did not have a chance to ask the IRD representatives about this division of labor based on the nationality of aid workers, and therefore could not clarify whether it was decided according to specialty or trust levels]. The UNHCR file number is very important, you have to indicate if a family or individual is not registered or does not want to register. So you have to check the refugees' residence document [UN asylum seeker paper] and also the passport. The passport is very important: you should demand to see the passport and hold it in your hand, write down the number and look at the stamps to check if the family has an annual residence permit or not. You should explain to them that this is for their own good: *that we have conditions, those who meet them, will have their names raised in aid provision lists*. If they have a residence permit, you should indicate what type of residence they have: work permit, investment, student, marriage to a Jordanian; and make sure that the passport in your hand is the latest one.

One of the volunteers raised his hand and asked a question about an item in the check-list that translates into: "Someone who presents a danger on the UNHCR or its partners or others." He asked: "How will we know that someone might present a danger to the UNHCR?" The Jordanian IOR answered: "If he is "aggressive" (If he was/*Iza kān* "aggressive", she used the English term). The Iraqi IOR further explained: "For example if the person says that he or she will do any harm to the UNHCR." One of the volunteers said: "Some Iraqis are aggressive, when we call them they refuse the house-visit and sometimes they hang up the phone." The IOR explained that this did not mean anything: "only if we feel that there is a 'real' threat or danger to the UNHCR, you should not add a tick here unless you are 100% sure that the person is dangerous, because if they see the tick [apparently the pronoun "they" refers here to the IRD or the UNHCR], the person will be interrogated. A person who constitutes a threat, is someone who states that he will do something against the UNHCR or another organization. RAIS is a living database and it must be updated daily; an example of a threat could be: I will explode or kill, etc. Any item with a tick should be supported with comments and evidence, all the forms that are submitted without notes will be rejected and returned back to the volunteer."

The IRD representative gave an example of how need should be measured: "You have to make sure that you do not write contradictory information; we receive reports from the UNHCR that confuse the data-entry employees because the forms submitted by volunteers contain contradictory data. For example, when you tick next to the field which indicates that a family needs emergency cash assistance, and that they need emergency support for food

supplies, and then you put a tick indicating that *the dwelling/ house conditions are good*. This is one example of contradictory data, there must be consistency.” Another IOR further explained: “For example if a family shares an apartment with another family (i.e. when two families live together in one rented apartment), and when they have everything they need, they are not necessarily eligible for emergency cash assistance. O*nly if their housing conditions are poor*, and only then, you should tick the box.” The previous IOR intervened again with further clarification:

> There might be people who complain that the aid they receive is not sufficient, this is not our business - *niḥnā mā dakhalnā*.

The above encounter presents part of the hierarchy involved in the refugee aid industry where we can observe part of the pressure and tensions created among staff with different ranks and administrative roles. To receive the wage, Iraqi volunteers have to reach a defined target of Iraqi ‘beneficiaries’, they have to fill in the forms according to given set of standards developed by the UNHCR bureaucratic systems of data gathering and documentation, through the centralized RAIS databases to effectively define who is eligible to receive aid and who is not. The meeting between the IRD aid managers and volunteers (mostly Iraqis) lasted for almost two hours, followed by a distribution of lunch meals. I did not go to queue for the meal, but a woman who was sitting next to me returned to the queue when she saw that I was not eating and brought another meal for me. I tried to apologize but she insisted that I should eat. She was one of the few who ate their meals in the center where the meeting took place. I noticed that the majority of volunteers put the meal in a plastic bag. I could hear one of the women volunteers sitting next to me telling her daughter that they had some leftovers from yesterday and with this meal they would have enough food for today. Another woman asked me if I had an extra plastic bag, and I gave her a bag with my meal. While, the woman whom I had just met and brought me the meal told me that as a CAC (community action committee), the duties assigned to her had been reduced compared to the previous year and that this month, for example, she would not earn more than JD 15 (US$ 21) as transportation allowance.

This meeting presents some aspects of the complexities involved in aid provision. The UNHCR— through IRD and other NGOs— delegate the work of documentation and description of Iraqis who are eligible to cash assistance and other forms of aid to Iraqi volunteers. However, many of these Iraqi volunteers, as observed above are themselves in

urgent need of assistance. The details of this meeting should explain the tensions I observed in the encounters during the house-visits described earlier in which Iraqi volunteers seemed torn between their obligations as aid workers trained to report the Iraqi conditions using certain terms and methodologies, and their emotions when having to deal with Iraqis who experienced similar tragedies to their own. As we have also seen, the Iraqi volunteers did not act as passive workers obeying the instructions they had received to technically fill in information in the reports. They behaved as active agents who did their best to show other Iraqis how to be included in the limited systems of aid offered by the UNHCR.

In my meeting with the spokesperson of the UNHCR in Amman, I asked her about the process followed to decide whether a refugee would be eligible for a specific service. The UNHCR representative explained that they centrally controlled their services through a web based system, Refugee Assistance and Information System (RAIS): "protective and confidential", as she described it, to keep information about refugees and arrange for "equal" distribution of assistance: "RAIS is an online database shared among local and international organizations; it is networked and shared among all our partners who are given different levels of access rights for data entry and retrieval, it shows all the necessary information about the refugee to allow us to coordinate the aid services and ensure that they are not abused by some refugees." She emphasized that aid and services were provided according to assigned criteria: assistance and financial aid would depend on need. While the recognition as refugee and resettlement to a third country would be assessed on individual basis: "it depends on the story the refugee presents to us, what kind of persecution or threats he faced in Iraq, it has to be a well-founded story."[44] When I asked her: "What if a person fails to express his/her personal loss in a well-founded story format, will they lose the chance to be counted for protection and/or resettlement?" She answered that this might be the case sometimes, yet, they tried to avoid it as much as they could: "Our staff, both local and international, are well trained about the country of origin, what problems exist, in the different regions, cities, and areas and what might have forced the people of a certain area to leave, what role a person had in the party if he had a role, if he was senior or at a lower level …." She meant the Baath party, as Iraqis who were affiliated to it (especially high ranking members) had to undergo

[44] "Well-founded story" was the exact expression used by the UNHCR spokesperson; she said it in English in this interview. It conforms with the universal definition of the refugee: "a refugee is a person who owning to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country…."

further screening and checking and some were denied the right to the 'refugee' label (and the benefits that came with it).

These conditions for aid specified by the UNHCR representative reveal what Liisa Malkki describes as the common "tendency to universalize the refugee as a special 'kind' [sic] of person that occurs in both the textual representation of refugees and in their photographic representations" (1995a: 9). Refugees, according to Malkki are presented as "exemplary victims" rather than agents: "stripped of the specificity of culture, place and history […]" (ibid.). The power of this discourse is that when the displaced contradict this image of –lessness (or the *zoé i.e.* unqualified life), and display other not-so-essential needs according to the "agreed" classification of essential needs, they are excluded from the formal space of protection, which is designed to serve only those in need of food or shelter (as in the case of the woman with a girl in college).

Another source of tension is: How can the personal and shared experiences of suffering, pain and loss— as the ones presented during house-visits above— be materialized into documented evidences? How can such sensations and feelings that are "so brutally nonlinguistic be codified?" (Hastrup, 1993: 773). How can Iraqi survivors turn painful personal and collective experiences where they encountered deep losses into a good story and "well-founded evidence" that might bring them, as persons, potential gains in the present and, probably, in the coming future? While in the field, I rarely saw or heard the Iraqi collective story in the formal space of protection. During training events, participants were reminded (by trainers, and sometimes one of the participants would remind the rest) that they should not talk politics or make the meeting too political.

The collective story when shared outside the private social gathering sphere was usually condensed into an individual story. The Iraqi who chose to increase his or her limited possibilities of survival by registering in the UNHCR, whether he/she was defined as asylum seeker or refugee waiting for resettlement to a third country,[45] would get an open file in the UNHCR that she or he must update, in personal interviews with UNHCR officers (at their headquarters in Deir Ghbar in West Amman), regularly every six months. In addition, local

[45] Both certificates: Asylum Seeker Certificate (see Appendix B) and Refugee Certificate (see Appendix C) do not grant Iraqi refugees in Jordan residence or work permits. However, they have some protective value, as a few Iraqi men mentioned that they showed them in cases when they had been stopped by police officers in the streets of Amman.

community centers and NGOs which were funded by international organizations (affiliated with the UNHCR) to provide services for Iraqis, would send volunteers to visit Iraqis in their homes. The volunteer would ask for the UNHCR documentation and the story. Eventually, many Iraqis had *to learn how to reconstruct the story* in a way that presented the "well-founded" evidences to gain the protection benefits, which might reduce their suffering in the present or in the future.

Reflections on –lessness as a precondition of inclusion in humanitarian aid

The cases presented in this chapter explore ethnographically how the inclusive exclusion discourse and practices of humanitarian organizations only "grasp human life in the figure of the bare life" (Agamben, 1998: 133). While refugees are described as humans in the texts of the international conventions, they are constantly reminded by the discourse of these organizations that their lives are less valuable as *bios* and that this reduction presents the conditions which make them eligible "objects of aid and protection" (Ibid.). We have seen the clash of positions here. When a family attempted to move above the limit of poverty to provide higher education opportunity for their daughter, which is an attempt to increase the educational capital, the family was excluded from the formal space of protection (i.e. no longer eligible for emergency cash assistance). And such a decision about who can receive support and who cannot is made on the basis of bureaucratic processes and quantitative methods. The needs of Iraqis were quantified by using a check-list which was to be completed in a consistent and technical way providing brief descriptions, and using bullet points. Based on such reports the level of –lessness was made visible and quantifiable.

On a general level, we see a process here that is similar to what is reported in other refugee ethnographies. One example is Mckay (2012) who in her analysis of humanitarian governance in the case of Malawin refugees in Mozambique commented: "Care is increasingly extended through categories of vulnerability through which groups (such as women, children, or patients with particular diseases) and individuals qualify for selectively distributed supports from a patchwork assemblage of organizations" (2012: 290). Mckay's description of another refugee management experience is similar to the current assemblage of organizations' management of aid provision to Iraqi refugees.

What we see here is also a response to a change in the larger system of refugee management on a global level. The change is in the style of management of refugee protection from a macro to a micro oriented system. The macro oriented and centralized management of refugees was focusing on refugee crises as collective crises that needed to be handled primarily by putting the refugees into camps, with the consequence that the individuals in such refugee camps over time got treated in ways that reminds us of mechanism described by the concept "biopower."[46] The new approach focused on micro project-based responses targeting people staying outside the confines of the refugee camps, as in the case of 'outreach' services described above. Instead of the collective strategies towards refugee camps, a new type of management emerges, in which training services are provided through micro projects that have as a specific aim to make the refugees able to help themselves, within the region and host-country where they are displaced. In a period of neoliberal dominance this means to adapt to market forces.

The neoliberal intervention in the Iraqi space was not only at the level of promoting a *New Iraq,* where privatization and free market and trade would be the norm and replace the state control of resources and trade, it was also evident in the conditions for international aid in a global context, which promoted linking developmental aid to host countries with humanitarian aid to refugees, while ignoring the historical and political factors that led to the refugee problem. In their introduction of *Interpreting Welfare and Relief in the Middle East,* Naguib and Okkenhaug comment that activities of aid and welfare in general "can never be removed from political, social or economic contexts. [...] Interpreting the complexities of welfare and relief in the Middle East is another way of drawing attention to the fact that such activities also inform power constellations and must be analyzed as such" (2007: 3-4). The design of international aid for Iraqis (and other groups of refugees) requires consideration of the political context at both its local and global levels. But most of all the design of international aid for Iraqis must bring into consideration the human dimension of the refugee situation, which brings me to the end of this chapter, but also to its beginning in which I introduced the notion of –lessness. What I have shown is that Iraqis who had had the good fortune to escape the hard, almost deadly living conditions in their country were not

[46] Ethnographies among camp refugees describe the role of sharing the camp space in the production of collective narrative and identity (see for example Malkki's discussion on the camp historicity (1995, 1996) and Peteet's discussion on Palestinian refugee camps (in Lebanon) as sites for the elaboration of social relations "characterized by a serious running back and forth between hope and despair" (2005: 93-130).

immediately included in the "humanitarian" space of protection. They had to undergo a longer process to become eligible for emergency assistance and temporary protection.

Many of the Iraqis I met explained that they initially depended on the money they had brought from home. Some, like the woman who was excluded from the formal protection space for having a girl in college, ended up selling part of the furniture they had bought upon arrival to cover the costs of basic needs such as apartment rent, food, water and electricity. She and others, both families and individuals, had eventually to turn to aid organizations. When they approached the UNHCR and its partner organizations for assistance, they were told that aid was designed to protect only the most vulnerable Iraqis.

There is a dilemma here. The humanitarian agencies, on top of which stands the UNHCR, emphasize the rights of individuals to be fed, sheltered and educated at a certain level essential for survival outside their homelands until a durable solution could be reached. The minimum humanitarian assistance in the Iraqi case was based on the needs of most vulnerable Iraqis (and Jordanians) as individuals rather than rights of a collective refugee community in need of international legal protection and essential services that these Iraqis could not access due to their exclusion from the former Iraqi state. Iraqis had to constantly prove that they deserved aid, and thus to be included in the formal humanitarian space as individual cases/files, and not as a collective displaced community. Their plight as collective communities was ignored not only in the aid context but also in the media.[47] Impoverished Iraqis thus came to realize that the conditions of -lessness was a prerequisite to obtain assistance of food and most-needed cash to cover expensive living costs in Jordan.

[47] See Peteet (2007).

Chapter Five

Ongoing changes in the system of aid and access to work in Jordan

During my fieldwork, I observed how, in the process of creating their spaces of *ʾamān*, Iraqis had constantly to negotiate their positions in Jordan. Some Iraqis, who had little or no access to employment and therefore also had difficulties in earning their own living, did their best to prove that they were eligible to the rights and benefits provided by the UNHCR system to asylum seekers and refugees. While other Iraqis tended to ignore the formal UNHCR protection systems, and in such cases the people involved turned to explore other possibilities of making their spaces of *ʾamān*.

In Chapter Three we saw several Iraqi academics and doctors in Jordan who tried to work in their professional occupations and maintain their careers. They had to learn how to cope with the changing conditions imposed by displacement and dispossession. While some succeeded to work as contracted temporary employees in private Jordanian universities and hospitals, or as volunteers in international organizations in Jordan, others decided to work inside Iraq under the protection of their tribe, ethnic group or neighbors, to support their family needs in Jordan. In general, after 2000, highly qualified Iraqi academics and doctors had to go through more complex experiences in negotiating the losses and gains involved in working at reduced conditions at Jordanian institutions; some who had less access to material and social capital either worked in a different field or had to sell their skills and expertise in degrading conditions. During their prolonged stay in Jordan, Iraqi professionals had to adjust their tactics and strategies to circumstances; according to their access to resources and the changing conditions of employment in the Jordanian labor market, and their different perceptions of well-being.

In Chapter Four we saw another type of adaptation, represented by Iraqi former state employees with less resources than the more affluent highly-skilled professionals. One common choice among Iraqis in that chapter was to contact the UNHCR and start a process of registering as asylum seeker first and then, apply for the status of refugee. In the period during which the applications were handled and the Iraqis were waiting for decisions they became involved in several important contexts. One process was a constant search for sources of income to sustain their households. But unlike the more affluent groups, these Iraqis had a

problem of getting access to any type of legal income within the Jordanian system. The second process was the one defined by UNHCR and the aid system, in which a screening was carried out to decide who was worthy of resettlement and further support. During their stay in Jordan, they could attend courses, workshops and seminars which represented one way of coping as the participants were paid travel allowance and got free meals; all mounting to whatever 'income' they had from remittances or irregular work, thus compensating for the lack of formal employment. The money was called "salary" and represented an alternative way for those Iraqis to expand their spaces of *ʾamān*.

This system of aid provided some Iraqis with a feeling that they continued to exist as professionals who could create a possibility to work and a purpose to live in dignity. But beyond this the opportunities available for those Iraqis went through significant changes during periods in which the aid system experienced reduction in available funds, and also experienced a change in the overall policies from "humanitarianism" to "developmental aid."

The above summaries of major conclusions in Chapters Three and Four leave us with a need to explore further two crucial contexts that affected the possibilities for these groups of former Iraqi state employees and professionals to help themselves. These two contexts were: first, the Jordanian context of employment in relation to 'foreign' workers or 'strangers', the two labels governing Iraqis' presence in the job market in Jordan, and the second context was to understand better the changing context of international aid provision for refugees as developmental aid which is designed to "help refugees help themselves." In this chapter, I shall discuss both contexts and relate them to the major themes in Chapters Three and Four.

The first context -of work for Iraqis in Jordan

If we move back in time to the 1990s, the possibilities for Iraqis to find work in Jordan were more promising. As described in Chapter 3, Iraqi academics who moved to work in Jordan during the times of *al-ḥiṣār* found employment in Jordanian universities and were paid following the Jordanian academic scale based on their academic qualifications. But this was to change. With the acceleration of privatization and the opening of several private universities in Jordan, many non-Jordanian academics were dismissed from governmental universities, despite the role they played in establishing some colleges in the fields of engineering, medicine and other scientific fields. Following the 2003 war, many former Iraqi

professors who were employed at governmental universities had to move to work in private universities on temporary contract basis.

The cases presented in Chapter Three show how Iraqi highly skilled professionals dealt in different ways with the restrictive structures of employment in Jordan, in their attempts to live according to their perceived standards of well-being as professionals practicing their careers. The ability to practice one's profession also allowed the Iraqi professionals somehow to maintain his/her former social status and also to secure a decent living for one's family. This does not mean that all former Iraqi professionals had similar chances to practice their profession. According to my observations in the field, the ability to practice one's career was conditioned by access to additional resources through remittances sent from Iraq or relatives based elsewhere, in addition to the money initially brought from Iraq either from savings or selling properties. Such resources were important during the period it took to find work, or to pay for the annual residence permit. This is significant because the availability of funds kept many Iraqis out of the alternative process, to seek assistance through UNHCR. Access to other resources was thus essential to avoid being caught in the complex process of defining who was what – a refugee, a guest, a foreigner and so on. One way out was actually to start migrating back to Iraq, turning into "circular migrants" relying on tribal networks and new strategies of hiding to avoid death threats and other risky conditions.

Iraqis who had been professionals and state-employees in Baghdad, had to learn how to extend their spaces of *ʾamān* by exploring work options in Jordan. Unlike their former situation in Iraq, where they were supported by the Iraqi state, in Jordan they had to learn how to cope without the support of a state. Here they had to depend on their own skills and talents to find an employment opportunity. The cases presented in Chapter Three show how this group of Iraqis had to learn how to preserve their former identity as professionals through dealing with the reductionist conditions of displacement, using various coping strategies. In this chapter I shall be more concerned in exploring the challenges they met in their search for employment. The highly skilled professionals were not alone in meeting such challenges. The search for work, and stable employment that could provide a source of income, was a widely shared experience for former Iraqi state-employees in all sectors, including Iraqis who gradually turned to the UNHCR for support. Even though we might find winners and losers among Iraqis in terms of securing job positions in Jordan, yet all Iraqis, were affected–at various levels– by the ambiguous Jordanian rules concerning employment regulations for

refugees or foreign workers (as Iraqis were often categorized when it comes to their right to work).

As explained in previous chapters, the possibilities of work were critical for the production of *ʾamān* among this group of Iraqi former state employees and professionals. However, the situation with regard to employment opportunities in Jordan was at best unclear, as described by one Iraqi volunteer:

> There is no work, no money! As Iraqis in Jordan, most of us spend our days imprisoned in a narrow apartment, doing nothing. In Iraq I had a regular job, respect and social status but I am no one here, I am nothing! And you keep lecturing me to lecture other Iraqis that I am a welcomed brother and guest; you are telling me that I am a "special" guest with rights from the UNHCR, but I don't know where to go to claim those rights, I even don't know what these rights are.

It was obvious that the Iraqi presence in Jordan was conditioned by several factors which made it difficult to describe the limits of Iraqis' rights to reside, work or settle and resettle in that country. Um-Omar, a former Iraqi librarian summarized briefly the ambiguity of the rules and regulations governing the Iraqi presence in Jordan. Her protesting statement above occurred during a workshop in which a Jordanian lawyer was dictating the rules and regulations of the new family protection law issued in Jordan in 2008 to a group of Iraqi volunteers contracted temporarily by various international and local NGOs. The workshop was held in a 4-Star hotel in Amman on 21 March 2011, a Jordanian employee from an international organization introduced the lawyer-trainer as a legal consultant who will deliver an 'important' session on the legal procedures to control domestic violence in Jordan. This session, as presented in the next section provides some details of the ambiguous conditions governing Iraqis' access to work and protection in Jordan.

The rumor of a 'secret pardon'

At the beginning of the workshop, the Iraqi volunteers were asked to share cases of domestic violence they had to deal with during their home-visits and interactions with Iraqi 'refugee' families. The Iraqi participants mentioned several cases in which they were involved as part of their work as volunteers to provide outreach services to fellow Iraqis registered in the UNHCR. They indicated how, in most of the cases, the Jordanian legal bodies, police and family protection units failed to protect the abused Iraqi woman. In the three main cases shared by the volunteers during the workshop, the Iraqi woman's attempt to leave the conditions of abuse forced her to search for work to support herself and her children, away

from an abusive husband or the bad conditions at protection centers. However, as presented by the volunteers, the abused Iraqi women, in the three cases of domestic violence, ended up facing more abusive conditions committed by their Jordanian employers.

The lawyer asked the volunteers to focus on the incidents of domestic violence, which is the topic of the workshop, but the Iraqi participants wanted her to address "the other violence" as they called it: "the economic violence by exploitative Jordanian employers." This opened the floor to questions on the right to work. Most of the questions were ignored by the lawyer who, in turn, posed a question aiming to challenge the participants to rethink the cases of domestic violence they shared, and most importantly to try to indicate that 'employment in Jordan' is not the theme of the workshop and in her opinion, it should not be an Iraqi concern:

> All the examples you presented, are of Iraqis, this means that they are refugees. As refugees in Jordan, do you have the right to work here?

The nineteen male and female Iraqis who were present in this workshop were 'working' as volunteers in several international or local organizations. They argued with the lawyer about a so-called 'secret pardon', a term that I remembered hearing from other Iraqis in the field, but in this workshop, the volunteers referred every time to the source of the 'secret pardon' or the rumor (according to the lawyer). They claimed to have heard this from an employee in an NGO or international organization who told them that "as Iraqis they are now permitted to work to support themselves, and that the Jordanian authorities will pardon those Iraqis caught working, without a work-permit."

The so-called secret pardon seemed to represent one hope for this group of Iraqis to lift the restrictions imposed on the possibility to find employment in Jordan. They explained that according to the secret pardon, any Iraqi who manages to secure a job contract is encouraged to contact the Jordanian Ministry of Labor to obtain a work permit. Following this she or he could approach the Ministry of Interior to apply for an official residence permit, and as a result they would be exempt from the fines accumulated due to the expiry of their entry visa, which was another problem Iraqis had to deal with in Jordan.

The lawyer appeared confused when she could not proceed with the workshop as initially planned, while she seemed totally unprepared to discuss the legal procedures concerning

employment of Iraqis in Jordan. Instead of addressing the concerns expressed by Iraqis about the right to work, the lawyer ordered the Iraqi participants to reveal the sources of their information by repeatedly asking them to check the credibility of the sources of this "rumor" [as she referred to the secret pardon]. On the other hand, the Iraqi volunteers seemed confident in their responses to the lawyer by presenting more examples of specific cases in which some non-governmental organizations like Care International and the Legal Aid had provided assistance to Iraqis to obtain work permits in certain job positions including nursing, restaurant service (as waiters) and car mechanics (as technicians). Iraqi participants explained that they were told that this is only one step within a larger process aiming to facilitate the working conditions for Iraqis as part of the 'secret pardon'.

The lawyer, though acknowledging the role of the organizations mentioned by Iraqi volunteers, questioned the authority of these organizations when it comes to discussing amendments and changes in the legal situation for Iraqi refugees. To make it more meaningful in legal terms, the lawyer questioned the sources of the new information shared by participants. She considered their legal source as weak and referred Iraqis to the conditions listed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the UNHCR and the Jordanian government in 1998. By this, she concluded that the claims presented by the Iraqi volunteers who assumed that Iraqis are permitted to work in Jordan totally contradict the 'official' legal regulations governing Iraqis' temporary presence in Jordan as 'refugees' who (according to the lawyer) have one legal authority to consult, which is the UNHCR. She further clarified that according to the MOU (see Appendix A), "Jordan is not a refugee country"; and although it receives refugees, the employment of refugees is not permitted, because, as the lawyer explained:

> The government fears that if refugees find jobs in Jordan, they will eventually settle here. For you [the lawyer addressed the Iraqi volunteers] the only durable solutions are repatriation or resettlement in a third country.

The argument went on and the participants continued to refer to concrete examples of what they termed as "the recent changes in the Iraqi refugees' rights to employment" which they heard from the organizations they were affiliated to as volunteers and trainees. Unlike the legal document (the MOU) the lawyer referred to, the participants— when challenged by the lawyer to show their sources— referred to what they called the secret pardon or "royal exception" by the Jordanian King offering Iraqis who are willing to work the possibility to do so.

The lawyer in her attempts to redirect discussions back toward the planned workshop topics referred to the MOU as the main legal source for Iraqis to consult. This did not seem convincing to the Iraqi participants. But the only response from the lawyer was to repeat that Iraqis should refer to what she called their "correct" legal source of reference. "The UNHCR is your source of protection and the authority (*marji'iyya*) to which you, as Iraqi refugees in Jordan, should always refer."

The lawyer used the term *marji'iyya* in Arabic **مرجعية**; which is commonly used to refer to the highest or supreme ranking religious authority or other legal source of authority reference to follow. The lawyer's reference to the UNHCR as the sole source of authority and protection which Iraqis could consult created further confusion, especially that these Iraqi volunteers had already experienced contradictory discursive practices of protection in Jordan. Presenting the UNHCR as the only *marji'iyya* or the highest legal authority and reference did not serve the lawyer's case in this workshop when one of the participants, who was following silently the discussions finally decided to raise his hand to demand the right to speak, and directed his brief comment to the lawyer:

> Your use of the term refugee is not correct, I am constantly addressed as a guest in Jordan. I am not a refugee here.

At this point the lawyer, who seemed already exhausted and confused by the unexpected turn of events, ignored the last comment on the refugee vs. guest in the Jordanian discourse concerning Iraqis, instead, she announced that it was time to conclude the workshop, one hour before the planned schedule– by challenging the participants to reconsider their use of the secret pardon:

> You should stop repeating rumors, as often our Iraqi "brothers"[48] do! This is the way rumors spread, instead you should ask yourselves why is this "pardon" described as "secret"? And if you were told that this is secret, why do you mention it publicly? From my position as a lawyer, I can offer you a legal advice not to disclose this issue of the secret pardon because if *al-mukhābarāt* (the secret police) hear you, you will be deported. I am giving you this legal advice: You have to be sure of the news you spread, before you repeat such information. In the Iraqi community, a term like this [she referred to the secret pardon mentioned by Iraqi volunteers several times during the workshop while she avoided using it] can quickly spread and turn into a problem. My advice to you is that you are a "refugee", and your *marji'iyya* is the UNHCR.

[48] Brothers is another term used by Jordanian officials to describe the Iraqi presence in Jordan in addition to guests and refugees.

The workshop and arguments stopped here without resolving the issues presented either on domestic violence or employment conditions concerning Iraqis in Jordan. This final statement by the lawyer sounded more like a threat than a legal advice, particularly when *al-mukhābarāt* was mentioned. It seemed the lawyer sensed this as she ended the workshop on a more positive note, stating that such cases as the ones presented and discussed during the current workshop were good because they helped to enrich training events. But her comment was met only by more silence. To save the situation she went on to pose a question addressing the silent participant who has made the last brief comment of being a guest not a refugee in Jordan: "According to the document you received from the UNHCR, are you an asylum seeker or a refugee?" The participant responded, briefly, as any wise person would respond to avoid further troubles with *al-mukhābarāt*: "I do not like any of the two terms." No further comments were made by other participants and the workshop was over.

After the workshop ended, the Iraqi volunteers proceeded their discussions over lunch, in the absence of the lawyer. I was sitting next to Um-Omar while we were waiting for the lunch to be served (lunch was scheduled one hour later according to the original workshop plan). Um-Omar expressed her disappointment with the workshop and the lack of clarity concerning what she called "Iraqi rights" in Jordan: "You see how they [she referred to trainers and organizations who organize the workshops; and the lawyer in this case] never give us direct responses to our questions." The discussion then evolved with other participants about the lack of jobs and employment opportunities which they described as the biggest problem Iraqi families faced in Jordan. The parents who used to work in Baghdad had not only lost their professional status in Jordan, they had also lost the ability to provide for their household and children's education. This concern "finding a job, a stable source of living" was shared by many Iraqis I met in the field and the workshop was an opportunity for the Iraqi volunteers to discuss their biggest concern.

The above case is one example of the ambiguous conditions in which Iraqis had to negotiate their terms of survival in Amman. In general, there was little space in Jordan for the Iraqis to discuss their situation in a more collective manner so they were left to make their own decisions and to pursue individual strategies. Part of the reason for this was to be found in the set up of the assistance programs provided to Iraqis in Jordan by International aid organizations, and Jordanian Royal Decrees. For instance towards the end of my fieldwork

(2010-2011), the Jordanian government announced an expansion of the protection space for the Iraqis, including a General Pardon Law which "allowed" Iraqis to regularize their stay and apply for work permits. Some more details appear in the following excerpt from the universal periodic review by the UNHCR that was submitted for the Offices of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report in March 2013:

> "Since 6 December 2009, the [Jordanian] Government has had a more lenient approach vis-à-vis the Iraqi refugees in Jordan, allowing Iraqis to work in professions not occupied by Jordanians and approving some vocational training programs. On 11 January 2011, the Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Interior decided to open more work sectors for Iraqis in Jordan, as they were the vast majority of the refugee population. This decision had significant impact on persons of concern in Jordan, as it followed General Pardon Law No. 15, issued on 1 June 2011, which waived, among other things, overstay fees –thereby allowing Iraqis to regularize their stay, secure a residency and apply for work permits - and led to a new opportunity for Iraqis and non-Iraqis to work in a wide range of sectors" (2013:2-3).

The workshop described above took place on 21 March 2011, and it seems that the news about a "secret pardon" that was shared among Iraqis was related to these developments. As the UNHCR report cited above indicates, the General Pardon Law was officially issued by King Abdullah on 1 June 2011, and it confirmed the rumors in the workshop as the new law waived overstay residence fees and indicated that Iraqis could apply for work permits. However, the protective space soon shrunk again with the rise of the Syrian refugee problem towards the end of 2011.

Although the "secret" pardon (when revealed) indicated that Iraqis could apply for work permits, in practice Iraqis were still treated as foreign workers. In official reports by UNHCR, they were asylum-seekers and refugees and the Jordanian government representatives kept referring to Iraqis as guests and brothers, but when it comes to their legal rights to employment, they were considered as foreigners. Therefore, also in reality, they had to apply for work permits, like other foreigners to be eligible to work.

Working in conditions of "permanent 'temporariness'" between rumors and 'royal' exceptions/decrees

The effect of the confusing situation was that more often than not Iraqis were denied the right to work in Jordan. As per the findings of FAFO in 2007, only 22% of Iraqi adults were employed. During my presence in Jordan, most of the Iraqis I met used to work illegally (and less often on temporary contract basis) and were paid less than Jordanians doing the same

jobs. Being an Iraqi guest or foreigner in Jordan, where the living expenses are much higher than in Iraq and other neighboring countries means that Iraqis had to search for ways to increase their access to cash, and extend their spaces of *ʾamān*.

Most Iraqis reside in the Jordanian capital Amman. The majority who do not have a regular source of funding, tend to rely on multiple sources including family and relatives' remittances, illegal work in Amman and organizational assistance; they live in the area known as East or popular Ammani neighbourhoods (Amman *al-sharqiyya*/ *al-shaʿabiyya*). While 'rich' Iraqis, who have enough resources, usually live in more affluent neighborhoods in the so-called West Amman (Amman *al-gharbiyya*). Some could afford to buy annual residence permits that give them the right to travel freely and apply legally for a job (for JD 50,000/ USD 70,500 bank deposit that can be reduced to JD 25,000/ USD 35,250). Some also own the apartment they reside in. For the more affluent group described in Chapter Three, Amman feels like a second capital city after Baghdad where they can do business, live as authors, academics or artists, wear the clothes they want and walk in the street without fear of being kidnapped, killed or threatened. Above all, they can get access to services, especially electricity. Electricity was the most celebrated service in daily discussions among Iraqis to the extent that some used to joke describing their presence in Amman as "electricity refugees."

By the time, Iraqis learnt that they could extend their space of *ʾamān*, through buying a residence permit that was officially given to investors or by seeking the benefit of a royal decree. One interesting exceptional case I learnt about while in the field was an Iraqi musician who received a residence permit by a royal decree. In my visit to this Iraqi musician family house, they expressed their relief for having an annual residence permit. When I asked if they had to pay 'the investor banking deposit', they said that their residence-permit was free and showed me an official letter with a list of names of other musicians who were granted this permit through a royal decree. The members of Kaẓim al-Saher's band were given rights to a free residence permit which could be renewed annually following their performance in a concert on the occasion of the Jordanian king's birthday. The musicians who played with the famous Iraqi singer, got this exceptional treatment when the king's office wanted to pay al-Saher and his musical group. Al-Saher, one of the most famous contemporary Iraqi singers, demanded no fee, but requested the right to legal residence for his group of 24 musicians and their families, which they were given in November 2005

according to a royal decree issued by the Royal Hashemite Court in the same year (2005). On the basis of this letter the musicians whose names were listed in the letter could gain Jordanian residency valid for one year.

ʾAmān in conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity

Iraqis in Jordan found themselves in a strange position: on the one side, they have been told that they are "special" guests with rights protected by several actors: the UNHCR, local and international non-governmental organizations and the Jordanian government. However, when it comes to their legal residential or labor rights, Iraqis who have entered Jordan under the residency laws as foreigners, will be considered illegal when their visa expires, after six months unless they pay a fine of JD 1.5 on daily basis. This lack of legal status remains the main protection challenge and inhibits the ability of this group of Iraqi professionals and former government employees to reside, move and work legally in Jordan and most of the time, this pushed Iraqis into "the exploitative informal sector, or in some cases, 'partnerships' with local Jordanians. Even those with legal status (residence permit or temporary visas) struggle to obtain work permits" (Chatty and Mansour, 2011: 100).

The fact that the host country, Jordan, did not deal with Iraqis as refugees and decided to call them guests seemed to have a profound effect for both sides. For Jordan as a country whose population is mixed, with large numbers of Palestinian refugees who were offered Jordanian citizenship, new refugee flows were perceived as a threat to the national demographic structure. As Marfleet notes: "The presence of refugees may be so disturbing to states that whole refugee populations are marked out as fundamentally alien and unwelcome, a characterization that may persist for years or even for generations" (2006: 200). In addition, the Jordanian government had multiple priorities in using the guest label which served more than one reason as explained by De-Bel Air: to maintain foreign investment; to continue to be seen as an ally to the US and a mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict; to abide by the political and economic reforms they had committed to; and to ensure domestic security and stability (ibid., 2007). When it comes to the Jordanian population, in a country with poor resources, they felt threatened by the newcomers who would be sharing an already impoverished space. In this confusing context, Iraqis in Jordan had to struggle to find a safe space during prolonged displacement. The following brief description of the living conditions of an Iraqi

musician in Amman reflects the feelings of being stuck in conditions of instability and uncertainty shared among several Iraqis I met in Jordan:

> We have to learn how to live, with a razor-blade in one's throat بلاّع الموس", as described by an Iraqi musician who left Iraq in 2004. In December 2010, he was still classified by the UNHCR as 'asylum seeker', because he was not eligible for the refugee certificate status or for resettlement (due to his long service in the military, where he worked during day-time, while he worked as musician in the evenings). Lucky to be a musician by profession and education as a graduate of the High Institute of Music in Baghdad, he managed to work illegally in Amman's restaurants and hotels and could make enough money to cover his family's expenses. Living as musician in Baghdad was no longer possible as his friends and former colleagues were threatened and targeted by militias of religious bodies. He is not considered a potential case for assistance according to the UNHCR criteria as he is not vulnerable enough: "I can afford to rent this furnished apartment in Dahiyet al-Hussain (a relatively affluent neighborhood in West Amman), as long as I succeed in finding work. The UN social worker reported that I am living a good life and do not deserve cash assistance." He continues to live and work illegally in Amman and travels to Baghdad to visit his parents when the security conditions seem safe enough: "We are stuck here in the transit, between Baghdad and Amman, like someone who has a razor-blade in his throat, if he tries to swallow it, he'll die, and if he tries to remove it, it's risky, one may die too.

The fear of being 'illegal' became another source of insecurity Iraqis experienced at various levels. The 2007 decision of the UNHCR to consider Iraqis as refugees on a *prima facie* basis did not change the conditions of survival for most Iraqis (I met). The fact that no formal arrangements were made to receive Iraqis as refugees meant that they were responsible to secure their own stay within the limits allowed by available resources. During my time in the field this lack of clear legal procedures governing the Iraqi presence in Jordan was one source of the ambiguity experienced among various actors in the field, especially Iraqis. According to a UNHCR report (2013), when it comes to employment, Article (8) in the MOU (Appendix A) states that a legally resident refugee may "work for his own account whenever the laws and regulations permit", and relevant laws stipulate that refugees and asylum seekers shall be treated as equal to non-citizens regarding work permits. Article (9) adds that "refugees holding degrees recognized by the competent Jordanian authorities could practice liberal professions if the laws and regulations permit." However, according to a report compiled by the UNHCR and submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Right in March 2013, the Jordanian government has had a more lenient approach vis-à-vis the Iraqi refugees in Jordan. From December 2009 the authorities allowed Iraqis to work in professions not occupied by Jordanians and they also approved some vocational training

programs (such as nursing and car mechanics as mentioned by the Iraqi volunteers in the workshop described above). In this confusing situation very few of the Iraqis I met, whether the highly-skilled professionals in Chapter Three or the asylum seekers and refugees of Chapter Four, were able to establish a permanent adaptive strategy. They were left with their own abilities to improvise.

The second context -of aid systems and dynamics in the formal protection space

Another key context for Iraqis in Amman was the aid system. The limited yet needed assistance programs provided to Iraqis in Jordan by aid organizations were not fixed. Thus, also here we see confusion. It is true, as the lawyer in the case above mentioned, that the limits of the protection space were listed in the MOU signed between the UNHCR and the Jordanian government in 1998, however the services, rights and assistance provided depended on the amount of funds from donor aid in addition to the royal decrees (commonly known as exception rules by the King) or Pardon Laws issued by the Jordanian King.

For example, the so called protection space increased in 2007 following an international conference organized by the UNHCR in Geneva in which the high commissioner for refugees announced that "the humanitarian dimension of the [Iraqi] problem can no longer be overlooked." In 2007 a royal decree opened public schooling to Iraqi children regardless of their legal status. Prior to that period, Iraqis with limited access to resources from their home country did not send their children to school as they could not afford private school fees. Yet, after 2007, other problems appeared, such as crowding in school classes especially in the eastern Amman poorer districts, issues of poor performance, bullying, and limited capacity. Some of these issues were addressed by aid agencies and UN organizations while other forms of assistance were restricted only to the most vulnerable Iraqi families who could not afford to pay for school supplies, uniforms, or stationery and transportation fees. Middle-class Iraqi professionals, who had access to free education at all levels in their home country and employment opportunities, had to learn how to accommodate to these changes in Jordan and elsewhere.

The above increase in funding (in 2007) allowed for a brief period with expansion of the formal protection space provided for Iraqis in Jordan through reinforcing the capacity of Jordanian institutions in educational and health sectors. And as indicated earlier, on 1 June

2011, King Abdullah officially issued another General Pardon Law that waived overstay residence fees and indicated that Iraqis could apply for work permits. However, in practice, the protective limits were not clear and they soon shrunk again with the rise of the Syrian refugee problem.

To understand the ambiguity in the formal protection space, it is important to examine the role of the different parties involved: UNHCR and specifically the refugee protection notion; Jordan as the host state and its role as provider and recipient of international aid; and the Iraqis' not only when categorized as refugees, but also as active agents in their encounters with aid. Here I will focus on the implications of different understandings of such terms as 'refugee' label and the formal 'space of protection', offered by UNHCR and other international providers of services for Iraqis in Jordan. My second focus is on the role of Jordan as host state for Iraqi and other refugee communities.

The 'refugee'- an unsettling notion

The formally used definition of a refugee has been made available to us in 1951 by the Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees:

> "A refugee is a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country…."

The Convention "defined the refugee in strictly limited terms: refugeehood, the status associated with the forced migrant, was reduced to a single legal definition. The formal definition of a refugee produced a legal category of persons which empirically consisted of the large numbers of people fleeing Eastern Europe following World War II. Complex experiences associated with historical and political changes were thus reduced to a single legal dimension. The concept of refugee was expanded by the Convention's 1967 Protocol and by regional conventions in Africa and Latin America to include persons who had fled war or other violence in their home country. The definition was an expression of the priorities of Western governments then deeply involved in the ideological struggles of the Cold War. At the time they viewed refugees solely as victims of specific forms of political persecution" (Marfleet, 2006: 11). However, refugees existed prior to the twentieth century, although not in the fullest modern sense, in terms of their relation to the hierarchy of organization

manifested in the citizen/nation/state ensemble (Soguk, 1999: 58; Chatty, 2010). The lead international agency coordinating the categorization process after mid-20th century was the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), mandated by the United Nations to protect refugees and find durable solutions for their plight.

The UNHCR activities were and are still based on a framework of international law and standards that include the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 on international humanitarian law, as well as an array of international and regional treaties and declarations, both binding and non-binding, that specifically address the needs of refugees. Thus international refugee law is part of a larger mosaic of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The major 'solutions' UNHCR is working with to solve the refugee problem are voluntary repatriation, resettlement and integration. Displaced persons, like the Iraqis, were looking at three options. First, local integration in the host country. But this option was rejected by the Jordanian Kingdom who is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention that defines the rights and obligations of refugees. In addition, the kingdom feared any influx of refugees in the country as Jordan already had one of the highest ratio of refugees to indigenous population as a result of the previous Palestinian refugee waves in 1948 and 1967. The second option is repatriation or return to Iraq. This was possible but not encouraged by the UNHCR. Still, the organization provided limited financial assistance to Iraqis who chose to repatriate voluntarily. It is not clear whether the Iraqis who returned were pushed because of uncertainty in their legal status in Jordan (and Syria), or because they could no longer afford to stay in these host states without any prospect of employment. On the other hand, at the end of 2007 the Iraqi government sponsored television ads that portrayed families returning to safe and happy conditions, and promised about US $800 to those who returned, and, for a while, sponsored free buses from the borders of Syria and Jordan to Baghdad (Zwiebach, 2007: 786). In 2009, the UNHCR also launched a project to facilitate the transition from asylum to the return and reintegration of returnees in Iraq during 2009–2010. The project document published online explains that Iraqis wishing to return would be assisted with shelter rehabilitation and returnee transitional cash allowance for a period of six months. This did not work as many families were forced to flee Iraq again. The third option, resettlement in a third country, was seen as "the most appropriate solution for Iraqi refugees", as I was told in an interview with the UNHCR spokeswoman in February 2011. But, she added: "resettlement is designed to protect the most vulnerable of the refugees; those who cannot return to Iraq and cannot be

assisted to stay in Amman by the UNHCR. And most important of all they should fulfill the refugee status requirements and should have a good story with a clean record, which means not being involved in the previous regime wars and killings."

Though resettlement to a third country was described by the UNHCR and host country authorities as the most appropriate solution, some Iraqis who thought resettlement would put an end to the conditions of uncertainty in Jordan, failed to cope in the third country, especially those who lacked access to financial and social capital. I met several Iraqis, one family and four separate individual cases who could not survive in the United States which was the biggest country of resettlement for Iraqis after 2007. They returned to Iraq and then to Jordan again, where I met them. While some of them were still unable to work and cover their living expenses in Jordan and tried to get resettlement in Europe or Australia, others have had to learn how to create their own space of *'amān* in Jordan.

Looking at the practices of UNHCR it became clear to me that the emphasis of the UNHCR was and is on the refugee as an individual person. And as noted in Chapter Four this is so despite the fact that the communities of refugees for whom this UN organization caters, such as Iraqis, are groups and masses of people who fled and were directly forced out of their original places of residence "owing to a well-founded fear." Refugees in international organizations' discourse and within their activities are basically constructed as humanitarian objects and individual victims who require aid to avoid a larger humanitarian or political crisis; or what Malkki described as "a singular category of humanity within the international order of things. […] The humanitarian interventions tend to be constituted as the opposite of political ones" (1996: 378). While it is easy to agree with this, what I observed during my fieldwork was also that something new was in the making in the way UNHCR was operating. And this change was clearly also related both to local politics in Jordan and to the wider field of global politics. Let me start with brief description of the changes that concerned the Jordanian involvement.

Transformation of aid: From centralized humanitarian protection managed by the UNHCR to developmental programs managed by contracted organizations

Dealing with the postinvasion Iraqi refugee flow (and the following Syrian refugee crisis) involved a complex process of learning for the UNHCR and international aid actors in

general who had to rethink their mandate,[49] and make amendments to services' provision (Chatty, 2017a; Kelberer, 2017). The UNHCR had to revise its urban refugee policy, in response to the large numbers of displaced Iraqis after the US-led invasion in 2003. According to Kelberer the revision policy issued in 2009 "represented a major departure from the UNHCR's previous stance, for the first time stating that urban refugees had the right not only to live outside of camps, but to access international assistance" (2017,156).

During my fieldwork in 2010-2011, international donor support was channeled mainly through the UNHCR and the International Relief and Development Organization (IRD, funded mainly by the USA government), and other foreign governmental and non-governmental organizations. They (international donors) had designed their protection programs within this framework to be channeled through local and other international organizations which have, in turn, to compete for funds and bid for their share of resources dedicated to address the "Iraqi crisis." To support the most vulnerable Iraqis, the UNHCR and IRD coordinate their aid work through partner organizations: international organizations and a larger local network run by the so-called "royal organizations." The competition for the main bulk of international aid money coming to Iraqis in Jordan has generally been confined to the large Jordanian royal organizations including: Nour Al-Hussain Foundation (chaired by Queen Nour, wife of King Hussain Bin Talal, father of current King Abdullah II of Jordan), The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (chaired by Princess Basma Bint Talal, Sister of King Hussain and Aunt of current King Abdullah II of Jordan) and Jordan River Foundation (chaired by Queen Rania, wife of current king Abdullah). These organizations, in turn, deliver services to Iraqis through other Jordanian community centers and privately contracted service providers. This system of aid has been promoted as an 'outreach service' that can better respond to the essential needs of urban refugees with access to healthcare, education, entrepreneurship training projects for income-generation skills, legal protection and other in-kind and cash donations.

[49] The memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between the Jordanian government and the UNHCR in 1998, as mentioned earlier, has been amended in 2014, during the rise of the Syrian refugee crisis. However, the amendments did not address the two major concerns observed among refugees regarding official work or residence permits. Only two articles were amended in 2014 with the aim to give the UNHCR more time to deal with the large number of refugees, as follows: The article that used to give the UN agency between 21 and 30 days to examine applications was amended to extend the period given to the UNHCR to assess refugees applications to 90 days. The second amendment stipulates extending the validity of a refugee identification card to one year instead of six months. For further details check Khetam Malkawi's article in Jordan Times published on 31 March 2014 at: https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/gov%E2%80%99t-unhcr-sign-amendments-cooperation-memo

The above-described style of decentralized re-organization of humanitarian aid by the UNHCR in the host country represented one side of a shift from the long-term "care and maintenance" programs delivered in refugee camps to what is described as "development-oriented approaches in the refugee responses" (Crisp, 2001). It partly serves saving high expenses involved in centralized management in refugee camps, especially when resettlement and repatriation do not seem likely in the short-term, which means that refugee camps could turn into a permanent solution. De-centralization also serves the international community to avoid long-term commitment by passing the responsibility of care and protection to the host state's institutions. While all the above-mentioned partners receive their 'shares' from the developmental donor-aid, Iraqis, who are often announced as the main target of this aid, have to compete (with agreed percentage of the poorest Jordanians) for the limited funds that are packaged in the form of training courses, travel-allowances and few meals and snacks (their share from the 'hospitality' item, as planned in the project budget sheet). Eventually, this arrangement of aid provision, which was designed to target Iraqis through Jordanian institutions and community associations, increased the tension and suffering of impoverished Iraqis who had no access to alternative resources and could not find employment in Jordan and therefore, grew more dependent on the limited aid available (as explained in Chapter 4). On the other hand, representatives of the Jordanian organizations I met, explained that they too had to compete for funds to cover their staff expenses and services, and support rising numbers of refugees, especially after the Syrian crisis, in addition to providing services to the poor Jordanians within the communities they originally work for.

The problems with the development-oriented approach

According to Kelberer, this development-oriented approach favored by donor organizations, prioritizes temporary local integration and is backed by transfers of both humanitarian and development aid to host states: the right to work and right to education are promoted as "pathways to enhance urban-refugee protections, integrate them more fully into local structures, and create add-on benefits for the host state and local communities" (2017:155). But there were problems, as observed in the field among Iraqis. One result of the decentralization aspect in the developmental approach was that with several organizations delivering services, there were an increase in service-points to which Iraqis could turn for assistance nearby their places of residence. Yet the quality of the service varied depending on

the centre that provided it. It also meant that a considerable amount of the aid assigned for Iraqis would be spent to cover the logistical and managerial expenses of the UNHCR partner organizations and the Jordanian government, as expressed by Chatelard in her review of the Iraqi refugee crisis: "A humanitarian agenda serves Jordan's governmental interests better than those of Iraqis who have had no choice but to look for safety and a future outside of their country" (2008: 6).

A second problem is related to short-term contracts and temporality of aid. The temporary aspect of protection and aid services had negative effects on both the Iraqi recipients and the aid workers and organizations. Initially the services provided to Iraqis on the basis of vulnerability addressed urgent needs, but, since they now were funded on a project basis, this meant that the need had to be quantified (according to measurable evidence), however, the response is according to the funds available, regardless of the need (even if the need is defined as urgent). I was told by several organizations that Iraqis were usually informed in advance about the range of the services they could obtain from various organizations, this might provide some relief for the organizations, but for the Iraqis, it certainly produced confusion and increased their feelings of uncertainty and fear, as illustrated in the following case I witnessed during my fieldwork.

I do not know what happened to that woman whom I had met during a lunch with an Iraqi friend, a volunteer whom I met in several training events. I still remember the *istikān* tea cup and her trembling hand stirring the spoon. I had almost finished drinking my first cup of tea, while writing down the recipe for the rice *kubba* that my friend cooked alongside three other delicious dishes for lunch (*biryāni*, potato *kubba* and rice/*timān kubba*). My friend asked to refill my cup and poured more tea, while the other woman, was still stirring with the spoon although there was no more sugar to dissolve. My friend asked her if she needed more sugar, but she did not answer her and turned to me asking if I knew somebody that could help fund her treatment. My friend told her: "But no, she is a student, not an aid worker!" The woman did not seem to listen to us. She explained how she took part in a project on "early breast cancer detection," sponsored by an international medical organization that funded mammogram screening sessions for Iraqi women. She mentioned how she had then carelessly listened to the social worker when the latter tried to emphasize the importance of going to regular checkups and how she had gone for the mammogram though she did not have any visible signs of the disease. She could not hide her tears when she said that the mammogram

had revealed a tumor and the need for an immediate operation. When she contacted the social worker to inform her of the mammogram results, the social worker's response was that the project was solely covering the mammogram test, and that treatment was not part of the project outcomes. The social worker advised her to contact other donors. While my friend kept repeating "may God help you", the woman went on describing details of her suffering and efforts to secure funds for house rent, her son's education, and the treatment of her sick husband. She addressed her talk to me most of the time, hoping that I might be able to help. I could see it in her eyes when she finished the story, she looked at me anticipating some response. When she heard nothing from me except some words of sympathy, she asked me directly if I could help or advise her on where to go for assistance. And I had to clarify my position as a student again to which she responded with an angry question: "Then if they don't have the money to treat us, why should they deceive us to do the free mammogram test? Our life here wasn't easy before their aid came and they turned it into hell now." During the time of my research, the already minimal funding underwent additional decrease, and most of the organizations had to stop some of the projects through which they provided services to Iraqi refugees.

Yet another problem brings us back to the issue of work, salaries and income. I observed many times how several Iraqis were struggling to extend their access to cash aid from all possible sources. Attending or delivering courses, often addressing irrelevant topics was one source to gain limited access to cash in the form of daily wage (as in the case of voluntary work as trainers) or travel allowance (in the case of trainee-participants). A visit I made to a local community center with representatives of one of the royal Jordanian organizations, mentioned above, which was contracted by an international organization to deliver services to Iraqi refugees provides an example of how the new development-oriented approach affected the possibility of Iraqis to use the courses and their travels to and from courses to earn extra money. The workshop I attended during my visit to the organization targeted young women in a training about reproductive health: the workers distributed leaflets with information on birth control to raise women awareness about pregnancy and other health-related issues. I spoke with some of the Iraqi women who attended, and they expressed that although the content of the training sessions at the center is boring but they continue to come to gain some cash. The cash in this case referred to the travel allowance.

At the end of the session, the aid worker explained that this is one in a series of workshops funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The organizer thanked the women for their commitment and attendance and explained that they will continue delivering training sessions to raise awareness about important themes. She announced the forthcoming program for 2011 which will focus on gender based violence after they completed the program on reproductive health during 2010, and opened the floor for questions. The only question that one woman asked, and she said that her question is a common concern shared by other women was about "cash": "what about the travel allowance? We leave our homes and come to the center and spend hours here listening to lectures." The response of the organizer was that in the new program, snacks will be provided but there will be no travel allowance (i.e. no cash) because the training sessions are designed to be delivered in one of the women's houses that should be in a walking distance from their own homes. The women's reaction was one of disappointment and they repeatedly raised their hands to ask about the travel allowance. The Iraqi volunteers (trainers), in turn, explained that this design of the courses made it more difficult to gather the required numbers of trainees: "It is good in the sense that the training provides a space to meet others and leave the confinement of the house, but many women stopped coming because it is no longer profitable without the travel allowance." In addition, according to aid workers and trainers, Iraqis preferred to learn more useful skills such as English language (for those waiting for resettlement), handicrafts and cooking, than sitting to listen to "boring" lectures about birth control or child learning disabilities or domestic violence… etc. Several Iraqi women whom I met during such courses had university degrees and professional experience, and they often complained about having to attend "boring courses."

Refugees as an important source to attract 'additional' international aid

The response of Jordan as a host state to this development-oriented approach was not unexpected. Jordan is dependent largely on foreign money to support its resource-poor economy (Massad, 2001: 15). As a state dependent on foreign money through grants, donor projects and remittances sent by Jordanians living and working abroad, especially in Gulf countries, Jordan easily accommodated to this development-oriented aid structure. Aid funds collected to cover expenses for hosting refugees represented another important source of aid for Jordan. Royal Jordanian organizations and local community centers benefited from more access to funding opportunities by attracting Iraqi refugees in their programs, and in

programs that were originally designed to target poor Jordanians. Kelberer provides additional context:

> "Jordan's first significant period of refugee-rentier behavior began during international negotiations for aid during the Iraqi refugee crisis in the Iraq War of 2003. As other sources of foreign aid had decreased in the 1990s and 2000s, Jordanian appeals for humanitarian aid during that war centered on the burden of hosting thousands of Iraqi refugees. The government highlighted the fact that Iraqi refugees lived entirely among the local population and directly affected the host community. Jordan has used its refugee policies as leverage in international negotiations to lobby for increased access to aid, and threatened to retract protections and services if it is not delivered. In 2013, for instance, the World Bank approved a $150 million loan to Jordan for its bread subsidy program despite its official stance against subsidies. In return, Jordan pledged to spend $55 million of the loan on subsidies for Syrian refugees. By using this strategy, Jordan was incentivized to inflate the size of the crisis and the level of need to elicit higher rent payments. It was criticized by many observers for allegedly over reporting the number of Iraqi refugees to gain more aid" (2017: 158).

The Jordanian government attempts to seek rents from refugees can be seen in international conferences. The Jordanian state received high levels of foreign aid, much of which went into local services, in exchange for providing Iraqis with temporary asylum (Seeley, 2016). In an already scarce job market, where Jordanians suffer unemployment and had to migrate in search for work in the Gulf, Jordan was trying to gain more access to aid to address Jordan's fiscal problems, ideally through loans and grants. Being the second largest host of refugees per capita in the world following Pakistan,[50] helping Jordan to help the refugees to stay within its borders turned aid provision to refugees into an important aid industry.

The changes introduced in the management of the protection space (towards a development-oriented aid structure) did not mean wider space of protection for Iraqis, as much as they benefited the Jordanian organizations. As mentioned earlier, only in January 2007, the UNHCR belatedly concluded that people fleeing Iraq were refugees "on a prima facie basis." This did not guarantee their status or security in the main neighboring hosting countries. Statistical reports indicate that Jordan received around 750,000[51] and Syria 1.4 million Iraqis. Iraqis were dispersed in urban areas, in a situation of legal and social insecurity, with limited

---

[50] Malkawi, Khetam. "Refugees constitute third of Jordan population — World Bank official." Published on 19 December 2015.
http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/refugees-constitute-third-jordan-population-%E2%80%94-world-bank-official

[51] The numbers of Iraqis in Jordan as announced by Jordanian officials in 2007 at a donor conference for the UNHCR was 750,000. However, the official number of registered Iraqis according to the UNHCR was 10,600, while according to a quantitative study by Fafo the number of Iraqis in 2007 was 161,000.

opportunities for engaging in professional pursuits or collective social activities. A complex set-up was deployed to protect and assist Iraqis in neighboring countries, supported by international funding and refugee resettlement schemes to western states restricted to certain so-called most vulnerable cases (Marfleet, 2007; Sassoon, 2008; Chatelard, 2009; Peteet, 2010b, Hoffman, 2016).

Furthermore, the development-oriented aid structure did not change much of the legal or social conditions of Iraqis in Jordan, as they were still treated as foreigners or 'guests' with limited opportunities to engage in the employment sector or organize collective initiatives in the public space. The Jordanian government "discouraged donors from projects that establish a refugee category" (Fagen, 2007: 11). Following an international appeal for funds, which as agreed were to be distributed through government channels to improve the Jordanian educational system and health services, the Jordanian government allowed (only in August 2007), on humanitarian grounds, Iraqi students enrollment in public schools and offered Iraqis in general access to primary health or emergency treatment regardless of their resident status. In my interview with a lawyer from Legal Aid, a Jordanian NGO providing legal services for refugees, the lawyer described the Iraqi's status in Jordan as a "distinguished" foreigner:

> Iraqis should know that they are foreigners in Jordan, they receive all the rights given to foreigners and have to fulfill their duties as foreigners; but as Iraqis they also receive special treatment and protection services from the UNHCR, so the conditions of an Iraqi foreigner are different from those of a French foreigner, the Iraqi is more "privileged" than other foreigners in Jordan, he is a distinguished foreigner.

Thus, the Iraqi entering Jordan on a three months visa, as most Iraqis whom I met in 2010 and 2011 did, was considered a foreigner. As a foreigner, she or he is not allowed to work and is obliged to leave the country and renew her/his visa to avoid accumulating fines. Following the expiry of the visa, the Iraqi should pay JD 1.5 (US $ 2) per day as a fine. The Legal Aid lawyer indicated that many times Iraqis faced troubles resulting from the 'rumors' they tend to exchange. The main problems she discussed were related to residence and work permits. The lawyer explained that most Iraqis who did not leave the country to renew their visas were not deported as the UNHCR interferes to protect them, in addition to various levels of leniency by the Jordanian government after 2007. She mentioned that deportation or imprisonment is an exceptional and not a normal occurrence; it only happened in cases of

Iraqis who committed an offence or violated the law, and therefore were deported or imprisoned and released on a bail or through the assistance of a Jordanian sponsor/guarantor. During my stay I did not meet families who directly experienced this, but several Iraqis kept referring to their fear of deportation or imprisonment that happened to other Iraqis they know, who were caught working.

Iraqis' attempts to extend the limited formal protection space by sharing stories of their 'lack of *ʾamān*'

It is at this point— after having presented my analysis in Chapters Three and Four, and now in this chapter also added the two contexts that I consider of great importance to understand the Iraqis' attempts of making *ʾamān* according to their perceptions of what makes life worthwhile living— that I see the aid system lose sight of the political dimension of the Iraqi refugee collective cause or story. What emerges as problems to the aid organizations and to government authorities, with people cheating, or people criticizing the system, should be understood as part of the attempts of Iraqis to make their spaces of *ʾamān* in a restricted and limited structure of aid. Iraqis were not only passive objects of aid, they were active agents who, following a dramatic change in their lives, were trying to learn how to make their own spaces of *ʾamān*, where they feel safe again. But, as we saw in different cases, the encounters between Iraqis and aid are most of all characterized by reduction in their being and well-being.

I therefore end this chapter with what I observed during a short workshop among Iraqi women working as volunteers and trainers for several organizations. The workshop was held at a local Jordanian foundation that collaborated with the UNHCR to provide services for Iraqi refugees. Perhaps the case would not impress the UNHCR nor other aid organizations, but it certainly made a strong impact on me as a participant-observer of the Iraqi encounters with aid systems, especially when it comes to the ability to share personal and collective stories of losses endured during times of war. Storytelling, once described by Arendt, "as a fundamental human activity" when she indicated that almost everything can be borne if put into a story shared with others (in Human Condition, 175, quoted in Hansen, 1993: 220); in this sense stories are not only consoling but work as a strategy for sustaining a sense of agency in the face of disempowering circumstances (Jackson, 2002: 15). The existential need of storytelling is made vivid in various literary works such as Coleridge's Rime of the

Ancient Mariner (1798) that is one paradigmatic case which is recalled to explain the liberation that follows the telling of a long-suppressed story of suffering and guilt, and how people need to get things off their chests or out of their systems to move on. This "fundamental human activity" or "existential need" did not exist for Iraqis in the formal space of protection where Iraqis, most of the time, had little command of the conditions of the story –telling and –sharing.

> It was during the workshop break when one of the trainees whom I had met in previous training events, pointed at a woman in the room, and said loudly: "you are writing about Iraqis? You must hear Um-Amira's story. She has a 'strong' story: she lost her daughter, a 24-year-old medical doctor who just graduated from Baghdad university; she was killed in an explosion in the *sūq* (outdoor market), only a week after her wedding." We were approaching the corner where Um-Amira was standing, drinking her coffee. Um-Amira, who heard our conversation did not say anything. She listened to her daughter's story as briefed by my friend Sawsan, and said nothing. It was obvious that she did not want to talk about it, so I decided not to ask her anything about Iraq or her life in Amman, as I had learnt during my stay among Iraqis not to rush into questioning them before clearly presenting my research project to make sure that they do not mind taking part in it. I greeted Um-Amira instead and tried to change the topic by asking her if she liked the training. She told me that she was not interested in training events, and that she only came for the sake of her younger daughter, who refused to eat or go anywhere, and spent most of her time at home, sleeping or watching TV: "She only likes to come to the center when they organize music sessions, especially with the Italian musician girl. My daughter's English is good and they [the center staff] ask her to help with translation, so it is the best chance to make my daughter leave the house and do something."
>
> The music session was about to start and we were asked to get ready and sit in a circle. An Italian volunteer with a guitar was leading the session which started with stress-relieving exercises. The Italian girl demonstrated happy, smiling, angry and other facial expressions. She showed us how we could shape and reshape our facial expressions by moving its parts and other parts in our bodies to release tension and stress. She spoke in English while Um-Amira's, 15-year-old daughter, translated the instructions into Arabic. We were all trying to mimic her movements; it was fun and we laughed at the cynical comments some women were making. Then the Italian girl announced that it was time for music. She played a nice tune and encouraged us all to sing a simple two-word song with her: *bella mama*. The women were repeating the *bella mama* in the tune, but after a short while some started murmuring, and one of them interrupted the session asking loudly: "what is this song? What *bella mama*? Sing something real." During that argument and a pause to change the song, Um-Amira, leaned towards me and showed me a picture of a young woman on her mobile phone; she told me that it was of her daughter: "Amira, look how beautiful she was, a princess [which is also the meaning of her name: Amira is the Arabic word for princess]." I nodded my head silently, while the Italian girl was kind enough to play another tune, that of a famous popular song from the Iraqi folklore *Māli shughul bil Sūq* (I

have no business in the market) which goes, according to my less-poetic translation from the Iraqi accent into English:

"I have no business in the market, just passed by to see you …
I have been thirsty for long years, and only seeing your face will satiate my thirst
I wanted to walk across the two bridges: Karkh and Risafa to ask if anyone saw my beloved
I am lost; searching for you everywhere, and you just went and left me alone, why? What have I done to you?
How can I sleep the night while you occupy my mind? Even fish in water weep for my plight."

All the women joined in singing the popular Iraqi song, while three of the women jumped up from their chairs to dance in the middle of the circle. Um-Amira could not sing, she started crying, while the singing and dancing went on. I was the only one who seemed to be disturbed by Um-Amira's tears, it could be because I was sitting next to her, or may be because I was new to the exercise while it felt normal to the rest, as it was supposed to release stress, tears and laughter. But Um-Amira's tears were running down ignored (as if flowing in water like the weeping fish in the song). I was trying to comfort Um-Amira, while the dancing women tried to make some funny movements to change her mood, they even tried to push her to join them in the dancing circle and only stopped when her daughter, who was still sitting next to the Italian singer to help with translation, interfered and told them to leave her mother alone because this had been her sister's favorite song and she normally cried when she heard it. We were all forced to leave Um-Amira alone when one of the dancing women fainted; she suddenly turned pale. Another woman helped her out of the room to get some fresh air and urged us to call for medical help saying that this could be serious because this woman had recently had open-heart surgery. Luckily, this foundation had a health care unit; a nurse quickly came and took the woman to the clinic. And for the rest it was time to leave.

This was one of the moments during my fieldwork when I felt the burden of my research intervention. I could not talk to any of the women about it and they seemed too preoccupied each with her next task. While I was preparing to leave, Um-Amira came to talk to me. She apologized for not being able to tell me her story then, as she had to go home to cook; she suggested that we meet another time if I wanted to hear her story. Though I felt that her invitation sounded real, I was reluctant to call her, and did not. Her story was too painful, as other stories in times of wars described by the Iraqi poet Dunya Mikhail: "-To give back to your mother-on the occasion of death- a handful of bones- she had given to you- on the occasion of birth?"

It took me long time to verbalize this experience of the way loss passed in the lives of several Iraqis I met during fieldwork, it made me question the way those persons who survived

similar tragic losses, like Um-Amira, were constantly forced to expose them in their attempts to gain right to humanitarian assistance. By this the human pain dissolves into the stories that are presented to the aid agencies, stories that have a strategic aim of producing access to the resources of aid. In some cases, it felt that this construction of ‘ the story’ seemed to produce a normalization of loss in the lives of these survivors of war. After a few meetings in the field, I could clearly notice a pattern in constructing ‘the story’ in the formal space of protection which some Iraqis presented to me in fixed printed format. Upon introducing myself and my research in our first meeting, some Iraqis would immediately ask me: “So, do you want to hear my story?”, or “Are you interested in my real story or the story that I officially told [to the UNHCR and the IOM]”? Others would simply disappear and come back with a fixed version of “the story” as an A4 printed paper or offer to save the electronic version to my memory stick.

The music incident described above was another chance to reflect on the ability to share one’s story and the meanings of ʾamān in the Iraqi social life throughout a longer history of structural change. The women in this case did not construct a story. The music incident, with the dancing detailed above show a more direct and emotional expression of pain, and can be seen as another attempt to create a space of *ʾamān* for sharing their story of loss collectively in the formal protection space, and not only in the limited private space of *ʾamān* among family and close friends. It provided a chance to go back to Iraq, Um-Amira went back to the *sūq* (market) where her daughter’s life ended, other women remembered other changes they had to survive during times of wars and sanctions. Instead of the strategically formulated story there were tears, words, silence and dancing, fainting or laughing. All outside of the official template. This could also explain why the women were so enthusiastic about such music sessions. Unlike their disinterestedness in the content of the courses and training events in general, this time all of the women were waiting for the music, to the extent that they tried to cut short the training session that preceded it to allow extra time for music. They started murmuring and some of them expressed loudly their concerns, that they already heard enough and that the time (30 minutes) dedicated for the music session was not enough. This was one of the rare chances in which refugees were allowed to restructure a service offered to them and make it suit their real needs, the need to express the pain produced by the loss of their earlier lives. And this expression came in a form quite different from the planned and structured meetings they were used to in which their losses had to be made visible in quantifiable terms that fitted the definition of the relevant organization.

In the formal space of protection, Iraqis gradually learnt that having a good story would be their ticket to a safe country; to *ʾamān*. In cases of war-survivors, where protection was conditioned on gaining the label of refugee, the stories were future oriented and the survivor's self was reduced to a victim to be saved. In this case, telling the story was concerned with: "how to make the period between arrival in the camp and departure to the third country as short as possible" (Knudsen, 1990: 127). In the Iraqi case the temporary protection offered in host countries within the region was limited; therefore, the burden of negotiating options of *ʾamān* fell mainly on Iraqis who had had to learn how to share their experiences with others as well as what to share or hide. A woman told me at the end of our meeting: "we have passed through lots of things, but I cannot tell you everything, my file is still being processed in the UNHCR and my status is still not settled, I only told you what I can share with you at this point; this is not the whole story, we have been through lots of things." Iraqis looking for resettlement to a third country, usually reconstructed their stories to describe their losses (and sometimes survival experience) in a standardized version ready for consumption to correspond with that told in the contexts of official aid and protection. The aim would be to generate some potential gains for the 'victim(s)' in the story. Storytelling in the Iraqi and similar cases becomes a strategy for survival. It is conditioned by the Iraqi's need to obtain protection and assistance on the one side; and the requirements of the protection providers on the other side. In this sense the "existential need" to tell a story is transformed into a practical one that is achieved through different tactics; some tended to hide parts of their experiences, trim others or make changes in the details to ensure that 'the story' is a 'strong' or 'good' one.

"Your protection insurance is a good story", was common advice Iraqis exchanged, but what is a good story? According to Kleinman and Desjarlais, "to receive assistance, it may be necessary to undergo a transformation from a person who has lived through the greatly heterogeneous experience of political terror to stereotyped victim, to standardized sufferer of a textbook sickness" (1997). Similarly, in the testimony version of the story presented to the UNHCR, words are carefully selected, and supporting elements introduced (as explored in Chapter Four). It seemed as if Iraqis were capitalizing on their personal losses, which occupy the story, while history and politics were disappearing. Fassin and Rechtman (2009) address this in their *Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*; when they explore how the new conditions of victimhood established through the concept of trauma has

created “a new language of the event”, in which “more credence is given to a medical certificate attesting to post-traumatic stress than to the word of an asylum seeker.” They ask what conception of the law and of the subject is operating? (Ibid., 7) They comment on how a system of knowledge and values was shaken and how one truth was overturned and another produced. What is lacking in the universalizing process of producing the story as legitimate evidence for obtaining survival is history and politics that are considered “too much information” (Malkki, 2007: 341) or to put it in Fassin’s words: “The process of subjectification of survivors as victims leaves aside the individual and collective histories of the subjects” (Fassin, 2008: 555).

When it comes to the victimhood conditions I observed among Iraqis (Chapter Four), reducing the story into a humanitarian account in which the storyteller is asked to focus on the event experience from the perspective of a victim, deprives the event of its political and historical aspects in the sense that it deletes the plurality – the presence of many and not just the one. I cannot help compare the experience I had with Um-Amira’s story and the music event (above) with a meeting I had with the spokesperson of the UNHCR in Amman. She emphasized that recognition as refugee and resettlement to a third country would be assessed on an individual basis: “it depends on the story the refugee presents to us, what kind of persecution or threats he faced, it has to be a well-founded story.” Would Um-Amira’s story be considered as a well-founded story? And how can Iraqis tell their collective story of loss as part of urban Baghdadi middle class communities and former state employees? As indicated earlier, when Iraqis started referring to their collective experiences, in the formal protection space, they were usually reminded by trainers that they should not talk politics or make the meeting too political. In such a situation the collective story remained more or less hidden in private social gatherings.

As time passed, I began to notice how tiny and restricted the space was that allowed Iraqis to share their collective experiences of loss and war in the public sphere[52] and the official space of himaya/protection, while I could observe the great share it occupied in their private space of *ʾamān*. During social gatherings, Iraqis used to share their memories of past losses and

[52] Iraqis residing in Amman are not allowed to form associations or other forms of public gatherings except business activities on the condition that those businesses are run in partnership with Jordanian businessmen (Chatelard, 2008: 12).

fears of further loss in the future in a variety of formats, not restricted to the one-dimensional "well-founded story" condition of humanitarian aid.

But I want to turn precisely to these experiences that can show us that Iraqis are agents or "bios" in Agamben's terms with political existence, and to get a glimpse into the change and suffering their experiences have caused. I do this in the following two chapters, in which I focus on the stories my informants told me about what they had experienced and what had brought them to Amman. By listening to the stories and contextualizing the memories of Iraqis, the next two chapter provide better understanding of the transformation experiences that these Iraqi professionals and state employees had to endure as displaced subjects in Jordan in the present, as well as in the past three decades inside their home country during the longer period from 1960s –2000s.

Chapter Six

Baghdad 1960s-1980s: Living with promises of a better future

> *In Baghdad, most women and men used to work. Unlike Gulf countries that rely on migrant labor, Iraqis during most of the times were working people, except when they were called to serve on the field [battlefield]. Even then, Iraqi women filled many posts that became vacant due to the state-call for Iraqi male employees to fight on the war front, while Egyptian male labor were hired to work in the construction sector.*[53]

The Iraqi state bureaucrats and professionals I met in Jordan shared several common features in their stories about living in Iraq throughout the years 1960s–1980s. They described a relatively stable and promising conditions of better future for an Iraqi generation who had access to free education from nursery to PhD, and employment opportunities and other public services and benefits. This enabled them to enjoy higher standards of living than their parents' generation, for few decades.

It was common among most of the participants in this research who belonged to the older generation to feel nostalgic about a past when they had better chances of receiving quality education and rewarding job opportunities and 'welfare' services. The accounts of living in Baghdad during the period between 1960s-1980s present how the lives of these government employees were transformed by the intersection of internal regime strategies of development and the effects of the militarization and liberalization policies that followed in late 80s. The stories these Iraqis shared in 2010-2011 in their spaces of *ʾamān* in Amman reflect a big change in their perceptions of well-being. During the sixties and seventies, well-being was linked to being hardworking people (as described in the quote above), and participating in building an Iraqi modern nation state through investment in education and stable employment conditions in the public sector.

The current chapter presents the experiences of Iraqi professionals and state bureaucrats with that period which was marked by relative stability and promising future as well as rising

[53] Interview with an Iraqi professor of economics and finance at al-Isra University in Amman on 24 November 2010.

tensions between the state and society. The experiences shared describe how the livelihoods of these government employees were affected by the economic development programs led by the state: including the "illiteracy eradication campaign," the systematic teacher training programs, the increase in schools in rural and urban areas and investment in higher education and fellowships to study abroad, in addition to job opportunities with welfare benefits for university graduates and adequate infrastructure and health services, to be followed by times of successive and seemingly endless war conditions in the 1980s onwards.

The presentation of the stories I heard among Iraqis in Jordan does not aim to construct an alternative history or histories of Iraq,[54] instead this chapter describes collective experiences of learning to live as subjects of a state that aspired for rapid modernization. To understand the experiences of these groups of employees and professionals with the development of state programs and the dismantlement of the state and its institutions, it would be helpful to contextualize these experiences within the wider historical and political contexts and events which affected the process of state development.

The focus solely on the authoritarian and totalitarian dictatorship practices as omnipotent-like presence (Makiya, 1989) while ignoring other aspects of Iraqi life during the period in concern (1960s–1980s) would present a limited understanding of the complex social dynamics in the various life stages of these former Iraqi professionals, as explored in previous chapters. Their experiences cannot be simply reduced to 'complicity' of Iraqi state bureaucracy to sustain the brutality of Baathist violence. The stories shared of that period present several dimensions; in addition to the hardships of wars and regime repression that many Iraqis had to endure. Former Iraqi government employees do not describe their being in that period as merely suffering souls or compliant agents to the regime.

The stories shared in the field of former living conditions in Baghdad tend to describe various nuanced and complex experiences. It was not just what was told, a careful observer and listener among Iraqis in the field could sense the global effects on the Baghdadi urban

[54] There are various recent attempts to write the Iraqi history from below. For example, on writing history from below, see Nadia Al-Ali's work *Iraqi Women: Untold Stories from 1948 to the Present* (2007) in which she explores the relationship between experiences, memory and truth using the method of oral history among Iraqi women (from educated middle-class urban backgrounds). Other debates from different disciplines are compiled in Tejel, Sluglett et al. *Writing the Modern History of Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges (2012).* In my presentations of the Iraqi stories, I am interested in how individuals and communities deal with social transformation from the stories Iraqis tell.

communities. They were reflected in the diverse food flavors and spices; the rich Iraqi melodies and songs; the variety of religious beliefs and practices and the different languages and dialects in addition to the unfamiliar words which I had to guess from the context: *qamṣala* (Turkish) for jacket, *mayz* (Persian/ Farsi) for table, *glās* (English) for a cup, *banka* (Indian) for a ceiling-fan and many more. These observations during my fieldwork among Iraqis in Amman present glimpses of the complex history that is often reduced to the Baath or Saddam's totalitarian regime when discussing Iraq during the last three decades of the twentieth century. One of the problems that leads to this reductionist presentation of Iraq is that no distinction is usually made between the regime as a ruling power and the state with its government bureaucracy and institutions which developed over a longer period of the modernization process of the country, during the Ottoman and British rule of the Iraqi space (Davis, 2005; Tripp, 2007; Dewachi, 2017).

The Iraqi professionals and state employees I met in Amman often referred to this distinction (between the regime and their roles as part of the state bureaucracy) when they described how their lives had been transformed by the modernization of state bureaucracy and the regime developmental programs and repressive rule of its subjects. The current chapter draws on interviews I had with Iraqi professionals and government employees. In addition, it engages with other studies which allow deeper understanding of the details and contradictory descriptions of living with state policies and the Iran-Iraq war. Due to lack of anthropological and sociological works on that period, I refer to Bassam Yousif's *Human Development in Iraq 1950-1990* (2012), and other works which help understand the stories shared by Iraqi state employees of their experiences with social transformation during 1960s–1980s in Baghdad.

General features of the rising government bureaucracy in Baghdad: 1960s-1980s

The Iraqi nation-state project, like other postcolonial states in the region had been affected by the rules and divisions imposed by the colonial demarcation of borders through the Sykes-Picot agreement implemented during the British and French "mandate" regimes. The Iraqi project of national independence focused on building a strong nation-state through investing in institutional infrastructure, human development and social welfare, with particular emphasis on the state military apparatus. This project was similar to the urbanization and modernization of other neighboring countries, following the dismantlement of the Ottoman

empire and European capitalist expansion in the region through drawing borderlines that were more suitable to colonial interests than the indigenous communities' living patterns. Sami Zubaida described some common features of the urbanization and modernization processes including:

> "the breakdown or transformation of primary communities, urbanization, individualization of labor, intensification of the social division of labor, the emergence of new forms of government and institutions, widening of education and literacy, technologies and networks of communication and transport, and new ideational formations, often significantly influenced by European ideas, especially in relation to political community and the state" (2009: 129).

Some of the features described by Zubaida were shared in the stories Iraqis tell of the transformations they and their parent generation witnessed in Iraq. When it comes to the formations of political communities, research on the statecraft in Iraq tend to identify two competing visions: Iraqi vs. Arab nationhood (Davis, 2005; Ismael and Ismael, 2015). One common aim among the two visions of the Iraqi nationhood project was to "supplant traditional categories of identity" (religion, ethnicity, sectarian or tribal affiliations) in service of a broader and inclusive Iraqi (and Arab) identity. The strategies used by the state to achieve national unity, as identified by Ismael and Ismael (2012), include mandatory military conscription, public education and the development of a social welfare structure funded by a state-centered oil sector (ibid., 7). This chapter presents another attempt to understand how these state employees and professionals managed the changing conditions in the Iraqi state in times of affluence and gradual reduction beyond the category of the Baathist regime of Saddam, which often reduces those experiences into "good vs. evil" or "victim vs. hero" story.

The majority of state-bureaucrats and professionals I met in Amman belong to urban Iraqi communities, especially the capital Baghdad; they included doctors, academics and university lecturers, schoolteachers, businessmen, lawyers, engineers, army officers and various other government employees (with their family members). Access to modern education and rewarding governmental jobs allowed the rise of some shared form of citizenship among these various members of Iraqi employees who tended to describe the good life in the late sixties and seventies in terms of similarities rather than differences. The similarities revolved around a 'rich social life' with inter-communal mixed neighborhoods and mixed marriages, access to free education in Iraq and/or grants to study at universities abroad, stable governmental job opportunities for both men and women and higher consumption ability of

material and cultural products. This contributed to the rise of a middle-class life style based on one's academic merits and professional training and access to employment in the public sector. The policies enhanced later by the regime, which invested in the military sector during the long Iran-Iraq war (1980–1988) and the following wars and sanctions affected the potential of many members of this former Baghdadi middle class.

Being a middle class professional in Baghdad, as narrated by Iraqis who came from different backgrounds and lived through various periods inside Iraq can be described as a swinging experience; the massive rise in oil prices following the war of October 1973 against Israel carried promises of better living conditions, however these conditions did not last long as the war with Iran in 1980–1988 meant the militarization of many aspects of the social and cultural space in Iraq. Furthermore, the regime decision to invade Kuwait and the 1991 US-led war accompanied by harsh economic sanctions which lasted for more than twelve years led to harming former relations with neighboring countries, as well as the destruction of the state infrastructure that severely affected the living potentials of Iraqi professionals and state-bureaucrats.

Being part of the Iraqi state schooling and labor system during the period 1960s–2003 did not feel the same all the time. Being a state employee in Baghdad in the 70s felt different from being one in the 80s, and both periods had very little in common to the 90s. In most of these periods, the state apparatus was governed and controlled by an oppressive regime rule governing the production of the national space and narrative. Iraqis were disciplined to contribute to the survival of that space and their own survival, as expressed in the accounts of state bureaucrats and professionals I met in Jordan.

The next sections of this chapter describe the times Iraqis used to call "the good old days" during 1960s and 1970s. The stories they tell explore the meanings of well-being and *ʾamān* in retrospective awareness. This did not last for long and was not inclusive for all Iraqis, there were several stories of exclusive practices by the regime against opposing parties as individuals or groups. The stories describe how the living conditions changed for these Iraqi state employees and professionals during the Iran-Iraq war in 1980s, with excessive liberalization policies of the state and the militarization of the Iraqi society. Liberalization and privatization of Iraqi public services and the shift in investment from education to

militarization led to the reduction of *ʾamān*, well-being and happiness as explored in the case of Nagham, a former Iraqi accountant, that is presented in the end of the chapter.

The ‘good old days’

Good old days in the memories of the Iraqis I met in Amman date back to the 1960s and 1970s; when living standards were high thanks to the modern state apparatus investment in both human and rich natural resources, not only oil, but the Euphrates and Tigris rivers that enabled the country to be self-sufficient in food production. As in other post-colonial states around, in the region, the government intended to enhance modernity and good living standards. These were the years of a flourishing economy and emergence and expansion of a broad and affluent urban middle class (Herring, 2011: 346).

The developmental project of the state transformed many parts of the Iraqi society from a primarily rural, agricultural society with a quasi-feudal, quasi-tribal social structure in 1920s into a modern urban-based society in 1970s, thanks to the oil wealth and Iraqi state investment in the social well-being of the population:

> “The increase in world oil prices in the mid-1970s allowed the regime to guarantee employment in the state public sector. This sector ultimately engendered a large employed middle class dependent on the existence of the state. The state-employed middle class was structurally open to workers and peasants through social mobility instruments such as education and membership in the Baath Party” (Ismael, 2004: 335).

The stories of the older Iraqi state employees I met in Amman, who were between 65–80 years old in 2010 and 2011 describe the living conditions in Baghdad during the mid-sixties and seventies when they were in their twenties as prosperous, and promising of new opportunities and prospects. Leading a good life then meant acquiring quality education, preferably a university degree from an Iraqi and/or foreign university, a rewarding job in one’s specialty, access to good health care services and a house and good transportation and other public services, and the ability to provide good education for their children in addition to the ability to travel and consume[55] high quality material and cultural products supported by developing state infrastructure. Rich social life meant also spending time together in

[55] The rise in consumption capacity described by these government employees is attributed to “a reasonably high rate of growth in the national income and expansion in GDP over the period 1955 to 1970, but specifically with the increase in Iraq’s crude oil exports as a result of the nationalization of the oil industry in 1972. Bassam Yousif provides details of the sharp rise in the oil price in 1973, 1974, 1978 and 1980 (see Yousif, 2012: 49).

restaurants, excursions at lake Habbaniyah and Tigris and Euphrates bays, socialization at various clubs and in cinemas and theatres and most often in home gardens, away from the observing eyes of the regime security.

Higher education was an important asset for the wider middle class members to gaining access to the 'rich' social and cultural life that was once restricted to Iraqis belonging to wealthiest families (merchants and land owners). The state welfare services included free education from kindergarten until one completes university education. Graduate students had the right to a two-year paid leave to complete their MA studies and three-year paid leave for those enrolled in PhD programs:

> This was during the years 73-80, which was a golden period in terms of the burgeoning economy. The state managed huge projects to build the infrastructure that would improve people's daily life including schools, universities, hospitals, roads, bridges and the cultural and architectural revival of the Iraqi nation.[56]

The Iraqi population was not large, the salary rate was good, in addition to the government intention at modernization and development which was realized by offering welfare services including a marriage loan of Iraqi Dinars (ID) 1000 ($ 3400), which state-bureaucrats could repay on easy terms, and did not have to begin repayment in the first year. Families were paid allowance for children, and free education and health treatment and kindergarten services and transportation for working mothers were provided.[57] Work and government employment, as described by this generation of Iraqi professionals used to be perceived as a way to optimize resources and construct their social personhood through educational qualifications and consumption practices.

A former army officer mentioned that free education allowed Iraqis belonging to poor or less-affluent families to gain education and a stable job and ascend to middle or upper-middle class income: "When I was in college, I used to receive ID 10 as a monthly study grant. Upon graduation from the army college in 1967, I was immediately employed and received ID 60 as monthly salary, half of which I gave to my parents and the other half was enough to cover my living expenses and ensure savings. The Iraqi Dinar then was as strong as the Kuwaiti Dinar and used to equal three American dollars."[58]

---

[56] Meeting with Professor Taha on 2 March 2011.
[57] This was mentioned by several Iraqis from the older generation, this information is taken from an interview with an Iraqi professor on 24 November 2010.
[58] Interview on Friday 1 March 2011.

High school students and university graduates who excelled in their education could apply for state grants to complete their studies in Europe or the USA. Professor Naim (67 years old) was one of those students who excelled in high school and left Baghdad at the age of 17 to study Engineering in the UK:

> I left Iraq on a fellowship funded by the Iraqi government to study in Britain where I finished my B.Sc. with honors, and got the first rank in my Master. At the age of 26 I got my PhD and I stayed for another two years to finish my post-doctoral research. I returned to Iraq in 1973 and after two years I had the honor to establish the University of Technology in Baghdad and the School of Control and System Engineering, many of my students are lecturers in Jordanian universities today.[59]

State-induced policies worked to eradicate illiteracy, educate both men and women, and incorporate larger numbers of women into the labour force: in 1974 a government decree stipulated that all university graduates—men and women—would be employed automatically (Al-Ali, 2005: 744). Graduates were immediately employed following graduation and after few months, government employees could think of buying the marriage house[60] and a car. Some professionals mentioned that they could afford then to enjoy access to quality consumer goods and services and even spend summer in Europe. According to an Iraqi academic (61 years old), Iraqis were considered highly welcomed tourists as "gulf citizens" when they used to travel to Jordan or elsewhere, unlike their displacement after 2003.

Being a member of the Iraqi state bureaucracy in 1970s

Building a career profile as a qualified working man or woman was one of the most important features among this group of professional middle class Baghdadis in 1970s, as described in the quote at the beginning of this chapter from an interview with an Iraqi professor who was teaching in a Jordanian private university.

Several Iraqi women I met in the field commented that they were surprised to see so many non-working Jordanian women in Amman, as my friend Um-Adnan commented during one of our first meetings: "In Baghdad, most women work outside home; unlike Amman, you will rarely find a housewife." As part of the regime's efforts to modernize the society, it "focused

[59] Interview on 14 April 2011. Chapter Three presents more details about Professor Naim's displacement experience in Jordan.

[60] Professor Taha mentioned that he had built his house thanks to a program sponsored by the state which included the provision of a 600 m^2 piece of land for newly married couples, interview on 2 March 2011.

on educating women, bringing them into the labor market, transforming their appearance and integrating them into the political process as emblems of the successful transformation of their nation-state" (Joseph, 1996: 9). Nadje al-Ali attributes the government motivations to encourage employment, especially among women, as a way to respond to the need for human power and a work force to support the progressive development plan in addition to what she calls the Iraqi state attempt to indoctrinate its citizens. She concludes that whatever the motivation of the state, this policy increased women's participation in the public sphere, making Iraqi women among the most educated and professional in the Arab region (Al-Ali, 2005: 744 -745). The state provided urban working women with free public transport and childcare facilities, in addition to the assistance of extended family members (Al-Ali, 2007a: 135). Anthropologist Suad Joseph observed that the Baath framed women's employment not just as a means for national development, but also for the achievement of economic independence and the liberation of women themselves (Joseph, 1991).

During the 1970s-1980s, work, usually in the public governmental sector, was an integral part of the Iraqi identity and remained so for most educated and professional men and women, such as Um-Adnan who continued to work as a teacher until 2003 when many Iraqi women (and men) lost their jobs as a result of the reconstruction process or due to the deteriorating security conditions. The presence of the state coercive apparatus seemed to be important to secure employment, even in times of war. Despite the loss of her right hand during the heavy bombing campaign in the first Gulf war in 1991, Um-Adnan could resume her employment as school teacher, in which she felt safer than home where she had to deal with occasionally violent husband. These developments in the Iraqi women's status are much older, following the 1958 revolution, women were granted political and social rights and encouraged to utilize state-sponsored educational facilities (Moghadam, 1993: 70). The developments also included allowing women to receive housing, child allowances and welfare benefits if they were the main breadwinners in their families (Joseph, 1996: 9). Although these changes led to improved rights to education and employment, male control of women's personal lives in the domestic space in Iraq (as in the case of Um-Adnan above) was little changed (Joseph & Slymovics, 2001: 36).

The working conditions in public state institutions in the 1970s were perceived as highly rewarding by both men and women, especially when compared with times of deprivations during the sanctions period. Professor Taha described his working conditions after he was

appointed upon his graduation with a BA degree from Baghdad University: "In 1973, I was appointed as school teacher and my salary was ID 31, it was more than enough, I used to save from it, after few months there was 80% increase and my salary became ID 51. It was possible for my generation, shortly after graduation, to afford to build a house, buy a car and live a dignified life. Things changed drastically in the 1990s."[61] Access to higher education was perceived as a strong driver of social mobility. Professor Taha completed his education and got a PhD degree, so did his wife who got a master degree in Mathematics and statistics.

Educational qualifications ensured better working and living conditions and higher social status or what is described by Professor Taha as "dignified life." Despite the state development plans and extended public welfare services which led to improvements in income distribution among various segments of Iraqi societies (Yousif, 2012), Iraqi highly qualified professionals were eventually distinguished from other manual workers by their conditions of employment, such as access to regular monthly salary that enabled them to live in better-serviced urban Baghdadi neighborhoods than the living conditions in rural and town areas.

The ability to consume high quality material and cultural products became another feature of establishing high social status. While in the field, I could not help but notice the extra care of preserving an elegant appearance among members of this generation of Iraqis who would usually dress in formal suits in the public space, this was not part of the daily routine among Jordanians or Palestinians. Even on a hot day, Abu-Omar used to wear his brown or beige 1980s three-piece style suit. During one of my visits to his home, one of his Iraqi neighbors came to ask Um-Omar, in her role as a volunteer in one of the international organizations, about ways to support the family of one of his friends who just arrived from Baghdad. When Abu-Omar joined to greet his neighbor, he apologized more than once for coming in training suit and blamed the conditions of displacement that forced him to spend most of his days at his rented apartment, while as he explained in Baghdad, he would never meet guests without shaving and putting on his suit. This seemed to apply to most governmental employees of that generation, as observed in the pictures some of them shared with me from Baghdad. The pictures of that period indicated that consuming formal western-style cloths and sharing leisure time at a restaurant or a club or the home garden seemed as events to exhibit

[61] Interview with Professor Taha on 2 March 2011.

professional and economic success. This group of Iraqis who belonged to the older generation described Baghdad in the 1970s as the best time they remembered from living inside Iraq. They describe the Iraqi state as a modernist state with large investments in science, education and urbanization. In addition to the health services that improved with rising numbers of qualified Iraqi Doctors (see Dawachi, 2017).

Well-being in 'retrospective awareness'

The personal experiences shared by Um-Adnan, Dr Taha, Professor Naim and others— about what they called 'the good old days in Iraq' during the late sixties and seventies— convey that these were general attributes of the Iraqi social order and state employees standings enhanced by the state institutions and the regime in the process of urbanization and modernization of the Baghdadi space in the 1970s.

The good life, described above, is not attributed to access to services and good financial resources only, but also to the changes in labor law and family law and women status in particular. The conditions of women improved with socialist-like economic development programs, especially when it comes to the rising educational opportunities "in an egalitarian fashion in comparison with other countries in the region. The state efforts to attract women into paid employment was unparalleled in its time in the region. And there was progress for women under law: complete equality was achieved in social and economic legislation but relatively modest gains in personal rights. These gains accompanied and reinforced the government's ambitious development plans and efforts of state-building" (Yousif, 2012).[62] This was the case in several developing countries, as explained by Moghadam, in which the state played a major role in the formulation of social policies, development strategies, and legislation that shape opportunities for women. The state can act as a facilitator for or an obstacle to the integration of female citizens in public life. However, as per Moghadam, development strategies and state economic policies are not formulated in a vacuum; they are greatly influenced, for better or for worse, by world-systemic imperatives. Moghadam considers what she describes as the dual process of economic development and state expansion as the major source of social change in the Middle East in the post-World War II period (1993: 17-21).

[62]For more empirical details see chapter 6 "The position of women" in (Yousif, 2012: 105-128).

In her study, Valentine Moghadam refers to the "Iraqi Baath regime in its radical phase (1960s and 1970s) and the social transformation it enhanced by introducing a land reform program that changed the conditions of the peasantry and by establishing a welfare state for the urban working classes and the poor. In the drive against illiteracy and for free education, the Baathist revolution produced one of the best-educated intelligentsias in the Arab world (1993: 22). Concerning women "the Baath party had an interest both in recruiting women into the labor force to alleviate a continuing labor shortage and in wresting women's allegiance away from kin, family, or ethnic group and shifting it to the party-state." The 1978 Personal Status Law aimed to reduce the control of extended families over women. In the late seventies the government passed laws requiring attendance at adult literacy classes targeting women through trade unions and other organizations and using the TV. Women were recruited into state-controlled agencies and put through public education as well as vocational training and political indoctrination. According to Moghadam, 51 percent of Baghdad university medical school's first-year class in 1979 was female (1993: 58).[63] The ruling Baath Party encouraged a wide range of employment for women, who by the late 1970s accounted for 29 percent of the country medical doctors, 46 percent of all dentists, 70 percent of pharmacists, 46 percent of teachers and university lecturers, 33 percent of the staff of government departments, 26 percent of workers in industry, and 45 percent of farm employees (ibid.). Furthermore, Shereen Ismael notes that during the seventies "with improvements in education and health programs, jobs were created through a state-controlled public sector, and a legislated minimum labor wage led to rapid growth in the Iraqi labor force as well as in the government bureaucracy" (2004: 335).

These years were celebrated by the Iraqis I met as times of prosperity carrying promises of comfortable life, especially when compared to the 1990s–2000s. The following account from an interview with a retired engineer provides some details of the life style some of these new highly skilled and upper-middle class professionals could enjoy in the sixties:

> In the sixties, you could call the cinema and reserve a lounge to watch a movie and relax; there were several cinemas: Al Hamra Cinema and Granada Cinema

[63] To understand the enhancement in female education, these numbers need to be read in comparative perspective: "Prior to the Baath Revolution, of the almost 4 million females in the population only 23000 had achieved secondary certificates or their equivalents; 8000 college or institute certificates; 200 graduate degrees or diplomas; and 90 doctorates. Sixty-seven per cent of the females were illiterate as per the statistics of the General Population Census of 1965. However a decade after the Baath take-over, females constituted 43 per cent of the children in primary schools […]. In the decade of the 1970s, female enrolment in primary schools increased 366 per cent, in secondary schools 314 per cent and in universities 310 percent" (Niblock, in Joseph, 1991: 181).

> that had both winter and summer screenings. The transportation services in Baghdad were better than transportation in Amman today, a taxi would come to pick you up and it was common to pay the taxi driver a lump sum at the end of the month. Home delivery services were available, even for food and dairy products. We could buy the latest fashion trends from fancy stores owned by rich Jewish traders such as Orosdi-Back.[64]

Recreational activities in cinemas, coffee shops, bookshops and social clubs became an important part in the life of the upper-middle class and middle-class Iraqi state employees. The clubs were popular spaces mentioned by Iraqis in their stories of that period, while they almost disappeared in the stories of the 1990s onwards. Clubs such as al-Alwayia, al-Sayd (Iraqi hunting club), al-Mashriq, al-Dhubat (Officers club) and the Air force club provided access to swimming pools in winter and summer, and gym and sports activities, as well as a space for sharing social events and parties.

When the public space described above was shrinking as a result of fear from the Iraqi regime oppressive control and exclusion of opposition voices, the home garden became an important space for social gatherings, as described in an account by an Iraqi accountant I met in Jordan.[65] Most of the middle class families I met in Jordan explained that back in Iraq they lived in separate spacious houses with surrounding gardens. The garden around the Iraqi house was an important space where family meetings and gatherings with friends and neighbors used to take place. The garden was also the site of memories framed in family pictures which decorated the apartments of more affluent Iraqis in Amman, these pictures usually captured memories from Baghdad with friends and extended family members such as cousins, aunts, uncles and married brothers and sisters.

In addition to gaining symbolic capital through quality education and employment opportunities, consumption of cultural and material goods was another aspect of "post-colonial modernity" in Iraq and other neighboring countries.[66] The possession of material goods, increasingly became another way of establishing social status. Iraqi professionals from the older generations emphasized their ability to consume western brands and fashion trends from international chain stores such as Orosdi-Back in addition to the consumption of cinema-movies and musical events and drama. This was not limited to rich and upper middle-

[64] Interview on Friday 25 March 2011 with an Iraqi engineer and his wife in their owned apartment in Amman.
[65] Nagham's account on the loss of happiness at the end of this chapter.
[66] Nadje al-Ali describes similar consumption patterns of western fashion and electrical appliances by Egyptian youths, as one aspect of the post-colonial modernity (al-Ali, 2004: 30).

class Iraqis, but was mentioned by middle class state employees with a seemingly romanticized exaggeration when they compared their past life in Baghdad to the poor present living conditions in Jordan: "Iraqis love fashion and they like to look good, I used to purchase western clothes from famous international brands. Imagine that when I first arrived to Amman in 2006, I brought few costumes and dresses which I had purchased during the 1980s in Iraq, and I discovered that in Amman they were just presented as new western fashion."[67] Consumption of quality cultural and material products, especially food, clothes, books and other entertaining activities often came in the stories of this group of former Iraqi state employees when they described the losses they had to endure in their well-being. Consumerism as an indicator of status and identity is discussed by Turner as an aspect that appeared on an unprecedented scale which has meant "a great expansion of the power of self-production: in other words, the capacity to produce personal identity, create individual and group lifestyles, and achieve personal and social values" (Turner, 2003: 53).

Education and employment were not only appreciated as means to increase one's access to consumerism but they were associated, in the stories of some highly skilled Iraqi professionals and academics with building the nation. This generation of older Iraqi academics have an understanding of education that refers to establishing, creating and building the state. Education, as part of a public system was more egalitarian than the private university conditions that they experienced in Jordan; it was part of a larger national duty, as explained by Dr Naim's perception of his academic role in Baghdad and Amman (Chapter 3). When Dr Naim returned to Baghdad after 10 years of academic training in Britain (from BA to post-doctorate levels), his primary task was to establish a college in engineering with the aim to provide quality education to new generations of Iraqis to graduate as highly qualified engineers. His description of state-governed academic systems in Baghdad which emphasized quality education for free contrasted with the current neo-liberal understanding of education provided by the private sector in Jordan as a path to individual success and accumulation of financial capital, Dr Naim regrettably explained: "in Amman, I have to carefully observe the new limits of my role as educator, to not talk to students even when their quality of work was lower than anticipated, I was told that if I want to keep my position, I have to be kind and careful when giving academic feedback and advice, because they [the Jordanian university

[67] Meeting with former Iraqi accountant in the Ministry of Commerce in her rented apartment in Amman, where she moved to live with her two daughters and son, following the death of her husband, who was a high ranking army officer in Baghdad (August 2010).

where he works] want to keep high numbers of students who could pay the high study fees at private universities, regardless of quality."[68]

During 1960s–1980s, well-being for this group of Iraqis was associated with being ambitious students and hard-working professionals and employees in addition to having access to material and symbolic capital to provide stable living conditions to their families. As explained in Chapter Three, well-being is not restricted to the individual, it is relational and inclusive. For the older generation of Iraqi academics and doctors, the limits of well-being were extended to the larger Iraqi society as part of the nation-state building project; they aspired to create quality educational opportunities and health services for a wider generation of younger Iraqis. Well-being for Dr Naim and other Iraqi professionals belonging to his generation— who were part of the state-building project (sometimes described as the revolution generation)[69]— was expressed in relation to larger national aspirations and dreams. However, in other periods (1990s-2000s) during the hard times of wars and economic sanctions, well-being was reduced within the limits of the nuclear household's needs, and when expressed at wider scale, it included the extended family, tribe or other factional groups.

The interest in the well-being of the nation for older Iraqi generations could be attributed to the practical enhancement in the living conditions which were experienced then (in 1960s–1970) by this group of government employees, coming to work and study in Baghdad or abroad from different areas in Iraq (thanks to the support of governmental study fellowships). Iraqi family's access to regular salary income increased among various social classes. Bassam Yousif's review of the income through the period (1950–1990) suggests a fundamental change in income distribution between Iraqis from lower and upper incomes:

> "There is little doubt [according to data from various sources] that the distribution of income improved between 1956 and 1976 and, indeed, compared favorably with that of many developing and some developed countries.[70] The improved income distribution was not accidental but was the result of the emphasis on social welfare that successive governments after the 1958 revolution put into

[68] Interview on 14 April 2011.

[69]With reference to the 1958 revolution, see Campbell, 2016: 28-48.

[70] Yousif presents data compiled from a World Bank report in 1994 (see endnote 37, page 177) which indicates that in terms of the ratio of the income of the bottom 40 percent to the top 20 percent in 1971, the distribution of income in Iraq was more egalitarian than Brazil's in 1989 (7:67.5 percent), Mexico's in 1984 (11.9:55.9 percent), and Malaysia's in 1989 (12.9:53.7 percent); it was comparable to the United Kingdom's in 1988 (14.6:44.3 percent), but slightly less equal than the South Korea's in 1988 (19.7: 42.2 percent) and India's in 1989-90 (21.3:41.3 percent).

> practice. […] The provision of these services [public education and health] disproportionally benefitted the poor – directly by heavy subsidization of goods that the poor purchase or indirectly as enhanced educational and health outcomes promote higher labor productivities, access to employment and hence income – it promotes a more equal distribution of income. Finally, the expansion of the public sector, where wage and salary differentials were deliberately curtailed, was another factor that likely contributed to lowering income inequality" (2012: 54).

The social welfare policies mentioned by Bassam Yousif above included land reform and redistribution (in rural areas) and greater resources devoted to health and education, as he explored through various data available from different sources covering that period. The state welfare services and investment in education and employment sectors aspiring to turn Iraq into a modern developed nation-state raised the aspirations of Iraqi professionals and government employees who anticipated a better future for their offspring. The opportunities of education and employment enhanced the feelings of secured economic and social conditions during 1960s–1980s, and the nationalization of services and later oil industry gave the Iraqi state and bureaucracy direct control over output and profit (Yousif, 2012: 49).

In his analysis of "Human Development" in Iraq (1950–1990), Yousif explores the government strategies of economic development which were associated with various problems (including the promotion of inefficient activities and industries). Yet, Yousif concludes that the Iraqi state for most of the above-mentioned period which he studied, implemented a largely successful and mostly egalitarian strategy for human development. With the exception of human rights and political freedoms. Yousif states that these policies and programs were proposed before the Baath came to power, and he refers to the seminal work of Hanna Batatu (1978), *The Old Social Classes and New Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, and more recently Eric Davis' (2005) *Memories of State* concerning the Iraqi state development project. Yousif concludes from his analysis of the data collected from various resources that: "there is no doubt that the Baathist regime vigorously pursued long-term development, sometimes at the expense of current consumption which does not fit with the rentier state economy as one whose concern is mainly to buy public compliance with oil revenues.[71] The data available on the economic growth, education, housing, health, nutrition and other basic services illustrate continuous improvement.

[71] Yousif shows evidence of how the Iraqi state attempted to repress consumption during the 1970s despite the rise in prices of oil and state revenues in order to increase its investments in its ambitious development program by channeling oil revenues into spreading primary education in rural and urban areas, as well as improving housing conditions and nutrition and health standards.

For example, when it comes to education, throughout the period of Yousif's study, except for a slight decline in secondary enrollment in the 1980s, enrollments in higher education reached unprecedented levels. Similarly, the state allocation of expenditures and outcomes in health became more equitable and efficient over time. In fact, some human development outcomes (for example, infant mortality) improved at an undiminished or accelerated pace during the 1980s. In addition, the nutrition standards increased during the Iran-Iraq war, as the regime increased imports of grains to ensure adequate food availability to the general public. The state also facilitated and supported women's education and paid employment during that period; women achieved some gains in terms of their status under law. However, independent women's organizations, (as in the case for other sectors in the Iraqi society such as youth, labor, cultural and political movements), were repressed and replaced with Baath party organs. The Iraqi state— Baath for most of the period under Yousif's study— was incapable of tolerating any coherent political opposition: "civil society was smashed, human rights were routinely violated, and political freedoms were repressed, [while] at the same time much was achieved in the material components of development" (ibid.) Nevertheless, it is important to note that even with these improvements that led to expanding the well-being of the middle class through education and employment opportunities, the capacity of the state economy to absorb investments was limited, as Yousif concludes, and it was thus unable to carry through all the planned investment projects in development. This is partly attributed to the limited authority of the state bureaucracy in a totalitarian system (obviously the experience of Dr Naim above in the engineering sector cannot be generalized in all sectors)[72]: "the state bureaucracy, which controlled most of (even non-oil) GDP after the early 1970s, was notoriously slow, cumbersome, and inefficient with bureaucrats reluctant to make decisions or take initiative" (ibid, 59).

On the other hand, some governmental policies related to crude nationalization in times of war and political tension meant excluding several qualified Iraqi professionals as described by Iraqi academics and professionals I met in Amman: "Because they were 'nationalists' [he referred to the Baathist regime], the regime issued a rule that anyone married to a foreign woman should leave the government institution on early retirement, this regulation led to the

[72] The Iraqi successive regimes had invested more in certain scientific sectors such as engineering, medicine and later military industrialization, while they repressed thinkers, artists and academics in the humanities and social sciences fields when they dared to criticize the regime policies or aimed to suggest social change or other innovative programs which diverted from governmental plans (See Davis, 2005).

loss of some good academics and professionals then."[73] The following section will briefly present other policies of exclusion practiced by the Iraqi state during 1970s, which were not commonly shared among the Iraqi professionals and state bureaucrats I met in Jordan, though they led to the expulsion of several Iraqi professionals then.

On being excluded by the Iraqi regime in the 1970s

During the 1960s-1970s, the development plans carried out by the state through enlarging public education, provision of welfare services and enlarged salaried employment in state governmental positions aimed to discipline a new generation of Iraqi highly qualified professionals and scientists. In that period, the regime issued some rules to encourage more mixed inter-communal life in the Iraqi space, especially in the capital Baghdad. Some measures were introduced to suppress former sectarian and patriarchal loyalties which were reflected in the tribal family name and religious practices. For example, Saddam Husayn issued a decree in the end of the 1970s, "prohibiting the use of the name of the region after a person's surname (*laqab*), [and..] in 1973 he stopped calling himself Saddam al-Takriti and used Husayn, his father's name." (Dawod, 2012: 105). This was part of the Baath regime attempts to modernize the state by developing the infrastructure and human capital, the provision of secular education, public services and employment and ensuring more progressive laws, in addition to militarization. Obviously provision of welfare services, infrastructure and protection, in addition to political and social participation are important elements in strengthening modern nation states. However, in the case of Iraq and other Arab states, pre-modern relational networks remained present in the state structure to be recalled in times of crisis. The above changes aiming at detribalization were not reflected in Saddam's political ruling system, practically, during late 1980s and 1990s, and at the top levels of political organizations, Husayn built a complex power structure in which the tribe constituted his first circle of protection (Dawod, 2012: 104).

Furthermore, to benefit more from the state services, one had to hide any oppositional views and appear as loyal member to the Baathist regime. The ability to lead a comfortable life as described above by this group of Baghdadi state employees was conditioned by one's loyalty to the regime which controlled many aspects of state life. From 1980s–2003, membership to the Baath party was an essential proof to secure access to a good job and related state welfare

[73] From an interview on 28 November 2010 with a former Iraqi engineer whose brother and former colleagues had to leave Iraq for being married to a 'foreign' woman from Western European countries or the USA.

services. According to most of the Iraqis I met this meant being registered in the state records as *naṣīr* in the Baath party, at least, (a rank that means supporter) and to avoid expressing any opposing views, otherwise Iraqis who were politically active and openly dared to challenge the Baathist policies and practices had to face the retaliation of the regime tyranny, they (and in some cases the whole family or community members the opposition members belong to) suffered torture, execution unless they managed to escape away from the regime reaching hands. Um-Amjad (66 years old Iraqi widow), narrated how her father, a former employee at the British Petrol Company in al-Basra (BPC) disappeared in 1976 following the nationalization of the BPC, as a result of expressing his opposing views to the nationalization process. Her father never came back. Hundreds of Iraqis, who were considered non-loyal by the regime had to leave the country to escape persecution.

It is worth mentioning here that there were other stories which I did not hear among this group of Iraqis during my presence in the field in 2010-2011, but I have memories of that period from my childhood in Syria. I remember family friends, mostly doctors, academics and musicians who graduated from the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries and had fled their country in the late seventies and eighties running away from persecution for their affiliation to the communist party or for opposing the Baathist regime of Saddam Husayn. Previous research studies provide extensive details of Iraqis expelled from their country in the phase of state-making in the 1940s and 1950s (al-Rasheed, 1994; Davis, 2005:70; Sassoon, 2009; al-Ali, 2007; Tripp, 2007). These included both Baathists as well as members of the Iraqi communist party both Shia and Sunni, and members of certain ethnic groups such as Kurds and Turkmens who were included or excluded within the state apparatus at various levels and scales during different periods. In times of stability, such exclusionary practices targeted individuals who were considered “infidel”, as in the case of Um-Amjad’s family whose father was punished but her family continued to live inside Iraq and had access to the state welfare services. Rohde indicates how disciplining and silencing the population was achieved by the dual tactics of buying internal dissent through good salaried employment and severe repression (2010: 24-32). The exclusionary practices from the state welfare services used to increase in times of crisis and wars, when the regime and coercive state apparatus targeted entire households, if a member of those households dared to publically criticize the state policies or join opposition groups and parties.

In the worst incidents, during times of political tension, members of certain ethnic or sectarian groups had been targeted as collectives, as described in the case above by a former Iraqi academic "in the name of nationalization", the regime attacked professionals married to women from western Europe or North America. Former practices of the so-described "purging" policies to protect 'the Arab national pride' by the Iraqi ruling parties and regime, targeted members of certain communities just for being considered part of the "enemy" camp. This happened to Iraqi merchants and highly educated and skilled professionals from the Jewish community who were attacked after the 1948 Israeli colonization of Palestine and the expulsion of the Arab Palestinian indigenous inhabitants to establish a state for the world Jews.[74]

It happened again in the late 1980s, when the Baath party turned to the old networks of patronage and encouraged specific communal loyalties, which formalized sectarian advantage and identified a host of internal enemies. The party targeted members of the Shia and Kurdish political parties repeatedly over the next 20 years, especially during the war with Iran, which resulted in the displacement and expulsion of large numbers of Kurds and Shia who were accused of being of "Iranian affiliation," (see Marfleet, 2011: 177-181; Khoury, 2013: 25; Chatelard, 2008, 2009). I met some of these families in Jordan and Bergen (where I did my Ph D studies), some described unexpected night raids by the secret police (*al-mukhābarāt*) although they were not politically active in any opposition party. They described their expulsion as part of targeting the entire Shia community by the former Iraqi regime that deported several Iraqis who were not registered as Ottoman citizens to the Iranian borders on the pretext of *taba'iyya Irāniyya* (Iranian affiliation).[75] These rising policies by the regime against the so-called "internal enemies" forced several Iraqi academics, intellectuals and artists to leave their country to safer places.

The living conditions for several Iraqi state employees changed, during the 1980s, when large numbers of males were forced to join the military front in an "unnecessary war," as most of

[74] The acts of targeting the Iraqi Jews in 1948 did not happen in the context of civil war or local sectarian tensions, but were part of larger regional and global conflicts.
[75] The politicization of ethnic and sectarian identities increased in times of conflict, such as the anti-Saddam intifada following the Iraq-Kuwait War of 1990-91, and the present situation following the 2003 invasion. Despite the claims of the regime to erase these sectarian sentiments, the regime did not change the strange Iraqi nationality law. Many of the Iraqi Shia in late Ottoman times claimed Iranian nationality to avoid military service, and to enjoy some of the privileges of foreign subjects. These constituted ambiguous citizens of the new Iraq, described as *taba'iyya Irāniyya*, "Iranian affiliation." This status continued to be inherited by their descendants to the end of the Baathist regime in 2003 (Zubaida, 2011: 128).

the Iraqi professionals (I met) described the Iran-Iraq war. The state development opportunities and promises of better future for the children and grandchildren of these former Iraqi state bureaucrats were not free of tensions which resulted from the rising regime repression and lack of freedom to express political or cultural opinions by members of the diverse communities within the Iraqi society.

In their introduction of *Contesting the State* Kapferer and Taylor describe the state bureaucratic process in relation to state violence: "Bureaucratic processes assume particular force in the social assembly and regulative dynamics of modern states and, indeed, can inhabit the conventional thought processes of the citizenry, thus giving form to state violence" (2012: 9). Another form of state violence in the Iraqi bureaucratic processes, was the state attempts to militarize large parts of the civil bureaucracy through prolonged conscription service in 1980s, as explored in the following sections.

1980s- liberalizing the state and gendering the militarization of society

Unlike 1970s when the government invested in training young Iraqis and building state institutions by employing graduates in rewarding governmental jobs, in 1980s more efforts and resources were invested by Iraqi state institutions and the Baath Party to mobilize people for war. The stories shared in the field of the 1980s were less homogeneous than the ones of the 1970s. It depends on how close war was to one's home, and the level of losses the household endured (martyrs, prisoners, war-disabled and the disappeared). Nearly all Iraqi families I met in Amman had somebody on the war front during 1980s:

> All Iraqis born between 1955–1970 spent between 9 to 10 years in conscription service, during the years 80–88 on the war front. This affected Iraqi's social life. Many households of war generation had only 2–3 kids compared to the former generations who used to have 5–8 children. I have only one daughter.[76]

Abu-Wafa had just finished his first university degree in engineering when the war with Iran started and he was called to join mandatory conscription. The war affected the ability of this generation to pursue their higher education. Being a hard-working student with high academic achievements, Abu-Wafa was hoping to follow the steps of his eldest brother and complete his higher education studies in the UK but due to the war conditions, he was forced to postpone his study plans while his conscription was prolonged for eight years. The war

[76] Interview with Abu-Wafa at his owned apartment in Amman, on 4 December 2010.

front was one of the most common stories shared about Baghdadi life in 1980s; the prolonged service in the military postponed or cancelled former educational and career plans: “What is more urgent today: firing the cannon in the battlefield or sending you abroad to gain another degree?” This was the response of the head of the academic department to Professor Taha’s request to complete the procedures for his PhD grant to leave to France. Taha, was not a professor then but a lecturer at al-Mustansiriyah university, and due to the burdens on the war front, he had to postpone his PhD plans for 12 years. Travel became highly restricted especially for qualified professionals. In 1983, the Iraqi government declared it would confront inflation and other economic fallouts of the war with dramatic austerity measures. To support the national economy, most foreign imports that competed with locally produced commodities were banned. To prevent an exodus of populations, the government issued a travel ban, mainly on government employees and men of conscription age (Dewachi, 2017: 136).

In his ethnography, Dewachi describes how the Iraqi government terminated the decades-long foreign missions program for medical training. Physicians were strictly banned from travel, though a few were allowed to attend medical conferences abroad after acquiring myriad approvals from state internal security agencies. The termination of the field specialization study-abroad program demoralized the younger generation of Iraqi doctors. Many had wished to use state scholarships to pursue medical training abroad. Meanwhile, senior Iraqi physicians were told to establish local alternatives. In 1986, the government approved the creation of the Iraqi Board for Medical Specialization. The board offered Iraqi doctors postgraduate training in different medical and surgical specialties and subspecialties (ibid., 137).

The militarization of Iraqi space- “the internal front”

The war with Iran affected many aspects of the Iraqi social life which were present in the former decade. In her book *Iraq in Wartime: Soldiering, Martyrdom and Remembrance*, Dina Khoury (2013) traces the political, social, and cultural processes of what she calls the “normalization of war” in Iraq during the last twenty-three years of Baathist rule. When men were called to the war front, women were encouraged to fill in their positions in the state bureaucracy.

The high investment in the military sector in Iraq, as in other postcolonial states around (Syria, Egypt) was not a new development related to the war with Iran. The military used to constitute the backbone of the Iraqi bureaucracy during the Ottoman time, and the following British colonial administration. The consequent Iraqi republic regimes proceeded this high investment in the military sector, as the following table shows:

Table 2.1 Iraq's public expenditures as a percentage of GNP in 1960, 1987 and 1990

	1960	*1987*	*1990*
Health	1	0.8	0.8
Education	5.8	4.6	5.1
Military	7.3	30.2	27.4

Source: Sivard, 1993. [77]

The data reveal a large discrepancy between the percentage of government expenditures of GNP on health and education when compared to the rising investment in the military sector in the 80s and 90s, the UN reports show that Iraqis used to enjoy relatively good level of education and health services during 1970s and 1980s (despite the great losses on the war front with Iran):

> "Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Iraq enjoyed some of the highest health and educational indicators in the Middle East and was among the most industrialized nations in the region. Iraqi children enjoyed healthy home lives and excellent education, and were well nourished. Despite more than 250,000 Iraqi deaths and significant damage to Iraq's civilian infrastructure during the Iran–Iraq War, Iraq's health, education and other social programs continued to advance throughout the 1980s. Just prior to the 1990–1991 Gulf War, the UN described Iraq as a high-middle-income country, with a modern social infrastructure" (UN, 1999, in Ismael and Ismael, 2015: 151).

Bassam Yousif's study provides further details that serve to explain the rise in household expenditure in the first years of the war (1981–1982), he attributes this to the Baath regime policy of "guns and butter": "the regime used its foreign currency reserves to shield the public as much as possible from the privations of war […] through importing consumer goods notably food that were by comparison scarce before the start of the war and selling the goods at subsidized prices […and] carrying out its ambitious development program. In its attempts to avoid large pay rises in the public sector, and in order to restrain the growth in

[77]The table is taken from: (Ismael and Ismael, 2015: 16).

wages and salaries, which started to increase in real terms in the late 1970s, the regime imported labor" (2012: 51-52).

These economic intervention are described by Dina Khoury as the government's attempt to normalize the Iran-Iraq war and make it part of the everyday life of citizens or what was termed then the "internal front." This was a complex and dynamic process in which the Baath Party was "instrumental in securing citizens' obedience through monitoring dissent on the one hand, and acting as a social organization ensuring that the impact of the war was borne by the population and effecting the social policy that governed the day-to-day lives of Iraqis" (2013: 49). In its role as social organization, the Baath party, through its different hierarchies and representatives from the General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW), the Federation of Iraqi Students and Youth and other popular organizations, was involved in ensuring that Iraqis had access to services, especially those directly affected by the war, including conscripted soldiers, their families, and families of martyrs, who were offered privileged access to employment in government enterprises and educational institutions (Ibid., 53). This included paying visits to war–affected families by party cadres to foster pride in the children of martyrs, prisoners of war, or those missing in action, in addition to servicing the families' needs and linking them to the party's daily struggle (Ibid., 69).

Many educated professionals and state workers continued to work in the military sector in the 90s, where government's investments were higher than the civil services sector. Despite the risks involved in dividing the family (due to the absence of male members on the war front), affiliation to the army was one way to ensure a regular salary by a governmental job until 2003. Iraqis from various professional backgrounds were affiliated to the army. The government investment in the militarization of the Iraqi society in the 1980s onwards, made it an attractive sector for some Iraqi university graduates, who could ensure better conditions of survival and regular salary during the 1990s by keeping their military rank as officers working in the administrative sector of the military services; this way they used to enjoy more privileges than those working as civil servants in the public sector. In the field, I met Iraqi engineers, musicians and journalists who were employed in the administrative sectors of the Iraqi military for years after the end of their conscription period (ranging from 8–12 years), and some of them had a chance to work in the private sector in the evening time. This increased their access to resources following the decrease in state welfare services with the liberalization process.

When it comes to Iraqi men employed in the state bureaucracy in 1980s, serving in the army was not a choice. Abu-Hussain who was a former officer in the Iraqi army considered the compulsory military service as part of one's duties as Iraqi, regardless of the way international aid organizations in Jordan perceived it:

> Being an Iraqi, whether Sunni or Shia, you were obliged to protect your country interests and defend your state from any foreign attack. The UNHCR and IOM consider you as a threat for defending your nation-state, while they protect those who fled the army or served in the American occupation army and give them cash assistance and resettlement to the USA and Europe. After serving my country for 35 years and spending four years in an Iranian prison, I am not entitled even to pension from my home country.[78]

At the age of 63, Abu-Hussain was denied the right to retirement salary for being affiliated to the former government military and was not considered eligible for resettlement to a third country. He had to turn to the limited aid in addition to a manual work opportunity in the industrial zone in Sahab to provide for his family in Jordan. I met him several times when I was visiting his wife in their rented apartment in down-town Amman. His wife was occasionally attending and delivering training events to extend their limited space of *ʾamān* by securing additional financial support, though little and irregular. Following the habit of their generation, Abu-Hussain and his wife did not refer to their sectarian affiliation but I learnt from their son— who had to split his file in the UNHCR from his parents' file hoping to gain resettlement in a third country— that his father is Shii and his mother is Sunni.

Abu-Hussain's story shows how the larger political and global changes affected the daily life of individuals who had to constantly learn how to cope with new exclusionary policies. His long service in the army of the pre-invasion Iraqi government led to his exclusion from both the protection space in Jordan and the retirement salary provided by the current Iraqi government. His only son, Hussain considered himself lucky that he was still young and had not been called to serve in the army. Hussain seemed very close to his parental family with whom he, his wife and their young daughter, spent most of their time, yet Hussain expressed with pain how he decided to split his file from his parental family's file in the UNHCR because he realized that only by excluding himself from his parental family (to prove that he had no link to the Baath Party and Saddam's military in which his father serviced for a long

[78] Interview on 28 February 2011, in a visit to Abu Hussain's house. Abu Hussain holds an MA degree in education, his son explained how the family had to leave their area in Baghdad after being threatened for being Shia in a "Sunni"-majority neighborhood.

time), he would be included in the international framework of protection for asylum seekers.[79] In April 2011, Hussain's resettlement application to the USA moved to the final stage in the IOM resettlement program. Military conscription in Iraq was inclusive and obligatory; as Abu-Hussain explained. When a young man turns 18, if he is out of university, he must join military conscription for one year and a half. The majority of Iraqi males who were young in the 1980s were called to service, again and again, during the war time with Iran and the first gulf war following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990–1991.

Iraqis I met in Jordan expressed diverse reactions to the militarization of their society and their role in the army. I met few Iraqis who took the risk to escape from the military service and left the country. In his attempts to avoid 'losing' years in the military, Said delayed his graduation from the University for two years:[80] "I had to graduate in 1982, but I completed my BA degree only in 1985, as I could not defer it further."[81] After serving for eight years as an English-Arabic translator in a publishing unit affiliated to the military, Said decided to put an end to his service, when his unit officer commanded them to get ready for invading Kuwait. He managed to pay smugglers and crossed the borders to Jordan.

The critique of the militarization of daily life during the 1980s was shared among members of the younger generation who grew up during the Iran-Iraq war. During one of the English language classes I volunteered to teach, the students, cynically recalled the state attempts to bring the battle-field at home through the daily TV program in the 1980-1988: *Suwar min al-Ma'araka* صور من المعركة (Images from the Battleground). The program was broadcasted on the Iraqi national TV station prior the children's program (that was before the rise of satellite stations, in that period when only one TV channel could be watched in most homes). The men— who were children during the 1980s whose fathers were most of the time away in the battle front— described how they were bombarded with images of heroism and death. One of them joked how his father hated seeing the TV set turned on in the few days he spent at

[79] Madeline Campbell presents details of the complex and vague screening process in the US Refugee Admissions Program that might lead to US resettlement or rejection. For details, see (Campbell, 2016: 144-161).
[80] In his study of Iraqi doctors, Dewachi explains that during this period education acquired greater social value because, above all, continued schooling in the overwhelmingly state-run education system guaranteed a delay in military service (2017: 137).
[81] This was not an option for all males, while the children of better resourced families remained in school, as evinced by the increase in enrolment in higher education during the late 1980s. This was also a means for males to obtain military service deferments. By contrast, other males, from the poorer classes, were joining the workforce in increasing numbers (Yousif, 2015: 80).

home, away from the war front. He described an incident when he returned from school one day to see the TV screen covered with pictures of Saddam and soldiers while his father ordered him to go to his room to rest and study after watching all the TV programs.

Abu-Hussain, however, described his long years of military service as his national obligation and one's patriotic duty, others considered it part of their duties to the state– which they were forced to perform– to be included in the state apparatus and welfare services, and avoid the regime punitive measures if they were identified as deserters. His son, Hussain could only escape military service due to being the only male child of the family and thanks to his younger age (born in 1989), however, living inside Iraq in the 1980s, both men and women were increasingly connected to the militarization process of the society. Abu-Hussein's family story was paradigmatic of several Iraqi families who were forced to split their files in the UNHCR and eventually ended up living in different continents.

The militarization of the public space affected many aspects of Iraqi life, especially when it comes to the father's, brother's and husband's absence, as explained in the field accounts. In the following section, I present an excerpt from a longer story about some aspects of this militarization, which I heard from Um-Amjad during several meetings.

Um-Amjad: Living as a soldier's wife

Um-Amjad, whose father disappeared in 1976 after openly criticizing the nationalization process of the BPC (Basra Petroleum Company), married her cousin who was a lieutenant and continued his career in the military. Her story as a wife of a soldier presents rich insights on the way soldiers' families had to cope with the long absence of men on the war front. The government services to families of high ranking Baathist soldiers were vital for her household survival. Nevertheless, Um-Amjad had to lead an unsettled life to cope with her husband's military posts' requirements; the family had to live in different locations: Baghdad, al-Basra, Tikrit, al-Masib, Karkouk until she decided to quit her job and settled in a house in *al-muʿaskar*. She described *al-muʿaskar* as a military housing compound where she lived with her two children for some years:

> Military men were valued during Saddam's time; it was a war-time and Saddam needed them. We lived a luxurious life in *al-muʿaskar*, where we missed nothing; they ensured that we got all what we needed. In spite of that, it was war and there were no men. [She suddenly stopped the war story to turn to her love story that she nostalgically described almost as one of those famous legendry love stories.]

> Our love story then became everybody's story; Everybody talked about our love story. You know the song *yā rail sīh ib qahar sīhat ʿishiq yā rail*? [O' train cry out in sorrow and anger, a cry of love, O' train]." Um-Amjad started humming the first part of the popular Iraqi song "The Rail and Hamad":[82] our relatives used to say, when I was engaged and my fiancé had to travel from Baghdad to al-Basra to visit me that this song must have been written for you two." I still have the letters we used to exchange. My husband spent most of his days on the war front. He used to call me in the middle of the battle; you know the telephone service then was not as advanced as it's today. In order to call me, he had to be passed through a number of soldier-employees and connecting points and sometimes I could only hear the echo of his voice screaming at the telephone switchboard operator to connect us and get away, I used to hear the echo of his voice but he did not hear me.[83]

Um-Amjad described how she waited for the few days when her husband would come home for a short period of not more than five days per month and sometimes less. Eventually during 1986, he was absent for more than six months when he was transferred to the front line at the battlefield. By that time, she was tired of military compound life and decided to return to their house in Baghdad. In 1987, her husband came home and was planning to spend one week with her and their two kids, but on the third day of his home-visit, he was called to join Nahr al-Jasem or the so-called al-Buhairat battle: "I knew that he wouldn't survive this time, I had a feeling that he wouldn't come back. Many died in that battle; soldiers and complete brigades were involved and none came back from it."

One important element in Um-Amjad's story is the absence of the heroic side when she talks of the Iran-Iraq war; instead the focus is more on the love story and the troubles she had to endure as a soldier's wife who became a widow and a mother of two orphan children. Unlike the feelings of pride, Um-Amjad expressed whenever she described her deep love for her cousin and mentioned how they decided to marry when he was still a lieutenant in the army "with one star"; she seemed proud of his brave and heroic stories every time she referred to his participation in the fight against the Israelis in 1973.

---

[82] From "The Rail and Hamad", one of the most popular poems of al-Nawwab in Iraqi dialect, written in 1958 and turned into a song performed by Yas Khader and various other Iraqi male and female singers. Um-Amjad explained to me that the rail is the train that is one of the containers of Iraqi memories. The train, al-rail in the accent of southern Iraq, is also given a major role in Muthafar al-Nawwab's poem, which was turned into one of the most popular Iraqi love songs.

[83] I met Um-Amjad several times during my fieldwork and we spent time at her rented two-room apartment in al-Hashimi al-Shamali and in other common friends' homes. This excerpt is from a longer conversation on 10 January 2011.

Dina Khoury talks of the war "memory discourse" as an attempt by the state to regulate the inner emotional self of the Iraqi individual as he or she experienced war, through the "taken for granted" shared memory of war. The official version of war experience was disseminated by state cultural institutions and the party organizations in the 80s; the Iraqi state monopolized literary output as well as the commemoration of fallen soldiers. The state promoted a heroic narrative of the war experience, and the memory discourse disseminated by the government during the Iran-Iraq war was dominant. Its categories were: memory, martyrdom, *mājidāt* or strong Iraqi women (Khoury, 2013: 11-12). Unlike Um-Amjad's description of heroism associated with the 1973 war, in her stories of the 1980s, the image of the fighter-hero who sacrificed his life for defending the nation pride seemed to have lost its weight. Instead feelings of nostalgia and loss replaced those of heroism.

Um-Amjad's story is similar to other stories I heard in the field— mostly from women but also several men— when the eight years of the Iran-Iraq war were mentioned, feelings of loss, sorrow and long wasted years away from male family members who were conscripted soldiers, were expressed. Rather than political and heroic messages that were promoted by the regime in the official public media such as newspapers, television and radio stations, the focus of the stories' on the 80s was more on the suffering aspect in the cases of wives and sons of martyrs, war prisoners in Iran, long periods of conscription and military service on the war front, and the disabilities among men who returned alive from the battlefield.

The Iran-Iraq war which was conceived in September 1980 as a war of "demonstration" in the words of Charles Tripp (2007: 28), turned by 1982—with the Iranian achievements— into a war of "survival" to maintain the regime in power against the stated aim of Khomeini who made peace conditional on the fall of Saddam and his party (Khoury, 2013: 29). In 1986 Iran exerted strong efforts to conquer Basra and break the Iraqi defensive line. On 6 February of that year, it conquered the Faw Peninsula. To counter the loss of Faw, Saddam Husayn pushed his military to conquer Mehran, but lost it. The loss of Faw and the unsuccessful attempt to take Mehran created a serious crisis for the regime. The regime allowed for the voicing of complaints by its citizens against the corruption of state organs and party officials. It appeared that citizens had much to complain about, including: economic hardship and labor shortages: "so critical was the shortage of men that the government conscripted some one hundred twenty-five thousand male university teachers and students, a practice it had avoided in fear of alienating a critical element of society" (Hiro, in Khoury, 2013: 32). In 1987, one

year before the war ended, out of a total population of 2.6 million Iraqi men aged 18 to 45, 1.7 million were in arms (ibid.: 34).

The deployment and death of large portions of the productive male population led to labor shortages. One and a half million Egyptians and other Arab laborers were imported to run the agricultural, industrial, and service sectors of the economy, and at times to help transport goods to the front. Women were called upon to fill public sector positions, and by 1988 accounted for 31% of the labor force in that sector, and one-fourth of the total labor force (Hiro in Khoury, 2013: 34).

Gendering Iraqi public space(s): recruiting male bureaucrats in the military service and feminizing the civil service

When remembered, the war recalls losses of male members who were either absent for a long time, or gone forever. Men talk of wasted time and years in conscriptions while women usually talk of their losses and suffering from the absence of their partner/ father/ and brothers/ sons on the one side, and of increasing responsibility and independence with a sense of pride, on the other side. Being responsible for managing home and the city in general. Men also celebrate the role of women in managing the "internal front" during their absence on the battlefield: "women saved the country,"[84] as an Iraqi engineer who spent long years in service told me. On the changing role(s) of women during the 1980s, Ismael and Ismael write:

> "The Iran–Iraq War saw the expansion of women into ever-larger economic roles. Due to the enormous numbers of male casualties and the loss of men from the economy, women were encouraged to take on new roles. By necessity women became the principal food providers in addition to traditional roles overseeing child care. To encourage the participation of women in the labor force, the regime observed and enacted Labor Law 71 in 1987, which was meant to protect the status of women. The Iraqi Revolutionary Council went further with decrees taking protective responsibility of the widows of dead soldiers, providing the widow with a free plot of land, free housing, as well as social security" (2015: 181).

As described earlier, Iraq had one of the highest rates of women's education in the Arab region, by the 1980s. The progressive attitude toward women's education and economic independence during the republican era continued under Baath Party rule (Dewachi, 2017: 205). Yet, the growth of workforce participation and female involvement in social and economic life outside the home, while robust, did not mirror the experience of other societies.

[84] Meeting with an Iraqi engineer on 29 January, he spent seven years in military service.

Iraqi sociologist Lahay Abdul-Ḥussain, in her examination of available statistical record, measured the impact of the Iran–Iraq War on women in education and their work outside the home between 1980 and 1988 she found that:

> While Baathist development did help expand women's opportunities in terms of education, work and occupations, the Iran–Iraq War pushed women heavily toward more segregated work opportunities. Therefore, gender segregation became a concrete reality in the formal workplace. For example, the feminization of elementary school teacher and secretarial jobs compared with the other occupations became apparent. This was in contrast to the experience of women in many countries experiencing total war, where the opportunity to advance was more meritocratic—even if such opportunities were diminished as gender norms returned following the conflict (Abdul-Ḥussain, 2006, quoted in Ismael & Ismael, 2015: 181-182).

The prolonged war heavily affected Iraqi men and women from all generations and one of the biggest changes were related to the process of development planning which were brought to an end (Yousif, 2012: 153). This heavily affected the state bureaucracy and professionals in the middle class in general whose access to welfare services was heavily affected. Iraqi state employees and professionals had to learn how to cope with the liberalization and privatization of the state economy that led eventually to the loss of former higher social status associated with education and government employment. Economic prosperity was conditioned by expressing affiliation to the Baath party high officials which facilitated access to resources to run a private business.[85]

Furthermore, the long periods of conscription and military service created great tension in Iraqi family daily lives and changed the community perceptions towards "military duty." The call for men to serve their military "duty" and the prolonged coercive conscription period forced the government to employ women in public sector positions at a higher rate, while relying on Egyptians and other Arab laborers to fill vacant places in the industrial and

[85] Beginning in the 1970s and consolidating through the 1990s and 2000s – most countries in the Middle East and North Africa region have been profoundly transformed by neoliberal economic policies. These policies have included privatization, labor market deregulation, opening up to foreign direct investment (FDI), increasing integration into global financial markets, reduction of tariffs and other barriers to trade, cutbacks to social spending (notably on food subsidies) and so forth. (see Hanieh, 2013:47-74 for an account of neoliberalism in the region, and Hanieh, 2015: 63) In the case of Iraq, liberalization was more related to investment of oil revenues in militarization and to the funding of expensive war operations in the Iran-Iraq war it relied on loans from gulf countries and Saudi Arabia which increased the burden on the state and gradually it reduced its investment in human development. However, the privatization was not associated with opening up to foreign direct investment (FDI). This became only possible after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, as discussed briefly in Chapter 1. The CPA orders signed by Paul Bremer focused on promoting free trade in the context of transnational production rather than investment in developing local infrastructure (see Klein, 2004, 2007; Doran, 2012).

construction sectors. These governmental strategies of survival seriously affected the centralized governmental sector.

Raya, a woman in her mid-fifties when I met her in 2011, told me how the city landscape changed when she described Baghdad in late 1980s; like many women of her generation, her father and brothers spent long years in the military service, while her husband ran away. Her story, of which I present more details in Chapter Seven, explores several features of Iraqis' struggle with compulsory militarization:

> I got tired, my brothers were in the military for long years [I learnt later that she lost two of her brothers: one was killed and the other imprisoned and disappeared during the war with Iran]. All the men in my neighborhood (al-Saydiyya) were called to join the military service. There were times when you would see no man in the whole neighborhood. Only women were around, while the men were all the time in *al-jabha* (the war front). I used to spend the evening hours on the roof, when you look in front of you, you can see all the women in black: one mourning the death of her brother, another lost her son or husband. Once I was sitting in my house with my sister, we had a neighbor in the house next to ours who was hiding from the conscription. The popular army forces crossed through our house garden to our neighbor's, whose house was surrounded by popular army. The man was sick, but they forced him to join the popular army. My husband was all the time running from military service, partly in Kuwait and then in al-Mosul. He ruined our family life while trying to escape the army service; he lost all his business in Kuwait. I used to tell him that my five brothers went to the army, why do you have to run away and hide? He used to answer me carelessly: do you want me to die? No other nation witnessed what we experienced in Iraq, no one! The Iraqi woman suffered a lot, God may help her! At that time, you could not see a man working around; when you go for shopping, you never meet men, if you want to buy fish, it's a woman who will open the fish and clean it, and the butcher was a woman too. Even 'those *shrūgiyyat*[86] Shiis', when they lost their husbands in war, they used to come and look for any work in the city. There was an empty green piece of land in the opposite side of my store and I used to watch those women cultivating the land and living from its products.

Raya presented a vivid image she recalled from her life in Baghdad during the Iran-Iraq war in times when only women could be seen in the shops and governmental jobs in addition to the rise of "the women in black" who turned Baghdad into a "city of widows" to borrow the description of Haifa Zangana (2009). The feminization of the government services and the

[86]*shrūgiyya* (feminine) and *shrūgī* (masculine) is a term with degrading meaning that is used to refer to the poorer Iraqis who moved from rural areas to settle in suburbs around the capital Baghdad. Hanna Batatu mentions that *shrūgīs* "the Easterners, if literally translated" — migrated from the 'Amarah tribal country— whose *sarifas* or mud huts dotted the landscape of Greater Baghdad during the 1940s and 1950s (1978:49).

dependence on the so-called secondary labor forces[87] in addition to liberalizing and privatizing the state economy, all these had negative effects on the former conditions of labor and state welfare services which Iraqi professionals and government employees used to enjoy in the 70s. Some of the Iraqi males who spent years on the war front were not able to find 'decent' employment conditions after the end of the war due to lack of vacancies. Dewachi describes how these condition affected women's and men's presence in the state bureaucracy:

> "When men were mobilized to the frontlines, more women took on responsibilities as heads of household and active participants in the state labor force. The war saw more Iraqi women enter social, economic, and public life, assuming more active, "productive," and "reproductive" roles in Iraq's wartime society. Decades of progressive social policies that favored and supported female education paid off. Increasing numbers of women were hired for low- and middle-ranking administrative and technical positions in Iraq's public sector. In a number of ministries, women employees constituted between 60 and 80 percent of the workforce. Improving work conditions for women and providing an infrastructure for managing their family "duties" further facilitated women's incorporation into government jobs. Women's pay was increased and maternity leave was extended. At each government ministry, daycare services for working women with preschool-age children were provided. Women's role in the new war economy was not limited to their labor. The government also tapped women's personal resources. The Ba'th Party conducted donation campaigns across the country—known as *Hamlat al-Tabaru' LilMajhūd al-Harbi* (Donation Campaign for the War Effort). Through coercion and cooptation, women lined up outside party headquarters to contribute money and gold jewelry. Although such policies stirred resentment toward the regime, it was seen as being balanced by a new social contract—defined by women's economic visibility and assumed independence" (Dewachi, 2017: 139-140).

The above excerpt explains the new division of labor in the Iraqi social space imposed by the conditions of war and regulated by the state policies and the regime ruling bodies who invested in improving the situation of girls' schooling and higher education and enhancing working women conditions and their legal rights in general.

Effects of militarization and liberalization on households and family relations

In the nationalized Iraqi discourse of the 80s, women were associated with images of glory; they were described as *majidāt* (strong/ glorified women), martyrs' wives, mothers of heroes

[87] To help cope with the manpower shortage, the state opened the door to Arab labor immigration. As explained earlier, priority was given to Egyptians, a large population that was dealing with the socio-economic dislocation caused by Egyptian president Anwar al-Sadat's "liberalizing" policies (for details, see Mitchell's America's Egypt: Discourse of the Development Industry (1991)). Filling low-wage menial jobs in construction and agriculture, it is estimated that more than 1 million Egyptians worked in Iraq during the 1980s. This was probably the largest population of migrant labor working in any Arab state at the time (Dewachi, 2017: 139).

who sacrificed to raise strong Iraqi sons and daughters who would, in turn, build and defend the nation. In the stories I heard in the field of that time, women related *ʾamān* to their strength and independence and partly, in some cases, to financial security. Such was the case of Um-Amjad, who as a martyr's wife used to receive a monthly salary from 1987 when her husband died in the battlefield till 2003. The story of Raya during *al-ḥiṣār* (in Chapter 7) also emphasizes the importance of financial security, unlike Um-Amjad who relied on the state support, Raya whose husband had deserted conscription by paying huge bribes had the chance to improve her household's economic conditions by running a private business in addition to her governmental job. In both cases, memories of war time reflect the feelings of suffering and loss experienced by Iraqi women as a result of the militarization of the Iraqi social life.

Well-being in 1980s as described by Iraqi males in the field was related to the ability to gain exemption from military conscription, or the ability to minimize the prolonged conscription period. An Iraqi young man considered himself lucky if he was the only son in the family or had two family members who fell as martyrs on the battle-front, because he could choose not to serve on the front line, though not completely exempted. An Iraqi man, who served in the military for six years described how difficult, almost impossible, it was to get exemption: "one could be exempted from serving in the army only if he was too sick, almost dead: severe heart diseases, severe asthma or severely handicapped persons, completely blind, paralyzed or over 60 percent disability, cancer patients, and bladder and bowel incontinence. Otherwise all Iraqi men should serve in the army! That's why you won't find in Iraq a family without a martyr or a martyr's mother."[88] Another effect of the 1980s state policies of militarization on family life was related to marriage life and child reproduction. Contrary to the family planning programs implemented in many developing countries, child survival was tied to "limiting family size as a means of population control." Dewachi explains that in the Iraqi case this was somewhat different:

> "The Iraqi government adopted prenatal policies, promoting higher rates of fertility and reproduction, and linked them to the strategy of war mobilization. The government adopted new policies regarding contraception. Although contraception was not actually illegal in the 1980s, it was definitely discouraged and was not readily available, as it had been before the war. Many incentives were given, such as the extension of maternity leave to one year—of which six months were paid. Baby food and articles were imported and subsidized. In the workplace, the government established comprehensive daycare for employees and

[88] From a conversation during a social gathering with three Iraqi families on 27 March 2011.

> facilitated maternity leave and early retirement for women with three children and more. The government further offered loans, bonuses, and subsidies for young married couples. It regularly held public collective weddings, offering financial support for those who could not afford marriage expenses. With each child, married couples were entitled to an incremental monthly subsidy. The more children in a family, the larger the subsidy" (2017: 143).

During my fieldwork, I noticed that among the war generation, this seemed like another site of resistance as some parents of small families (who had one or two kids) expressed that they tried to avoid bringing more children, in an attempt to avoid sending them to war. It is not clear whether this was a common reason among families with one or two children (compared to the larger households among their parents' generation), or whether this was a natural outcome for working mothers, but in several cases, some parents attributed this to the long absence of the father on the war front; as one of the women who had one son explained that this was not her intention, but due to the imprisonment of her husband in Iran and his long absence, she (and other women she knows) lost the chances of conceiving naturally.

Despite the large increase in the participation of women in state public life in the 1970s and 1980s, the war with Iran brought new problems to the women who had to learn how to live as widows or wives of missing husbands and prisoners of war and single mothers of young sons (to turn into soldiers or martyrs in the future). A collective response by various state agencies was planned to increase the formal space of protection for Iraqi women who lost their husbands and sons in war. This was observed through the involvement of the party associations, such as the General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW) in managing the social costs of war. The federation focused more on families who were directly harmed by war. As Dina Khoury explains, the Federation expanded its reach to include 850,000 members reaching 62% of Iraqi neighborhoods in rural and urban areas with 30% of membership among urban women by 1987 and was active in pushing for amendments to the Personal Status Law in 1983 and 1985 to accord more rights within the family to individual women. The GFIW and other popular organizations, increased their involvement, which included assessing the social needs of individuals and families affected by war. This resulted in the development of laws; the GFIW played an important role in reforming the Personal Status Law that defined the rights of inheritance, marriage and divorce as part of the modernization and development project of the Iraqi state, in addition to its interest in the facilitation of inheritance and compensation for martyr's widows and the wives of those missing or imprisoned in Iran (Ibid., 78-79).

In commenting on these government actions to mobilize Iraqi women, Joseph argued that this official mobilization has been less about liberating women and more about strengthening the state (2000: 36). In the seventies and eighties, Iraqis belonging to various groups including: young children's *Talāʾiʿ*, paramilitary groups, student associations, science, sports, cultural clubs – all had to learn how to become loyal to the party and the state as part of their socialization for discipline and political loyalty (Joseph, 1991: 181). According to Joseph, women and families played an important role in the dynamics of the Iraqi state. Another important factor is the economic boom after the nationalization of Iraqi oil which offered the state extensive public resources to fund its public sector programs in education, social services, industry, agriculture and commercial services: The Iraqi Baath Party had an interest both in recruiting women into the labor force in the context of a continuing labor shortage and in wresting women's allegiance away from kin, family, or ethnic group and shifting it to the party-state. Women were recruited into state-controlled agencies and put through public education, vocational training, and political indoctrination (ibid., 1991: 177).

Similar arguments to Joseph's above concerning the progressive Iraqi state policies in relation to Iraqi women were raised in several writings which tend to argue that formal mobilization of Iraqi women had been less about liberating them in the Western meaning of the term and more about strengthening the state (For example, Joseph, 1991: 184; Joseph and Slomovich, 2001: 36; Moghadam, 1993, 2004, al-Ali, 2005; Al-Jawaheri, 2008: 15-29; Rohde, 2010). In general, they refer to the higher female participation in the labor force and polity as needed for the state-building program, in addition to the revisions of the personal status law as necessary and useful to ensure wider female participation in the public sector, through several programs developed by the Baath party and other state agencies: "The Baath have sought to redirect the allegiance of women towards the party and state not only by providing them organizational alternatives but also by extending rights and services to them. Legislative reform as well as programs of immediate relevance to women have been developed towards these ends" (Joseph, 1991: 179, 184).

This role of state apparatus can be observed in Iraq and other modern regimes of governmentality, but what makes the Iraqi case a unique case is not only the sudden rise in the levels of education and employment among women, but the big decline in the living conditions of these women who experienced increasing levels of reduction in services and

"rights" from 1980s onwards (at least till 2011, the time of this research). Wives and descendants of army officers were affected at various levels depending on their educational and career backgrounds in addition to their access to political and material capital. Iraqi women described enthusiastically their former career life and how they were encouraged to participate in the public social life and government employment sector to cover for the absence of male working force who were called to fight on the war front. As described earlier, this was perceived as positive effect by most women I met, in retrospect, when they compared the opportunities they had then to what they witnessed in the recent past in times of war and displacement following the US-led invasion. Most women in the field celebrated former state policies and the increase in state services and legal protection for women, especially the women who were affected the most by the war; they mentioned the ability to lead a "decent" life as single mothers and martyr's wives: "the state ensured that wives of martyrs would need nobody to live a decent life, because the state provided services to cover their and their children's needs." This is how Um-Amjad described her life throughout the 1980s until 2003 (when the monthly financial entitlement assigned by the former Iraqi government stopped). The 'decent' conditions referred to their right to access state welfare for performing one's duty in defending the nation pride.

In their stories, Raya (the wife of a wanted soldier for military desertion) and Um-Amjad (the wife of a martyr soldier who died on the war-front) and other women I met, talk of their struggles as mothers and wives of soldiers, dissidents and martyrs in the 1980s and 1990s. Some present their experiences as citizens of the Iraqi and Arab nation who had to fight and resist in a "defensive war."[89] Others were more critical to Saddam's oppressive policies and his authoritative decisions to force Iraqis into one war after another.

Um-Amjad who became a widow in 1987 was considered eligible for state welfare services in Iraq, like other widows who described different levels of gains and losses. In one of our informal gatherings in Um-Amjad's rented apartment, we realized that four of the women sitting in the room, including Um-Amjad, were widows of martyrs and one was also the mother of a martyr. The women repeated several times how the wife of the martyr in Iraq was treated "like a queen." They mentioned this to compare that 'more affluent' life before 2003

[89] Rohde explains what he describes as a "massive patriotic propaganda campaign" developed by the Iraqi regime to enhance its legitimacy in its war against Iran, at least during the first years of the war, especially among the Iraqi Shias; according to Achim Rohde: "the Baath regime apparently managed to achieve a degree of Gramscian hegemony vis-à-vis its Shiʿite population, at least during the war years" (ibid., 34).

to the poor conditions in the small rented apartments in al-Hashimi al-Shamili where they have been living for years waiting for resettlement. Um-Amjad had been hoping to gain resettlement to Germany to reunite with her daughter, but according to the resettlement regulations she was not considered eligible.

The perceptions of lack of *ʾamān* were measured in retrospect. In conditions of structural violence and ongoing wars and losses, the former sacrifices for the Iraqi nation state— which these widow women had to endure as soldiers' wives and later as single mothers of orphans— were no longer appreciated or rewarded by the new Iraqi state government as "war heroes" or by international protection frameworks which Iraqis could access in their refuge place in Amman as "war victims." On the contrary, being affiliated to the former Iraqi army-men was one of the conditions to be excluded from the Iraqi state welfare after 2003 and many times from further internationally designed solutions such as resettlement to a third country. To be eligible for resettlement that was considered the best solution by some Iraqis like Um-Amjad, she had to prove that she was not involved in Saddam's regime or military prior 2003 and her resettlement application would be stronger if she could prove that she was a victim of that regime. Being affiliated to military active persons in Saddam's government could be one reason for being excluded from the formal protection space in Jordan or postinvasion Iraq.

However, the reality was more complex as Um-Amjad and other widows described their relationships to the former regime by talking of the opportunities and welfare services the regime used to provide, which in their expression were sometimes personalized in the figure of Saddam rather than the state: "Saddam did not hurt us, on the contrary, Iraq was safer during his rule and as wives of soldiers and widows, our conditions were better in terms of accessing education, having more stable jobs and protection services. Living in Baghdad was safer and I felt prouder." This is how one of the women commented during a meeting in Um-Amjad's rented apartment when she described her life as an Iraqi widow (among several other widows who accidently gathered to drink tea in one cold afternoon in January). Like Um-Amjad, this woman's husband was a martyr killed during the Iraq-Iran war and she received state support services. She compared her conditions in the 1980s-1990s in Baghdad with the condition's of her son's wife who was widowed after 2003 but did not receive any support from the state for her or her son. We can see how *ʾamān* for these women is reduced

to reflect the ability to secure decent living standards for their orphan children that was possible through former state services and support.

Towards the end of that decade, in late 1980s, many Iraqis had to experience further reduction in their well-being and deterioration in the general economic situation due to the reduction of state investments in the public sector and infrastructure. According to Rohde, with the financial burden of maintaining the war with Iran, and the decline in oil revenues, the Iraqi regime embarked on a broad program of economic liberalization that led to decline in state services and former development plans (ibid., 2010: 42).

Liberalizing the state economy and the privatization policies

During the Iran-Iraq war in 1982, the Baathist congress de-emphasized the "socialist" aspects of its economic programs, paving the way to a policy of liberalizing the economy, allowing private entrepreneurs to become subcontractors of the state by providing them with low-interest loans and tax concessions (Khafaji in Khoury: 31). The economic costs of the Iran-Iraq war were staggering. Iraq emerged burdened with a foreign debt of $50 to $82 billion US dollars, the bulk of it owed to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Unemployment, caused in part by the demobilization of soldiers and the dismantling of the war economy, as well as the increase in the demands for social services, severely stressed the state's ability to create jobs and meet the population's social needs. In response, the government accelerated the rate of privatization that had begun during the war and introduced fees on some public sector services. Consequently, inflation rose 35-40% and "complaints about government and party officials enriching themselves at the expense of Iraqis who had sacrificed for the nation permeated the press" (Bengio, in Khoury: 34).

In his Ph D thesis, Yousef Baker refers to the effects of the privatization and liberalization campaign on the state bureaucracies whose power dwindled: "The regime undermined the power of labor by allowing industries to import Arab labor and removing minimum wages. Industries shed between 40 and 80 percent of their work forces. The government itself downsized its own bureaucracy" (Baker, 2014: 124-125).

Despite the activation of the Baath party ground-based organizations, the effects of war on the educated and highly skilled labor were still high. Many former middle class Baghdadis

had to learn to live with lower ambitions in terms of career rewards, especially after the liberalization of the economy and the retreat of the former 'socialist' aspects in state welfare services. With the rise of the inflation rate, the state role in economic life was negatively affected and the private sector was enhanced to benefit a small rate of government and party officials while the investment of the state in public welfare such as education, health and social and cultural sectors decreased at the expense of its investment in military infrastructures. Yousef Baker explores some of the reasons of this transformation:

> "War with Iran transformed Iraq from a creditor nation to a debtor nation, which became one of the reasons the Baath regime invaded Kuwait in 1990 [….]. For an economy so dependent on oil revenue, dramatic changes in the oil sector sent shock waves throughout the economy. This included increasing inflation, decrease in public spending and public services, decrease in non-military government spending, decrease in non military imports, an overall reduction in the standard of living, decrease in foreign exchange reserves and an increase in foreign debt" (Baker, 2014: 120).

Towards the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the economic liberalization process which had begun during the war was extended and reinforced. Price controls were removed, entrepreneurial activity was encouraged, and a number of state factories were sold off to private individuals, as were some other minor state assets. Licenses were granted for private industrial projects; the private sector accounted for nearly a quarter of all imports. These activities provided excellent opportunities for profit-making by a few individuals; however, they led to massive inflation which became so serious that regulations had to be re-imposed in a number of areas (Tripp, 2007: 241-242).

The regime management of the country resources including human resources during the long eight-year war with Iran led to a gradual decline in former development plans. The prolonged war affected the allocation of resources to development when the state poured the resources from nationalization of the oil industry in 1972, agriculture, "strategic rents" from oil-rich gulf states for defending the "eastern flank of the Arab nation" into financing the war, and "the militarization of its population" (Khoury, 2013: 6). Compared to the rich social life enabled by the state welfare services in 1970s, declining oil prices worsened Iraq's economic woes in 1988, as did the curtailment of its oil production due to the destruction of some of its oil production facilities. There was "a shift in the categories of people targeted by the social and security policies of the state. Soldiers, deserters, insurgents, and martyrs' families became the primary objects of state policies" (Ibid., 7). The Iraqi state then developed a

reward system that depended on "a hierarchy of rights-based, precise definitions of martyrdom"[90] (Ibid., 71). In addition to the hierarchies established in state services when it comes to employment and protection, the narratives of war shared by the women and men I met in Amman are different from the heroic narrative of war in the official version presented by the Iraqi State.

This focus on military activities and the high level of conscription of university graduates (including some academics and professionals and large number of government male employees) affected the former prosperous middle class life style that was linked to professionalization and successful career. Within five years of the start of the Iran-Iraq war, the regular army grew from 200,000 to 500,000, mainly through the broadening of the conscription age. On the other hand, "recruits" to the Baath-run paramilitary Popular Army reached close to 650,000, mainly through the recruitment of men above the official age of military service (Dewachi, 2017: 136).

Conscripting the male population into the military had serious effects on the country labor and living standards of the Baghdadi urban middle class households. Women's role in the public space increased while many of them had to suffer the double burden to substitute for the absence of the men at home and in the public services. The former professional and state employees conditions began to change and working in a state job (in the public sector) was no longer considered as the best paid job. The rise of private businesses meant the appearance of new rich families and the gradual decline of the middle class. Former high educational and cultural life was shrinking, and education became less effective in its role to upward mobility. Eventually, Iraqis who had more access to resources to run private businesses could ensure better living conditions for their families than the ones solely dependent on their professional

[90] I observed similar cases like Um-Amjad's who described how they lost their rights to state welfare in the postinvasion Iraq, but in few cases I heard different stories about other martyr's widows which reflect that these benefits were not extended at the same level to the less-educated and the less desired segments of society who were excluded from many opportunities described by middle class and upper middle class Iraqis. In her story, Raya described the poor conditions she observed among few widows who used to visit her shop. She explained that some of these women used to grow vegetables in an unused land lot (near her shop) to feed their orphan children. It was not easy in 2011 when I met Raya to check the accurate dates of such incidents: whether this happened during the 1980s or 1990s when state services deteriorated, as Raya left Iraq in 1996 and witnessed the difficult years of *al-ḥiṣār*. Raya described the women as poor *shrūgiyyat* Shia from al-Thawra district. Al-Thawra district (literally means revolution district), or sometimes called Saddam district which was a public housing project often described by Iraqis as a neighborhood with poorer services when compared to other Baghdadi neighborhoods; it used to host Iraqi households who migrated from rural areas in the 1950s–1960s to search for job opportunities in the capital Baghdad. In postinvasion Iraq, the district was named al-Sader city after the Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

qualifications and governmental jobs. The following story presents Nagham's experience, which reflects the reduction in former rich cultural and social Baghdadi life.

Nagham: Learning to live with reduction in one's well-being and 'happiness'

Nagham, who came to live in Amman with her Jordanian husband and her two small children towards the end of the Iran-Iraq war, vividly narrated her feelings of reduction which she often described to her son and daughter as an absence in their lives that could never be filled.

I heard Nagham's distinctive Iraqi dialect while I was reading at the Shoman public library. When I noticed that everyone was exchanging greetings with her, I expected that she was one of the regular library users and followed her through the reading area but she entered one of the offices and took her seat next to a window overlooking the huge *Ishtar* gate of the Iraqi Embassy that is standing on the other side of the library street. Her voice and looks changed when she started talking about her memories of Baghdad.

Her relatively small family used to live in Zayouna suburb in Baghdad, in the so-called 'Officers Neighborhood': she and her younger sister used to live with her father who was a doctor and her mother who was a school principal and music teacher. Nagham was not able to complete one sentence whenever she talked of the current situation in Iraq, although as I noticed from her comments later, she was following the daily news from various sources, but her pain when she tried to talk of today's Iraq felt as big as her enthusiasm when she described her former memories of living in Baghdad during the late seventies and eighties. Her memories of being an Iraqi in the seventies and eighties focused on the social and cultural activities shared by Baghdadi professionals and bureaucrats or what she called the 'rich social and cultural life' as she described the gatherings of extended family and friends:

> I remember our weekly gatherings; we used to meet every Thursday evening, around 80-100 persons from all ages. I remember how we used to listen to music and then examine and explore various melodies and explain the history of specific rhythms. We used to discuss the latest intellectual works, novels and articles on drama, music and literary works. Books were very cheap then in Iraq; one could buy two or three books for only one Iraqi Dinar. This was the kind of life and experiences we had in Iraq in the seventies and eighties. These are the stories I tell my children who grew up here in Amman and never returned to Baghdad. Iraqis were fond of reading. One of the popular games during our gatherings was poetry games; one starts reciting a line from a poem and the rest will follow, each person will recite a line from another poem that starts with the same rhyme and/or word

with which the previous poem line ended. That is the life I miss here in Amman, my children missed it too, and my grandchildren will miss it.

Looking back nostalgically to the past was common among successive Iraqi generations in their stories of Iraq. Similar to what Batatu (1978) observed in his work, which was written during the 1970s, that in their stories in the sixties many Iraqis looked back nostalgically to the epoch of the monarchy. Under the monarchy, however, many more felt that they could not have had worse governance than they had. Coups or outbursts of national or local significance characterized, in fact, almost the entire life span of the monarchy— in the period 1921–1958 (see Table 17-1 in Batatu, 1978). Similarly, many of the Iraqis who had been forced out of their country post-2003 longed for many aspects of their former lives in Iraq. It was common to feel this nostalgic longing to the past among the Iraqis who had been forced out of their country during the sanctions period in the 1990s and post-2003, especially the older generation who longed for many aspects of their former lives in Iraq. The loss here is many times expressed as the loss of access to formerly shared social and cultural capital in the Baghdadi space, in addition to the loss of personal economic capital, and particularly rewarding career opportunities (see Chapter 3).

Nagham was 55 when I met her in May 2010, and although she left Iraq in 1991, her description of the former Baghdadi life was as nostalgic as the stories told by the older generation of Iraqis who left Baghdad after 2005. They too shared Nagham's longing to a beautiful past, especially when that past was contrasted with difficult conditions in the Iraqi space. Nagham was aware, as she told me that her memories of the beautiful days in Baghdad in the seventies and eighties might not have been shared by all Iraqis, as she learnt from the stories she had heard from her father about the suffering of the peasants he treated in the province hospital. Being part of an educated and affluent family, she could complete her higher education at university in Baghdad and the USA in the field of economics and business management and find a good job. Her nostalgic story focused on the rich cultural and social life that had been "completely destroyed" after 2003, as she explained. However, she blamed the deterioration in the rich cultural life to the oppressive rule of the former regime that focused on militarization and controlling all aspects of Iraqi life and restricting access to wider sources of knowledge. She found it difficult to live with that reduction, and her decision was to leave Iraq with her family in 1991. Being married to a Jordanian, it was

easier to settle in Amman and find a job in one of Amman's largest public libraries where I met her.

She recalled the suffering of her family and friends who stayed in Baghdad after she had left. Her focus was on lack of access to educational and cultural materials "whenever they heard of a visitor coming, they asked me to send them latest issues of journals and periodicals. They lived out of history with the oppressive regime and economic sanctions (*ḥiṣār*): no access to satellite dishes, or journals. In 1991, Americans threatened to bomb Iraq back to the stone age and they did."[91] Nagham visited Iraq only once in 1995 to attend the funeral of her mother, and in her attempt to reconnect with the memories of her past, she carried with her what she could collect in her travel bag from the family photos and books, but she failed to save the thick arts encyclopedias and two large paintings that were confiscated by the guards at the borders. Her other attempts to arrange with taxi drivers to bring the rest of her family library failed. Nagham's former rich social life in Baghdad was reduced to the stories she tells her son and daughter and the pictures and few books she could save from her family house that she never returned to. Her story did not address the loss of material property, such as the house and other belongings but the reduction of well-being and happiness; i.e. the rich social life she enjoyed in Baghdad, which was based on a wider network of family and friends. The loss of chances to regain this source of happiness results from the reduction in the inter-communal mixed urban Baghdadi life of the 60s, 70s and 80s with the potential it offered for sharing diverse cultural products. Her relatives and friends were scattered all over the world: her sister lives in London, and other relatives are based in Dubai, USA and the UK.

Despite her relatively settled conditions, after spending 19 years in Amman, gaining the Jordanian nationality and having a permanent job, a heavy weight of loss was present, which she described as 'the inability to be happy' as she was in Baghdad:

> We, human beings, each of us have been assigned a share of the happiness available in this universe. When it comes to us, the Iraqis, we have consumed our share of happiness in Iraq, there is no hope to find it anymore.

Happiness as perceived by Nagham and other Iraqis I met is related to the rich cultural life, social relations and family ties her generation shared in the Baghdadi space during the late

[91] Nagham was referring here to the threat by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker during his meeting with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz to bomb Iraq back to the Stone Age if Saddam does not pull out his troops from Kuwait.

sixties and seventies with “an expanding middle- and lower-middle class educated, largely urban population” (Khoury, 2013: 205). The stories of her family social gatherings present an image of educated and hard-working Iraqis who had more space to enjoy a rich social life through sharing poetry and music. Although Nagham’s story refers to her own extended family, her story tells some general aspects of being Iraqi in 1970s and 1980s that were sporadically shared by less-settled Iraqis I met in Jordan.

The state’s investment in expanding institutions of higher education, and building a bureaucracy of government employees with access to rewarding monthly salaries and other benefits especially entertainment generated higher expectations for Nagham’s generation. Nagham’s father and mother had access to free university education and government jobs that ensured some stability and allowed more access to free time in which they enjoyed sharing literary and artistic activities. As described by Dina Khoury this generation which she calls the “revolution” generation had cultivated new sensibilities articulated in outlets of modern public culture that distinguished them from the generations of their fathers and grandfathers who were mostly uneducated and relatively poor. This can explain the disappointment of Nagham’s generation who had to witness the gradual demise of access to quality education and cultural venues with the increasing investment by the state in a destructive war and the militarization of society. The transformations witnessed in the modernization process with the promises they carried for Iraqis who enjoyed the cultural and educational rise in the 60s and 70s, are perceived as loss of former well-being and happiness when compared to the drastic changes following wars, economic sanctions and destruction of the state infrastructure.

The decline of well-being among Baghdadi communities and the rise of longing to ‘old good days’

In his introduction of the edited book on *Culture and Well-Being*: well-being, according to Jiménez in several cases explored ethnographically, is always measured against its absence (2007: 22). Similarities can be drawn in the stories explored in this chapter among martyr’s widows, and other Iraqi women and men belonging to older generations who measured their current well-being in relation to what is absent, as revealed in their nostalgic stories of a lost past. Nagham described the meanings of happiness or well-being by recalling the absent

happy moments shared with her Baghdadi community of family and friends, when she recalled access to high quality education and rich cultural life in Baghdad before the 90s.

The older generations of Iraqis I met in the field preferred, like Nagham, to share their memories of a beautiful Baghdad with their children and grandchildren. The nostalgic stories of the former Iraqi rich cultural life was less common among other Iraqis who left Baghdad after 2005. There was another kind of absence that they considered in measuring their current well-being; the absence of the Iraqi state institutions and order. What they missed was: rewarding working conditions, stronger state education programs, good health services and other basic services provided by state institutions such as electricity and clean water and wider protection space as described by Um-Amjad and other Iraqi widows, in addition to longing to feel safe or the absence of *ʾamān* in postinvasion Iraq.

In 1980s, the state's investment in the war with Iran put an end to former development plans (Yousif, 2012). In its attempt to save resources, the regime started a process of privatization and liberalization. According to Baker: "the privatization and deregulation process started during the war but it really took off in 1988 after the cease-fire with Iran. The focus of the state moved from equity to increasing production levels, by setting targets for production and providing subsidies to privately owned farms. This was a dramatic turnaround in policy" (2014: 123). The focus on military activities and the high level of conscription of university graduates, including academics and professionals, affected the former prosperous middle class life style that was linked to professionalization and successful career. Iraqis' accounts of the social transformations they witnessed over the last four decades present how being part of the former Iraqi state, in times of peace and more often wars, transformed the social realities of these middle class state bureaucrats and professionals. These social transformations cannot be explained solely by the internal dynamics of the former Iraqi regime rule of the state and society. As indicated above external interventions through wars, liberalization, the oil boom and the armed invasion and accompanied neo-liberal globalization played important roles in disrupting the everyday life of the government bureaucracy.

The survival of these Iraqi agents within the above described state systems is a complex experience, which cannot be reduced to supporting or opposing the regime. In the seventies till mid-eighties hard work is mentioned as one of the means to achieve success and well-being. Iraqi state employees and professionals had to constantly learn how to live with

reductions in their well-being. During 1970s–mid 1980s, free education and governmental employment were mentioned as the means to achieve success and enjoy rich social and cultural life. The state-society relations changed from investment in Iraqis' welfare and infrastructure development to the militarization of society, and the gradual decline in state-welfare services, especially for Iraqi professionals and government employees who could not find a job in the private sector.

While the advent of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic reform policies and structural adjustment programs enhanced state "liberalization" and marketization in Egypt, Jordan and other Arab states, the Iraqi state was more immune to these policies due to access to large oil resources. However, by mid-1980s, the Iraqi government issued several steps to encourage privatization and liberalization. These were not directed by the IMF, but were meant to cover the increasing war debts. I agree with Bassam Yousif that in the case of Iraq, the state failure to proceed its development plans was more relevant to its decision to invest resources in war rather than receding to liberalization policies as other Arab states did and turned to rentier states (2012, 67).

The responses of Iraqis to these changing state strategies of governing the human and material capital, included several tactics ranging from fleeing the army and the country altogether to discursive tools such as humor and mockery at their experiences with war. The accounts of this group on the effects of larger political and global changes on their personal lives present a reduction in their perception of well-being from the good life associated with the effects of the state 'socialist' development program in 1970s to learning to live with reduced social space as a result of militarization and declining role of the state in service provision. The 'good old days' as perceived by Iraqis in this chapter experienced further reduction during 13 years of *al-ḥiṣār,* as explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Seven

Baghdad 1990s-2011: From filling freezers to counting calories
The decline of the State institutions and inter-mixed urban communities

Since we were children
The sky has slipped into clouds in winter
And it always rained. Yet we're hungry.
In Iraq not a year has passed without hunger
Rain ... Rain ... Rain ...
Every drop of rain, holds a red or yellow flower.
Every tear of the starved who have no rags to their backs
Every drop of blood shed by a slave
Is a smile awaiting fresh lips
Or a nipple glowing in the mouth of a newborn
In tomorrow's youthful world, giver of life!
Rain ... Rain ... Rain ...

Badr Shaker al-Sayyab[92]

Rain, in the Arabic and ancient Mesopotamian culture, symbolizes fertility and the renewal of life; however, as al-Sayyab tells us in his poem which my generation memorized at school, the fall of rain did not save Iraqis from hunger and poverty. Similarly, many of the Iraqis who were forced to leave their country and learn how to live elsewhere used to tell me: "Iraq is a land of wealth, but this wealth was not accessible to the Iraqi people." Some would further explain: "The Iraqi land is fertile: *arḍ al-sawād*;[93] we have oil, mercury, Tigris and Euphrates and rich cultural heritage, but all this is not ours to enjoy."

The high expectations of "good life" perceived by Baghdadi professionals during the previous two decades in the 1970s and 1980s were no longer possible, as a result of the structural violence Iraqis have endured during successive war conditions: eight years of war with Iran (1980-1988), followed by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (1990), the first US-led Gulf war (1991), and the external interventions that destroyed the state infrastructure during the Gulf war (Desert Storm) in 1991, in addition to the severe *ḥiṣār* (UN economic sanctions)

[92] From al-Sayyab's poem "Canticle of the Rain" written in 1954, and translated by Abdullah al-Udhari, *Modern Poetry of the Arab World*. London: Penguin 1986, p31 (in al-Musawi, 2006: 70).

[93] This is one of the oldest Arabic names used to refer to the alluvial land around Tigris and Euphrates. The ancient name Mesopotamia is of Greek origin and means the land between rivers "Bilād ma bayn al-nahrain." Bottéro describes this place at the end of the 4th millennium: "Mesopotamia, a land of alluvia, of rich and fertile soil, owing to its location, its resources, and its industrious and culturally advanced population, found itself destined for wealth from the fruits of its labor […] at the same time it was very open, through its trade to the west, Asia Minor and Syria, Egypt , Iran, and even further away to the western shores of the Indian peninsula" (2000: 15).

from 1990-2003 which ended with the US-led invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq. These events resulted in structural changes in the Iraqi space, which affected the daily lives of Iraqis and their perceptions of well-being, and brought the process of development planning to an end (Tripp, 2007; Yousif, 2012).

Iraq had to undergo huge transformation from a country which was perceived in the region, during 1970s and 1980s, as competent in education and health; and a strong and rich state with the region's second-largest reserves of oil; well-equipped socially with a large base of professionals, artists and scientists in addition to its strong military skills and army. An image that was reinforced with the travel of Arabs to Baghdad to study at its universities, the trade exchange among Iraq and nearby countries, and cultural events and works, especially poetry and music (such as al-Marbad Arabic poetry festival), in addition to its financial aid and support to Arab states such as Jordan and Palestinian martyrs' families. All this changed throughout the nineties and following the 2003 war. The images coming from Iraq in 2010-2011, during the time of my fieldwork were restricted to what was broadcast on TV: the destruction of the state and its institutions, the assassination of targeted groups of professionals: academics, scientists, medical doctors, and kidnappings and explosions in streets, restaurants and shopping areas and the rise of ISIS during 2014 which further destroyed the Iraqi social fabric by targeting the indigenous communities of Christian Iraqis in the northern areas and the Yazidis who were also expelled from their homeland where their ancestors had lived and preserved their ancient traditions and languages.[94]

In the stories of Baghdadi government employees and professionals, I could many times hear the old pain experienced in reduced well-being as expressed in the rain poem of al-Sayyab (with which I started this chapter). The de-valuing of highly qualified professionals (Chapter Three) is related to the decline of the nation-state developmental role and Iraq is not a unique case, it happened in other cases regionally (such as Egypt, Syria and Algeria) and globally (Soviet Union and Eastern European countries); all these states, at various levels, invested huge resources in education and welfare services to build a class of qualified state-bureaucrats and professionals who accumulated advanced scientific skills and professional expertise. However, all this changed, and in the case of Iraq, the prolonged war conditions

[94] The expulsion of these groups, their historical presence in Iraq and relationship with the former state, and their suffering from ISIS brutality which amounted to ethnic cleansing campaigns of the material and cultural existence of these communities in Iraq, in addition to their gradual resettlement in Europe and the USA can be explored ethnographically as another experience of searching of *ʾamān* and learning to live again.

and “structural violence” forced many of the highly skilled professionals to search for new ways of living, sometimes through migration to countries with better employment opportunities.

In his description of war-torn Mozambique, Lubkemann defines the violence of structural changes in the case of Machazians as follows:

> “Structural violence is inherently wrapped up in dynamic processes of structural change. More than absolute thresholds or social differences, it is the way in which social transformation can reduce the capacity for subjects to realize their own expectations—and most particularly those they associate with normal everyday living—that matter most in generating sentiments of loss and deprivation. Structural violence thus occurs when changes in the broader social, economic, and political environment render everyday and strategic life projects dramatically more difficult or even impossible to realize” (2008: 112).

In this chapter I draw on Lubkemann’s explanation of structural violence in the case of prolonged war conditions not only as objective force but also with reference to the subjective sense of acute deprivation produced by changing socioeconomic and political conditions. Lubkemann explains “deprivation” as referring to the subjective package of sentiments—of disappointment, disempowerment, loss, and frustration— that results when groups or individuals perceive that their own experience is falling short of some standard they expect and believe they have a right to achieve (2008: 112).

In the Iraqi case, the broader changes in the social, economic and political features as a result of prolonged years of war have affected the potentials of leading a “good life” as described by government employees and highly skilled professionals in the previous chapter. The situation was worse for the less developed communities in rural areas who were already suffering from poor state services. However, during the 1990s, life changed for all Iraqis, it appeared as if the clock in Baghdad had been turned centuries back. When the US Secretary of State, James Baker, warned Tariq Aziz, the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, in Geneva in 1991 that Iraq would be bombed back into the Stone Age, he was true to his word and more. The following excerpt from a longer legal case presents part of the direct effects of the 1991 US bombing of Iraq:

> “The US administration ordered the destruction of facilities essential to civilian life and economic productivity throughout Iraq; systematic aerial and missile bombardment of Iraq was ordered to begin in January 1991. The bombing continued for 42 days. It met no resistance from Iraqi aircraft and no effective anti-aircraft or anti-missile ground fire. Iraq was basically defenseless. Most of

> the targets were civilian facilities. The United States intentionally bombed and destroyed centers for civilian life, commercial and business districts, schools, hospitals, mosques, churches, shelters, residential areas, historical sites, private vehicles and civilian government offices. In aerial attacks, including strafing, over cities, towns, the countryside and highways, US aircraft bombed and strafed indiscriminately. As a direct result of this bombing campaign against civilian life, at least 25,000 men, women and children were killed."[95]

The Red Crescent Society of Jordan estimated 113,000 civilian dead, 60% of them children, the week before the end of the war. The intention and effort of this bombing campaign against civilian life and facilities was to systematically destroy Iraq's infrastructure leaving it in a pre-industrial condition. As a direct intentional and foreseeable result of this anti-civilian destruction, over one hundred thousand people have died after the war from dehydration, dysentery, diseases, and malnutrition caused by impure water, inability to obtain effective medical assistance, and debilitation from hunger, cold, shock and distress. So-called 'super bombs' were dropped on hardened shelters with the intention of assassinating Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. Under the cover of weapons inspections in particular, scores of factories, schools, chemical plants of a civil nature — indeed anything suspected even remotely of having a prohibited military function — were blown up or bombed. The US administration ordered the destruction of facilities essential to civilian life and economic productivity throughout Iraq; systematic aerial and missile bombardment of Iraq was ordered to begin in January 1991. The bombing continued for 42 days. It met no resistance from Iraqi aircraft and no effective anti-aircraft or anti-missile ground fire. Iraq was basically defenseless. Most of the targets were civilian facilities. The United States intentionally bombed and destroyed centers for civilian life, commercial and business districts, schools, hospitals, mosques, churches, shelters, residential areas, historical sites, private vehicles and civilian government office. The U.S. assault left Iraq in near apocalyptic conditions as reported by the first United Nations observers after the war.[96]

---

[95] From a paper published online by Francis Boyle on 2 September 2002, originally presented to a symposium held by the Albany Law School. The symposium, held on February 27, 1992, was titled: International War Crimes: The Search for Justice. This paper documents the numerous occasions that international laws were broken and disregarded during the Gulf War: http://www.counterpunch.org/2002/09/02/us-war-crimes-during-the-gulf-war/ , retrieved in August 2014.

[96] For further details see, 'US genocide in Iraq' by Ian Douglas, Hana al-Bayaty, Abdul Ilah al-Bayati published online on 1 June 2007: http://ianrobertdouglas.com/2007/06/01/us-genocide-in-iraq/#sthash.vdsZ0Qw4.dpuf , retrieved in August 2010.

The invasion of Kuwait- personal and collective losses

The Iraqi state investment in the military sector did not decrease after the end of the war with Iran. In the immediate aftermath of the war, a military-industrial complex fueled by the building of a military infrastructure increasingly swallowed up state resources (Khoury, 2013: 35). Being an Iraqi and part of the military and Baath party apparatus seemed as blessing and curse. According to Sissons and Al-Saiedi, membership in the Baath party (and military) carried strong economic benefits, especially during difficult times such as the time of currency collapse and great economic hardship; party section members *(ʿudu Shuʿba*) received a monthly stipend of roughly $250 in 2002, a significant sum (in a time when Iraqi professionals reported that the monthly salary equaled $6-10). Other benefits of party membership included bonus points for children's educational results in their secondary school examination, vehicles, and greater ease of access to civil service positions and promotions. It was also vital for obtaining any kind of government employment (2013, 5).

Said, a university graduate, but working in a military unit, perceived the prolonged state warfare with Iran as a burden and curse. However, the hardest part was in August 1990, when he had received the army order to join the forces invading Kuwait, this order came as a shock:

> As soon as I graduated from the university, I had to go to the compulsory military service, my service which lasted for eight years was in the publishing unit of the army; university graduates are not always based on the war front. However, it all finished when the officer in charge of our unit gave us military orders to prepare ourselves to enter Kuwait. I was in shock at this news and couldn't focus or think. I left everything, didn't take any of my personal belongings and walked through the desert until I reached the main road and took a car home. I was lucky to obtain a fake passport quickly and flee to Jordan during the chaotic times, but others who fled the military service were executed.

Kuwait, by the nature of its physical proximity and political relations during the Iraqi war with Iran, was part of the lives of several Iraqis I met, either through mixed marriages, or for being the place of residence and work for several Iraqi families. In the collective memory of most of the Iraqis I met, the war with Kuwait was an unnecessary war, and it was described as a big transformation in some personal life stories, such as in the cases of Tamara and Nadia below.

Life after 1991 was never the same for Tamara, a woman who was in her fifties when I met her in a women's shelter in Amman. She grew up in Kuwait where she was born to an Iraqi

family. Upon completing her high diploma, she got a job at the Kuwaiti airport. During 12 years of work she travelled in the vast world. The big change in her life was after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, when her family as other Iraqi individuals and families residing in Kuwait were accused by the Kuwaiti returnees (those who left Kuwait upon hearing of the Iraqi invasion) of being part of the so-called "*ṣāmidūn*" (those who remained in Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion) who were also perceived (by Kuwaitis) as traitors. Tamara's family members had been forced to leave their jobs and home in Kuwait. They moved to their hometown, al-Basra in Iraq, where the family faced many economic difficulties during *al-ḥiṣār*. Tamara could not find a job in al-Basra or Baghdad, or afford medical treatment when she got sick, eventually she moved to Amman for medical treatment and could not return back to Iraq due to problems with her travel papers. To survive in Jordan she had to work as domestic worker and endure abuse until she was rescued by a woman's shelter, where she was living and working as a cook when I met her in July 2010.

Similarly, Nadia— an Iraqi woman I met in a Palestinian refugee camp in Amman (married to a Palestinian-Jordanian whom she had met in Baghdad in the 1990s) was born in Kuwait to a Kuwaiti mother and Iraqi father, she was also forced to leave Kuwait when the Kuwaiti family of her former husband asked him to choose between being their son or the husband of an "enemy" Iraqi woman. Nadia had been forced to leave her two small children and Kuwaiti husband when Iraq turned into Kuwait's number one enemy:

> The family of my former husband asked him to choose either to be their son or my husband; they did not want to see me after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and arrest of their son, my husband's brother, who was arrested by the Iraqi army, I was 23 years old and had to leave my little son and daughter with my husband, they told them that their mother died and I never met them again.[97]

Nadia went to live with her paternal family in Baghdad, like thousand other Iraqis, who lost their jobs and former connections in Kuwait, but she had to cope also with living apart from her two kids whom she never met since 1992. When I met her, she only briefly mentioned this personal loss, though she was very passionate when she mentioned later the difficult conditions in Iraq and the brutal slaughtering of her two brothers in Baghdad in 2007. When I asked her how she coped with this forced separation from her former Kuwaiti husband and children, she only repeated in brief what she mentioned when she started talking about her life as an Iraqi in Amman: "We, Iraqis, had to learn how to move ahead without looking

[97] Interview on 20 Nov 2010 in Nadia's house.

back." Obviously, Nadia had not left that part of the past behind as she could have simply chosen not to mention it and start her story from the hard sanctions times which forced her to flee Baghdad with her new family.

The cases of Nadia, Said and Tamara present some examples of how larger political events played integral part in the personal choices, losses and living conditions of this group of Iraqis at various scales. Iraqis who had family members living and working in Kuwait were severely affected by their regime decision to invade Kuwait.

The invasion was condemned by both the international community and the Arab League. The UN Security Council passed a series of resolutions: Resolution 660 called for Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait, and Resolution 661 imposed an economic embargo on Iraq. The Iraqi leadership's expectations of US-improved relations, culminating with the exchange of ambassadors following their war with Iran, proved to be false, as just days after the invasion of Kuwait, Bush's administration began to consider a military option against Iraq. The first contingent of US troops was deployed to Saudi Arabia on 7 August (the invasion started on 2 August). The US succeeded in bringing 28 countries into an international coalition of forces including the Arabic countries of Egypt, Syria and Morocco. The official American decision was announced in a claim of an initial goal of protecting its oil interests in Saudi Arabia and liberating Kuwait from the clutches of another "Hitler." A deadline for withdrawal was set for 15 January 1991 and approved by UN resolution 678, which authorized war against Iraq (Khoury, 36).

This UN resolution (678) turned into a tool to punish the entire Iraqi society. The First Gulf War or Operation Desert Storm by the US-led coalition waged an air campaign which lasted for 42 days from 16 January until 24 February. The ensuing bombing of Iraq destroyed the achievements of decades of infrastructure work. For months, Iraqis living in the capital had no electricity, no clean water, and no telephone lines (Dewachi, 2017: 148). The air war targeted civilian infrastructure and inadvertently led to "the loss of civilian life", referred to in the parlance of the US military as "collateral damage." The destruction of state infrastructure that was hardly repaired left the urban Baghdadi communities dependent on the state minimal means of humanitarian survival aid.

Power plants, bridges, and communication networks were hit, as were shops and, in one case, Al-Amiriya, a shelter housing more than 400 Iraqis, including entire families. The Iraqi cities experienced the full impact of a bombing campaign that dwarfed anything their populations had experienced during the Iran-Iraq war. Salsabeel[98] described how her family survived the bombing of Al-Amiriya Shelter when her father preferred to stay at home, where he could follow the war news on the radio: "the bombing lasted the whole night, and although we had covered the windows with layers of adhesive brown tape and mattresses and blankets which we fixed with screws on all the windows, we were covered with dust in the morning. My father was all the day and night carrying a small transistor-radio to follow the news, but only in the morning, we realized that we survived the bombing of al-Amiriya shelter in which we were hiding during previous nights."

First Gulf War: The disillusionment with state official narrative and practices

The 1991 massive bombing campaign of Iraq heavily destroyed the state infrastructure, industrial capacity, agriculture, telecommunications, and critical public services, particularly electricity and water treatment. Iraqis had to witness the demise of many aspects of their former living space and observe the weakening role of the state institutions despite the increasing power of the regime daily control of Iraqi public space. The ruling system experienced big changes in both the institutional and discursive levels. For some Iraqis, Baghdad was no longer the city they knew, they decided to leave when they could no longer cope with the changes imposed on their being and well-being as they perceived it in their former rich social and cultural life (like in the case of Nagham in Chapter 6).

The following excerpt from Raya's story presents further details of Iraqis' encounter with the weakening of the material state forces. In 1991, during the American bombing of Baghdad, Raya realized that she could not rely on the police or other legal state bodies to protect her family members and belongings. She decided to move to live in her store to protect it from thieves, when most of her neighbors followed the advices of their relatives in the military to leave Baghdad and hide in neighboring rural areas. Raya sent her two eldest kids to their father's town, al-Mosul. Eventually when the bombing increased, one of her neighbors convinced her to move with her to what they thought would be a safer place, al-Siniya.

[98] I met Salsabeel (35 years) during dinner with Iraqi friends in April 2011.

Raya describes how she and her two children survived and escaped death as if by "a miracle" as she likes to call it. One interesting element in Raya's story of the 1991 bombing is linking well-being to super-natural power, as observed in her several references to the good energy and the strong sense of intuition she has developed over years, which she said had saved her and her children several times from certain deaths. Following is Raya's story with the First Gulf War, which I present as she narrated it, although my translation from Arabic into English sometimes fails to convey the sense of cynical humor and supernatural effects to which Raya turned in the absence of state protection:

> The Americans first bombed the electricity-generating plants; we spent the nights by candlelight, there was no electricity, the whole district, al-Saydiyya, was empty. Everyone left to safer rural areas or hid in the shelters; a friend of mine came and forced me to close my store and leave with her, because they expected that the neighborhood would be bombed: her husband is *ʿaskary* (military man) and he knows. I was with my youngest son and daughter. I took all the food that was in the freezer. It was the 16th or 17th of January and we went to hide with my neighbors in al-Siniya, north of Tikrit. I didn't know what is al-Siniya. There was fog and it was very cold, my friend's acquaintances had a big house. It was full of people, for seven days we were hearing dee da dom [she imitated the sound of bomb explosions], bombs were falling. I found their kids, once playing with my three year old son. They tied him with a rope, and were making fun of him: because we fled from Baghdad, they were making fun of us calling us *jubanā* (cowards). They called my son *jabān* (coward) and spit on him; he had to pee then and peed on them. We spent seven days hiding in that house, we ran out of food, they had 12 kids and I came with two. We had only milk to drink from the cows our host owned, and radishes they planted earlier to eat. On the 8th day, I decided that this is enough and left immediately. I decided to die in my house in Baghdad. They tried to stop me: are you *mkhabla* (crazy)? Baghdad *inḍarbat* [Baghdad was bombed], no one is there! But I was determined to leave, there was a voice inside me urging me to leave. I saw a car, and waved to the driver, he passed in front of us and seemed unwilling to stop. I shouted at him: STOP [she uttered the word in a sharp loud voice]. The driver stopped the car and I immediately (without saying a word) put my two kids with my stuff in the car. He asked me: are you crazy? Where are you going? He was a military man, and he swore that the car was out of fuel. But I had a car and mastered driving; I advised him to switch the car off-and-on several times. The road ahead of us was a downward slope, the car rolled down the road and we managed to reach the next garage where a taxi was waiting for two passengers: there was a pilot sitting next to the driver and a soldier in the back; I sat next to him with my son and daughter: the driver asked for ID 16, I told him he can charge ID 50: just drive us to Baghdad. The car ran towards Baghdad, we passed 10 km when suddenly we heard the sound of a huge explosion: *miṣfat al-Siniya* (al-Siniya oil refinery) was bombed and the fire reached to the sky. The taxi driver left us on the main road and there were no cars. I had to walk for miles with my 3-year son and 5-year old daughter, no taxi, no car! I found another military car and asked the driver to give us a lift, and we were soon joined by *ratel ʻaskary* (a military convoy), who was leading us all the way. We finally reached our house in Baghdad, there was no

> one in the neighborhood, but I felt relaxed when I reached home. I told myself that it is better to die at home. I went to check my store, the window was broken and everything was robbed. I went to register a complaint at the police station. It was after mid-day, and a police man came rubbing his eyes half asleep. It appeared that the Russian embassy was also attacked and one of the embassy staff members was waiting to register his case too. I looked at the policeman standing unshaved with his untidy suit and asked myself: what can he do for me? How will he help me? While he told me: *rūḥy bābā*, go, if the Russian embassy had been stolen, what could we do for your store! In the nineties, life became unbearable in Baghdad, our neighborhood was initially built to host families of military men and police, but it was unsafe. In 1996, I decided to leave. I came to Amman with my children. It was very difficult to leave Iraq then, I had to pay lots of money and bribes to obtain a travel permit from the authorities to cross the border to Jordan.

Raya's personal story above with the First Gulf war presents several details of the dynamic processes of structural change in the Iraqi social space. Her cynical approach in describing her hiding experience among rural communities and the perceived cowardness of Baghdadis as reflected in the 'children's game' indicates how the changes in the political environment generated sentiments of loss and deprivation and reduced many former capacities which could not be realized with the lack of state protective apparatus resulting from the weakened army and police. Raya, as mentioned in Chapter 6, descends from a family whose males were army officers, including her father and her three brothers, but in the story above she decided to trust her intuition rather than following the military advice of her neighbors, the military officers, who were supposed to know the safest areas to hide from the bombing operation. Her story describes the attack on former state authorities including the police who failed to provide the expected protection during the heavy campaign of US-led bombing. Iraqi civilians in her story seemed as defenseless as the members of military and police services: the unshaved look and reckless attitude of the policeman in the station, the pilot and soldiers who deserted their fighting positions and were like her and her two small children looking for the safest way to reach home in Baghdad. In the midst of this "structural change" (Lubkemann, 2008), Raya presented herself in better control of the situation thanks to her intuition and what she called "good energy." She preferred to die in her familiar Baghdadi neighborhood than stay in what was perceived, by others around (including her neighboring military families), as the safe rural area.

The effects of the Iraqi army retreat from Kuwait under the heavy US bombardment were rarely discussed in the official Iraqi stories in which the military duty was usually associated with bravery and heroic actions. However in 1991, many Iraqi soldiers were attacked by air

bombs during withdrawal from Kuwait. On 24 February 1991, the US-led coalition began its ground offensive to liberate Kuwait. While the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council ordered troop withdrawal from Kuwait and Iraqi troops began their pullback, the US military decided to block all routes for Iraqi troops back into Iraq and on 26 February, the US military bombarded retreating Iraqi soldiers in various locations (the Jahra-Basra highway, the Jahra-Umm Qasr road, and the Umm Qasr-Baghdad-Nasiriyya road). The bombardment continued until the American President Bush declared victory on 28 February and called for a cease fire, which Iraq accepted two hours later (Hiro, 514-520, quoted in Khoury, 39).

Raya continued to live and work in al-Saydiyya, with neighboring families of army and police officers. Unlike other Iraqis who left Baghdad due to the deterioration of economic conditions, Raya's economic situation was better as an employee at the Ministry of Trade in addition to her private store business which she could establish in the 1980s thanks to the remittances sent by her husband who deserted military conscription to work in Kuwait. In 1996 Raya decided to leave Baghdad to save her two sons from conscription and mandatory military life.

The decline of the heroic image of Iraqi warrior (of 1980s) and the rise of *al-ḥiṣār* victim

The effects of the prolonged war conditions and the destruction of many former aspects of state institutions led to gradual decline of the heroic image of Iraqi warrior and the rise of *al-ḥiṣār* victim. The attributes of heroism and loyalty associated with military life in the official Iraqi discourse in 1980s, when loyal soldiers, martyrs and *majidāt* women were glorified, changed in the First Gulf War and *al-ḥiṣār* period. The new war experiences in the 1990s was the hapless civilian victim of the violence of war and the gritty survivor of the sanctions regime (Khoury, 2013: 11-12). This shift was more noticeable in the commemoration of the dead: the prototypical martyr was no longer the heroic fallen soldier, but the civilian victim of US bombardment and the UN-imposed siege.

Iraqi families who remained in Iraq during the 1990s were hoping that the situation will improve one day, but instead war had become the norm with *al-ḥiṣār*. *Al- ḥiṣār* created the conditions of structural violence which erased many of the aspirations of a former middle class life style. Unlike the 1970s when Iraq met its own food needs, in the 1980s, investment

in agriculture decreased and Iraq produced only one-third of the food it consumed, relying on imports for remainder (Gordon, 2010: 21). This high dependence on imports to meet basic needs increased Iraqis' suffering during the UN economic sanctions and siege.

The 1991 war and the destruction of state infrastructure had affected the former perceptions of Iraqis towards the state role in economic and political protection, as reflected in Raya's story above. The conditions of *al-ḥiṣār* further affected the well-being of Iraqi professionals who relied on the state as main employer. The number of Iraqi professionals and former state bureaucrats who decided to leave their country and search for security and *ʾamān* abroad increased during the 1990s.

From filling large freezers to counting calories

The sanctions regime was imposed on 6 August 1990, four days after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the sanctions that Joy Gordon (2010) describes as 13 years of *Invisible War* prevented Iraq from restoring any of its welfare services to the level it had achieved in the 1980s. Yasmin Al-Jawaheri presents what she calls "Food and Medicine Crisis" during al-*ḥiṣār:*

> "Iraq's welfare state was described as having been [until 1980s …] among the most comprehensive and generous in the Arab World, which ensured that Iraq had the highest caloric consumption per head in the Middle East (by the end of 1980s). However, after the imposition of sanctions, the Iraqi government instituted a food rationing system in September 1990 that was considered internationally to be 'crucial' in sustaining the survival of the Iraqi population over years of sanctions, and in preventing an imminent famine. […] Basic subsistence for the majority of the Iraqi people was only attained through access to the government's rations, which were provided at nominal prices" (2008: 7).

The sanctions devastated the health, education, and basic well-being of almost the entire Iraqi population, who had to learn how to survive on a food ration system. The high level of dependence of the middle class on the state's economic services and infrastructure increased the suffering of these government bureaucrats when the state economic capacity deteriorated during the sanctions period, this "effectuated the contraction of the middle class" (Ismael, 2003: 335). About 60% of the population became dependent on a system of monthly food rations given out by the government and paid for by the oil-for-food program (UNICEF, 2004, in Gordon, 2010). The government used to distribute food baskets of 1,200 kilocalories per day (UN office of the Iraq Program, 2003; in Ismael and Ismael, 2015: 19).

Iraqis were already exhausted by eight years of war and suffering from economic austerity and were not ready for the hardships brought on by the UN-imposed embargo and the human costs that a military confrontation with a coalition of twenty-eight countries could bring. Dina Khoury explains in *Iraq in Wartime*: "The crisis and the war transformed the UN as an international organization and linked its Security Council, if not its other humanitarian organizations, to US interests. For the next twelve years, the UN oversaw and gave legal sanction to the harshest and longest embargo ever imposed on a nation, reshaping the meaning of humanitarianism and linking it with the political agenda of its most powerful states" (2013: 40). As Dewachi explained these UN sanctions on Iraq were officially designed as a regime of "global governance" and as a containment program aimed at disarming the regime and preventing it from reconstituting its military capacity (2017:7). The impact of economic sanctions had far-reaching consequences—in both economic costs and humanitarian terms.

Prohibiting exportation while Iraq depended on revenue generated by oil and importation, when two-thirds of food consumption used to come from imports, led to great suffering among the population (Gordon, 2010: 21). Economists estimate that Iraq's GDP fell by one-half to two-thirds of its pre-war level by 1997. Hyper-inflation meant that the vast majority of Iraqis employed in the public sector saw their buying power evaporate. Per capita income declined from its prewar level of US$ 3500 to US$ 450 in 1996. Malnutrition became a severe problem affecting 22% of children under five; in addition, the sanctions destroyed the ability of the state to invest in the crucial areas of health and education. The public health services deteriorated in addition to the lack of water treatment and medicines (UNICEF, in Khoury, 2013: 44).

The drastic change in the living standards was shocking to the educated and highly skilled members of middle class and upper-middle class Iraqis whose careers were no longer securing the essential living needs of the household. Um-Mazen, a mathematics teacher, was about to lose her youngest son in 1998 when he contracted a poisoning disease[99] from the milk that was imported in Iraq through the Oil-for-Food program:

[99] Before sanctions, Iraq had one of the best health care systems in the Middle East, both in terms of access and quality of care. The population enjoyed health conditions that were high by the standards of middle-income countries, and accordingly the incidence of malnutrition was uncommon. However, health and health care

> They used to send us poisoned milk, I was lucky that I was able to leave with my son to Amman, but we had to sell our house and car in Baghdad and I asked my parents in al-Basra to sell a plot of land to pay for my son's treatment. After six months of my stay here, I decided to bring the rest of my family, we did not intend to stay in Amman this long. Our plan was to go back when the Americans lift *al-ḥiṣār*, but things got worse after they occupied Iraq.[100]

Al-ḥiṣār produced great pressure on most Iraqis and led to unprecedented impoverishment of members of the middle class with varying impacts according to socio-economic status, age, gender, geographical location and more important the affiliation to rising patronage networks. Iraqi Women, as Nadje al-Ali's has presented from numerous accounts she collected before and after the US-led invasion of 2003, have been the biggest losers in Iraqi wars (Al-Ali, 2005, 2007, 2009). Illiteracy increased by 2000; 23% of Iraq's children did not attend elementary school due to shortage of class seats (UNICEF, in Khoury, 2013: 44). The losses of the educated and professional Iraqi communities were most of the time unbearable, especially for families who were completely relying on their monthly salary as an income and had no properties to sell.

Contrary to the announced objectives of the First Gulf war in 1991 and the UN sanctions to weaken the Iraqi regime, the war and ensuing sanctions resulted in the destruction of Iraq's civil infrastructure and deterioration in the living standards of the wider Iraqi society, while the highest level of regime officials enforced a stronger client-patron system that was used to increase their personal wealth rather than protecting the wider population needs which were harmed by the destruction of the country's civil infrastructure (Tripp, 2007; Ismael & Ismael, 2015; Gordon, 2010).

A UNDP report on the deterioration in the economic conditions indicated that: "GDP per capita dropped to an estimated US$715 [from US$3,508 before the First Gulf war], which is a figure comparable with such countries as Madagascar and Rwanda" (UNDP report, 2000: 6, in Ismael and Ismael, 2015). Raya's story reflects how she had to learn how to live with the decline of state services in terms of social, legal and economic protection. Raya did not directly criticize the state with its regime and apparatus, but her story presents the Iraqi state

---

rapidly deteriorated under the impact of sanctions, and by 1997 "general malnutrition (underweight for age) occurred in 24.7 percent of children under five years" (WHO, 2003) and the mortality rate for children under 5 years went from 56 deaths per 1,000 live births before sanctions to 131 deaths per 1,000 live births in the 1994–1999 period (UNICEF, 1999 in Ismael and Ismael, 2015).

[100] Interview with Um-Mazen in her rented home in Amman on 13 January 2011.

apparatus in 1990s as weak and vulnerable as reflected in her description of the police and army officers. Raya's coping strategies with impoverishment included opening a private business that was possible through the support of her husband who left the country during the 1980s to Kuwait to avoid longer years of military service. Raya was able to preserve good standards of living, unlike many other state bureaucrats who had to depend on the government food basket.

The relatively high living standers and consumption habits described by Iraqi professionals in the seventies and eighties experienced a sharp decline: "By 2000, with rising food prices and declining per capita income, the UNDP estimated that the average family spent as much as 75 percent of their income on food. As a result, dietary energy supply had fallen from 3,120 to 1.093 kilocalories per capita/ per day by 1994-1995 […]. Despite a UN target of 2,463 kilocalories and 63.6 grams of protein per person per day, the nutritional value of the distributed food basket did not exceed 1,993 kilocalories and 43 grams of protein" (Ismael and Ismael, 2015: 18).

The amount of suffering and loss this UN-led economic sanctions and siege system created was overwhelming and included all sectors of Iraqi working class. In particular, children mortality rates increased to an alarming rate of 131/1000 in the 1990s compared to 56/1000 prior to the sanctions. One of the biggest problems then was the United States' block on infant milk on the grounds that it "could not be considered medicine" and humanitarian circumstances still had not been shown (Gordon, 2010: 54). This increased the suffering of working women in their attempts to provide basic survival for their household, especially when it comes to feeding their young children (as in the case of Um-Mazen above who had to leave Iraq to save her child). To survive inside Iraq, government employees and professionals had to revert to various coping strategies such as baking bread at home and saving on many expenses, in addition to selling their belongings of property and furniture.

In *al-ḥiṣār* time, well-being was contrasted with lack of essential food items, the most common symbol was the "empty freezer." The large home freezer was often mentioned in the Iraqi accounts about the good times that preceded the embargo and sanctions, but during the 1990s Iraqi women had the hardest responsibility to stay in control and ensure the survival of the family on essential food items. The large freezers disappeared to be replaced by fixed amounts of food ration:

> During the sanctions period, we used to receive a fixed amount of food ration. Women had no free time, because we had to make everything at home. The government used to distribute flour, either you take it to the nearest bakery and exchange it with bread or you make your own bread at home, we learnt how to bake and had to prepare many things at home, we worked all day with minimum breaks.[101]

The freezer, electricity and other infrastructure hosting the 'former rich Iraqi meals' no longer existed for several Iraqi families and the ability to lead a middle class life demised for many educated and professional Iraqis. The consumption of food was limited to the ration products; this meant that women's responsibilities increased as they had to find means to distribute the limited food among the household members. Meat as a main ingredient in the Iraqi diet was rarely present in Iraqi lunch or dinner during *al-ḥiṣar* times.

The ration system lasted for a long time and became an essential part in the lives of many Iraqis for years to come, to the extent that it was celebrated as one of the former state achievements proving the efficiency of the former regime in distributing essential items for all Iraqis. When compared to the postinvasion state services or the aid structure offered to displaced Iraqis in Jordan (pre-conditioned by visible vulnerability), the ration in *al-ḥiṣār* times is described as "adequate and it reached every member of the Iraqi society from the minister to the guard (*min alwazīr lal ghafīr*), to cover their needs of food and cleaning materials and even shaving blades."[102] Each individual in the household used to receive: three kilos of rice, 13 kilos of flour, 2 kilos of butter and 3 kilos of sugar,.. etc., per month"[103]. The ration card became an essential element in the daily survival lexicon of many Iraqis, especially those who formerly relied on governmental salaries. It was not uncommon during my fieldwork time to hear Iraqis speaking appreciatively of the ability of the former state to manage and organize the Public Distribution System. The system was not only used as the essential means of survival, it was considered as a right that every Iraqi was entitled to.

[101] I met Um Ahmad at her house on 28 November 2010. She was a school teacher in Baghdad, and her husband is academic who has Ph D in economics from the UK. They left Baghdad to Amman in 1997 but her husband returned to work in Baghdad in 2009, while his family lives in Amman, as in the few cases of 'circular migration' among highly skilled Iraqi professionals presented in Chapter Three.
[102] Meeting with Um-Laith, an Iraqi widow and mother of two in January 2011.
[103] A chat with Um-Omar and friends in February 2011.

The effects of prolonged war and economic sanctions on family relations and women's conditions

Despite several attempts to reorganize the Iraqi society through education, urbanization and bureaucratization that appeared in the Iraqi government discourse of the seventies and eighties, Iraqis' stories of living experience during the times of *al-ḥiṣar* in the 1990s and the occupation of 2003 reveal the return of familial and tribal networks and the rise of inequalities embedded in patriarchy. *Al-ḥiṣar* had affected Iraqi families at different levels and various scales. The difficult economic conditions led to several changes in the state support to family life which in turn affected the roles of household members.

The Baath regime in its attempts to survive the conditions of war and suppress any existing or rising opposition returned to the use of patrimonial connections and networks of patronage. This gradually subverted the former role of the Iraqi state institutions and laws in favor of factional and patriarchal systems, which were used in the establishment of modern state bodies in the late Ottoman period and throughout the British colonial rule. The war conditions and regime reactions created different levels of ruptures in the lives of these urban Baghdadi communities who had to learn how to live through continual changes.

Following the decline of state welfare services due to state policies of militarization and privatization in 1980s, and the weakening of the state institutions and economic conditions as a result of the extensive bombing of state infrastructure and the long period of the UN-economic sanctions, former government employees could no longer rely on their monthly salary and many had to search for additional jobs. Researchers focus particularly on the change in women's conditions and roles (Ismael, 2004; al-Jawaheri, 2008; al-Ali and Pratt, 2009; Rohde, 2010). Ismael argued that with the lack of previously available public services (such as free transportation to work, school, childcare facilities etc.), the Iraqi regime had been actively promoting women's return to the home (2004: 338).

In her explanations of the specificities of state-society interactions and their implications for women's citizenship rights, Suad Joseph argues that rights and entitlements in the Middle East are mediated via membership in families and communities, which she describes as hierarchical entities animated by a patriarchal logic that privileges men over women and the old over the young. There exists, in other words, no autonomous associational arena between state and society that is not thoroughly permeated by both the reality and the idiom of kin and

family relations. Therefore, an associational life premised on autonomous self-bearing rights in his or her own person does not have much resonance in a social context where connectivity rather than contractuality structures notions of selfhood. This applies equally to men and women, but it is women and the young who bear the brunt of the inequalities inherent in patriarchy (Joseph, 1996). At the social level many Iraqis turned to factional networks such as tribal, religious and ethnic relations to ensure social security in times of privation.

Joseph and Slymovics further describe the conditions in Iraqi (and Syrian) states as one where states, as part of their building projects, tend to undermine local communities in order to control and claim the loyalties of their citizens (2001:11). Their argument is that in societies where the state is more repressive than the communities, women secure themselves in their communities to receive protection from the repressive state and they see that the disadvantage of this sort of protection is that women must submit to the control of the men of their community (ibid, 12): "Familial bonds are seen as sources of support and security against what is perceived as an even greater source of oppression, the state" (ibid., 2001: 13).

In such conditions, economic empowerment, though important, does not lead necessarily to more equal social and economic relations; working outside home, did not lead to real change in gender roles (as observed in the Iraqi case and other neighboring societies). In the social imagination prevailing in these societies, reproductive tasks remained the responsibilities of women— who most of the time were responsible for rearing children and handling other related house-working duties, which were seen as the natural responsibilities of women. This put larger burden on Iraqi working women—as described in the cases of (Um-Amjad in the previous chapter) and Um-Ahmad, Raya and Um-Mazen above— that increased in the 1990s when the state protective role and services gradually diminished. In general, women conditions deteriorated with the decline of state welfare services and the backlash against former women's entitlements such as free public education and wider employment opportunities with childcare benefits and free transportation. Several Iraqi women I met in Amman described how they had to leave their jobs during *al- ḥiṣār* period to take care of their children and save on travel expenses.

Being a member of the Iraqi state bureaucracy class in 1990s

Life in Baghdad, under *al-ḥiṣār,* changed for many former Iraqi middle-class men and women. Following decades in which they were directed towards obtaining a university degree and a suitable profession in the governmental sector, Al-Jawaheri explains how highly educated Iraqi men, who worked in the daytime as teachers, lawyers or engineers had to take jobs as taxi drivers or shopkeepers in the evening in order to make ends meet, while women became more dependent on male providers, and many were pushed back home or turned to the so-called 'socially acceptable' and often low-paid jobs typically in the public sector (2008: 37-38). With the weakening of state authority and regulations in the 1990s, an increasing number of Iraqi professionals and young men started thinking of migration. Iraqis who left in larger numbers in the 1990s came to Jordan searching for work and when they failed to find jobs, they moved to other Arab countries (including the Gulf, Libya and Yemen) or applied to international bodies as asylum-seekers, to turn into political refugees and humanitarian cases who had to present a convincing story of persecution by the Iraqi regime. Others managed to reach Europe through rising smugglers' networks. Their exit journey from Iraq was not easy, it was prohibited for medical doctors (and other professionals) to leave the country and their certificates were held by the Ministry of health; some had to alter the profession indicated in their passports and others left with fake passports.

The Iraqi state, in its attempt to prevent the brain-drain, continued practicing a long-standing travel ban on doctors and other professionals. Dewachi explains in detail the difficult process Iraqi doctors had to follow to leave the country:

> "The doctor's escape from Iraq began with a counterfeit passport. In an attempt to curb their exodus, the Iraqi government had instituted a long-standing travel ban on doctors. Furthermore, the government and their universities withheld doctors' graduation certificates and grades. Doctors needed to obtain clearance and permits from the Ministry of Health, the Internal Security Forces, the Directorate of Conscription, and in some cases the Office of the President" (Dewachi, 2017: 157).

The sanctions, more particularly, induced an alarming degeneration of the country's health infrastructure and contributed to the exodus of thousands of doctors. Increasing numbers of senior specialists and junior doctors alike have escaped the country, contributing to further shortage of physicians and expertise. It is estimated that close to half the medical force has escaped Iraq over the past two decades—probably among the largest flights of doctors seen in

recent history from one single country (Dewachi, 2017). The harsh regulations described by Dewachi and the ban on travel applied to other groups of academics and professionals in medical sectors who had to wait until 2003 to return to Iraq to get their original certificates. I met few Iraqis, including doctors and academics, who came to Jordan, during the 1990s fleeing these conditions of massive impoverishment. The majority of qualified doctors proceeded to Europe and other western and Arabic countries, while several university professors, were still teaching at Jordanian private universities.

Hussain, a professor of Economics and Finance explained how they had had to sell all their properties in Iraq in 1998 including his car, three land plots, and his house furniture to cover his family's travel expenses from Baghdad to Amman:

> I was an associate professor at the University of Baghdad. I am ashamed to talk about my salary, imagine that a university professor monthly salary then was 7500 Iraqi dinars (ID), this was equal to two and a half Jordanian Dinars. You can imagine how difficult it was when you compare our income to the prices of essential items: the egg tray cost was ID 3500. My wife, who has a BA in statistical science, decided to quit her job when she calculated the costs of her daily transportation which exceeded her monthly salary of ID 2500. One of our daughters was still a baby and we had to use old pieces of cloth as diapers when the price of one diaper bag reached ID 5500. To pay for the passports and the bribe needed to obtain an official travel permit, we had to sell everything, except our house, which we kept thanks to relatives who moved in and protected it. Travelling from Iraq then was prohibited for all professionals and government employees except in urgent conditions, as the state needed all its human resources to survive war and sanctions conditions. I had enough years of public service in teaching, so I could ask for early retirement which was accepted by my college dean and I got ID 2500 as retirement salary. I paid ID 400,000 for obtaining a valid passport then.[104]

In order to travel outside Iraq during the 1990s, an employee required the approval of the head of his/her department or unit; an academic, for example, required a travel permit from the department of higher education. The state funds were invested in war efforts and travel allowances for academic conferences were no longer offered while limited scholars were allowed to travel for educational purposes. Being an academic, one was not allowed to leave his teaching position during war time even for joining an academic conference: "for twenty years they kept asking us to join military trainings, although we already served the military

[104] From an interview in November 2010 with Professor Hussain, an Iraqi academic, born in 1949. He moved to Amman during *al-ḥiṣār* in 1998 with his wife and three daughters.

conscription, and some Iraqi academics were taken to the war fronts to serve in the popular army."[105]

Moving in search of work out of Iraq became the solution to preserve the former life style among highly-qualified professionals who started looking for contracts abroad. When the state authorities noticed the brain-drain of skilled labor, they imposed stricter restrictions on travel, as Professor Ali explained:

> To travel I had to obtain an official agreement from my department and the relevant ministry; the Ministry of Higher Education. The government stopped the allowances assigned for attending conferences and scientific missions. Education was no longer a priority, all government expenses were invested in the military sector. Military service was prolonged even for those like me who had already completed their conscription service.

The inflation was unprecedented. Between 1945 and 1989 inflation in Iraq had remained within the single digits. But inflation rose from 6 percent in 1989 to 500 percent in 1994. The Iraqi Dinar depreciated from a level at 1990 where 4 dinars could buy one dollar, to where 1700 dinars could buy one dollar in 1995, a drop of 425 percent (Foote et al., in Baker, 2014: 134). Everyone but those very close to the regime were impacted.[106] Former state employees and teachers left their jobs on early retirement with low pension (ID 2500), to search for another job in the private sector. This affected higher numbers of working women whose duties increased with the deterioration in public services. In general, the poor salary and lack of free public transport and kindergartens made it difficult to continue working for women.

As mentioned by several Iraqis in the field, the person who dared to criticize the bad living conditions and the despotic rule of the regime would become vulnerable to the regime oppressive punishment, being a former Baathist who quit the party or a military man who fled his duty station was another source of vulnerability, while others who were affiliated to the Baath party (including Palestinians and other Arabs, as I was often told) benefited in terms of study grants and other privileges. The critique of that period focused on the sharp retreat of the middle class and lack of essential resources among the majority of Iraqi people, compared to the high salaries, new cars and other privileges that staff in security apparatus and high political and party positions used to enjoy.

[105] Interview with Professor Hussain in November 2010.
[106] For details, see chapter "Economic Restructuring in Iraq: Intended and Unintended Consequences" in Yousif (2012).

The harsh conditions during *al-ḥiṣār* forced large segments of Iraqi academics and professionals to think of alternatives. The most impoverished state-employees had to look for additional jobs, some could only work as peddlers. Academics and doctors who were prohibited from leaving their positions had to work for a poor salary and do additional work in their free time. An academic who hold a PhD in Mechanical Engineering explained how he started to work in car maintenance in 1994. In that period, it was common to see both partners working (this applied to most of the families I met in Jordan), yet salaries were not enough to cover the basic needs of households. Abu Jibour holding an MA degree in Physics started working in trades and was eventually appointed as a head of trading company.

When *al-ḥiṣār* is compared to the postinvasion period, this group of Iraqis generally describe the destitute but add that even then people could lead a more normal life; they could organize wedding parties and could still go out and meet in home gardens, unlike the ban on music and celebrations imposed later by rising sectarian and religious parties and militias during the US occupation of Baghdad. In terms of losses, one common expression was: "We suffered from scarcity of resources but during the sanctions Iraq was much more secure, it felt safe to go to one's work and move around."

When they talked of the 1990s, Iraqi educated members lamented the lack of high cultural events and educational opportunities when compared to what they called "the rise of *al-ḥiṣār* culture. The culture of *al-ḥiṣā*r is related to the rise of bribes, corruption, document forgery and human trafficking. As a way to escape the travel ban imposed by the state bodies (such as the Ministry to which a government employee is affiliated and internal security forces or secret police (*al-mukhābarāt*) and the directorate of conscription), as Dewachi explained:

> "Still, in 1990s Iraq, everything was possible for the right sum. The deterioration of everyday life under the sanctions regime and the inflation of the Iraqi Dinar had made bribes a common income supplement for poorly paid government employees. A middle-ranking government employee received between $2 and $4 per month, which barely covered transportation costs to and from work. In certain cases higher-ranking government managers would collect such bribes and redistribute them among their directorate's employees to guarantee a fair and equal distribution of wealth" (2017: 157).

Like other countries in the region, the military expenditure represented the highest percentage in the government budget**.** There was no way one could be exempted from mandatory

military service and only few could afford it: "wealthy or connected Iraqi men could pay an exemption to avoid military service. […] The uneducated poor constituted the largest part of the Iraqi fighting machine. As largely middle-class, educated, and urban young people [...] tended to serve in higher military positions, and they were sometimes quite removed from the frontline" (Campbell, 2016: 42).

The decline of the 'old' state bureaucracy and the rise of new business elites and the 'black market'

The 1991 bombing fiercely hit the former life style of the educated professional and state bureaucrat communities, as a result of the destruction of larger part of state infrastructure, including electricity and the main state factories and industries and health and education institutions.[107] Furthermore, *al-ḥiṣār* left larger groups of these communities isolated from the outside world, except through the small transistor- radio working on batteries.

To face the inflation, Iraqis had to learn how to increase their access to resources. State-bureaucrats survived by finding an extra menial job or by leaving one's position in the public sector to work in private business or services. For example, I met an Iraqi former chemical engineer who lost his job when the pharmaceutical factory he had worked in was closed, as a result of the economic siege.[108] In his attempt to secure his household living expenses, he turned to work in the second-hand cars trade sector during the nineties which enabled him to sustain good life for his family.[109] Other university academics and engineers had to work in shifts. After completing their daily tasks at state institutions, many worked as taxi drivers, private teachers or in maintenance services and house painting. I also met Iraqi state bureaucrats who found it easier to retire early and with the right connections and access to resources, some were able to establish a profitable private business in the trade and construction sectors.

[107] The US-led campaign in 1991 Gulf War and UN-imposed sanctions on Iraq deliberately targeted civilian as well as military facilities, with the aim of severing the "supply lines" on which the Iraqi regime depended. During the forty-day military campaign, more than ninety tons of bombs were dropped on Iraqi cities, targeting bridges, factories, roads, oil refineries, power stations, and water sanitation and sewage treatment plants. (al-Dewachi, 2017: 7)

[108] According to Bassam Yousif's analysis of Iraqi economy during 1920-1990, reductions in the government development spending in the end of 1980s affected manufacturing more than other sectors, reducing manufacturing's share of investment (2012: 57). The ban on imports imposed by the UN sanctions regime further harmed the industry and manufacturing sector.

[109] Interview with Husam on 3 February 2011.

Al-ḥiṣār affected this group by transforming their living conditions from previously affluent economy into survival. The regular monthly salary lost its value as explained above, in addition to the restrictive measures that were imposed on various levels and the rise of patronage networks. This led to downward mobility for the majority of middle class members while a small group of workers in high positions experienced upward mobility. Other means of survival that were sporadically mentioned with less details are references to small thefts or bribery: "Imagine when employees are paid poor salaries, some turned to bribes, when $ 100 equaled ID 280,000."[110]

This led to the rise of a new class of traders and businessmen and businesswomen. The rise of the private sector did not restore old powerful dominant classes such as landlords, industrialists and large-scale traders (Zubaida, 2009: 165), the new class of private business owners was often mentioned as a beneficiary of the state and its resources, and in contrast to the declining fortunes of the old middle class who used to constitute the larger segment of the state public sector including teachers and civil servants in addition to other highly skilled professionals such as doctors, academics, lawyers and engineers. The new elite grew closer to the government that used its oil revenues to create a social base of state-dependent capitalist class along with a burgeoning military and bureaucracy. The state-dependent capitalist class grew in size and wealth as the government invested in the private sector and became its biggest consumer. The state had let go of direct control of some sectors but retained control of the overall economy. Through the sanctions in the 1990s, the Iraqi economy became informalized, depending on illicit networks and smuggling to retain its social base and its power. The government had been weakened, yet it was still in control and its dependent elite held on to their privileged social positions. Iraqis saw inflation, decreased living standards, food shortages, along with the concentration and centralization of wealth and power in the hands of a small clique of politically connected class (Baker, 2014: 144-145).

A women who was an active member of the General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW) explained how she increased her household access to income during *al-ḥiṣār* when she left her job in one of the state departments in 1993 to work in cloths trade. Through her relationships with state officials, she managed to enter containers of cloths and accessories

[110] Interview with Professor Waleed on 14 April 2011.

from the USA and Europe. Later, she further increased her business when she signed a contract with one of the state institutions to manage its cafeteria as a private investor.[111]

The rise of a new business elite and the opening of public institutions to private investment accelerated during the 1990s as observed in the experience of state bureaucrats mentioned in this chapter. This process of privatization started during the 1980s. For example, when it comes to agriculture, in 1960 the Iraqi government owned half of Iraq's agricultural land. By1989 the Iraqi government had sold or leased 99 percent of the land to private investors with favorable terms. These investors were made up largely of the contractor class faction mentioned earlier, many of whom were from Anbar and Salah al-Din provinces and part of Saddam's close supporters. This centralization and consolidation in the private sector would repeat itself in other sectors. During the sanctions, this was the same fraction that profited from the smuggling of oil and trade in outlawed commodities, all of which was accepted and promoted by the state (Baker, 2014: 123).

Baker explains the role of the privatization and liberalization reforms in the concentration of wealth in a new business elite: These reforms did not lead to more competition but rather simply replaced government monopolies with private ones held by individuals or families close to the regime. The total shares in the 'mixed sector' plants that had extraordinary rates of profits due to access to government foreign exchange were given out for political patronage to those state-dependent elites. […] Baker argues convincingly that "the economic liberalization did not aim to procure more money nor was it due to some ideological change in the governing elite. Neither was this due to external economic interference such as structural adjustment programs. Rather, the government was trying to accomplish three objectives, the first of which was to increase foreign exchange to operate the various industries and to keep up with the subsidies it was offering before. Secondly, it wanted to control the ballooning administrative costs of running the various economic sectors. Lastly and potentially most significantly, it wanted to buffer itself from any social upheaval due to growing economic problems and allowing it to blame the new business elites if it had to" (2014: 124-125).

[111] This woman continued to work in trade until 2007 when her neighborhood was attacked and she had to evacuate her house and eventually left to Syria and later to Jordan where I met her in April 2011.

The effects of the 1991 destructive war and sanctions were determinative in shaping Iraq's future for decades to come. As expressed by Dewachi (2017), the sanctions induced an ecology of "state failure", where the besieged state became unable to restore its damaged infrastructure to prewar conditions. Furthermore, corruption emerged as a systemic problem during the 1990s, as one of the strategies to deal with the comprehensive sanctions, bringing the collapse of the local currency and encouraging smuggling and the emergence of an informal 'grey' economy. While chronic shortages of key goods, notably medical supplies, affected the mass of Iraqis, those at the center of the regime benefited from their links to the smuggling networks, accumulating vast sums of money as well as strengthening their grip on the state apparatus (Marfleet, 2019).

During my fieldwork, I often heard stories about how rich Iraqi businessmen managed to expand their trade business in an economic sanctions and embargo situation by relying on the "black market" which became a new source of living for few privileged families who grew as parasitic groups, dependent on the state and its resources. Those families had better abilities to cope with the economic sanctions as one of the women I met in western Amman ascribed her household prosperous life in *al-ḥiṣār* times and afterwards to her husband's job as an "oil trader."[112]

However, turning to the private sector was not a profitable option for all Iraqis. Teachers had less options and turned to give private lessons,[113] while a mechanical engineer started working in repair and maintenance work following his daily work in the governmental job. Other families started selling private properties to secure the cash they needed to buy essential items for the family survival. The regime tended to encourage privatization, while bribery and corruption were institutionalized when some state officials promoted the idea of "helping the civil servant." The privatization of state services in oil regimes, as explained by Zubaida, created great problems to the young educated sectors of the population by excluding them from former career prospects to which they were led to aspire. The firm linkage

[112] Several resources refer to oil smuggling outside of the Oil For Food Program (OFFP) through a network of neighboring states, different border groups and companies. Yousef Baker explains that this was done primarily though signing of trade agreements between Iraq and neighboring states, called "trade protocols." Interestingly smuggling occurred on the borders of Iraq even with countries that did not sign protocols like Iran and even Kurdish groups supposedly hostile to Baghdad became entangled in this economy. At times, this occurred right under the gaze of American forces and with their conspicuous silence on the activities (Al-Ahmad, in Baker, 2014: 141-142). Outside of the OFFP, Iraq's government was able to smuggle oil through a network of neighboring states, members of UN, different border groups, network of smugglers, and companies.

[113] A teacher's salary was 3000 Iraqi Dinars (around 2-3 US dollars).

between education and career in the popular mind aroused the expectations of Iraqis (2009: 166). In the 1970s and 1980s as explained in Chapter Six, the state had a policy of enhancing higher education through a system of scholarships abroad and free university education inside Iraq, and the graduates were mostly absorbed as employees in the governmental public sector, mostly into the military and civil services bureaucracies. In the 1990s, most university graduates struggled to preserve a middle-class life-style in conditions where essential commodities were scarce. Some explained how they were compelled to sell properties and in the late 90s pieces of furniture and even the room doors (inside houses) to buy food items.

The decline of the middle class following the 1991 Gulf War and the prolonged economic sanctions period, was also intensified by the increasing flow of Iraqis who managed to cross their country borders in search of more rewarding job opportunities and decent life for their families. Around one million Iraqis and foreigners working in Iraq had crossed into Jordan over a period of two months. While some of these returned to Iraq, successive groups of individuals kept arriving in Jordan, whose border remained constantly open between 1990 and 2003 as Jordanian exports of vegetables and clothes doubled during the time of sanctions.[114] In that period, Iraqis were fleeing the deteriorating economic situation that ensued from the UN-imposed economic embargo on Iraq in addition to various types of violence exerted by the Iraqi regime security apparatus. Most of those who fled Iraq in the 1990s belonged to the educated Iraqi middle-class with a large number of professionals and academics (Chatelard, 2009: 5). They were hoping to improve their living standards and ensure a better future for their children which was no longer perceived in Baghdad.

Postinvasion Iraq- the dismantlement of state institutions and loss of *ʾamān*

As described by Iraqi professionals and state employees who lived through *al-ḥiṣār* period, the difficulties and suffering experienced during the war with Iran, the First Gulf war and more than twelve years of harsh economic sanctions which destroyed the largest part of the socio-economic Iraqi-state infrastructure, all this suffering "seemed like nothing compared to the destruction that followed the US-British led invasion and occupation of Iraq." The brutal invasion and military occupation of Iraq in 2003 erased the former Iraqi state with its repressive and ideological apparatuses. The early bombing campaign proved eventually successful in turning Iraqis' lives in *awe* through a *shocking* spectacle. "Shock and awe" was

[114] For information on the trends in Jordan's exports to Iraq and the role of Iraqi investment in Jordan, see Saif, Ibrahim and David Debartolo (2007). 'The Iraq War's Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan'.

the name US invaders gave to their initial military attack that promised to bring democracy to the Iraqi people and the conditions for free-market economy and prosperity for a global business club:

> "Large-scale destruction of infrastructure, mass murder and the comprehensive dismantling of state institutions that left only chaos allowed occupation forces to orient the new political order towards its own interests while leaving ordinary Iraqis helpless in facing daily suffering, lawlessness and insecurity" (al-'Assaf and Jawad, 2013, in Ismael and Ismael, 2015).

Samer Abboud notes that the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), the new governing body of Iraq following its occupation in 2003, rejected any role for public sector enterprises in the new economy: construction, engineering, technology and transport enterprises were all marginalized during the reconstruction process (2008: 432). Many of the factories simply closed and awaited purchase. For example, a state-owned tractor factory just outside Baghdad that had employed 6000 people remained idle for 3 years after being targeted for privatization (Cloud 2006, quoted in Abboud, 432). Worse than this, is the role US allies and the members of the Iraqi political opposition in exile played in advocating what is described as the "Year Zero" approach (Klein, 2004), those who believed that Iraq was so contaminated that it needed to be rubbed out and remade from scratch, so destroy the Cardiac Centre that had Saddam's name and picture on it and kick out the doctors to reconstruct a new one, as part of rebuilding a new democratic Iraqi state (see Dr Omar's story in Chapter One).

Paul Bremer, the head of the US occupation forces, bluntly announced the plan in 2004 as "a full-scale economic overhaul. We're going to create the first real free-market economy in the Arab World. […] To corporatize and privatize state-owned resources and to wean people from the idea that the state supports everything" (Chandrasekaran, 2006: 58). In the 20 June 2003 issue of *Wall Street Journal*, Bremer, the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) –the US-British body which governed Iraq for 14 months from May 2003 to June 2004– announced a wholesale reallocation of resources and people from state control to private enterprise. The makeover list included: revamping the banking system; modernizing the stock exchange; privatizing some 120 state-owned enterprises; tax reform; and removal of all restrictions on foreign investment through suspension of all customs duties and tariffs.[115]

[115] Operation Iraqi Prosperity by L. Paul Bremer published in Wall Street Journal on 20 June 2003. http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB105606663932885100

The US plan for Iraq was to eliminate food subsidies, along with below-market prices for gasoline and electricity. Iraq was to prepare to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), which meant the elimination of tariffs, the creation of new laws to protect businesses, and the entry of foreign-owned banks (Chandrasekaran, 2006: 58). One practical step to achieve this was the denationalization of Iraqi assets and trade. In September 2003, the CPA announced Order 39 permitting complete foreign ownership of Iraqi companies and assets (apart from natural resources), total overseas remittance of profits and some of the lowest taxes in the world. Iraq was officially "open for business" [*sic*] (Medani, 2004). This was achieved through an aggressive privatization program, or in the words of Naomi Klein, "a radical economic shock therapy" that cut out the usual middlemen in such processes of privatization: the IMF and the World Bank were relegated to supporting roles leaving the US front and centre. Paul Bremer was the government and there was no need to negotiate with the local government. So while Bremer may have signed the laws, it was private accountants who designed and managed the economy. Think tanks were paid to think such as Britain's Adam Smith Institute who was contracted to help privatize Iraq's companies. Private security firms and defense contractors trained Iraq's new army and police (Dyn-Corp, Vinnell and the Carlyle Group's USIS, among others). And education companies drafted the post-Saddam curriculum and printed the new text-books (2007: 343-348).

The long 13 years[116] of the most comprehensive set of economic sanctions in modern history had failed to coerce the Iraqi regime into neoliberal reform. The US-led invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq was one practical step to promote the New World Order in the name of liberating the Iraqi people. Many Iraqis did not anticipate what happened next. The liberation, democratization and reconstruction of Iraq that had been presented by the US media as the main missions for the invasion alongside the protection of Iraqis' violated human rights under the undemocratic rule of Saddam, had a strong effect on the decision of some Iraqis to stay in their country until it was not possible to control the chaotic violence which spread as fire spreads amid dry straw: "*We were waiting for things to improve when the Americans invaded Baghdad, after long years of a cruel economic embargo that isolated Iraqis from the rest of the world. Nothing changed unfortunately, things only got worse*", as Hanan said. I met Hanan in April 2011, she told me that she had been working earlier as a

[116] Following the US occupation of Iraq in March 2003. The sanctions, which governed petroleum revenues and state assets frozen abroad in 1990, were not lifted until December 2010 (Ismael & Ismael, 2015: 182).

teacher of physics but decided to change her profession. After the invasion, she enrolled in the university to take another BA in English language hoping to get a better job in one of the various international organizations and NGOs which have flourished in Iraq following the US-led invasion.[117]

Max Weber argued long time ago that bureaucracies play a vital role in producing stability when regimes change. In the case of Iraq following its invasion and occupation in 2003 and Bremer's orders that led to the dismemberment of state institutions deprived the country of the largest base of its former bureaucracy. This produced further instability in the main fields of life such as education and health services, but above all the security services when the police and military forces were dismantled. A wide group of former state employees were affected by the destruction of the state institutions. These include hundreds of thousands of former army soldiers, police officers and active Baathist who were affected by the de-Baathification policy and left with few choices. They had to either face death, or learn how to live in disguise according to the terms of their tribe to deserve its protection, or fight in a chaotic war where the boundaries between resistance fighters and terrorist militias were blurred.

Former businesses were destroyed, and jobless men and women were attracted to work with the newly established government. As presented in the case of the physics teacher above some were even ready to acquire new skills to gain a job in the new rising NGO sector. Eventually they were targeted by militant fighters and militia groups for collaborating with the US occupying forces and the often so-called "Iraqi puppet government." The situation of academics and professionals such as doctors and lawyers were not better. They were targeted by killings[118] or kidnapping operations and the few who wanted to work in their specialty in Iraq had to secure their own protection by affiliating themselves to one of the rising powers: a strong tribe, militia or sect.

Reconstruction was placed at the heart of the political agenda of occupying powers. Therefore "reconstruction has to succeed to prove that the military strategy was correct"

[117] For a critical discussion of the rise of NGOs working on women's issues in the post-invasion Iraq, see al-Ali and Pratt (2009: 57-71 and 145-148): many international organisations and NGOs relocated to manage their programmes remotely from Amman in 2005-2006 due to the deteriorating security situation.
[118] 1.2 million deaths have been directly attributed to the invasion and in daily unidentified events of explosion and assassination.

(Barakat, 2008: 3). Despite the rise in wages, there was lack of *ʾamān* (no stability or safety). For several former state bureaucrats, it was not possible to stay in one's job when several state apparatus were dismantled including the Iraqi army and police, they were deprived of their jobs and sources of living. One of the tactics that some Iraqi professionals used in the beginning was to return to their original town or city where they could rely on the protection of extended family and tribe, hoping to return to their former lives when conditions improve. Several Iraqis I met in Amman attempted to hide in the province cities, eventually when conditions did not improve in Baghdad and after failing to find safe job opportunities inside Iraq, many had to cross the borders looking for safety and work elsewhere.

Expulsion of Iraqi state-bureaucrats and professionals

The US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, resulted into a large military occupation of the Iraqi territory, the US troops 'official' departure from the country had not happened until December 2011. The result was liberating Iraqis' assets and resources and, as some Iraqi academics and professionals used to describe their expulsion: "liberating Iraq from Iraqis." Iraqis used to describe this targeting of academics and doctors as a plan to decimate Iraq from the educated elite class. While many jobs and the employment sector in general were previously regulated by the state institutions and the Baathist regime, the 2003 war on Iraq was primarily an attack on the regime and those state institutions on which many of the current group of expelled Iraqis in Jordan once relied. Depending on the resources they had access to, some Iraqis had better chances of survival than others. While most had to make risky decisions to deal with the chaos at home or flee.

Initially, Iraqi neighbors from various sects and religions arranged survival by exchanging homes between Sunnis and Shiis. When the levels of danger increased, they moved to other cities inside Iraq where attacks and explosions did not happen at similar scale. However, when going to schools became a dangerous journey, some parents stopped sending their girls and boys to school. This was not an easy decision for educated parents who eventually decided to leave the country to seek education opportunities for their children in safer conditions. The culture of bribes that were popular during *al-ḥiṣār* continued and increased in amount. Former officers and employees who lost their jobs in the army and other state institutions started looking for other jobs. Some turned to work with the US Army in services and translation, others considered it treason to their nation.

Eventually, members of all sects and ethnic groups had to learn how to live with rising levels of unexpected attacks, kidnappings and explosions. Iraqi Christians who were told that they have no place in their former neighborhoods, had to hide with Muslim friends until they arranged to leave to Amman, one of the Christian families I met described how they bought air tickets as soon as they got the visa for Amman to avoid any questioning or targeting if they came in a taxi by road.

These changes gradually forced a large part of professionals and state bureaucrats to leave Iraq, looking for safety and protection; they did not all plan a permanent exit from Iraq. Um-Mina's family is one of those Iraqi families who left in 2005 and did not intend to leave Iraq for good. They had a chance to return to Baghdad in 2007 but finally in 2008, they left and decided to stay in Amman, where they were waiting for resettlement in a third country:

> When we returned, I was shocked by the changes in my area, one is stopped, every 100 meters, at a checkpoint, cars are not allowed to enter all areas. In some places you have to walk 5 km in the heat. Imagine that I couldn't find the house where I lived my entire life with my family. I was roaming around the area and the taxi driver was telling me that this is Al-Amiriyah: The concrete walls were all around, like the Israeli wall you have,[119] you have to enter the area from one entrance, after passing the controlling check-point (*sayṭara*). They took our IDs and we had to wait for one hour and a half for them to return our IDs, it was turning dark and there was no electricity, add to it the polluted air in Baghdad. I couldn't stop crying, this is not the Baghdad I know, I can't raise my children there, I decided to sell the house and search for another state where I could live with my family.

The absence of essential services and their privatization affected the possibilities of survival for many Iraqis. Former Baghdadi serviced-neighborhoods played an important role in shaping a middle class life style and rich social relations. Many aspects of this former social life disappeared with the harsh conditions of the 1991 bombing and economic sanctions. In 2003 the former middle-class life style among this group of professionals and state employees had been severely targeted when they became the subject of direct attacks by kidnappings, assassination and ethnic cleansing of formerly mixed neighborhoods. In addition to the direct threats to their lives, I will explore two common factors presented by these former urban Baghdadi state employees and professionals to explain the chaos and lack of *ʾamān* that forced them to exit Baghdad: First, the physical division and fragmentation of

[119] Several Iraqis made this comparison between the Israeli wall in the West Bank and the wall in Baghdad.

the Baghdadi space, and secondly the retreat of former social relations in inter-mixed neighborhoods and state institutions to be replaced by sectarian and factional divisions of the political and social Iraqi space.

For several Iraqis, like Um-Mina's family, Baghdad did not feel like home anymore, and their displacement is on-going. I close this final chapter of the thesis with two detailed stories of complex and long journeys some of these displaced Baghdadi families were forced to make in search of a new *safe* State, where they were hoping to live in *ʾamān*.

I. Fragmentation of a former inter-communal Baghdad — the spread of anomie

The above brief presentation of the political and economic changes enforced in the so-called *New Iraq* following the invasion is useful in understanding the global background of the conditions that forced the Iraqis I met in Jordan out of their homes. The invasion of Iraq, its occupation and dismantling of state institutions, the establishment of the CPA following the violence of the shock and awe, and the intensified operations of killing performed by the growing militias, criminal gangs and death squads the Salvadoran way,[120] gradually affected the social contract that had formerly been established in the mixed Baghdadi neighborhoods and in the Iraqi society at large. This contract was further damaged by the institutionalized ethno-sectarian divides introduced by the CPA with the appointment of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) on a sectarian basis.[121] Inter-communal relations were attacked forcing many Iraqis to leave their neighborhoods for another place where they would not be threatened for belonging to a particular sect or religion.

The walling of Baghdad was another step in dividing the city into small manageable pieces with walls and military checkpoints, which further intensified militia attacks on sectarian

---

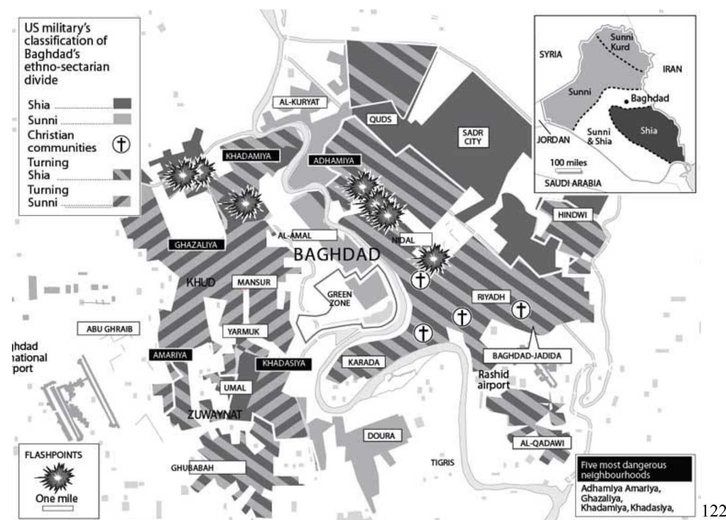
[120] See for example the special investigation by *The Gaurdian* published on 6 March 2013 titled "From El Salvador to Iraq: Washington's man behind brutal police squads on: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/06/el-salvador-iraq-police-squads-washington, retrieved on 20 August 2014.

[121] The IGC that was formed as an advisory body to the CPA from July 2004-May 2005 comprised of twelve Shii (from Da'wa party and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)), five Sunnis (from the secular-oriented US allies the Iraqi National Congress INC and Iraqi National Accord INA), five Kurds (from the two Kurdish Nationalist parties PUK and KDP), a Turkmen, and a Christian, while Bremer refused to introduce a gender quota (al-Ali and Pratt, 2009: 90). For more on the composition of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) appointed in mid-July 2004 by Bremer see Tripp (2007: 284). For their part, the CPA, the IGC and the representatives of the allied forces of occupation retreated inside the 'Green Zone' that had been created as a kind of citadel in the center of Baghdad (ibid, 285-287).

pretext and forced many inhabitants to relocate. Introduced by the US-led occupying forces, the walling was presented as an attempt to protect the city residents from militia and armed groups' attacks. However, according to the Iraqis who left Baghdad after 2008 and those who continued to visit Baghdad, this was another factor that led to the division of Iraqi society and the promotion of sectarianism. Walling also increased the daily suffering of Iraqis who had to waste long hours to reach their places of work or study or medical treatment. A doctor from al-Saydiyya described the walling of his neighborhood: "instead of minimizing the acts of killing, it increased the suffering of the neighborhoods' inhabitants and did not stop the 'killing on identity' [the term Iraqis use to describe the killings of Sunnis or Shiis]." Al-Saydiyya, as this doctor explained, was walled from all sides and isolated from its surrounding neighborhoods, and, most of the time, there was only one open point that was used as both entrance and exit. He explained how the daily journey to his clinic that used to take him ten minutes by car before the walling, became a long two- or three- hour journey, not to forget the risks one might face at the checkpoints where he or she had to decide which ID card to show by guessing the affiliations of the armed men guarding the point. One tactic that Iraqis developed was to carry two ID-cards: one identifying the person with a Sunni name and the other indicating a Shii name; however, this tactic did not work all the time for everybody, especially given that there were so many fake check points (*sayṭarāt wahmiyya* as Iraqis call them), who acted like mafia or gang killers involved in the profiteering kidnapping business. The doctor from al-Saydiyya was forced to leave Iraq after being targeted by the armed guards at his neighborhood entrance who shot at his car following the regular checking of his ID. He was not hurt, but two of his close neighbors died in similar incidences and his family decided it is time to leave to a safer place, so they left to Amman.

The sectarian wall, as it was called by some Iraqis, was a physical embodiment of the destruction of the social Baghdadi inter-communal life. It split neighbors and families and further reduced the already limited possibilities of living for the majority, who did not feel safe leaving their homes and could no longer reach their work and schools. It created the conditions for anomie, a concept originally coined by Durkheim to refer to a situation in which former norms of solidarity break down due to a rapid change in society (2005 [1952]). Iraqis were forced to search for ways to bring a sense of connectedness and solidarity in their lives. Most of the time they sought the protection of powerful individuals and lucky were those who belonged to a strong tribe. The violent changes in the Iraqi state gradually affected the former solidarity norms among Baghdadi communities as expressed by Iraqis: "you don't

know anymore who is your enemy and who is a friend, the neighbor who supported me to locate the gang who kidnapped my son appeared to be one of the gang members."



[122]

Violence spread in Baghdad and across Iraq from multiple sources, criminal gangs whose primary concern was looting by removing all obstacles in their way. A gang business flourished and went beyond looting to include kidnappings and hired killings under various covers: sectarian, religious affiliation or killing on identity, and violations of what was announced as good religious conduct. Such violations included: women not respecting the dress codes of *ḥijāb*/ veil or black *ʿabāya* (a big black piece of cloth traditionally used by Iraqi women as a loose fitting cloak to cover the entire body except the face and hands), women hairdressers, barbers for providing *al-haf* or *haf al-wajih* (using a thread to remove face hair), market sellers for mixing tomatoes and cucumbers (because cucumbers are viewed as a male vegetable and tomatoes as female, and mixing them in a box is seen as lascivious), street vendors selling ice, etc. It was not uncommon to hear that the same gang men who killed Shiis in what was assigned as a Sunni neighborhood in the morning, were seen killing Sunnis in another neighborhood in the evening.

It was normal, my informants used to say, to see dead bodies mutilated, burned or shot at the entrance of a street in a Baghdadi neighborhood, while the American soldiers would stand at

[122] A map depicting the walling of postinvasion Baghdad and the physical borders of the sectarian division. Map source: http://www.mappery.com/map-of/Baghdad-Sectarian-Divisions-Map , retrieved on 27 November 2014.

the other end of the street, doing nothing except following any moving object and shooting at it. This scared other Iraqis in the neighborhood who could not pull the dead bodies to be properly buried for several days without risking being shot themselves as terrorist suspects.

In their book *Iraq in the 21st Century*, Ismael and Ismael (2015) provide analysis of the main features of the Anglo-American war in deconstructing the Iraqi state and the attempt to reconstruct an Iraqi society that is weak without substantive sovereignty or independence in forming its economic and social policies and the rise of a politicized sectarianism. In my attempt to explore the experiences of Iraqi professionals and state bureaucrats following the deconstruction of the Iraqi former state-building project during 1990s-2003, it is important to emphasize the centrality of former experiences of Iraqi state bureaucrats with privations of wars in understanding the coping strategies after the recent 2003 US-led war and occupation of Iraq.

Among the very few anthropological works on life in postinvasion Iraq, (based on prolonged ethnographic fieldwork in post-occupation Basra) Hayder al-Mohammed has efficiently shown how—in the context of deterioration of security, militia kidnappings, and breakdown of the country's infrastructures—everyday life in Iraq is predicated on ethical modes of sociality and dwelling that contrast with the somewhat flat representations in media and academia of social life in the country:

> "The entangling of lives—which manifests through interest, attention, or small gestures of politeness and which has no formal account as an ethics of the everyday within the social sciences—indicates movements, understandings, and encounters of lives that exist beyond the monopoly that Islam, sectarian and religious identities, or social forms and structures such as tribalism enjoy within studies of the Middle East" (2015: 112).

According to Hayder al-Mohammad, the ability of Iraqis to survive the two recent gulf wars, the crippling 12 years of sanctions, and the violence and deprivation of life after the invasion points to some of the courage, relentless battling, and "talent for life" (Scheper-Hughes 2008) it has taken to maintain one's own life and the lives of those one cares for and looks after (Al-Mohammad, 2015: 114).

In post-2003, maintaining one's life and the lives of those one cares for was associated with survival and feeling safe. The good days which the old generation miss in their present Baghdad is feeling safe or what they called *ʾamān* whose limits are set by the historically and

socially situated conditions of its production, the *ʾamān* habitus: i.e. being able to work in their profession in rewarding conditions and provide for their children's education and well-being (in 1970s) and avoiding long years of military service or loss on the war-front or simply feeling safe (in 1980s): "In those days, when we used to forget our house door open without fear of coming back home at 3:00 a.m after a party." Compared to the 1990s years of privations during *al-ḥiṣār* and the present conditions in which they experienced rising levels of threats, uncertainty and insecurity. Another aspect of *ʾamān* that we observed among displaced former state employees in previous Chapters is to be capable of practicing one's profession: "I like to have order, some kind of routine and systematic life; to wake up early and go to my work without fears."

II. The decline of inter-communal relations and the rise of sectarianism

One obvious distinction in the stories told by professionals and state bureaucrats of their life in Baghdad in the 1970s-1980s is the absence of reference to one's sectarian affiliation.[123] The older generation would insist that it was not an issue, Um-Amjad in her story about her father who disappeared during the nationalization campaign did not mention his religious or sectarian belonging (as a Shii man married to a Sunni-Kurd woman), instead she focused on her father's political views, as one of the high ranking officers who opposed the processes of the BPC nationalization (Chapter 6). Her story of the 70s shared many elements of the nostalgic stories retold among the older generation of those times, especially when she described the mixed inter-communal origins of her extended family. Um-Amjad's husband, who was also her cousin was Shii, and her daughter is married to a Kurdish Iraqi from the north whose family migrated to Germany during the 1990s, while her son was married to a Sunni woman from Baghdad. One of her brothers was married to a Christian woman while another brother and one of her sisters had to leave Baghdad and hide in Kurdistan after being targeted by armed militias for being part of one of the Sufi orders, who were not considered as proper Islam by the current Shii or Sunni militias controlling segregated neighborhoods in Baghdad.

[123] While the recent Sunni/ Shii sectarianism appears as the main factor in the ongoing killings in Iraq as presented by the media and many stories told by Iraqis who left the country, few analysts of the Iraqi society criticize the "overplaying" of the heterogeneity of Iraqi society and describe the sectarianism issue as more the product of political conflicts and competition for power than a reflection of any fundamental hostility between the two denomination (Dawod, 2012: 93).

Another shared response observed among this group of older generation Baghdadi state employees was the apologetic attitude whenever they had to mention their communal or sectarian affiliation and critique to the Jordanian governmental institutions and international organizations for requesting this detail in official documentation. Um-Amjad and other Iraqis from her generation often expressed their refusal of what they called the "sectarian thinking" that was growing in the Iraqi political life after 2003. In their stories about living in Baghdad before the US-led invasion, they described mixed families and Baghdadi neighborhoods where difference in religious or ethnic identity seemed more normalized especially in times of stability and prosperity, comments like: "Feasts were celebrated by all during various religious holidays and occasions" were more popular among the older generation of Iraqis. It seemed that personal identity, as perceived by this older group of former state employees and professionals was more related to being part of the Baghdadi urban middle class; the main aspects of identity emphasized was the rich cultural life, high educational levels and rewarding governmental jobs and close family ties as well as a consumption style of modern products.

However, I argue that understanding this inter-mixed or "cosmopolitan"[124] aspect of Iraqi life is more complex than the way it was described in the above comment and other similar comments about the absence of sectarian thinking among Iraqis. Several other factors were involved in the rise of sectarian views or intolerance during different Iraqi historical periods at various levels. The effects of the British mandate colonial rule through sectarian divisions were not sidelined during the post-colonial rule when Iraqi rulers used ethnic and sectarian divisions at various scales, especially during times of wars and tension (Yousef, 2014; Tripp, 2007). In the 1980s, this was reflected in discourses concerning the political loyalty of various groups in the Iraqi society: one example is the questioning of the Iraqi Shia loyalty by the former regime during the Iran-Iraq war, in addition to the changing socio-economic factors during long decades of historical changes.

It is more common to hear in the main stream media after 2003, descriptions of Iraq as "the land of divisions" **أرض الشقاق** i.e. ethnic, sectarian, tribal and religious divisions (Sunnis vs. Shi'is; Arabs vs. Kurds with less common references to Assyrian- and Chaldean-Christians, Yazidis and Sabaeans), and as referred previously, this division was presented as one of the

[124] As Sami Zubaida described it in his article "Communalism and Thwarted Aspirations of Iraqi Citizenship" (2005).

main structural problems that have affected the establishment of a certain form of Iraqi democratic state before 2003 (with specific emphasis on the dominance of the Sunni Arabs in Iraqi politics). Rohde indicates in his study of Iraqi state-society relations that "a degree of skepticism remains concerning the normative power of communal loyalties in Baʻthist Iraq", he refers in his analysis of these loyalties, to other studies, to conclude that in Iraq "the significance on a day-to-day level of an individual's regional background, family, clan, and tribal affiliation continues to be more pronounced than in the long-established, settled urban and rural societies in some of the neighboring states" (Sluglett and Sluglett, 1991; Zubaida, 2002 in Rohde 2010: 11).

This perception about Iraq is also reflected in the mainstream media news which often refer to sectarian and ethnic differences in Iraq as the main cause of the chaos which spread in the country following the US-led invasion, rather than seeing it as a product of deeper underlying internal and external factors such as class division and competitions between elites for finite resources in addition to colonial interests. The former decline of ethnic and tribal role, as described by the older generation of urban Baghdadi communities, can be perceived in relation to the rise of general state-welfare services which ensured certain level of stability and security, eventually the decrease in security and decline of welfare and state protection was accompanied with the return of tribal and sectarian relations, and as we explored above in the times of *al-ḥiṣār*, sometimes these factional and tribal relations were revived and sponsored by the regime as one of the tactics to strengthen its rule. As explained, this politicization of ethnic, tribal and religious differences was practiced by the Iraqi state at various levels during times of wars and sanctions, and it was one of the strategies carried out with American occupation (Baker, 2014; Zubaida, 2012). According to Zubaida the political chaos following the removal of the regime had roots in oppressive practices of the Baathist rule (1986-2003) which suppressed all forms of politics outside its control with brutal and indiscriminate violence. In addition, the decades of destructive wars and the sanctions regime from 1991 resulted in great hardship and dislocation in the populace at large, and pushed people increasingly into the embrace of reconstituted communal and tribal solidarities and allegiances (2011: 102).

In the following excerpt from *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq,* Eric Davis explores the changes in the state policies concerning traditional tribal relations over the last four decades:

> "Nationalist ideologies of modernity and unitary solidarity of the nation were central to Ba'thist ideology, reinforced by an agenda of eliminating alternative centers of power and "traditional" solidarities. However, this suppression of tribalism was to change in the 1990s. The Kuwait war, the intifada that followed, and then the sanctions regime diminished the power and wealth of the regime and the party's ability to control the provinces. Saddam then resorted to a reconstruction of the tribes, their shaykhs, and their judicial tribunals, supplying the nominated shaykhs with resources and arms, as a measure of social and political control in the provinces. This was not the first tribal manifestation of the Saddam regime. The process of Saddam's consolidation of personal power in the party and the state, and the purging of all possible opponents and rivals, led to the narrowing of the power base to what has been called 'the family party'" (ibid., 2005: 27).

Zubaida explains this transformation and the rise of the Takriti Baath which came to be more narrowly based on family and clan solidarities, with Saddam's immediate cognates in the key positions and the security apparatus manned by concentric circles determined by degrees of kinship. While this arrangement empowered segments of certain Sunni tribes of the northwest, it did not amount to the official endorsement of tribalism that came in the 1990s. Until then Baathist ideology conformed to the nationalist and modernist denunciation of tribalism (2012: 341-342).

When they often described what they missed from the past, most Iraqis mentioned the former inter-communal Baghdadi life, and preferred to ignore the ethnic "boundaries" that were shrinking or extending in their Iraqi space during different historical periods. The old generation of this group of urban Baghdadi professionals shared with me many examples and stories of mixed marriages within their families and mixed celebrations among neighbors and friends of various religious events. However, these boundaries seemed to "persist despite a flow of personnel across them," to borrow Barth's (1969) analysis of ethnicity as a social process and relationship between groups rather than the content of those groups. Barth describes how interaction in such mixed social system does not lead to its liquidation through change and acculturation; cultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence (ibid., 9). In a more recent attempt to explain the rise of ethnic division, in its tribal and sectarian faces, in the Iraqi case, Kadri brings in the role of political and economic players in the enhancement of religious and sectarian identities. His analysis of ethnicity is similar to that of Barth in the sense that he describes it as a process rather than an ontological being: "sectarian identity itself has no being or ontological being of its own; it is a

political relationship defined within particular circumstances of the class struggle and in a historically determined social formation" (2016: 161).

The Iraqi and other experiences (in former Yugoslavia) prove this but they also prove that when a social system produced its strong socio-economic productive basis, these cultural differences move to the background and lose their political roles, as many former Iraqi professionals used to repeat in the field. However, whenever the collective social system was attacked whether by former state oppressive policies or foreign military interventions, these cultural differences were politicized and were assumed as a social system for their followers. Older generations of Iraqis who were raised in more "secular" environment preferred to silence or ignore religious and sectarian differences in their stories about living in Iraq during the last four decades. But when they addressed incidents of social exclusion practiced by various Iraqi governments or militias, the boundaries become clear and individuals who did not perceive religion or sect as an important feature in their social relations with other fellow workers, neighbors and even marriage partners had to learn how to deal with "deadly identities" (Maalouf, 2012). One's presence or absence in the *New Iraq*, is determined by one's sect, ethnicity and their former relationship to the state/ regime. This new situation in Iraq, and in the region at large, imposed new representations on the inhabitants of those states. It is reflected in the rising Shii vs. Sunni discourse in the Arab Media in general.

Another common explanation of the rise of sectarian and religious movements in politics, as presented by researchers of the Middle East is the failure of Arab "secular" nationalist regimes to bring about sustained socioeconomic development and to prevent the expansion of the state of Israel after the 1967 war that helped generate popular support for Islamist movements (al-Ali and Pratt, 2009: 11). It is true, as often explored by researchers, that there are several other causes for the decline of national secular ideologies in favor of more Islamist or other religious ideologies and identities, and while I agree with this wider view of the decline of nationalist secular politics and the rise of sectarian thinking before 2003, the point I wanted to make is related to the effects of '*the official institutionalization*' of a sectarian government-style in Iraq after 2003, as an important context to understand the displacement experiences of former Iraqi state-bureaucrats I met in Jordan. The new Iraqi government set up by the CPA was based upon communal (sectarian) affiliation and later encouraged the development of political parties and militias which recruited in ethno-religious constituencies, within two years of invasion, the United States had created a novel sectarian system: what is

described in the media as the “Lebanization of Iraq,” the parliament was eventually established in 2005 and ministries were allocated according to the relative weight of such parties and of parliamentary blocs, and the reconstructed armed forces followed this pattern. Previously, of little significance, sectarian parties and networks started to exert a much stronger influence in the absence of a strong central state” (Marfleet, 2007: 409). The years 2004 and 2005 evolved in terror tactics including assassinations, disappearances, killings by death squads and imprisonments that were directed to minorities and also professionals such as doctors, lawyers and academics.

Based on my former analysis, it would be naïve to blame the rise of religious and sectarian divisions in the Iraqi society solely on the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, and this is not the point I wanted to make here. The stories of lived experiences shared by former Iraqi state employees and professionals in their home country and in their transit space in Jordan can be perceived as life changing experiences in the context of larger structural violence. This structural violence did not stop with the attack on the former regime. On the contrary, with the destruction of the centralized coercive apparatus of the state: several Iraqis explained how they had to deal in the past with the state violence by strategies of hiding, avoidance, resistance or complicity, while in postinvasion Iraq, they had to learn how to avoid the chaotic violence coming from various sources: militia groups affiliated to various political, religious, sectarian and ethnic communities in addition to the rising American El Salvador-style death squads and privately run mercenaries (like black water), and militias funded by regional and global actors such as al-Qaida and ISIS (the Islamic state in Iraq and Syria).

Following 2003, many former potentials to live as middle class intermixed neighbors in Baghdad disappeared with the destruction of state institutions and the spread of violence and lack of security to the extent that some Baghdadis found it safer to move out of their homes in the neighborhood where they spent their entire lives to their original city or town, where they could gain some protection from extended family members and their larger tribe. Although the town was more secure than Baghdad, it lacked essential services that these internally displaced Iraqis used to enjoy in the capital city, regardless of how limited they were.

Another aspect that was presented as a reason to leave Iraq entirely are the unfamiliar practices ordered by religious figures who imposed the head cover on all women and

prohibited music and former social life in clubs, in addition to other 'pre-modern practices' described by this group of educated Baghdadis. Eventually, they felt further excluded from the new Baghdadi fragmented space by these practices and the sectarian segregation imposed on former inter-communal mixed neighborhoods. After 2003, being Iraqi was not enough to continue living in Iraq, one has to be Sunni to live in a Sunni-majority district or Shii to stay in a majority Shii district. Due to the inadequacy of government social service programs and the factional setup of governmental structure, familial and tribal relationships offered a source of compensation and Iraqis turned to their families to get access to wider political networks. In the current Iraq, family origin became more important to gain access to political and administration positions than qualifications and skills. The Iraqi state institutions could not strengthen their role as the primary service provider (as in the period before 1990s), therefore, many Iraqis began to align themselves with various tribal and sectarian groups that could provide access to services, or at least to protection.[125]

The above stories of the expulsion from former Iraqi mixed neighborhoods imply the transformation in the Iraqi social space from one governed by a centralized hegemonic and despotic power of a nation-state and regime that functioned through a mixture of modern state institutions and various levels of patrimonial and traditional powers, to one governed by several factional and sectarian representative bodies. The decline of collective state institutions and the rise of privatization and liberalization of resources led eventually to the spread of sociopolitical disorder and the rise of "corporate-like groups" which are based on kinship, religious or ethnic affiliations. This does not make a less violent state as per Kapferer: "In this case the chaotic "violence at the periphery is not a mere fact of the failure of state orders, nor of traditionalism, but of the appearance of new forms of ordering practice that are part of the modern emergence of the corporate state" (ibid., 2005: 294).

The destruction of former state apparatus left many Iraqis unprotected; they did not only lose control of their individual lives when they lost their working positions and access to state services, but they also lost the main source of protection of a former communal life. They had to learn how to avoid the violence coming from different parties and militias. The easiest way was to leave the country. Those who decided to stay had to learn how to live and work

[125] Hayder Al-Mohammad (2012) presents an ethnographic case about the protective role of the tribe in postinvasion Iraq, in his article: "A Kidnapping in Basra: The Struggles and Precariousness of Life in Postinavation Iraq."

without the protection of the state, eventually, some turned to these "new forms of ordering practice" organized within sectarian and tribal groups affiliated to various militias and sectarian parties. Such as the doctor (Sabah) who returned to work under the protection of his tribal group (Chapter Three); although this older generation of Iraqis often announced their refusal of communitarian and sectarian thinking but they had little opportunity to avoid engagement with sectarian and tribal groups if they wanted to survive in postinvasion Iraq. Security services were privatized and employees were hired by private security firms to perform jobs that would otherwise be done by the Iraqi police and military. This commodification of security created a bourgeoning market. Security agencies owned by Iraqis and non-Iraqis alike hired both Iraqis and non-Iraqis.

This is not unique to Iraq. Friedman describes a similar process of transformation of the entire social space by the establishment of non-modern conditions of identification in the case of Eastern European countries like Yugoslavia. The spread of disorder, as Friedman states is "a universally recurrent phenomenon, along with many of the forms that it takes such as social fragmentation, individual crises, new collective identifications, and what I [Friedman] have referred to as ethnification" (2008: 211). He attributes the variable reactions to a disordered social arena to its variable constitution (2008: 205). Thus, Friedman establishes a link between hegemonic decline and commercial expansion caused by decentralization of capital accumulation in hegemonic organizations and resulting from this decentralization (ibid., 212).

Another explanation of the rise of factional identities or "identity problems" as Friedman described them is the downward mobility that results from the economic crisis; specifically the effects of decentralization of capital accumulation on areas abandoned by capital where people turn to the past, "to roots, to ethnicity and to other collective identities, whether regional, religious, or even gender based, that replaces the vacuum left by a receding modernist identity" (ibid., 216). Friedman further argues that ethnification and social and political disorder are expressions of declining hegemony in global systems and that this relation occurs in spite of the fact that the societies involved might practice very different forms of ethnicity (ibid., 222). In the world of the decline, the "new rising hegemonies become new zones of nationalization and homogenization where a former cultural and political diversity is less tolerated" (Friedman, 2008: 223).

Friedman's analysis sheds some light on the new situation in Iraq, and in the region at large, which imposed new representations on the inhabitants of former states. Ethnic and religious/sectarian backgrounds were always present at various levels and scales in the modern Iraqi state (Zubaida, 2009). Gaining access to free public education and regularly paid jobs in addition to quality medical services affected social relations and practices within families, it also affected the organization of the social space in Iraqi society, allowing satisfactory living standards. The sixties and seventies witnessed the development of a new class of professionals and intellectuals in addition to wider segments of administration workers, to add to the former military and state functionaries (see Chapter 6). However, the investment in the militarization of society by drawing large part of professionals into the war front for long periods of time had negative effects on the development level, as well as the decrease in resources dedicated for building institutions and human capacities. There was a rise in the transnational system of trade and financial transactions in which the nation-state is no longer the primary organizational framework of the economy, this did not mean that the state lost its role completely during the 1980s. The rise of the neoliberal discourse at the international level through corporate and financial elites and within several Arab states in Egypt, Jordan and Iraq led to narrowing the ideological basis of popular identification with and loyalty to the state and its institutions of political participation. According to Turner, the rise of global capitalist system or the increase in transnational capital markets did not mean the withering away of the state, it has heightened rather than undermined the importance of state boundaries (2003, 48). The hegemony of neoliberal policy led to the weakening of popular sovereignty on which the modern state has been based since the eighteenth century (ibid., 50).

With the destruction of the Iraqi state and its institutions came the negative effect on the former social networks which once served as safety nets. As police and army forces were made redundant, new types of loyalty started to grow; some Iraqis turned to their sectarian group (and militias) for protection; while others recalled tribal connections. Eventually this state of anomie "freed Iraq from Iraqis" as Iraqis in Jordan repeatedly described their displacement. Iraq had been freed from Iraqis as national subjects and citizens; in the *New Iraq*, Iraqis were presented more as members within tribal, sectarian or ethnic communities struggling to survive under the rule of a weak administration confined in the green zone in Baghdad.

This approach led the country into what Sahlins describes as "the state-of-nature effect" in his reading of the disorder that erupted in Iraq: "It takes a lot of culture to make a state of nature. […] The American invasion of Iraq in 2003 set off a terrible civil strife in which a myriad of local forces killed each other, often in the name of global causes. For all its nation-building ideology, US policy supposed Iraq to be historically and inevitably divided into opposed religious and ethnic groups […]. Indeed there was a lot of essentialism informing the invaders' conquer-and-divide policies—which ignored a long history of intermarriage between the various groups, the mix of Shiites and Sunnis in the Iraqi army during the war with Iran, the contingent of Shiites in the ruling Baath Party, and other such preexisting conditions of national coherence" (2011: 27-28).

The above-described destruction in Iraq might be read as some Iraqis I met have described it, as another phase in the troubling history of Iraq. The Iraqi state was established through various economic and political interventions of colonization, *coups d'état*, developmental projects, wars and conflicts, all of which resulted in several waves of displacement. Crisis is also presented as the leading force of the Iraqi community growth, as per Hannah Batatu's study of the Iraqi social classes: "It should be borne in mind that what is becoming the Iraqi community has also grown in crises, in moments of great danger and common suffering, in the tremors of agitated masses and their outbursts of anger: if this community in embryo will in the future hold together and maintain its separate identity, the Uprising of 1920, the War of 1941, the Wathbah of 1948, the Intifadah of 1952, and the Revolution of 1958, though not free of divisive aspects, will be seen as stages in the progress of Iraq towards national coherence" (Batatu,1978: 36).

Batatu tells us in his work, which was written during the 1970s, that in their stories in the sixties many Iraqis looked back nostalgically to the epoch of the monarchy. Under the monarchy, however, many more felt that they could not have had worse governance than they had. Coups or outbursts of national or local significance characterized, in fact, almost the entire life span of the monarchy— in the period 1921-1958 (see Table 17-1 in Batatu, 1978). Similarly, many Iraqis who had been forced out of their country post-2003 longed for the inter-communal aspects of their former Baghdadi life; although sentiments of fear and shock were more present than nostalgia in their stories. Displacement or being-on-the-move is another event in the present Iraqi story, as reflected in the following two long journeys by Iraqis searching for a safe State.

Iraqis on the move- complex journeys seeking asylum and ʾ*amān* in a safe State

The Iraqis' troublesome experience with mobility and travel is not recent. As explored earlier in this and previous chapters, it was not uncommon to hear that Iraqi males were denied travel rights by former state authorities for years because, they were constantly told, their country needed them in times of wars and emergency. There were periods during the eighties and nineties when the former Iraqi regime imposed strict regulations on the mobility of its subjects to the extent that some Iraqis expressed that one of their biggest wishes was to cross their country borders. An Iraqi musician, who had served in the army from 1983–2003, expressed his excitement when he first learnt that the Iraqi borders were left open following the attack on the regime: "I could not believe it when in 2004 I realized that I could finally travel. I could obtain an interim travel document issued by the CPA,[126] with which I entered Syria." Syria and Jordan were not the end destination for impoverished Iraqis who were unable to secure jobs and provide for their families. In 2010–2011, making a space of ʾ*amān,* for several former Iraqi state employees was linked to asylum in one of the so-called safe States (*buldān ʾamina*) in the West. Despite lifting the restrictions on travel imposed by the former Iraqi regime, the number of Iraqis who were accepted for asylum in 1997–2002 was much higher than the number accepted in 2003–2006.

As explored in his book *Rethinking Asylum*, Matthew Price clarifies that this solution is not granted to all refugees: "only a fraction of the world's asylum seekers are Convention refugees; the majority do not qualify" (2009: 17-18). Still reaching a safe state was the dream of several Iraqis I met in the field: "preferably European or best if we can gain resettlement in a Scandinavian country." Iraqis were repeatedly told that asylum is limited and designed to serve the most vulnerable of refugees and is not a solution for all. After 2003, the more preferred humanitarian responses are designed to provide temporary protection space in the neighboring states where the UNHCR and other international players will ensure the distribution of relief and development aid to refugees who remain in their countries or regions of origin. This temporary refugee policy tool, as explored ethnographically in Chapters Four and Five, aims to provide relief aid directly to refugees or through intermediaries—such as the state of origin, international humanitarian organizations like the United Nations High

[126] I had the chance to see this document titled *Coalition Provisional Authority of Iraq Interim Travel Document,* it states that: "the bearer of this document is a citizen or born in Iraq and does not possess a valid Iraqi passport but has identified himself to the undersigned issuing authority" (i.e the CPA).

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), or nongovernmental organizations—and development aid of various kinds designed to ameliorate the suffering of refugees.

In the last section of this chapter, I will present two of several stories shared by Iraqis moving in search for *ʾamān*. The increase of restrictions on mobility for Iraqis, in addition to the slow recognition process to evaluate the Iraqi needs of protection according to international standards, forced many individuals and families like Amal's family to rely on smugglers' services, while other families like Sundos' had to wait for long years to be counted in the official UNHCR resettlement program. Before presenting the two stories as narrated by Amal and Sundos, I will present a short brief about the Iraqi asylum experience as another coping strategy with the lack of *ʾamān* during the last four decades.

This style of temporary 'in-region' protection is prioritized not only because it decreases the flow of unwanted migrants to the western countries, but it is also less expensive to keep these unwanted displaced persons as refugees in neighboring countries instead of granting them asylum in Europe: "In 2003, for example, Britain spent more than US$1.5 billion to support 93,000 asylum seekers. Meanwhile, the entire UNHCR budget, meant to provide relief for over 20 million refugees and internally displaced persons, amounted to US$1.17 billion in that year, of which the UK donated about US$47 million" (Price, 2009).

Leenders (2009) critically explores the growing phenomenon of the "securitization" of refugees with reference to Iraqi refugees' abandonment in terms of humanitarian protection. His review of the latest Iraqi refugee presence in the region shows that despite the absence of Iraqi refugee warriors, "few western policy-makers or UN officials will dare to take credit for it publicly, but judging from the large numbers of Iraqis now stuck in neighboring countries, the Iraqi refugee crisis appears to mark the triumph of the in-region solution" (2009: 358). In his discussion of the effects of using the refugee warrior label or the "growing securitization of refugee studies" as an excuse to contain them to the region and deny them access to asylum in North America and Western Europe (2009: 344). Leenders' observation is confirmed in the following figure which presents the distribution of displaced Iraqis around the world; the highest percentage of the displaced resided in Syria and Jordan (44%) as well as inside Iraq (43%) compared to only 4% in Europe in 2007.

The temporary protection space in neighboring countries or the so-called regional solution to refugees represents a shift in responsibility and its standards from international law to individual human rights. In his essay 'The New Humanitarian Order', Mamdani (2008) describes this as a fateful shift from law to humanitarian protection order. As the Bush Administration made patently clear at the time of the invasion of Iraq, humanitarian intervention does not need to abide by the law. Indeed, its defining characteristic is that it is beyond the law. It is this feature that makes humanitarian intervention the twin of the 'war on terror' [*sic*]. This new humanitarian order, officially adopted at the UN's 2005 World Summit, claims responsibility for the protection of vulnerable populations. That responsibility is said to belong to the international community, to be exercised in practice by the UN, and in particular by the Security Council, whose permanent members are the great powers. Whereas the language of sovereignty is profoundly political, that of humanitarian intervention is profoundly apolitical, and sometimes even anti-political. Looked at closely and critically, what we are witnessing is not a global but a partial transition. The transition from the old system of sovereignty to a new humanitarian order is confined to those states defined as 'failed' or 'rogue' [*sic*] states. The result is once again a bifurcated system, whereby state sovereignty is obtained in large parts of the world but is suspended in more and more countries in Africa and the Middle East. "If the rights of the citizen are pointedly political, the rights of the human pertain to sheer survival; they are summed up in one word: protection. The new language refers to its subjects not as bearers of rights and thus active agents in their emancipation but as passive beneficiaries of an external responsibility to protect. Rather than rights-bearing citizens, beneficiaries of the humanitarian order are akin to recipients of charity. […] Humanitarianism [according to Mamdani] does not claim to reinforce agency, but only to sustain bare life. If anything, its tendency is to promote dependence. Humanitarianism heralds a system of trusteeship" (Ibid., 2008). Mamdani in his essay presents another critique of the reductionist effect of the humanitarian aid system, in addition to Agamben's critique mentioned in Chapter Four.

Military intervention in the Iraqi case was another substitute for refugee protection and asylum policies. Despite the harm to the displaced, coercive interference in the form of military intervention seemed a practical solution to contain the refugee problem within the Iraqi borders. As per Marfleet, this policy was pioneered in Iraq: "Since the early 1990s, both states and international agencies have worked to contain some large groups of displaced people within their country of origin, largely in order that they cannot make claims for

asylum" (2011: 173). In the Iraqi case, the UN Security Council Resolution cited the "repression of the Iraqi civilian population in many parts of Iraq, including most recently in the Kurdish populated areas which led to a massive flow of refugees towards and across international frontiers" as a threat to international peace justifying military action to create a safe haven (Price, 2009: 77). The safe haven or area is a zone within which people in danger could seek security; Stubbs notes that by definition: "Safe havens are not places of asylum in which protection is offered by a host state, rather the policy of choice is to restrict these havens to within the country in conflict" (Stubbs 1999, quoted in Marfleet, 2006: 203).

In the 2003 military intervention, the announced aim was to bring prosperity, gender empowerment and democracy to the rest of Iraq and liberate Iraqis from the rule of the repressive regime of Saddam. Iraqis in 2006 became once again the leading nationality seeking asylum in industrialized countries. However, border restrictions then were increasing at all levels. Locally: eleven of Iraq's 18 governorates put restrictions on movement within Iraq. Regionally: strict entry restrictions were imposed following the November 2005 suicide bombings in three luxury Amman hotels where western military contractors and diplomats usually stayed. Al-Qaida in Iraq claimed responsibility for the bombings, and the Jordanian government responded by deporting Iraqis, limiting the number of residence permits, and prohibiting the entry of Iraqi men between the ages of 18–35. The Jordanian borders were closed to all but extremely exceptional cases including Iraqi investors, students or patients. Saudi Arabia set plans to build a 560-mile fence along its border with Iraq to keep out illegal migrants from Iraq. In addition, the limited protection space in Jordan and Syria was temporary, and both countries introduced visa restrictions despite the encouragement by western countries to contain Iraqis fleeing war in the region through the so-called burden sharing policy which contributes to funding the educational and health services in host countries. Globally: refugees and migrants fleeing harsh conditions in their countries have been constrained by the cost of the journey and restrictive administrative practices in receiving countries. The process of global integration by means of economic liberalization, as described by Marfleet, is accompanied by intensified border control and rigorous policing of aliens. This pushes more people to use smugglers' services and, because most of them originate in crisis zones far from desired countries of asylum, they are compelled to make the longest and most difficult journeys (2006: 250).

Despite the restrictions, Iraqi asylum claims in the 36 industrialized countries that report data to UNHCR more than doubled in the first six months of 2007 compared to the first six months of 2006. Sweden received the largest number of claims and accepted most Iraqis as *prima facie* refugees (O'Donnell and Newland, 2008: 2). However, according to the UNHCR records, the total number of asylum seekers arriving in industrialized countries in 2006 was less than half the average number who had arrived during the six years prior to 2003. During the first half of the 1990s, more than 5000 Iraqis were resettled each year to industrialized countries. After 2003, the numbers of asylum applications submitted in industrialized countries fell by around half when compared to the numbers in the period 1997-2002, as the following UNHCR graph shows.

Iraqi Asylum Applications submitted in 38 Industrialized Countries, 1992-2006

2006 figure is preliminary and for 36 countries rather than 38. *Source*: 'Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries, 2006.' UNHCR, 23 March 2007.

Figure 2: source UNHCR[127]

In the period January – December 2007, the UNHCR referred nearly 21,000 Iraqis for resettlement to 16 countries. Of those 14,798 were referred to the United States and the rest, around 6,000, to Australia and other Western European countries and Chile and Brazil. However, by the beginning of December 2007, only 4,575 Iraqi refugees had left through a formal resettlement program. Only 202 Iraqi refugees were admitted to the US in 2006, and fewer than 600 were admitted between 2003 and 2005. In 2007, the US Congress passed the "Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act" which gave priority for resettlement to Iraqis facing persecution or who were at risk for having worked with a US government agency, contractor, media organization, or NGO inside Iraq. According to this Act, those Iraqis would be eligible to

[127] UNHCR. (2007). Statistics on Displaced Iraqis around the World-Global Overview. http://www.unhcr.org/461f7cb92.pdf

apply directly to the US refugee resettlement program rather than having to apply outside of Iraq through the UN referral system. The Act also specified that 5,000 special immigrant visas would be available yearly for five years for Iraqis who had worked for the US government in Iraq (O'Donnell and Newland, 2008: 17-20).

Despite the fact that during the late 1990s larger numbers of Iraqis were admitted for asylum in Europe, apparently as a political tool to condemn the Iraqi so-described rouge state, yet the asylum route for many Iraqis in the 1990s was not necessarily shorter than today. In contrast to previous generations of Iraqi exiles, who had been able to enter and settle in Europe or the US through labour or student migration regimes, the post-1990 migrants were faced with the non-entry policies that most wealthy states had started to adopt in the 1980s and had little choice but to acquire legal status through asylum regimes. Various actors were involved then including smugglers. Chatelard lists several actors who facilitated Iraqis' journeys to Western Europe, North America or Australia including the UNHCR, churches that sponsored refugee arrivals through national schemes in Australia or Canada, embassies, migrant smugglers who operated travel services, religious leaders, Christian or Shii, who were in Amman or had made it to a safe country, or the International Committee of the Red Cross. All other means were preferred over smugglers. However, the UNHCR was neither trusted nor favoured as the UN system was, in general, perceived to be responsible for imposing the economic sanctions over their country, and because many migrants did not want to be forced to resettle in a country that they had not chosen (2009b: 8). Social capital is identified by Chatelard, as Iraqi migrants' main asset. Among the various components of this capital, kinship and religious ties appear to be those mobilized first because they have already gained a transnational dimension (2005: 363).

In general, the numbers of Iraqis reaching resettlement countries through organised resettlement programs have been small compared to the large numbers who enter European countries. Amal told me the story of her long and painful experience with failing smuggling attempts.

The story of an Iraqi family's long journey with smuggling attempts to reach Europe

Amal, a Chaldean Christian Iraqi woman married to an Assyrian Christian had to move from their district in Baghdad al-Jadida where their new neighbors refused to see them as Iraqis;

they called them *al-Nasara*.[128] In 2004, one year following the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, Amal and her family became too anxious and afraid, she had stopped sending her three children to school. Later, her husband, who had a car repair workshop, was forced to close it following annoying questions and bullying by a group of youngsters: “Why are you hanging that woman’s picture on the wall?” referring to a painting of the Virgin Mary that had been hanging on his garage wall for more than fifty years, from the time of his late father. In the beginning, Amal’s family moved to stay with her husband’s family in another inter-mixed Baghdadi neighborhood. Eventually, they realized that their neighborhood is not safe anymore and they were forced to sell their house (for much less than its real price), in addition to selling the old car and furniture to cover the costs of their journey to safety: “Sweden is our dream, we wanted to reach Sweden to reunite with my parents.” Amal, her husband and three children started their journey with the help of smugglers, they paid them all the money they had brought with them from Iraq, but only reached Athens. In Athens, they faced many troubles but thanks to her husband’s work in car maintenance they managed after one year and a half to collect enough money to pay to another smuggler who promised to get them to Sweden. After six months in Stockholm where they reunited with her family, the Swedish authorities informed them that they would have to return and claim asylum in the country that had their fingerprints. They consulted a friend who helped them to cross the border into Norway, where Amal spent “the happiest seven months in her life”, as she described it: the Norwegian authorizes arranged for an apartment in Bergen, a monthly financial allowance, school for their kids and she and her husband started Norwegian language courses. But they were told again that as per the Dublin regulation,[129] they could not stay longer in Norway and had to return to Greece where their asylum claim would be determined. Back in Athens, they received an order to leave for Iraq within 31 days, but the money they had collected from Norwegian aid was not enough to buy five airplane tickets and her husband had to work again to earn extra money.

[128] Al-Nasara is a term that is used by the followers of some political Islamic fractions to refer to Christians, it has negative connotations as expressed by an Iraqi Christian man I met for it refers to the earlier Jewish Christians, in addition to bringing back the old pre-citizen category of *dhimmi* or non-Muslim communities who were asked to pay a certain tax in return for protection and safety by the Islamic ruler (see Chatty for the description of Ottoman government of *dhimmi* peoples, 2010: 45-48). In July 2014, ISIS painted a number of houses in Mosul with the Arabic letter ن for N to impose its rule on the Christian communities who had not yet escaped; they were given three choices: conversion, payment of *al-Jizya* (a special tax) or death (Cockburn, 20 July 2014).
http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/time-runs-out-for-christian-iraq-isis-deadline-passes-with-mass-flight-9617606.html

[129] Under the Dublin Convention of 1990 the European Union agreed that a refugee’s first safe country of arrival should accept responsibility for determining her/his status, establishing the concept of the “safe third country” (Marfleet, 2006: 250).

In October 2007, they returned to Baghdad to stay with her husband's family. The conditions were worse than in 2004 when they had decided to leave Iraq. This time they had to live through the nightmare of negotiating with a gang who kidnapped their eldest son and asked for a high ransom of US$ 10,000, expecting that a family coming from Europe would be rich. The family managed to negotiate with the kidnappers and settled the release of their son for US$ 5,000. Amal's father-in-law sold a piece of land, and they paid the ransom with part of the money and, with the rest, headed again to Sweden in January 2008. On their way in Turkey, the smugglers decided to split the family because they were too many, Amal and her husband refused but, in the end, had no choice but to send their eldest son, who was 14-years-old with another Iraqi couple who promised to take care of him. They gave him a list of phone numbers in Sweden and Iraq in case they failed to reach Sweden on the same day. Amal boarded the airplane with her husband and the two younger kids. Their son's journey took him to Holland while the rest of the family reached Athens again. This time they recognized the airport and managed to leave without having their fingerprints taken. They stayed with friends in Athens, while her husband worked for few months to collect enough money to buy airplane tickets to Baghdad. Back in Iraq again, they stayed more than a year, this time with one family member missing. Amal described how they were locked in at home day and night, as she was afraid to send her two kids to school to protect them from kidnapping or death by explosives. Friends advised them to go to Jordan and apply for resettlement to the Netherlands; they expected that having a son there would make it easier for the family to gain asylum rights. In 2010 they left for Amman, where I met Amal. She talked most of the time about her eldest son with whom she communicated daily online. She still missed her parents in Sweden but could not stop thinking of her son. Amal's family registered in the UNHCR and received refugee certificates, but the UNHCR informed them that neither Netherlands nor any other European country accepted their emigration request, and that they would have to wait for the implementation of the UNHCR resettlement program in the United States.

In the case of Amal, as was true of other survivors who had an urgent need to reach a safer place, she and her family had to sell all their possessions in Iraq to pay the smugglers who were supposed to help them to overcome the obstacles and cross the borders that separated them from Sweden. Her son had reached Netherlands by chance while she was sitting in Amman counting the days and hours that separated her from her son and waiting for

resettlement to the United States where she hoped to obtain the 'green card' with its expected benefits of mobility and access to protection and other services. Amal was thankful that her family had managed to escape a worse tragedy which thousands of asylum seekers had had to face in their attempts to enter Western Europe or Australia: "At least we are all alive unlike many Iraqis who died on the mountain roads and those who died along the coast of Christmas Island few days ago."[130]

The complex journey of Sundos' family in search for *ˀamān* in a new *State*

The Baghdadi urban space was fiercely attacked by the US-led invasion and eventually the inter-mixed neighborhood communities were un-mixed through a violent sectarian division of the city by concrete walls and checkpoints. In the following excerpt Sundos presents some details of the early days of the US-led invasion and following chaotic conditions and the rise of 'sectarian thinking' which extended to neighboring countries as reflected in the visa entry restrictions that appeared more restricted toward members of certain sects:

> In April 2003, our district, al-Amiriya, turned into a war zone; the Americans targeted all places in Baghdad in turns. They invaded Baghdad from every side; from the south: Babel, al-Saydiyya, Doura, al-Yarmouk, and from the airport street. There was no fierce resistance like that in al-Basra, but there were armed clashes in the outskirts of Baghdad, especially in al-Saydiyya and Doura, and the big battle was at the airport. Our house is close to the airport street, more than 3600 Iraqi soldiers have been exterminated and the Americans threw tons of weapons from the sky; we used wet underwear as face masks to avoid inhaling chemicals. The building next to our house was shelled; we were all in the house: my two sons, two daughters, my husband and my son's wife. My eldest son is from my first marriage; my first husband is a martyr who died in a battle during the Iranian war. The Americans were throwing cluster bombs. We know that the destructive effects of these bombs extend to a large space within a whole kilometer, we also know that when a place is targeted once, there's a big chance that they will bomb it a second time, that's why we decided to run out of the house. We managed to leave on time, except for my eldest son who could not make it and is now a martyr like his father, to repeat the tragedy for his son who became an orphan, like my son.
>
> In July 2003, we left Baghdad to Amman. We stayed here for a year until we spent all the money we brought with us and returned to Baghdad. Few months later, we received a letter containing a bullet and a note written by hand saying: "this is one bullet, and the rest 29 bullets will follow." Although some of our Shii neighbors left, we thought that we are safe as I am Shii married to a Sunni in a majority of Sunnis district. But at the end we decided that it's better to leave, so we moved to stay with my family in al-Bayaa district. We lived there for nine

[130] For details of the Christmas Island incident see: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/dec/15/asylum-seeker-boats-capsizes-australia-christmas-island on 15 December.

> months but the situation got worse especially following the attacks on the Sunnis and the "killing on identity" which extended all over Baghdad. In 2006, we left to Syria, and lived there for some time, we got refugee certificates from the UN and were hoping to get resettlement in Europe when 'the UNHCR terminated my husband's residence' and asked him to return to Iraq; they helped around 2000 families to return during that time. My husband was happy to go back, but I remained in Syria as my son and daughters were in the middle of their school year, besides I had nothing left in Baghdad except the house which was partially destroyed by the bombing; it was a nice house: two-storey and three toilets, and look at us here, we have to share two rooms with one toilet. My husband, a former school teacher lost his job when they accused him of being a member in the Baath party. He found a new job when he returned to Baghdad as a taxi driver, but he was kidnapped and they only released him after paying a big ransom. His family collected the money and helped him to leave Baghdad following his release, and we are still in debt.
>
> My husband left Baghdad again, this time to Amman. He rented first an apartment in Jabal al-Hussain and called for us to join him. We left Damascus to Amman later in March 2009. I had to wait for long hours at the Jordanian border as first they did not want to let me in for being a Shii, but they allowed me when my grandson started crying. It was very humiliating and I got angry when I had to explain to the soldiers on the border that this is not an issue for us; I'm married to a Sunni, my mother is Kurd and my children are mixed and we live together without problems. It is difficult to live here in Amman where my husband works one day and spends 10 days searching for work. ***I just want a State to catch me (with my family), and we will work hard and be obedient citizens as we were in Iraq, I just ask them to give us a chance to live a decent life. Any State***, preferably Scandinavian but if not possible, we may even go to the US, my son wants to return to Iraq and refuses to go anywhere but we have to go if our application for resettlement succeeds: we will have rights to work freely, our daughters and son will have access to education and health care and maybe obtain travel documents that will allow us to travel and move around freely.

This story presents a summary of the nine long years this Iraqi middle class family spent in the transit space of neighboring countries. In October 2010, when I first met Sundos in a rented apartment in al-Hashmi al-Shamali, she told me that they were waiting for resettlement to a third country because they were convinced that there was no safety or future in Baghdad anymore: "*mākū ʾamān, mākū mustaqbal*." Sundos' story resembles in many aspects the stories of other Iraqis who fled the destruction and death in their homeland seeking safety elsewhere. The limited formal protection provided and the deteriorating situation in their country forced many Iraqis to undertake complex journeys within the region and elsewhere.

Sundos' husband who was a teacher in the former government was excluded like many of the state bureaucrats from governmental jobs and returned to Baghdad to work as a taxi driver

but was kidnapped and the family had to pay a high ransom to release him. The limited space of protection in Jordan shrank more with the rise of the Syrian refugee problem towards the end of 2011, and resettlement to a third country seemed like the only solution for lots of Iraqi families.

One of the striking elements of her story is how Sundos has dealt with her losses. The family could anticipate the dangers coming with the bombs falling on Baghdad in 2003; thanks to the long military experience of Iraqis during the past twenty three years of wars (1980–2003), they managed to evacuate the house in time, however Sundos had to experience another devastating loss in 2003. She had lost her first husband in the Iranian-Iraqi war in 1986 and then their son in 2003. Her survival in 2010 was linked to saving the remains of her social world: her family, which in her view would be achieved by finding a new *State* to work in and lead a decent life in *ʾamān*. She compares the differences of the living conditions in Iraq with the poor dwelling they could afford in their temporary asylum in Syria and Jordan. This applies to many Iraqis I met: most of them ended up living in apartments or rented rooms sometimes shared with others, whereas in Iraq, most middle class and some lower middle class families had lived in houses.

The dismantling of the Iraqi state and the destruction of state infrastructure was experienced by these state bureaucrats, academics and professionals, as loss of ground to stand on, as expressed by Sundos' need for a State to 'catch' her. The use of the term 'catch': Sundos used the word **تكمشني** in Arabic, which means to catch a ball or another thrown object—symbolizes a state of being thrown and hanging somewhere in between, as if being deprived of a State and what it represents means deprivation of gravity.

Arendt once presented a similar description of the stateless man, "a human being without ties": "when one becomes simply a 'human being' without ties to political life deprived of expression within and action upon a common world loses all significance." The loss of *State* came to be shared by more and more people who, while nominally citizens of legally recognized states, nevertheless lacked a share of a genuine common world. Expelled from a meaningful political community, individuals could plausibly assume both that the world was run by mysterious and ineffable forces and that they had no responsibility for its shape" (2004 [1951], 297-300). However, what is different here from Arendt's reading is that the 'ties' that this Iraqi woman is looking for in the new State seemed to be reduced to services

and institutions that might save her from impoverishment as well as secure education, employment and health services for her family.

What is clear at this stage is the absence of official hegemonic or common Iraqi versions of the story about the 2003 war and occupation of Iraq. The story Sundos told about the airport battle (Saddam International Airport, before the Americans changed its name to Baghdad International Airport),[131] brings to mind another perplexing incident from my fieldwork when I attended a gathering at the Jordanian Writers' Association in April 2013 on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the occupation of Baghdad. The opening event was a lecture by an Iraqi journalist discussing the role of media in showing the realities of the US-British led war on Iraq in 2003. Several arguments were presented, followed by a sharp dispute about 'what really happened in the battle of the airport?' The participants, mostly Iraqis and few Jordanians, spent the entire Q&As session arguing about the details of the battle. There were several stories with contradictory information about the exact dates of the battle incidents (2-8 April 2003), and what 'really' happened: A victory for the Iraqi army? Treason? Or defeat? Or a massacre in which the American army used a neutron bomb that melted the bodies of Iraqi soldiers and left the airport building intact? The numbers of the soldiers killed from both sides were also unclear: while western media presents a number of between 300–400 Iraqi soldiers and 2 or 3 American soldiers,[132] Iraqis argue that more than 2019 American soldiers were killed, in addition to a large number of Iraqi soldiers from the Republican Guard unit.[133]

The religious, ethnic and professional identifiers are emphasized in the stories of the current Iraqi refugee wave as reasons for being forced out of their homes and city. As explained in the previous section of this chapter, religion and ethnicity were not part of the stories I heard among older Iraqis, especially the few professionals and academics who left in the 1990s and were still waiting in Amman for a chance to return to Baghdad. They focused more on the

---

[131] The Battle for Baghdad. By Galal Nassar, 10-16 April 2003, issue no. 633, published online in al-Ahram weekly: http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/633/sc1.htm. The battle of Baghdad Airport: is it a massacre or a great achievement? By Alaa al-Lami published online on: http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=351714 (Arabic), both sites were retrieved in September 2010.

[132] See US forces tighten noose, battle for Baghdad airport, published on 4 April 2003. Available online on http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2003-04-04/news/0304040260_1_uniformed-iraqis-iraqi-soldiers-iraqi-capital. Other sources mention the killing of 2 US soldiers, without a word about the Iraqi causalities, see for example: US troops killed in battle for Baghdad airport published on 4 April 2003: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2003-04-05/us-troops-killed-in-battle-for-baghdad-airport/1830492 , both sites were retrieved in September 2010.

[133] The Battle of Baghdad Airport 2003, published on 1 September 200: http://noqta.info/page-59078-ar.html , retrieved in September 2010.

difficult conditions that had forced them to leave Baghdad brought on by the economic deterioration and state political pressures in the times of international sanctions against Iraq.

Sundos' angry response to the soldiers on the Jordanian border, when they refused to let her in for being Shii, typifies the responses of this wave of displaced Iraqis who have tended to openly express their rejection of attempts to politicize ethnicity and religion. On the other hand, the nostalgic reference to the former "conviviality" or "everyday-living-together"[134] in Baghdad has been fading especially in the stories of the new comers and those who have visited Iraq since 2006. What they shared was a growing concern of uncertainty about their present and future lives, having been expelled from a newly fragmented Baghdadi space redesigned in the US-led occupying forces vision to homogenize formerly mixed neighborhoods by segregating them with concrete blast walls. The walls represent a direct step towards the de-nationalization of the Iraqi urban communities implemented through redrawing the Baghdadi neighborhoods and state rule along religious, sectarian and ethnic lines.

Despite the increasing risk members of this professional and state employees class faced in their attempts to remain connected with Baghdad, circular migration was one solution, especially for the academics and skilled professionals, who preferred to work and live in disguise, out of their former neighborhood in Baghdad, or under the protection of their tribe in town than accepting low payment conditions in Jordan. This was possible for doctors, academics, pilots and other highly skilled workers whose services were in demand, while former state bureaucrats had to live in disguise and work in the private sector or other services like Sundos' husbands who worked as taxi driver. I heard in the field stories of Iraqi families who were too afraid to cross their country border, their option was to live in disguise hiding in towns or villages inside Iraq, especially the ones affiliated to the former regime such as army officers. Nawal (51 years old) described the life of her uncle, a former officer in Saddam's army: "My uncle who was close to the leadership office lives under disguise in one

[134] I heard various stories from Iraqis in the field about the former inter-mixed way of living in Baghdadi neighborhoods. The most common expression they used was "mākū farq" (i.e. there is no difference between Sunni/ Shii/ Christian/ Muslim/ Sabean ..etc), however, it is beyond the scope of this research to follow how much these inter-mixed spaces had been inclusive of the various ethnic and religious identities. I find "conviviality" as used by Annika Rabo in her description of every-day civility and co-existence of Aleppians a useful concept here. Rabo explains that "conviviality captures more closely this everyday living together. The idea of conviviality does not exclude the presence of conflicts, expressed both discursively and in practical action. […] People do not have to love one another but must accept that they share certain spaces" (Rabo, 2012: 145).

of the Iraqi rural towns where nobody knows him, he is keeping a low profile and dresses simple; the way people in that town dress. To save his family, he sent them to al-Musol. However, the state stopped his wife's salary and when she went to complain, they told her that she received enough money from Saddam. One of their sons committed suicide, he could not reconcile with the harsh conditions of the family new life." Moving or staying where one is— were not easy decisions to make, as observed in the former two cases. Most of the time, they involved a complex process of measuring capacities and present and future possibilities, as Jackson commented on displacement in similar conditions of uncertainty and lack of *ʾamān*:

> "Critical to these processes of capturing or commanding life is a capacity to *move* to where life appears to be most abundant and accessible, or to *orient* oneself so as to see what other possibilities may exist where one is" (2013: 3).

Concluding remarks: Well-being/ *ʾamān* in the absence of a State

Living in conditions of –lessness has not been a new experience for Iraqis as discussed in Chapter Six and the current chapter; the experiences of living through three wars in two decades and one of the most severe economic embargo and sanctions regimes (*al-ḥiṣār*) has been felt as a *present past* that seemed to regulate the Iraqi's current practices in expanding spaces of *ʾamān*. In some way the current coping strategies could be seen as this *presence of past experiences* that governed the Iraqi practice in the new conditions of –lessness; in this sense these past experiences functioned in a way similar to what Bourdieu described as habitus (1990: 55).

The structural violence that resulted from the militarization and privatization policies of the Iraqi regime, the 1991 US-led bombing of the Iraqi state infrastructure, and 13 years of *al-ḥiṣār* to be followed by the US-led invasion and occupation generated various losses, difficulties and possibilities for these groups of men and women. Their former experiences of extended circumstances of deprivation and destructions led to adopting strategies and tactics of survival embedded within former social networks and cultural practices. In prolonged conditions of war and displacement, they had to explore other possibilities; some could return to work inside Iraq and had to rely on tribal and sectarian affiliations for protection (Chapter Three), while others, like Amal's family in this chapter, had to try longer and costly journeys to reach a new safe state in Europe.

Loss, which is not a new experience in the Iraqi life, was not restricted to the material existence at home, it extended to the symbolic capital which these former highly skilled professionals and government employees used to enjoy in Iraq (before 1990s) and that had been devalued after 2003 in Jordan. In the current context, education was presented as a capital that lost its value when the nation state had been weakened and finally destroyed. The majority of Iraqis I met, both those who left in the nineties and the ones who joined them later in Jordan after 2003, were well-educated. In their stories, they described how certificates and academic titles were sources of living (before 1990s) as well as dignity at home, but university degrees and professional expertise gained from working in the previous state institutions became a source of danger in the *New Iraq* while their degrees were not valued when de-territorialized.

The above family stories of expulsion from Iraq and search for safety in a new state imply the transformation in the Iraqi social space from one governed once by the hegemonic and despotic powers of state and police to one that is controlled by various acting bodies of primordial sectarian, ethnic and tribal origin: a transformation from conditions of modernism during the former four decades dominated by the state institutions in which these Iraqis participated as part of the state bureaucracy— into the decline of the state and the rise of disorder controlled by new actors such as the rising sectarian, ethnic and religious groups.

Iraqis who had been professionals and state-employees in Baghdad had to learn how to extend their spaces of *ʾamān*/ safety by exploring the best conditions for family survival through tactics of negotiation with— and avoidance of— the limits imposed by Jordanian authorities and international organizations or through turning to other less formal networks inside Iraq or abroad. Their decisions were, most of the time, based on extending the possibilities of survival, as per one's perception of what constitutes better living opportunities.

In general, the economic conditions for the majority of these displaced Iraqis did not change much from the bad times of *al-ḥiṣār*, however, their daily routine changed when several government employees stopped going to work[135] and education also stopped for a while, and

[135] According to Sissons & Al-Saiedi (2013), the number of Iraqi civil service prior to 2003 is estimated from 900,000 to more than a million, not counting the military. De-baathification committees were created in each ministry. Employees who had been senior party members were dismissed. The Ministry of Education was the

when it restarted, nothing seemed similar to how it was before 2003. One of the factors that affected the education and employment conditions was the increased role of political parties and sectarian militias in universities and other institutions formerly run by the state. In general, the salary scales improved after 2003 (for Iraqis who were allowed to work in the institutions of the *New Iraq*), but *ʾamān* became the biggest concern as repeated by several Iraqi professionals in the field: "one does not know when she or he leaves her/his house in the morning, whether they would return home that evening."

most affected, followed by the ministry of higher education and the Ministry of Health which came next. Many ministries reportedly retired or transferred senior figures, rather than go through a formal de-Bathification (ibid, 22).

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

> Our lives were turned upside down. One morning some of us woke up deprived of their future hopes when they lost all their past: home, job, status and rich social life and relations, while others woke up with a new future. You can see them in the rich neighborhoods of West Amman, they own large houses, hotels and manage prosperous businesses between Amman and Baghdad.[136]

As in most cases of wars, there were losers and winners following the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, however, this was not the end of the story. The story of this thesis started with the experiences of former Baghdadi middle class state employees who were displaced in Jordan in 2010-2011, to conclude with the stories they shared about other experiences of gains and losses during the rise and decline of Iraqi state institutions from 1960s–2000s. Loss in the Iraqi context grew as a combination of series of losses Iraqis had to endure inside Iraq during years of state oppressive policies, wars and UN-imposed economic sanctions, the violence that erupted after 2003 and the destruction of state institutions; which prompted Iraqis to engage actively in learning how to live again by extending their space of *ʾamān*. The observations and stories collected in Jordan among Iraqis as displaced individuals, families and communities were explored within the wider historical and political contexts in which this group of Iraqis lived and survived in a war-torn society.

I used *ʾamān* as one framework to contextualize and present the current experiences of displacement and survival of this group of former state employees and professionals, within the longer historical and political contexts of the rise and decline of modern state apparatus and relations. *ʾAmān* was the shared motivation among Iraqis fleeing the conditions of structural violence in Iraq. In Jordan, Iraqis had to experience additional conditions of marginalization as foreign workers or 'refugees' or guests and strangers who were constantly reminded that they should be polite, and disciplined to respect the limits. They all sought *ʾamān* but found it in various ways and scales, most of which pointed beyond the official protection space established by the UNHCR (and the development aid to the Jordanian government). Being Iraqis involved a complex relation to the possible as agents who had to deal with increasingly restricted and restrictive structures over the past four decades. My

[136] Abu Omar, Iraqi engineer, 57 years old, I met him several times during my fieldwork (2010-2011) when I visited the family in their rented apartment.

observations among Iraqis in the field in Jordan (Chapters Three–Five) and the stories shared about other troubling events with the post-colonial regime in Iraq (Chapters Six and Seven) show that these complex experiences cannot be reduced to experiences of victimization by state oppressive policies and ongoing wars and forced displacement. Similarly, making a space of *ʾamān* cannot be captured as one category of being Iraqi, after 2003, such as refugees or asylum seekers in Europe, or volunteers, or temporary and foreign workers in Amman or circular migrants between Iraq and Jordan. Being Iraqis after 2003 (and for some after 1991) was all of these, in addition to being professionals and state employees, fighters on the war front or builders of a strong nation, or survivors of bombing and severe regime of economic sanctions, as presented in the Iraqi stories of past experiences in Baghdad during 1970s-2000s. The memories expressed in stories about recent and past incidents in Baghdad were not only nostalgic feelings but they were presented as embodied history of continuity in times of change. Making *ʾamān* is observed as a process which involved past experiences in the form of habitus, to build certain level of social continuity and create a feeling of safety and familiarity in conditions of structural change. Well-being or *ʾamān,* as observed in several cases was also relational, not restricted to the individual. It involved the well-being of family members, friends and the *ʾamān* of the larger Iraqi community through joining efforts in building the nation and sacrificing in the war-front in Iraq, and supporting fellow Iraqis in Amman, as we observed in the cases of several Iraqi professionals in Chapter Three, and also among Iraqi volunteers in Chapter Four.

The ethnographic observations among former Iraqi state bureaucrats and professionals show that in the absence of clear structure of aid, these Iraqi professionals and state employees followed various paths in making their space(s) of *ʾamān*. Iraqis, with dwindling access to resources, had to learn how to accept the refugee label with its ‘promising’ entitlements, as well as reductionist effects. While, the highly skilled professionals who had access to some sources, could explore other possibilities to extend their space(s) of *ʾamān* such as living between Jordan and Iraq, or paying smugglers to help them move out of the region to search for safety in Europe. To understand the variety of Iraqi experiences presented in the individual stories, they were explored within the context of the changing role of Iraqi state in the two “transformative moments” (Masaad, 2001) during 1990s and 2003 which led to the displacement of high numbers of former Iraqi state employees. One important feature of social and cultural life in Iraq and the region was an accommodation of diverse ethno-religious and linguistic communities particularly characteristic of the major cities within and

beyond the Ottoman empire (Chatty, 2010; Marfleet and Haneih, 2014). As explored in Chapter Seven, one of the collective losses shared by these former class of state employees was the loss of the communal life-style in inter-mixed urban Baghdadi neighborhoods, which gradually demised after 2003, especially after the forced displacement of this group of state employees and professionals from Baghdad, who constitute "an entire layer of Iraqi society schooled in secular nationalist traditions" (Marfleet, 2007: 409).

Abu Omar's description of his losses in the beginning of this last chapter is indicative of the experiences of displaced Iraqis and their struggle to cope with changes when their lives turned up-side down. These former Iraqi state employees and highly skilled professionals in Amman where I met them in 2010-2011, seven years following the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq were dealing with a combination of series of losses in their home country, in addition to the lack of an organized protection program in Jordan, the host country. Within such constrained and constraining structure by prolonged conditions of war and displacement, Iraqis, even in the same family, turned to explore various coping strategies in a complex relation to the possible. After 2003, Iraqis were not only struggling to cope with the loss of their jobs, property, loved ones and other aspects of their former cultural, social and professional Baghdadi life, many of them were searching for ways to avoid further losses and realize both current and future goals; a process which was described in this thesis as the search for *ʾamān*.

This research explores the experiences of middle class state employees and highly skilled professionals with losing many aspects of their former lives when they lost access to regular salaried jobs and free education and other public services. Similar losses had been observed in other cases of regime change and collapse such as the case of the eastern bloc countries in 1989-1990, which affected the ability of survival among families and communities as described by Don Kalb:

> "People complain that what they got from socialism – the chance to make and sustain a family, build a career around honest work, and maintain a house of one's own – can't so easily be gained today. The stories of decline are also about a keenly felt erosion of solidarity and communal life" (Kalb, 2011:25).

Iraqi state employees expressed similar feelings of being "left behind, left on their own" (2011: 30), in postinvasion Iraq as Kalb described in the case of postsocialist state employees. One important difference is that in the latter stories of state decline, people could

stay in their homes and country, but several Iraqi former government employees and professionals were forced to leave their homes with the destruction of the former state bureaucratic institutions in 1990s and 2000s and the decline of public services, when they had to deal with different levels of state violence in addition to the effects of the UN-imposed economic sanctions. Until 2003, many Iraqi state bureaucrats still tended to look at the state as the main source of protection as well as misfortune and oppression, however, the US-led attack on the oppressive regime and the state apparatus did not stop the violence, it redistributed its sources among various militias and sectarian groups. The destruction of former state apparatus left many Iraqis unprotected; they did not only lose control of their individual lives when they lost their working positions and access to state services, but they also lost the main source of protection of a former communal life. They had to learn how to avoid the violence coming from these different new ruling groups. The easiest way was to exit Iraq with either temporary or permanent intentions.

The current study positioned the displacement and expulsion of Iraqi government employees within broader literature about social change during war-time and regime change. The transformations and changes in the institutional structures had affected the lives of once prosperous Baghdadi professionals and middle class government employees, who had to deal with different scales of change; from the former state apparatus to the spread of chaos and violence in the postinvasion period. The absence of unified governing regulations in Iraq and Jordan in 2010-2011 and their diverse access to resources led to different patterns of coping and livelihoods. The common denominator in most of the stories and experiences observed was the loss of *ʾamān,* as a result of the gradual decline of their former middle-class status linked to their relation to the Iraqi state as professionals and government employees.

ʾAmān or its lack (*mākū ʾamān*) became the most common phrase to describe life in Iraq and the host state after 2003. For many former highly-skilled professionals and state employees *ʾamān,* after 2003, meant not being threatened, kidnapped or killed, therefore, moving out of Iraq seemed as the main coping strategy to extend the space of *ʾamān*. Iraqis described Jordan, and its capital Amman, as a safer place to be in, than in postinvasion Baghdad. Amman provided these former Iraqi state employees with access to safety, health and education, and other basic services including electricity, and more importantly freedom to move around and dress the way they pleased. Making a space of *ʾamān* was linked to

restoring some stability and life routine that Iraqis used to enjoy in their former Baghdadi lives. However, as we saw, this was not the case for all Iraqis.

In their search for *ʾamān,* these Iraqis were not leading a pleasant or easy life*,* they had to deal with multiple forms of restrictions on entry, residence and access to labor and other essential services to reproduce their lives in a meaningful form according to their perceptions of what is a life worth living. The thesis presented several tactics and strategies adopted by these displaced groups of Iraqi professionals and state bureaucrats. One of the most important aspects was the ability to reconnect with a profession and employment activity that allowed more stable existence in the past, even if this meant exposing their lives to risks by returning to work in Iraq.

Access to work for this group of displaced professionals seemed to play an important role in creating more familiar spaces of *ʾamān* by sustaining social status and relationships within the limited formal protection space (as explored in Chapter Five). Work here acted as a collective meaning of making *ʾamān*, and an opportunity to improve the well-being of the Iraqi collective through the anticipated return of qualified Iraqis and their persistence and hard-working nature. It was not only a ticket for individual return of highly qualified professionals, but it could be seen as a way to revive a Baghdadi society. This optimism towards the future of Iraq, as observed among few Iraqi professionals in Chapter Three was not common in my meetings with most Iraqis who had little connection with home. *ʾAmān* for highly skilled professionals who were not able to return to work in Iraq, also meant the ability of living in dignity and not "starting from zero", as many medical doctors used to repeat.

In the shrinking spaces of privatized systems in both Jordan and Iraq, the conditions of work were increasingly exploitative with minimal rights or benefits to workers. This forced some professionals to examine the alternative possibility of 'circular migration' between Amman and Baghdad or their original tribal town in Iraq where they could locate a relatively safe and well-paid job in their profession, despite the high risks involved. This growing circularity of migration among Iraqis and later Syrians (Chatty, 2017a) in the Middle East challenges the prevailing assumptions and definitions of refugees and asylum-seekers. Iraqis, as we saw in Chapter Three, explored various other possibilities– than becoming refugees– including: working as skilled doctors and academics with reduced authority and payment in Jordan and

living as ‘circular migrant’ workers between Baghdad and Amman. Working in Iraq, for some of those highly-skilled professionals meant more secure economic returns and social relations, despite the existing risks that initially drew them out of the country.

Making *ʾamān* in conditions -of reduction and -a complex relation to the possible

The making of *ʾamān* was related to adjusting to the particular conditions of reduction as perceived by the various groups of Iraqis who were affected by the changes -characterized by the dismemberment of Iraqi state institutions and formal communal life style. The majority of Iraqis I met had been state-employees in Baghdad and were forced to leave Iraq under direct threat of death and had lost their jobs and means of living. Only few Iraqis, among the highly skilled professionals were able to find temporary jobs in Jordan. As explored in Chapters 3–5, most had to choose among limited choices in restricted structures to extend their and their families spaces of *ʾamān*.

The search for work and employment opportunities, which could provide a more regular source of income was a widely shared experience among former Iraqi state-employees, including those who gradually turned to the UNHCR for support, after failing to secure any kind of work. Relying on their past experiences of losses in times of wars and economic sanctions, on the one hand, and on their abilities to secure resources from social and financial remittances, on the other hand, Iraqis had to learn how to live and survive in increasingly restricted structures by following various routes.

The stories of past experiences from 1960s–2000s explored in Chapters Six and Seven provided the general political and historical background to contextualize the experiences observed among Iraqis in Jordan during 2010–2011. By following the stories Iraqis shared in their *ʾamān* space, we learnt how their lives have been shaped by conditions of structural change in a once wealthy oil developmental state severely affected by three wars within two decades and thirteen years of comprehensive economic sanction. One relevant example is the various strategies Iraqi women and men developed during the times of war and sanctions, to extend the family access to *ʾamān*. The stories of 1980s in Chapter Six explored the gendering of the Iraqi public space and how women played a larger role in preserving both the daily family and institutional survival needs. During the times of war and sanctions at home, Iraqi women and men developed various strategies of survival: women played a larger

role in the so-called domestic front, when men were absent defending the 'national pride' on the war front. Similar trends were observed in the Iraqi survival experiences in Jordan (Chapters Four and Five). The women in impoverished Iraqi families were more proactive than men in seeking aid and voluntary jobs to secure the basic family needs in Amman, this can be partly attributed to the pattern observed in other times of crisis during wars and sanctions, but we need to take into consideration the objective chances in the new situation in Jordan, where men's chances of finding voluntary or regular work were less possible.

Contrary to the stories of 1970s and 1980s and part of 1990s which expressed collective representation of Iraqi losses and coping strategies, the stories of their survival after the US-led occupation of Iraq in 2003-2011focused more on personal losses. In 2010, Iraqis did not have a collective force to teach them how to live and die in fighting another war as part of preserving national pride or surviving economic sanctions. The experiences and stories of Iraqi women and men in this ethnography presented examples of how the burden of negotiating survival possibilities fell mainly on Iraqi individuals and families who actively had to learn how to live again by making their own spaces of *ʾamān*. *ʾAmān* in its various meanings explored in this thesis, was one common theme shared by most Iraqis I met: while they tended to describe collective meanings of *ʾamān* (under a centralized state, especially in the good old times), the absence of collective solutions to Iraqis in Jordan (and elsewhere) forced them to investigate different options to measure the best possibility to regain part of the *ʾamān* they lost.

Well-being or *ʾamān*, as termed by displaced Iraqis in Jordan, is related to being able to lead a life according to one's expectations as a highly skilled professional. The stories Iraqis shared in 2010–2011 in their spaces of *ʾamān* in Amman reflected also a big change in their perceptions of well-being. During the sixties and seventies, well-being was linked to being hardworking people and participating in building an Iraqi modern nation-state through investment in education and stable employment conditions in the public sector. However, after 2003, Iraqis' notion of the state seemed unsettled when several Iraqis expressed their dream to become members of a State, any state that can provide them stability and good living opportunities, as explained in the cases of Amal and Sundos' families in Chapter Seven. The former notion of the state—that once allowed a more collective presence of Iraqis as a national body not as individuals or factions divided in tribal, ethnic and sectarian groups—was severely attacked by the US-imposed constitution for governing *the New Iraq*.

Yet, the story of this collective loss was rarely shared among displaced Iraqis who were made visible under the collective identity of refugee only in 2007, and only in numbers to attract money for aid.

We observed how these Iraqis who used to form part of the majority hegemonic elite as highly skilled state employees inside Iraq had to experience reduction in their well-being in Iraq and Jordan, when they were marginalized during the last four decades by various structures of change, including the militarization and liberalization of the state economy and the privatization policies during the late 1980s, and the extreme decline in state infrastructure and rising conditions of impoverishment during the UN-imposed sanctions in the 1990s, until the large scale destruction of former state-institutions and communal urban life style which led to their expulsion from Iraq. As presented in Chapters 3–5, the highly skilled Iraqi professionals and other state-employees who used to occupy elite positions in the Iraqi labor market during the last three decades (1960s–1980s) had to explore among a few possibilities to extend the limits of their being-in-the-world according to their perceptions of well-being or *ʾamān* from where they came as professionals and state-employees. To explain the various scales of agency explored in the thesis, I used Lubkemann's description of structural violence in prolonged conditions of war: "***a function of how far one has come from where one once was***, rather than a common destination that is reached" (2008, 346).

Feeling safe and being in *ʾamān*, as explored in the chapters of this thesis had different meanings for Iraqis, depending on the period in question. We saw that the past experiences of good life on the one hand, and experiences of losses in times of wars and economic sanctions, on the other hand, were present in the Iraqis' attempts to search for *ʾamān*. Coping with the changing conditions after 2003 has not been a new experience totally for Iraqis. In some ways, the present coping tactics with reduction in possibilities to work and leading a middle class life in Amman could be seen as a presence-of-past experiences with reduction that governed Iraqi lives during times of war and the severe UN-economic sanctions. In this sense, the making of *ʾamān* is a process embedded in history, the past experiences functioned in a similar way to what Bourdieu described as habitus. Iraqis were active in shaping their present space of *ʾamān*, not only as a response to the changes after 2003, but also as part of habitus that seemed to play an important role in their continuity to exist according to their perception of what it means to be Iraqi.

While, the highly skilled professionals, who had access to more sources could explore more possibilities to extend their space(s) of *ʾamān,* such as working in reduced conditions in Jordan as the doctor-volunteer or as academics on temporary contracts, other highly skilled professionals turned to circular migration and living between Jordan and Iraq (Chapter Three), while others, like Amal in Chapter Seven wanted to move further away where they expected to find more favorable conditions of labor under the protection of a strong 'State', and some of them invested lots of wasted money, tears and efforts in paying smugglers to help them search for safety in Europe. However, impoverished Iraqis, with dwindling access to resources, had no choice but to turn to the UNHCR for protection as we followed in Chapter Four, they had to learn how to accept the refugee label with its limited advantages of voluntary work and 'salary' as well as reductionist effects.

In the encounters I observed among less-affluent and impoverished former state employees and professionals, they had to cope with the reductionist conditions of becoming a refugee, which seemed like the only solution to gain some access to present (limited aid) or future *ʾamān* (resettlement in a third country). Many times, though not always, it was part of a larger strategy of survival to create some certainty, through quantifying one's needs according to the conditions of aid to be eligible for gaining access to cash assistance and paying their monthly house rent or daily travel allowance, which they appropriated as *rātib* (salary), or 'work' as trainer volunteers or trainees. In Chapter Four, we saw how Iraqis struggled to adjust their appearance in the formal protection space to how they were expected to look like and behave. Obtaining a job, even as volunteer, seemed like the best choice to extend their access to 'salary' and also dignity and *ʾamān*, as expressed by these former government employees. This involved a process of negotiations to survive the ambiguous terms of losses and gains in Jordan, as explained in Chapter Five. We observed how Iraqis had to re-discipline their needs within restricted limits in the already limited formal space of protection in neighboring countries.

For most Iraqi professionals, practicing their careers and securing higher education for their sons and daughters were not only considered essential needs, but were part of the continuity of their social status and cultural being as members of middle-class Baghdadi communities. The limited official protection space and absence of welfare programs within the neo-liberal agenda 'to help individual "refugees" to help themselves' forced many Iraqis to re-define their well-being within the possible limits. Most of them had to work in temporary jobs or

illegally and were paid less than Jordanians doing similar or lower-level jobs. Making their spaces of *ʾamān* was not less complex for academics, medical doctors and other qualified professionals. The 'lucky' ones who could find temporary jobs used to complain that they were facing discrimination and had to work below their qualifications. Categorized as foreign workers, after 2003, Iraqi academics and doctors employed by Jordanian private universities and hospitals seemed regular on paper but when it comes to working conditions, being a temporary employee on annual contract increased their feelings of insecurity and limited their responsibilities and rights as official workers.

The processes described cannot be reduced to structural change with absent agents, Iraqis as observed were not helpless or power-less, and they exercised various levels of agency to cope with structural violence and change. Some of them expressed larger scales of change "from where [they] once [were]", as in the cases of the doctor, academic and nuclear engineer presented in Chapter Three (Possibility 3), who all used to work as qualified professionals in their home country, but in Jordan they had to accept any available work as secondary and de-valued labor. Other highly-skilled professionals who had some access to material resources could practice their professions at various levels as temporary workers and volunteers and preserve their former social status and professional life style, while Iraqis who had access to financial capital and sectarian, ethnic or tribal support in Iraq took the risk to return and work under the protection of their sectarian or tribal ruling groups of the *New Iraq*.

The decision to stay in Amman or move back to (and from) Iraq depended on their access to capital: both financial, social and symbolic. As presented in chapters 3–5, Iraqis realized that they could extend their space(s) of *ʾamān* in Jordan, through buying a residence permit that was officially given to foreign investors (or by seeking the benefit of a royal decree). This meant that the ability to secure *ʾamān* in Jordan was not possible for all Iraqis at the same scale; some Iraqis could enjoy better living conditions and mobility rights than others who had to endure gradual decline in their *ʾamān* (well-being) possibilities, and eventually, had to negotiate the terms of temporary survival, and learn the rules for becoming a refugee, in order to be included in the restrictive protection space that is conditioned by the visibility of need and –lessness (Chapter Four).

According to my observations in the field, one important factor in extending the space of *ʾamān* was Iraqis' access to financial support and remittances sent from Iraq or relatives

based elsewhere in Europe or the Gulf, in addition to the money initially brought from Iraq either from savings or selling properties. Being able to pay the deposit of $ 50,000 (and freeze $ 25,000 in a Jordanian bank) allowed easier circular mobility for Iraqi highly skilled professionals to work and live between Amman and Iraq. Therefore, perceptions of well-being among these more affluent highly qualified professionals varied according to their age and access to social connections.

Having the right social connections in Amman and Baghdad was another factor in allowing circular mobility. Iraqi professionals and state-employees know from their previous experiences with wars and living with an oppressive regime that establishing strong social networks with influential figures in the government is important to protect one's life, family and property. For the highly skilled professionals who could afford to return and work inside Iraq, this option was perceived as the best possibility for extending the space of *ʾamān* and well-being not only for their families (who were living in Jordan to enjoy better services), but also as part of renewing their national aspirations of rebuilding a strong Iraq, as explored with detailed ethnographic cases in Chapter Three. This return was not the safest choice, but these professionals learnt that similarly to the pre-2003 times, *ʾamān* for postinvasion displaced Iraqis was realized in relational terms; this time it was more related to affiliation to one's tribe and particular sectarian group or militia. The Iraqi professionals who took the risk to return had to learn how to live and work without the protection of the state, eventually, they had to negotiate with the rising ruling militias and sectarian groups to gain their protection and purchase rights to private protection services ranging from electricity to property protection. As we explored in Chapter Three in the case of the doctor who returned to work under the protection of his tribal group, and other doctors and academics who had to rely on their ethnic and sectarian affiliations to secure job positions and safety, this older generation of Iraqis often expressed their refusal of sectarian and factional thinking but with the privatization of security and most services in postinvasion Iraq, Iraqis had to arrange for their own safety and protection through relational networks and/or purchasing security services. I heard several stories about the eve of the US-led invasion, when some Iraqis had access to a personal gun, but later they had to buy additional weapons to protect themselves and their belongings, as a former Iraqi employee in the Ministry of Trade explained: "I bought a machine gun in 2005, as my neighbors did but it wasn't enough because the militia men started using mortar shells, and 4x4 jeeps in kidnapping school students, so I decided to leave to Jordan to protect my children."

In the case of other highly skilled professionals who could not establish similar networks of protection inside Iraq, making their space of *ʾamān* was perceived as creating a possibility of practicing their profession in Amman as volunteers or hired employees on temporary or contract basis. They saw this choice as acceptable as they could treat Iraqi patients and teach Iraqi students. This compensated for the relatively low returns of employment in Jordan, and was considered, by highly skilled professionals from the older generation, better than the possibility of third country resettlement, where they expected to end up sitting alone at home. The relational aspect of survival was not based on blood ties only, Iraqis were active agents in the process of extending the space of *ʾamān* for themselves, their families and households and their fellow Iraqis. This was observed in both Iraq as in the examples mentioned above and in Jordan, where we saw aspects of these relational networks in cases of households composed of young male or female Iraqis sharing apartments in Amman to survive on the minimal aid provided by refugee protection networks.

As explored in Chapters 3–5, there was little space for establishing relational networks among Iraqis in the official protection space in Jordan. The music incident described in the closing section of Chapter Five was one rare opportunity in the official protection space in Jordan to reflect collectively on the meanings of loss and *ʾamān* in the Iraqi social life throughout a longer history of structural change. The Iraqi women's request from the Italian musician to play an Iraqi song; what they called a "real" song represented a chance to create a space of *ʾamān* for sharing their story(s) in the official space of protection managed by aid organizations in Jordan and funded by the UNHCR. This was a chance to go back to Iraq and express their happy and sad experiences through singing and dancing. This was the only chance when I observed Iraqis sharing their stories collectively in the public space in Jordan, while I had the chance to listen to several stories Iraqis shared in the spaces of *ʾamān* about the changes they had to endure during the last four decades in both Iraq and Jordan and how they actively coped with and responded to those changes as explored in Chapters Six and Seven.

The coping strategies in some cases, such as in the cases of Amal's family in Chapter Seven and Abu-Hussein's family in Chapter Six which involved the split of the family and the separation of parents and sons/daughters, might be perceived as failing coping strategies (or attempts), which led to further reduction according to the Iraqi common perception of *ʾamān*

in relational terms, however, understanding these cases within the larger context of structural change in which Iraqis had to learn how to live with losses and gains, such coping strategies can be perceived as attempts to accumulate some gains, and/or avoid further losses in the future, even though this separation might seem, to an outsider, as the worst choice these Iraqis could make to deal with their present losses.

As I argued in Chapter Three, the cases of ʿcircular migrationʾ embodied the most proactive form of agency. The highly-skilled Iraqi professionals who decided to work and live between Amman and Iraq did not only consider the probable option that is constituted in the prolonged relationship with a world structured according to the categoris of the possible and the impossible; "of what is appropriated in advance and what one can reasonably expect for oneself" (Bourdieu, 1990). These professionals refused the limited possibilities imposed by a world structured according to the "national order of things" (Said, 1986; Malkki, 1994, 1995a), instead they negotiated new possibilities to preserve their *ʾamān* (and well-being) in the world as hard-working professionals, regardless of imposed borders and restrictions on mobility. As agents in these conditions of structural change, Iraqis had to "adjust to the objective chances" of satisfying their desire to work in reductionist conditions, and "so to become accomplices of the processes that tend to make the probable a reality" (Bourdieu, 1990: 65), similarly to what they did in 1990s during the sanctions period. The highly-skilled professionals were not alone in meeting such challenges, the process of becoming a refugee was not less complex, at various scales.

Observing the various coping strategies among this group of Iraqi professionals and listening to the stories they share after 2003 reveal that *ʾamān* was not only dependent on access to resources from Iraq and the limited official protection provided in Jordan (which was lacking for many Iraqis I met), it was also embedded in the Iraqi habitus, which I called in this thesis *ʾamān*. This *ʾamān habitus* is reflected in the capacity of Iraqis to engender thoughts and actions to adjust to the new conditions of reduction in postinvasion Iraq and host states. It is an embodied experience within the larger Iraqi historical and social experiences with previous structures of social change, violence and displacement.

Moving between different labels and places: Re-thinking the 'refugee discourse' as a framework of researching forced displacement

Iraqis had a long history with mobility and forced displacement. As explored in Chapter Seven, forced displacement and/or being-on-the-move was not a new strategy Iraqis used to cope with structural change. ***Moving*** out of Iraq was in itself one of the coping strategies among this group of former Iraqi state employees. There was no one common pattern in the Iraqi crossing of borders after 2003, and in many cases it was not an immediate choice. As explored with Iraqis' experiences in the previous chapters, many families, even those who had capital and connections abroad, tried several strategies before making the 'final' decision to cross the borders of their home country. They negotiated with neighbors on survival tactics, tried to keep their jobs and their kids at school. Some tried to temporarily move to various towns and cities inside Iraq. Even after moving out of their country, some decided to keep their property by asking relatives or friends and neighbors to stay in the house, what was called as *ḥirāsa* حراسة (guarding) in the Iraqi lexicon of war. Others with fewer resources, had no alternative but to sell their belongings to secure the money they needed to cover transportation expenses, visas, smuggling services, renewal of passports and certification of school and university degrees that could not happen quickly without bribery in the growing culture of nepotism in the *New Iraq*.

As explored in Chapter Seven, asylum and displacement were not new occurrences in the Iraqi context (Chatelard, 2005, 2008). In 2003, Iraqis living outside their country as refugees or asylum seekers or diaspora were estimated to reach 3- 4 million. Chatelared reported that more than one million Iraqis left Iraq over the 13 years of the sanctions especially from the middle class as a result of impoverishment due to hyperinflation, loss of employment or wages, limitations of public liberties, and long years of military conscription. Over 300,000 Iraqis have requested asylum in a Western country since 1991. In most cases, they have reached their countries of final destination through irregular channels after transiting Turkey, Syria or Jordan (2005: 344). In 2000, Iraqis reached the highest rate of asylum seekers worldwide: 41,000 applications according to the UNHCR. In 2002, Iraqis constituted the third largest refugee caseload in the world, and human rights organisations were arguing that half of the Iraqis residing abroad had a well-founded fear of persecution were they to return under the regime of Saddam Husayn (Chatelard, 2008). In the experiences observed and stories told by Iraqis in the field, I realized that despite a long history of forced migration, the

terms “refugee” and “asylum seeker” were less commonly used by Iraqis to describe their displacement.

As explored in Chapters Two and Five, Iraqis used other terms to describe their forced displacement, such as exile (*manfy* or *mughtarib*) and emigrant (*muhājir*), migrant worker or guest. These labels signify more collective experiences than the notion of the individual refugee. Nadje al-Ali defined the Iraqi diaspora as “a conflict-generated diaspora.” She argues that forced migration cannot simply be contrasted with voluntary or economic migration. Rather, there exists a continuum between flight in a situation of conflict and acute danger and migration in a pre-conflict yet tension-ridden period. In her view, Iraq is a case in point, presenting a continuum of economically driven migrants, especially under economic sanctions (1991-2003), who were part of a political crisis together with political refugees fleeing the persecution, torture and repression of the dictatorship of Saddam Husayn (1979-2003). According to al-Ali, the current displacement needs to be seen in the context of a longer history of various forms of migration–for education, labor and from persecution–well before the rise of the Baath (2007b).

In 1990s, migration, particularly of highly-skilled professionals, played an important role in terms of securing more rewarding employment opportunities in the hospitals and universities of neighboring countries (or elsewhere in Europe (Dewachi, 2017) for Iraqis who were seeking asylum). Moving out of Iraq in 1990s was related, as we read in Chapter Seven, to Iraqis’ search of rewarding jobs and better medical treatment and education services for their kids (the two sectors that were highly affected by the UN economic sanctions). After 2003, the term refugee was more commonly used to describe Iraqi presence in neighboring countries, especially in humanitarian aid organizations reports and few academic studies. Iraqis in Jordan were labeled as migrant workers, foreign workers, guests, asylum seekers or refugees waiting for resettlement in a third country. Rather than developing collective identities around one of these labels, Iraqis moved between unsettled categories and localities. In conditions of ambiguity and uncertainty about the limits of protection in Jordan, it was not always possible to draw a clear cutline between who is included in the space of protection and who is excluded from it. Crossing their country’s borders in search for safety was a complex process in which Iraqis had to explore various possibilities, of which becoming a refugee was one option.

Anthropological research on forced displacement and refugees have addressed the problematic encounter between refugees and protection systems which tend to construct the refugee as an object and category of intervention by an international protection and relief regime (Peteet, 2005a). In a review of refugee studies by Malkki (1995b), she shows how the discourse– presented by anthropologists and other reports produced by international organizations and human rights agencies– does not only construct refugees as "people who can find themselves quite quickly rising to a floating world either beyond or above politics, and beyond or above history, but refugees also tend to be constructed in these studies as simply being victims" (ibid., 518). This reductionist effect of the humanitarian aid and discourse, which is linked to victimization is explored in ethnographic studies of refugees in various localities (Fassin, 2011; Feldman, 2009; Peteet, 2005a). The problem stems from the disempowering and reductionist aspects of the humanitarian system that preconditions protection on 'visible' vulnerability and victimization; which certainly fits with what I discussed in Chapter Four as the conditions of –lessness.

It is true that refugees are usually victims of atrocities in times of war. But by emphasizing the victimization of refugees at the expense of revealing the forces in the field that reproduce this victimization; and by using the ready-made terminology and measures of international agencies and ignoring the larger political and historical contexts, a researcher can only produce a reductionist reading of the field. The process is similar to what Nietzsche described in his criticism of the simplification of reality through "reducing something unknown to something known [which] calms the mind and also gives a sense of power" (Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron, 1991 [1968]: 25). As argued in this thesis, exploring the encounters among Iraqis and the limited systems of aid reveals the complexity of establishing a protection space through measuring loss by the reduced image of refugee as a 'bare life'.

Through reference to broader debates about protection, refugees and agency in relation to the Iraqi displacement, I attempt to explore another framework for explaining life and survival in conditions of reduction during times of war, regime change, destruction of former living conditions and forced displacement. In these debates, researchers and academics have dealt with the challenges involved in the humanitarian response to the Iraqi refugee problem. Perveen Ali uses methods of critical legal geography to map and analyze how states, institutional and individual practices reproduced, intersected with, or contested sovereignty and exceptionalism in what she terms the four spaces of the Iraqi refugee crisis: the Iraqi

state, host states in the region, camps in the borderlands, and resettlement. Using Agamben's theory of sovereignty, she relies on experiences and observations during her work in the UNHCR Iraqi resettlement program to examine how sovereignty was expressed, naturalized, or contested in the Iraqi refugee crisis. Ali argues that Iraqi refugees, their legal status and the spaces they occupied came to embody the contests for identity, power, and authority lodged between states, local actors, and the UNHCR (2012: 14-15).

Another researcher who explored international protection systems provided for Iraqis in the region is Sophia Hoffman in her study among Iraqi refugees in Syria. According to Hoffman's description, Iraqis' collective presence was more visible in Damascus (than Amman) through Iraqi cultural societies and mutual-aid organizations (Hoffman, 2016:8). Hoffman argued that international aid organizations introduced a different concept of "state-citizen relations" and a different concept of "statehood" to Syria. According to Hoffman, the roots of this development lie in the importance that liberal states give to stringently distinguishing between citizens and foreigners, as she discussed: "To maintain their boundaries and sovereignty, liberal states require a constant differentiation between those who belong to the nation and those who do not. Refugee-aid organizations follow this concept of statehood. But in Syria, and the politics of the Bashar al-Asad government, marking foreigners as different was by far not as important." This, according to Hoffman, explains why Iraqi migrants encountered much greater "freedoms" in Syria than those usually allocated to migrants in Western states" (2016: 9-12).

Another relevant argument to Hoffman's discussion above was presented by Dawn Chatty in which she explored the "disconnect between international rights-based protection approaches to refugees and what she called the duty-based asylum (*karam*) commonly accepted in Middle Eastern societies" (2017b, 177). According to Chatty, Iraqi and Syrian exiles and refugees have regularly confounded the international system of humanitarianism, for example, Iraqis did not flee their country when expected to, nor did they return in the numbers expected by the UNHCR after 2011. Chatty explains that the Iraqi rejection of camps caught the international community off guard and has since resulted in a rethink at UNHCR and other refugee agencies. Only a few years ago, refugees who evaded camps were 'criminalized' for such acts. However in 2009, largely as a result of the Iraqi crisis, UNHCR issued new guidelines to address the bureaucratic requirements for effectively dealing with the urban, self-settled refugee (ibid., 195). This applied to the specific Iraqi refugee

population in Syria and Jordan, and as Chatty explained it became a 'gold standard' for UNHCR operations. But as she further adds these "innovative measures to assist the self-settled are being tested piecemeal by various agencies" and for example in the complex Syrian humanitarian crisis these lessons learnt from the Iraqi crisis have proven extraordinarily difficult to operationalize (Chatty, 2017b: 180).

Chatty's analysis of the history of displacement in the region provides interesting insights of alternative ways to deal with complex forced migration. She refers particularly to the Middle Eastern constructions of duty-based obligations to the guest, stranger, and person-in-need or what she describes as generosity, solidarity and hospitality using the Arabic term "*karam*." And towards the end of her article, she promotes what she calls a "holistic approach" which taps into the social and ethical norms of hospitality in local contexts together with the delivery of rights-based asylum as provided by international humanitarian organizations (which is currently limited in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon that are not signatory to the 1951 convention on the status of refugees). Though she is more concerned in exploring the two approaches, Chatty also referred to the limited space created by the duty response which forced refugees in huge numbers to take dangerous journeys in the Mediterranean, as she describes: "it is no wonder that the 'house' has become full and some of those seeking asylum have had to look further afield to the northern shores of the Mediterranean. This one might say is what happens when a duty-based approach faces the pressure of extreme numbers; some will need to move on" (ibid.,195). Chatty presents more detailed ethnographic cases in her book *Syria: The Making and Unmaking of a Refugee State*, of the decisive role of historical ties and other links with local communities in the choices of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries to live outside the UNHCR camps, where they could enjoy more freedom of mobility, especially to travel between Syria and their camps; what Chatty calls "circular migration" (2017: 226-246).

Geraldine Chatelard, another anthropologist who did several research studies among Iraqis in Jordan indicated that a humanitarian agenda serves Jordan's governmental interests better than those of Iraqis who have had no choice but to look for safety and a future outside of their country (2008). Chatelard emphasizes the continuum of Iraqi migration. She explains that Iraqis started to talk about themselves as refugees or asylum-seekers in the post-1990s with the growth of the non-entry policies that most wealthy states started to adopt. The categories of refugees and asylum seekers were used to acquire legal status through asylum regimes, but

they did not use these terms to qualify Iraqi migrants collectively (2009b: 9). Chatelard looked critically at the humanitarian response to the recent Iraqi flow and argued against isolating the current wave of Iraqi flow after 2003 from what she calls a continuum of forced or induced migration from Iraq going back decades with a marked trend towards acceleration as of 1991, and again as of 2005. Recent refugee flows from Iraq, according to her, have to be considered in relation with vast pre-existing Iraqi diasporas (2008, 2009b). Furthermore, Chatelard criticized the way NGOs and international organizations have tended to adopt a needs-based approach or a rights-based approach without considering individual migrants as resourceful individuals. These agencies, according to Chatelard have been designated to the Iraqi refugee crisis less because of the number and conditions of forced-migrants than because of political agendas and imperatives of institutional survival. One of the aims of this political agenda is conceptualized as burden-sharing, which finds its origin in the international refugee regime and has been advocated by the humanitarian community to provide incentives to Iraq's neighbors to act in the interest of enhanced protection for Iraqi refugees as a means to contain forced migrants in their regions of origin.

I agree with both Chatelard's and Chatty's arguments against isolating this wave of Iraqi displacement from former experiences of Iraqi displacement and forced migration, and the importance of exploring historical experiences of displacement which reflect alternative notions of hospitality and solidarity in the region (Chatty, 2017: 189). However, as explored ethnographically in Chapters Four and Five in this thesis, I do not see the current Iraqi expulsion as just another wave in a continuum of Iraqi migration resulting from "a new conflict and a regime change" as expressed by Chatelard (2008).

I suggest that the context of the current expulsion needs to be explored within the broader historical and political context that affected this group of middle class Baghdadi state employees; namely, the dismantling of the post-colonial Iraqi nation-state and the great changes it brought into the Iraqi political, economic and social life. This did not only produce another episode of displacement: the Iraqi displacement following the 2003 events did not only displace Iraqis as individuals, but it unsettled the notion of the nation-state that once bound them as a collective national body to be replaced by tribal communities from different ethnicities, religions or sects.

My journey with Iraqis revealed that their problem with the minimal aid does not result from excluding them from the more visible humanitarian protection system by depriving them of the label of refugee and the collective space of the refugee camp.[137] I argued in Chapter Five that the problem lies in the notion of refugee, which was once assigned by international law and the reductionist aspect of the humanitarian aid discourse in the current neoliberal context with its focus on a development-oriented approach. The problem also stems from the disempowering and degrading aspects of the humanitarian system that preconditions protection on vulnerability and victimization; what I term as the conditions of –lessness (Chapter Four), while ignoring the historical and political context of the specific displacement and displaced group.

The aid provided to Iraqis in Jordan was limited and based on a developmental rather than humanitarian approach. The thesis explored several aspects of the exclusionary effects of the formal protection and aid systems and how Iraqis responded to the ambiguity and uncertainty by which their protracted displacement was managed, through negotiating the limits allowed to live and work in Jordan in relational terms. Regardless of the formal label designated to these flows of people through borders, displacement and refugeeism have become a regular feature of our times. As Minh-ha described it for another region:

> "No longer an extraordinary occurrence that requires a temporary solution, […] refugeeism a matter of life or death for many, the act of crossing overland and oversea to seek asylum in unknown territories is often carried out-especially in mass flight—as an escape alone, with no specific haven of refuge in mind. Thus, the creation of refugees remains bound to the historical forces and political events that precipitate it" (2011: 46).

Unlike other cases of prolonged forced displacement in the region, such as the case of Palestinian refugees, the "refugee" label was not adopted as a collective identity in this Iraqi case of displacement. The use of 'refugee' by Iraqis was more related to increasing their space of *ʾamān* through access to aid and less commonly through attempts to connect with other Iraqis in the field by relating to their past way of life (and losses), as we observed in the music event in Chapter Five. This event was one of the moments in my research that forced me to move with Iraqis in the field, beyond the categories used by the official bodies of protection in the host country, and explore the experiences and stories shared by Iraqis within

[137] Julie Peteet presented a strong argument in her brief analysis of the minimal international response to the Iraqi displacement in her discussion of why the US ignored the humanitarian crisis that it was responsible for creating (2007: 8-9).

the wider historical and political context (Chapters Six and Seven). By ethnographically exploring the Iraqi encounters in the formal space of protection in Jordan and listening to the stories they share about the presence and absence of *ʾamān* (well-being) in both countries (Iraq and Jordan), the current thesis argued that becoming a refugee was only one mode of survival—one that was limited and not available to all Iraqis in this case, and that for many was not the desired choice. In the current conditions for international aid in a global context which promote linking developmental aid to host countries with humanitarian aid to refugees, while ignoring the historical and political factors produced a protection system that led to increasing the restricted and restrictive structures these displaced Iraqis had to deal with, as I argued in Chapters Four and Five.

The thesis presents *ʾamān* as a concept to explore Iraqis' current and past experiences with conditions of structural violence through following the changes in their perceptions of well-being with the presence and absence of protection systems in Jordan (as reflected in the conditions of development aid) on the one hand, and the presence and absence of state regulatory policies in the various periods discussed inside Iraq, as narrated by Iraqis, on the other hand (Chapters Six and Seven). I used the concept of the space of ʾa*mān* as a productive concept in Lefebvre's sense; it serves to explore the social space produced by Iraqi Baghdadi urban communities, as an outcome of a process or "a field of action" (1991:191): "the outcome of past actions", and "what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others" (1991: 73). As elaborated in the thesis, the production of the space of *ʾamān* involved relationships and networks among family, friends and relatives, it was not related only to responding to the present needs of survival, *ʾamān* was measured against what these former Baghdadi professionals and state-employees perceived as well-being and *ʾamān*, taking into consideration the changes they had to endure in the longer period between mid-1960s–2011, in addition to the future possibilities they aspired to achieve. The experiences and accounts of this group portrayed the complex effects of larger political and global changes on their personal lives during times of big changes.

The conditions of war and refuge had imposed on this group a complex structure of human relations to the possible(s). The variety in the experiences of *ʾamān* making can be attributed also to the lack of a strong protection and aid structure in Jordan. Iraqis had to negotiate the terms of losses and gains among several actors in the field — at the national level (the former regime relations and the rising ruling groups in the *New Iraq* based on sectarian, ethnic and

other private interests and affiliations), regional (neighboring state authorities and people), and global (UNHCR, and other international organizations, resettlement countries, especially the United States as an employer inside Iraq, aid provider and migration destination, the allies army, al-Qaida (ISIS), etc.)—in addition to the players who evolved from the complex set of relations and interests among these actors, including social networks and organizations, smugglers and militias. Negotiating with various actors and moving among different labels produced complex forms of agency among Iraqis who had to deal with various scales of restrictive and restricting structures. This meant that each Iraqi family had to depend on the resources and relations they had access to in their hiding space in Iraq and temporary space of protection in Jordan to create the best possible conditions for their family survival. According to available resources, Iraqis were able to transcend some of the structural restrictions, and engender new actions and expressions which seemed adjusted to the historical and social conditions in which their *ʾamān habitus* was constituted. The work of Bourdieu is useful here in exploring the complex set of relations in moments of crisis "when the social world loses its character as a natural phenomenon", the crisis conditions in this case could provide the condition for questioning and criticizing the situation that is usually taken for granted (Bourdieu, 2010 [1977]: 169).

The new situation in Iraq, and in the Middle East at large, imposed new representations on the inhabitants of the countries in the region. Being in the *New Iraq*, after 2003, is determined by one's sect, ethnicity, religion and your former relationship to the state/ regime. This affected entire communities who felt that they had no place in the new social fabric of the country despite their ancient presence in the area, as expressed by several Christians, Sabeans and Yazidis I met in the field.[138] In other stories, families turned to the tribe for help to release their kidnapped sons and daughters. While one of the Christian families I met told me that his family had no future in the *New Iraq* because they did not have a tribe to protect them.

The liberalization program of the CPA (the Coalition Provisional Authority in postinvasion Iraq) rendered hundreds of thousands former Iraqi civil and military employees jobless,

[138] During 2010-2011, I met few Yazidis and several Christian families who left their homes in Baghdad after receiving direct threats. This was before the attacks of ISIS (Daish) in 2014. However in August 2014, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) attacked the Yazidi communities living for centuries in the area of Mount Sinjar in Nineveh governorate, and killed and kidnapped thousands, while others who managed to flee escaped to the Kurdish areas (see Cetorelli et al, 2017).

throwing whole communities who relied upon income from the state into crisis. The immediate effects of dismantling the Iraqi state did not result into mass refugee influx as per UNHCR and other studies, the studies attribute this to the Iraqis' coping mechanisms developed over the course of two decades of wars and sanctions (Marfleet: 2007). However, the economic and social effects of this radical destruction of the state accumulated gradually to sweep away an "entire layer of Iraqi society schooled in secular nationalist traditions" (notwithstanding the complex ethno-religious makeup of the state created by Britain in the 1920s, the postcolonial order was assertively secular).

To understand the displacement experiences of former Iraqi bureaucrats and professionals I met in Amman in the years 2010 and 2011, this thesis explored ethnographically how do Iraqis learn to live again and reformulate a sense of well-being (or *ʾamān*) after the destruction of many aspects of their familiar social world. By following the experiences of Iraqi professionals and state-bureaucrats with the making of *ʾamān*, the thesis asked kind of a "Zafimaniry question": *How humans deal with loss and reduction in their being-in-the-world due to social transformations— whether imposed by regimes, wars, invaders and forced displacement— as active agents, and not only as victims of oppressive structures?*

In the absence of a strong central state, the new ruling sectarian parties and militias started to exert a much stronger influence in Iraq after the US-led invasion in 2003. The invasion later became military occupation which lasted until mid-December 2011, when the American President Obama formally declared an end to the Iraq war. The war, as described by Iraqis who witnessed it, resulted in many casualties, but the most striking in this war (as expressed by the main participants in this thesis) was the targeting of specific groups including state bureaucrats and professionals. In the opening quote to this thesis final chapter, Abu-Omar referred to other Iraqis who had benefited from joining the new regime's militias and businesses, not necessarily in its formal programs, but through taking part in the acts of violence and looting that commenced in the first week of the invasion. I did not meet Iraqis from the latter group who were interested to share their stories "with gains" but the news coming from Iraq during the hot summer of 2019 presented protests of angry Iraqis over the corruption and theft of the country resources and the government's failure to provide basic services like electricity and water in the second largest oil producer country in OPEC. Iraq is described in media reports among the most corrupt countries; or a "kleptomaniac state" as Patrick Cockburn wrote: "where hundreds of billions of dollars have disappeared into the

pockets of the ruling elite over the past 15 years, while everybody else endures shortages of everything from jobs and houses to water and electricity."[139]

While I was writing this final chapter of the thesis in December 2019, massive demonstrations took to the streets of Baghdad to protest the corruption of the Iraqi postinvasion regime and its sectarian ruling parties. This new generation of Iraqi students and professionals, who grew up after 2003 during the hard times of violence, corruption and sectarian division of the Iraqi space gathered in Baghdad's Tahrir Square (liberation square) to demand change. Hundreds of thousands protesters from different backgrounds came with agreed set of demands: the dissolution of the Parliament, a new election law, and a new constitution. This can be read as an attempt to reclaim an inclusive Iraqi space and remove the 'ethno-sectarian' (*muhāsasa tā'ifiyya*) system of rule that was institutionalized by the United States in 2003.

[139] Patrick Cockburn's article in the Independent on 6 July 2018: "After ISIS is gone, Iraq will continue to be a deeply corrupt country." https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/iraq-isis-corruption-airstrikes-baghdad-patrick-cockburn-a8434371.html

Appendix A — Copy of the MOU between Jordan and the UNHCR

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Jordan and UNHCR

5 April 1998

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

Preamble:

The same preamble of the Cooperation Agreement was reproduced.

Article (1):

The definition of refugee as appeared in article (1) of the 1951 Convention was reproduced without the geographic and time limitations.

Article (2):

In order to safeguard the asylum institution in Jordan and to enable UNHCR to act within its mandate to provide international protection to persons falling within its mandate, it was agreed;

(1)that the principle of non-refoulement should be respected that no refugee seeking asylum in Jordan will be returned to a county where his life of freedom could be threatened because of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion;

(2)above does not include persons whose applications for asylum were rejected by UNHCR.

Article (3):

It was agreed to allow UNHCR to interview asylum seekers who entered Jordan clandestinely and are being held by competent authorities UNHCR would make its determination within seven days except in exceptional cases requiring other procedur and the period should not exceed a month.

Article (4):

Asylum seekers and refugees are under a duty to Jordan and in particular they are required to observe laws, regulations and other arrangements required for public order.

Asylum seekers and refugees are under the duty not to take any activities violating security or embarrass government on its relations with other countries or giving interviews to the media. In the case of violation UNHCR would endeavour to resettle recognized refugees.

Article (5):

Asylum should be humanitarian and peaceful and therefore the two parties have agreed that asylum seekers and refugees should receive a treatment as per the international accepted standards. A refugee should receive legal status and UNHCR would endeavour to find recognized refugees a durable solution be it voluntary repatriation to the country of origin or resettlement in a third country. The sojourn of recognized refugees should not exceed six months.

Article (6):

It was agreed to accord refugees treatment as favourable at the accorded with respect to freedom to practice their religion and freedom as regards to religious education of

their children without discrimination as to race, religion or nationality and without contravening the constitution of Jordan provided that religious right are not contrary to the laws, regulations and public decency.

Article (7):

A refugee shall have free access to courts of law and in order to enjoy this treatment he has the right of litigation and legal assistance as accorded to the nationals wherev that is possible.

Article (8):

In order to enable a refugee to provide a living for his family it was agreed to accord refugee who is legally residing in Jordan to work for his own account whenever the laws and regulations permit.

Article (9):

Refugees holding degrees recognized by the competent Jordanian authorities could practice liberal professions if the laws and regulations permit.

Article (10):

In order to find durable solutions and to facilitate voluntary repatriation or resettlement in a third country it was agreed to except refugees from overstay fines and departure fees.

Article (11):

In order to provide international protection and assistance for needy refugees it was agreed that UNHCR would provide assistance in accordance with the regulations in force.

Article (12):

In order to respond to emergencies in the event of large influx it was agreed that the two parties will cooperate to provide quick response for emergencies including establishment of a joint emergency mechanism to make available food, water, sanitation, shelter and medical treatment and also to provide physical safety for refugees and asylum seekers.

Article (13):

It was agreed to deal with problems pertaining to asylum and refugees through the liaison office at the Ministry of Interior UNHCR Branch Office undertakes to provide the liaison office with required personnel and the technical facilities required for this work UNHCR B. O. undertakes to inform the liaison office of all asylum applications and all correspondences in respect of asylum should be through the liaison office at the Ministry of Interior.

Article (14):

In order to safeguard the asylum institution the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan would consider the establishment of a national mechanism for status determination.

Appendix B – A Sample Copy of the UNHCR Asylum Seeker Certificate

UNHCR Asylum Seeker Certificate

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Date of Issue:
File No.:
Name:
Date of Birth:
Nationality:

To Whom it May Concern

This is to certify that the above-named person, is an asylum seeker whose claim for refugee status is being examined by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

As an asylum seeker, she is a person of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and should, in particular, be protected from forcible return to a country where she claims to face threats to her life or freedom, pending a final decision on her refugee status..

Any assistance accorded to the above-named individual would be most appreciated.

This certificate does not entitle the holder to a residency permit or a work permit in Jordan. The issuance of such permits is solely within the compentence of the Jordanian authorities.

Appendix C — A Sample Copy of the UNHCR Refugee Certificate

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Telephone: 00962 6 5502141
Fax: 00962 6 5924658
E-mail.: Joram@unhcr.org

UNHCR Refugee Certificate

وثيقة الاعتراف بصفة اللجوء

Date of Issue:
File No.:
Name:
Date of Birth:
Country of Origin: Iraq
Alias Name:

تاريخ الأصدار:
رقم الملف:
الأسم:
تاريخ الميلاد:
بلد الاصل: Iraq
أسم الشهرة:

To Whom it May Concern

الى من يهمه الأمر

This is to certify that the above-named person has, on the basis of available information, been recognized as a refugee by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, pursuant to its mandate

يشهد مكتب المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة بأن الشخص المذكور أعلاه قد تم الاعتراف به كلاجئ من قبل مكتب المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لشؤون اللاجئين بناء على المعلومات المتوفرة لدى المكتب .

As a refugee, she is a person of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and should, in particular, be protected from forcible return to a country where she would face threats to her life or freedom. Any assistance accorded to the above-named individual would be most appreciated.

وبصفته لاجئ فإنه يعتبر من الأشخاص المشمولين برعاية مكتب المفوضية، و يتوجب بشكل خاص حمايته من العودة القسرية إلى بلده حيث يواجه تهديدا لحياته او لحريته. كما يعرب مكتب المفوضية للأمم المتحدة عن فائق تقديره لأى مساعدة تقدم الي الشخص المذكور أعلاه.

This certificate does not entitle the holder to a residency permit or a work permit in Jordan. The issuance of such permits is solely within the compentence of the Jordanian authorities.

هذه الوثيقة لا تخول حاملها الحصول على تصريح عمل أو اقامة في الاردن. إن اصدار هذه الوثائق المتعلقة بتصاريح العمل أو الاقامة تقع حصريا ضمن سلطة الحكومة الاردنية.

Questions regarding the information contained in this document may be directed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at the address above.

يمكن توجيه أي سؤال يتعلق بالمعلومات الواردة في هذه الوثيقه إلى مكتب المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لشؤون اللاجئين على العنوان المذكور أعلاه.

This document is valid until:23-09-

إن هذه الوثيقه صالحه حتى تاريخ: 23-09-

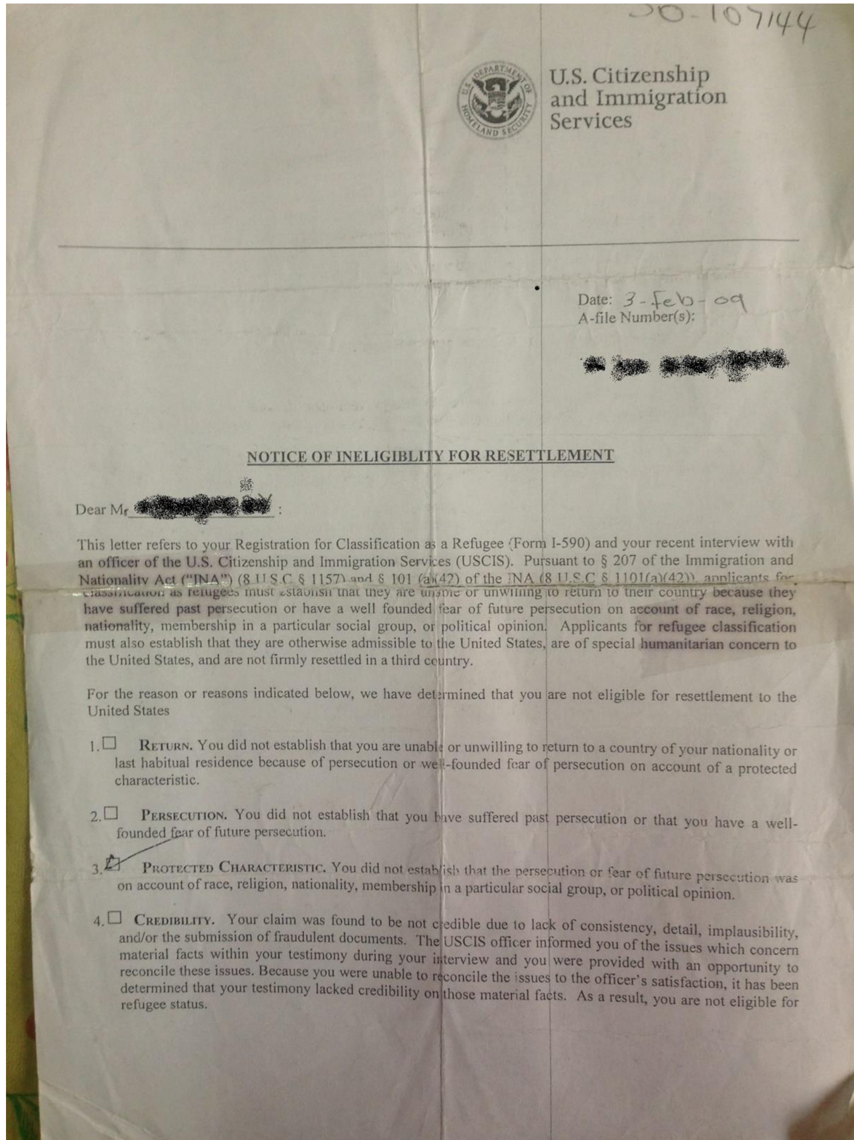
, Son

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

UNAUTHORIZED COPY VOID

Appendix D — A Sample Copy of a Notice of Ineligibility for Resettlement

(or “resettlement rejection letter”, as Iraqis in the field used to call it)



30-107144

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Date: 3-Feb-09
A-file Number(s):

NOTICE OF INELIGIBLITY FOR RESETTLEMENT

Dear Mr [redacted]:

This letter refers to your Registration for Classification as a Refugee (Form I-590) and your recent interview with an officer of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Pursuant to § 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (“INA”) (8 U.S.C § 1157) and § 101 (a)(42) of the INA (8 U.S.C § 1101(a)(42)), applicants for classification as refugees must establish that they are unable or unwilling to return to their country because they have suffered past persecution or have a well founded fear of future persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Applicants for refugee classification must also establish that they are otherwise admissible to the United States, are of special humanitarian concern to the United States, and are not firmly resettled in a third country.

For the reason or reasons indicated below, we have determined that you are not eligible for resettlement to the United States

1. ☐ RETURN. You did not establish that you are unable or unwilling to return to a country of your nationality or last habitual residence because of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution on account of a protected characteristic.

2. ☐ PERSECUTION. You did not establish that you have suffered past persecution or that you have a well-founded fear of future persecution.

3. ☑ PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC. You did not establish that the persecution or fear of future persecution was on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

4. ☐ CREDIBILITY. Your claim was found to be not credible due to lack of consistency, detail, implausibility, and/or the submission of fraudulent documents. The USCIS officer informed you of the issues which concern material facts within your testimony during your interview and you were provided with an opportunity to reconcile these issues. Because you were unable to reconcile the issues to the officer's satisfaction, it has been determined that your testimony lacked credibility on those material facts. As a result, you are not eligible for refugee status.

5. ☐ PERSECUTION OF OTHERS. You are ineligible for refugee status because you have not met the burden of proving that you have not ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of others on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

6. ☐ FIRM RESETTLEMENT. You are ineligible for refugee status because you are firmly resettled in a third country.

7. ☐ INADMISSIBILITY. You were found to be inadmissible to the United States pursuant to INA § 212(a) (8 USC § 1182(a)) subject to the exceptions of INA 212(b)(3) the following are the specific provisions under which you were determined to be inadmissible:

____

____

- ☐ A waiver of the inadmissibility cited above may be requested.
- ☐ A waiver is not available for the inadmissibility cited above.
- ☐ You may not apply for a waiver of the inadmissibility cited above at this time, because you have been denied on multiple grounds and must first submit a request for review (see below).

8. ☐ SPECIAL HUMANITARIAN CONCERN. You are ineligible for refugee resettlement in the U.S. because you have not established that you qualify for access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

9. OTHER REASON(S): ______________________________

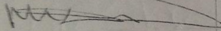
____

____

Based on the reason or reasons indicated above, your request for resettlement to the United States is hereby denied.

There is no appeal for a denial of an application for refugee status. USCIS may exercise its discretion to review a case upon timely receipt of a request for review from the principal applicant. The request must include one or both of the following: (1) a detailed account explaining how a significant error was made by the adjudicating officer, or (2) new information that would merit a change in the determination. USCIS will only accept one request that is postmarked or received by USCIS within 90 days from the date of this notice.

Sincerely,



for
Phyllis Coven
Field Office Director

Bibliography

Abboud, Samer. (2008). “Failures (and successes?) of neoliberal economic policy in Iraq.” *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 2 (3): 425-442.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. (2009). “Dialects of Women’s Empowerment: The International Circuitry of the Arab Human Development Report 2005.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.41, No.1, pp.83-103.
___________ . (1991). “Writing Against Culture,” in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, ed. Richard Fox. New Mexico: School of American Research Press.

Adriaensens, Dirk. (2010). “Killing the Intellectual Class: Academics as targets,” in *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq: Why Museums Were Looted, Libraries Burned and Academics Murdered,* ed.R. W. Baker, S. T. Ismael, & T. Y. Ismael. New York: Pluto Press.

Adwan, Laura. (2011). "The Image of Palestine in the Narratives of Refugees: A Comparative Study of Two Refugee Camps - Qalandia in Palestine and Al Yarmouk in Syria.” In *Palestinian Refugees: Rights, Narratives and Policies*. Birzeit: Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Unit and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies, Birzeit University: pp. 233-253. (Arabic).

Agamben, Giorgio. (1998). *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Agárdi, Izabella. (2012). “On the Verge of History: Rupture and Continuity in Women’s Life Narratives from Hungary, Romania and Serbia.” PhD dissertation, Utrecht University.

Alahmad, Nida. (2013). “Rewiring a State: The Techno-Politics of Electricity in the CPA’s Iraq.” *Middle East Report*, 266 (43).

Al-Ali, Nadje. (2004). *Secularism, Gender and the State in the Middle East: The Egyptian Women’s Movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
___________. (2005). “Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi women between dictatorship, war, sanctions and occupation.” *Third World Quarterly* 26 (4-5): 739-758.
___________. (2007a). *Iraqi Women: Untold Stories from 1948 to the Present*. London: Zed Books.
___________ . (2007b). “Iraqi Women in Diasporic Spaces: Political Mobilization, Gender and Citizenship.” *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 117-118. Juillet 2007. Available online http://remmm.revues.org/3371 , retrieved in August 2014.

Al-Ali, Nadje and Nicola Pratt. (2009). *Women and War in the Middle East: Transnational Perspectives*. London: Zed Books.

Al-Ali, Nadje and Nicola Pratt. (2009). *What Kind of Liberation?: Women and the Occupation of Iraq*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ali, Perveen. (2012). *States in Crisis: Sovereignty, Humanitarianism, and Refugee Protection in the Aftermath of the 2003 Iraq War*. A thesis submitted to the Department of Law of the London School of Economics and Political Science for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Arab Human Development Report: Research Paper. "Leaving No One Behind: Towards Inclusive Citizenship in Arab Countries." (2019). Published for the United Nations Development Program: Regional Bureau for Arab States.

Arendt, Hannah. (2004 [1951]). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Schocken.

Alsarayreh, Mohammad N. et al. (2017). "Medical Tourism and Its Role in Marketing Jordan Abroad." *International Review of Management and Marketing* 7(4): 180-185.

Badiou, Alain. (2001). *Ethics: an essay on the understanding of evil*. London: Verso.

Bahrani, Zainab. (2010). "Archaeology and the Strategies of War," in *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq: Why Museums Were Looted, Libraries Burned and Academics Murdered, ed.* Baker, R. W. Ismael, S. T. Ismael, & T. Y. Ismael. New York: Pluto Press.

Baker, Raymond W., Shereen T. Ismael, & Tareq Y. Ismael. (2010). *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq: Why Museums Were Looted, Libraries Burned and Academics Murdered*. New York: Pluto Press.

Baker, Yousef. (2014). "Global Capitalism and Political Control: Investigating the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq." Ph D Dissertation. University of California-Santa Barbara.

Barakat, Sultan (editor). (2008). *Reconstructing Post-Saddam Iraq*. New York: Routledge and Third World Quarterly.

Barghouti, Mourid. (2000). *I Saw Ramallah*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.

Barnes, Anne Evans. (2009). "Realizing Protection Space for Iraqi refugees: UNHCR in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon." Research Paper No. 176. Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES). Available online http://www.unhcr.org/4981d3ab2.html , retrieved in March 2012.

Barth, Fredrik (1969). "Introduction", in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Batatu, Hanna. (1978). *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A study of Iraq's old landed and commercial classes and its communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Bhattacharyya, Gargi. (2008). "Globalizing Racism and Myths of the Other in the 'War on Terror'," in *Thinking Palestine,* ed. R. Lentin. London: ZED Books.

Bloch, Maurice. (2005). "Where did anthropology Go? Or The need for 'Human Nature'," public event held in London School of Economics on 24 February 2005. Paper downloaded from http://www.lse.ac.uk/PublicEvents/pdf/20050224-bloch-anthropology.pdf .

Bocco, Riccardo. (2010). "UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees: A History within History." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28, nos 2&3.

Bottéro, Jean. (2000). *The Birth of Civilization in Ancestor of the West: Writing, Reasoning, and Religion in Mesopotamia, Elam, and Greece*. Jean Bettéro, Clarisse Herrenschmidt, and Jean-Pierre Vernant. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. (2010 [1977]). Outline of a Theory of Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
________________. (1999 [1991]). "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field." In *State/ Culture: State-Formation after the Cultural Turn*, edited by George Steinmetz, 53-75. New York: Cornell University Press.
________________. (1990 [1980]). *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
________________. (1998). "The Essence of Neoliberalism" in *Le Monde diplomatique – English Edition*. http://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu, accessed in September 2014.
________________. (1998). *On Television and Journalism*. London: Pluto Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean-Claude Chamboredon, & Jean-Claude Passeron. (1991 [1968]). *The craft of sociology: epistemological preliminaries*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Campbell, Madeline Otis. (2016). *Interpreters of Occupation: Gender and the Politics of Belonging in an Iraqi Refugee Network*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Castles, Stephen, Hein de Hass and Mark J. Miller. 2014. "Theories of Migration." In *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 25-53. New York: The Guilford Press.

Cetorelli, Valeria and Isaac Sasson, Nazar Shabila, Gilbert Burnham. (2017). "Mortality and kidnapping estimates for the Yazidi population in the area of Mount Sinjar, Iraq, in August 2014: A retrospective household survey." PLos Medicine 14(5): e1002297.
https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002297

Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. (2006). *Imperial Life in the Emerald City-Inside Iraq's Green Zone*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf (electronic version).

Chatelard, Geraldine. (2003). "Iraqi Forced Migrants in Jordan: Conditions, Religious Networks, and the Smuggling Process." United Nations University: World Institute for Development Economics Research.
________________. (2005). "Iraqi Asylum Migrants in Jordan: Conditions, Religious Networks and the Smuggling Process," in *Poverty, International Migration and Asylum* ed. Borjas, George and Jeff Crisp. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
________________. (2008). "Constructing and deconstructing 'the Iraq refugee crisis':" Paper presented at the Conference of the International Association of Contemporary Iraqi Studies, SOAS, London, 16-17 July 2008.
________________. (2009a). "Migration from Iraq between the Gulf and the Iraq wars (1990-2003): historical and sociospacial dimensions." A paper. French Institute for the Near East (IFPO), Amman.
________________. (2009b). "What Visibility Conceals, Re-embedding Refugee Migration from Iraq," in *Dispossession and Displacement: Forced-Migration in the Middle East and Africa* (Proceedings of conference), ed. Dawn Chatty. (2009). London: British Academy. A paper accessed online.

Chatty, Dawn. (2017a). *Syria: The Making and Unmaking of a Refuge State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_________________. (2017b). "The Duty to be Generous (karam): Alternatives to rights-based asylum in the Middle East." *Journal of the British Academy*. 5: 177-199. Accessed 26 March 2019. DOI https://doi.org/10.5871/jba/005.177

_________________. (2010). *Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chatty, Dawn and Nisrine Mansour. (2011). "Displaced Iraqis: Predicaments and Perceptions in Exile in the Middle East." *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*. 28 (1): 97-108. Accessed 28 March 2019. Retrieved from:
https://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/36092

Chomsky, Noam. (2002). "Who are the Global Terrorists?" in *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*, ed. Ken Booth and Tim Dunne. Palgrave Macmillan. Accessed online on http://www.chomsky.info/articles/200205--02.htm

Colson, Elizabeth. (2003). "Forced Migration and the Anthropological Response." *Journal of Refugee Studies*. 16 (1): 1-18.

Crisp, Jeffrey. (2001). "Mind the Gap! UNHCR, Humanitarian Assistance and the Development Process." *International Migration Review*. 35 (1): 168-191.

Dawod, Hosham. (2012). "Tribalism and Power in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's 'House.'" In *Contesting the State: The Dynamics of Resistance and Control*, edited by Angela Hobart and Bruce Kapferer, 87-123. Wantage: Sean Kindston Publishing.

Davis, Eric. (2005). *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq*. Berkley: University of California Press.

Davies, Nicolas. (2010). *Blood on Our Hands: the American Invasion and Destruction of Iraq*. USA: Nimble Books LLC.

De Bel-Air, Françoise. (2009). "Iraqis in Jordan since 2003: What Socio-Political Stakes?" CARIM Research Reports 2009/10. European University Institute: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

Dewachi, Omar. (2017) *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Dodge, Toby. (2003). *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Dorai, Mohamed Kamel. (2007). "Iraqi Refugees in Syria." Paper prepared for the Migration and Refugee Movements in the Middle East and North Africa. The Forced Migration & Refugee Studies Program. The American University in Cairo, Egypt.

Doran, Christopher. (2012). *Making The World Safe for Capitalism: How Iraq Threatened the US Economic Empire and Had To Be Destroyed*. London: Pluto Press.

Durkheim, Emile. 2005 (1952). *Suicide: A study in Sociology*. London: Routledge.

Eickelman, F. Dale. 2002 (1981). *The Middle East and Central Asia: An Anthropological Approach*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Fafo/ DoS/ UNFPA. (2007). *Iraqis in Jordan*: *Their Number and Characteristics*. Amman.

Fagen, Weiss. (2007). "Iraqi Refugees: Seeking Stability in Syria and Jordan." Institute for the Study of International Migration: Georgetown University and Center for International and Regional Studies: Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar.

Fair, Jo, and Lisa Parks. (2001). "Africa on Camera: Television News Coverage and Aerial Imaging of Rwandan Refugees." *Africa Today* 48 (2): 35-57.

Fassin, Didier. (2011). "Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries. The Governmentality of Immigration in Dark Times." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 40: 213-226.
___________. (2008). "The Humanitarian Politics of Testimony: Subjectification through Trauma in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Cultural Anthropology* 23, (3).

Fassin, Didier, and Richard Rechtman. (2009). *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Translated by Rachel Gomme. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Fassin, Didier and Estelle d'Halluin. (2007). "Critical Evidence: The Politics of Trauma in French Asylum Policies." *Ethos* 35 (3).

Feldman, Ilana. (2009). "Gaza's humanitarianism problem." *Journal of Palestine Studies*. 38 (3): 22-37.

Ferguson, James. 2003 (1990). *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Foucault, Michel. (1977). *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. London: Allen Lane.

Friedman, Jonathan. (2008). Transnationalization, Sociopolitical Disorder, and Ethnification as Expressions of Declining Global Hegemony. In Historical Transformations: The Anthropology of Global Systems, edited by Kajsa Ekholm Friedman and Jonathan Friedman, 203-226. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Fuller, Max and Dirk Adriaensens. (2010). "Wiping the Slate Clean," in *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq: Why Museums Were Looted, Libraries Burned and Academics Murdered.* Edited by Raymond. W.Baker, Shereen T. Ismael, & Tareq. Y. Ismael. New York: Pluto Press.

Gordon, Joy. (2010). *Invisible War: The United States and the Iraq Sanctions*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Graham, Mark 2002. Emotional Bureaucracies: emotions, civil servants, and immigrants in the Swedish welfare state. *Ethos* 30 (30): 199-226

Hanieh, Adam. (2015). “Overcoming Methodological Nationalism: Spatial Perspectives on Migration in the Gulf Arab States.” In *Transit States: Labour, Migration and Citizenship in the Gulf*, edited by Abdulhadi Khalaf, Omar AlShehabi and Adam Hanieh, 57-78. London: Pluto Press.
___________ . (2013). “Mapping the Neoliberal Experience.” *Lineages of Revolt: Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East*. Chicago and Illinois: Haymarket Books. pp 47-74

Hansen, Phillip. (1993). *Hannah Arendt: Politics, History and Citizenship*. UK: Polity Press.

Harding, Scott and Kathryn Libal. (2010). “War and the Public Health Disaster in Iraq,” in *The War Machine and Global Health: A Critical Medical Anthropological Examination of the Human Costs of Armed Conflict and the International Violence Industry,* ed. Singer and Hodge. UK: AltaMira Press.
_________________. (2007). “The Politics of Refugee Advocacy and Humanitarian Assistance.” *Middle East Report* 244: 18-21.

Harker, Richard and Cheleen Mahar, & Chris Wilkes. (1990). *An Introduction to the work of Pierre Bourdieu: The Practice of Theory*. London: Macmillan.

Harper, Ian and Bryan Maddox. (2008). “The Impossibility of Well-Being: Development Language and the Pathologisation of Nepal.” In *Culture and Well-Being: Anthropological Approaches to Freedom and Political Ethics*, edited by Alberto Corsín Jiménez, 35-52. London: Pluto Press.

Harper, Andrew. (2008). “Iraq’s refugees: Ignored and Unwanted.” *International Review of the Red Cross* 90 (869): 169-190.

Harrell-Bond, Barbara. E. (1986). *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, David. (2006). “Neo-Liberalism as Creative Destruction.” *Geografiska Annaler*. Series B, Human Geography, Geography and Power, the Power of Geography. 88 (2): 145-158.
___________ . (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hastrup, Kristin. (1993). “Hunger and the Hardness of Facts.” *Man* 28 (4): 727-739.

Herring, Eric. (2011). “Variegated neo-liberalization, human development and resistance: Iraq in global context.” *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 5 (3): 337-355.

Hills, Elaine and Dahlia Wasfi. (2010). “The Causes and Human Costs of Targeting Iraq.” in *The War Machine and Global Health: A critical medical anthropological examination of the human costs of armed conflict and the international violence industry,* ed. Singer and Hodge. UK: AltaMira Press.

Hoffmann, Sophia. (2016). *Iraqi Migrants in Syria : The Crisis Before the Storm*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.

Human Rights Watch. (2006). "The Silent Treatment: Fleeing Iraq, Surviving in Jordan." Report available online.

Ismael, Tareq and Jacqueline Ismael. (2015). *Iraq in the Twenty-First Century: Regime change and the making of a failed state*. New York: Routledge.

Ismael, Shereen. (2004). "Dismantling the Iraqi Social Fabric: From Dictatorship Through Sanctions to Occupation." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*. 35 (2): 333-349.

Jackson, Michael. (2002). *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity*. Denmark: Museum Tusculanum Press.

___________ . (2011). *Life Within Limits: Well-being in a World of Want*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

___________ . (2013). *The Wherewithal of Life: Ethics, Migration, and the Question of Well-Being*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jawad, Saad. (2013). "The Iraqi Constitution: Structural Flaws and Political Implications." LSE Middle East Centre Paper Series/ 01 November 2013. Available online: http://www.lse.ac.uk/middleEastCentre/publications/Paper-Series/SaadJawad.pdf

James, Wendy. (2008). "Well-Being: In Whose Opinion, and Who Pays?" *In Culture and Well-Being: Anthropological Approaches to Freedom and Political Ethics*, edited by Alberto Corsín Jiménez, 69-79. London: Pluto Press.

Al-Jawaheri, Yasmin Husein. (2008). *Women in Iraq: The Gender Impact of International Sanctions*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris.

Jiménez, Alberto Corsín. (2008). "Well-Being in Anthropological Balance: Remarks on Proportionality as Political Imagination." In *Culture and Well-Being: Anthropological Approaches to Freedom and Political Ethics*, edited by Alberto Corsín Jiménez, 35-52. London: Pluto Press.

Jones-Gailani, Nadia. (2013). "Third Parties in 'Third Spaces': The Multifaceted Role of Translator in Oral History Interviews with Iraqi Diasporic Women." In *Oral History off the Record*, edited by Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, 169-183. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Joseph, Suad. (2012). "Thinking Intentionality: Arab Women's Subjectivity and its Discontents." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*. 8 (3): 1:25.

___________. (2001). "Women and Politics in the Middle East." In *Women and Power in the Middle East*, edited by Suad Joseph and Susan Slyomovics. 34-40. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

___________. (1996). "Gender and Citizenship in Middle Eastern States." *Middle East Report*. 198: 4-10

___________. (1993). "Gender and Relationality Among Arab Families in Lebanon." *Feminist Studies* 19 (3): 465 – 86.

___________. (1994). "Brother/Sister Relationships: Connectivity, Love and Power in the Reproduction of Arab Patriarchy." *American Ethnologist* 21(1): 50–73.

___________. (1991). “Elite Strategies for State-Building: Women, Family, Religion and State in Iraq and Lebanon.” *Women, Islam and the State*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti. (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press), 176–200.

Joseph, Suad and Susan Slymovics. (2001). “Introduction.” In *Women and Power in the Middle East*, edited by Suad Joseph and Susan Slymovics, 1-19. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Press.

Kadri, Ali. (2016). “Iraq – Then and Now”, Chapter Four in *The Unmaking of Arab Socialism*. London: Anthem Press.

Kalb, Don. (2011). “Introduction” of *Headlines of Nation, Subtexts of Class: Working-Class Populism and the Return of the Repressed in Neoliberal Europe*, edited by Don Kalb and Gábor Halmai, 1-36. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Kamp, Martina. (2009). “Fragmented Citizenship: Communalism, Ethnicity and Gender in Iraq.” *Women and War in the Middle East: Transnational Perspectives*. London: Zed Books.

Kapferer, Bruce. (2005). “New formations of power, the oligarchic-corporate state, and anthropological ideological discourse.” *Anthropological Theory* 5 (3): 285-299.

Kapferer, Bruce and Christopher C. Taylor. (2012). “Forces in the Production of the State.” In *Contesting the State: The Dynamics of Resistance and Control*, edited by Angela Hobart and Bruce Kapferer, 1-20. Wantage: Sean Kindston Publishing.

Kapoor, Ilan. (2012). *Celebrity Humanitarianism: The Ideology of Global Charity* (Interventions). London: Routledge.

Kelberer, Victoria. (2017). “Negotiating Crisis: International Aid and Refugee Policy in Jordan.” *Middle East Policy*. 24 (4): 148-165.

Khoury, Dina (2013). *Iraq in Wartime: Soldiering, Martyrdom, and Remembrance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Klein, Naomi. (2004). “Baghdad Year Zero: Pillaging Iraq in Pursuit of a Neocon Utopia.” *Harper's Magazine*. Available online:
http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article6930.htm
___________. (2007). *The Shock Doctrine*. London: Penguin Books.

Kleinman, Arthur and Robert Desjarlais. (1997). “Violence, Culture and the Politics of Trauma.” in *Writing at the Margin: Discourse between Anthropology and Medicine*, ed. Arthur Kleinman. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

Knudsen, John Chr. (2005). *Capricious Worlds: Vietnamese Life Journeys*. UK: LIT Verlag Munster.
_________________. (1988). *Vietnamese Survivors: Processes Involved in Refugee Coping and Adaptation*. Bergen: University of Bergen.

Koslowski, Rey. (2005). *International Migration and the Globalization of Domestic Politics*. New York: Routledge.

Leenders, Reinoud. (2009). "Refugee Warriors or War Refugees? Iraqi Refugees' Predicament in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon." *Mediterranean Politics* 14 (3): 343-363.

Lefebvre, Henri. (1991). *The Production of Space*. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Loescher, Gil. (1993). *Beyond Charity*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lubkemann, Stephen. (2008). *Culture in Chaos: An Anthropology of the Social Condition in War*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Maalouf, Amin. (2012 [2000]). In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong. New York: Penguin Books.

Maček, Ivana. (2009). *Sarajevo Under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Makiya, Kanan. (1989). *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Malkki, Liisa. (2007). "Commentary: The Politics of Trauma and Asylum: Universals and their Effects." *Ethos* 35 (3): 336-343.
___________. (1995a). *Purity and exile: violence, memory, and national cosmology among Hutu refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.
___________. (1995b). "Refugees and Exile: From 'Refugee Studies' to the National Order of Things." *Annual Review of Anthropology 24*, 495-523.
___________. (1996). "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization." *Cultural Anthropology* 11 (3): 377-404.
___________. (1994). "Citizens of Humanity: Internationalism and the Imagined Community of Nations." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 3 (1): 41-68.

Mamdani, Mahmoud. (2008). "The New Humanitarian Order." *The Nation* published on 29 September 2008. Accessed online: http://www.thenation.com/article/new-humanitarian-order?page=0,1

Marcus, George. (1998). *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Marfleet, Philip. (2006). *Refugees in a Global Era*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
____________. (2007). "Iraq's Refugees: 'exit' from the state." *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies*. 1 (3): 397-419.
____________. (2011). "Displacement and Denial: IDPs in Today's Iraq." *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 5 (2).
____________. (2011). "Introduction: Displacement past and present." *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 5 (2).
____________. (2019). "Iraq: What happened next…" *International Socialism*, issue 161. Posted on 2 January 2019. Accessed online in July 2019 http://isj.org.uk/iraq-what-happened-next/#footnote-10080-2.

Marfleet, Philip, and Adam Hanieh. (2014). “Migration and ‘Crisis’ in the Middle East and North African Region. In *Crisis and Migration: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Anna Lindley, 24-45. New York: Routledge.

Massad, Joseph. (2001). *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan*. New York: Columbia University Press.

McKay, Ramah. (2012). “Afterlives: Humanitarian Histories and Critical Subjects in Mozambique.” *Cultural Anthropology* 27 (2): 286-309.

Medani, Khaled. (2004). “State Rebuilding in Reverse: The Neoliberal ‘Reconstruction’ of Iraq.” *Middle East Report* 34 (232). Accessed online: http://www.merip.org/mer/mer232/state-rebuilding-reverse

Minh-ha, Trinh T. (2011). *Elsewhere, Within Here: Immigration, Refugeeism and the Boundary Event*. New York: Routledge.

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. (2005). *Watching Babylon: The War in Iraq and Global Visual Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Mitchell, Timothy. (1991). “America’s Egypt: Discourse of the Development Industry.” *Middle East Report*, 169: 18-36.

Moghadam, Valentine M. (1993). *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Moghadam, Valentine M. (2004). “Patriarchy in Transition: Women and the Changing Family in the Middle East.” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 35 (2): 137-162.

Al-Mohammad, Hayder. (2012). “A Kidnapping in Basra: The Struggles and Precariousness of Life in Postinvasion Iraq.” *Cultural Anthropology* 27 (4): 597-614.
_________________. (2015). “Poverty beyond Disaster in Postinvasion Iraq: Ethics and the “Rough Ground” of the Everyday.” *Current Anthropology*, Politic of the Urban Poor : Aesthetics, Ethics, Volatility, Precarity. 56 (S11): S108-S115.

Mokbel, Madona. (2007). “Refugees in Limbo: The Plight of Iraqis in Bordering States.” *Middle East Report* 244: 10-17.

Al-Musawi, Muhsin (2006). *Reading Iraq: Culture and Power in Conflict*. London and New York: I.B.Tauris and Co Ltd.

Naguib, Nefissa. (2017). “Middle East Encounters 69 Degrees North Latitude: Syrian Refugees and Everyday Humanitarianism in the Arctic.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49: (S4): 654-660.

Naguib, Nefissa, and Inger Marie Okkenhaug. (2007). “Introduction.” *Interpreting Welfare and Relief in the Middle East*. Leiden: Brill.

Nyers, Peter. (2006). *Rethinking Refugees: Beyond States of Emergency*. New York: Routledge.

Ochs, Elinor and Lisa Capps. (1996). "Narrating the Self." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25: 19-43.

O'Donnell, Kelly, and Kathleen Newland. (2008). "The Iraqi Refugee Crisis: The Need for Action." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute (MPI). Available online file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/MPIThe_Iraqi_Refugee_Crisis_The_Need_for_Action_011808%20(1).pdf, retrieved in November 2011.

Olwan, Mohamed. (2009). "Iraqi Refugees in Jordan: Legal Perspective." CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes. European University Institute: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

Otterman, Michael, Richard Hil and Paul Wilson. (2010). *Erasing Iraq: The Human Costs of Carnage*. London: Pluto Press.

Parry, Jonathan. (2007). "Afterward: Questions of ('Zafimaniry') Anthropology," in *Questions of Anthropology*. ed. Rita Astuti, Jonathan Parry, and Charles Stafford. Oxford: Berg.

Parsons, Michelle Anne. (2011). "Death and Freedom in Post-Soviet Russia: An Ethnography of a Mortality Crisis." PhD Dissertation. Emory University.

Parvathaneni, Harish. (2004). "UNRWA's Role in Protecting Palestine Refugees." BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights. Working Paper No. 4. Available online: file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/WP-E-09.pdf , retrieved in May 2010.

Peteet, Julie. (2005a). *Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

__________. (2005b). "Words as Interventions: Naming in the Palestine: Israel Conflict." *Third World Quarterly*. 26 (1): 153-172.

__________. (Fall 2007). "Unsettling the Categories of Displacement." *Middle East Report* 244, 2-9.

__________. (2010). "The War on Terror, Dismantling, and the Construction of Place: An Ethnographic Perspective from Palestine." in *Iraq at a Distance: What Anthropologists can Teach us about the War*. ed. A. C. G. M. Robben. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

__________. (2010). "Cartographic Violence, Displacement and Refugee Camps: Palestine and Iraq," in *Exodus to Exile: Palestinian Lives in the Levant,* ed. A. Knudsen and S. Hanafi. New York: Routledge Press. 13-28.

Plewes, B., and Stuart, R. 2007. 'The pornography of poverty: a cautionary fundraising tale', in D. A. Bell, and J.-M. Coicaud (eds.), pp. 23–37.

Price, Matthew. (2009). *Rethinking Asylum: History, Purpose, and Limits*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Al-Qadh, T. and M. Lacroix. (2011). "Iraqi Refugees in Jordan: Lessons for Practice with Refugees Globally." *International Social Work* 54: 521-534.

Rabo, Annika. (2012). "Conviviality and Conflict in Contemporary Aleppo," in *Religious Minorities in the Middle East: Domination, Self-Empowerment, Accommodation*, edited by Anh Nga Longva and Anne Sofie Roald. Leiden-Boston: BRILL. 123-147.

Al-Rasheed, Madawi. (1994). "The Myth of Return: Iraqi Arab and Assyrian Refugees in London." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 7 (2/3).

Roald, Ane. (2011). *Iraq the Region and National Politics: A case study of the Baghdad-Amman-Damascus micro-region*. Ph. D. thesis submitted at the University of Oslo.

Rohde, Achim. (2010). *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship*. New York: Routledge.

Al-Rubaiee, Fadhil. (2006). *The Helmet and the Turban: The American Occupation and the Religious Authorities Attitudes in Iraq*. Damascus: Al-Farqad Publishing House. (in Arabic).
_______________. (2008). *Honey and Blood: From the violence of the state to the state of violence.* Damascus: Al-Farqad Publishing House. (in Arabic).

Sahlins, Marshall. (2011). "Iraq: The State-of-Nature Effect." *Anthropology Today* 27 (3).

Said, Edward. (1986). *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*. New York: Pantheon.

Saif, Ibrahim, and David DeBartolo. (2007). "The Iraq War's Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan." Amman: Economic Studies Unit—Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan.

Salih, Ruba. 2002. "Shifting Meanings of 'Home' Consumption and Identity in Moroccan Women's Transnational Practices between Italy and Morocco." In *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and Transformation of Home*, edited by Nadje Al-Ali and Khalid Koser, 51-67. London, New York: Routledge.

Sassoon, Joseph. (2009). *The Iraqi refugees: the new crisis in the Middle East*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Scarry, Elaine. (1985). *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. (2008). "A talent for life: Reflections on human vulnerability and resilience." *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 73 (1): 25–56.

Scott, James. (1985). *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Seeley, Nicholas. (2016). "The politics of aid to Iraqi refugees in Jordan, *Middle East Research and Information Project*. 256. https://merip.org/2010/09/the-politics-of-aid-to-iraqi-refugees-in-jordan/

Sissons, Miranda and Abdulrazzaq Al-Saiedi. (2013). Iraq- A Bitter Legacy: Lessons of De-Baathification in Iraq." International Center for Transitional Justice. March 2013. Accessed 27 August, 2019.
https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Report-Iraq-De-Baathification-2013-ENG.pdf

Sluglett, Marion Farouk and Peter Sluglett. (2001). *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers.

Soguk, Nevzat. (1999). *States and Strangers: Refugees and Displacements of Statecraft*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Stansfield, Gareth. (2007). *Iraq: People, History, Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Szörényi, Anna. (2006). "The Images Speak for Themselves? Reading Refugee Coffee-table Books." *Visual Studies* 21 (1): 24-41.

Tejel, J, Peter Sluglett, Riccardo Bocc and Hamit Bozarslan (ed.). (2012). *Writing the Modern History of Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges*. London: World Scientific Publishing.

Tripp, Charles. (2007). *A History of Iraq*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Turner, Terence. (2003). "Class Projects, Social Consciousness, and the Contradictions of "Globalization."" In *Globalization, the State and Violence*, edited by Jonathan Friedman, 35-66. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

UNHCR-PDES. (2009). "Surviving in the City: A Review of UNHCR's Operation for Iraqi refugees in urban areas of Jordan Lebanon and Syria." PDES/2009/03. July 2009.

Voutira, Efthia, and Barbara. Harrell-Bond (1995). "In Search of the Locus of Trust: The Social World of the Refugee Camp," in *Mistrusting Refugees*, ed. By E. Daniel and J. Knudsen. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Al-Wardi, Ali. (2009 [1965]). *A Study in the Society of Iraq*. London: Alwarrak Publishing Ltd. (in Arabic)

Wolfe, Patrick. (2006). "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8 (4): 387–409.

Yousif, Bassam. (2012). *Human Development in Iraq: 1950-1990*. New York: Routledge.

Yaseen, Sabah. (2008). "Iraqi Tribal Awaking, Background Scene: Murdering the State and Alienating the Society," in *Iraq under Occupation: Destruction of the State and Setting-up Chaos*. Beirut: The Center for Arab Unity Studiees.193-208.

Zangana, Haifa. (2002). *Women on a Journey: Between Baghdad and London.* London: Al-Kalima publishing house. (in Arabic).
____________. (2009 [2007]) *City of Widows*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
____________. (2009). *Dreaming of Baghdad*. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York.

Zetter, Roger. (2007). "More Labels, Fewer Refugees: Remaking the Refugee Label in an Era of Globalisation." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20, (2): 172-192.

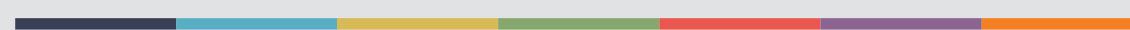
Zizek, Slavoj. (2004). "Iraq's False Promises." *Foreign Policy* 140: 43-49.

Zubaida, Sami. (2005). "Communalism and Thwarted Aspirations of Iraqi Citizenship." *Middle East Report* 237:8-11.
____________. (2009). *Islam, the People and the State: Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.
____________. (2011). *Beyond Islam: A New Understanding of the Middle East*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Zwiebach, Cecile. (2007). "Iraqi Refugees and UNHCR: The Challenges of Administering Humanitarian Assistance under Overlapping Refugee Laws." Article downloaded from HeinOnline Legal Research Database. Citation: 22 Geo. Immigr. L.J. 767 2007-2008.

Other online sources
The UNHCR website.
Daily and weekly newspapers: The Guardian, The Independent, Jordan Times and other online resources cited in the footnotes within the text.

Graphic design: Communication Division, UiB / Print: Skipnes Kommunikasjon AS



uib.no

ISBN: 9788230859902 (print)
9788230861462 (PDF)