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VESTIGES OF GLORY:

IRAQ'S UNIVERSITIES AND FEMALE STUDENTS

IN THE MIDST OF TYRANNY, SANCTIONS AND WAR

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A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND POLICY STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This historical dissertation examines the intersectionality of sanctions, war and autocratic rule as it manifested itself on Iraqi university campuses and, more specifically, the impact on female students. While much has been written on Iraq, we have yet to understand the academic, personal and professional toll it took on university students between the onset of the Saddam regime in 1979 and 2005, three years after the Allied Invasion. This is a unique opportunity to study a higher education system that once held an esteemed regional reputation and is now greatly eroded. Our ability to generate historical research on this population enhances our knowledge of the role political and economic events play on university campuses. The historical method was employed in this dissertation and expanded upon by Iraqi women's narratives. Primary and contextual sources were collected, coded and reconstructed thematically and chronologically. Findings included increasing obstacles and restrictions placed on academic freedom and women's higher education opportunities as the regime increased its power. Iraqi women reported that the decade of sanctions was the most damaging to their college learning but that current civil unrest and rising Islamist factions are greatly hindering their ability to achieve academic goals. The intersectionality of three wars (First Gulf, Iran-Iraq and Second Gulf Wars), shifting Saddamist law concerning women's rights, and international sanctions diminished women's learning, social and professional engagements at Iraqi universities. Efforts to rehabilitate Iraqi higher education must include international partnerships, expatriate alumni participation, gender integration and authentic student advocacy opportunities.

CHAPTER ONE
Focus and Context

Introduction

Iraq's higher education system was once a shining jewel in the Middle East.[1] Jointly imbued with ancient Mesopotamian heritage and Arabic scholarship, Iraqi universities prided themselves on their academic standards, western trained faculty and rapidly growing student population. At the onset of the Saddam Hussein regime in 1979, the government aggressively pursued further higher education objectives as well as political, social, and economic access for women. Saddamist rhetoric encouraged women to persist in their educational and career goals and several laws were enacted to protect these burgeoning opportunities. Unfortunately for these women, Saddam was both fair-weather and ruthless. As Iraq suffered through the Iran-Iraq War (1981-1988), First Gulf War (1991), UN imposed sanctions (1991-2003) and affiliated air strikes, it became a totalitarian state ruled by terror and dominated by chronic deprivation. When the United States and allied nations deposed Saddam in the Second Gulf War (2003), conditions only worsened in Iraq. Amidst this quarter century of devastation, more than twenty Iraqi universities continued serving students, including thousands of Iraqi women. The story of Iraqi students, who refused to give up on the promise of higher education, has yet to be told. This dissertation restories how university students, especially women, experienced deprivation, foreign occupation, tyranny, radicalism and violence.

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[1] Shaheen Chughtai, "Iraqi Students Let Down by US Timetable," *AlJazeera.net*, July 6, 2004, http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/F09564C8-D697-4487-817F-9833BB5ED35B.htm.

Background

Iraq's twenty-two million inhabitants live in a country of contrasts. To the north is the forested mountain region of Kurdistan; to the south, what were once fertile marshlands; and in the west a formidable desert climate. Baghdad, in central Iraq, sits on the famed Tigris River, enduring scorching summers but pleasant winters. Iraq's contrasts are not only geographic; its collective identity has undergone numerous metamorphoses. Once part of the Ottoman Empire, the British occupied Iraq beginning in the First World War. In 1932, Iraq became an independent kingdom and in 1958 declared itself a republic. In truth, Iraqis lived under a cycle of dictatorships and coups. Once the Baath's bastardized form of socialism[2] began to dominate Iraqi governance, establishing pan-Arabism became a priority.[3] Soon, this mutated to fostering Iraqi nationalism, independent of regional movements.[4] It was at this time that Saddam Hussein rose in the Baath ranks, becoming Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council as well as Director of Internal Security (1968). In 1979, President al-Bakr, who was instrumental in Saddam's advancement, was removed from office and Saddam named president.

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[2] Samir Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear: The Inside Story of the Saddam's Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 255.
[3] Pan-Arabism is a nationalist ideology stressing commonality amongst Arab nations, especially in their opposition to Western forays into the region.
[4] Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear*, 208.

Following Iran's Islamic Revolution, Saddam declared war on Iran in 1980, using the pretext of disputed border territories.[5] In the eight-year conflict, up to 300,000 Iraqis were killed – the deadliest war in Iraqi history. As the war drew to a close, Saddam intensified attacks against Kurdistan, the northern, semi-autonomous region he wanted brought to heel. During the 1988 Anfal Campaign (Anfal means "spoils of war"), 4,000 Kurdish villages were razed and thousands of Kurds succumbed to nerve gas attacks.

In the same decade, central and southern Iraq witnessed great progress. When Iraq nationalized petroleum reserves (1972), GDP instantly increased five-fold; as of 2004, 75% of Iraq's GDP still originates from the sale of oil.[6] Iraq now had the resources to concentrate on infrastructure, much of which went to education at all levels. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHE) was reorganized and from the onset, ordered to promote Baathist ideology, including anti-Western propaganda. This ambition has always manifested itself as a challenge in Iraqi universities. Prior to the 1990's, many faculty members were trained in Europe or the United States and Iraq's developing infrastructure relied heavily on western technology. Hence, Iraqi engineers, doctors, architects and so forth appreciated and put to use what they learned abroad. This has led to a fissure between the humanities and hard sciences, one limited to endorsing regime practices and the latter trying to modernize it with western practices.

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[5] George Packer, "Testing Ground," *New Yorker,* February 28, 2005, http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/050228fa_fact.

In 1991, after boasting he had weapons of mass destruction, Saddam invaded Kuwait. UN-affiliated forces, most of which were American, bombed Iraq when he refused to withdraw. At the same time, the UN imposed Resolution 661 that prohibited the purchase of any commodities originating in Iraq, reasoning that Saddam's regime could not survive without their multi-billion annual oil sales. Instead, Saddam sold oil through illegal channels and pocketed the income for himself (he further exploited the sanctions program when the 1996 Oil-for-Food Resolution was put into place). Whom embargoes did greatly harm were the Iraqi people. Throughout the 1990's, Iraqis endured massive food and medicine shortages, decimated municipal services, and rampant inflation not matched by income gains. Corrupt government practices and a black market quickly took hold.[7] Those who supported the Baath lived slightly better than most Iraqis (mainly through job security) but almost everyone outside Saddam's inner circle encountered tremendous hardships.

Sanctions eviscerated higher education gains[8] made in the 1980's by also prohibiting the sale of educational materials to Iraq. From 1991 until 2003, the majority of Iraqi students have been prevented from study abroad or updating study materials. Even today, with the US's stated commitment to an open Iraqi society, university students have very few

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[6] US Commerce Department Report (2004), quoted in Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq* (New York: The Feminist Press, 2005), xv.
[7] Joseph Braude, *The New Iraq: Rebuilding the Country for Its People, the Middle East and the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 120.
[8] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 132.

opportunities to go abroad, enter into international research collaborations, and have not received sufficient donations of modern textbooks, computers and lab equipment. Western scholars are just now beginning to understand the scholastic repercussions of sanctions, imagining their own professional development devoid of journal subscriptions, internet research and modern lab equipment.

Taken independently, dictatorship, wars, and trade embargoes can severely erode the educational infrastructure of any country, let alone one in the Developing World. In Iraq, these events occurred in a coinciding, intersectional fashion (a discussion of the term *intersectionality* can be found in Appendix A). The repercussions for Iraqi universities were devastating: student and faculty attrition; severe limitations on academic freedom; destruction of campus buildings and library collections; isolation from the outside academic world and violent incursions on campuses. Add to this the continual deterioration of women's freedoms, whether by political, criminal, military or social forces. As of 2005, Iraq's university women are struggling to make it to classes safely and, once there, find few resources to guide their college learning. A more complete discussion on the status of Iraqi women, in historical context, follows.

Focus of Study

Iraq provides a unique opportunity to study how concurrent external phenomena, such as militarism, civil violence and dominant ideologies, manifest themselves on university campuses. This research distinguishes itself with an emphasis on female university

students. It is not a comparative study – reflecting the experiences of female students against those of their male peers. Instead, this research centers on Iraqi universities in historical context, often including but not limited to the perspective of its female students. However, there were many instances where I found it necessary to stress that men struggled equally under the regime, sanctions, occupation and numerous wars.

Employing historiographic methods, this dissertation will restory salient developments and events as they relate to Iraqi higher education from the 1979 onset of Saddam's regime until 2005, two years after the Allied Invasion of Iraq. In addition to targeted research on female students, the study is partially limited to experiences at the Universities of Baghdad, Basra and Technology. A full discussion of methodology can be found in Appendix A.

It is impossible to examine the impact wars, economic stressors and the Baath autocracy had on the Iraqi campus in isolation of one another because these events and their repercussions acted in concurrence. Given the timeframe of this study, most Iraqi students have always lived under a dictator, struggled to secure basic commodities, and witnessed military and criminal violence in their communities. "Normal" campus life in 2005 Iraq consists of students using photocopied, outdated textbooks, classrooms where everything has been looted down to the outlet covers, and tanks rolling across campus

lawns.[9] Students are now entering a second decade of acute learning deprivation. They lack current materials, qualified instructors, collegial research opportunities and, most significantly, a stable higher education infrastructure.

The consequences of regime rule, wars, and trade embargoes cannot be measured in material losses alone. Female students (as well as their male peers) have lost their collective sense that vibrant higher learning and gratifying careers await them. This was a promise made to women in Saddam's vision of a utopian Socialist Iraq. Until the 1990's, Iraqi college-educated women were well represented in most white-collar sectors, especially engineering and the medical sciences.[10] However, due to sanctions and rampant Baathist cronyism, the value of an Iraqi college degree diminished greatly.[11] Today, many Iraqi women express a desire to complete their studies abroad. When a nation's university students place little value on their own higher education system, the road back to international prestige is formidable.

This historical dissertation has significance across multiple disciplines and, hopefully, the potential to impact US policy in Iraq and the willingness of the international higher education community to offer sustained, collegial assistance to Iraqi universities. A

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[9] Beriwan Khailany, Deputy Minister of MOHE, Iraq, "Department of Higher Education and Scientific Research: Iraq after the War," speech delivered at the University of Oklahoma (Al Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq, April 27, 2004).
[10] Samir Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear,* 88. Doreen Ingrams, *The Awakened: Women in Iraq* (London: Third World Centre for Research and Publishing, 1983), 121-122.
[11] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi Women between Dictatorship, War, Sanctions and Occupation," *Third World Quarterly,* 26 no. 4-5 (2005), 747.

popular *hadith*[12] says, "A woman acts for the people." The ability of Iraqi women to regain the collective educational ground they lost during the past two decades greatly influences their country's prospects in terms of civil liberties, economic opportunity and international relations.

Previous Studies on Iraqi Women and Iraq's Education System

The theoretical frameworks in which Iraqi education and its female students have been examined are problematic. While there is plentiful literature on Iraqi women, nearly none of it centers on university experiences. Many of these studies examine the lives of Iraqi women who are either functionally illiterate and poor or already established in their professional fields. Other Iraqi women studies are situated in Islamic familial structures; survival strategies under tyranny; political advocacy and advancement; or health issues under sanctions. Western scholarship on Middle Eastern women has always and in all ways been challenged to view our subjects beyond victimhood. All too often, we encapsulate their identity to whether they must wear the *hijab* or *abaya*;[13] familial relations; adult literacy; and issues of poverty and refugee status.[14]

One methodological pitfall pertaining to Iraqi women is a heavy reliance on documents generated by the General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW). The GFIW was the only

[12] Islamic proverb not found in the Qur'an but attributed to the Prophet Mohammed.
[13] The hijab is the head covering worn by some Islamic women; the abaya is the full-length garment.

sanctioned national women's organization during Saddam's rule and no more than a Baath mouthpiece. While the GFIW made considerable progress in eradicating female illiteracy, more intensive (and objective) research indicates that the GFIW had no right to self-govern or set their agendas.[15] The function of the GFIW was to indoctrinate Iraqi women and enroll them as laborers in Saddam's vision of an Arab superpower. For research relying solely on regime-sanctioned publications and interviews of Baath-approved study participants,[16] the resulting analyses are far from the reality of many Iraqi women's lives. One such illustration is Doreen Ingrams who presents the GFIW as truly empowering and Saddam as their kindly patron.[17] To be fair, Iraqi women made considerable educational, personal, and professional gains in the 1980's. Nonetheless, Ingrams fails to stipulate that the Revolutionary Command Council (which was entirely comprised of men)[18] established the GFIW to institutionalize women's conformity to Saddam's pan-Arab agenda. Instead she uses vague language such as GFIW "members are expected to be in sympathy with the ruling Baath Party."[19]

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[14] Haleh Afshar, "Development Studies and Women in the Middle East: Dilemmas of Research and Development" in *Women in the Middle East: Perceptions, Realities and Struggles for Liberation,* ed. Haleh Afshar (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 6-7.
[15] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 754.
[16] As illustrated in Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor*: *Muslim Women Lift the Veil of Silences on the Islamic World* (New York: Plume Publishing, 2003), 224. Foreign researchers were often assigned a Ministry of Information "translator" whose primary function was to limit who the researcher spoke to and report back to the Ministry on daily activities.
[17] Doreen Ingrams, *The Awakened,* 111-112.
[18] Deborah Cobbett, "Women in Iraq," in *Saddam's Iraq: Revolution or Reaction?,* ed. CARDI (Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq, United Kingdom: Zed Books, 1990), 127.
[19] Doreen Ingrams, *The Awakened,* 112.

The methods and biases that western scholars assume when studying Middle Eastern women must be questioned.[20] All too often, we posit that our concepts of gender equality existing (or that should exist) in Western culture are applicable to the Middle East. This fails to consider what Islam means to Middle Eastern women, notions of postcolonial national identity, and the fact that, in Iraq's mere forty-eight years of independence, it endured numerous coups, wars, and dictatorial rule. Haleh Afshar contends, "We must address critically both the tools and the results of prevalent analysis and root out hidden assumptions."[21] The ability to place the experiences of Iraqi women in the appropriate context -- understanding the milieu in which they live -- has yet to be fully achieved by historical and women's studies scholarship. In regard to this study, there are very few academic publications that discuss the formative university experience as it pertains to Iraqi women. However, overall, studies of Iraqi universities and *all* students' experiences of such are lacking in the field of comparative higher education.

Research on Iraq's education system concentrates predominantly on primary and secondary school levels and adult literacy programs, especially prior to 2003. Since the Allied Invasion, numerous media outlets and a select group of academics have explored the current dire state of Iraqi higher education. Journalists and scholars repeatedly iterate that Iraqi higher education was the regional model, superior in its research output and academic rigor. However, since there were few comparative higher education studies *prior* to our current engagements in Iraq, it appears as if many in the academic

[20] Haleh Afshar, "Development Studies and Women in the Middle East," 3-17.

community are surprised to learn about the past glory of the higher education system and our complicity in its near demise. Keith Watenpaugh, in an expanded dialogue on the war in Iraq and its impact on higher education, chastises:

> Sometimes, I think we are, as a community of humane scholars, sleepwalking through the most important crisis of our lifetimes and we will look back on the legal, civil and moral outrages committed in the name of War on Terror with the same embarrassment we now view the internment of Japanese Americans or the communist Witch Hunts of the 1950's. Elements of the so-called War on Terror and certainly the war in Iraq have been predicated on purposeful misinformation, rank ethnocentrism, bad language skills and poor analysis – the things we college professors are supposed to be good at counteracting and helping students and society overcome.[22]

Significance of Study

Historical narratives of Iraq's universities, enhanced by participant interviews, elevate our scholarly analyses of modern Iraq and serve as case studies -- illustrating how higher education reacts and adapts to external political, social and economic pressures. By specifically examining the experiences of Iraqi female students, we reframe the academic gaze used to study Middle Eastern women and schooling systems. There remains a vibrant, scholarly debate on the purpose of research. Are our objectives, as scholars and researchers, purely epistemological or do we also want to be agents of change? Can we write about human struggles and acute suffering absent of emotive currents emerging in

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[21] *Ibid*, 6.
[22] Keith Watenpaugh, "Rebuilding Iraq's Academic Community and Challenges of Civil Society in Civil War," speech delivered to Center for Arab and Islamic Studies, Villanova University (Philadelphia, September 9, 2004).

our scholarship? Ruth Behar speaks of the appropriate objectivity required: "We need other forms of criticism, which are rigorous yet not disinterested; forms of criticism which are not immune to catharsis."[23]

When choosing to research a topic as evocative as this, not acknowledging one's visceral reactions does not demonstrate objectivity, only apathy. Instead, by relying upon multiple perspectives, narrative objectivity is more nearly achieved. The implications of this proposed work go beyond a simple enrichment of current scholarship. Karl Hostetler writes:

> Good research is a matter not only of sound procedures but also of beneficial aims and results. Our ultimate aim as researchers and practitioners is to serve people's well-being – the well-being of students, teachers, communities and others.[24]

This research may galvanize entities able to extend educational resources to Iraq to do so promptly. This includes all foreign governments currently involved in Iraq's reconstruction but also universities around the world that value academic freedom and communities of genuine higher learning. To date, the response record of both has been substandard.[25] In the case of Iraq, higher education entities should inform themselves

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[23]Ruth Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that Breaks your Heart (*Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 175.

[24] Karl Hostetler, "What is 'Good' Education Research?" *Educational Researcher* 34, no. 6 (2005): 17.

[25] See, for example, Keith Watenpaugh, "Between Saddam and the American Occupation: Iraq's Academic Community Struggles for Autonomy," *Academe* 90, no. 5 (2004). David Jobbins, "Aid to Iraq Starts to Flow but More Help is Needed," *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, March 4, 2005, 13. Andrew Albanese and Michael Rogers, "Iraqi Libraries Devastated in War," *Library Journal* 128, no. 9 (May 15, 2003), http://www.libraryjournal.com/index.asp?layout=articlePrint&articleID=CA296431.

thoroughly prior to extending well-intentioned assistance. Not to do so results in misguided and inappropriate interventions. As a contemporary case in point, it makes little sense to build new classrooms and laboratories if there is no safe means for women to travel to class.[26]

Regarding Iraqi women's ability to determine their own futures, Haleh Afshar speaks of "research as a liberating strategy."[27] By converting testimonies of lived experience into reliable and valid data, we generate context and space for transformative, sustainable change. Afshar urges researchers to dismantle both the patriarchal ideology that dominates women's lives as well as our own assumptive analyses that render scholarly judgments.[28] Research such as this may inform women's advocacy and humanitarian aid agencies on how higher education is connected to national gender integration. For example, a 2002 UNESCO Report argues that limitations placed on women at the undergraduate level, whether they originate from cultural, economic or institutional barriers, are a leading cause of women's inability to assume leadership in both professional fields and at their own universities.[29]

I would agree with these assessments. As of 2006, Iraqi universities, while for the most part, operational, still lack critical infrastructure and materials to provide university schooling that meets both the nation's demands and expectations of academic leadership.

[26]In 2003, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded $20 million in grants to five US university consortiums to rebuild Iraq's higher education. None of these consortiums prioritized the issue of safe student commutes.

[27] Haleh Afshar, "Development Studies and Women in the Middle East," 5.

[28] *Ibid*, 5.

[29] UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations), *Women and Management in Higher Education* (Paris: UNESCO, 2002), 31.

Conceptualizing the role gender plays in this study merits special discussion. Women's studies and affiliated scholarship is augmented by in-depth studies of Iraqi university women, which can provide new illustrations of gendering practices. John Tosh writes, "Gender is knowledge,"[30] while Catharine Stimpson defines it as the "architecture of femininity and masculinity" or "patterns of behavior that men and women, *as men and women,* learn, act out and act on."[31] Stimpson emphasizes that studies of women beyond US borders "can challenge our affluent, but tacky, provincialism…repudiat[ing] loftier American generalizations about women as a globally common group."[32] Gender manifests itself *within* "prevailing ideologies and norms, in laws, in citizenship rights, in political dynamics…and economics."[33] One means in which Iraq promulgated Baath nationalism was by exploiting gender integration efforts. Saddam's regime demanded ever-shifting roles for the ideal Iraqi woman. She must, at different times, be a professional, a fruitful mother (putting childbirth before education), educate the illiterate, educate her family and neighbors on Baath ideology, report family and neighbors for any suspicious behavior and, ultimately, be a symbol of the newly "enlightened" Iraq[34] under the magnanimous Saddam Hussein.[35]

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[30] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 3rd ed. (London: Pearson, 2000), 187.
[31] Catharine Stimpson, "Women's Studies: The Idea and the Ideas," *Liberal Education* 73, no. 4 (1987), 37.
[32] *Ibid*, 36.
[33] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 740.
[34] Saddam Hussein, *The Revolution and Woman in Iraq* (Baghdad: Translation and Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), 11.
[35] Ibid, 740.

While the US has an abundance of media pundits postulating their theories, the American public lacks a multidisciplinary, *academic* conceptualization of why Iraq is mired in its current situation. As an illustration, Americans often assume that Iraqi, Saudi and Afghani women are essentially the same – same faith, same oppression, same ethnicity. This is as valid as stating that Canadian and Mexican women are identical because they live on a shared continent. The academic community should make efforts to counteract this collective naiveté, and yet we lack both the studies and the personnel to do so. For instance, of today's 1,084 U.S. international relations professors, nearly half teach extensively on Middle Eastern issues and yet only 7% can be considered regional experts.[36]

Overview of Iraq's Higher Education System

Prior to Baath rule in the 1970's, Iraq maintained a handful of colleges, each under the guidance of an affiliated ministry -- Baghdad's College of Medicine was managed by the Ministry of Health; teachers' colleges came under the auspices of the Ministry of Education; veterinary and agriculture studies were developed by the Ministry of Agriculture, and so forth.[37] College leadership and ministry relations were the responsibility of campus deans.[38] Due to numerous factors, Iraqi higher education boomed in the 1970's. In the decade ending in 1980, the number of Iraqis ages nineteen

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[36] Susan Petersen, Michael J. Tierney and Daniel Maliniak, "Inside the Ivory Tower," *Foreign Policy*, November/December 2005, 58.

[37] Mustafa Al-Abideen, "A Comparative Study of the Perceptions and Expectations of Deans and Faculty Members Regarding the Functions of the College Dean at the University of Basrah," (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1979), 4.

to twenty-three grew from 685,000 to 1,014,000 (32% growth rate).[39] While in 1970 only 30% of high school graduates enrolled as college freshman, by 1980 the rate increased to 50%.[40] Female participation rates were even more dramatic. While the overall increase of male university students in the 1970's rose by 122%, it skyrocketed to 173% for women. By 1980, one-third of all Iraqi university students were female.[41]

As the Baath cemented their powerbase, a vision for centralized higher education emerged. Revolutionary Command Council Mandate 342 (1969) ordered the abolishment "of all colleges and institutions of higher learning and [to organize] a new structure of higher education with a strong intention to integrate national development."[42] In the next year, the MOHE was formally instated. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, by its very name, made explicit that the Iraqi government sought to generate and control applicable scientific and technological advances. Furthermore, Baath indoctrination became mandatory curricula. In the late 1970's the MOHE issued the following:

> New syllabuses must at once be prepared for every level from nursery school to university, inspired by the principles of the party and Revolution … reactionary bourgeois and liberal ideas and trends in the syllabus and the educational institutions must be rooted out. The new generation must be immunized against ideologies and cultures conflicting with our Arab nation's basic aspirations and its

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[38] *Ibid*, 4.
[39] Yousif Hamame, "Higher Education and Labour Market in Iraq: The Case of Engineers," (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 1986), 109.
[40] *Ibid*, 110.
[41] *Ibid*, 110-111.
[42] Kadhim Hussain Bakir, "Arabization of Higher Education in Iraq," (PhD diss., University of Bath, 1984), 194.

aim for unity, liberty and socialism.[43]

Yousif Hamame argues that the centralization of Iraq's higher education system, akin to similar movements in the Middle East, evolved primarily "to meet a particular need for…specialized manpower."[44] Nationalization of Iraq's oil reserves in 1972 made Iraq considerably wealthier and the Baath immediately drew up ambitious infrastructure development plans. By 1980, Iraq had six internationally recognized universities with the University of Baghdad especially well regarded. While prior to the 1970's, many high school graduates pursued university educations because they were not able to secure suitable employment,[45] the hiring boon generated by nationalizing petroleum resources created the greatest impetus for higher education development --although couched in the language of an ideological revolution. Iraqi national mandates included decrees such as: "[The goal of higher education is to] modernize and expand science, technology, and research programmes to meet political, military, economic and social needs of the state."[46] The emphasis on political and military objectives and the omission of the arts, humanities and social sciences forebodes many of the struggles Iraqi universities faced in the ensuing decades. For women, Saddam's tyranny eventually rendered pointless all the promises he made toward their professional advancement.

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[43] ABSP (Arab Baathist Socialist Party) Political Report cited in Samir Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear,* 85.
[44] Yousif Hamame, "Higher Education and Labour Market," 78.
[45] *Ibid*, 113.

Until the Allied Occupation, Iraqi higher education remained highly centralized – although no impression should be given that the MOHE itself was an autonomous agency. Like all government entities, MOHE operations were extensions of Saddam's tyranny and were wholly dependent on the regime for their viability and funding. The MOHE was a considerable bureaucracy, tasked to oversee:

- All public university and technical institute admissions, including which universities students would attend.
- Granting travel permission and scholarships to study abroad.
- Accrediting all public institutes of higher learning.
- Hiring, promotion and termination of all university staff.
- Development and dissemination of all higher education curriculum and courses of study.
- Managing the national higher education budget. This included approving requests for any campus construction as well as textbook, library, lab, computer purchases, etc.

Admission into Iraq's universities remains based entirely on baccalaureate exam scores taken during the last year of high school. Students can list their university and department preferences but, ultimately, the choice is left to the MOHE.[47] Entrance into medical and

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[46] Article 4 of the Iraqi Council of Higher Education and Scientific Research (1970) cited in Kadhim Hussain Bakir, "The Arabization of Higher Education,"196.
[47] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 67.

engineering colleges are the most competitive,[48] followed by scientific and non-medical, pre-professional studies. One female lawyer recounted her university admission experience: "I had not planned to enter the law profession…[i]nstead, I had intended to enter the College of Administration and Economic[s]; but I found that I had been accepted by the College of Law and Politics despite my wish."[49]

The Iraqi academic year begins in early October and ends in June with final exams each semester. Undergraduate degrees in the sciences, arts, and engineering fields are four-year programs; veterinary, pharmacology and dentistry studies require five years; achieving an MD requires six. Humanities students may select either the BA or BSc route.[50] Faculty hierarchy is akin to the US model: professors report to department chairs; department chairs report to deans but deans can report directly to the university president.[51] Lecturers (graduate students or adjunct faculty), assistant professors and full professors provide Iraqi university instruction and achieving tenured status is more a function of MOHE promotion than peer review. Administrative and faculty advancement, especially in the higher echelons, required loyalty oaths to and membership within the Baath Party. [52] These loyalty oaths should not be construed similar to those

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[48] Yousif Hamame, "Higher Education and Labour Market,"123.
[49] Baghdad Observer, "How Women Lawyers Fare," *Baghdad Observer,* September 5, 1978.
[50] Kadhim Hussain Bakir, "The Arabization of Higher Education,"195-196.
[51] Mustafa Al-Abideen, "A Comparative Study," 18.
[52] Steve Niva, "Academic Freedom in the Middle East: Institutional Legacies and Contemporary Predicaments" in *Academic Freedom 4: Education and Human Rights,* ed. Ximena Erazo, Mike Kirkwood and Frederick de Vlaming (London: Zed Books, 1996), 214.

taken by American faculty. Instead, Iraqi faculty vowed to uphold party objectives as well as report colleagues and students involved in suspected anti-Baathist activities.

Iraq currently maintains twenty public universities as well as numerous technical institutes.[53] Among the public universities are more than 200 colleges and 600 academic departments. It is a testament to Iraqi perseverance that, in the weeks after the 2003 invasion, 240,000 students (80% of the total student body) returned to their university studies[54] (of which approximately 18,000 held graduate student status).[55] Numerous media outlets report that females comprise approximately 50% of the total university student body. However, the reliability of this figure should be questioned as this may be based on enrollment and not actual class attendance data.[56]

Historical Overview on the Status of Iraqi Women

Throughout the twentieth century, Iraqi women participated in national independence struggles as well as making demands of their own. In the 1920's, women's organizations protested British imperial rule and promoted education for girls. The Teachers Training College for Women opened its doors in 1923 and Iraq's first female doctors and lawyers began graduating in the late 1940's.[57] While the Iraqi monarchy (1932-1958) outlawed

[53] There are, additionally, eleven private colleges in Iraq, six of which are housed on University of Baghdad campuses. As of 2004, 15,000 students attended private colleges.
[54] Al Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq, *Media Kit,* 2004. (Norman, Oklahoma), 1.
[55] Beriwan Khailany, Deputy Minister of MOHE, Iraq, "Department of Higher Education and Scientific Research: Iraq after the War."
[56] *Ibid.* Deputy Minister Khailany has stated that, nationally, female undergraduates comprise 38% of the total student body.
[57] Doreen Ingrams, *The Awakened,* 120.

many women's organizations,[58] evolving versions of the national constitution recognized full citizenship rights for females. By 1970, the Labour Act promised women equal pay and fair working conditions. The law, however, contradicted itself by stipulating that women were prevented from night shift work, such as nursing, or physically rigorous jobs.[59]

Iraqi women have long been considered the most educated in the Middle East.[60] In the 1980's, more female physicians, scientists and engineers came from Iraq than any other Arab country.[61] Women, in the appropriate cultural context of Iraqi society, engaged in civic and social events and served as laborers and professionals in multiple sectors. Historians stress that it was, again, the economic boon and not Saddam's benevolence that provided enhanced social and economic mobility for women.[62] The 1991 imposition of UN sanctions drastically altered Saddam's second decade of rule. Without the ability to legally sell oil, inflation and corruption overtook every aspect of Iraq's economy and infrastructure. This is not to say that Saddam's earlier years were built on any sort of humane ethic. However, almost every Iraq scholar argues that sanctions, by far, did more damage to Iraqi women than their dictator, the Iran-Iraq War, or the First Gulf War.[63] As an illustration, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports that in

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[58] Deborah Cobbett, "Women in Iraq,"124.
[59] Doreen Ingrams, *The Awakened,* 106.
[60] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 743.
[61] Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor,* 244.
[62] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 744.
[63] See, for example, Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 747. Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor,* 226-230.

1991, Iraq maintained the region's highest rate of women in the workforce at 23%. By 1997, it had fallen to 10%.[64] In effect, the situation in Iraq is one of confounding variables – we cannot distinguish a discrete amount of damage that just one event, such as sanctions or the First Gulf War, instigated.

The 2003 "liberation of Iraq" severely curtailed women's access to higher learning. Adding to the scholastic deprivation created by sanctions, Iraqi university women now deal with lengthy security checkpoints, suicide bombings, looting, and clerical groups intent on terrifying them into Islamist ideals of appropriate womanhood. Allied Occupation agencies interceded on behalf of women, although these efforts can be construed as misguided. UN Resolution 1325 called for Iraq's women to be fully included in reconstruction and government building efforts.[65] While historically Iraqis promoted women's advancement, they are in no mood, after sanctions and two wars with the west, to mimic US methods of gender integration. The intent of UN Resolution 1325 may be based upon women's innate rights but the tone is entirely too Western and condescending for some Iraqis, women included.[66] Nadje Al-Ali further explains that demands "for the mainstreaming of gender…[are] being linked to the wider issue of foreign occupation, neocolonial configurations and an interim government that lacks widespread credibility."[67]

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[64] UNDP, (2000). *Country Report: 1999-2000,* 2000, Iraq Country Office (electronic version).
[65] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 739.
[66] *Ibid*, 739 and 757.

Academic expertise on Iraq should demand commensurate scholarship on women and higher education researchers must consider female students' perspectives. This study is not a feminist polemic but rather feminist scholarship in practice; framed upon the premise that women engage in formal schooling through means unique to regional and social constructs of gender. As researchers, we must view the influence of gender in schooling as an integral component of the student experience. The stories of these women do not represent the Other, or, rather said, a corollary to the history of Iraqi higher education. Instead, their narratives are essential to and exemplify multifarious facets of Iraq's university system. Certainly, these women experienced higher education in ways unique to their gender. However, there are numerous factors, for instance, tyranny, embargoes and war that affected all students. By validating the influence of gender, historians are not generating exclusive histories, but rather inclusive and complete narratives.

Unfortunately, some Western scholars do not adequately address Iraqi female perspectives. Keith Watenpaugh, a recognized expert, has written extensively on contemporary Iraqi higher education. However, his brief commentaries regarding female students leave more questions than answers. Indeed, at times, he seems to forget the presence of university women altogether. Iraq's cafés, according to Watenpaugh, have

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[67] *Ibid*, 739.

long been intellectual enclaves although "exclusively male spaces."[68] In an article later the same year, he describes these same cafes as where "Iraqis of *all strata* test for themselves the very limits of free speech and thought."[69] This illustrates a common misstep in research on Iraq, regardless of the author's gender. We cannot accurately measure freedoms and opportunity in Iraq absent valid data from women. To omit their experiences indicates a worldview where the status of women is of secondary significance.

Study Structure

This dissertation is the resulting coalescence of primary and secondary textual evidence, augmented by interviews from seven women who attended the Universities of Baghdad, Basra or Technology between 1979 and 2005. Subsequent chapters are historical studies examining student experiences' of national events and phenomena. Chapter Two is an overview of postsecondary education under the Baath regime; Chapter Three recounts female students' experiences of the Iran-Iraq and First Gulf Wars as well as UN embargoes. Chapter Four assesses the condition of Iraqi higher education since the 2003 Allied Invasion. In the final chapter, recommendations for postsecondary rehabilitation are presented. Each chapter is framed upon analyzing how external and campus events influenced students, notably women, and the meanings they took from these. Since

[68] Keith Watenpaugh, Edouard Metenier, Jens Hanssen and Hala Fattah, "Opening the Doors: Intellectual Life and Academic Conditions in Post-War Baghdad," *The Iraqi Observatory*, 2003, 24. Italics mine.
[69] Keith Watenpaugh, "Fragile Glasnost on the Tigris," *Middle East Report*, 228. (2003), 2.

historical research is inherently conceptual[70] and interpretive and supported by textual evidence, the *explanations* for events and phenomena are imbedded in the history themselves. Historians list events A, B & C that created circumstances D, E & F.[71] Therefore, it seemed inappropriate to include a chapter on findings and analysis. Conclusions arrived at from restorying the data were more appropriately situated when placed in the historical chapters themselves because they indicate the climate in which Iraqi universities and female students existed.

In an effort to not interrupt the flow of the overarching narrative, the method of study is contained in Appendix A. This in no way diminishes its significance but rather places it in a more appropriate setting for historical scholarship. Appendix B is a chronology of significant events in modern Iraqi history and a sampling of interview questions are in Appendix C. Institutional Review Board documents can be found in Appendix D, acronyms are defined in Appendix E and Appendix F groups cited scholars according to their expertise.

Biases

Acknowledging the theoretical lens I bring to this study enhances my ability to write objectively as well as generate germane conclusions and recommendations. In narrative research, the theoretical lens is "the guiding principle or ideology that provides

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[70] Here "conceptual" refers to the generation of ideas from specific events.
[71] Robert Fox, class lecture, Prospectus Development, Adult and Higher Education Program, University of Oklahoma, (November 7, 2005).

structure."[72] As the research gathering instrument, I process the data through my own preconceived notions of the function of higher education as well as my perceptions of gender and the Middle East. It can be presumed that totalitarian regimes, wars and economic deprivation generate stressors and that researchers attempt to quantify and qualify these. It would be, however, imprudent to make conclusive statements until data have been collected, deconstructed and repieced thematically, uncovering a more robust and focused narrative. The beliefs and assumptions that I bring to this research include:

- Higher education plays a vital role in national development, international engagement as well as the capacity to foster and sustain an open civil society.
- Nation states have an obligation to promote and provide, to the best of their abilities, postsecondary education independent of ideological agendas and political machinations.
- Higher education should be both available and affordable to every qualified student regardless of gender, ethnicity, faith, orientation, political affiliation or physical limitations.
- Higher education furnishes critical formative experiences in terms of self-identity and civic engagement.
- External campus events such as civil strife and economic hardships impact universities' resilience.

[72] John Creswell, *Educational Research*, 476.

- Unstable conditions in modern day Iraq are the result of British imperialism, tyranny, numerous wars, US and their allies' interventions, UN sanctions as well as competing ethnic and religious factions.
- Gender is a social, not physiological, construct and refers to the historical, social and cultural mores that define norms of femaleness and maleness.
- Women can experience schooling differently from men due to gender constructs.

By validating the existence of my biases, I confirm that this study's approach is not without certain objectives. Aside from generating a thorough history, I also seek to expose the calamitous state of contemporary Iraqi higher education. This is done in the hopes that my academic colleagues, across multiple disciplines, will explore their own potentialities in extending assistance to Iraqi universities.

CHAPTER TWO
The Mirage and Menace of the Baathist University: 1979 – 2003

The history of Iraq's universities and their female students is one of tensions, widening polarities between what the state expected from higher education and the educational venues students needed; between autocracy and the desire to learn in a stable and democratic civil society. Despite the high regional regard Iraqi universities held in the 1980's, Saddam deprived them of their vitality, insistent that academia avail itself completely to his whims and nationalist agendas. Woven throughout this narrative is evidence of resilience and defiance, when students took advantage of the state's inability to control every mind and idea. This chapter provides historical context to Saddam's adulterated oversight of higher education and the strained conditions in which universities and female students attempted to persevere.

University women's interviews triangulate, complement and sometimes question the trustworthiness of the documents analyzed in this study. These testimonies verify what is yielded in historical documents, especially important since most of the cited scholars and journalists are neither Iraqis nor graduates of Iraqi universities. Eight Iraqi university women volunteered to serve as research participants for this study.[73] Pertinent biographical data for each, as well personal impressions based on interview transcripts, both quantifies and qualifies the significance of their commentaries. In an effort to

[73] The IRB Consent Letter and IRB Approval can be found in Appendix D. Appendix C contains a sampling on interview questions.

distinguish between scholarly and participants' comments, the names of these eight women are bolded.[74]

Azhar is the eldest participant at fifty-six years old and demonstrated the most visible involvement in Iraq's current reconstruction through her advocacy work and as the founder of the Iraqi Women's Charitable Association. While her parents were not college-educated, **Azhar** achieved an impressive academic record. She attended the University of Basra in 1971to study biology, followed by graduate and doctoral level work at both the University of the Philippines and University of Basra, where she is currently a professor of marine biology. **Azhar** is married to a professor and the mother of five children, ages seventeen to twenty-nine. **Ghaida** is also a University of Basra instructor, having worked a decade to complete her PhD in computer engineering.[75] **Ghaida's** life is marked by sorrow. Her only brother was killed during the First Gulf War and her sister emigrated to Australia, rarely able to enjoy her family's company. **Ghaida**, a single professional, lives with her mother and survived open heart surgery and an aggressive breast cancer during her doctoral studies.

Linda's responses are often acerbic and witty, betraying both her disgust and apathy with Iraq's tyranny and cycle of wars. At twenty-seven years old, **Linda** is completing her

[74] With the permission of the eight interview participants and the IRB, real first names have been used in this study.
[75] I have a friendship with **Ghaida**, although we have never met in person, since my work at the Al-Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq. Her biographical data is based on personal emails sent in 2003-2006.

master's in translation and linguistics studies at the University of Baghdad; her undergraduate was awarded by the University of al-Mustansiriyah in 2002 (same field). She is also unmarried. **Nedal**, a decade older, described her father as an "unskilled worker, cook and guard and my mother was a housewife," and that, as an adolescent, her career ambitions were to be a physician. Instead, **Nedal** attended the University of Kuwait, achieving a bank and finance undergraduate degree in 1990. In 1997, she completed an MBA at the University of Basra and her PhD in business administration five years later. Another single woman, **Nedal's** measured responses revealed both positive and negative aspects of Saddam's regime. **Mayyada** was more reserved in her email interviews, exhibiting less disclosure than most respondents. She is single, forty-five years old and the daughter of a businessman and schoolteacher. **Mayyada** graduated from the University of Baghdad, first in 1984 with a BA in English literature and then in 1988 with dual master's degrees in English literature and modern drama.

Finally, there is **Nidhal**[76] and her two daughters, **Wasna** and **Shayma**. Married to an architect who holds a PhD, **Nidhal** is completing her own PhD studies at the University of Technology where she is also a lecturer. She shared her concerns about young Iraqis notions of democracy, "The young people thought democracy meant that they could do anything they want and thought it was what you saw in American movies." This is, perhaps, a reflection of her experience as a mother and grandmother, including harrowing moments of barely escaping street violence in Baghdad. **Nidhal** has three daughters, two

of which met this study's criteria.[77] **Shayma**, **Nidhal's** eldest, wrote that her career goals were to graduate from high school with high enough grades that she could attend the college of dentistry, "and thank god, I did," in 2000. **Shayma** has a three year-old daughter, and between hers and her mother's interviews, **Shayma's** psychological suffering became apparent. She also exhibited a good deal of self-determination, especially in her personal life. When asked whether she was married while in college, **Shayma** revealed, "No, I [wasn't] married nor engaged, just in love…my dad ha[d] firm laws that no engagement until graduation, so the same day of graduation I was engaged. My husband is a dentist." **Nidhal's** second daughter, **Wasna**, is the study's youngest participant at twenty-two years old. Her career ambitions sound more indifferent compared to her sister's, "Maybe it is a pity, but I can't remember that I had a goal, all I wanted was to get an average of marks that could get me in any college I want." **Wasna's** MOHE acceptance letter stated she was to attend the University of Mosul (in northern Iraq) despite her request for the University of Baghdad. Her mother, using her professional contacts, was able to secure **Wasna's** admission to the University of Baghdad in the end. **Wasna's** email commentaries were always distinguished by her enthusiastic use of exclamation points and capital letters.

While this cohort represents a multiplicity of social and educational backgrounds, as well as diverse in age, for the Universities of Baghdad, Basra and Technology, I have always

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[76] **Nidhal** visited the University of Oklahoma in 2004 and part of her biographical data and insights were gathered from that visit.
[77] Discussed in Appendix A.

remained struck by the collective academic persistence these women exhibited. Each endured Saddam's regime and sanctions as well as surviving at least two wars. Only three participants studied abroad at some point but all demonstrated a keen understanding of how Iraqi universities compared to regional and western institutions. Every participant either attended graduate school or has plans to do so, many with the hopes that they may complete programs abroad.

Managing Higher Education

A swelling youth population, rapid industrialization and a booming oil economy fueled the advancement of Iraqi higher education. Prior to Saddam's presidency, the Iraqi government supported postsecondary schooling; the 1974 Free Education Law provided free education from primary school through the university level at any public institution.[78] University students could also expect free textbooks, health care and, often, housing.[79] In the same year, another law guaranteed public sector employment for all university graduates. Again, the state supported Iraqi universities to address labor needs -- not for the simple ambition to educate the Iraqi people.[80] Nonetheless, Iraq's financial windfall (as a result of nationalizing oil preserves) allowed Saddam to invest $20 billion

[78] Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy, "Iraq," in International Higher Education: An Encyclopedia, vol. 2, ed. Philip G. Altbach (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), 1021.
[79] Mustafa al-Abideen, "A Comparative Study of the Perceptions and Expectations of Deans and Faculty Members Regarding the Functions of College Deans at the University of Basrah" (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1979), 17.
[80] Yousif Hamame, "Higher Education and the Labour Market in Iraq: The Case of Engineers" (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 1986), 78.

annually into infrastructure,[81] or approximately $1000 per Iraqi. At the close of the 1980's, 20% of the total education budget went to higher education; by 1992, it rose to nearly 25%.[82] A great deal of this increased financing reflects the professionalization of the Iraqi middle class with dramatic rises in women's university enrollment especially.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, established in 1970, was tasked to oversee all public university management and development. From the onset, the medical and hard sciences, as well as engineering and allied technical fields, received more supervision from national entities.[83] The Council of Higher Education and Scientific Research was Iraq's "supreme scientific body,"[84] under the direct oversight of Saddam Hussein. Council members included MOHE personnel, university presidents, the president of the Union of Iraqi Lecturers and student representatives. The Council's objective was to fashion "a supreme policy of education, culture, science and technology, considering its coordination and integration with the proposed social and economic programmes of the state."[85] The MOHE's regulatory nature encapsulated more than accreditation standards and operational support. Its overarching function was to generate a replenishing pool of skilled, Baath-supporting citizens.

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[81] Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor: Muslim Women Life the Veil of Silence in the Islamic World* (New York: Plume Publishing, 2003), 244.
[82] UNESCO, *Situation Analysis of Education in Iraq*, April 2003, Paris, 73.
[83] Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy, "Iraq," 1018.
[84] Yousif Hamame, "Higher Education and the Labour Market," 87.
[85] *Ibid*, 87.

Naturally, such administrative oversight inhibited academic freedom.[86] For instance, professors had to secure MOHE research approval before embarking on a sabbatical semester[87] allowing "for little pretence of free inquiry."[88] Steve Niva claims the Iraqi regime sustained

> a pattern of violations of academic freedom that ranges from direct censorship and interrogation to institutionalized control and manipulation, from restricting educational materials to storming universities campuses.[89]

A blatant example of curtailed academic inquiry is that the government required every typewriter and copier be registered with them[90] -- not for inventory measures but to make users accountable for any documents generated from them. Interview participants mentioned additional regulated items including wireless communication and internet devices; "computers were on the top [of the] list in the 70's, then in the late 80's this was found [to be] a foolish decision."[91] Iraq is hardly alone in persecuting their professoriate -- many Middle Eastern countries have poor records concerning academic freedom. Palestine, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have banned research programs and textbooks and interrogated instructors. Following a 1980 coup in Turkey, 2,000 faculty

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[86] The definition of academic freedom most appropriate to this study is that issued as the "Lima Declaration on Academic Freedom and Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education" (1988) which defines academic freedom as "freedom of members of the academic community, individually or collectively, in the pursuit, development and transmission of knowledge, through research, study, discussion, documentation, production, creation, teaching, lecturing or writing." Full text at: http://www.hrw.org/reports98/indonesia2/Borneote-13.htm.

[87] Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy, "Iraq,"1023.

[88] Steve Niva, "Academic Freedom in the Middle East: Institutional Legacies and Contemporary Predicaments," in *Academic Freedom 4: Education and Human Rights,* ed. Ximena Erazo, Mike Kirkwood and Frederick de Vlaming (London: Zed Books, 1996), 210.

[89] *Ibid*, 207.

[90] *Ibid*, 210.

[91] Interview comment by **Nidhal**.

members lost their jobs and some were imprisoned.[92] For the Arab region, where "institutionalization of the educational systems [is a] part of state-building,"[93] model citizenship is expected from the most eminent scholars, not civil disobedience.

The Universities of Baghdad, Basra and Technology

Both the University of Baghdad and the University of Basra are spread across multiple city campuses. The majority of University of Baghdad students attend the al-Jadiriyya campus butted against the Tigris River or the Bab al-Muazzam liberal arts campus, nearer to downtown. Today, the University of Baghdad enrolls approximately 72,000 students (41% female).[94] The University of Basra is in Iraq's second largest city and mere miles from Iran and Kuwait. The University of Technology is located in Baghdad.

The 1956 founding of the University of Baghdad incorporated a dozen Iraqi colleges that had been established as early as 1908.[95] Four years later, graduate programs were begun with an enrollment of 14 students. By 1965, the University of Baghdad had more than 700 graduate students.[96] At both the undergraduate and graduate level, the university relied heavily on foreign instructors because of a limited, qualified Iraqi teaching pool.

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[92] Steve Niva, "Academic Freedom in the Middle East," 207.
[93] *Ibid*, 208.
[94] MOHE Enrollment Report, Internal document from the Al Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq, University of Oklahoma, December 2004.
[95] Kadhim Hussain Bakir, "Arabization of Higher Education in Iraq" (PhD diss., University of Bath, 1984), 192.
[96] *Ibid*, 225.

Of the 1265 teaching members at the University of Baghdad in 1965, 20.6% were foreigners.[97] Table I illustrates the university's composition:

TABLE 1: Instructors' Nationalities at the University of Baghdad, 1965. [98]

COUNTRY/REGION OF ORIGIN	NUMBER TEACHING AT U. BAGHDAD
Egypt	131
India	33
United States	26
United Kingdom	19
Germany	15
Eastern Europe	16
Other Nationalities	21
Iraqi	1004
TOTAL TEACHING FACULTY	**1265**

Most Iraqi universities relied on foreign teaching personnel and even by 1980, only two-thirds of all university instructors were Iraqis.[99] **Ghaida** recalled that the majority of her University of Basra engineering professors were Indian, Polish and Egyptian and that she preferred their teaching and testing methods. "Most Iraqi staff," she wrote, "[were] too stiff and not…accepting [of other] opinions." Another means by which Iraq addressed its lack of native teaching staff was to require government employees (who held a master's

[97] *Ibid*, 223.
[98] *Ibid*, 223.
[99] Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy, "Iraq," 1017.

degree or higher) to teach up to six hours weekly in their field at an assigned university.[100]

Several Iraqi universities maintain colleges for female students only. For instance, at the University of Baghdad there are women's colleges in education, physical education and science. This does not mean that female students interested in these subjects must enroll in the women's colleges, they may choose either sex-segregated or co-educational programs. Rather, women's colleges are vestiges of earlier single sex schooling and remain viable as some Iraqi families will not permit their daughters to engage in co-educational learning. Nonetheless, these women's colleges represent a small minority of all Iraqi higher education and none of the women who participated in this study attended a single-sex college. **Nidhal** explained that the state did not necessarily endorse segregated schooling. However, because Iraq needed to maintain primary and secondary teaching staff levels, they provided teacher training venues that appealed to "the desires of parents," concluded **Nidhal**.

The city of Baghdad, renowned for its ancient and scholastic heritage, stands in contrast to Basra in southeastern Iraq. The region is geographically significant for multiple reasons. Basra is where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers merge to flow into the Persian Gulf. The region contains most of Iraq's vast oil reserves, date palm industries, marshlands and Iraq's only sea access. Prior to the Iran-Iraq War, Basra was a

[100] *Ibid,* 1023.

cosmopolitan playground known for its nightclubs, casinos and foreign shops that were frequented by wealthy Kuwaitis.[101] In 1964, four colleges were established in Basra, under the auspices of the University of Baghdad. The University of Basra became autonomous in 1967[102] with graduate studies beginning in the 1970's.[103] At first, like other Iraqi universities, the University of Basra relied solely on MOHE faculty appointments. However, by the mid 1980's, the university began to cultivate its own specialized expertise and teaching staff that, with the MOHE's approval, pursued advanced studies in Baghdad or abroad.[104] As of December 2004, the University of Basra enrolled more than 23,000 students and has one of the highest rates of female students nationally (44%).[105]

The University of Technology in Baghdad was established as a vocational technology center in 1974.[106] As Iraqi infrastructure became increasingly technocratic, the university gained acclaim for its engineering and computer programs as well as training technical educators. Today, the campus serves 13,342 students (28% female).[107] In the 1990's, UN weapons inspections teams repeatedly investigated the University of Technology for

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[101] George Packer, "Testing Ground," *New Yorker*, February 28, 2005, http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/050228fa_fact.
[102] Kadhim Hussain Bakir, "Arabization of Higher Education in Iraq," 194.
[103] *Ibid*, 194.
[104] *Ibid*, 226.
[105] MOHE Enrollment Report.
[106] UNU (United Nations University), *The Current Status and Future Prospects for the Transformation and Reconstruction of the Higher Education System in Iraq*, http://www.unu.edu/news/ili/Iraq.doc.
[107] MOHE Enrollment Report.

suspected atomic and biological weapons labs. In 2003, Allied Forces again searched for evidence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).[108]

Baath Ambitions for Higher Education

Yousif Hamame observes "There is a choice between educating the individual for his own sake and educating him for the sake of the nation."[109] Since the onset of Baath rule, Iraqi universities served state ambitions before those of their students. Naturally, every nation has a vested interest in higher education. By supporting post secondary entities, nations seek to enrich human potential for their own benefit and among international venues. However, Iraq's governance of higher education is unique for its overtly exploitative nature -- human potential could only be measured against its perceived value to the state, including the advancement of women. Baath dogma saturated every aspect of Iraqi higher education in order to hone a technocratic, compliant citizenry.[110] In **Nedal's** estimation, "Saddam ruined the whole education [system]" and the Iraqi Prospect Organisation described Iraq's higher education as such: "rather than places of political and social dialogue, universities were just another means of indoctrination and control by the state."[111] Consequently, while Iraqi universities maintained a regional

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[108] Barton Gellman, "Iraq's Arsenal Was Only on Paper Since Gulf War, Nonconventional Weapons Never Got Past the Planning Stage," *Washington Post*, January 7, 2004, A01.
[109] Yousif Hamame, "Higher Education and the Labour Market," 105.
[110] Keith Watenpaugh, Edouard Metenier, Jens Hanssen and Hala Fattah, "Opening the Doors: Intellectual Life and Academic Conditions in Post-War Baghdad," *The Iraqi Observatory*, 2003, 6.
[111] Iraqi Prospect Organisation, *Iraqi Constitution: Attitudes Toward Democracy*, http://www.iprospect.org.uk.

reputation for excellence, the reality within Iraq is that they struggled to meet regime standards. [112]

As early as 1978, ABSP agendas discussed "Baathizing" universities, including directives to hire and promote Baath members only.[113] The Iraqi tenure system guaranteed "employment but not necessarily rank" -- that was tied directly to demonstrated ABSP loyalty.[114] Professors who actively promoted the Baath party on campus found it "increasingly easy … to move through the ranks."[115] This practice reflected the professional caste system taking place throughout Saddamist Iraq. Once the vast majority of industries and institutions had been nationalized, job placement and advancement became tethered to Baath membership. Increased pay and rank demanded further public support of the regime as well as submitting intelligence reports.[116] Professors were expected to participate in Baathist campus rallies and to meet with senior party members,[117] presumably to receive directives and report any suspicious behavior on the part of their colleagues or students. Some professors refused to make public their politics and faced the repercussions. One ABSP document insisted that any educator who

[112] Keith Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors," 19.
[113] Steve Niva, "Academic Freedom in the Middle East," 214.
[114] Keith Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors," 19.
[115] *Ibid*, 19.
[116] Zainab Salbi and Laurie Becklund, *Between Two Worlds* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 33.
[117] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 50.

refused to join the party must sign an "Implicating Pledge" which was then forwarded to regional RCC headquarters.[118]

Again, Iraqi universities are not unique in their existence under autocratic rule. Steve Niva contends that Middle Eastern regimes commonly "embed and reproduce their rule in educational systems."[119] Niva further explains

> This is done through controlling curricula, books and educational facilities as well as monitoring who can teach and providing incentives for those who serve the goals of state power and prestige. These methods often result in situations where limitations of academic freedom need to be understood in the broader context of a multitude of institutional pressures and inertia, as well as self-censorship.[120]

Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy concurs with Niva, connecting efforts to upgrade schooling systems to Arab nationalist movements.[121] Arab nationalism required adherents who could identify their exploiters as well as their own potential as a talented yet obedient population. Universities ideally filled this niche as the instructional centers for appropriate citizenship and professional engagement. They represented Saddam's modernity and generosity as well as the vow between the professional classes and the tyrant.

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[118] IRDP-NIDS-322091, April 7, 1986, (Iraq Research and Documentation Project). Formerly of Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, this archival website is being reloaded by the Iraq Memory Foundation at http://www.iraqmemory.org.
[119] Steve Niva, "Academic Freedom in the Middle East,"208.
[120] *Ibid*, 208.
[121] Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy, "Iraq,"1024.

As the ABSP conceptualized how to indoctrinate Iraqis (a process called Baathification), two educational pillars were established – "mental guidance" and "Baath education."[122] Objectives included:

- Targeting special populations including women and students at all levels.
- Inundating public dialogue spaces, such as cafes, with Baath treatises.
- Promoting rallies and artistic works glorifying the Baath.
- Controlling all media outlets and flooding them with images of Saddam and transcripts of his speeches.
- Initiating "home education visits" to present ABSP objectives, outline what was expected of every Iraqi citizen and insisting that "hostile activities" be immediately reported.[123]

The Baath recognized that indoctrination required formal and informal instruction and that Iraqis of all strata had the potential to advance or subvert their nationalist ambitions – notably thinkers, artists, youth, journalists and parents. The nation's universities were, in a fashion, laboratory schools where innovations in propaganda and "mental guidance" could be developed and practiced.

University departments were concerned with their relevance to the regime. Academic departments managed a precarious existence – too much attention from the regime was stifling and could be dangerous; being irrelevant could result in financial neglect. Unlike engineering, medicine, and the hard sciences, the humanities and fine arts did not have

[122] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word,* 50.

"an obviously pragmatic value to the state"[124] but they were not entirely ignored. By the 1980's, the Ministry of Information actively recruited artists and writers, faculty and students, providing financial incentives for their intelligence gathering efforts.[125] Such an arrangement, completely coercive on the part of the regime, vanquished any semblance of academic freedom and civil liberties. For those reported upon by their colleagues, the repercussions seemed especially ominous. In 1986, a faculty of arts professor was arrested for distributing "50 Kurdish and Arabic hand-written hostile pamphlets" with alleged communist passages. During his interrogation, the professor named his fellow "communist saboteurs" which included at least one student. There is sufficient contextual evidence to suspect any confessions made by the professor were done so under extreme duress.[126] One of the offending passages from the confiscated literature read "Democracy for Iraq."[127] As shall be seen, university women also faced accusation and interrogation, often sexually victimized by state officials.

Saddam: Imagined Scholar

If the learning outcomes had not been so disastrous, Saddam's foray into scholarly writing might be viewed with amusement. Under the assumption that his "scholarship" was integral to Iraqi canon, Saddam insisted that *The Political Dictionary of Saddam Husayn* and *The Complete Writing of Saddam Husayn* (all eighteen volumes) be

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[123] *Ibid,* 50.
[124] Keith Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors," 20.
[125] Steve Niva, "Academic Freedom in the Middle East," 212.
[126] *Ibid,* 215 and Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor,* 225.

published early in his presidency.[128] Saddam exploited Iraq's scholarly milieu by publishing several books that were more works of myth weaving than valid research.[129] While Saddam held two law degrees (University of Cairo, 1962 and University of al-Mustansiriyah, 1971), he seemed more keenly interested in history and how he could manipulate it to his ends. In the 1980's Saddam unabashedly stated that history "should be written to serve the interests of the Iraqi society as defined by Baathist ideology."[130] In the estimation of Ofra Bengio,

> The [Baath] regime interfered massively in the writing (or rewriting) of history and in the didactic messages it was meant to convey. [Hussein] declared that history was not written for the dead, it was there to guide the living… [H]istoriography must accentuate the ideal and heroic figures—not so much to do them justice but rather to make them into role models.[131]

For the Baath, history was an indoctrinating tool with an evocative function[132] – requiring students to conform, not think. Saddam reminded educators that "We do not seek to return to history but rather to move history towards us"[133] and that history should inspire Iraqis "without theoretical or philosophical explanations or analyses that might confuse them."[134]

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[127] IRDP-NIDS-315990 January 8, 1986. This case is in reference to the University of Salahaddin.
[128] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word,* 78.
[129] *Ibid,* 78.
[130] Eric Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides, "Statescraft, Historical Memory and Popular Culture in Iraq and Kuwait," in *Statescraft in the Middle East: Oil, Historical Memory, and Popular Culture*, ed. Eric Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides, (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991), 139.
[131] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word,* 167.
[132] *Ibid,* 167.
[133] *Ibid,* 164.
[134] *Ibid,* 164. The Baath also selectively revised education and geography textbooks. *Ibid,* 50.

The impact to the historical record is apparent – contemporary Iraqi history is difficult to write simply because there is a great deal of fiction and omission in sanctioned sources.[135] Saddam rejected western or Orientalist[136] interpretations of Arab history for their "imperialist and racist concepts."[137] While there is merit to this stance, the Saddamist version of history was vainglorious and promoted racist and ethnocentric concepts in an attempt to legitimize his rule and wars on an intellectual basis. Today, Iraq's history books lack accounts of the Iran-Iraq War or invasion of Kuwait presumably because more objective accounts of these events are not yet available.[138]

Nearly all higher education curricula were revised to idolize Saddam and Arab heritage. Measures included the ineffectual Arabization campaign and mandatory coursework known as "Arab Social Studies." The manipulation of curriculum also included limiting access; Tariq Aziz, the longtime Minister of Information, sent a letter to the MOHE requesting that

> Due to public welfare requirements, and security and media reasons, please inform all institutions and departments in your charge to not circulate any foreign-printed material perfunctorily. Such material should be presented first to this Ministry's department of censure to obtain approval for circulation.[139]

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[135] Juan Cole, "The Difficulty Writing Iraqi History in the United States," *History News Network*, January 20, 2003. http://hnn.us/articles/1207.html.
[136] Orientalist refers to post-colonial, western-oriented studies of the Near and Far East.
[137] *Ibid*, 169.
[138] Ilana Ozernoy, "Betwixt and Between," *U.S. News and World Report*, October 4, 2004, 34.
[139] IRDP-NIDS-1107916, March 20, 1976.

Mayyada, who attended the University of Baghdad (1980-1984) as an English literature student recalls, "any books that [were] related to Anti-Baath ideologies or those by Jewish writers were banned."

All undergraduates were required to take Arab Social Studies -- approximately 240 instructional hours over four years.[140] **Mayyada** remembers assigned texts by Saddam and that Arab Social Studies was not "aimed for education but as a sort of propaganda for the party's principles." Andrew Rubin describes the course as "a brain-numbing, chauvinistic and hyper-nationalist occasion for unrestrained celebration of Baathism, elevating the writing of party theoreticians to canonical heights."[141] **Nedal** offered a more nuanced perspective, writing, "It shows how this country is unique and the great men and ideas which buil[t] this country. There was a lot of good stuff but [it has] been used to reinforce the party's objectives." She adds, "The party was using our legacy to validate its own ideas and pass them to youth." One focus of Arab Social Studies was to "describe America and Israel as the number one enemy for Arab[s] and Iraq," according to **Azhar**. **Linda** concurs, recalling that Arab Social Studies was intended to teach "how wonderful Arabs are and how base the others, who all our enemies are."

The Arabization movement, as it manifested itself on universities, was one response to anti-Western sentiments and considered "an essential basis for Arabizing other aspects of

[140] Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy, "Iraq," 1017. Al-Rubaiy also notes that as of 1986, every undergraduate was also required to take computer science coursework.

life such as administration, courts, banks, factories, etc."[142] For many Arab academics, the Middle East's subjugation to western imperialism and capitalism was partly the result of the region's inability to make scientific advancements relevant to their own needs and in their own language.[143] Kadhim Hussain Bakir wrote his 1984 dissertation on Iraqi efforts to covert the language of instruction, textbooks and technical terminology into Arabic for the sake "emancipat[ing] science from its narrow circles."[144] The Law of the Preservation of Soundness of the Arabic Language (1977) vested the Iraqi Scientific Academy with "coining scientific and technical terminology."[145] Furthermore, the MOHE issued numerous directives stating that Arabic was Iraq's official language of university instruction.[146] Despite the presence of coded law, the issue has been problematic for numerous reasons. During the 1970's and 1980's, Iraqi universities had too many foreign instructors unable to teach in Arabic. **Ghaida**, **Azhar**, and **Shayma** each stated that the majority of their science, medical and engineering courses were taught in English. **Wasna's** experience was similar, her Arab Social Studies class was taught in Arabic but "all other classes were in English." **Ghaida's** case is intriguing – while her electrical engineering classes were predominantly given in English, classes with an immediate pragmatic value to Iraqi development, such as power and communication systems, were taught in Arabic.

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[141] Andrew Rubin, "The Slaughter of Iraq's Intellectuals," *New Statesman*, September 6, 2004. 24.
[142] Kadhim Hussain Bakir, "Arabization of Higher Education in Iraq," 115.
[143] *Ibid,* 102.
[144] *Ibid,* 199.
[145] *Ibid,* 204.
[146] *Ibid,* 116.

The lack of qualified Arabic speaking instructors was only one reason the Arabization movement did not succeed. Iraq also needed Arabic textbooks and terminology but translation staff and publishing houses could not keep pace with MOHE and university demands.[147] The greatest challenge to Arabization was the public's response. Students' parents voiced concern that, by not repeatedly reading, writing and speaking in English, their children would limit their study abroad and employment options.[148] **Azhar** recalled how her English-based marine biology courses helped in later international research collaborations. Since most Iraqi school children had eight years of English instruction (beginning at the age of eleven) and many university freshmen had compulsory English courses,[149] the regime obviously placed some value on the ability to speak the language.[150] Graduate students realized that

> scientific research carried out in English and published in a foreign journal still [made] a greater impression on researchers in general, and on promotion and research committees, in particular, than work carried out in Arabic.[151]

Hussain Bakir, writing about the fluctuant application of Arabization standards, explains, "This practice…has encouraged the use of foreign languages in scientific institutes, while Arabic was more associated with teaching humanistic subjects."[152] **Azhar** mentioned that

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[147] *Ibid,* 215.
[148] *Ibid,* 15.
[149] *Ibid,* 234.
[150] Bakir contends that a majority of entering freshman had inferior English skills making it difficult for them to understand textbooks or follow scientific lectures. *Ibid,* 235.
[151] *Ibid,* 218.
[152] *Ibid,* 116.

until the 1990's the majority of their scientific lectures were delivered in English but noticed an increase in coursework in Arabic after that. This may indicate enhanced measures by the Baath to advance Arabization in an era of international tensions and foreign wars. For instance, **Nedal's** graduate coursework in business and finance (1998-2002) was taught in Arabic although her instructors relied on English language textbooks. Not surprisingly, Arab Social Studies was always taught in Arabic. The Arabization program illustrates how the Iraqi government was more concerned with conversion than cognition, believing that every lesson should be infused with nationalist objectives. In this fashion, curriculum detoured from pure studies and became subservient to ideology. Students remained savvy enough in understanding their higher education was being forsaken for Saddam's glory, as indicated by the comments made by interview participants. However, the nature of Saddam's Iraq, as is true with any regime, prevented students and faculty from generating sustained, proactive protest.

Undergraduate and Graduate Standards

Iraq maintained six public universities by 1980 with impressive enrollment numbers: Baghdad University had approximately 35,000 students; Basra University more than 10,000 and Technology University enrolled 8,000.[153] Increasingly, students from other Arab nations applied to Iraqi universities that were held in regional regard.[154] University admissions remained competitive and determined entirely by students' baccalaureate

[153] Iraq Ministry of Planning. *Annual Abstract of Statistics: 1980*, 240 – 241.
[154] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq* (New York: The Feminist Press, 2005), 66.

exam scores. Each academic department maintained enrollment quotas "determined in relation to Iraq's Development Plan"[155] with medical and engineering programs most popular and selective, followed by the sciences and finally non-scientific courses of study.[156] Approximately 50% of university applicants were denied admissions based on their baccalaureate scores in the 1980's.[157] Corrupt student admissions were a common Baath practice, commonly known by university students. The RCC habitually waived admissions requirements for family members and allies.[158] A 1978 RCC decree permitted any member of the armed forces or internal security forces to be admitted into any university of their choice, regardless of their baccalaureate exam scores.[159] **Linda**, a University of Baghdad graduate student, explained that applicants designated as "Leader's Friends" benefited from their political ties by being given extra five points on their exam scores.

Alongside preferential treatment for some applicants were admissions practices that diminished opportunity -- based on factors completely apart from academic performance. The MOHE identified applicants by religious and ethnic markers: applicants' files were yellow if they were Arabs, red for Kurds and green for Christian students.[160] Furthermore, the Baath required that a high school student's political affiliation be kept

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[155] Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy, "Iraq," 1020.
[156] *Ibid*, 1020.
[157] *Ibid*, 1020.
[158] Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear: The Inside Story of Saddam's Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 143.
[159] *Ibid*, 103.
[160] IRDP-NIDS-1270981 August 14, 1984.

on file for future reference.[161] One RCC memorandum explicitly endorsed student evaluations by non- academic measures:

> Students who hold different views than that of the government or are simply of a different ethnicity, religion or tribe than the leading Tikriti clan…[can be] blacklisted and barred from attending university.[162]

Undergraduate pedagogy and curriculum had certain structural impediments. First, colleges tended not to collaborate on commonly required coursework resulting in several departments teaching the same course.[163] For instance, students had to enroll in math courses offered by their academic department rather than from a mathematics department. This may have been a prohibitive factor in students' decisions to switch degree plans as core curricular courses, transferable across departments, may not have existed. Universities emulated foreign models of educational organization and pedagogy, sometimes to their detriment. Yousif Hamame, writing about the University of Baghdad, states that the Law School patterned itself on the French model; medicine and the sciences followed the British system; the Colleges of Education and Agriculture practiced the American model and engineering studies were based on German and British systems.[164] Hamame questions the effect such patch working had on institutional cohesion:

> Such a variety of experiences could have represented an excellent

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[161] IRDP-NIDS-1270812 no date
[162] IRDP-NIDS-1042115 August 20, 1983.
[163] Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy, "Iraq," 1023.
[164] Yousif Hamame, "Higher Education and the Labour Market," 81.

> opportunity to develop a healthier intellectual environment if the salient features of each pattern were integrated and adapted to local conditions. Instead, and maybe because of the lack of communication and the absence of coordination, complexities and obstacles have dominated higher educational institutions…in Iraq.[165]

Allegiance to foreign pedagogies meant that academic departments did not prioritize community needs and that, often, instructional materials did not relate to actual conditions in Iraq.[166] Finally, undergraduate instruction did not encourage engaged and critical thinking skills on the part of students. "For all practical purposes, undergraduate studies tend[ed] to transmit information rather than produce knowledge."[167] In the estimation of **Mayyada**, all Iraqi schooling "depends on memorization rather than initiative and discussion." A.A. Al-Rubaiy criticizes Iraqi higher education pedagogy, contending it ill-prepared students for graduate school who were required to complete one year of independent thesis research.[168]

Despite a lack of student preparedness, universities routinely developed graduate programs--often from "the urge to compete with the University of Baghdad"[169] which, by then, had several graduate departments of international acclaim. Adequate facilities and qualified teaching staff could not keep pace with the surge in graduate programming resulting in inferior efforts, at least at the onset.[170] Nonetheless, undergraduates eagerly

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[165] *Ibid,* 82.
[166] *Ibid,* 82.
[167] Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy, "Iraq,"1018.
[168] *Ibid,* 1018.
[169] *Ibid,* 1018.
[170] *Ibid,* 1018.

applied to graduate schools with the Master's of Science being the most popular degree program.[171] PhD programs were highly selective and most academic departments admitted only a few doctoral candidates annually.[172] Certainly, many Iraqi graduate students took advantage of study abroad offerings but these opportunities began to diminish by the 1990's. The Iraqi PhD required three years of study (after successful completion of a Master's) of which two years centered on dissertation research. Doctoral candidates were encouraged to select at least one foreign professor for their committee.[173]

Khalis Adham's 1975 dissertation on Iraqi medical education surveyed 108 medical students at the Universities of Basra and Mosul (of which 50% of participants were female).[174] The data processed by Adham may illustrate some of the challenges and frustrations felt by Iraqi graduate students in the ensuing decades. Complaints from these medical students are, for the most part, universal themes of student dissatisfaction:

- Financial obligations
- Coursework does not address actual medical conditions in Iraq
- Limited interactions between professors and students outside the classroom
- Students were discouraged from asking or too intimidated to ask questions; professors chastised them publicly
- Limited funding and facilities for student socials

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[171] *Ibid,* 1018.
[172] *Ibid,* 1018.
[173] *Ibid,* 1018.
[174] Khalis Adham, "Planning Higher Education in Iraq: Planning Medical Education" (PhD diss., Linkoping University, 1975), 15.

- Poor new student orientation
- Stress generated by academic pressure and unrealistic exam schedules[175]
- Rote memorization instruction

Each of these stressors may indicate an overly rigid schooling system, out of tune with the needs of its students and communities. Such assessments can only be made when researchers evaluate postsecondary education against regional models and Iraq's own stated higher education goals. Western universities are not solely the appropriate yardstick to gauge student satisfaction simply because the resources invested into both schooling systems as well as the culture in which they exist are not commensurate. Theoretical guidelines for research are discussed more fully in Appendix A.

Thousands of Iraqi graduate students took advantage of study abroad opportunities, especially early in the regime when it was both encouraged and funded by the state.[176] Three interviewed women, **Azhar**, **Nedal** and **Nidhal**, studied in the Philippines, Kuwait and the United Kingdom accordingly. A 1978 *Baghdad Observer* report stated that 4884 Iraqi students were studying abroad – 1504 in the United Kingdom, 949 in the Soviet Union and the rest in the United States, Egypt or elsewhere.[177] When considering that Iraq enrolled approximately 28,500 university students that same year,[178] this study abroad figure is quite extraordinary and does not even include students paying for their

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[175] *Ibid*, 82-85.
[176] Kadhim Hussain Bakir, "Arabization of Higher Education in Iraq," 224.
[177] Baghdad Observer, "Statistics on Students Abroad," *Baghdad Observer*, September 9, 1978.
[178] Samir Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear*, 88. Based on enrollment for 1979 – 1980 which was 28,647 students.

own overseas schooling. Study abroad students understood that they were expected to return to work as civil servants or university professors[179] and, until the 1990's, a majority of Iraqi faculty did complete their doctoral work abroad.[180] After the First Gulf War and imposition of UN sanctions, vastly fewer Iraqis had either the state's permission or the wherewithal to study abroad. The impact was that, "an entire generation of junior professors have spent no time abroad, have never attended international conferences or have not built connections with colleagues outside of Iraq."[181]

Nidhal's experience exemplifies the diminishing opportunities in Iraqi higher education. In 1988, **Nidhal** won a full scholarship to complete her PhD studies at an Australian university. The MOHE confirmed that she had all of her travel documents and permissions but still denied approval, despite having allowed her to study in Great Britain just six years earlier. This was in accordance with a new Baath law that prohibited a woman's right to travel overseas without a male, related chaperone. Even though **Nidhal** was an advanced student in a field much favored by the state (chemical engineering) and at a university that routinely churned out senior level technocrats (University of Technology), the state was reacting to two emerging issues – a growing brain drain[182] and replenishing a military force decimated by the Iran-Iraq War.

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[179] *Ibid*, 224.
[180] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 132.
[181] *Ibid*, 19.
[182] "Brain drain" refers to the emigration of professors and other university trained specialists.

Interviewed participants revealed multiple facets of student-professor relations. None of the women were appointed an academic advisor by their department of university. However, many chose their own mentors and met with professors beyond the classroom setting. Not all professors were approachable. **Linda** recalls instructors that harangued students publicly and **Mayyada** disclosed that, "not all professors welcomed …our asking questions or raising points of debate. Some of them looked at that as a sort of challenge to their knowledge." Several women felt their male instructors treated them with due respect in deference to cultural norms of male-female relationships. Sisters and dental students **Shayma** and **Wasna** noticed that, however, not all male instructors respected these boundaries. **Shayma** insists that some younger male professors "treat the girls nicely because they are Romeos." In **Wasna's** estimation, male professors were either "real gentleman," "Casanovas," or treated female students as if "we are a low life." **Ghaida**, who pursued undergraduate and doctoral work in engineering at the University of Basra, writes about her male instructors:

> They always told me that I should not look to [compete] with other colleagues because…I am a woman and I have to look [to be just] a wife so [there was] no need for high education and it is better to limi[t] my education to BSc. … This usually happened when I got high marks in some examinations. For example, one [Egyptian professor] told me "I can give you [a]… 100% in this exam, what will you do with high competency? You will certainly [be] getting married in [the] future and [have] no need to get high marks…" and after that he gave me 95% rather than 100%.

It should be noted that **Ghaida**, like several other women in this study, remains unmarried.

Many aspects of professor-student interactions were not colored by gender. Women like **Azhar** never felt they were treated differently from their male classmates, "they treated me as a student only," and enjoyed opportunities to consult and even socialize with their instructors. **Azhar** contributes her professors' attitude to the fact that, during her undergraduate years in the 1970's, conditions in Iraq were "different from now, saf[e] life, no war and the staff live[d] in good conditions." With varying degrees of confidence, all of the interviewed women felt they could ask their professors questions. Iraqi students, like their counterparts in any other country, learned which professors were friendly, aloof, quick to anger and so forth. **Linda** participated in the time honored student tradition of mocking professors' mannerisms and methods. The resulting impression from these narratives is that professors were a varied lot but generally respected by their students. **Mayyada** concluded that "I don't claim that [student-professor relations] were 100% ideal. But there was a sort of implied and generally accepted code of behavior." Interviewed women repeatedly suggested that professors should rely less on the textbooks and lecture and encourage more discussion and practical application of studied subject matter. **Linda** urged professors to "broaden their horizons for they are so st[u]ck to the books which is quite boring."

Cronyism, Hypocrisy and Foul Play

Like other institutions dominated by the regime, Iraqi universities became conduits for Saddam's corruption and victimized by his tyrannical surveillance. Saddam's family and friends exploited their regime connections and were awarded university degrees under

questionable circumstances -- Uday Hussein being the most glaring example. His 1988 University of Baghdad civil engineering transcript ranked him first amongst his 174 peers and perfect scores in each of his subjects[183] – quite an accomplishment considering his government and lothario obligations surely kept him elsewhere. His father also gave Uday the presidency of the Iraqi Student Union.[184] The RCC codified corrupt admission standards with laws such as any one in the "armed forces, internal security forces and Presidency of Public Intelligence shall be admitted into the university" regardless of their academic standing.[185] Furthermore, once admitted, enrollment and attendance standards did not apply to Baath-favored students.[186] Samir Al-Khalil estimates that in 1979 nearly 20% of all university students were the result of "open door admission standards" originating from the military, security forces or ABSP.[187]

Deborah Cobbett asserts that, beginning in 1990, only students who swore allegiance to the Baath party could gain university admission.[188] Multiple sectors of Iraqi society were held accountable through loyalty oaths:

> Written pledges are required of most citizens [for] clearance for work, study or even residential relocation. They are the Iraqi government's way of incriminating all citizens in the intelligence-gathering procedures.[189]

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[183] Simon Robinson, "Inside the Secret World," *Time,* April 21, 2003, 54.
[184] Nidhal, interview comment.
[185] Samir Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear,* 103.
[186] *Ibid,* 103.
[187] *Ibid,* 103.
[188] Deborah Cobbett, "Women in Iraq," In *Saddam's Iraq: Revolution or Reaction?* ed. CARDI (Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq, United Kingdom: Zed Books, 1990) 133.
[189] IRDP-NIDS-694268, no date.

Other evidence indicates these oaths were haphazardly applied to students. **Nedal** and **Wasna** both filled out allegiance forms; **Wasna** recalls her oath that stipulated "I promise that I will support the Baath [P]arty and the [P]resident Saddam Hussein until the end and damned [be] the traitor." However, **Wasna** explains, "it was only paper and this paper did not mean anything to us." **Mayyada** and **Linda** perceived their loyalty oaths as optional, even when they knew they would face pressure from Baath campus representatives. In **Mayyada's** case, her loyalty oath asserted that no one in her family was a member of an opposing political party and she chose not to take it. **Linda** also chose not to sign, writing,

> After my admission I was harassed by high-ranking Baathists who used to threaten me that I will be kicked out of college if I don't join the party, but it turned out they were bluffing and wanted to increase their quota.

There is no indication that female students were targeted more intensely than their male peers – however, nor did their social status provide them any protection from Baathist violence.

Both instances indicate that Baath tyranny was imperfect in its application and students were willing to take risks in order to retain some autonomy. While loyalty oaths may have not been compulsory, other issues were non-negotiable. All university campuses were ordered by the RCC to admit armed forces, security and policing units, as well as intelligence agencies "at any time for any reason."[190] Indeed, there were several instances when university students were arrested on campus for suspected political activism. In

1998, two University of Baghdad engineering students were removed from their final exams, accused of demonstrating against the state and never heard from again.[191] Najia Hatim al-Rikabi, a female university student in 1980, was imprisoned and tortured (along with her one year-old daughter) for her membership in a communist organization. Although released, she died within a few days as the result of poisoning.[192]

Student activism and student instigated violence occurred sporadically. During the Iran-Iraq War, some university students protested against U.S. support of Saddam Hussein.[193] A series of bombings at al-Mustansiriyah University in Baghdad occurred during an international youth conference, killing two students (1980). The next day, as students processed behind their classmates' caskets, two more bombs were detonated. Al'Da'awa, a fundamentalist group opposed to Baath regime, assumed responsibility for the terrorist attacks.[194] In the same year, Al'Da'awa attempted to assassinate University of Technology's president, killing a staff member instead.[195] It remains uncertain how many university students participated in Al'Da'awa's terrorist activities.

The criminality that was more omnipresent in student's lives was the regime's nepotism and retaliatory, capricious measures that adulterated the value of Iraqi postsecondary education. **Shayma** explains, "In Iraq, college is just for learning and studying and

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[190] Steve Niva, "Academic Freedom in the Middle East," 214.
[191] Edward Wong, "On Iraqi Campuses, Free Can Be Messy," *New York Times,* January 17, 2004.
[192] Deborah Cobbett, "Women in Iraq," 128.
[193] Zainab Salbi, *Between Two Worlds,* 203.
[194] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 123.

graduating…and any other activities, especially during Saddam's time, [were] …suspicious." When Luay Hussein, Saddam's nephew, failed an engineering course at the University of Baghdad due to his chronic absences, his friends beat Luay's professor so severely he was permanently disabled. Saddam's response was to produce a staged video of the attackers receiving corporeal punishment and turning it over to the university.[196] At any rate, the university clearly did not feel they had the authority to handle the matter on their own. This is partly because universities had no genuine self-governance but also because a hallmark of the totalitarian state is the "normaliz[ation of] moral transgressions and criminality."[197]

The regime expected universities to lead in citizenship building, even if they had to use duplicitous measures to achieve the mirage. **Linda** recalls the "Model Student" program where pupils especially favored by the Baath led classes and served as peer mentors. In actuality, **Linda** admits, "we used to choose the academically dumbest but the brightest in terms of skipping classes." Here students learned to exploit the corrupt system exploiting them, both state and student fronting illusions to their own benefit. The Iraqi Student Union (ISU) was the only sanctioned university student group in the entire country. Not surprisingly, the ISU was micromanaged by the ABSP to glorify the regime and, insists **Shayma**, "professors were not allowed to give any advice to them." Students were not required to join but certainly pressured to do so. **Mayyada** writes,

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[195] *Ibid,* 123.
[196] Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors," 20.
[197] Riadh Abed, "Tyranny and Mental Health," *British Medical Bulletin* 72, (2004): 4.

"Joining…was suggested to me many times but I refused because I am disinterested in politics." The ISU appears to have been a gateway association, segueing graduates into full ABSP standing. Perks came with ISU membership – officers were not required to attend classes in order to receive diplomas[198] and, according to **Azhar**, many joined simply to improve their scholarship or study abroad chances with the MOHE. Ofra Bengio has pointed out that ISU elections, while showcased as exercises in democracy, were essentially Baath-rigged affairs to elect compliant student leaders.[199] Annual ISU functions included lectures, festivals, new student orientation and parties for graduates, according to **Nedal** who found it frustrating that the entire campus would close down during these events. On occasion, **Nedal** attended ISU social programming for "a good time" but did not consider herself a member.

Conclusion

As Iraq mucked its way through a war with Iran and then suffered a decade of sanctions, the prevailing campus climate was one of increasing suspicion and isolation. Once, Iraqi universities were on a trajectory to academic greatness but strangulating regime surveillance, coupled with trade embargoes, left them isolated and antiquated, vestiges of their own glory. Despite episodic opportunities students took to express their defiance of their government, they were not taught to think independently, practice thoughtful critique or nurture their professional and political personas. What did emerge were

[198] Deborah Cobbett, "Women in Iraq," 133.
[199] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word*, 61.

students’ coping strategies: remaining above suspicion or even invisible to the regime -- meaningless markers of academic success.

CHAPTER THREE
Rhetoric and Realities for Iraqi University Women: 1980 – 2003

Most western scholars, until the 1990's, viewed Iraq as progressive; a model for other Middle Eastern countries. What was overlooked was Saddam's brutal and capricious dictatorship that chose torture and misinformation campaigns to instate allegiance. Anthony Shadid, writing about Saddam, asserts, "for three decades he dragged his country through the sewer in delusional attempts to impose a legacy. The efforts would have been pathetic if not for the horrific toll they inflicted."[200] While Saddam exploited the Iraqi people in actuality, on paper and in speeches he glorified and defended them, especially women.[201] Take, for example:

> Those who still look on women with the mentality and ideas of the ages of darkness and backwardness do not express the aspirations and ambitions of the Revolution. They are at variance with the principles of the Party which are essentially based on freedom and emancipation.[202]

As promising as this may have sounded, the Baath always made it clear that women's liberation was contingent upon achieving party objectives; that Saddam's version of freedom demanded obedience to the state:

> The ideological premise of the ABSP and its theory of action indicate that no revolutionary change may…

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[200] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005), 33.
[201] Zainab Salbi as quoted in Laurie Ball, Iraqi Women Demand Role in Steering Iraq's Future, http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/pk1/wwwh03062803.html.
[202] Saddam Hussein, *Revolution and Women in Iraq*, (Baghdad: Translation and Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), 11.

> [occur without] precise knowledge of the laws which govern social change and their correct utilization by capable leadership which defines with precision sound formulas and correct areas for the emancipation of women.[203]

Therefore, Iraqi women could expect personal freedoms and wider opportunity once they had put forth their best efforts to advance the pan-Arab socialist agenda and Iraq as the utopian example.[204] Conversely, citizens should ultimately blame themselves for any hardships they endured.

Women were critical to Saddam's plan to fully dominate Iraq. Certainly, he needed greater female participation to meet increasing labor demands. However, by appointing himself the liberator of Iraqi women, Saddam also realigned the social hierarchy. Kinship and tribal allegiances, historically, under girded Iraqi governance. This was due to the inherently patriarchal Arab culture where "the old and the males hav[e] authority over the younger and female."[205] By providing Iraqi women financial and state enunciated support to further their educations, Saddam attenuated the kinship yokes many Iraqi fathers, brothers and husbands held over their daughters.[206] While he may have empowered women, Saddam's true ambition was to weaken powerful men and their tribal allies who might rise against him.[207] The president "shifted women's allegiance to

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[203] *Ibid,* 21.
[204] *Ibid,* 14
[205] Ghada Karmi, "The Saddam Hussein Phenomena and Male-Female Relations in the Arab World," in *Women in the Middle East: Perceptions, Realities and Struggles for Liberation,* ed. Haleh Afshar (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 150.
[206] *Ibid,* 155.
[207] Samir Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear: The Inside Story of the Saddam's Iraq* (New York: Pantheon
Books, 1989), 92.

the state and away from the family or ethnic group."[208] Saddam instated himself as the national father figure – benevolent or merciless, depending on the collective behavior of his newly nationalized "tribe."[209] Saddam expected Iraqi women to represent his modernity and magnanimous rule. This behavior has often been expected of Arab women – to symbolize the honor, the wealth, the virtue and the values of their family or community despite or even to the detriment of their own ambitions.

Civil Society and Women's Opportunities in Saddamist Society

Early in his presidency, Saddam promised civil and economic opportunities for women but only so far as such actions benefited the regime first. During the earlier 1980's, Iraq's rapidly developing economy generated a solid middle class sector[210] and increased postsecondary opportunities. Women's participation in white collar professions such as social work, law, journalism, engineering, architecture and the diplomatic corps rose. [211] 46% of teachers and dentists, 29% of physicians and 70% of pharmacists were women in 1980's Iraq – all of which required a university education.[212] However, women's participation at senior management levels remained stagnant at 4%.[213] Doreen Ingrams

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[208] Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor*: *Muslim Women Lift the Veil of Silences on the Islamic World* (New York: Plume Publishing, 2003), 239.
[209] Ghada Karmi, "The Saddam Hussein Phenomena,"155.
[210] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi Women between Dictatorship, War, Sanctions and
Occupation," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 4-5 (2005): 744.
[211] Doreen Ingrams, *The Awakened: Women in Iraq*. (London: Third World Centre for Research and Publishing, 1983),121.
[212] Saeid Neshat, "A Look into the Women's Movement in Iraq," *Farzaneh* 6, no.11: 56.
[213] Samir Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear*, 88.

concedes that any senior female administrator or executive would have "almost certainly…had to prove herself to be more exceptional than any male competitor."[214] Nadje Al-Ali resists over glorifying Saddam's early years:

> How far this access to education and the labor market resulted in an improved status for women is a more complex question. As in many other places, conservative and patriarchal values did not automatically change because women started working.[215]

Such prospects and limitations surely influenced women's career choices as they pursued university studies. Graduates did not expect grand salaries[216] but, in a country that subsidized many basic expenses, they were able to secure professional class status. For women, "working outside the home became…not only acceptable but prestigious and the norm."[217] The first generation of female college graduates under Saddam have, more often than not, positive recollections of their government. Higher education was free, government and public sector jobs were plentiful, study abroad was feasible and women were encouraged to study in male-dominated fields.[218] Amal Sharqi,[219] former director of Iraq's Department of Culture and Children, chastises those critical of Saddam's treatment of women, "When people raise the issue of totalitarianism, I point out that without it we

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[214] Doreen Ingrams, *The Awakened,* 78.
[215] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 745.
[216] *Ibid*, 72.
[217] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 745.
[218] *Ibid*, 745.
[219] Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor, 230.*

would never have been able to achieve the present status of women in Iraq."[220] Amal demonstrated pride for her president's efforts, expressing,

> To bring about change, to enable women to be educated, to go to school, to be economically active takes time and effort. In the West, it took a century to change the status of women. You have to build an infrastructure for it, and Saddam Hussein did so and did so quickly.[221]

Beneath the veneer of liberated womanhood, lay more sinister realities. Most menacing must have been Saddam's eldest son, Uday, thug lord of predatory sexual violence. During Uday's enrollment at the University of Baghdad's civil engineering program, peers claimed he abducted and raped female classmates.[222] Many Iraqis believed Uday maintained special "rape palaces."[223] While facts may never be untangled from urban legend, one Iraqi woman conceded, "It didn't matter whether these stories were true. They were believed."[224] Rape carried additional repercussions in Iraq beyond the immediate violation and long-term healing required. Traditionally, when a young Iraqi woman is raped, she is no longer marriageable unless the family can arrange for her to marry her assailant.[225] This was, for obvious reasons, not an option for those women raped by Uday (or his allied goons).[226] Therefore, for a University of Baghdad woman to be noticed by Uday must have been nightmarish indeed.

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[220] *Ibid, 234.*
[221] *Ibid*, 234.
[222] Edward Wong, "On Iraqi Campuses, Free Can Be Messy," *New York Times*, January 17, 2004.
[223] Zainab Salbi and Laurie Becklund, *Between Two Worlds* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 125.
[224] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 3.
[225] Human Rights Watch, "Climate of Fear: Sexual Violence and Abduction of Women and Girls in Baghdad," *Human Rights Watch* 15, no.7 (July 2003): 14.
[226] Zainab Salbi, *Between Two Worlds*, 125.

Sexual assault was a standard method of intimidation and intelligence gathering employed by the regime. A recently discovered government identification card listed a male employee as "a fighter in the popular army" with the job classification as "violation of women's honour"[227] – in other words, a state sanctioned rapist. Saddam's secret police often videotaped their gang rape activities, threatening to release the video to the victim's family if she did not become an informant on her family and community.[228] This practice is eerily similar to events that took place at a University of Basra student picnic in 2004, to be discussed fully in chapter four, where the perpetrators then were militant fundamentalists. In both instances, a woman's sexual reputation was an effective tool of coercion. To be sexually victimized in Middle Eastern culture often results in dual traumas: surviving the attack and facing one's family in the aftermath. Middle Eastern women's chastity is the family's crest or cross to bear. Zainab Salbi explains: "a family's honor is *judged* by the behavior of women, but it is effectively *owned* by men: her husband or father or brothers, or even her sons."[229] While there is no evidence that university women were more susceptible to state sanctioned rapes, there is also no evidence that they were not equally targeted. Fearing abduction and sexual assault may have well influenced a woman's choices of when and where to attend classes as well as whom she could trust on campus.

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[227] Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK), *Saddam Hussein: Crimes and Human Rights Abuses*, (London, November 2002), 8.
[228] Zainab Salbi, *Between Two Worlds*, 121.

Rape was only one instrument in the regime's cache of physical, sexual and emotional extortion. According to a 2002 UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office report, Saddam's preferred methods of torture included eye gouging, electric shock, use of electric drills, nail extraction, pipe beatings as well as rape and sodomy.[230] One man who went to the Baghdad city morgue to recover the body of a relative stumbled upon the corpses of more than twenty young women, all naked, all having had their breasts hacked off and most mutilated by additional means.[231] In an effort to force parents to confess to something or accuse someone, Baathist violence often centered on children. Even very young children have been raped,[232] fed poison,[233] and put into gunny sacks with starving cats in front of their mother's eyes.[234] Today, it seems as if every Iraqi knows at least one person who was abducted, tortured, incarcerated or never heard from again. Surely thousands of university students lost family members to this brutal dictatorship. While Article 22A of the Iraqi constitution prohibited all forms of psychological or physical torture to "obtain information or confessions from detainees,"[235] the RCC maintained the right to operate outside any national law to protect party interests. Therefore, until 2005, not one Baath official had been formally tried for ordering or participating in torture.[236] Yet, of the estimated 10,000+ Iraqi who were executed by the regime, human rights workers believe

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[229] *Ibid,* 253. Salbi's italics.
[230] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Saddam Hussein,* 21.
[231] Deborah Cobbett, "Women in Iraq," in *Saddam's Iraq: Revolution or Reaction?* ed. CARDI (Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq, United Kingdom: Zed Books, 1990), 129.
[232] *Ibid,* 129.
[233] *Ibid,* 128.
[234] *Ibid,* 129.
[235]*Ibid,* 129.
[236] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Saddam Hussein,* 5.

most were tortured first,[237] and of which one quarter may have been academics or students.[238] By the 2003 demise of the regime, Iraq still held approximately 100,000 citizens as political prisoners. [239]

Saddam criminalized many women's activities despite his public declarations favoring their independence. The RCC declared it a crime against the state to belong to any women's organization other than the GFIW[240] which, will be recalled, was not more than a conduit for Baath propaganda. Another RCC decree made "punishable by execution" supporting any political party besides the Baath or purposely concealing earlier support for other political parties.[241] In his research on mental health in totalitarian regimes, Riadh Abed concludes that dictators intentionally abrade civil society so that its members will not feel they have anything left worth defending.[242] In a totalitarian state, where what constituted political organizing and activism was broadly defined – it is not surprising to hear Iraqis describe themselves as apolitical, for to be outspoken could be fatal. Therefore, university women could not openly organize as students, faculty, allied

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[237] Deborah Cobbett, "Women in Iraq," 225.
[238] Steve Niva estimates that nearly 1000 of 4000 executed persons in Iraq between 1968 and 1981 were affiliated with a university. I have applied this as an approximate figure for the number of Iraqi students and academics executed by the regime once Saddam became president. Steve Niva, "Academic Freedom in the Middle East: Institutional Legacies and Contemporary Predicaments," in *Academic Freedom 4: Education and Human Rights*, eds. Ximena Erazo, Mike Kirkwood and Frederick de Vlaming (London: Zed Books, 1996), 215.
[239] Riadh Abed, "Tyranny and Mental Health," 9.
[240] Saeid Neshat, "A Look into the Women's Movement," 56.
[241] IRDP-NIDS-316446, Jan 11, 1979. (Iraq Research and Documentation Project). Formerly of Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, this archival website is being reloaded by the Iraq Memory Foundation at http://www.iraqmemory.org.
[242] Riadh Abed, "Tyranny and Mental Health," 4.

professionals or even around a seemingly innocuous hobby or interest. Nor did university women find much appeal in joining the GFIW. **Nedal** explained that university women rarely affiliated with the GFIW as many of its objectives were not related to professional women nor was it highly regarded on campus. **Linda** was even more direct about her opinion of the GFIW "What do I think of it? It sucks, like all Baath stuff."

Those women who dared to speak out against the regime often paid with their lives. In the 1980's, women of the rogue Iraqi Women's League as well as female Kurdish demonstrators and Shia supporters were abducted, tortured and executed.[243] "It has often been said, with great irony, that in Iraq women have been granted equal rights with men only in detention and torture" writes Deborah Cobbett.[244] The story of eighteen year-old Maysoon al-Assadi, a university student and member of the Iraqi Communist Party in 1980, [245] leaves little doubt that college students were under regime suspicion. Maysoon was hanged by her hair and repeatedly beaten on her feet during her interrogation. When she refused to recant a condemnation of Saddam, she was intentionally electrocuted at a slower voltage rate resulting in her death taking two hours to arrive.[246]

Incidents such as these infected Iraqis with apprehension, foreboding and distrust and they acknowledge their emasculation under the tyrant,

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[243] Deborah Cobbett, "Women in Iraq,"128.
[244] *Ibid*, 128.
[245] Robert Fisk, Revealed: The women who suffered Saddam's tyranny, http://www.robert-fisk.com/articles351.htm.
[246] *Ibid.*

> I had never come to terms with the big questions, like how Saddam Hussein had managed to stay in power for a quarter of a century when most Iraqis hated him[.]…How did he manage to dictate the way virtually every Iraqi spoke, loved, married, prayed, played, smiled, learned, dressed, ate, deceived, despaired, celebrated and died?[247]

While none of the women interviewed for this study disclosed personal experiences of torture, each acknowledged the pervasive fear in which they lived, in the Saddamist malaise where finding freedom seemed beyond human capabilities. Comments included:

- **Azhar**: "Saddam said 'All the Iraqis are from Baath, even if they do not join it.'"
- **Linda**: "We (students and professors) treat[ed] each other suspiciously."
- **Mayyada**: "We had to accept all [Baath] ideas and pretend to welcome them."
- **Nedal**: "I spent my days dreaming that I would be able to break from that big prison [known as] Iraq"

Women's reluctance to provide specific examples of Saddam's cruelty may result from a self-censorship habit[248]-- undoubtedly reinforced when the RCC ordered tongue amputations for any person found slandering Saddam or his family (2000) and then airing these events on television.[249] When censorship was raised to a macabre version of state entertainment, Iraqi academics surely weighed the value of their work against that of their lives. Samir Al-Khalil, writing on the functions of Saddam's sanctioned violence, argues

> For the [Baath], violence is no longer merely the sanction used periodically against a genuine opposition. The [Baath] invent[ed] their enemies; violence – not the threat of it – is institutionalized,

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[247] Zainab Salbi, *Between Two Worlds*, 5.
[248] Self-censorship and its impact on this study's methodology is more fully considered in Appendix A.
[249] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Saddam Hussein*, 5.

> forever reproducing and intensifying that all-pervasive climate of suspicion, fear and complicity so characteristic of their polity.[250]

The much-vaunted social services provided by the socialist regime often came at a personal cost. Since the 1980's, Iraqi children received daily lessons idolizing Saddam and how to report on their families and neighbors.[251] Deborah Cobbett has been especially critical of Iraq's early childhood education contending that Iraqi women "have less and less confidence in them since children are subjected to chauvinist indoctrination and acquire habits of spying and violence."[252] Cobbett questions how Iraqi youth could glorify Saddam's rule (as required by state curriculum) when the reality of their lives included losing family members to military and political violence.[253] Services provided to Iraqi children are significant to this study on dual fronts. First, many university women used state subsidized childcare services or had children in elementary school. Secondly, many of these children are now Iraq's contemporary university students, having already endured more than a dozen years of dogmatic schooling.

News reports showered adoration on Saddam as the propaganda machine it was forced to become. According to Ofra Bengio, "the press became a subcontractor,"[254] and Uday

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[250] Samir Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear*, 129.
[251] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 82.
[252] Deborah Cobbett, "Women in Iraq," 134.
[253] *Ibid*, 134.
[254] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word*, 78.

was appointed director of all media outlets.[255] Uday quickly passed a measure requiring all print media to carry his or his father's image on their front page each time they published.[256] Baath officials rarely appeared on television or for an official photograph without some image of Saddam prominently displayed.[257] In essence, the media did not report news but rather Saddam's message. Unfortunately, narratives and other data sources describing the impact on journalism students have not surfaced. It is known, according to interview participants, that no student publications, such as a campus newspaper[258] were permitted besides Baath approved publications – most notably the *Heartbeat of Youth*, a pet project of Uday's.[259] According to **Linda**, the University of Baghdad issued its first independent, student-generated newspaper just last year.

Saddam saturated Iraq in his image and his eyes, both literally and figuratively, were everywhere. Statues and murals canvassed the country showcasing Saddam as a kindly benefactor, sex symbol, international activist or military giant. Films, stamps, festivals and archways elevated Saddam to mythic proportions.[260] Saddam appeared daily on television, delivering live and lengthy speeches. Every classroom from nursery school to the university lecture hall was expected to display his likeness. It seems as if this publicity blitz (lasting more than two decades) had dual objectives – obviously to glorify

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[255] Jonathan Finer, "Press in Iraq Gains Rights but no Refuge," *The Washington Post*, June 6, 2005.
[256] *Ibid.*
[257] Samir Al-Khalil, 110.
[258] This excludes a handful of academic journals that became increasingly limited to the Middle East with the onset of sanctions.
[259] David Blair, "Iraq Writes of "Straw, Straw,' not 'War, War'," *Daily Telegraph*, December 12, 2002.

Saddam as Iraq's modern hero but also to remind every Iraqi that no activity could escape the tyrant's gaze. The dreaded Ministry of Information was the regime's more visible surveillance agency, gathering intelligence and gossip alike from homes, classrooms, workplaces and cafes. The very fact that many of these incoming reports were false or, at the very least, embellished, was not always a concern for either the Ministry of Information or Saddam. Samir al-Khalil writes:

> For the system to work the truth value of a report is irrelevant. The simple fact of its existence is enough to generate the appropriate atmosphere of suspicion and fear, and to implicate with impeccable proof broad layers of people in the violence of the regime.[261]

It is impossible to fully perceive how students persisted in this climate where truths were secondary to rumors, anxieties and malice. **Linda**, sharing a painful memory, reveals the transgressions students had to choose between:

> [I]n my freshman year…the officials kicked my friend and me out of the classroom for we were the only persons who refused to join the Baath party. The reason I was furious was…that I realized this won't be the last… [this] was just what I had bargained for.

University Women in 1980's Iraq

College aged Iraqi women enjoyed a vibrant social life within the appropriate context of Arab society during the early regime years. While many functions were co-ed, men and

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[260] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word,* 169.
[261] Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear,* 63.

women often segregated themselves,[262] with women dancing and sharing tea and treats amongst their female friends. One study of the medical college at the University of Basra found male students complaining that their female peers did not want to socialize with them enough, especially at school functions. The women responded that their non-participation reflected their dislike for the behavior and language used by male students.[263]

Very few of the interview participants were married during their undergraduate careers. While this practice is universally common, it should be recalled that **Ghaida**, **Mayyada** and **Nedal**, entering their fourth decades, have yet to marry and remained at universities for doctoral studies. It appears as if most female college students either lived at home or, if attending a more distant university, resided with extended family instead of occupying residence hall space. One Iraqi young woman wrote in the 1980's,

> They [her parents] usually let me do what I like and I respect them for that. But even though I am independent I would always live with them until I marry. No girl would dream of taking a flat on her own or with friends, however much she wanted to, as only bad girls do that.[264]

It should be noted that, regardless of parental objections, Iraqi law forbade single men or women to lease apartments.[265]

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[262] Zainab Salbi, *Between Two Worlds,* 10.
[263] Khalis Adham, "Planning Higher Education in Iraq: Planning Medical Education" (PhD diss., Linkoping University, 1975), 83.
[264] Doreen Ingrams, *The Awakened,* 62.

Iraqi youth, like much of the world, were drawn to western pop culture, especially music, fashion and film. Saddam did not completely ban these more innocuous foreign influences. **Linda** wrote that her dream vocation as a younger woman was "to be the manager of my fave Irish pop group." Sana al-Khayyat contends that "clothes and make-up [became] almost an obsession" for many 1980's cosmopolitan, young Iraqi women[266] and while many donned the abaya during their transit to and from campus, they revealed western-styled clothing once there.[267]

Interviewed women gave lackluster reviews of their campus student services, regardless of when or where they attended university. Women were asked about student health care, psychological counseling, libraries and computer labs as well as athletic venues. Participants reported that student health centers provided minor medical treatment – aspirin, antibiotics and such, as well as handing out excuse slips for student absences. **Mayyada** described her health center at the University of Baghdad campus as limited to "just one doctor and one nurse." Iraqi universities made limited provisions for student-centered psychological counseling, even though facilities were provided on both the University of Baghdad and Basra campuses. **Nedal**, who admitted, "I had a lot of problems," nonetheless did not turn to her campus (University of Basra) counseling services, stating, "I rely on myself my family and friends to deal with it." **Linda** claimed she had "never heard of such a thing" as campus based mental health. Her remarks may

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[265] *Ibid*, 66.
[266] Sana al-Khayyat, *Honour and Shame: Women and Modern Iraq* (London; Saqi Books, 1990), 19.

illustrate that students had no reason to expect their universities would or should provide such resources.

Interviewed women did rely on some "student comforts" provided by their universities, especially the cafeteria and libraries. **Azhar** used both facilities on a nearly daily basis and continues to do so as a faculty member. **Linda** admitted that "I couldn't survive without the cafeteria" and **Nedal** estimated she was in the library up to twenty hours a week. **Mayyada** stayed away from her cafeteria because it "was crowded and dirty" and had to rely on a home computer as her department did not provide a computer lab. **Azhar** also depended on her personal computer mainly because she was able to secure internet access long before the University of Basra could.

A common theme in the interviewed women's responses was the role grades and parents played in choosing a degree plan and profession. Respondents were asked to recreate their university admissions experience and their parent's influence.[268] Data from these women indicates that academic major selection was more directly influenced by the prestige associated with the field than personal interest and **Nidhal** admitted that a majority of Iraqi college students, in her estimation, select their courses of study based on potential earning power. Therefore, it appears as if career tracking took place at the national level (favoring some professions more than others) but that when parents and

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[267] *Ibid,* 19.
[268] A sampling of interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

students made choices, they also based these on cultural perceptions rather than individual ability and ambitions. **Mayyada** illustrates this phenomena writing,

> My father thankfully influenced my choice because
> I first thought of studying law but he suggested that
> I should study English language and literature because
> the field is more fitting for me as a female in the
> society where I live…it was rather a democratic
> influence since we discussed both choices and I
> was ultimately convinced of his.

In her case, **Mayyada** was fortunate, "My first choice was the Department of English [at the] University of Baghdad…and I got exactly what I wanted because my grades qualified me for it." **Linda's** father also opined on his daughter's college plans, although not quite as diplomatically. "Humanities for my dad are rubbish. He wanted me to study engineering," writes **Linda**, who then turned to her mother. "My mother went to same university where I studied. I was a bit influenced by her." **Azhar** had not intended to study biology but had to settle for the field when her grades were not high enough to enter the medical school track. In the end, she became a respected professor of marine biology.

Nidhal's Experience: Student and Student Parent

Nidhal's story as both a daughter and mother is instructive. Neither of **Nidhal's** parents were college educated although her mother had some teacher training. She is the second of five children, including three sisters, and all of her siblings attended college. **Nidhal** felt that her parents sought every advantage of the free education provided by the Iraqi government. She remembers that her mother pushed her to study so often that when she

became an adult she could not accomplish basic household tasks like cooking an egg. **Nidhal** wanted to be a pharmacist but having missed the entrance bar by one point on her baccalaureate exam, she had to settle for chemical engineering instead at the University of Baghdad. Currently, she teaches at the University of Technology. When **Nidhal's** two daughters received their baccalaureate results, their scores were high enough that she insisted they must choose dentistry, pharmacology or medical studies. One daughter, **Wasna** (currently an undergraduate at the University of Baghdad's dental college), explains her mother's intent:

> I know for a fact that both mom and dad would will support me with any choice I make and if they think the choice is not good for me, we'll sit down, discuss the matter and see if they can convince me.

Nidhal also shared that, in 1996, the Ministry of Industry declared all chemical engineering departments must halt their admission of female students because there "were too many in the profession." **Nidhal** reported that five years elapsed before universities admitted women.[269] The female graduate students at the University of Technology asked for the policy to be reversed in 2000 on the grounds that, as instructors, "it made them uncomfortable to teach in classrooms with only male students." The MOHE ruled that 15% of the 2001 incoming chemical engineering students be female followed by another 15% increase in 2002. According to **Nidhal**, as of 2005, more than half of chemical engineering students are female.

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[269] Riverbend shared a similar story in her blog stating that men were granted admission into some engineering colleges with four fewer points on their baccalaureate exams (92% vs. 96%) in

The Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)

Saddam's tyranny metastasized as he dragged Iraq through two wars followed by a decade of defying the UN and, hence, suffering sanctions. As the longest continual armed conflict of the twentieth century, the Iran-Iraq War originated over a turf squabble; Saddam sought greater access to the southern waterway shared between the two nations.[270] Nonetheless, Saddam exploited ideological, cultural and ethnic differences[271] between Iraq and the new Iranian theocracy and further insisted Iraqi Shia (predominantly residing in the south) were rebellious, under the sway of Ayatollah Khomeni.[272] Yet Samir Al-Khalil argues for an ulterior motive on Saddam's part, contending that the president saw a war with Iran as an opportunity to foster nationalism and appoint himself as the defender of pan-Arabism in the Middle East.[273] Salbi concurs, arguing

> By reviving ancient animosities and claiming that [Saddam] was protecting Iraq from the spread of the Iranian revolution, he was able to portray this as a defensive war, not a war of aggression.[274]

However, as the war progressed and failed to achieve Saddam's objectives, he declared the conflict a jihad (which he had no vested authority to do), insisting every Iraqi was

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an effort to remedy gender disparity in these fields. Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq* (New York: The Feminist Press, 2005), 67.

[270] George Packer, "Testing Ground," *New Yorker*, February 28, 2005, http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/050228fa_fact.

[271] Inflaming centuries-old conflicts between Arabs and Persians.

[272] Samir Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear*, 262-267.

[273] *Ibid*, 267.

[274] Zainab Salbi, *Between Two Worlds*, 32.

morally obligated to participate militarily.[275] 10% of all Iraqis served in some war-related capacity,[276] including at least 40,000 female soldiers.[277] The Iraqi regime put one million troops in the field and, by 1986, every male under the age of 55 was put on conscription notice.[278] In essence, this means that almost every Iraqi college student today had at least one male family member who either served in the war or was under conscription obligations. Saddam spent more than one trillion dollars to fund the war,[279] up to 300,000 Iraqis died,[280] and in the end no territorial shifts transpired.[281] Anthony Shadid concludes, "For many Iraqis, the years of battle with Iran represent great suffering without a real purpose. People will often shrug when asked what it was about."[282]

Saddam surely recognized the role university students played in the Iranian Revolution, notably deposing the Shah, overrunning the U.S. Embassy and thrusting the new theocracy's tenets onto the global stage. At the time (1979), Saddam was still considered a progressive leader and began to amass powerful allies in his build up to war.[283] Nonetheless, the successful Iranian coup led, in part, by university students, may have well fostered the further restrictions and surveillance placed on Iraqi universities in the 1980's. The actual war fueled further corrupt admissions practices. By the mid 1980's,

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[275] Miriam Cooke, *Women and the War Story* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 220.
[276] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 23.
[277] Miriam Cooke, *Women and the War Story,* 252.
[278] Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear,* 259.
[279] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 24.
[280] *Ibid,* 259.
[281] George Packer, "Testing Ground."
[282] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 262.

in an effort to reward military service, the regime ordered the MOHE to provide bonus points on baccalaureate exams for those children or siblings of a fallen soldier.[284] Universities felt other repercussions of military obligations. For instance, during the war 75% of University of Baghdad nursing students were male – rates clearly out of sync with the department norm. This was the direct result of women being prevented from serving on the front lines and the regime facing massive nursing shortages in their conflict zones.[285]

The extent to which specific Iraqi campuses sustained damage as a result of the war is difficult to ascertain. Basra, especially in the last years of the war, was constantly bombed from across the shared waterway and many Shia communities faced Saddam's wrath for their actual and suspected insurgent activities. The experience for Baghdadis was different. At first, the war barely impacted the capital as it was far from the front and not lacking in basic commodities.[286] Soon, however, Baghdad became saturated in militaristic ambitions and martyr glory. Zainab Salbi, who was then an adolescent, recalls soldiers and the youth laden Civil Defense canvassing the city with their assorted

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[283] Indeed, the Reagan Administration sent special envoy Donald Rumsfeld as their official endorsement of Saddam's aggressions against Iran. Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 92.
[284] Deborah Cobbett, "Women in Iraq," 133. Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy, "Iraq." In *International Higher Education: An Encyclopedia, vol. 2*, ed. Philip G Altbach (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), 1020.
[285] Joyceen Boyle and Khlood Salman, "Nursing in Iraq," in *Women in Nursing in Islamic Societies,* ed. Nancy H. Bryant (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 302.
[286] Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear,* 260-261.

weaponry. Television bulletins endlessly ran graphic images of dead Iranians while cars snaked through Baghdad with coffins strapped to the their roofs.[287]

Like embargoes, sanctioned terrorism, and the First Gulf War, the Iran-Iraq war is significant to this study because it shaped the identity and worldviews of contemporary university students. Samir al-Khalil concurs, writing that the Iran-Iraq War "will cut deep into the modern consciousness of future generations…it will shape their beliefs, attitudes, prejudices and values for many, many years to come."[288] Those Iraqis who were children during the Iran-Iraq war recall practicing air raid drills, emergency medical treatment and identifying Iranian sympathizers.[289] A video recently uncovered in Saddam's archives shows a girl, prim in a frilly white dress, singing to her president "One day I hope to hold a gun." She looks to be no more than eight years old.[290]

Shifting family law and national priorities negatively impacted opportunities for university women. Before the Iran-Iraq War, multiple forms of birth control were available to Iraqi women but were made illegal once the war began.[291] Saddam's feminist rhetoric faded amidst pronatalist policies and conciliatory slogans emerged such as "the fields, the brains, the wombs will bear fruit."[292] Indeed, Saddam seemed to take special

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[287] Zainab Salbi, *Between Two Worlds*, 122.
[288] Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear,* 262.
[289] *Ibid,* 33.
[290] Frontline World, *Saddam's Road to Hell,* Public Broadcasting System, January 27, 2006.
[291] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 749.
[292] Celine Whittleton, "Whither Iraq" in *Saddam's Iraq: Revolution or Reaction?* ed. CARDI (Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq, United Kingdom: Zed Books, 1990), 248.

interest in increasing the number of children born to at least one college educated Iraqi, granting some men five hundred dinars for marrying a university graduate.[293] As the Iran-Iraq War dragged on, Saddam announced that any woman who had less than five children "would be considered a threat to national security."[294] While it is unclear whether women faced prosecution, Saddam did justify his reversal on their educational opportunities by saying,

> [E]ducation in Iraq is spreading at the expense of childbirth… if a man comes to me and asks me to allow him to study for his Master's degree or PhD then I would probably let him do so. If, however, a twenty-eight year old woman comes to me with the same request then I would have to calculate how long it would take for her to get her doctorate, and I would see that this may take her beyond marriage…I consider the raising of a family to be far more important than getting a PhD. We must unashamedly let this be known to Iraqi women.

Implied in Saddam's message is that national permission is required to pursue educational and other personal goals. **Azhar's** experience illustrates this new regime policy. Between 1977 and 1989, she had five children and expressed her struggles to secure birth control – "it was very difficult to buy or get anti-pregnant tablets [and] if I found [them] I should buy with…a high price." **Azhar** also addressed a rumor that has consistently circulated throughout Iraq – that during the Iran-Iraq War Saddam began a fertility enhancement injection program for childbearing aged women (married or not). **Azhar** stated that the injection program had occurred although not able to provide specific evidence; **Nedal** admitted to having heard the rumor also. However, both

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[293] Omar Suha, "Women: Honour, Shame and Dictatorship," in *Iraq Since the Gulf War: Prospects for Democracy,* ed. Fran Hazleton (London: Zed Books, 1994), 64.

Mayyada and **Linda** strongly refuted the existence of the fertility program. Regardless, unlike the previous decade, university women in 1980's Iraq found their bodies increasingly under state control, similar to what was happening to their campuses.

The RCC criminalized any new marriages between Iraqi women and foreign men, in an effort to prevent children from having dual citizenship.[295] The law was instated at the onset of the Iran-Iraq War when Saddam's vision for an invincible army required a replenishing troop body. For women studying abroad, it is unknown how this marriage law impacted their personal lives. What should be noted is that most interviewed participants did not marry while they were university students. This is, obviously, similar to marital rates for university women in the western world who often postpone marriage until after achieving their undergraduates. However, it should be observed that some of these eight women have been attending the university for more than a decade.

TABLE TWO: MARITAL DATA FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Azhar	Married in 1977 while in graduate school
Ghaida	Not married
Linda	Not married
Mayyada	Not married
Nedal	Not married
Nidhal	Married in mid 1970's while in graduate school

[294] Celine Whittleton, "Whither Iraq?" 248.
[295] Omar Suha, "Women: Honor," 63.

Shayma	Married in 2000 while in graduate school
Wasna	Not married, still an undergraduate

The First Gulf War (1991)

While Iraq did not initiate the First Gulf War, the invasion of Kuwait certainly pointed to Saddam's willingness to flaunt international law. As the Iran-Iraq War drew to its fruitless end, Saddam began to focus his diatribes on western involvement in Middle Eastern affairs and how, in his estimation, Kuwait had become an American lapdog.[296] Again, Saddam's real motives for military aggression were more self-serving. Anthony Shadid argues that the regime invaded Kuwait for potential financial gain. Kuwait, wealthy in terms of oil and bank accounts, stood in contrast to Iraq -- now deeply in debt after the Iran-Iraq War.[297] Again, Saddam employed ethnocentric mongering to garner national support for the invasion. Saddam also exploited scholastic venues to justify his aggression. Within three weeks of invading Kuwait, three academic publications circuited Iraq "proving" that Kuwait was actually Iraqi territory and insisting reunification take place.[298]

The chronology of the First Gulf War is brief. On August 2, 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait followed, four days later, by the UN passage of Resolutions 660 and 661. Resolution 660 officially condemned the invasion while Resolution 661 codified the sanctions policy. In

[296] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word,* 170.
[297] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 24.
[298] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word,* 171.

early 1991,[299] when Iraq refused to withdraw from Kuwait by a UN imposed deadline, UN Allied Forces[300] bombed Iraq. In the mere 43 days of actual conflict, bombings were so intense that more than 700 Iraqi sites were destroyed[301] including forty university facilities such as laboratories and residence halls.[302] It is estimated that 250,000 Iraqis died as a result of the conflict. Zainab Salbi shared the following passage from her mother's journal, written at the time of the war:

> Every morning and every evening the sky is full of fire.
> It looks like Star Wars: airplanes, jets, rockets, missiles.
> Every second the house shakes. We get used to the
> shaking, but not to being afraid.

Nadje Al-Ali agrees that First Gulf War bombings were especially traumatic:[303]

> Iraqis invariably have vivid memories of the
> Gulf War and, even before the latest war, many
> Iraqis spoke about ongoing nightmares, a sense
> of anxiety and a great sensitivity to certain noises
> that could only remotely be mistaken for bombs.[304]

The majority of today's university students would have been between the ages of four and twelve during the war and mental repercussions are apparent today, even in a country that does not recognize post-traumatic stress disorders.[305] Education and medical experts

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[299] The First Gulf War spanned January-March, 1991.
[300] Of which the majority were U.S. Armed Forces.
[301] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 37.
[302] Riverbend, http://riverbendblog.blogspot.com. January 18, 2006 blog. Riverbend states that during the First Gulf War some campuses also sustained looting damage.
[303] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 745.
[304] *Ibid,* 745.
[305] *Ibid,* 745.

agree that today's young adult population shows the strain of having grown up amongst wars, sanctions and civil strife.[306]

Sanctions and the Dispossessed Generation

With Saddam's refusal to vacate Kuwaiti territory, the United Nations imposed Resolution 661, barring imports to and exports from Iraq, save items of humanitarian need.[307] The UN knew they were committing the Iraqi people to acute hardship. In 1991, at the onset of embargoes, 70% of all food consumed in Iraq was imported.[308] The 1996 "Oil for Food" modification permitted Iraq to sell a certain percentage of their oil to purchase food, medicine and other items of humanitarian need[309]-- none of which directly impacted university resources. Not only did Saddam exploit the "Oil for Food" program to horde funds but, in the estimation of Jan Goodwin, the whole modification was "only a palliative, and insufficient to overcome the humanitarian crisis in Iraq."[310]

Sanctions decimated Iraq and the much of the promise its people held. Iraq was unable to make repairs to damage sustained in the First Gulf War -- hundreds of bridges, electrical grids, refineries, water treatment and sewage facilities were simply left in disrepair

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[306] Jacqueline Ismael and Sheeren Ismael, "Gender and State in Iraq," in *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East,* ed. Suad Joseph, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 210. Riadh Abed, "Tyranny and Mental Health," 8.
[307] Saeid Neshat, "A Look into the Women's Movement," 58. The UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee determined which items were classified as meeting of "humanitarian need."
[308] Jacqueline Ismael and Sheeren Ismael, "Gender and State," 209.
[309] Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor,* 226.
[310] *Ibid,* 226.

throughout the decade.[311] In a country once deemed the region's most advanced in terms of health care and social services, children began dying of malnutrition. Half of all Iraqi newspapers and magazines were shut down to preserve paper and the remaining publications were ordered to cut their circulation in half.[312] As sanctions progressed, there was massive unemployment, inflation and a devalued currency[313]-- a bag of rice cost more than one month's salary for the average Iraqi laborer.[314] One of the embargoes' most damaging effects to higher education was the erosion of the middle class --"reduced to penury and struggling simply to survive."[315]

Prior to 1991, Iraq held the highest regional rate of women in the labor force at 23% of the total population. By 1997, it fell to 10% when salaries could not keep pace with inflation.[316] Social services, such as free transportation to and from campus and childcare services began to diminish. Many women could no longer afford to go to work[317] or attend classes. Iraq already had an inflated rate of female run households as a result of their engagement in two wars and by the fact that sanctions increased the "forced migration of men."[318] For many university-affiliated women, this meant that their

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[311] Jacqueline Ismael and Sheeren Ismael, "Gender and State," 209.
[312] Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor,* 232.
[313] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 746.
[314] Jan Goodwin, "Price of Honor," 227.
[315] Stephen Zunes, "The U.S. Obsession with Iraq and the Triumph of Militarism," in *Iraq: The Human Cost of History*, eds. Tareq Y. Ismael and William W. Haddad, (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 201.
[316] UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) *Country Report: 1999-2000*, Iraq Country Office, 2000.
[317] *Ibid.*
[318] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 746 and749.

fathers, brothers and even husbands left to work in other countries when able to do so.[319] Saeid Neshat summarizes the devastation sanctions wrought on professional Iraqi women:

> During the…period of 1991-2003, women, who had gained a great deal during the period 1958-1978, were the most endangered by the war and sanctions. These sanctions created wild inflation that shut down the whole economy, brought on massive unemployment, and cut off revenue to the public sector, the largest employer of women. The salaries of schoolteachers, doctors, social workers, engineers and technicians became almost worthless. Young women in big cities, who had enjoyed financial independence with a salary of around $400 a month a few years earlier, suddenly found that their real wages were reduced to less than $2 a month.[320]

Naturally, the collective morale of Iraqi womanhood spiraled downward amidst surges in domestic violence, divorce and male emigration, resulting "in an acute demographic imbalance."[321] Ultimately, the decade is remembered by Iraqis for its dual repressors: Saddam and sanctions. Professional Iraqi families accustomed to household help found themselves taking care of new tasks – cooking meals, gardening, and cleaning. Nadje Al-Ali commented on the symbolism of professional women resorting to doing their own baking– a marker of how far they had fallen economically.[322] Or, in the words of **Nidhal**, "I never expected to make my own bread."

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[319] 1990's Iraqi law prevented the vast majority of women from traveling abroad without a male relative serving as a chaperone.
[320] Saeid Neshat, "A Look into the Women's Movement," 58.
[321] Nadje Al-Ali, "The Impact of Economic Sanctions on Women in Iraq" http://www.acttogether.org/impactonwomen.html.

Universities were not immune to the "austerity measures" the regime was forced to take in response to sanctions.[323] Watenpaugh and co-authors write,

> It was determined at the time [by the Iraqi government] that it was impossible for the state to continue to fully fund universities and maintain a level of quality [and therefore] it would create a multi-tiered and hierarchical university system.[324]

Saddam's new pet university, Saddam University, became the flagship institution, replacing the University of Baghdad in terms of funding and resources.[325] Established in the 1990's and butted against the University of Baghdad,[326] Saddam University, according to **Nidhal**, operated independently of the MOHE and under the leadership of Uday Hussein. A newly awarded PhD in political science did not mitigate Uday's total lack of university administrative experience. Uday assumed a professorship and much was made of the thesis he supposedly wrote foretelling the demise of the United States in the twenty-first century.[327] **Nidhal** insists that Uday culled the brightest professors and students from other Iraqi universities, forcing them to attend Saddam University.[328] **Nidhal** did concede that the shuffle enhanced the academic output at Saddam University where classrooms were often limited to twenty-five students (unlike 200 in comparable classes at the University of Technology). Nonetheless, the "new system neglected the

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[322] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 746.
[323] Keith Watenpaugh, Edouard Metenier, Jens Hanssen and Hala Fattah. "Opening the Doors: Intellectual Life and Academic Conditions in Post-War Baghdad," *The Iraqi Observatory*, 2003. http://web.mit.edu/cis/www/mitejmes/OpeningDoors.pdf, 6-7.
[324] *Ibid*, 6.
[325] *Ibid*, 6. **Nidhal** concurred with this assessment.
[326] *Ibid*, 6.
[327] David Blair, "Iraq Writes."
[328] Keith Watenpaugh, et.al., concur with **Nidhal's** recollections, *Opening the Doors*, 6-7.

established universities… to the benefit of ad hoc institutions like Saddam University. Colleges of law, technology and medicine were founded along the same line and lavished with resources."[329]

Again, the state manipulated study programs, financially favoring those fields that most benefited their immediate needs – namely engineering and medicine.[330] Nonetheless, every Iraqi instructor and student endured hardships, witnessing their education and expertise become obsolete as the world closed off to them. Many university students were expected to use their skills to respond to sanctions' effects. Students in the computer networking fields were tasked with repairing the nation's telecommunications grid that had been severely damaged in the First Gulf War[331] and medical students constantly treated cases of child malnutrition.[332] **Azhar** witnessed the deteriorating health of students themselves, writing

> students [are] suffering from low hemoglobin
> due to malnourishment and also their teeth are
> not very well [because it is] very difficult to go to
> the dentist because their money is not enough.

[329] *Ibid*, 6.
[330] *Ibid*, 6.
[331] Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor*, 235.
[332] Kevin Whitelaw, "Saddam's Charade," *US News and World Reports*, October 28, 2002. http://www.usnewsclassroom.com/issue/021028/usnews/28baghdad.html.

Textbooks were years, even decades, out of date and most university students relied upon photocopied versions sold in book markets.[333] Riverbend writes,

> Because curriculums were American or British, the books also originated from these countries. Major publishing houses refused to sell books to Iraqi universities because their government considered it illegal (apparently, you can make a WMD using a calculus book).[334]

Furthermore, the U.S Treasury Department ordered American professional organizations to limit services they provided to members residing in embargoed countries, including mailing serial publications and providing online access.[335] UNESCO reported that the "presence of Iraqi scientists in internationally refereed journals [was] very low," and primarily limited to Iraq's own eighteen journals, of which all were scientific in nature.[336] Faculty couple Jenan Al-Mukhtar and MH Al-Ali remember their productive lives before sanctions' isolation set in, "Until 1990, we were active in research, producing at least four to six papers each academic year. We were in continuous contact with many foreign universities and took part in conferences."[337] Interviewed women, recalling their own academic hardships, wrote of sanctions repercussions. **Ghaida**, of the University of Basra, remembers three or four students having to share one computer to complete in-class assignments in her computer networking classes and **Azhar** had to rely on friends

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[333] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 132.
[334] *Ibid*, 132.
[335] Lila Guterman, "US Policy Restricts Publishing by Scientists in Countries under Trade Embargo," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 10, 2003, 26.
[336] UNESCO, *Situation Analysis of Education in Iraq, 2003,* Paris: April 2003, 53. In 1999, Iraq universities published 18 scientific journals.
[337] MH Al-Ali and Jenan Al-Mukhtar, "Baghdad University: A Day in the Life," *Academe* 90, no.5 (September/October 2004, electronic version).

outside of Iraq to smuggle books to her. **Linda** claimed her textbooks were twenty years old and that, as a translation student, she had no access to "English speaking media." **Nidhal's** situation was equally dire. As a chemical engineering student at both the University of Baghdad and Technology, she used lab equipment from the 1970's. **Nidhal** also stated that paper was so scarce that "official university correspondence was printed on the back of PhD theses."

The 1996 Oil for Food modification included a MOHE request for $692 million in funds. In the end, Iraqi universities received only $263 million in supplies of which nearly 45% were vehicle donations. Educational and sports equipment constituted 23%, teaching materials comprised 22% and the remaining donations were furniture, generators and printing machinery. Almost none of the $263 million included laboratory or information technology equipment.[338] Essentially, the UN and affiliated donors barely took into consideration campus needs, doing little to remedy the situation.

As a result of sanctions, "Many of these [university] institutions" concludes Keith Watenpaugh, "are frozen in terms of development somewhere in the late 1980's."[339] Many Iraqi academics remain bitter that their brethren in other countries forsook them, especially those professors who built relationships with their own instructors during their study abroad years. One Iraqi history professor explained the sentiment, "we knew our

[338] UNESCO, *Situation Analysis*, 52.
[339] Keith Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors," 6.

government was never with us. But we trusted the West, the professor community abroad, our colleagues, whose principles we shared."[340]

Nowhere was the sense of isolation more apparent than the late arrival of the internet to Iraq. Saddam severely curtailed internet access in addition to the restrictions placed by the UN. **Linda** asserted that Saddam had IT personnel scramble "any site [that had] anything to say against Saddam." As of 2000, college students were aware of the internet's potential but had limited access to it, especially on campus (instead, most relied on pay-as-you-go internet cafes). Anthony Shadid, who traveled to Iraq numerous times in the 1990's, recalls, "By 1998, almost embarrassed by their backwardness, professors would ask me about the [i]nternet, amazed and bewildered."[341] **Ghaida**, as the University of Basra's computer center director, did not have campus internet access until 2001 and even today, struggles to get full-text research articles because of access barriers and downloading capabilities. In 2002, the government did open several internet cafes but barred entry into numerous sites and monitored email.[342] In essence, as the rest of the world's universities accustomed themselves to greatly enhanced global engagement, Iraqi students remained in the technological dark ages. "When we got the internet in 2000," remembers **Nidhal**, "it was astonishing because we saw the world was so small."

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[340] Barbara Aziz, "Iraqi Embargo's Unknown Victims," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 30, 1995.
[341] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 41.
[342] Kevin Whitelaw, "Saddam's Charade,"

Most Iraqis shared **Nidhal's** savvy, understanding that "Saddam wasn't under sanctions, only the Iraqis." In countless ways, Saddam manipulated the embargoes program to further exploit Iraqis as well as increase his personal wealth by illegally selling oil. He continued to lavish himself and his cronies with luxury goods and palatial homes, complained **Azhar**. All the while, according to **Linda**, "he grew greedier and more brutal" and "imprisoned more people." The ultimate effect of UN sanctions was to give the tyrant the wherewithal to become more tyrannical. From a distance, it may be convenient for equally educated and freer people to ask why the Iraqis did not overthrow Saddam. The response by one female Iraqi professor is telling: "I would rather be a live rabbit than a dead and dismembered lion."[343] In retrospect, it seems rather fanciful that the western world expected the Iraqi professional classes to lead a coup when the west was not promising military back-up, refuge, aid and professional job placement. Therefore, when Saddam was "re-elected" in 2002 with 100% of the vote, when the election body announced his victory long before any ballot counting could have been completed, the Iraqi people did not show outrage, only sorrowful acceptance.

According to **Nidhal**, some Iraqi universities saw a vast improvement in their resources beginning in 2000. At the University of Technology, where **Nidhal** teaches, campus conditions suddenly improved between 2000 and 2003. Buildings and grounds were restored, air conditioning installed and every faculty member received a new computer. In addition, limited access to western media was permitted by 2002, including new

[343] Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor*, 233.

satellite service that brought cable channels like VH1 and the Discovery Channel (news programming remained prohibited).[344] While it is unclear why Saddam suddenly reestablished himself as the patron of higher learning, one possibly reason is that he suspected an imminent invasion by the United States. Refurbishing the universities not only made Iraq look modern and progressive to the outside world, it also elevated Saddam to champion status among his own people while demonizing the west for their sanctions.

Nonetheless, sanctions and Saddam's reactionary measures razed Iraq's higher education, dashing it from its stature of regional esteem. "Degrees became worthless," writes Nadje Al-Ali, "in the context of widespread corruption and an uninterrupted exodus of university professors in the 1990's."[345] Those professors who were able to emigrate were fortunate – between travel restrictions imposed by sanctions[346] and Saddam's iron fisted refusal to let anyone to escape, very few students (or professors) could secure opportunities abroad. Par for the course, such limitations did not apply to Saddam's friends and powerful Baath members, remark **Mayyada** and **Azhar**. **Ghaida** insists that the few study abroad scholarships that were available were "specified to male not female faculty as the woman was prevented [from] complet[ing] her PhD or MSc study outside

[344] Kevin Whitelaw, "Saddam's Charade."
[345] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 747.
[346] No commercial airliners of UN Member States were permitted to fly in or out of Iraq during sanctions.

of Iraq."[347] Today, university women still aspire to see the wider world. **Linda** confesses bittersweetly, "it was a corny dream. I'm still dreaming about it, I'm sure one day I will, *inshallah*."[348] **Ghaida** is more dismal, "we were feeling [that we were] arrested in a big jail! We could release [ourselves in] March 2003[349] but I think it is too late to be free…"

In such a climate, maintaining a façade of higher learning required ingenuity, determination and faith. In the estimation of **Azhar**, "during Saddam's regime, especially 2000-2003, our university [was] similar to [a] secondary school." In essence, Iraqis became survivalists where "food [was] more important than knowledge."[350] Teaching shortages became a mounting issue in sanctions era Iraq with diminishing incomes, standards and qualified instructors. Students did demonstrate resilience in the midst of intellectual inertia and isolation. **Ghaida** found herself an increasingly self-directed learner, "we depend on…self-learning before teaching our students" and **Azhar** managed to have the Red Cross bring her scientific textbooks at the University of Basra. However, some students (and their instructors) were forced to forsake learning for income in the face of harsh realities. **Mayyada** writes

> It was…misery since students had no hope to achieve anything of worth after getting [their] university degrees. Professional opportunities for professors were nil, as the chances and scopes of university professors were

[347] **Ghaida** also mentioned that most of these scholarships were for programs in China, India or Russia.
[348] Arabic for "Allah willing."
[349] Marking the Allied Invasion of Iraq.
[350] Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor*, 228.

not much better than those for primary school teachers."

The tragic consequences sanctions and Saddam ultimately had on every Iraqi university member is wistfully illustrated in the following joke, often told in Iraq.

> A cab driver was speeding down the highway when he was cut off by a large delivery truck. He leaned out the window to yell at the truck driver, "Hey! You ought to let me go first! I'm a professor at the university!" shouted the cab driver. "That's nothing," responded the truck driver, "I'm the university president."

Conclusion

Iraqi youth, especially in comparison to their Iranian peers, had been relatively passive – not despite their government's efforts but specifically due to its totalitarian nature. For two decades, "the Iraqi people were scared …to speak or refuse any law issued by Saddam" **Mayyada** confessed. Students witnessed their professors, neighbors and family members be interrogated, imprisoned and even murdered. Regardless of the presence of codified law, the aims of the Baath always superceded civil rights.[351] The Iraqi government served just one master – Saddam, who never had any vested interest in advancing women or higher education for their own sake. In essence, learning became synonymous with indoctrination and an Iraqi degree contingent upon Baath allegiance. And for women betrothed to Saddam's vision of an egalitarian Iraq, promises made soon became too lethal to break.

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[351] Riadh Abed, "Tyranny and Mental Health," 4.

By 2001, Iraqis were aware that the Bush administration intended to reinvade, and, for many, they hoped that this time their brutal dictator would be removed. Keith Watenpaugh warned that some Iraqis were no longer willing to remain complacent, "Clearly Iraq's campuses are set to become radicalized loci."[352] With the 2003 invasion (led by the United States and its allies[353]), university students, just like **Linda** and her "corny dream," dared to imagine new lives with the freedom to travel and make up the academic ground they had lost. As will be seen in the next chapter, the chaos resulting from the Allied Invasion provided few genuine opportunities for students and considerably more danger, enemies and hardships.

[352] Keith Watenpaugh, "Rebuilding Iraq's Academic Community and Challenges of Civil Society in Civil War," speech delivered to Center for Arab and Islamic Studies, Villanova University (Philadelphia, September 9, 2004).
[353] The UN refused to endorse or participate in this invasion of Iraq.

CHAPTER FOUR
Nominal Allies and Actual Insurgents: Universities in Contemporary Iraq

When the city that was to become Baghdad was founded in the eighth century, it was called the "city of peace,"[354] but since 2003, it has been anything but peaceful. Between the Allied invasion and resulting military occupation, civil violence between Shia and Sunni groups, and the infiltration of foreign terrorist cells in the current leadership vacuum, Iraq is, for all intents and purposes, in complete chaos. University students could hardly imagine their lives more challenged than they were during sanctions and, yet, the 2003 invasion delivered on few promises and made the pursuit of higher education a hazardous occupation. From the perspective of women, pursuing their university studies mutated into a daily challenge of avoiding suicide bombers, gunfire, carjackings and Islamist vigilantes.

The U.S. and allied nations' stated case for invasion has mutated over the past few years, and that debate is beyond the scope of this research. What is certain is that nearly 24,000 *civilian* Iraqis died between March 2003 (the onset of aerial bombings) and March 2005 of which 18% were women and children.[355] On just the second night of the air campaign, 320 cruise missiles were dropped into Baghdad alone.[356] By April 7, Allied

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[354] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005). 19.
[355] Iraq Body Count, *A Dossier of Civilian Causalties, Fact Sheet One.* http://www.iraqbodycount.org. Of these, it is estimated than 1198 were women and 1281 were under the age of 18. 45% of the total civilian deaths occurred in the Baghdad vicinity.
[356] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 53.

forces controlled Baghdad and within two days, rampant looting had taken over the city.[357] Three months later, Uday Hussein was killed and five months following his death, Saddam was captured. While stable leadership and governance has not yet established itself in Iraq, the official occupation of Iraq ended on June 28, 2004 with the seating of Iraq's provisional government.[358] Iraqis held elections six months later[359] and continue nascent efforts to become autonomously ruled despite multiple competing factions and insurgent campaigns.

Student Resilience

A composite picture of current Iraqi higher education reveals there are 1290 university students for every 100,000 inhabitants, or approximately 13% of the total population.[360] Nationally, there were 262,000 undergraduates and 18,000 graduate or PhD students in the 2003-2004 academic year, according to Deputy MOHE Minister Beriwan Khailany.[361] While some researchers and media outlets contend that Iraqi women

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[357] *Ibid,* 118.
[358] *Ibid,* 359.
[359] *Ibid,* 393.
[360] UNESCO *Situation Analysis of Education in Iraq: 2003.* April 2003, Paris. In 2002, the total population of Iraq was 22 million with more than 7 million living in the capital city.
[361] Beriwan Khailany, Deputy Minister of MOHE, Iraq, "Department of Higher Education and Scientific Research: Iraq after the War," speech delivered at the University of Oklahoma (Al Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq, April 27, 2004).

comprise approximately half of the current college student population,[362] Dr. Beriwan asserted that a more realistic figure is 38%.[363]

The MOHE functioned episodically during 2003 and 2004; nonetheless, all university applicants still processed through the ministry. In 2003, 75,000 Iraqis submitted university applications with 90% identifying the University of Baghdad as their first choice (of which 10,000 would be accepted).[364] Contemporary Baghdad is far from an idyllic college town. Anthony Shadid sensed that "even under Saddam's terrifying grasp, the city has never felt so dangerous or out of control."[365] Yet, students returned to their studies in droves in 2003, despite and sometimes in the midst of military action and civil violence. Eighty-three percent of the entire college population, or 240,000 students, returned to their classes just weeks after the war began.[366] In **Linda's** case, commuting to class came to involve navigating crossfire:

> One day, fighting between the [Iraqi National Guard] and "insurgents" was in full swing. We were a few blocks from [campus when] …[a]ll of the sudden, the driver announced that the guards signaled him to stop. I had a class I couldn't miss …so I decided to walk amidst the shootout.[367]

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[362] For example, Keith Watenpaugh, Edouard Metenier, Jens Hanssen and Hala Fattah, "Opening the Doors: Intellectual Life and Academic Conditions in Post-War Baghdad," *The Iraqi Observatory*, 2003 [electronic version]. http://web.mit.edu/cis/www/mitejmes/OpeningDoors.pdf, July 15, 2003.
[363] Beriwan Khailany, "Department of Higher Education."
[364] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq* (New York: The Feminist Press, 2005), 133.
[365] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 336.
[366] Al Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq, *Media Kit* (Norman, Oklahoma, 2004).
[367] **Linda's** blog, March 23, 2006. http://firstwordsfirstwalkfirstiniraq.blogspot.com.

Student resilience is remarkable given the collective mental state of Iraqis. In the twenty-six years reviewed in this historical study, Iraq was engaged in wars for ten years, dominated by Saddam's tyranny for twenty-five, sanctions reigned for twelve years and foreign occupation the last three. In the estimation of the Iraqi Prospect Organisation, current university students' "experience of normal civil society is limited due to the totalitarian nature of the [Baathist] state."[368] One father describes his daughter life, beginning with her 1979 arrival: "She opened her eyes to the Iran-Iraq war …[and] hasn't seen one moment of happiness or security."[369] A Baghdad psychiatrist noted the increase of young adult patients with panic and anxiety disorders as well as severe depression.[370]

Mental health experts expect to see continuously increasing rates of post-traumatic stress and schizoid disorders, and the troubling symptoms that accompany these, given the unrelenting isolation and violence to which young Iraqis to have been exposed.[371] Riverbend, a recent college graduate, wrote in her blog *Baghdad Burning*,

> I think everyone I know is suffering from that mental strain. You can see it the eyes and hear it in the taut voices that threaten to break with the burden of emotion. We're all watching things carefully and trying to focus on leading semi-normal lives.[372]

Nidhal, a University of Technology instructor, whisked her pregnant daughter away from the city (herself a student at the University of Baghdad) in 2003. In **Nidhal's** estimation,

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[368] Iraqi Prospect Organisation, *Iraqi Constitution: Attitudes Toward Democracy*, www.iprospect.org.uk, 4.
[369] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 274.
[370] Ilana Ozernoy, "Betwixt and Between," *U.S. News and World Report*, October 4, 2004, 33.
[371] Riadh Abed, "Tyranny and Mental Health," *British Medical Bulletin* 72 (2004), 8-9.

Shayma was suffering from "shell shock and having panic attacks," taking Valium up to three times a day. Human Rights Watch warns that the victimization of women in regions of conflict inhibits their ability to participate in the rehabilitation of civil society:

> The failure…to protect women and girls from violence, and redress it when it occurs, has both immediate and long-term negative implications for the safety of women and girls and for their participation in post-war life in Iraq.[373]

Shayma's narrative illustrates the repercussions Human Rights Watch is speaking of:

> You know the unbelievable circumstances that we live here in Iraq …I can't stand [it] anymore…I'm depressed and tired and fed up…I can't live like this anymore…always in my prayers I ask God to take me before anything happen[s] to my family…I'm so angry at myself because I can't let my daughter feel safe…everyday when she goes to kindergarten I…imagine if I won't see her again.

"Liberated Iraq"

The United Nations unanimously voted[374] in 2003 for the United States and Great Britain to be vested with "sweeping formal authority" in the occupation of Iraq,[375] which came to be the Coalition of Provisional Authority (CPA). According to the US Institute of Peace, "the rebuilding of Iraq is the most far-reaching reconstruction enterprise since the efforts in Europe and Japan at the conclusion of World War II."[376] The CPA was never able to

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[372] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 256.
[373] Human Rights Watch, "Climate of Fear: Sexual Violence and Abduction of Women and Girls in Baghdad," *Human Rights Watch* 15, no.7 (July 2003), 1.
[374] Syria abstained.
[375] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 197.
[376] US Institute of Peace, *Donor Activities and Civil Society Potential in Iraq*. http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr/124/pdf.

stabilize post-war Iraq, despite U.S. declarations that the country was now liberated and on the road to democratic governance. Instead, argues women's activist Zainab Salbi, "The violence under Saddam, which had been controlled vertically by the government, had now spread horizontally out across the neighborhoods." Since Iraq's liberation, conflicting ideologies butt against one another, making consensus-building nearly impossible. Anthony Shadid astutely observes that when Americans hear the word "occupation" they hark back to the productive and harmonious rehabilitation of Europe and Japan post WWII. Conversely, for Arabs the term conjures images of Israeli occupied Lebanon, and, of course, Palestine.[377] Keith Watenpaugh is even bleaker, insisting that US and British higher education advisors "play[ed] a paternalistic role…akin to colonial administrators:"[378]

> While these programs have the potential to aid Iraqis as they rebuild their educational structures, in the long run they will tar all American educational initiatives and American academics with the same neo-colonial brush.[379]

In the end, writes Watenpaugh,

> Core values of open exchange, freedom of inquiry, women's participation in higher education and faculty self-management may all be dismissed as "American" values and moreover as anti-Muslim.

Vast portions of Iraq now exist in lawlessness – in 2003, Baghdadis witnessed seventy carjackings *daily*.[380] Events rarely present in regime-era Iraq, such as Islamist terrorism,

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[377] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 198.
[378] Keith Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors One Year Later: Reflections on the Iraq War and the Middle Eastern Studies Community," *Bulletin of the Middle East Studies Association* 38, no.1 (Summer 2004) 16-23. http://www.lemoyne.edu/history/waten.html.
[379] *Ibid.*

seeped into the country. For instance, al-Qaeda terrorists executed more than forty Shia travelers over a several week period in 2005 on the road between Basra and Baghdad.[381] Due to multiple insurgent efforts as well as the United States lack of appropriate post-conflict planning, municipal services such as water and electricity do not meet basic demand. In many cases, power systems and treatment plants that sustained damage in the First Gulf War were not repaired during sanctions and to this day remain defunct. **Nedal** attempts to see her situation with some humor, "no electricity, no fuel, no water, no internet, just count the 'no's' here, this is our horrible life and in spite of all that we [are] still working, studying, laugh[ing] and alive."

Allied forces became notorious for their inability to secure Iraq, establish basic services, and their lack of cultural sensitivity. "The American promises to Iraq are like trying to hold water in your hand. It spills through your fingers," complained the owner of Baghdad's Renaissance Bookstore.[382] Keith Watenpaugh declared the 2003-2004 reconstruction year "a total waste"[383] and Anthony Shadid made the following observation:

> There was never really a plan for post-Saddam Iraq. There was never a realistic view of what might ensue after the fall. There was hope that became faith, and delusions that became fatal.[384]

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[380] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 37.
[381] Frontline World, *Saddam's Road to Hell.* Public Broadcasting System, January 27, 2006.

[382] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 216.
[383] Keith Watenpaugh, "Rebuilding Iraq's Academic Community and Challenges of Civil Society in Civil War," speech delivered to Center for Arab and Islamic Studies, Villanova University, Philadelphia, September 9, 2004.
[384] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 132.

In retrospect, Allied forces failed to identify priorities and envision probable outcomes. This includes conceptualizing the role universities could have played in reconstruction efforts and democracy-building. Furthermore, the United States overestimated the gratitude they believed Iraqis would have for their "liberators." In the end, when it could not deliver on its promises, the US seemed mystified that Iraqis reacted in anger. Shadid concludes that, "the Americans brought a revolution without ambition and upheaval without design."[385]

All of the women interviewed for this study spoke of the exhaustion threaded throughout their daily lives – worrying which commute route was likely to be safe, how long electricity would be available, hoping a delayed family member had not being abducted or worse. In 2004, **Nidhal** and her daughter **Shayma,** as well as **Shayma's** preschool-aged daughter, narrowly escaped a bombing near the Green Zone that destroyed their car. It was the frustrating monotony created by military checkpoints that really exhaust **Nidhal**, "To get to the university takes about two hours …[m]y husband is driving me to the university because I don't like to drive in such…messy and dangerous road condition[s]." Riverbend's blog details her constant wariness, attempting to be vigilant for car bombings or checkpoint soldiers who might find her "suspicious."[386] It may seem ironic to contemporary Iraqis that their despot is finally on trial and yet thousands of

[385] *Ibid*, 9.
[386] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 99.

street crimes now go unpunished. "Nothing seemed secure," writes Anthony Shadid, "not cars, not homes, not daughters, nothing."[387]

Female students, like all Iraqi women, have been liberated from Saddam's sadism only to find themselves victimized by a war, foreign occupation, rampant street crime and warring Islamist factions. By far, the gravest concern for university women is getting to and from classes safely. **Nidhal** expressed the uncertainty many commuting Baghdadis must feel: "we all know that if [we] return back home safe …[one] day, maybe not [so] at another time. [It] is just like [being on a death list] but we don't know when or where." Exhibiting equal despair, **Ghaida** shared "Nowadays, no university work, no peace." Between March and August of 2003, there were approximately 400 *reported* cases of women being abducted in Baghdad alone.[388] Most families viewed reporting abductions to the CPA as futile; instead taking on search-and-rescue missions or revenge into their own hands.[389] University women may appeal to kidnappers for various reasons. Professional abductors may assume these women's families have the resources to pay large ransoms and sex industry traffickers seek Iraqi women for brothels abroad.[390] Finally, Islamist factions have attacked, abducted and murdered Iraqi women in moralizing campaigns over what they perceive to be depraved, overly western lifestyles. Regardless of the motives, the impact is that women cannot freely leave their homes: "the

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[387] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 138.
[388] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 37.
[389] *Ibid*, 37.
[390] Brian Bennett, "Stolen Away" May 1, 2006, http://www.time.com/time/archive/preview/0,10987,1186558,00.html.

situation is incredibly frustrating to females who work or go to college."[391] For these emerging professional women, the experience seems infantilizing – adult women are told they may not leave the house or, if they are permitted, must do so with a male relative, often himself armed. **Linda** expresses that she keeps "in mind my mother's warnings: 'do not talk to strangers, they could be pro-Saddam, or pro-some-militia, so keep your views to yourself' – it's fun to be over twenty, but you still feel like five."[392]

While Iraq is certainly not a safe place for young men either, it must be acknowledged that women are uniquely vulnerable during this time. Nadje Al-Ali theorizes that

> Violence against women is often endemic in post-war situations, partly because of the general state of anarchy and chaos but also as an element of heightened aggression and militarization, and prevailing constructions of masculinity promoted during conflict.[393]

Young Iraqi women are attacked in what may be classified as "gender-neutral" crimes, such as ransom-based kidnappings; but women are also targets for sexual and moralizing attacks, which rarely impact men directly. Yet again, it is the pervasive and unrelenting fear, the rumors which cannot be fully disproved, that are nearly as demoralizing as surviving an attack itself. For University of Baghdad biology professor, Naba al Barak, street violence hinders women's ability to participate in Iraq's refashioning. She argues

> The most important thing is security. Women's issues will have to come second. If there is no security, we

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[391] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 17.
[392] **Linda**, *First Word*s, March 22, 2006.
[393] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi Women between Dictatorship, War, Sanctions and Occupation" *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 4-5 (2005), 742.

> won't even be able to go out to the streets to protest something that is against out rights.[394]

It appears as if those factions willing to use terrorism to achieve their objectives have reached the same conclusion: fear is an effective systemic barrier to open and democratic communities. Islamist sects that are opposed to women moving freely through society harass and threaten women, douse them with acid, and worse. Zeena al-Qushtaini was a college-educated Baghdadi who co-owned a pharmacy with a male physician. A divorced mother of two young children, Zeena was known for her work on behalf of women's rights and expensive, western-styled clothing. One March evening in 2005, six armed gunmen stormed the pharmacy and kidnapped Zeena and her partner. They were found ten days later on a highway just south of Baghdad. The physician had been beheaded and Zeena had a bullet in her head. Those who murdered Zeena dressed her in a full abaya before dumping her body.[395]

Professional Iraqi Women and Islam Today

Islamist groups, many of which do not hail from Iraq, want Iraqis to choose between their Islamist ethic and personal beliefs and ambitions. Radical Shia clerics package this dilemma as the chasm between devout Muslims and fallen ones, insistent that Sharia law govern Iraq.[396] Most middle class, professional Iraqis do not polarize their faith as such and dismiss the idea that they are not devout simply because they do not want to live

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[394] Babak Dehghanpisheh, Eve Conant and Rod Nordland, "Iraq's Hidden War," *Newsweek,* March 7, 2005, 24.
[395] *Ibid,* 21.

under Sharia law. Furthermore, a schism has widened between Shia and Sunni Muslims, instigated by contemporary political fears rather than a tradition of segregation. Middle-age Iraqis "remember fondly a country in which no one knew who was Sunni and who was Shiite" before "identity politics" fractured Iraqi civil society.[397]

As illustrated by Zeena al-Qushtaini's murder, some clerical groups act inhumanely in the name of their god. But Riverbend insists this is not Islam: "This is not done in the name of God—it is done in the name of power."[398] She continues in her blog,

> Any oppression to women isn't a reflection on Islam. It is a reflection on certain narrow minds, ignorance, and politicization of religion. Islam is a progressive religion and no religion is clearer on the rights of women.[399]

Islam has always promoted education for all persons, not just clerics, scribes, the privileged and male.[400] The Prophet's heirs will be the learned[401] and the wise man Hasan Basari insists that the "ink of the learned" is more precious than "the blood of martyrs."[402]

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[396] Sharia Law is the Koranic moral code that insists there is no distinction between spiritual and secular life.
[397] George Packer, "Testing Ground," *New Yorker*, February 28, 2005. http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/050228fa_fact.
[398] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 19.
[399] *Ibid*, 190.
[400] Kadhim Hussain Bakir, "Arabization of Higher Education in Iraq" (PhD diss., University of Bath, 1984), 87.
[401] Imam Gazzali, "Acquistion of Knowledge, Excellence of Learning," *Revival of Religious Learnings*. 1111 AD. Translated by Fazlul Karim Published by Darul Ishaat, Karachi, Parkistan. http://www.as-sidq.org/learnin1.html.
[402] *Ibid.*

Yaner Mohammed, President of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, says, "we're surprised by the rise of political Islam" and stresses that her country is not a "conservative Islamic society" like many in the region.[403] Another reason Iraq's intelligentsia are taken aback by the Islamist presence in their midst is that such movements had previously been contained to poorer and less educated communities. What is striking about these Islamist terrorists is their willingness to use tactics that conflict with their principles of appropriate womanhood. In their efforts to moralize through intimidation, clerical groups violate their own codes by speaking directly to women they do not know, taking them to secluded places, being outwardly disrespectful, and exposing, touching and defiling these women's bodies. It may seem surreal for many urbane Iraqi women to see the grip fundamentalism has taken. Of course, there are women who participate in Sharia and other radical Islamist sects. Ilana Ozernoy reports that "for some [young women], Saddam Hussein's ouster has meant the right to embrace religious extremism; for others the right to embrace jeans, Internet chatrooms and the Backstreet Boys."[404] The significance of Islamist movements to this study is that universities and female students are so often the focus of their campaigns whether these factions are dominating student elections, disrupting classes, attacking female students or murdering their professors.

[403] Babak Dehghanpisheh, "Iraq's Hidden War," 23.

Social Engagements for University Women

Parents of adolescent and young adult daughters severely restrict shopping and social excursions from a realistic concern over street violence. Not surprisingly, these young women complain that they feel like prisoners and that their entire engagement with the outside world consists of channel or internet surfing and chatting on cellular phones.[405] By 2004, more than 300 channels were available in Iraq through satellite television.[406] While few professional families entirely circumvent their daughter's access to campus, most women are encouraged to attend classes only and then rush home. However, more alarmist attitudes may be on the rise. A study of nearly 2,000 Shia residents in southern Iraq cited civil violence (as well as rampant unemployment rates) as an adequate reason to limit women's education.[407]

Many young Iraqi women take advantage of "ether socializing" – mingling in digital communities rather than in the actual presence of people. As of 2005, there were more than eleven million cellular subscribers in Iraq, marking a 158% increase in two years.[408] This, in turn, spurred the "secret boyfriend" phenomena whereby young Iraqi women are courted over their cellular phones as well as in internet chat rooms.[409] While perhaps not

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[404] Ilana Ozernoy, "Betwixt and Between,"32-33.
[405] *Ibid*, 32.
[406] *Ibid*, 32.
[407] L. Amowitz, G. Kim, C. Reis, J. Asher and V. Iacopino, "Human Rights Abuses and Concerns about Women's Health and Human Rights in Southern Iraq," *JAMA*, 291, no.12 (March 24/31, 2004), 1471. 50+% of participants agreed that women's access to education may be a cause for rampant violence and unemployment.
[408] Military Officers' Association of America, Central Oklahoma Chapter, "From the President's Pen," *Newsletter*, December 8, 2005.
[409] Babak Dehghanpisheh, "Iraq's Hidden War." Ilana Ozernoy, "Betwixt and Between,"33.

as intimate, dating Iraqis have few other options – popular nightclubs and restaurants have been blown up and strolling couples report being harassed and even shot at by religious vigilantes.

Today, Iraqi youth access internet venues for their academic and social benefits, but also to share the realities of their lives through blogging. Riverbend,[410] an anonymous, female, recent university graduate and **Linda**,[411] interview participant, post regularly on their blogs and are oft quoted in this study. Both blogs are fascinating reading, each sardonic, keenly perceptive and evocative. At internet forums like *aliraqi.org*,[412] young men and women, Iraqis and foreigners, send hundreds of posts daily on matters as diverse as Sunni-Shia relations, finding old classmates, soccer, women's rights and beer.

CPA Efforts to Rehabilitate Iraqi Universities

The CPA appointed personnel to oversee the temporary administration and restoration of postsecondary education and, more specifically, the removal of Baath professors and administrators. In the end, the CPA failed to accomplish the first objective and acted excessively in the latter case. CPA Order Number One, "De-Baathification of Iraqi Society," was issued in June 2003 and commanded that all Baath, senior level administrators across all regions and government sectors were "hereby removed from

[410] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, http://riverbendblog.blogspot.com.
[411] **Linda**, *First Words*. First Walk,
[412] http://www.aliraqi.org.

their positions and banned form future employment in the public sector."[413] For universities, this meant that most top level administrators, presidents, deans, chairs, as well as senior professors, were immediately terminated and campuses, already in the midst of multiple crises, were left sans leadership.[414] While the CPA naively hoped de-Baathification measures would remove all vestiges of Saddam's tyranny, the plan was shortsighted. First and foremost, the CPA appeared ignorant to the fact that most senior administrators and professors joined the Baath Party for job protection and promotion and not because of any authentic allegiance.[415] Nor did the CPA have the wherewithal to fill the vacancies they created. Senior level gender equity was certainly not a concern. Save for the appointment of Deputy MOHE Minister Beriwan Khailany, the CPA did not insist that women play a prominent role in higher education planning and development.

The effects of de-Baathification were comparable to the looting of campus libraries – entire entities were laid waste. Sixty-five of seventy instructors at the University of Baghdad's political science program were identified as Baath members and the CPA dismissed six of the most senior professors.[416] Nearly 180 more University of Baghdad professors shared the same fate.[417] When university president Sami Mudhafar, a long-time anti-Baathist, realized the CPA would not relent until they removed all Baath members in leadership positions, he took his concerns to the MOHE. Mudhafar

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[413] Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors," 21.
[414] Andrew Lawler, "Iraq's Shattered Universities," *Science*, June 6, 2003. http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/summary/300/5625/1490.
[415] Edward Wong, "On Iraqi Campuses, Free Can Be Messy," *New York Times*, January 17, 2004.
[416] *Ibid.*

expressed that his campus would soon face massive teaching shortages and that he could no longer endorse CPA policies. Instead of being lent a sympathetic ear, he was immediately asked to resign.[418]

The MOHE faced numerous additional challenges aside from protesting presidents. Looters burned and sacked the MOHE building several times with one of the biggest losses being the recently installed nation-wide database of student records.[419] Reconstruction funds earmarked for Iraqi higher education almost never materialized although, grants Keith Watenpaugh,

> smaller programs sponsored by the USAID that link US and Iraqi universities have had some positive results, this includes Al-Sharaka, a program headquartered at the University of Oklahoma.[420]

The MOHE, only moderately functional during the height of sanctions, was rendered nearly useless by the end of 2003. In the estimation of Deputy Minister Idris Salih,[421] 85% of Iraqi higher education infrastructure was destroyed between 2003 and 2005.[422] Salih's counterpart, Beriwan Khailany, highlighted other problems currently encountered by the MOHE and its universities:

- Higher education remains highly centralized

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[417] *Ibid.*
[418] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 133.
[419] UNESCO, *Situation Analysis*, 34.
[420] Keith Watenpaugh, "Rebuilding Iraq's Academic Community." USAID is the US Agency for International Development.
[421] The MOHE maintains two deputy minister positions: Dr. Beriwan Khailany currently oversees scientific research and Dr. Idris Salih manages higher education administration.
[422] David Jobbins, "Aid to Iraq Starts to Flow but More Help is Needed." *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, March 4, 2005, 13.

- Curriculum is standardized at the national level
- There are few international engagements or collaborations
- No bilateral agreements with other institutions
- Brain drain: the emigration of Iraqi professors and other researchers[423]

The CPA could not or would not prioritize the universities and by doing so damaged relations with an Iraqi sector both familiar with the west and likely to advocate for rehabilitation and democracy building. Deputy Minister Khailany criticized US agencies and grant awardees tasked with rehabilitating Iraqi higher education in this stateside radio broadcast:

> When the US liberated Iraq, all we Iraqis were very happy to be free from the dictatorship, After the war stopped, we were expecting a lot from America and then they were very slow…European and Asian countries did a lot more than the Americans. The only running program we have so far is with Oklahoma University…apart from that, in the past two years, we haven't gotten anything.[424]

CPA appointed higher education advisors did little to impress Iraqi academics, even though these advisors were:

> *de facto* head[s] of Iraq's university system with the ultimate power to veto appointments and set budgets… answering first to L. Paul Bremer[425] and then the Pentagon.[426]

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[423] Beriwan Khailany, *Al Sharaka Leadership Conference*, Amman, Jordan, August 11-17, 2004.
[424] Beriwan Khailany, interview by Dick Gordon, *The Connection*, July 1, 2005. http://theconnection.org/shows/2005/07/20050701_a_main.asp.
[425] Ambassador Bremer was appointed by the Department of Defense as the CPA Chief from May 2003 until June 2004.

Keith Watenpaugh and his colleagues are especially critical of the CPA's oversight of the MOHE and universities calling it "institutionally indifferent to the needs of Iraqis."[427] University officials were overwhelmed as they attempted to navigate the multi-tiered, cumbersome CPA bureaucracy.[428] Furthermore, few CPA staff members appointed to the MOHE spoke Arabic or were familiar with Iraqi history and culture,[429] nor demonstrated experience with or a vision for higher education in post-conflict regions.

Military Interactions with Students and on Campus

Students at the Universities of Technology and Baghdad eagerly returned to their campuses in May of 2003, mere weeks after the city endured unrelenting aerial bombings. They arrived to campuses heavily fortified, damaged, and ransacked. Both universities had security checkpoints manned by Allied troops. Tanks crisscrossed the campuses and University of Technology students insist US tanks broke down the main gates to provide looters access.[430] The campus was, again, the focus of intense weapons inspections. Temporary barracks and barbed wire peppered the University of Baghdad's landscape as the campus was a securable, strategic site for Allied forces. Both soldiers and squatters occupied residence hall space[431] while students were absent and did not vacate upon the students' return, "causing serious friction between university authorities

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[426] Keith Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors," 26.
[427] *Ibid,* 26.
[428] *Ibid,* 8.
[429] Watenpaugh, "Rebuilding Iraq's Academic Community."
[430] Andrew Lawler, "Iraq's Shattered Universities."
[431] In 2004, Iraq's public universities had 172 dormitories nationally with 76 designated for females. Beriwan Khailany, "Department of Higher Education and Scientific Research: Iraq after

and the Coalition [of] Provisional Authority."[432] Approximately 75% of University of Baghdad residential housing was occupied by foreign soldiers,[433] which left, according to university president Mosa al-Mosawe, 5,000 students without campus rooms.[434] Worse yet, the CPA never reimbursed the university for the use of these rental spaces.[435]

Students often encountered armed soldiers during their school day. Troops were stationed in lecture halls and, on occasion, denied professors entry into their own classrooms because they were late.[436] It is safe to surmise that commuting delays caused by Allied security checkpoints were the source of many tardy instructors. In April of 2003, US Marines exchanged machine gunfire with unidentified combatants midday at a University of Baghdad campus. The Marines then stormed several buildings, in the midst of classes, looking for the shooters. On the same day, gunfire resulted in the accidental explosion of anti-aircraft ammunition that was being stored on campus.[437] The presence of western soldiers makes many female students uncomfortable especially with mandatory "pat downs" at security checkpoints. For Muslim women, this process is offensive and demoralizing and has caused many women to simply return (and remain at)

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the War," Speech delivered at the University of Oklahoma. Al Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq, April 27, 2004.
[432] David Jobbins, "Aid to Iraq."
[433] Edward Wong, "On Iraqi Campuses."
[434] David Jobbins, "Aid to Iraq"
[435] Edward Wong, "On Iraqi Campuses"
[436] Aws Al-Sharqy, "Baghdad University Under US Siege," *Islam Online.net*, May 27, 2003. http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2003-05/27/article14.shtml.
[437] Martin Savidge, "Marines Take Fire at Baghdad University," *cnn.com*, April 9, 2003. http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/04/09/sprj.irq.university/.

home rather than endure it.[438] The reaction of one US Army intelligence officer exemplifies the divide between extending empathy and security concerns: "We're not going to risk the lives of one of our soldiers to be culturally sensitive."[439]

University Wastelands

Sanctions-era students surely believed they endured the nadir in their country's higher education legacy. But, in addition to the humiliation and disappointment associated with the Allied occupation, endless waves of looting left students and faculty stunned by the decimation surrounding them. Illustrations of the looting are gut wrenching for scholars to document: the University of Baghdad's music department lost 6,000 recordings and thirty pianos.[440] The oldest astronomy department in the Middle East, located at the University of Basra, was completely ransacked.[441] Antiquities and ancient manuscripts were whisked away to black market dealers and looted library books can be found at Baghdad's famed Friday markets.[442]

Ancient artifacts and books have received the greatest response, in terms of donations, from foreign higher education institutions. For Keith Watenpaugh, this is troubling:

> While there has been a tremendous international outcry for the archaeological museums and the ancient past of

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[438] Aws Al-Shaqy, "Baghdad University." Iraqi Women's League, "Open Appeal to All Women's Organizations in the United Kingdom." http://womenstrike8m.server101.com/English/iraqiwomenleagueopenletter.htm.
[439] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 231.
[440] Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors," 9.
[441] Mark Santora, "Aftereffects: Looting," *New York Times*, May 19, 2003, 13.
[442] Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors," 13.

> Mesopotamia – things that fir neatly into the trajectory of the heritage of "our Western Civilization," a similar outcry for that past most present in the lives of contemporary Iraqis, the heritage of Islamic, Ottoman, Arab – colonial and post-colonial periods was absent altogether.[443]

University of Basra Professor Abbas Ebadi agrees, "I have seen all the attention artifacts thousands of years old have gotten…but this was where we trained young minds for the future."[444]

University libraries sustained considerable looting and damage to their structures and book drives were begun to restore library collections. However, in some cases, international donors failed to identify those university libraries most desperate for assistance. Case in point is the University of Baghdad that housed 750,000 volumes. While only 1% of books were stolen in 2003 looting,[445] US and UK philanthropies made so many donations to the university library that most of these books had to be warehoused. On the other hand, items that the university library desperately needed replaced like computers, air conditioning units and copiers, were not sent. [446] Other university libraries that endured more pervasive looting were not the benefactors of

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[443] Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors One Year Later."
[444] Mark Santora, "Aftereffects," 13.
[445] Zain Al-Naqshbandi, *Report on the Central Library of Baghdad University*. Middle Eastern Librarians Association: Committee on Iraqi Libraries, June 22. 2004. http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/IRAQ/zan.html.
[446] Beriwan Khailany and Dr. Abdul Sattar Jawad, dialogues with author, April 2004.

similar generosity. The University of Mosul lost 890,000 volumes and 190,000 disappeared from the University of Basra library,[447] after which it was torched.[448]

Seemingly mundane objects did not escape the efforts of looters or the ire of vandals. Pictures shared by the MOHE[449] show cables ripped from ceilings, steel beams and venetian blinds torn down, chunks of cement wrenched from the walls, and stairs hacked apart. Classrooms and residence halls were robbed of all furniture and fixtures. Lab, computer and office equipment disappeared almost immediately in March 2003 but the looters were not done until they had stripped campuses of their window frames, doorknobs and lightbulbs. Students learned their academic records were burnt, scattered to the winds[450] or sold to "document shops" where Iraqis can purchase personal data about one another.[451]

Identifying why the looted occurred and who is responsible is difficult due to the number of suspected groups. Evidence on most campuses indicates that looting was not merely opportunistic as arson and wanton destruction accompanied many episodes.[452] Anthony Shadid argues that many looters targeted universities (along with other government

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[447] Andrew Albanese and Michael Rogers. "Iraqi Libraries Devastated in War." *Library Journal* 128, no. 9 (May 15, 2003). http://www.libraryjournal.com/index.asp?layout=articlePrint&articleID=CA296431
[448] Mark Santora, "Aftereffects," 13.
[449] Beriwan Kjailany, "Department of Higher Education and Scientific Research: Iraq after the War," speech delivered at the University of Oklahoma. Al Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq, April 27, 2004.
[450] Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors One Year Later."
[451] Frontline World, *Saddam's Road to Hell*.
[452] See, for example, Mark Santora, "Aftereffects."

entities) to retaliate against Saddam.[453] Some looting may be classified as "investigative" – specifically when Allied troops scoured laboratories and scientific departments. This, in no way, is meant to diminish the destruction these spaces sustained.[454] University of Technology students believe Kuwaitis also looted and vandalized their campus, according to **Nidhal**. She insists that in 2003 a large Kuwaiti truck arrived on campus and unloaded several people who set about to destroy lab and engineering studies space, all in retaliation for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait tweleve years earlier. In most instances, looting was the work of poorer Iraqis stealing items that might fetch them a few dinars. By mid-May 2003, University of Basra students arrived each morning to see donkey carts exiting the campus gates, laden with chairs, bricks, coils and books. Having worked through the night, the looters passed the students on their way to the thieves' market.[455]

Iraqi students and their professors also question the role western forces played by allowing looters access.[456] For example, University of Basra students complain that British troops stood by as looters pillaged their campus. Brigadier Graham Binns, overseer of the city's occupation, stated he explicitly ordered soldiers to not shoot campus looters.[457] Such experiences added to the collective sense of student despair: "war-time looting and raids by US troops not only disrupted [students'] studies, but

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[453] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 131.
[454] Andrew Lawler, "Iraq's Shattered Universities."
[455] Mark Santora, "Aftereffects."
[456] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 198.
[457] Mark Santora, "Aftereffects."

affected them psychologically too by violating the apparent sanctity of their campus."[458] Allied forces experienced regret also – one senior CPA official estimated that the inability to prevent looting "tripled the cost of reconstruction."[459] Who did come to the aid of Iraqi universities and many other communities were clerical groups. Armed Islamist patrols did what police and soldiers could or would not do: stopping looters, confiscating stolen goods, banning civilian shootouts, distributing food and medical treatment. Certain trade-offs were implied in these arrangements and some clerical groups began to identify aided communities as their newly acquired turf.[460] Nadje Al-Ali elaborates, "In light of the failure of US and UK soldiers to protect hospitals, museums, libraries, etc., the only people perceived to have provided security in a systematic way are the religious authorities."[461]

Campus life in Iraq today is marked by deprivations and very real dangers. Parents are organizing car pools or renting buses to take neighborhood students to campus as abductions grip cities in fear.[462] Deputy Minister Khailany has witnessed parents sitting outside their children's classroom, insistent on being bodyguards during the school day.[463] A professor at the University of Baghdad Women's College related the following student experiences during the spring 2004 semester:

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[458] Shaheen Chughati, "Iraqi Students Let Down by US Timetable." *AlJazeera.net*, July 6, 2004.
[459] Anne Helen Henderson, *The Coalition Provisional Authority's Experience with Economic Reconstruction in Iraq: Lessons Identified*, United States Institute for Peace, Special Report 138, April 2005.
[460] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 156-157.
[461] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 748.
[462] Keith Watenpaugh, "Opening the Doors One Year Later."
[463] Beriwan Khailany, Interview by Dick Gordon.

- Students from the nearby city of Fallujah cannot attend classes due to street violence.
- Baghdadi students must pay nearly a day's wages for taxi service to campus.
- Brothers and fathers wait outside classrooms.
- Students submit withdrawal papers because it either too dangerous or too expensive to continue.[464]

Chronic petrol, electricity and water shortages mean Iraqi campuses are episodically shut down, sometimes several times a day. When electricity is available, some campuses cannot afford to run the air conditioning,[465] despite temperatures that soar past 100° Fahrenheit. Medical students hone their skills in combat conditions – treating patients without water, antibiotics, insulin, lighting, x-ray machines, ventilators, lab supplies or gauze. These interns admit, in some disbelief, that Iraq's medical education is more devastated now than it was during the height of sanctions. Intending doctors and nurses treat diseases, such as Hepatitis C, that had been eradicated from Iraq years ago and dodge gunfire in the ambulance bay.[466] At the University of Basra, British soldiers stop incoming emergencies at the hospital gate to ensure looters or, worse yet, suicide bombers, are not in the vehicle.[467] At university budget meetings, administrators must

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[464] M.H. Al-Ali and Jenan Al-Mukhtar, "Baghdad University: A Day in the Life," *Academe* 90, no.5 (September/October 2004, electronic version).
[465] Beriwan Khailany, Interview by Dick Gordon.
[466] Dahr Jamail, "Iraqi Hospitals Ailing under Occupation," presented at the World Tribunal on Iraq, Istanbul, Turkey, June 23-27, 2005.
[467] Rod Nordland "They are Getting their Own Back." *Newsweek*, April 21, 2003, 48.

choose between the electric bill and campus security.[468] In both 2003 and 2004, the University of Baghdad was given a little as $25,000 per month to maintain operations on its multiple campuses.[469] All of this is occurring in the midst of Iraq's *de facto* civil war, and, as shall be seen, these issues are not necessarily the worst that universities face.

Radicalizing the Campus

In 2003, radical elements exploiting Islamic tenets began to visualize the potential and the problems college students presented. Militant Islamist organizations, foreign and domestic, sought to capitalize on those they could influence and paralyze, through terror, those minds they could not otherwise change. Any discussion of Islamist movements must begin with distinguishing them from the Islamic faith. Islamists rely upon (and sometimes distort) the most fundamental of Islamic beliefs to develop political theories and governance models. Entities such as al-Qaeda, the Taliban and al-Sadr Brigade could all be considered Islamist and, yet, unlike one another in terms of objectives. Nonetheless, every Islamist organization discussed in this study has chosen extremely coercive measures, including terrorism, against Iraqi students and university staff. Organizations such as these demand religious obedience, in the estimation of terror expert Jessica Stern, to "destroy moral ambiguities."[470] Yet, moral, political and even personal ambiguities are at the essence of higher learning – we expect students to wrangle with concepts such as truth, right and wrong, objectivity and so forth. To Islamists, such

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[468] *Ibid, 48.*
[469] Edward Wong, "On Iraqi Campuses."
[470] Jessica Stern, Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill (New York: Harper

questioning is absolute disobedience and agents use multiple, coercive measures to dissuade students from expecting anything more for themselves than what has been spoon fed to them. Fundamentalist groups need to infiltrate the professional classes and intellectual enclaves for their economic resources and to enhance their own status. Even terrorists may be legitimized by vested students and professors who provide academic "proofs" which justify inhumane acts.

As Iraqi women have been some of the most free and progressive in the Middle East, Islamist organizations modified their agenda so as to appear to promote their "liberation," all the while claiming to have women's best interests at heart. It is uncommon to hear Iraqi fundamental clerics denounce girls' and women's education – instead they are more likely to demand segregated learning, perhaps because they know success in Iraq will be impossible without women on board. Yet, it is also true that many Islamist agencies genuinely seek educated women, just not empowered ones. Their movement requires convert testimony from women admired within the community. By packaging their agenda as women and family friendly, Islamists can paint themselves as the elders of Muslim "family values."

Jessica Stern writes that there is a positive correlation between terrorism and educational attainment[471] and that economic realities can turn hopeful graduates into practicing

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Collins, 2003), xxvii.
[471] *Ibid,* 80.

terrorists.[472] In many cases, graduates cannot secure professional employment despite their expertise and years of hard work. "Radical Islamist groups," Stern explains, "use the concepts of benevolence and self-sacrifice to spread their movements in regions where the government has failed to provide social welfare."[473] It is the unfulfilled aspirations of the educated, those with the available time and critical thinking skills, who make the connection between their country's hardships and western militarism or local tyranny or whoever the enemy is identified to be. With time, and appropriate nurturing by radicalized mentors, desperate actions, including acts of terrorism, may become reasonable choices for educated persons.

Executing Intellectuals

One especially chilling practice of these Islamist terrorists is marking faculty for death. More than 240 Iraqi professors have been assassinated since 2003 and more than seventy have been arrested, kidnapped or had attempts made on their lives.[474] Instances of professor murders include:[475]

- Dr. Lyla Abdullah al-Saad, dean of the Law College at the University of Mosul, was shot multiple times in her bed alongside her husband. Both were then beheaded.[476]

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[472] *Ibid*, 80.
[473] *Ibid*, 41.
[474] Updated lists for both groups may be found at the Brussels Tribunal. http://www.brusselstribunal.org/academicsList.htm.
[475] Unless cited otherwise, examples come from the Brussels Tribunal.
[476] Robert Fisk, "Academics Targeted as Murder and Mayhem Hits Iraqi Colleges," *The Independent*, July 14, 2004.

- Professor Abdel-Latif Mayah of al-Mustansariyah University, was forcibly removed from his car by eight assailants and then shot thirty-five times on a Baghdadi street.[477] He was murdered the day after he spoke to the Al-Jazeera network.[478]
- Dr. Wajeeh Mahjoub, employee of the Ministry of Education and who had published eight textbooks in his field of kinesiology, was shot dead at the College of Physical Education in Baghdad.
- Dr. Sabri Mustapha al-Bayati, University of Baghdad geography professor, was assassinated in front of his students on campus.
- Professor Abdul Aziz el-Atrachi was also killed in front of his students. This agriculture professor died as the result of American gunfire at the University of Mosul.
- Professor of veterinary medicine, Bashshar Hassan was killed during a raid on his home by US troops.
- Dr. Iman Abdul-Munim Younis was shot in her car. She was the head of the translation department at the University of Mosul.[479]

To date, Iraqis remain unsure why their academics are being targeted as the executed do not share common political or religious beliefs. Nor did the CPA, allegedly, investigate

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[477] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 273.
[478] Brussels Tribunal.
[479] Tabitha Morgan, "A Sinister Campaign," *Middle East Newsletter*, November 25, 2004. www.brusselstribunal.org/pdf/AcademicsDossier.pdf.

any of these murders.[480] Numerous theories abound, some plausible, while others raise suspicion. The Iraqi Union of Lecturers[481] insist

> Insurgents are systematically assassinating members of the country's intellectual elite as a part of their general campaign to undermine the interim government.[482]

In this scenario, terrorism against intellectuals is meant to intentionally destabilize the government by attacking one of its revered institutions. MOHE Minister al-Baka argues that "international terrorist group, intent on delivering a body blow to Iraq and preventing its reunification" are responsible. For those Islamist groups that can be implicated in professors' assassinations, their motives are didactic. Terrorism's ultimate goal is not to take lives but to teach a lesson to those who survive, its impact is always in its aftermath. The message here, with the killing of intellectuals, is that too much secular learning is literally dangerous. By not outwardly claiming responsibility for these terrorist attacks, Islamist groups may gauge the public's reaction first, all the while confident they remain on the right side of their god.

Radical and disgruntled students have capitalized on the campaign to liquidate the academic community. Professors have left posts after receiving death threats because students presumed they were Baath supporters.[483] Others have been verbally attacked in

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[480] Andrew Rubin, "The Slaughter of Iraq's Intellectuals." *New Statesman,* September 6, 2004, 24.
[481] The Iraqi Union of Lecturers has contested MOHE figures on murdered faculty insisting that the ministry is underreporting. Amer Ouali, *Iraq's Universities Face Catastrophe*, September 16, 2004. http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/culture/?id=11281.
[482] Tabitha Morgan, "A Sinister Campaign."
[483] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 748.

classrooms for what students suspect are their political leanings, regardless what these may or may not be.[484] Upon advisement from the "Arab-Islamist resistance," the Mosul Student Union notified faculty which professors were being put on their death list.[485] Riverbend shares in her blog the collective despair these murders create: "[it is] like Iraq is suffering from intellectual hemorrhaging."[486] In a nation once known for an apolitical youth sometimes cowed by their instructors, now "professors are afraid of being denounced by their own students for political and personal reasons – the ultimate student evaluation."[487]

University of Baghdad president Mosa al-Mosawe believes there are financial and political motivations at play but that murders occur also to "evacuate Iraq of its scientific ability." [488] Some faculty may be favorable targets for ransom kidnappings because it is presumed they are wealthy or have wealthy family abroad. Other, more conspiracy-minded persons, including MOHE senior staff, finger Mossad (the Israeli secret service), or an American backed militia movement.[489] As rumors once again swirl through Iraq, it becomes increasingly difficult to identify the enemy or predict the next act of terrorism. Therefore, on the university campus, learning has taken a secondary role to survival.

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[484] Aparisim Ghosh, "When Violence Comes to Campus." *Time,* June 6, 2005, 35.
[485] Watenpaugh, "Rebuilding Iraq's Academic Community."
[486] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 225.
[487] Watenpaugh, "Rebuilding Iraq's Academic Community."
[488] Mosa al-Mosawe, Interviewed by Dick Gordon, *The Connection,* July 1, 2005. http://theconnection.org/shows/2005/07/20050701_a_main.asp.
[489] Andrew Rubin, "The Slaughter." Tabitha Morgan, "A Sinister Campaign." David Hoskins, *Worker's World.* December 3, 2005. http://www.workers.org/2005/world/iraq-1208.

Faculty routinely pay for bodyguards and handguns and learn to alternate their daily commute.[490] Married professors M.H. Al-Ali and Jenan al-Mukhtar admit that faculty

> [s]tay on campus no more than a few hours to do their teaching and then rush back home. They come only two or three days a week, doing most of their work at home.[491]

Only projections can be made on how these stressors modify campus culture and national impressions of higher education. MOHE Minister al-Baka disclosed that, "deans tell me their worries. I fear they will resign and that will lead us into a catastrophe."[492] Currently, the MOHE cannot offer any genuine protection for faculty but Deputy Minister Khailany urges her colleagues to hold fast to their professional obligations:

> We cannot just stand back and say "O.K., I'm not going, I'm not safe enough." We've got to work for our Iraq, it's our country so I will take the risk.[493]

For other higher education professionals, the potential payoff is not worth the risk. Between March 2003 and December 2004, an estimated 2000 academics fled Iraq despite the fact that their outdated skills made it difficult for them to secure posts abroad.[494] As of the last two years, certain coursework had to be cancelled because of a lack of instructors.[495] Admissions to Iraq's medical colleges have been cut due to the teaching

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[490] Abdul Sattar Jawad, dialogues with author, April 2004.
[491] MH Al-Ali and Jenan Al-Mukhtar, "Baghdad University."
[492] Amer Ouali, *Iraq's Universities.*
[493] Beriwan Khailany, interviewed by Dick Gordon.
[494] Tabitha Morgan, "A Sinister Campaign."
[495] Amer Ouali, *Iraq's Universities.*

shortage,[496] just when Iraq needs more doctors, nurses and public health officials. "The situation is so desperate," explains Dahr Jamail, "that medical universities have ceased providing their graduating doctors with certificates in order to force them to remain in Iraq to practice medicine."[497]

A report on Iraq's "brain drain" claims that less than one-third of current Iraqi instructors hold a doctorate due to emigration and violence.[498] **Nedal**, completing her PhD in business administration, rarely has instructors with more credentials than she does. Across her eighteen doctoral level courses, **Nedal** said only four instructors held PhDs. Professoriate emigration must be seen in tandem with academics fired in the de-Baathification purge -- a comparable number[499] and then faculty who resigned or were murdered. The academic standards for contemporary Iraqi higher education must be called into question, despite its legacy, because there is overwhelming evidence that supply cannot meet demand.

Contemporary Student Life

In small ways, Iraqi universities are expressing autonomy. Professors have begun blacking out references to Saddam in textbooks and previously banned books, including

[496] Ahmed Mukhtar, "Where Is This Going?" *Al-Ahram Weekly Online.* http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/694/re7.htm.
[497] Dahr Jamail, "Iraqi Hospitals," 26.
[498] Aparisim Ghosh, "When Violence Comes," 53.
[499] Amer Ouali, *Iraq's Universities.*

Shia texts and western novels, can now be purchased.[500] Once prohibited by the regime, students are developing representative organizations and many of these play a prominent role in campus politics.[501] Despite these hopeful signs, Iraqi universities and students are more endangered than they ever were in Saddam's darkest days. Car bombings, abductions and assault dominate students' days, not exams, ideas or outings.

At the University of Baghdad, Saddam's statue stands decapitated after U.S. soldiers took it upon themselves to leave their mark.[502] In many ways, the university seems headless itself. While leadership is in place, there are simply too many crises at hand– securing basic utilities, warring clerical groups and suspected mine fields on campus.[503] President Al-Mosawe confided that, after paying for the necessary 1300 campus security guards, he does not have the funds to buy much needed equipment and books.[504] Student fracas' can get dangerously out of hand as witnessed recently when a security guard told a Baghdadi student he was illegally parked. A fistfight broke out between students and arriving campus police. When security reinforcements were called in, they handled the situation by shooting their Klashnikov rifles. City police soon arrived, only to be shot at by the campus police. Amazingly, no one was injured but students did go on strike, insisting that campus security be reigned in and apologize.[505] Some student protests are more peaceful including the anti-occupation demonstration held late in 2003 to denounce raids

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[500] Edward Wong, "On Iraqi Campuses."
[501] *Ibid.*
[502] *Ibid*.
[503] *Ibid*.
[504] Mosa al-Mosawe, interviewed by Dick Gordon.

at the University of Technology in which three professors were detained.[506] Students certainly have a good deal to complain about. Aside from concerns of campus safety, students have protested their treatment at security checkpoints and the university's refusal to hear students' concerns under the pretense that administrators fear for their safety.[507]

Violence, in numerous manifestations, dominates campus life. In May 2005, a bomb planted at al-Mustansiriyah University killed two students and injured six more.[508] The same month a rocket attack at the University of Baghdad's engineering college resulted in the death of two students and wounding another seventeen.[509] Just five months after that incident, a man was stopped at a nearby Baghdadi campus[510] with ten pounds of explosives on his person. Upon police interrogation, the would-be terrorist confided that Allah had sent him on this mission.[511] In many situations, student-witnessed violence results in their making difficult choices, such as keeping pistols in their dorm rooms[512] and dropping out of school altogether.[513] A sign of the times is literally posted at the University of Baghdad. It reads, "It is prohibited to carry arms in the university. Kindly hand it to the reception office."[514]

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[505] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 134-135.
[506] *Ibid*, 164.
[507] *Ibid*, 129.
[508] Richard Stone, "Iraqi Science in the Line of Fire," *Science*, September 30, 2005, 2156.
[509] Aparisim Ghosh, "When Violence Comes," 35.
[510] Al-Kindy University.
[511] "Women Fleeing College Under Islamist Threats," *The Washington Times*, October 17, 2004 (no author listed).
[512] Shaheen Chughati, "Iraqi Students," 2.
[513] Robert Fisk, "The War on Learning," *The Independent*, July 14, 2004.

Female students have been particularly targeted for their clothing. In Iraq, wearing the hijab had traditionally been optional and relatively uncommon amongst professional women. Today roving morality patrols approach women, often threatening their lives, for their uncovered heads or western apparel. Contemporary Iraqi women are expected to wear loose, long sleeved blouses and long skirts and are discouraged from wearing pants of any kind.[515] A 2004 MOHE Power Point presentation to the University of Oklahoma contained seventy-two images of students at the Universities of Baghdad and Technology. Of these contemporary photographs of student life, women were in fifty pictures and only nine women appeared without the hijab; some women were dressed in the full abaya.[516] Iraqi women often express that the hijab does not make them more devout but rather serves as a safeguarding measure. Nonetheless, they insist the veil should represent women's choice, not their oppression.[517] Riverbend says the hijab protects her from "ogling and uninvited attention"[518] but many women wear it to protect themselves from Islamist attacks.[519]

The case of Rana Fuad illustrates why women are making this concession. In 2004, three masked men kidnapped Rana as she left Al-Mustansiriyah University. After berating Rana for wearing jeans, her abductors swore to chemically burn her face if they ever caught her wearing pants again. Upon her release, Rana immediately withdrew from the

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[514] Edward Wong, "On Iraqi Campuses."
[515] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 17.
[516] Beriwan Khailany, "Department of Higher Education."
[517] *Ibid.*
[518] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 93.

university.[520] At two Baghdad campuses, canvassed leaflets read, "If the boy students don't separate from the girls students we will explode the college. Any girl student who does not wear the veil, we will burn her face with chemicals."[521] At Al-Mustansiriyah University, women are prohibited from using these same stairwells as their male peers[522] and Shia-sympathetic professors at the University of Basra insist male and female students sit apart from one another in their classrooms.[523] Muhammad, a Basra student, explains the hidden dangers of women's voices, necessitating that they watch to whom and where they speak. "There is a special softness to women's voices, and because of that they speak flirtatiously." Muhammad frequently admonishes his female peers who are not wearing a hijab. "Sometimes they swear at me and tell me to get lost," concedes Muhammad, "but I see it as my religious duty."[524] Muhammad is the nephew of the cleric appointed to oversee Basra's education system. This administrator refused to pay any female faculty their emergency pay unless they appeared in his office wearing a hijab.[525]

Some women abbreviate their studies in an attempt to avoid street and campus violence. Gender disparity in university attendance is especially noticeable in evening studies. For example, while 2179 women (34% total student population) attend the University of

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[519] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 751.
[520] "Women Fleeing."
[521] *Ibid.*
[522] UNHCHR (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), "The Present Situation of Human Rights in Iraq." http://www.unhchr.ch/html/hchr/docs/iraq.doc.
[523] George Packer, "Testing Grounds."
[524] Women's International Network News, "Iraqi Women Professionals Ponder a Future under Shiite Rule," *New York Times*, May 25, 2003.

Technology during daytime hours, only 1567 women enroll in evening classes as compared to 5290 men (23% of total population).[526] Similarly, while women comprise 48% of the daytime student population at the University of Basra, during evening attendance women represent only 22%.[527] An especially discouraging sign for women is that approximately 3,000 female students in Baghdad alone applied to the MOHE to postpone their postsecondary studies in 2004.[528] Insights Education, an international education think tank researching gender disparity in school systems, predicts a dismal future for Iraq's female students. It is "very unlikely" Iraq will achieve "the right of women and girls to enjoy equal education opportunities with boys and men" by 2015, based on the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.[529] In other words, Iraq has fallen from the regional model in schooling women to not meeting basic benchmarks.

Extorting Orthodoxy on the University Campus

Few Iraqis doubt that foreign elements are culpable for rising fundamentalist movements, notably the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution (SCIRI). Founded in Iran in 1982, SCIRI's "goal is to import the concept of 'Islamic Revolution' from Iran to Iraq."[530] "In other words," writes Riverbend, "they believe that Iraq should be a

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[525] *Ibid.*
[526] Al Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq, Internal Document. MOHE January 2004 enrollment data.
[527] *Ibid.*
[528] "Women Fleeing"
[529] Insights Education, "Progress to Gender Equality in Education," September, 2004. http://www.id21.org.
[530] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 18.

theocracy led by Shia Mullahs."[531] There is no evidence that a majority of Iraqi Shia welcome theocratic rule.[532] Nonetheless, militant Shia organizations have infiltrated numerous branches of local Iraqi government and instated themselves in campus governance. In 2003, Shia leader Moktada al-Sadr urged his student followers to "take over student unions at universities across the country."[533] By the following year, the Shiite Union was the largest and most powerful student organization at the University of Baghdad, funded in part by external Shiite agencies.[534] The Shiite Union office walls are covered with images of "martyrs" killed by Saddam and *fatwas*[535] issued by al-Sadr and Iraq's Grand Ayatollah Sistani.[536]

While religious organizations *per se* are not disruptive to universities, those on Iraqi campuses are notoriously so, partially because students are at odds about how secular their higher education should be. The term "secular" is a neologism in Arabic and often translated incorrectly as "godless."[537] A recent study of Iraqi university students revealed that 68% do not want their refashioned country to be entirely secular, perhaps revealing their misunderstanding of the term.[538] The Iraqi Prospect Organisation insists that, "The

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[531] *Ibid.*
[532] *Ibid.*
[533] Edward Wong, "On Iraqi Campuses."
[534] *Ibid,*
[535] Legal edicts based in the Islamic faith.
[536] Edward Wong, "On Iraqi Campuses."
[537] George Packer, "Testing Ground."
[538] Iraqi Prospect Organisation, *Iraqi Constitution: Attitudes Toward Democracy*. www.iprospect.org.uk., 15.

word ‘secular’ has different meaning to some people in Iraq, not to mean separation of religion and state, but to mean anti-religion.”[539]

Infiltrating Islamist agencies polarize the issue by insisting students are either obedient Muslims or teetering dangerously toward becoming infidels. Furthermore, they package their agendas as their “freedom of expression” and newly won independence. Sunni student leader and anthropology student Abdel Kader Ibrahim of the University of Baghdad rationalizes his organization’s actions, “Saddam suppressed the voice of religion on campus, and our job is to revive it.”[540] But Dr. Ihsan al-Rawi, President of the Union of Iraqi Lecturers insists that, “the religion being brought into campus by these groups is the religion of hate.”[541]

Some administrators attempt to minimize the long-term influence Islamist agencies will have among university students. A University of Baghdad dean estimates that 90% of his students do not affiliate with organizations demanding religious rule on campus.[542] Unfortunately, different Islamist sects have demonstrated they cannot peacefully co-exist on the same campus, regardless of their numbers. When Shiites won a majority in May 2005 national elections, an affiliated University of Baghdad organization planned a campus celebration. University administrators informed a student representative from the

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[539] *Ibid, 15.*
[540] Aparisim Ghosh, “When Violence Comes to Campus,” 35.
[541] *Ibid, 35.*
[542] Mahdi Taleb, interviewed by Dick Gordon, *The Connection,* July 1, 2005. http://theconnection.org/shows/2005/07/20050701_a_main.asp.

Shiite group that religious celebrations were not permitted on campus. The student engaged in fisticuffs with a dean's personal guard soon after and then left campus. He was murdered before arriving home. The student's grieving friends responded by leading violent campus protests, destroying classrooms and all Sunni faculty had to be evacuated. Certainly nothing was resolved by the destructive mourning – the next day a friend of the slain student was also found murdered.[543] Student participation such as this may well inhibit women's willingness to engage in campus activities and political events, as well as diminishing any sense of safety they may have felt at their universities.

More moderate students, faculty and administrators have attempted to temper Islamist activities on campus. The Dean of the College of Science at the University of Baghdad claims that, "the only poster allowed in my college says, 'When politics is allowed in the door, science is kicked from the window.'"[544] The president of the University of Baghdad insists that are "severe measures" for any religious or political party found practicing "their activities" on campus but does not specify what these may be.[545] Even the MOHE Minister has acknowledged the danger Islamist organizations may invite to the universities and has publicly appealed to clerical groups to curtail their harassment against students and staff.[546] Perhaps the most effective measure against radical campus organizations is student activism. A female architecture student confessed she removed

[543] Aparisim Ghosh, "When Violence Comes to Campus," 32.
[544] Mahdi Taleb, interviewed by Dick Gordon.
[545] Mosa al-Mosawe, interviewed by Dick Gordon.
[546] Amer Ouali, "Iraq's Universities."

Shia posters endorsing al-Sadr saying, "We're not opposing these things because they're religious. But this is a university, not a mosque."[547]

Case in Point: The University of Basra

Competing Islamist organizations now dominate the University of Basra system. The northern campus is under the sway of the al-Sadr Militia, SCIRI's paramilitary unit, while the Fadilah Militia rules the southern campus.[548] With the removal of Saddam, approximately 100,000 Shiites that the tyrant had expelled returned to Iraq and, in doing so, brought their clerical allegiances fostered in their temporary home of Iran. Many Basrans believe Iran intends an indirect occupation of their city as most Shia clerical groups operating in the city maintain ties to Iran.[549] The city of 1.2 million is a shadow of its former cosmopolitan self. One Islamist group has made an amusement park their headquarters[550] and clerics shut down all city theatres and DVD stores. [551]

In 2003, Shia groups infiltrated regional infrastructure by taking posts on the police force, civic leadership and government agencies. Clerics networked hospitably with occupying British forces as part of their strategic vision.[552] Currently, local government is perceived

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[547] Edward Wong. "On Iraqi Campuses."
[548] George Packer, "Testing Ground."
[549] *Ibid.*
[550] *Ibid.*
[551] Women's International News Network, "Iraqi Women Professionals." George Packer, "Testing Ground."
[552] Geroge Packer, "Testing Ground."

as corrupt and incompetent with Sharia laws attempting to nudge out secular ones. Islamist militiamen have ordered that medical students at Basra Hospital may only treat women who arrive in appropriate Islamic dress.[553] Female students are harassed and even barred entry onto campus for "immodest" clothing and uncovered heads[554] and some local reports claim that three students have been assassinated for not wearing a hijab.[555] Islamist clerics made known their distaste for the arts by closing down the university's drama department.[556] While the music department escaped the same fate, students are only permitted to study music in theory as "some Islamists consider music immoral."[557] They very fact that university leadership is permitting outside, non-affiliated agencies to dictate what can and cannot be learned demonstrates the stronghold Shia militia have in the city.

A 2005 University of Basra picnic illustrates this Islamist vice grip. Each year, the Engineering College holds a student picnic in a city park and in March 2005 up to 700 students attended. Students enjoyed a meal, music and soccer – all rather innocuous activities and very few women attended the picnic unveiled.[558] Twenty to forty al-Sadr militiamen descended onto the picnic, firing into the crowd and beating students with wire cables, sticks and rifle butts.[559] Nearly a dozen students were hauled away in a truck

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[553] *Ibid.*
[554] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender," 751.
[555] Paul Wood, "Shia Militants Gaining Strength in Basra," *BBC News, World Edition,* October 16, 2005. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4347636.stm.
[556] Women's International News Network, "Iraqi Women Professionals."
[557] George Packer, "Testing Ground."
[558] Anthony Shadid "Picnic Is No Party in the New Basra," *Washington Post,* March 9, 2005.
[559] *Ibid.*

while others were robbed of their jewelry and cellular phones. Women appear to have been especially targeted,[560] and one unveiled woman, an Armenian Christian, was beaten so severely she suffered permanent vision loss.[561] By the university's incident report, fifteen students were seriously injured[562] and students insist two of these were the result of gunshot wounds.[563]

Equally disturbing were the al-Sadr cameramen who brazenly videotaped the attack. Videos show militiamen ripping clothes off of female students with the warning, "We will send these pictures to your parents so the can see how you were dancing naked with men."[564] Then, the militia made a profit from their violence by selling these videos in local markets.[565] The justification for the assault was delivered by a militia spokesman: "We beat them because we are authorized by Allah to do so and that is our duty…It is we who should deal with such disobedience and not the police."[566] Despite their overly puritanical interpretation of "disobedience," the militia was somewhat correct in their estimation of local police. Both Basra police and British troops were at the park, witnessed the attacks, and not once intervened.[567]

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[560] *Ibid*
[561] Catherine Philp, "Death at 'Immoral' Picnic in the Park," *Times Online*, March 23, 2005. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,7374-1537512,00.html.
[562] Anthony Shadid, "Picnic Is No Party."
[563] Catherine Philp, "Death at 'Immoral' Picnic."
[564] *Ibid.*
[565] Babak Dehganpisheh, "Bad Dates in Baghdad," *Newsweek*, November 14, 2005. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9937612/site/newsweek.
[566] Catherine Philp, "Death at 'Immoral' Picnic."
[567] Paul Wood, "Shia Militants."

Basra students, including those from local high schools and other universities, protested in the hundreds at both the university president's office as well as the governor's headquarters. Classes were cancelled when additional students refused to show up, insisting on an apology and remuneration of some sort.[568] In the end, students returned to classes with little vindication and their university remains under the *de facto* auspices of a fundamentalist agenda. Basra's waterfront is crowded with heroes from the Iran-Iraq war, each pointing an accusing finger at Iran. Today, Basra youth know their enemies have become local threats -- Islamist infiltrators, an impotent local government, uncaring occupying forces and blindsided university leadership.

Damage Assessments

The current state of higher education "infuriates all Iraqis" and is "a source of anger and shame."[569] Assuming a student can complete their degree program in the midst of a bankrupt economy and military and civil violence, their professional prospects remain dim. New medical doctors currently earn $5 per month.[570] 130,000 engineers reside in Iraq,[571] few of which have ideal jobs and earnings. One young Baghdadi woman revealed, "I used to struggle to make my dreams come true. Now I struggle to have a dream."[572]

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[568] Anthony Shadid, "Picnic Is No Party."
[569] Dick Gordon Interview, comments by Dick Gordon.
[570] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 22.
[571] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 135.
[572] Ilana Ozernoy, "Betwixt and Between," 34.

Perhaps, the international postsecondary community cannot muster sufficient empathy to inundate their Iraqi peers with donations and professional opportunities. Why should we care what happens to our counterparts in a country endlessly mired down by violence and oppression? Returning to Jessica Stern's work on the relationship between educational attainment and terrorism, occupying agencies must acknowledge that their ineptness in keeping Iraqi universities safe and operational invites in exploitative Islamist agencies. From the onset, funds promised to rehabilitate Iraqi higher education failed to materialize – none of which was kept secret from MOHE personnel. Whatever expectations university students had that actual learning opportunities awaited them began to fade by 2004 and their disappointment is fertile ground for terrorists. Tom Owens, *et al*, elaborates on the requisite funding to adequately stabilize Iraq's higher education system:

> The United States spends approximately 2.3% of the GDP on higher education. To fund Iraqi universities at the same level would require…at least $800 million. Instead, to date, the U.S. government appropriated less than $25 million. Add to this the inability of occupation forces and the Iraqi government to stabilize electricity, water, telephone and internet systems and it becomes readily apparent that Iraqi universities feel neglected.[573]

While the United States and United Kingdom are not wholly responsible for Iraq's universities, their inability to connect youth satisfaction with educational and professional opportunity is downright dangerous.

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[573] J. Thomas Owens, Tammy Boyd and Erin Taylor Weathers, 2004 Paper presented at the World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, Havana, Cuba Oct 25-29, 2004.

There were, during Saddam's regime, few terrorist organizations in Iraq (aside from the government). Today, agencies like al-Qaeda and the al-Sadr Brigade dominate cities, and make very well known their intent to use terrorism against westerners. These groups aggressively recruit skilled youth in a country where the median age is 19. More than 50% of the population is under the age of twenty-four which translates to 63% of eligible voters classified as "younger adults."[574] This population, in a study on attitudes toward democracy, affiliated the term not with free speech and political affiliation but with *economic and educational opportunities*. "This indicates," writes the researchers at the Iraqi Prospect Organisation, "a more instrumental view of democracy where it is defined by its substantive outcomes."[575] Those nations who identify themselves as "allies" to the Iraqi people and yet refuse to invest fully in higher education do so only to their detriment. In the meantime, Iraqis persist in their mere "skeletons of universities."[576] Some hope to leave Iraq, despite the fact the international travel documents remain incredibly difficult to secure. **Linda** discloses

> All that's left for me is the polluted air which cannot be captured in snapshots or saved in jars. And even that I know I should leave…for my life should start across the borders, where I'll have to go with the flow and pretend that I won't miss what's within these dotted lines I've always called home.[577]

Other Iraqis insist they will stay. "We have to do our work properly," urges University of Baghdad president al-Mosawe, "for our students, for the sake of our people, for the sake of our country."[578]

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[574] Iraqi Prospect Organisation, *Iraqi Constitution,* 4.
[575] *Ibid,* 9.
[576] **Mayyada**, interview text.

Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that Iraqi academics are capable of Herculean endurance for only so long. Sooner or later, a professor knows she or he must leave Iraq or face professional suicide. Each day, students must decide if attending classes is worth the financial and mental costs, especially amidst the Iraqi economy that, for the moment, cannot support the financial expectations of college graduates. These challenges are not unique to university women, although many are – amassing Islamist diatribes on their womanhood, socially inappropriate interactions with foreign soldiers, family demands that daughters stay home. The first waves of Iraqi women who have never lived without rampant oppression manifesting every aspect of their lives are now graduating from universities. We can only imagine what "liberated Iraq" will mean for them in the next decades, hoping they have more than hope themselves in which to invest.

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[577] **Linda**. *First Walk* blog, Friday, May 19 2006.
[578] Mosa al-Mosawe, interviewed by Dick Gordon.

CHAPTER FIVE
Remembering the Future

While this research is historical in function, appropriate recommendations can be made toward the reestablishment of Iraq's higher education system. Contemporary postsecondary schooling in Iraq is not in a nascent phase; academics and their students are more than capable of re-establishing superior universities if only provided the appropriate resources and opportunities. Naturally, immediate needs must be addressed first – establishing campus and Ministry security, electricity, water and internet access,[579] followed by basic supplies such as computers, furniture, and copiers.[580] While digital journal access, electronic microscopes and educational software have been generously donated, they are ineffectual on a campus without the infrastructure to make use of them.

Iraq's universities are at a pivotal moment. They must edify community engagements as the country desperately needs committed leadership and proactive citizens. As universities are able to normalize operations, they become practitioners of democratic principles.[581] At the same time, universities must detangle themselves from the Saddamist version of higher education, where the university-educated serve the state and, yet, the state is absolved of serving them. Certain mental shifts need to occur as Iraqi

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[579] It is acknowledged that these are beyond the scope and abilities of the MOHE and other agencies tasked with rehabilitating higher education.

[580] Watenpaugh, Keith, Edouard Metenier, Jens Hanssen and Hala Fattah, "Opening the Doors: Intellectual Life and Academic Conditions in Post-War Baghdad," *The Iraqi Observatory*, 2003. [electronic version]. http://web.mit.edu/cis/www/mitejmes/OpeningDoors.pdf.

universities refashion their institutional identities. Foremost, and in conjunction with the MOHE, universities must evaluate their highly centralized system. At this time, it does not appear prudent to dissolve the ties campuses have to the MOHE. Tuition costs are likely to rise and more rural, less illustrious campuses may fail without national support. Finally, and most frighteningly, universities operating beyond MOHE administration may soon be utterly overtaken by local Islamist factions.

Peter Taylor and Jude Fransman encourage nations in crisis to consider broader concepts of higher education. A "narrow view" of higher education is one where specialized knowledge is pursued for the sake of financial gain and professional prestige. Academic research is undertaken to achieve expert status,[582] seeking celebrity amongst academic peers. Alternately, the function of higher education in broader terms includes valuing collaborations between people and institutions, within and beyond academe. In a nation such as Iraq, wrecked and disillusioned, those persons able to envision short and long term, as well as inclusive, solutions re-engage their universities with civil society building.

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[581] Vanessa Pape Bouche, "Democracy and Diplomas: The Role of Higher Education in Occupied Japan and Iraq," (Master's Thesis, University of Texas, 2004), 85.
[582] Peter Taylor and Jude Fransman, *Learning and Teaching Participation: Exploring the Role of Higher Learning Institutions as Agents of Development and Social Change,* Institute of Development Studies (Sussex, March 2004), 6.

MOHE and University Leadership's Strategic Planning

The obstacles before the MOHE and university leadership are significant. It is inconceivable that Iraq's higher education system can restore itself without sustained assistance, in the form of donations and training, from foreign governments and agencies. The MOHE and universities must first identify their priorities, then identify potential donors. To date, Iraqi universities have had little respite to accomplish this, resulting in too many donors forwarding along what they believed was most appropriate.

After ensuring the Ministry and campuses have reconnected basic utilities, strategic planning for higher education infrastructure can begin. It would behoove the MOHE to evaluate its operational model and identify any structural, cultural and philosophical barriers. University leadership as well as MOHE staff could benefit from workshops in strategic planning as well as budget creation and cost-effectiveness standards; maintaining student records; academic standards; evaluating faculty; accreditation;[583] and institutional transparency and accountability. There are certain relationships for which the MOHE needs to develop a strategic vision, including engagements with national and foreign media, faculty unions, and, not least of all, students. One means by which strategic planning can be pursued is through Ministry retreats[584] that welcome university leaders to express their concerns and potential resolutions. The MOHE must present

[583] Iraq Higher Education Organising Committee, *International Symposium on Higher Education in Iraq* (University of Westminster, London, January 29-30, 2004), 7.
[584] Milton Greenberg, "The Power of Academic Citizenship," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 3, 2006, B20.

itself as an advocate for the universities, not simply their master. Furthermore, it must articulate to all Iraqi people the role higher education plays in national development.

UNESCO has urged the Iraqi academic community to redesign their hiring, promotion and admissions policies, writing:

> A strategic plan will have to be prepared to ensure that the universities play a catalytic role in the democratization process and ensure access to all on the basis of merit.[585]

This is especially critical after the de-Baathification debacle in which the CPA appeared hypocritical for removing alleged political appointments on the basis of their political affiliations. The UNESCO report suggests that, "professional rather than political criteria should guide staff appointments and university deliberations."[586] Therefore, transparency measures should be included in all forms of staff appointment and advancement, as well as student admissions. Ideally, Iraqis will come to practice "educational democracy," as coined by Raji Abou-Chacra, meaning, "education open to anyone with the ability to follow any course he wishes, *given the needs of society*, regardless of race, religion, class or sex, without any form of political or other discrimination."[587] It is advisable that the MOHE abandon its total reliance on the baccalaureate exam as it is well-known standardized tests are not consistent reliable measures of student ability.[588] However,

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[585] UNESCO, *Situation Analysis of Education in Iraq: 2003, (*Paris: April, 2003), 55.
[586] *Ibid,* 55.
[587] Raji Abou-Chacra, "The Problems of Higher Education in the Arab States," *Prospects,* xxi, no.3, 1991, 135. Italics mine.
[588] Torin D. Togut, "High-Stakes Testing: Educational Barometer for Success, or False Prognosticator for Failure," *The Beacon,* Fall 2004. http://www.harborhouselaw.com/articles/highstakes.togut.htm.

such action is only advisable when a more judicious and transparent system is ready to be put in its place.

Ultimately, the MOHE should initiate a “return to excellence” campaign elucidating higher education’s role in democracy building. Through outreach to secondary schools, community organizations, professional associations and expatriates, the MOHE demonstrates their commitment to a socially mobile and increasingly professionalized population. The brain drain phenomena must be immediately addressed, Iraqi universities cannot sustain any further losses whether due to emigration, resignation or assassination. Internet postings or “blogging” is an ideal venue for professors and students alike to discuss what fuels their academic persistence, current campus challenges, and the obligatory, supportive bonds between academe and wider communities. The MOHE must come to an accord with the Union of Iraqi Lecturers on what institutional recourse will occur in the event of attacks on faculty or students by other university members. Each university campus, under MOHE guidance, must make every effort to prohibit Islamist (or any other political group’s) disruptions on their campus. There is an appropriate time for student activism and then there is a time for campus cohesion so that the promise of higher education is not eradicated for all.

Exposing Academics and Students to their Scholarly Purpose

Similar to the disillusionment university presidents feel, faculty may be hard pressed to identify why their work is relevant anymore. Milton Greenberg elaborates,

> Still missing from most faculty preparation and professional development is the place of higher education in the nation and the world, the underlying and pervasive social issues that affect it, and the great potential of the power of academic citizenship.[589]

Here, Greenberg is speaking of US faculty. Imagine how ill prepared Iraqi faculty is to model citizenship in a country sliding into civil war. The Institute of Development Studies provides one pathway to revitalizing the teaching profession and inspiring students.

> Experimental and learning-centered participatory teaching methods are two cornerstones of transformative learning. Employing these methods in the contexts of [higher learning institutions] can make a significant contribution to capacity development of students, staff, practitioners and institutions as well as the creation of effective and sustainable initiatives in the community.[590]

Both instructors and students should be able to envision their studies leading promising careers and contributing to Iraq's redevelopment. Again, students who cannot capitalize on their university education in sanctioned and financially rewarding means may turn to rogue elements who are equally disgruntled with the *status quo.* The MOHE must nurture collaborative and pragmatic learning where students move from merely absorbing knowledge to applying it to their own and their nation's welfare.

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[589] Milton Greenberg, "The Power of Academic Citizenship," B20.
[590] Institute of Development Studies, "Learning to Participate: The Role of Higher Learning Institutions as Development Agents," *IDS Policy Brief,* 20, November 2003, 3.

Some instructional challenges are easier to address. Professors require updated teaching skills, relying less on lecture and "depository" learning and instead emphasize critical thinking and reflective learning. Students, at all postsecondary levels, should have opportunities to collaborate, express opinions, test theories, and grow in student-centered, not teacher-centered environments. The MOHE could, feasibly, provide incentives to professors who pursue retraining. Free online access to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*[591] and the *Times Higher Education Supplement* would allow students and professors to study how other universities operate, familiarize themselves student and faculty issues on other campuses as well take note of conference and publication solicitations.

Research, its methods and scope, should also be retaught. Iraqi academia currently faces a crisis where data collection, analysis and sharing skills are more than ten years out of date. The legacy of both sanctions and the regime is that researchers confine themselves to what is most readily available and approved by the state. Now that the world has literally reopened for Iraqis, scholars need training in navigating digital databases and the internet for appropriate academic sites. One potential solution is to permit graduate students and faculty to take, via distance education, research methods and electronic research coursework. University librarians, predominantly, have neither library sciences

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http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/briefs/index.html.

[591] Milton Greenberg, "The Power of Academic Citizenship,"B20.

degrees nor the technology to satisfactorily operate large, multifarious collections.[592] They, too, could benefit from training – namely database and digital research, archiving, and record keeping.

Absolutely crucial to renewed Iraqi participation in scholarly research is instruction on how to submit journal articles and developing conference programming. Students need the appropriate access to identify those professional organizations that are related to their studies and then how to apply for membership, submit papers, attend conferences as well as the student-incurred costs related to these. While participating in this dissertation's interviews, **Ghaida** struggled to have a paper correctly submitted to the World Scientific and Engineering Academy and Society (WSEAS). **Ghaida's** work in wireless networking had received international attention and she was asked to participate in the annual WSEAS conference in China (April 16–18, 2006). For months, the WSEAS seemed incapable of understanding that security and financial barriers made it impossible for **Ghaida** to travel to China. Then the WSEAS asked **Ghaida** to submit her paper along with a publishing fee of several hundred dollars. At the very best, her department said they could contribute $200 to the publishing costs. **Ghaida** was unaware she could ask the WSEAS to waive or at least diminish her publication costs and membership fees because of her student status. She wrote

> Although my paper has been accepted …I couldn't understand

[592] Keith Watenpaugh, Edouard Metenier, Jens Hanssen and Hala Fattah, "Opening the Doors: Intellectual Life and Academic Conditions in Post-War Baghdad," *The Iraqi Observatory*, 2003, 16 [electronic version]. http://web.mit.edu/cis/www/mitejmes/OpeningDoors.pdf.

> the details in [the attached] file. Actually, I don't know whether the expenses of the registration ($600) will include travel or not[.] I really have no experience with [i]nternational conferences.

As a result of this experience, **Ghaida** recommended that campuses host their own research conferences to prepare students for future, wider venues.

Finally, postsecondary curricula must be updated.[593] The Iraq Higher Education Organising Committee stresses that new textbooks must meet Iraq's vocational needs and that professional organizations abroad should guide curricular efforts.[594] This possibly implies that some textbooks would be foreign publications. It is critical that Iraqis begin to write their own textbooks, especially in the fields of history and art -- no one, save those who directly endured Saddam, sanctions and Iraq's numerous wars can, in a transformative context, quantify their country's toll. Iraqi scholars must reacquaint themselves with academic criticism, confident that they are practicing and protected by academic freedom. Deputy Minister Khailany concurs:

> Iraqi universities need a radical transformation of the humanities and social sciences. It is these fields that are most directly targeted by totalitarian regimes; it is these fields that are the organs of self-consciousness of a society.[595]

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[593] Iraq Higher Education Organising Committee, *International Symposium,* 6.
[594] *Ibid,* 6.
[595] Khailany, Beriwan, Deputy Minister of MOHE, Iraq. "Department of Higher Education and

Developing Student Services and Activities

Student services during the regime years were primarily confined to residence halls, cafeterias, computer labs and minor medical clinics. Student activities, advocacy and publications were essentially Baathist outreach programs, designed to showcase Saddam. Clearly, students who witness wars, state and rogue violence as well as extreme deprivation require some mental health interventions. Perhaps under the auspices of psychology departments and medical colleges, universities could provide counselors who specialize in PTSD, depression and grieving. Group counseling and community outreach in these areas would also be beneficial and demonstrate that universities are committed to the collective healing of Iraq. Students should be encouraged to express, through recordings, essays, artwork, blogs and conferences, their stories of hardship and survival and organizations such as The Forgiveness Project[596] have been especially well received in similarly fractured communities.

Students also deserve opportunities to advocate for themselves and to have the sense that their input matters to university leadership. Administrative endorsement of student advisory councils tasked to dialogue with university leadership consecrates the student body with democratic obligations. A first order of business for these councils should be the creation a student code of rights and ethics that would delineate:

Scientific Research: Iraq after the War," Speech delivered at the University of Oklahoma. Al Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq, April 27, 2004.

[596] The Forgiveness Project, http://www.theforgivenessproject.com.

- Comprehensive definitions of academic freedom and freedom of expression and how the university protects these.
- Inappropriate behaviors by students, faculty or staff that will not be tolerated.
- What constitutes criminal activity by students and against students.
- What constitutes academic dishonesty and student integrity standards.
- University redress and judiciary measures, including the proper chain of command for grievances.

Deputy Minister Khailany maintains that, "We're doing non-class activities in our campuses just to teach our students how to make their own decisions, how to stand up for their own rights."[597] Nonetheless, Iraqi universities must recover considerable ground to re-engage students in campus issues and advocacy upon their own behalf. Since the 1980's, the Baath have told students whom they may affiliate with and what their issues are. The implications of which are that, "[t]hese students have never experienced genuine democracy or a pluralistic civil society."[598] Islamist campus movements have only hindered nascent student efforts to achieve consensus building. The Iraqi Prospect Organisation stresses that

> There is a poor recognition of what are considered essential components of democracy as well as a perception that democratic characteristics, such as the existence of multiple opinions or political trends within a society, are synonymous with a country's

[597] Beriwan Khailany, interviewed by Dick Gordon, *The Connection*, July 1, 2005. http://theconnection.org/shows/2005/07/20050701_a_main.asp.
[598] Iraqi Prospect Organisation, *Iraqi Constitution: Attitudes Toward Democracy*, 5. www.iprospect.org.uk.

instability.[599]

Student government that is vested with the authority to enact legislation is one venue by which students can be exposed to democratic governance – given certain caveats. First, this body must be truly representative. Simple credos like "majority rules" are disadvantageous to Iraqi communities where there are a multiple agendas, beliefs and ethnicities at play. While student participation in electing their representatives is desirable, caution must be taken that elections are not turned into struggles between competing factions, nor attached to national politics. A more beneficial creed would be, "The right to rule belongs to the majority. But the right to representation belongs to all."[600] Cumulative voting, once practiced in the United States, mediates instances when simple majorities do not indicate an overwhelming mandate.[601] As an example, a college would elect three members to the student government with the proviso that one seat must go to a minority group that ran in opposition to the majority winner(s). In this way, underrepresented populations, whether they be Sunni, Kurds, women, Christians, graduate students or so forth, are also represented.

Secondly, student government must have the authority to enact change, including the ability to meet with and hold responsible university leadership. This does not mean that presidents and deans should become beholden to a tyrannical student body. Rather, students must be accountable for the content and quality of their university education and

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[599] *Ibid,* 19.
[600] Fair Vote, Program for Representative Government. http://www.fairvote.org/?page=37.

can achieve this only when they are included in its development. To keep student government appropriately vested, faculty advisors should be carefully chosen and the MOHE must create national standards of university student government that mirror their own practices of transparency and accountability. Finally, nascent student governments may benefit from the advisement of international mentors, whether these are similar bodies in neighboring countries or broader entities such as the collegiate-level Model United Nations.[602] Through these relationships, student representatives learn rules of enacting legislation, conflict resolution, effective campaigning and advocacy as well as identifying student-centered objectives, not political ones.

Alongside the development of representative student government is the opportunity to organize campus groups. Instead of embroiling themselves in ethnic and political fracas, these groups would focus on common professional or personal interests – a pre-dentistry club, honor's society, web design enthusiasts or a chapter of the Red Crescent Society.[603] Student groups also need committed faculty advisors and should adhere to a standard of ethics, jointly codified by university administration and student government. All student groups should absolutely be required to register their group on campus, and, in return, receive funding and administrative recognition. This addresses the issue of radical political elements infiltrating the campus. With full MOHE backing, universities must insist that, while they welcome student involvement, organizations must follow campus

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[601] *Ibid.*
[602] National Model United Nations Program. http://www.nmun.org/
[603] International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. http://www.ifrc.org.

codes and that only registered groups can meet and recruit on university premises. When Islamist groups refuse to abide by this, uniform sanctions must be imposed including the university's willingness to resort to police intervention *every time* rogue organizations disrupt the campus.

University Women Advocating for Change

"The research is unequivocal," writes Isobel Coleman, Senior Fellow at the Council of Foreign Relations,

> [I]f the goal is to improve health, nutrition or education… build robust and self-sustaining community organizations, encourage grass-roots democracy, and ultimately, temper extremism, successful efforts must target women. Economists increasingly recognize that nothing is more central to development than the economic, political and social participation of women.[604]

While most education experts agree with Coleman's assessment, there is a disconnect in understanding how women in *higher* education impact national development. It as if the ability to create literate, voting women is perceived as sufficient when this could not be further from the case. As an illustration, an Iraqi Women's League letter of demands to all British agencies aiding Iraqi women, cited twenty actions as wide ranging as promoting breastfeeding to the return of looted antiquities. Not one of these demands included protecting women's access to higher education,[605] despite the fact that Iraq's

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[604] Isobel Coleman, "Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Importance of Women's Participation," testimony before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus (Washington, D.C., March 11, 2004).
[605] Iraqi Women's League, "Open Appeal to All Women's Organizations in the United Kingdom."

record of university educated women was once the best in the Middle East. Yet, the numerous women's organizations that are developing within and beyond Iraqi borders can only benefit by connecting their work to university women, including them in goal setting, promoting their issues and networking.

Certainly, Iraq needs its women to be engaged voters but women must also be leaders in academia, government, industry and advocacy agencies. More research on how professional women drive economic, political and social advancement is required if Iraq, and nations in similar dire straits, are to capitalize on their female citizens and universities' potential. Therefore, programmatic development must accompany academic output on the relevance of university women to civil society capacity building. Specific to this study, the MOHE must enunciate the advancement of women as students, faculty and senior administrators in their strategic planning. A MOHE task force may be appropriate with the participation of Iraq's Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA). The presence of the MOWA at universities, perhaps represented through campus women's centers, could initiate gender equity workshops as well as provide female students with MOWA internships.

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http://womenstrike8m.server101.com/English/iraqiwomenleagueopenletter.htm. The letter also asserts that, "Only Iraqi women's organizations in Iraq have the right to speak in the name of our Iraqi women and voice their demands. No women from abroad are to be dispatched into Iraq to speak for Iraqi women." While it can be appreciated that only Iraqi women understand the reality of their lives, this organizational attitude may inhibit international women's organizations from extending aid to them and advocacy in the global community on their behalf.

Female faculty and students can identify their common challenges and ambitions in an annual status report of women in higher education, presented to university presidents, the MOHE and MOWA, media outlets, as well as international agencies vested in women's education like UNESCO and id21.org.[606] This is also the opportunity for Iraqi academic women to form a national association. Mentoring at the faculty-student, graduate-undergraduate and undergraduate-high school levels would help generate a broader and more fully endowed organization. Additional programming could include:

- Review board of the MOHE's admissions policies
- Tenure preparation workshops
- Conference and grant writing training
- A museum and women's library at the University of Baghdad, MOWA or MOHE
- National panels on significant women's issues
- Awarding international research scholarships
- Outreach to high schools, community women's centers and adult literacy schools

While it can be acknowledged that these objectives are oriented from a Western perspective on the function of higher education, we must nonetheless remember that Iraqi universities have traditionally been structured on European and American institutions and that Iraqi academics demonstrate a preference to continue in this fashion.

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[606] According to their website, id21.org "communicates international development research to policymakers and practitioners worldwide: health, education, global issues, urban development, rural development, natural resources." http://www.id21.org.

Campus women's centers could enhance the visibility of female student issues and serve as a bridge between the university and community women's centers. Interview participants were specifically asked about the feasibility of a women's center on their campus and responses varied. **Wasna** dismissed the idea:

> For me, I don't think we need it, we have so much to worry about than meeting and discussing these unimportant things, from my opinion, if I wanted to prove myself as a woman who is equal to [men, then] I should do it in real life not by talking. I think these centers are useless, at least in Iraq.

For **Wasna**, equal opportunity is secondary to eradicating current civil unrest. Nonetheless, she is ready to demonstrate her equality, not simply discuss it. **Mayyada** is also unenthusiastic about a campus women's center, admitting she thought it would be "misused" because "there isn't enough awareness" of women's issues. **Linda** had the opposite reaction, although abbreviated, writing only, "What a brilliant idea!" **Azhar's** response was unique from her perspective as a faculty member and advocate, "As a [women's rights] activist, I'm doing my best in the student community." She continues, "Now we are working toward establishing a women center [and] we need your help to prepare a proposal."[607] Finally, **Nedal** expressed a valid concern – any women's center should be driven by the goals of its members, not outside institutions or donor agencies. She writes,

> Yes, it would be a good idea, [g]iven it [was] used to address Iraqi women's issues [l]ike improving

[607] **Azhar** and her colleagues are currently writing a grant to establish a women's center at the University of Basra. I had written similar grants in 2004 and 2005 to benefit the Universities of Basra and Baghdad and submitted these to the U.S. State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development, co-authored by Drs. Muna Naash and Tammy Boyd.

> woman's image in work or education [and] help[ing] mentor young girls entering college…[A]s a teacher, I feel for my female students …if they asked for my advice I would give it. I know it is not good enough, there needs to be an organized effort.

These responses indicate that these women are not wholly familiar with the work women's centers do, unsure of how such entities could improve their lives as students. Regardless, the establishment of a campus women's center is problematic in contemporary Iraq. Universities do not have the funds to support a center and while foreign donors may be willing to step in, this may only raise the ire of anti-western elements. Security will certainly be an issue on campuses such as Basra and al-Mustansiriyah where brazen attacks against female students occur regularly. However, the possibility of women's centers should not be scrapped altogether. To capitalize on their potential, the MOHE and MOWA must jointly advocate for these centers' existence and the work done there must be such that women students become the centers' most vocal supporters.

"Women's issues" ultimately impact everyone. Male students are also victimized when Islamists target their female peers because the crux of Islamist's moralizing message is that men are so innately depraved that women are not safe around them. It is important to remember that radicalized clerical groups do not represent an Iraqi majority or a collective male attitude toward women. University men can "brought on board" as women express their concerns and demands and should be done so that such efforts do

not polarize the genders or become trivialized as a "battle of the sexes." Women's center outreach can include discussions on how men are exploited in hyper-militarized communities[608] (such as contemporary Iraq) as well as connecting women's education to overall family earnings and opportunity.[609] Establishing co-ed campus events – especially community service – prove that men and women can work together toward proactive change and absent of rampant immorality -- something, it appears, most Islamists find incomprehensible. Ultimately, each of these recommendations can cultivate students committed to learning above ideology, a generation of self-determined scholars instead of the legacy of their country's demise.

Alumni and Donor Recruitment

Iraq has thousands of alumni, in country and abroad, who are disconnected from their former universities. University-trained, expatriate Iraqis, have gone on, in most instances, to enjoy professional careers and the accompanying financial rewards. Yet, institutionalized alumni relations are not practiced by Iraqi universities.[610] Iraqi academics worldwide are distressed to see the conditions in their country's universities but lack the financial channels to donate money.

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[608] **Linda** commented that, "men's lives are complicated, for they were always victims of the political system. When Saddam was in power…he used to be fond of wars [and] our men must join the army. Same thing applies today, US soldiers and [the Iraqi National Guard] are as sadistic as Saddamists used to be."

[609] Isobel Coleman, "Post-Conflict Reconstruction."

[610] Abdul Satter Jawad, personal communication, April 2004.

Developing alumni philanthropy can erode the notion that state funding of universities equates state ownership of higher education, a question the MOHE will certainly face as Iraq refashions itself.[611] Bruce Johnstone has written extensively on how universities are funded, asserting that, "philanthropy becomes an enormously attractive political solution precisely because it is not taxes and it is not tuition fees."[612] Furthermore, alumnus giving signals that higher education is a "socially worthwhile cause."[613] Universities are ideally situated to benefit from the largesse of Iraqis abroad with disposable incomes, they lack only the publicity campaigns and banking mechanisms to do so. The Iraqi Prospect Organisation goes even further in recommending means by which universities can generate funds, arguing that, "universities should work toward a diversification of their sources of funds and develop income from services, investments, intellectual property rights, partnerships with industry, etc."[614] All of which could be made possible through the establishment of alumni associations and faculty organizations. In the case of alumni associations, appropriate training in endowment building would increase their ability to secure discretionary funding. Associations can also serve as career centers for alumni and current students – connecting skilled graduates to in-country, professional vacancies.

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[611] Beriwan Khailany, interviewed by Dick Gordon. The Deputy Minister expressed her belief that the MOHE, as well as all Iraqi government, would soon be "very much decentralized."
[612] Bruce Johnstone, "A Political Culture of Giving and the Philanthropic Support of Public Higher Education in International Perspective," paper presented at the International Conference on Higher Education (Luxembourg, August 26-28, 2004), 2.
[613] *Ibid, 5.*
[614] Iraqi Prospect Organisation, *Iraqi Constitution,* 7.

For better or worse, Iraq's most generous immediate donors are foreign governments that promised monies or materials to the MOHE or specific universities. Unfortunately, this relationship has been compromised by impediments and broken promises.[615] Both Deputy Minister Khailany and University of Baghdad President al-Mosawe expressed their disappointment with US pledges to assist them, making these statements directly to the American public.[616] They were particularly exasperated by travel restrictions that prohibited most Iraqis from traveling to the United States.[617] While US travel for Iraqis requires a lengthy application process, it can be achieved when hosting universities act more proactively. It is not enough for foreign universities and professional associations to extend invitations to Iraqi academics for research visits or conferences, we must also extend the financial resources to do so. Given the current income of Iraqi professors, international flights and US accommodations are well beyond what most can afford. For students and university administrators especially, visits to foreign universities should include opportunities to see the wider campus – student unions and housing, bursar and admissions offices, library archives, Arab-American student associations, faculty senates, to name a few.

Finally, the community of international donors who have, for the most part, acted altruistically, must re-evaluate their efforts. Are we sending the resources Iraqi

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[615] The relationship between Iraq and the US was discussed in Chapter Four. Other nations that donated to the MOHE and specific universities include Jordan, Qatar, Great Britain, Japan, South Korea, Germany and Canada.
[616] Beriwan Khailany and Mosa al-Mosawe, interviewed by Dick Gordon.
[617] *Ibid.*

academics specifically requested or are we donating only what is convenient and appealing to our notions of their needs? The University of Baghdad received a windfall in library book donations, as noted in Chapter Four, but lack inhabitable residence halls, computers and online journal access. Donations are only useful if they meet an actual need. However, since Iraqi universities are brimming with such needs, it cannot be that challenging for donors to identify a handful of means by which they can assist. We must listen *first*, and then react accordingly, resting assured our Iraqi colleagues can express how we may best help.

Two programs exemplify a more ideal philanthropic relationship. First is the British Council's Iraq website,[618] which:

> connects people with learning opportunities and creative ideas from the UK and aim to build lasting relationships between the UK and Iraq. Education is the focus of our re-engagement with Iraq, working in partnership with Iraqi institutions and individuals to reconnect Iraq with the international educational community and sharing the UK's experience to help design Iraqi solutions to Iraq's challenges.[619]

The site, almost overwhelming in its offerings and graphics, nonetheless delivers online access to numerous academic periodicals and information on study abroad and international scholarship programs. While most interview participants were unaware of the British Council website, **Linda** said she visited often and had begun her application for one scholarship program. The free site also provides online IT training and English

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[618] The British Council –Iraq, http://www.britishcouncil.org/iraq.htm.
[619] *Ibid.*

language testing. Another instance of suitable philanthropy was the Arab Science and Technology Foundation's 2005 conference[620] in conjunction with the Sandia Cooperative Monitoring Center.[621] By holding the event in Jordan, numerous Iraqi scientists were able to attend. Participants were encouraged to submit research proposals that demonstrated a clear benefit to Iraqi civil society. Submissions included identifying human remains through DNA technology, testing for post-traumatic stress disorders, desert land reclamation and water sampling. Several proposals were funded,[622] enjoining international donors with Iraqi academia as well as Iraq's wider rehabilitation needs. Money will never be the ultimate panacea for Iraqi universities' recovery. But when funds are matched to committed efforts by foreign research agencies, Iraqi higher education is revitalized, escorted back to the global stage of scholarly engagement.

The Opportunities and Obligations before Us

The ability of the MOHE, faculty and students to restore their universities lies within them but also amongst the global academic community whose covenant to academic freedom will ring hollow if we merely witness what is happening in Iraq. Iraqis affiliated with postsecondary education will hopefully persist in their profession or studies and demand that their new government protect higher learning and open inquiry. In the end, two transformations are possible: Iraq restores its reputation as a leader in university

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[620] Richard Stone, "Iraqi Science in the Line of Fire," *Science,* September 30, 2005, 2157.
[621] Located in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
[622] Richard Stone, "Iraqi Science," 2157.

education and students no longer view learning as an action superimposed onto them but rather a landscape in which they forge their own paths.

Higher education is, unquestionably, a critical facet of national development and redevelopment, promoting social mobility and serving as "a model of political stability."[623] Postsecondary schooling instills ownership and engaged citizenship, allowing its members to participate in a pluralistic and yet, incubated environment. At the same time, universities engage with institutions beyond their gates. The Institute of Development Studies elaborates, "As crucial components of global research systems, [universities] have the potential to bridge the global with the local, providing a real opportunity to scale up local knowledge, needs and priorities[.]"[624] Yet none of this can be achieved without the sharing of knowledge and resources on the part of more fortunate entities and institutions. When we practice this we are announcing that nationalism, political agendas and ideologies are anathema to the principles of academic freedom.

We could turn our backs, again, on Iraqi universities and let them slip into academic oblivion -- provincial colleges in a "backward" nation with unfamiliar people and customs. We could also insist that it is impractical to extend assistance now since Iraq seems doomed to a bloody and prolonged civil war. Keith Watenpaugh, ever vigilant of the academic community's apparent apathy, disagrees:

> It may seem superfluous to think about universities

[623] Vanessa Pape Bouche, "Democracy and Diplomas," 85.
[624] Institute of Development Studies. "Learning to Participate," 1.

> and colleges, research institutions and foreign exchange programs while Iraq seems to be going to hell in a handbasket. It is precisely higher education's role as a fundament of civil society, as a device in ameliorating forms of economic and class difference, and as a tool for building national community that should put it at the very center of all our efforts in Iraq…[L]arge-scale, free (or almost free) merit-based…higher education, combined with strategic and directed programs of economic development, is the only way to lessen the magnetic attraction of radicalized Arab-Islamist nationalism.[625]

Iraq is just now emerging from its oppression -- decades of dictatorship, violence and poverty. Yet, this is precisely the most opportune moment for the global academic community to offer assistance to their Iraqi peers. To value only our own rights to open inquiry and democratic learning environments eventually degrades academic freedom for everyone. Iraq is home to Babylonian artifacts, exceptional Muslim sciences during Europe's Dark Ages, vast marshlands of remarkable ecological worth, a tapestry of diverse poetry, art and song. And it is home to nearly 300,000 Iraqi university students who seek higher learning in world that seems to hold few expectations for them.

As the last interview set for this study, participants were asked what they wanted Americans to know about Iraqi women and their universities. **Linda's** remarks were primarily that the US was obligated to help restore university materials since American soldiers "opened the doors for the looters." **Linda's** impression of American "liberators" is surely the exact opposite message we want to leave with Iraqis but opportunities do

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[625] Keith Watenpaugh, "Rebuilding Iraq's Academic Community and Challenges of Civil Society in Civil War." Speech delivered to Center for Arab and Islamic Studies (Villanova

remain by which we can restore good faith. While **Mayyada** classified her universities as institutionally stunted, she acknowledged the great potential of her female peers. "All that Iraqi women need," **Mayyada** concluded, "is some peace and encouragement." **Azhar**, marine biology professor at the University of Basra, submitted specific requests – more computers and books, a women's center and a research yacht. But her greatest wish appears to be the "release [of my] university from the Islamic religious parties." **Azhar** seeks scholarly engagement for her students, not terrorized campuses and closed minds.

Iraqi university women have demonstrated admirable academic persistence, driven by their ambitions despite the mismanagement and atrophy of their universities. This is certainly true of the eight women who participated in this research. Iraq's potential is contingent upon its reinvestment in higher education, a commitment they cannot make without international pledges of aid. In the meantime, we can only expand and improve upon scholarly understandings of Iraqi women and higher education. We can rest assured that we have yet to see the full potential of either. To quote **Wasna**, this study's youngest participant, "I want [Americans] to know that we are fighters, survivors and that all these bad circumstances are just making us…stronger…and wiser. No matter what."

University, Philadelphia, September 9, 2004).

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APPENDIX A
The Method of Study

Timeframe of Study

This historical dissertation spans the onset of the Hussein regime until two years after the Allied Invasion of Iraq (2003). Major national and international events included in this study are: Saddam's presidency (1979 – 2003); the Iran-Iraq War (1980 – 1988); First Gulf War (1991); U.N. imposed sanctions (1991 – 2003); Second Gulf War (2003) and the Allied Occupation and post-war Iraq (2003 – 2005).

Salient Methodology

The conceptual structure for this study is the meta-synthesis of primary, secondary and contextual sources, enabling a more profound understanding of Iraqi higher education with an emphasis on female university students. Collected narratives (via e-mail) from Iraqi women enhance the research. They are, however, not the predominant data set. The narratives serve a special function by elucidating the *meaning* Iraqi women made of their university experiences. Interviews are illustrative and complementary but ultimately supplemental to the salient methodology, historiography.

Data analysis for this dissertation consists primarily of documentary research. Employing a historiographic approach, I am able to deconstruct textual evidence, thematically code each and place them in a chronologically appropriate examination of

Iraqi higher education. The coalescence of primary, secondary and contextual sources serves as the framework in this study's development.

Overview of Historiographic Method and Documentary Research

The discipline of history is, in essence, academic storytelling.[626] David Henige writes:

> It is not how assiduous the historian is in amassing evidence, or how careful in assessing it, that matters, but the way he tells his story. Through exposition, the historian's evidence becomes his reader's evidence.[627] (162)

Historians crave unexplored landscapes of the past, to reframe wider historical studies by locating stories that have yet been told or not told from a particular perspective. The rise and near demise of Iraqi higher education, and the stories of its female students, is engaging. Yet, it is also an incomplete history. Middle Eastern scholars and comparative education researchers have not generated thorough narratives addressing Iraqi higher education and students' experiences of this system.

What are historians tasked to examine and then present to their readers? History cannot always put forth irrefutable facts. For example, that, in 1991, the United Nations imposed trade embargoes on Iraq is not in question. However, the impact sanctions had on the Iraqi people cannot be directly measured nor fully understood by collecting data, such as child mortality or university enrollment statistics, alone. In essence, historians are expected to provide summations, cognizant of both their sources' and their own

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[626] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 3rd ed. (London: Pearson, 2000), 93.

objectivity. Mark Gilderhus states "using remnants of the past, historians reconstruct history, employing statements of probability, not certainty."[628] The historian's objective is to address gaps, to "do their best to fill in the holes with inferences that seem plausible."[629] Through the development of narratives, historians convey, "what it felt like to observe or participate in past events."[630] As architects of scholarly narratives, historians rely on quantitative and qualitative measures, as well as other disciplines' approaches to their topic.[631] We seek to "make connections, assign causes, trace defects, make comparisons [and] uncover patterns" thereby indicating our study's rightful place in historical scholarship and its relevance to events today.[632] Historians delve into archives, municipal records, censuses, and personal letters and practice content analyses, sequence coding, and measures of central tendency – all acceptable in historiography.

Documentary Sources: Classification and Evaluation

Historians rely on primary and secondary sources to secure evidence in relation to their studies. Primary source evidence requires rigorous evaluation. It may "represent narrow or partisan perspectives … [or] were created intentionally to deceive."[633] While a narrow interpretation of primary sources would be limited to event eyewitnesses alone, historian

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[627] David Henige, *Historical Evidence and Argument* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 162.
[628] Mark Gilderhus, *History and Historians: A Historiographical Approach*, 5th ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), 86.
[629] Richard Marius and Melvin Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History* (New York: Pearson, 2005), 4.
[630] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 93.
[631] John F. McCarthy, "Two Views of Historical Criticism," *Journal of the Roman Theological Forum* 78 (November 1998): http://www.rtforum.org/lt/lt78.html
[632] Richard Marius and Melvin Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 10.

John Tosh reminds us that: "sources more remote from the action have their own significance. The historian is often as interested in what contemporaries *thought* was happening as in what actually happened."[634] Evaluation criterion such as this is particularly relevant as I focus on Iraqi university women. In many instances, events happened *to* them rather than the women being actors in the event. Therefore, I am not, for instance, studying female soldiers in the Iran-Iraq War but rather how the war impacted female students. A secondary source is, essentially "an analysis of primary sources."[635] Many of the secondary sources in this study are theoretical in nature, such as Nadje Al-Ali's scholarship of contemporary Iraqi women.[636]

Discerning the bias in each source relates to data trustworthiness as well as identifying perspective. Keith Barton urges historians to not discount obviously biased evidence because the values woven into that source assist our understanding of dominant or competing ideologies. Historians should remain mindful that:

> [A] great deal of historical analysis is devoted to just this question: What were the ideas, attitudes and beliefs of people in the past? To answer the question, biased sources must be used, because the bias constitutes evidence of people's ideas.[637]

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[633] Keith Barton, "Primary Sources in History," *Phi Delta Kappan*, June 2005, 746.
[634] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 37.
[635] Richard Marius and Melvin Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 89.
[636] Nadje Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi Women between Dictatorship, War, Sanctions and Occupation," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 4-5 (2005), 739-758.
[637] Keith Barton, "Primary Sources in History," 748.

Nonetheless, when historians rely on biased evidence without seeking alternate accounts, their own objectivity and researching skills can be called into question. This issue is especially pertinent to this study of Iraqi higher education. The Baath regime had little vested interest in accurate reporting, especially in regards to human rights abuses and citizen dissatisfaction. Saddam's rule was based in ideology and, therefore, his self-preservation banked upon the *ideas* of Iraq's successes and adversaries versus what Iraqis actually experienced. Nor is Saddam alone in his misinformation campaign. Other governments and their agencies exploited and manipulated educational data "to document successes."[638] One function of the interviews of university women is to provide a counterbalance to the propaganda and possibly inaccurate information provided by the regime-controlled Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Primary and secondary sources may have an obvious, direct relation to the issue at hand or may be classified as *contextual*. Contextual sources inform research by providing pertinent and circumstantial evidence. These sources are significant to this study as there is limited targeted research on Iraqi higher education. Contextual primary sources are regularly put to use in a manner not intended by the author.[639] An example of this is government memorandums secreted out of Kurdistan in the 1990's. While their original function was classified communiqués on supposed anti-Baath activities, they include mention of university students and therefore enhance our understanding of Saddam's oppressive measures as they relate to higher education.

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[638] Benigno Aguierre and Roberto Vichot, "The Reliability of Cuba's Educational Statistics," *Comparative Education Review* 42, no. 2 (May 1998), 118-138.

Clearly, the historian's practice is interpretive -- rarely can we return to the time and place, seeking clarifications. We must become comfortable writing amidst conflicting ideas and incomplete stories. This intellectual milieu makes history intriguing as we are challenged to put forth the most accurate and thoughtful accounts we can. John Tosh speaks of the "historian's instinct" which is relied upon when encountering gaps in the historical record – "matters of motive and mentality frequently fall into this category."[640] Historiographers must concede that history is unkempt.[641] Evidence trails peter out, data cannot be fully verified and people die with their stories unrecorded. Again, historians should make every effort to be both objective and thorough in their narratives. However, as we evaluate historical studies, we must do so from the vantage point that "truths" in the historical context are interpretations of the available evidence, filtered through the researcher's method and analytic eye. Positivist concepts of Truth are rarely appropriate to historical studies for the very fact that the truths we seek are those saturated in human experience and expression.[642]

Data Sources

The data sources employed in this study of both primary and secondary nature can be classified as such:

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[639] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 41.
[640] *Ibid*, 105.
[641] Mark Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 84.
[642] Personal Narratives Groups, "Truths," 263.

- *Government and regulatory agency documents*. For example, publications from the MOHE, General Federation of Iraqi Women, UN or USAID Iraq Reconstruction Project.
- *University publications.* For example, *Baghdad University Journal of Medicine*, academic department websites or student newspapers.
- *Media reports.* For example, *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, AlJazeera.net or PBS broadcasts of "Frontline."
- *"Watchdog" organizations.* For example, Iraq Body Count, Human Rights Watch or the British Council: Iraq.
- *Books and referred academic articles.*
- *Interviews and personal communiqués.*

Pertinent Definitions

Intersectionality is an epistemological approach positing that "the classical models of oppression within a society, such as those based on race, gender, religion, sexuality, class, and other markers of difference do not act independent of one another. Instead, these forms of oppression interrelate."[643] This approach is regularly used in feminist studies of humanities and social sciences. For instance, in studies of Middle Eastern women, gender cannot be studied in isolation. We must also acknowledge their pertinent national and ethnic identities to generate more accurate descriptions of lived experiences. The term intersectionality has, for this study, been appropriated to also refer to those

[643] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality.

external, interacting *political, cultural* and *social* influences impinging Iraqi universities and female students. As an illustration, emerging Iranian-based agencies in southern Iraq affect the clinical practice available to University of Basra medical students.[644]

Inherent to historiography is the premise of *restorying* or creating the "metastory."[645] Textual evidence and other forms of data are potential narrative units, requiring thematic and sequential coding as well as evaluation of their trustworthiness. After analyzing data for their significance, each narrative unit is woven into the appropriate context for the study.[646] Restorying is a data processing tool commonly wielded by historians. However, restorying also occurs as narrative participants "externalize" their stories by sharing them with the researcher.[647] It is, therefore, dually practiced. Iraqi university women reconstruct their memories and insights in response to assigned e-mail questions. In turn, I restory their narratives while writing a history of Iraqi higher education.

Interviews of Iraqi Women

The sources that are unique to this study are the university women's narratives that essentially become new primary sources. Historical narratives, such as this, are both incomplete and lackluster without "the 'texture' of dire affliction … felt in the gritty

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[644] George Packer, "Testing Ground," *New Yorker*, February 28, 2005, http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/050228fa_fact.
[645] John Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (New Jersey: Pearson, 2005), 479.
[646] *Ibid*, 480 and 483.
[647] Marsha Rossiter, "Narratives and Stories in Adult Teaching and Learning," *Clearinghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education* no.241 (2002), 2.

details of biography."[648] Therefore, the addition of interviews enjoins *lived experiences to historical events* as well as *social and political phenomena.* By providing emotional and reflective context, interviews help researchers "extend [their] intellectual…reach across age, occupation, class, race, sex and geographical boundaries."[649] For this research, interviews corroborate the documentary research.

Recruitment involved e-mail solicitations through Iraqi university students or alumni. Approximately thirty women were suggested by existing contacts in Iraq or Iraqis abroad and all were invited to participate in the research interviews. There were few constraints to research participation in an effort to cull multiple perspectives. The criteria for research participants was the following:

- Participants must be female.
- Participants must have attended the University of Baghdad, University of Basra or Technology University between 1979 and 2005 as either an undergraduate or graduate student. These three campuses were selected for their geographic diversity, institutional size or specialized focus, as was the case of the University of Technology, and researcher's feasibility in maintaining consistent e-mail dialogues. Studies of Kurdish universities are not included due to the semi-autonomous Kurdish region which would have added considerable heterogeneity to the research.

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[648] Paul Farmer. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights and the New War on the Poor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 31.

- Participants must respond in English to assigned e-mail questionnaires. (English is often the language of instruction in Iraqi university classrooms.)

Factors that did not influence research participation included field of study, degree completion or current country of residence. As a segment of the informed consent (see Appendix D), participants were instructed that only their first names would be used in this study and that aliases could be requested. Eight women fully participated in these interviews and a sampling of interview questions can be found in Appendix C. E-mail narratives are deconstructed for thematic coding. Therefore, interviews and interview sets are not used in their entirety nor is this research a biographical case study. Instead, interview data inform and illustrate facets of an overall history of Iraq's universities.

Travel to Iraq is currently not feasible, for both my own and the participating women's safety. Iraqi women remain under a shroud of surveillance and judgment, especially if seen interacting with westerners with, all too often, lethal consequences. The choice to conduct e-mail based interviews was, therefore, partly generated from this rationale. However, e-mail based interviews provided distinct benefits. This asynchronous interview design allowed women to respond at their own pace (I asked that participants respond within two weeks) and in a private context. It seemed relevant that interviewees provide only the information they wanted to share, because any censorship on their part was also telling. E-mailing in a country with unreliable electricity and internet access

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[649] Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing* 2nd ed.

was not always convenient but certainly a better choice than traveling myself or hiring an interpreter or interviewing assistant. In the latter case, these occupations have notoriously been targeted for murder in Iraq, a risk I was not willing to take. Furthermore, the entire interview set consisted of nearly forty reflective questions that would have required multiple, in person interviews. I did not commit to this e-mail research protocol without some reservations, namely how I would engender ether space that invoked authentic and targeted responses. However, I am confident that e-mails allowed participating women to express, *in their own time and their own words*, their perspectives on Iraqi higher education. In the end, e-mails best suited my research objectives, providing new data while not harming or endangering participants.

A period of reflection (which may be prohibitive in real-time interviewing)[650] was intentionally built into this research method because I sought emotional analyses and memory recollection, both of which are not instantaneous processes. Therefore, computer-mediated communication (CMC), in the form of e-mail, was the most appropriate means of data collection allowing "researchers to capitalize on the ability of the medium to cross time and space barriers which might limit FTF [face to face] research."[651] E-mail based data collection also eliminates "transcription bias" whereby

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(Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995), 3.
[650] Chris Mann and Fiona Stewart, *Internet Communication and Qualitative Research: A Handbook for Researching Online* (New York: Sage Publications, 2000), 17.
[651] *Ibid,* 17.

the entire narrative is transmitted as the respondent intended it and immediately ready for coding. [652]

Interview participants were placed on a "blind" e-mail list and sent questionnaires on a two-week cycle. A concerted effort was made to practice "progressive focusing"[653] whereby interviews commence with general questions on family background and educational status and then gradually focus on more sensitive or complex issues. The first questionnaire requested basic biographical data such as year of birth, parents' employment, hometown, Iraqi universities attended and programs of study as well as familial status while enrolled. Subsequent interview sets were thematically clustered, focusing on professor-student relationships, social opportunities, professional development and career tracking phenomena, for instance. The last few interview sets were "era clustered" asking women to retell their experiences in regards to living under one or more of the following events: Saddam's regime, Iran-Iraq War, First Gulf War, sanctions, Second Gulf War and Occupied Iraq. Employing Rubin and Rubin's "responsive interviewing" technique,[654] I occasionally asked for clarifications and elaborations from respondents, recognizing that the interviewee and interviewer participate in a "dynamic and iterative process."[655]

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[652] *Ibid*, 22.
[653] Fiona Leach, "Researching Gender Violence in Schools: Methodological and Ethical Considerations," Paper presented at the World Congress on Comparative Education Societies (Havana: WCCES, October 25 – 29, 2004), 4.
[654] Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing*, 15.

Interviews may contradict one another in terms of historical events and political and social phenomena. One woman may express that the Baath presence on campus was acutely apparent while another may have rarely noticed it. Gilderhus justifies this as "divergent renditions result in larger, complementary forms of understanding in which one enriches and animates the other from separate vantage points."[656] I recruited as many participants as possible so that I could write from a multi-faceted perspective, the historiographic equivalent of triangulation. University women participants may contradict themselves in a singular interview or their interview data set. However, these interviews should not be discounted on that basis alone. Participants are sharing their recollections, insights and the meaning they took away from witnessing a particular event. These are highly subjective processes that cannot be verified solely by empirical measures. A more appropriate model for this historical study is Interpretive Constructionist Theory where the means by which people interpret events is equally or even more relevant than the actual event itself.[657] Again, historians engage in interpretive work, analyzing the significance witnesses took from episodes or phenomena in their own lifetimes. Rubin and Rubin write, "In this sense, multiple, even conflicting version of the same event or object can be true at the same time."[658]

Ollerenshaw and Creswell succinctly describes the critical elements of narrative inquiry which are pertinent to the interviews in this study:

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[655] *Ibid,* 15.
[656] Mark Gilderhus, *History and Historians,* 86.
[657] Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing,* 27.

- The researcher recognizes the significance of learning from those who participated or witnessed the event.
- The narratives become data.
- The researcher should identify key themes, arrange data chronologically and both deconstruct and restory the data.
- There is a level of collaboration between the researcher and the researched in fashioning meaning and sequence ordering.[659]

The Truth about Realities and the Realities of Truth

The academic community is sometimes wary of anti-naturalist interpretations of truth, especially as they relate to narratives. The Personal Narrative Group writes "[o]ur academic disciplines have more often discouraged us from taking person's life stories seriously. Disciplines have…done this by elevating some kinds of truth – the kinds that conform to established criteria validity – over others."[660] Yet, validity is not a suitable approach to historical research. Instead, we are more likely to rely on the "historian's truism" as proposed by Mark Gilderhus. Simply put, "different people in different times and places literally saw and experienced the world differently."[661] The experiences restoried in this study cannot be replicated, which is one reason this research is both

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[658] *Ibid,* 27.
[659] Jo Anne Ollerenshaw and John Creswell, "Narrative Research: A Comparison of Two Restorying Data Analysis Approaches," *Qualitative Inquiry* 8, no.3 (June 2002): 331-332.
[660] Personal Narratives Group, "Truths," in *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives,* ed. Personal Narratives Group (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 262.
[661] Mark Gilderhus, *History and Historians,* 5.

significant and engaging. We must acknowledge that Iraqi university women acted and reacted in manners that made most sense to them at that time.[662] In doing so, we are asserting a "positive valuation of the subjective."[663] This is best explained through a lengthy passage from the Personal Narratives Group:

> When talking about their lives, people lie sometimes, forget a lot, exaggerate, become confused, and get things wrong. Yet they *are* revealing truths. These truths don't reveal the past "as it actually was," aspiring to a standard of objectivity. They give us instead the truths of our experiences…Unlike the reassuring Truth of the scientific ideal, the truths of the personal narratives are neither open to proof nor self-evident. We come to understand them only through interpretation, paying careful attention to the contexts that shape their creation and the world view that informs them.[664]

The theoretical underpinnings for the concept of truth for this study are as follows:

- We cannot evaluate women's voices in the context of a male-oriented value system, whether that is Middle Eastern or western in perspective, without tainting our interpretation of their experiences.
- We cannot genuinely hear women's voices from a feminist perspective that is wholly western. This fails to embody the feminist objectives and struggles pertinent to Iraqi women.
- We cannot evaluate competently the Iraqi system of higher education from our position saturated in western academia. Iraq's universities are both similar to and radically different from their American counterparts.[665]

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[662] Virginia Olesen, "Feminisms and Models of Qualitative Research," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* ed. Norman K. Denzien and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1994), 161.
[663] Personal Narratives Group, "Truths," 263.

Women, indeed all people, come to know and express their truths from their *individual* experiences of *shared* realities. While the event that occurred may not be in dispute, the significance taken away is highly subjective. As the researcher, I must remain conscious of the gaze I bring to my study of Iraq -- a western educated feminist and higher education scholar.

Study Limitations

The research scope of this study is limited by my inability to safely travel within Iraq as well not speaking Arabic. While research participants maintain functional literacy in written English (as most have had English-based coursework, in various formats, since middle school), *cultural-linguistic* barriers remain a potential obstacle. Forces of culture imbue the significance we give to particular words. I must recognize that research participants and other authors of textual evidence are writing from their "sensory worlds," not mine.[666] For instance, my notion of university student services – residential housing, student activities, academic advisement and so forth – may not translate into Iraqi students' concepts of the same. Furthermore, my relationship with research participants is "consultative,"[667] our e-mail dialogues are premised upon the fact that I am seeking information. Therefore, university women who engage in this study may choose,

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[664] *Ibid,* 261.
[665] Expanded upon from Virginia Olesen, "Feminisms and Models of Qualitative Research," 161.
[666] Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), 2.
[667] Nina Brown, "Edward T. Hall: Proxemic Theory, 1966," *Center for Spatially Integrated Social Science,* http://www.csiss.org/classics/content/13.

in this non-intimate relationship, to withhold some information and emotive discourses because that is what feels like appropriate distance for them.

However, the greatest research challenge is securing Iraqi governmental, MOHE and individual campus documents. Since 2003, Iraq's universities and the Ministry have been repeatedly looted and torched, resulting in the loss of pertinent documents. Every effort has been made to access available textual evidence. As mentioned earlier, the credibility of some documents must be questioned due to corrupt Baath reporting. "Contingency governs the writing of history," emphasizes David Henige.[668] This dissertation's data is contingent upon the documents I can secure and then choose to use or disregard; the analysis in this study is contingent upon my own limitations and biases as the researcher.[669] Some collected textual sources, upon review, were omitted from this study because I was not able to verify seemingly dubious data or claims.

The use of narratives and biographical data from participant women also encounters some limitations. Hala Fattah, Stephanie Platz and Gibson McGuire elaborate:

> Autobiography is not really an Iraqi genre because over the past forty years, dictatorship and foreign wars have colluded to raise self-censorship to a level of survivor's art, to where the reconceptualization of the past has been portrayed as subversive.[670]

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[668] David Henige, *Historical Evidence and Argument*, 9.
[669] *Ibid*, 9.
[670] Hala Fattah, Stephanie Platz and Gibson McGuire, "An Oral History of Iraqi in Iraq and the Diaspora," *American Academic Research Institute of Iraq* (2005), www.taarii.org/research.php, 1.

Yet specifically because so many records and documents have been destroyed, Iraqis must rely on spoken evidence and their memories to stand in for official documentation of their status, participation and struggles.[671] While this may raise positivist concerns of validity, "the historian's business is to construct *interpretations* of the past from its surviving remains.[672]

Researcher's Background and Intent

My studies in higher education regularly focused on marginalized student populations, women's experiences of higher education as well as comparative higher education studies. In 2003, I assumed the position of Gender Specialist for the Al Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq, based at the University of Oklahoma. This USAID funded grant, in collaboration with the Oklahoma Higher Education Partnership, provided $4,000,000 in assistance to Iraq's MOHE as well as five Iraqi universities. As this grant program came to a close and I began to conceptualize a dissertation topic, I realized the unique opportunity before me. In discussions with numerous Iraqi university women, I repeatedly heard the complaint that westerners neither understood how robust Iraqi higher education had once been nor the realities of Iraqi women's lives.

Dissertation advisors suggested I consider only one political-military event and its impact on Iraqi higher education. However, as I delved further into the research, I realized how appropriate the intersectionality model was. It is impossible to gauge the repercussions

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[671] *Ibid,* 1.

of the Second Gulf War on the University of Baghdad, for instance, absent of the role Saddam and sanctions also played. I believe this study to be unique in focus, exploring the multiple and interacting political, cultural and social factors as they manifested themselves on Iraqi campuses.

The additional focus on Iraqi university women results from my studentship in women's studies and research projects on women's access to higher education. I maintain a robust doctoral candidate research record in women's narratives of higher education, especially populations struggling to complete their studies. Admittedly, personal experiences etched themselves into the development of my dissertation. As a doctoral student and working mother, I have endured numerous challenges to completing my Ph.D. As a child raised by State Department and USAID officers in the Developing World, I maintain a keen interest in comparative studies, especially as they relate to women's authentic opportunities to learn and participate fully in civil society.

I remain critical of the CPA and affiliated agencies' efforts to stabilize and rehabilitate Iraq, including its universities. We, the American government and our predominantly distracted intellectuals, have not so much exported democracy as forced the Iraqis to submit to an agenda that is neither rational nor altruistic. In the end, this has allowed terrorist agencies operating within Iraq to tie nationalist causes to their resistance. However, I remain a proponent of American universities "exporting" precepts of

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[672] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 55. Italics mine.

academic freedom along with appropriate material and financial donations. Learning can always take us further than we could have imagined but only when we assert our collective right to open inquiry. To confine learning opportunities to geography and ideology is a transgression for which few of us should expect redemption.

APPENDIX B
Significant Events in Modern Iraqi History

1918 – 1932	British Mandate Period
1932 – 1958	Monarchy Rule
1937	Saddam Hussein born in Tikrit.
1949	Syrian teachers working in Iraq begin to disseminate Baathist ideology.
1956	University of Baghdad is founded. Saddam joins the the ABSP.
1958	‘Abd al-Karim Qassem overthrows Iraqi monarchy and declared the new ruler.
1959	Pan-Arab Iraqi military officers lead an unsuccessful revolt against Qassem who reacts by attempting to purge Iraq of Baathists. Saddam is a member of an assassination team that fails to kill Qassem and must flee to Syria.
1961 – 1963	University students lead nationwide protests denouncing the Qassem regime.
1963	Qassem is overthrown and a Baathist regime is put in place which is replaced nine months later by a more moderate Baathist government which supports pan-Arab socialism.
1964	University of Basra is established under the auspices of the University of Baghdad system.
1967	After the Six Day War, Iraqi Baath protest their government’s support of pan-Arab nationalism over that of Iraq’s.
1968	On June 17, the ABSP and military officers depose the moderate Baath government. The Revolutionary Command Council is now the ruling body of Iraq and led by ABSP Secretary General Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr. He also commanders the army and is named president. Saddam Hussein becomes the deputy chairman of the RCC and director of internal security.
1970	Ministry of Higher Education is established.
1972	All Iraqi petroleum assets are nationalized.

1974 University of Technology established as a vocational-technology center. Unprecedented attacks against the Kurds take place in retaliation for their attempts to become semi-autonomous.

1977 After a failed Shia cleric demonstration against the RCC, nearly 200,000 Shia are stripped of their national papers and possessions and deported to Iran.

1979 Iran's Islamic Revolution is followed by al-Bakr's removal from office and being placed under arrest. Saddam Hussein becomes the new Iraqi President and immediately executes one-third of the RCC.

1980 Saddam declares war against Iran, which will last eight years. This war, which killed an estimated 300,000 Iraqis, will be Iraq's most deadly conflict.

1988 Saddam commences the Anfal Campaign, gassing over 1200 Kurdish villages.

1990 Saddam boasts to the international media that he has massive weapon capabilities and denounces Gulf States for their inexpensive petroleum prices. Later that year, Saddam invades Kuwait and effectively controls the government and all Kuwaiti assets. UN Security Council Resolution 660 condemns the invasion. UN Security Council Resolution 661 instates sanctions that prohibit purchasing "all commodities and products originating in Iraq and Kuwait" by any Member State.

1991 When Saddam refuses to withdraw from Kuwait by the date imposed by the UN Security Council, Iraq is bombed and invaded.

1992 Heavy US, British and French bombing takes place in southern Iraq as Saddam refuses to comply with UN Resolution 668. This is followed by bombings in and around Baghdad for non-compliance with weapon inspections teams and a failed assassination attempt on President George H. Bush. The Saddam regime promises $10,000 for any foreigner killed inside Iraq. A series of laws are passed that declare amputation the appropriate punishment for theft and dereliction of military duties. When doctors announce their refusal to perform these punitive amputations a subsequent law is drawn up promising doctors will face amputation if they do not comply.

1996 The Oil-for-Food Program allows Saddam to sell oil in exchange

	for basic commodities.
2003	Allied Invasion of Iraq begins in March, followed by CPA oversight. Saddam Hussein is captured in December.
2004	CPA turns national governance back over to the Iraqis and elections are held. Insurgents destabilize civil society in major cities.

APPENDIX C
Sampling of Interview Questions

Questions were clustered thematically and distributed, via email, on a two-week cycle in spring 2006. They were posed for open-ended responses and in some cases, follow-up or clarification dialogues took place. The following is a sampling of distributed interview sets.

Biographical Data

- City of origin
- Institution attended, degree sought, undergraduate and graduate data
- Parents' occupations
- Familial status during studenthood
- Working status during studenthood

Academic and Professional Choices

- What were your career ambitions as you were growing up?
- How did your parents influence your choice of university? Did they influence your career choice?
- I know that students are admitted into the university based entirely on their baccalaureate exam scores. Regardless of where you went to university and what you studied, what university was your first choice and what did you want to study?
- Did you ever want to be a professor and why did this career appeal to you?

Academic Interactions

- How did professors treat students and how did students treat their professors? Were you encouraged to ask questions or debate issues in class? Did you visit with professors in their offices or meet with them outside of the classroom?
- Were male and female students treated differently? Please share examples.
- Did you have an advisor or mentor on campus? If so, how did they help you?
- Is academic advising (for instance, choosing a major) or tutoring offered on your campus?

Student Engagement

- A 2003 UN Report (UNESCO) said Iraqi universities offer the following services: psychological counseling, nurseries, sports facilities and health programs. Does your campus offer these? What services are provided at each? Would you (or have you) used these campus services and why?
- Did your campus offer career counseling or job placement?
- On a weekly basis, how often did you use the university cafeteria, library and computer labs? What, if anything, prevented you from using these facilities?

- Did your campus have student publications, such as a newspaper? What topics were written about?
- Were you involved in any student organizations? Please discuss the purpose of these organizations. Were there barriers to developing student organizations?
- What were the larger social events held for university students?
- Did you socialize with other students? Please discuss how you spent your time when not studying or working.
- What are your best memories of your university days? Also, please discuss the times that were most difficult and why.

Student Life under the Baath Regime

- In your estimation, how did Saddam improve and/or harm Iraqi higher education?
- Were some students given easier admission standards or higher grades because they were connected to Baath leadership? Can you provide an example?
- As you applied for or were admitted into the university, were you required to sign any statement saying you supported the Baath party? If so, please provide details on what this document looked like.
- Do you think the Baath government supported some academic departments more than others?
- I have read documents that said some university classes were taught in Arabic while others were taught in English. Please give examples of classes that you had in Arabic followed by those given in English.
- I know that undergraduate students were required to take a class in Arab social studies. Please tell me what this class was like, providing examples. What were your impressions of this class?
- Please provide examples of programming and activities the Baath Student
- Union held on your campus and what kind of students joined? Did you join? Why or why not?
- Please discuss the General Federation of Iraqi Women. Did the GFIW have any projects or influence on your campus?
- In your classrooms, could you openly discuss what you thought about Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi government?
- Please discuss surveillance measures on your campus. Were students and faculty asked to report on the activities of their peers?
- Do you remember a time when students were harassed or arrested by the police or Revolutionary Command Council?
- What items did Saddam prohibit to be on campus and why?
- One author I have read claims there was a program to inject young women with fertility drugs, especially during the Iran-Iraq War. Is this a rumor or possibly true? Why or why not?
- I know that Saddam improved the status of women in many ways. I also know he did many things to damage their freedoms and opportunities. Please provide your opinion on Saddam's treatment of women and how it impacted your life.

- What year do you remember starting to use the internet and e-mail? What were your impressions of the internet?

Sanctions Era

- Please provide examples of how sanctions directly impacted your university studies.
- During sanctions, which items were the most difficult for you to get?
- How did sanctions make you feel about your university education and your professional opportunities?
- How did Saddam respond to sanctions?
- During sanctions, did you want to study abroad or attend conferences? Were you prevented you from these opportunities?
- Please give your opinion on the impact sanctions had on Iraqi women.

Universities since the Allied Invasion (2003)

- What are your thoughts when seeing American or British troops on your campus?
- What is university life like now for female students?
- Please describe any damage done to your campus since the Allied Invasion.
- Please describe an average day in your life as a university instructor or student since March 2003.
- What role do Islamic and/or Islamist groups play on your campus today?

Seeking Insight and Solutions

- What do you want Americans to know about Iraqi women and Iraqi universities?
- What are some of the more frustrating aspects of your university and its policies and practices?
- Please make very direct suggestions on what improvements should be made to your universities and who should make them.
- If you could make recommendations to your professors on how they could improve their teaching methods, what would these suggestions be?
- What do you think about the Iraqi system for admitting students into the university? Do you think other factors, beside your baccalaureate exam score, should be considered by the Ministry of Higher Education? What would these other factors be?
- Many western universities have campus women's centers. These centers are for female students to have meetings, develop organizations and discuss issues such as rape, women's health and establishing equality with men. Many of these centers also offer a mentoring program where female faculty and graduate students mentor undergraduate women as well as undergraduate women serving as "big sisters" to high school girls. Women's centers often have a computer center and small library (focusing on diverse women's issues) also. Would a women's center be a good idea on your campus? Why or why not? Which of the

above services would you use and what additional services would you want the women's center to provide?

APPENDIX D
IRB DOCUMENTATION
CONSENT LETTER (CONFIDENTIAL PARTICIPANTS)

Dear Iraqi University Woman:

I am a PhD student in the Adult and Higher Education Program at The University of Oklahoma, under the advisement of Dr. Rosa Cintron. I invite you to participate in a research study being conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus and entitled Iraqi Women's Experiences of Higher Education, 1979 – 2005. This is a historical dissertation that examines the effects sanctions, war and autocracy had on female Iraqi university students. You have been selected as a potential participant because you attended the University of Basra, University of Baghdad or Technology University between 1979 and 2005.

Your participation will involve answering, via e-mail, a series of open-ended questions about your experiences as a university student. Questions will be emailed to you on a two week cycle over a period of three to four months. Each email should take no more than twenty minutes for your response. It is understood participants will reply the best of their ability, given the current situation in Iraq (this study also includes expatriate Iraqi women). Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time. The results of the research study may be published, but your name will not be used. Instead an alias (code) will replace your name. Your identity will not be associated with your responses in any published format. However, I cannot assure confidentiality of email responses. After the completion of the dissertation writing process, emails will be removed from my University of Oklahoma email account and also wiped from my computer's hard drive. I will keep printed copies of all emails indefinitely. However, these will be maintained in a locked file system in my home in which no other person has access.

The potential risk in this study includes emotional recollections of your collegiate experiences through the email writing process. The benefit of this study is to improve scholarly understanding of the impact wars, sanctions and insecurity have on university services and learning. The findings from this project will provide information on how sanctions, war and autocratic rule impact higher education with no cost to you other than the time it takes for the survey.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at etweathers@ou.edu or (405) 325-4202. Questions about your rights as a research participant or concerns about the project should be directed to the Institutional Review Board at The University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Thank you for your consideration!

Erin Taylor Weathers
Doctoral Student, Adult & Higher Education at the University of Oklahoma.



The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

IRB Number: 11064
Approval Date: January 11, 2006

January 11, 2006

Erin Weathers
Education
820 Van Fleet Oval, ECH 227
Norman, OK 73019

RE: Iraqi Women's Experiences of Higher Education: 1979-2005

Dear Ms. Weathers:

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above-referenced research study. This study meets the criteria for expedited approval category 7. It is my judgment as Chairperson of the IRB that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected; that the proposed research, including the process of obtaining informed consent, will be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46 as amended; and that the research involves no more than minimal risk to participants.

As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form. All study records, including copies of signed consent forms, must be retained for three (3) years after termination of the study.

The approval granted expires on January 10, 2007. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with an IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date. The IRB will request an IRB Application for Continuing Review from you approximately two months before the anniversary date of your current approval.

If you have questions about these procedures, or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

E. Laurette Taylor, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

660 Parrington Oval, Suite 316, Norman, Oklahoma 73019-3085 PHONE: (405) 325-8110 FAX: (405) 325-2373

Appendix E
Acronyms

ABSP	Arab Baath Socialist Party
CPA	Coalition of Provisional Authority
GFIW	General Federation of Iraqi Women
ISU	Iraqi Student Union
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commission for Human Rights
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

Appendix F
Expertise of Scholarly Sources

This dissertation contains approximately one hundred and fifty sources. In an effort to not disrupt the historical narrative's flow, academic expertise is rarely mentioned in the main text. Instead, I have grouped together academic authors below, according to their field of study. Many of these scholars have interdisciplinary expertise, as it relates to Iraq, but I have listed most only once. Journalists are not included in this appendix but are cited in References.

MOHE Personnel and Iraqi University Staff
M.H. Al-Ali and Jenan Al-Mukhtar
Mosa al-Mosawe
Beriwan Khailany
Mahdi Taleb

Iraqi and Other Middle Eastern Higher Education
Raji Abou-Chacra
Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy
Robert Fisk
Steve Niva
J. Thomas Owens, Tammy Boyd and Erin Taylor Weathers
Keith Watenpaugh, Eduoard Metenier, Jens Hanssen and Hala Fattah

Doctoral Candidates Writing about Iraq's Universities
Khalis Adham
Mustafa Al-Abideen
Yousif Hamame
Kadhim Hussain Bakir
Vanessa Pape Bouche (Master's Thesis)

Library Specialists
Andrew Albanese and Michael Rogers
Zain Al-Naqshbandi

Comparative Education Studies
Benigno Aguierre and Roberto Vichot
Joyce Boyle and Khlood Salman
Fiona Leach

Higher Education's Function and Purpose
Milton Greenberg
Peter Taylor and Jude Fransman

Financing Higher Education
Bruce Johnstone

Standardized Testing
Torin D. Togut

Iraqi and Other Middle Eastern Women
Haleh Afshar
Nadje Al-Ali
Sana Al-Khayyat
Deborah Cobbett
Miriam Cooke
Jan Goodwin
Doreen Ingrams
Jacqueline Ismael and Sheeren T. Ismael
Ghada Karmi
Saeid Neshat
Zainab Salbi
Omar Suha
Celine Whittleton

Women's Studies
Catharine Stimpson

Political and Historical Studies of Iraq
Samir al-Khalil
Ofra Bengio
Joseph Braude
Eric Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides
Stephen Zunes

US Foreign Policy in Contemporary Iraq
Isobel Coleman
Anne Helen Henderson

Terrorism
Jessica Stern

Mental and Physical Health Issues in Iraq
Riadh Abed
L. Amowitz, et.al.
Dahr Jamail

Historiography and the Historical Method
Keith Barton
Juan Cole
Mark Gilderhus
David Henige
Richard Marius and Melvin Page
John F. McCarthy
John Tosh

Qualitative Methodology
John Creswell
Paul Farmer
Karl Hostetler
Jo Anne Ollerenshaw
Virginia Olesen
Marsha Rossiter

Interviewing Techniques
Hala Fattah, Stephanie Platz and Gibson McGuire
Chris Mann and Fiona Stewart
Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin

Researcher's Perspective and Objectivity
Ruth Behar
Nina Brown
Edward T. Hall