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BAGHDAD ARCHITECTURE, 1920–1950

MINA MAREFAT, PH.D.

Book Review: Caecilia Pieri, *Bagdad Arts Deco: Architectures de Brique, 1920–1950,* L'Archange Minotaure, Paris, 2008.

In 1961, geographer Pierre Marthelot wrote of the "paradox" of Baghdad as a historically prestigious "city without a past." Caecilia Pieri's respectful engagement with twentieth-century Baghdad definitively challenges and puts to rest perceptions of Baghdad as a once-glorious, long-stagnant city. In *Bagdad Arts Deco*, she shines a light on the multilayered architecture of Baghdad from its days as a secondary provincial capital in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire through three decades of British occupation and influence on the map and buildings of the city, including, in the second part of the book, details of domestic architecture in brick.

Compared to other capitals in the region, modern Baghdad has suffered from a lack of photographic and cartographic documentation. With every regime change, street names reflected new political meanings; maps, reminders of past powers, were intentionally effaced, particularly during the decades of the Ba'th regime. Pieri's meticulous work retrieves the fractured record of twentieth-century Baghdad building, enabling architectural historians to compare it with other capitals during an important period when colonial architectural conventions met a variety of cultural contexts and paradigms of "modernization." Having documented architectural changes in Tehran for the same period, it is clear to me that such comparisons will shed new light on regional architectural developments that have been so far studied only in relation to Western counterparts and with limited theoretical perspectives.

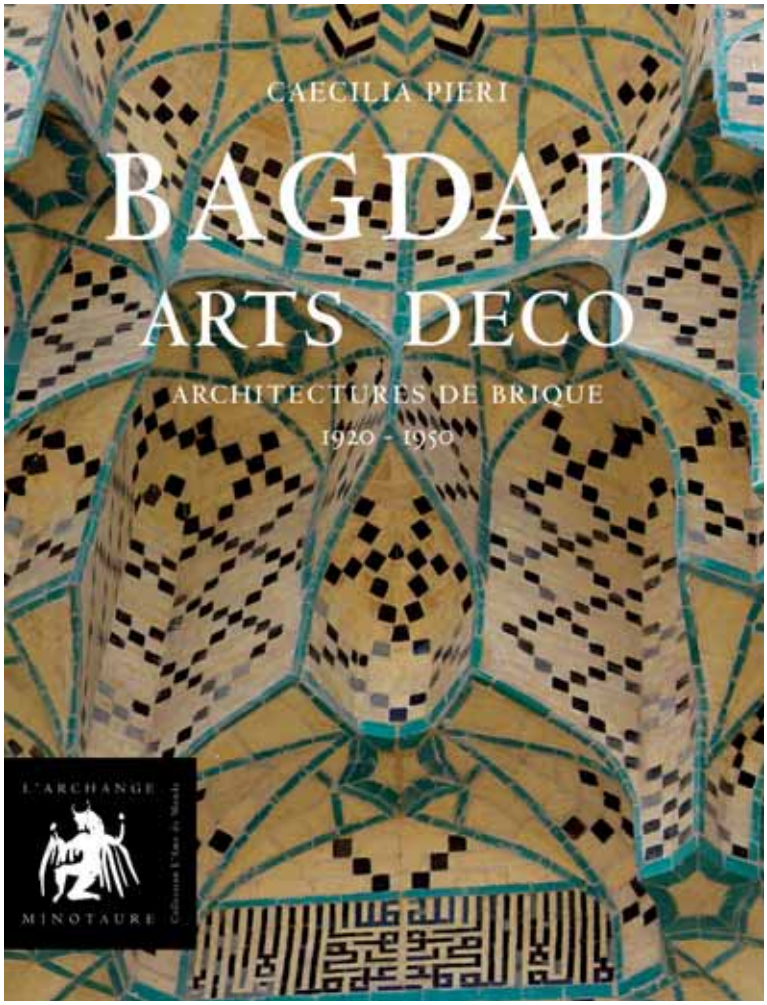

Figure 1.1. Cover of *Baghdad Arts Deco*.

Bagdad Arts Deco begins with three short articles by the writer Naim Kattan, the architect Rifat Chadirji and the architect and professor Ihsan Fethi, all of whose contributions to the history of Iraq are well known. Part One offers a strong visual survey of the city proper from 1920 to 1950; Part Two is a series of perspectives on houses, even into their rarely seen interiors. The result is an almost epigraphic history in brick of a surprisingly tactile, almost touchable city that speaks to specialists and non-specialists alike. During nine trips

Figure 1.2. "Conquering Bagdad." Front cover of a theater play by Frank Henry, 1914. Colonial iconography mixed real and imaginary artifacts: the Union Jack Flag, the soldier of the Indian Army dominating the city from a hill overlooking an absolutely flat landscape. The symbols of Baghdad — the Kadhimiya Shrine and the Old Bridge with *guffas* (antique round boats recorded by Herodotus) — have been artificially condensed within the same perimeter. (Pieri 2008: 36)

Figure 1.3. Map of the four historical cores of Baghdad: left, the west bank including Karkh and Kadhimiya; right, the east bank, including Adhamiya and Rusafa. The circle shows the supposed location of the "round city" founded by Al-Mansour in A.D. 762. (Atlas Ahmad Susa, 1957; Pieri 2008: 37)

Figure 1.4. Postcard (droits réservés) featuring equestrian statue of Faysal I, located in Karkh, west bank, at the crossing of Haifa Street and the street that continues to the bridge originally named King Faysal Bridge, today Al-Ahrar Bridge. (Pieri 2008: 49)

Figure 1.5. Baghdad, Abu Nuwas Street, east bank. Street facade of Art Gallery Dijla. The house, said to have been built in 1932, shows a typical hybridity of styles, techniques, and materials. (Pieri 2008: 85)

to Baghdad between 2003 and 2009, Pieri, a senior editor of France's Éditions du Patrimoine, creatively captured the physical imprint of the city through research that sometimes took her to unlikely places to find maps, postcards, and rare photographs in private collections. Her own beautiful photographs constitute primary documentation that sets a standard for other students and scholars in Iraq.

It is Pieri's interpretation of what she documents, however, that makes *Arts Deco* a captivating read. The story of colonialism imposed but subtly shaped and changed in local contexts is still being written. Pieri rejects the simplistic notion that colonialism, particularly the reigning Beaux Arts paradigms, imposed standards that killed architectural localism and creativity. Baghdad was not a blank field on which colonialism erected standardized monuments but, as she aptly puts it, a palimpsest, a layered urban space of materials, spatial relations, decorative styles, and craftsmanship displaying a long history of excellence in the use of native materials. Indeed, it is clear that handcrafted brickwork, reflecting knowledge of geometry and form passed down through generations of apprenticeship, is interesting and worthy of study in its own right. What the brick architecture of Baghdad reveals is not the imposition of imperial control under British rule, but the nuanced appropriation and formal manipulation that marked colonial architecture with the character of indigenous talent. It reveals freedom of expression in its most subtle forms. To recognize that, one must abandon the notion of a one-way relation of oppression and domination.

Certainly, monumental architecture in Baghdad and elsewhere has and will always function as billboard. Fortunately, the physical forms of the private house, so well represented here, testify to the impulse to reinterpret

Figure 1.6. Baghdad, Sinak, east bank. Continuity between the transitional houses of the late 1920s, of brick and wood, and the houses of the 1940s, brick coated with cement. (Pieri 2008: 72)

Figure 1.7. Baghdad, Waziriya, east bank. One of the first "Bauhaus"/"moderne international" houses, brick, late 1940s. (Pieri 2008: 99)

Figure 1.8. Sculpted detail in brick, Battaween, east bank. Most façades mix Art Deco stylization and revisited traditional forms, circa late 1920s. The gutters of cast-iron and wrought-iron balcony fence were imported from England. (Pieri 2008: 133)

and personalize even imposed forms. The transformation of the house in the twentieth century is indeed a story of combined social, technological, political, and psychological forces. With the inclusion of internal views of houses, Pieri has eloquently opened the door for additional research in this rich and minimally charted past. *Arts Deco* will be essential to any future effort to tell a more detailed story about Baghdad's built environment in and after the colonial period. As an architectural historian working on Baghdad in the following period, I found in it invaluable context for understanding what was happening in the capital city in the 1950s. Just as important, Pieri's photographs disclose the city that still exists, the qualities that can be built upon in the future, when remaking a war-torn Baghdad becomes possible.

If one were to quibble with anything, it would be the use of the term "Art Deco" to encapsulate complex forms, even if the addition of "s" to Art subtly distinguishes it from the period known as Art Deco in the West, so closely related to the early industrial tendencies that reshaped the Beaux Arts imagination of past forms. Using the phrase for Baghdad seems somewhat gratuitous — even if it is undeniably effective in piquing interest. The other problem for serious scholars is simplified references. The good news is that the author is preparing a scholarly edition of Baghdad's architectural history, with complete documentation. But these are small matters. As an original and engaging attempt to open the richness of Baghdad's twentieth century built past to those who have an interest in Baghdad's future, Caecilia Pieri's *Baghdad Arts Deco* is a complete success.

Figure 1.9. Baghdad, Sarrafiyah, east bank house, built in 1935. The covered central hall with circular mezzanine is a modernized version of the former hosh, an open-air central courtyard). (Pieri 2008: 102)

Mina Marefat is a Fulbright Research Scholar, Paris, spring 2009 and former TAARII fellow; she will be teaching at Georgetown University this Fall.

ANNOUNCEMENT

As part of the U.S. State Department sponsored Iraq Cultural Heritage Project (ICHP), in which TAARII is a partner, a National Institute for the Preservation of Iraqi Cultural Heritage is being established in Erbil, Iraq, by International Relief and Development (IRD). The Institute will be operated under the professional guidance of the Walters Art Museum, the Winterthur Museum and Country Estate, the University of Delaware Art Conservation Department, the U.S. National Park Service, and the Iraq State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH).

By the end of the two-year grant period, the Institute will be maintained and operated fully by SBAH. Training for professionals in archaeology, historic preservation, conservation, and collections management will be offered, with formal classes beginning in October 2009.

Experts in archaeology, historic preservation, conservation, and collections management who wish for further information may contact GansellAR@state.gov.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

STEPHANIE PLATZ

TAARII is pleased to announce the addition of a new researcher on its Iraqi Oral History Project, which is now beginning its third year of data collection with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Dr. Najwa Adra holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from Temple University and has extensive, interview-based research experience. She has conducted several field research projects in Yemen and has been a consultant to a number of organizations working there, including the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS), the Population Council USAID, UNICEF, the Ford Foundation, The World Bank, and UNESCO. She has published a number of articles on dance, literacy, poetry, and tribal identity in Yemen and is currently working on a manuscript entitled, "Dance and Paradox: An Ethnography of Dancing in a Yemeni Highland Community." Dr. Adra joins our team of interviewers in our first phase of the three-phase project, and will focus on interviewing Iraqis living in Western Europe and North America.

In this issue, we also highlight TAARII's ongoing commitment to teaching at member universities and outreach beyond the field of Iraq studies, to broader campus communities and their local environments. Eric Davis, TAARII Institutional Representative at Rutgers University, reports on a non-traditional course he offered political science students on his campus, with the assistance of students Andrew Spath, Brian Humphries, and Maroun Soueid. The course, "Iraq: Political Development, Sectarian Identities, and Democracy," featured a student simulation of an Iraqi parliamentary session, which required that students put their new understanding of Iraq's political culture and party agendas into action. In future issues, we would like to offer additional accounts of experiences "teaching" Iraq. We welcome contributions addressing courses taught, as well as syllabi from courses taught on Iraq in any discipline, which we hope to make available on our website.

Popular media images dominate perceptions of Iraq among students on university campuses and within the U.S. more generally. Meetings bringing experts to wider communities introduce the complexities of Iraq's social and political experience to a broader range of Americans, who in turn, can better participate in discussion around U.S. foreign policy. TAARII is committed to bringing the knowledge and views of its fellows and members to campus and public communities and seeks opportunities to support similar outreach efforts. Reports from TAARII Institutional Representatives Daniel Varisco of Hofstra University and Peter Wien of the University of Maryland detail conferences held on two member campuses with TAARII support in 2009. Both conferences featured speakers on modern Iraq and each conference considered the ways that the Iraqi historical past shapes its present and future.

Finally, as we aim to do in each newsletter, we bring to your attention in this issue notable work carried out within the TAARII community and in the multidisciplinary field of Iraq studies. Former two-time TAARII Fellow, Mina Marefat, reviews TAARII Member Caecilia Pieri's new book, *Baghdad Arts Deco*, which depicts both public and private architecture in post-colonial Baghdad between 1920 and 1950, to offer an uncommon glimpse of modernity in Iraqi state and society. On a more contemporary theme, Joseph Sassoon details the ways in which successive waves of "brain drain" from Iraq during recent decades — and peaking after the 2003 U.S. invasion — have significantly diminished human capital resources within Iraq and thus hobbled its capacity to renew its economic, political, and social infrastructures. Together, these contributions broadly sketch the experience of Iraq's cultural elite from the early twentieth through the early twenty-first centuries, leaving us to hope that we will witness a new cultural effervescence, akin to the freedom of expression Pieri depicts in post-colonial Baghdad, in which dialogue between native and international styles revitalizes the intellectual and cultural spheres. What can be done to improve the climate for scholars and to support those currently braving adversity in Iraq is a question central to TAARII's mission.

In our next issue, we look forward to announcing one or more prizes for Outstanding U.S. Dissertations on Iraq, to offering reviews of recent academic publications on Iraq, and to sharing news of collaborations between American and Iraqi archaeologists, as well as other current research initiatives. In the meantime, we welcome feedback and contributions from our readers, to assist us in maintaining the TAARII Newsletter as a vital forum for international, scholarly exchange related to Iraq.

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The annual deadline for submission of applications to the *U.S. Fellows Program* is November 15, 2009, for projects beginning as early as March 2010. The annual deadline for the *Iraq Fellows Program* is December 15, 2009. Applications from U.S.-Iraqi collaborative teams are welcome on a ROLLING basis. Teams of individual U.S. and Iraqi scholars wishing to collaborate may request up to $14,000. For additional information, please visit the TAARII website: www.taarii.org. To submit a collaborative proposal, contact info@taarii.org.

THE MAKING OF MODERN IRAQ

A TAARII-sponsored Workshop at Hofstra University

DANIEL MARTIN VARISCO, HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

As the Iraq War drags on, public attention to events in Iraq seems to be fading. The embedded journalists have published their accounts and moved on to other hot spots. The shift in attention to Afghanistan and the Taliban insurgency in Pakistan have almost knocked Iraq off the front page. Now, more than ever, it is important to focus on the history that shaped the current ongoing crisis. On April 27, 2009, the Middle Eastern and Central Asian (MECA) Studies Program at Hofstra University hosted a one-day-long "Iraq Study Day" with financial support from TAARII. Although general information is widely available in the media, students and faculty need to understand the historical context for the making of modern Iraq in the twentieth century. Five scholars with research expertise on Iraq were invited to campus for a series of three workshops and a public forum for the wider community. The forum, entitled "Iraq: How the Past Shapes the Future," was part of "Define '09" a series of lectures and events sponsored by Hofstra to examine the start of the Obama presidency. This was the pedagogical follow-up to "Educate '08" culminating in Hofstra's hosting of the third presidential debate in October 2008.

Figure 2.1. Eric Davis (left) and Bassam Yousif (right). Courtesy of Hofstra University

Three workshops were organized for discussion between the invited scholars, Hofstra faculty, and students. The day began with a workshop on the theme "Is Iraq an Artificial Nation?" Dr. Reeva Simon, a historian from Yeshiva University, presented a paper on "The Creation of Modern Iraq: The Basic Background." "It has become a truism in writing the history of modern Iraq to say that Iraq was a country created by the British from the former Ottoman provinces of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. But what does this statement really mean? What was 'Iraq' and how did the British create it?" asked Simon. She laid out the geographical designation of Iraq, noting that this area has always been a frontier zone between empires. During the Ottoman period, Iraq was divided into three main provinces, based on the major cities of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra, but with control largely left to local families, shaykhs, and ex-Ottoman military. During this time, Iraq became a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual zone. "Within the imperial context, Mosul looked to Anatolia; Baghdadi Arabs became more culturally and politically connected with Damascus and Beirut; and Basra was linked to the Persian Gulf," observed Simon. During World War I, the defining event in the formation of a modern Iraqi state, this area found itself at the intersection of declining empires. Competing interests between the Great Powers after the war led to confusion about the future of Iraq, even after Britain was awarded the territory at the San Remo Conference in April 1920.

Following this opening presentation, Dr. Magnus Bernhardsson, professor of history at Williams College and author of *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq* (University of Texas Press, 2005), addressed the issue of "What Is Iraq? How Has Iraqi National Identity Developed from 1921 Onwards, and What Have Been Some of the Key Ingredients in Iraqi Nationalism?" His talk focused on the development of Iraqi nationalism, in particular the challenge of researching and writing about that topic during wartime. In the public sphere, the question is often framed in terms of the "artificiality" of the Iraqi nation and proposals to split the country. Iraqi nationalism, like nationalisms in other countries, is ultimately constructed and is therefore not natural and, as such, artificial. But this does not mean, historically, that Iraqis have not developed a sense of belonging to an Iraqi nation. The talk addressed the multiple ways in which Iraqi nationalism has been closely tied to the political process. Overwhelmingly, this topic has been studied as a top-down phenomenon and therefore state-centric. In recent years, however,

there have been concrete steps taken to move beyond the state, especially by focusing on the sufferings and traumatic experiences of Iraqis for the last thirty years and what that has meant in forging the Iraqi nation.

The second workshop was devoted to the issue of "Oil: Curse or Blessing?" and led by Dr. Bassam Yousif, professor of economics at Indiana State University and author of *Development and Political Violence in Iraq* (Taylor and Francis, 2006). The presentation traced economic and political developments in the period from 1990 to 2003. It showed that the effects of economic sanctions were both calamitous and enduring: They prevented rebuilding, intensified competition over resources, and induced the emigration of skilled and professional personnel. Consequently, the ability of the economy to carry out investment was depleted and sectarian divisions were aggravated in the period. These conditions in part explain why U.S.-inspired economic liberalization and rebuilding after 2003 have been largely unsuccessful.

Figure 2.2. Daniel Martin Varisco. Courtesy of Hofstra University

The final workshop of the day dealt with the issue of "War and Violence through 2009." Nida al-Ahmad, who had recently defended her dissertation in political science at the New School for Social Research, spoke on "State Power in Ba'thist Iraq." Dr. al-Ahmad divided her presentation into three parts. First, she examined the politics of intervention in Iraq, suggesting that the U.S. project of state building assumed the formal "state" was separate from society and the economy. This led to the dismantling of the Ba'th Party, the Iraqi military, and Iraqi security; all of these actions had profound social and economic implications. Secondly, she noted that the Iraqi state remained intact in the 1990s despite major international sanctions. Yet, the Iraqi state collapsed immediately and the coalition forces were unable to build a stable state structure after the invasion. Finally, she pointed to the need for further on-the-ground study and archival research to re-examine the nature of state power in Ba'thist Iraq apart from the rigid state-centric approach that led to the war.

Figure 2.3. Left to right: Eric Davis, Reeva Simon, Bassam Yousif, Nida al-Ahmad and Magnus Berhardsson. Courtesy of Hofstra University

The final workshop presentation was by Dr. Eric Davis, professor of political science at Rutgers University and author of *Memories of State: Politics, History and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (University of California Press, 2005). Dr. Davis began his PowerPoint talk by noting that much is at stake in Iraq. Of particular importance is whether Iraq will be able to establish a stable, tolerant and participatory democracy that will not only serve the needs of its citizens, but also be a model for neighboring states. In studying the process of a democratic transition in Iraq, Western scholars have not paid adequate attention to what Davis calls "local knowledge," namely, how Iraqis themselves think about democracy. Rather than the model of technocratic governance in which the state provides little in the way of social services, a model that the Bush administration tried to impose on Iraq, Iraqis have always associated democracy with social justice. He gave numerous examples of how large segments of Iraqi society have been working to rebuild civil society and, through slow and tedious efforts, attempting to establish the basis for a stable democracy. A large and vigorous press, elections, the formation of democratically oriented political organizations, the anti-sectarian media, blogs, women's organizations, curricular innovations that promote peace studies, conflict resolution, national reconciliation at the secondary school and higher education systems, business initiatives that promote cross-

ethnic cooperation, artistic expression (such as murals on blast walls whose themes are peace and reconciliation), and even sports activities that foster cross-ethnic interactions are just some of the many ways in which Iraqis are working to confront the negative legacy of thirty-five years of Ba'thist rule. Iraq's democrats deserve more than the dismissive attitude they have received in scholarly, policy-making, and journalistic circles, especially in the United States.

Hofstra faculty participating in the workshops included Dr. Daniel Varisco, MECA director and chair of Anthropology, Dr. Stefanie Nanes from Political Science, Dr. Mario Ruiz and Dr. Simon Doubleday from History, Dr. Aleksandr Naymark from Art History and Professor Hussein Rashid from Religious Studies.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DISPLACEMENT OF IRAQ'S POPULATION AFTER THE 2003 INVASION

JOSEPH SASSOON, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

In examining the media and the debate surrounding Iraq, one is struck by the fact that the issue of Iraqi refugees is rarely mentioned. Even when it is, the brain drain is barely discussed although it is one of the important implications of this external displacement. This paper assesses the wide ramifications of the exodus of the best minds from Iraq following the internecine civil war that raged in Iraq, particularly during the period of 2005–07.

The first fact to point out is that the brain drain after the invasion was not the first time that Iraq witnessed such a phenomenon. Before and after the 1968 coup d'état, which brought Saddam Husayn and the Ba'th party to power, there were waves of brain drain. But after the 1991 Gulf War, which had come so soon after the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq War, a significant number of Iraqis left as they realized that with two wars, almost back-to-back, and sanctions, the opportunities for professional careers would dwindle dramatically. The fabric of Iraq's society seriously began to unravel during the 1990s, aggravated by hyperinflation and the collapse of the Iraqi dinar. By the time of the 2003 invasion, estimates of Iraqi exiles ranged from 2 to 4 million people. Whatever the figures are, there is no doubt that Iraq under Saddam Husayn had suffered an enormous brain drain with many intellectual and professional elites settling in Arab countries and the West.

Following the invasion and the collapse of the state, and given Iraq's dire economic situation (as a result of wars and thirteen years of sanctions), chaos prevailed. As violence spread in Iraq and ethnic cleansing began in earnest following the Samarra bombing of February 2006, internal and external displacement in Iraq intensified. It is estimated that 2.7 million have been internally displaced and at least 1.5 million became refugees outside their country.[1]

There are many major differences between the exodus of skilled professionals after the invasion of 2003, and the previous waves of brain drain. First and foremost, this was the first time that the state had collapsed and its civil service was shattered. Second, while Iraq witnessed numerous periods of economic hardship (particularly dur-

ing the sanctions), the dysfunctionality of the government exacerbated the situation significantly. Apart from insecurity and violence, a combination of other factors led to the massive brain drain: low levels of services (electricity, water, sewage, etc.), high levels of unemployment and inflation, and pervasive corruption.[2] Third, the violence that the country had witnessed bore no resemblance to previous periods. As the country plunged into a state of uncontrollable violence, the dividing line between insurgency and mafia-style gangs became blurred. Some kidnappings, for example, were connected to the sectarian strife, but others were carried out purely for ransom. The gangs believed professionals were an excellent target due to their position in society and their theoretical earning power. In January 2004, there were about two kidnappings per day in Baghdad, but by mid-2006, there were thirty daily kidnappings in the capital.[3] Iraq became the "killing fields" for academics.

Data about academics and professionals who were assassinated are relatively accurate. The BRussels tribunal compiled a list of 350 names of professionals (the vast majority being Ph.D. holders) who were murdered.[4] The Iraqi Lawyers Association published a list of 210 lawyers and judges killed since the invasion and said that the number of lawyers in Iraq has decreased by 40 percent during that time.[5] Thus, hundreds of Iraq's finest minds were left with no option but to flee the engulfing flames of sectarian hatred and violence that dominated every aspect of life and threatened them and their families. It should be pointed out that another reason for the exodus of the skilled professionals is the encroachment of religion and the militias over the day-to-day academic life, which makes it impossible to write or freely express secular or opposing views.

Although there are no accurate statistics on the number of Iraqi academics and doctors who fled the country, it is clear, however, that Iraq lost a large percentage of its academics and medical specialists (some say 70 percent) and probably 25–35 percent of its overall medical staff. These are massive numbers considering that the majority of this exodus occurred over just eighteen months.

The implications for Iraq of this brain drain are extensive and far-reaching. However, there are three significant areas where it has been felt particularly deeply: the economy, health, and education. The emigration of professionals has constrained the ability of the civil service to execute and plan the policies needed for the revival of the Iraqi economy. The management of Iraq's economy was dented, as pointed out in a report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), which concluded, "The central ministries had spent only 4.4 percent of their investment budget, as of August 2007."[6] The GAO attributed this, inter alia, to the fact that refugee outflows and de-Ba'thification had reduced the number of skilled workers.

With its loss of human capital, Iraq lost its middle class. Two economists who researched the middle class reached the conclusion that the middle class is the driver of democratization and has a crucial role in consolidating democracy.[7] Following the invasion and the violence, the weakness of Iraq's middle class meant that its private sector also faltered. Hampered by a decimated infrastructure, a lack of foreign investors and a flood of imports that undercut local businesses, the private sector failed to flourish. The U.S. efforts to develop the sector did not materialize and the Iraqi government "has been sustaining the economy by the way it always has: by putting citizens on its payroll."[8]

The impact of the brain drain on the health sector was severe. Doctors and medical workers were specifically targeted. Unlike Saddam Husayn's era, when doctors left Iraq because they were individual victims of the regime, in the Iraq of post-2003, doctors became a target as a group.

Whatever the exact number is of those who left, there are two definite observations. First, Iraq lost thousands of its physicians and with them the country lost a wealth of experience. Second, Iraq's health system has crumbled and the health conditions (physical and mental) of Iraqis have deteriorated dramatically in the six-year period following the invasion. The consequences of this brain drain for all patients in Iraq were severe. Two Iraqi doctors from Diwaniya and Kufa colleges of medicine wrote in the *British Medical Journal*:

> Medical staff working in emergency departments admit that more than half of those killed could have been saved if trained and experienced staff were available. Our experience has taught us that poor emergency medicine services are more disastrous than the disaster itself.[9]

As for the impact on education, it should be noted that the quality of higher education and research in Iraq has been steadily deteriorating since the second half of the 1980s as a result of the wars and the fact that the research community suffered total isolation from the international academic community due to the sanctions. In the immediate aftermath of the 2003 invasion, universities were among the first institutions to face looting. Two years after the end of Saddam Husayn's regime, a report by the United Nations University stated that 84 percent of Iraq's higher education institutions had been burnt, looted, or destroyed. According to the report, the infrastructure that survived mostly had unreliable water or electricity supplies, was badly equipped, and lacked computer facilities. Overall, the teaching staff was underqualified; 33 percent held only bachelor's degrees

despite rules requiring a minimum of a master's degree, 30 percent held masters degrees, and only 28 percent of the teaching staff had doctorates.[10]

At the same time, an atmosphere of terror and violence began dominating the campuses and the day-to-day lives of all academics. Like the doctors, lecturers and university staff were being targeted. Scores of Iraq's best minds were exiting the country, running away not just from the violence but also from the creeping control of the religious parties, through their militias, over the lives of the universities. As a result, many academics fled to northern Iraq, and Kurdistan is providing a haven for them.

Can Iraq's brain drain be reversed, how does it compare with the experiences of other countries, and what are the long-term implications for the country? The brain drain in Iraq, as was mentioned, is not a new phenomenon for the country. But this wave took place over a short period of time (2006–07) and, unlike in other countries, Iraq is not being compensated for the loss of its human capital by the exiles' remittances. This is a critical point when one looks, for example, at the brain drain in Lebanon, Egypt, or India. Remittances are, in many countries, an important source of foreign exchange for the country and income to their families at home.[11] Very few Iraqis are working abroad and earning enough to remit back a portion of their income. On the contrary, there is reverse remittance whereby refugees are reliant on their own savings in Iraq or remittances from their families to support them given the lack of employment opportunities in the host countries.

If violence comes to a halt or ebbs, would these professionals return to their country? It is doubtful that many of those who managed to get to the West (top specialists and members of the different minorities) will return to Iraq. Research done worldwide indicates clearly that only a relatively small percentage of educated skilled professionals return to their home countries assuming political and economic conditions improve. Also, the longer these professionals stay abroad, the less likely they are to return to their home countries.[12] One could safely assume that most of the minorities who found their way to Sweden and Europe will not return to Iraq in the near future, if ever. In the Arab countries, the case is somewhat different; most of the academics and doctors have not been able to find suitable jobs in their host countries (a situation defined by economists as brain waste),[13] and this is particularly true in Syria and Jordan. As many of those professionals have not managed to get jobs that meet their qualifications, a large number feel frustrated with their professional life. But even for them, some basic conditions have to be met before large numbers head home. Apart from a reduction or cessation of violence, ethnicity and sectarianism have to recede significantly from daily life. Those in exile will consider employment opportunities but would need to be confident that jobs and opportunities would be given on merit rather than according to affiliation to the right party and clan. Other considerations would be access to essential services (water, electricity, etc.) and quality of education for their children. Another critical factor is property rights and the ability to return home. As in the post-Balkan conflict, property disputes are a key issue and can be politically explosive. Needless to say, this assumes that the refugees will return due to "pull" factors in Iraq rather than "push" factors in their refugee countries.

One final aspect in considering the brain drain is to examine the reactions of the Iraqi government to this crisis. A tragic but critical point from the end of the 2003 war is that the Iraqi authorities are reluctant to recognize and admit that there is indeed a humanitarian crisis, and do so only under pressure from international organizations and media.[14] Overall, the Iraqi government has failed to take political, economic, and social factors into consideration and examine the country's capacity to absorb large number of returnees. "Instead, it has made the return of displaced Iraqis a component, as opposed to a consequence, of its security strategy."[15]

Six years after the invasion of 2003, Iraq continues to rely on its oil for more than 95 percent of its revenues and no real development of new industries has taken place. The deterioration in the agricultural sector has continued and farmers lack suitable irrigation, proper seeds, and modern equipment; farm labor has shrunk due to immigration to cities, and high soil salinity has stifled productivity. If the government does not spend the resources to develop agriculture, industry, and other sectors, it will not be able to spur employment. This will mean fewer "pull" factors to attract back the professional and skilled emigrants who fled their country. This is even more true in 2009, given that oil prices have plummeted to $50, and the Iraqi government will face tough times balancing its budget and creating employment opportunities.

Long term, the brain drain issue must be addressed since Iraq's oil wealth and the U.S.'s investments will not be able to compensate for the human capital loss. Apart from paying lip service, the government must launch the right projects to attract back Iraqi talent from abroad. In mid-2009, the systems are not in place to handle a large number of returnees and the country's infrastructure is far from ready. Violence must be diminished and professionals living in exile must feel they could return to work in a safe environment without undue pressure from militia groups and religious fanaticism. Property rights have to be resolved and infrastructure has to improve dramatically. Overseas governments and international organizations must be involved and can play an important role, as "Iraqis need training of civil servants, scholarships, and

agreements with foreign universities."[16] While the U.S. cannot shrug off its moral responsibility towards the crisis, the ultimate responsibility for the refugees must lie with the Iraqi government.

[1] For a detailed analysis of the refugees' situation after the 2003 invasion, see Joseph Sassoon, *The Iraqi Refugees: The New Crisis in the Middle East* (London: IB Tauris, 2009).

[2] Ali Merza, "Iraq: Reconstruction under Uncertainty," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 1.2 (2007): 173.

[3] Ashraf Al-Khalidi, Sophia Hoffman, and Victor Tanner, "Iraqi Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic: A Field-Based Snapshot," The Brookings Institute-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, June 7, 2007.

[4] www.brusselstribunal.org/academicslist.htm (accessed April 15, 2008). See also Ismail Jalili, "Iraqi Academics and Doctors: Innocent Victims of a Wider Geological Struggle," *TAARII Newsletter* 1.2 (2006): 8–11.

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SIMULATING THE IRAQI PARLIAMENT: BENEFITS OF A NON-TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO TEACHING IRAQI POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

ERIC DAVIS, ANDREW SPATH, BRIAN HUMPHREYS, AND MAROUN SOUEID

During the Spring 2009 Semester, Eric Davis offered an advanced undergraduate course at Rutgers University, "Iraq: Political Development, Sectarian Identities, and Democracy," with the assistance of Andrew Spath, Brian Humphreys, and Maroun Soueid. Teaching the comparative politics of a foreign country is difficult enough since many American college students often have had limited contact with cultures other than their own. Teaching Iraqi politics constitutes an especially daunting task. Not only is Iraq a complex political system, and one that is very different from the American political system, but one that has experienced significant change since Saddam Husayn's Ba'thist regime collapsed in April 2003. A central question that needed to be addressed in the course is the following: What pedagogies would best promote student understanding of Iraqi politics? As we discovered, a classroom simulation proved to be one of the most effective tools to enhance what students learned from more traditional resources and pedagogical strategies.

A prerequisite for students to participate in the simulation was a necessary grounding in the appropriate conceptual frameworks, and historical and factual basis of Iraqi politics. To address students' conceptual and empirical lacunae, the course employed multiple resources. Readings were chosen that offered students different perspectives on Iraqi society and

politics. Charles Tripp's *A History of Iraq* was useful due to its emphasis on political history and elites. Eric Davis' *Memories of State: Politics, History and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* and Faleh Jaber's writings on Iraqi tribes and tribal politics gave students a somewhat different focus by examining the social bases of politics. Jo Tatchell's *The Poet of Baghdad* was chosen because it offered students a "micro-analytic" approach to Iraqi politics by tracing the daily life of an Iraqi family, and the important opposition poet it produced, over a period of almost sixty years. These course readings were intended to offer students a variety of perspectives by employing readings that emphasized different analytic levels and vantage points on Iraqi politics and society.

Course readings were supplemented with an extensive variety of films and video clips. These included the film, "Forget Baghdad," in which four Iraqi Jews who were forced to leave Iraq in the early 1950s recounted their experiences as younger men in Iraq and their continued attachment to and yearning for contact with that past. Another film was "Saddam's Latest War," a 1993 film from the Public Broadcasting System's well-known "Frontline" series. This film, which was produced in Iraq's southern marshlands (*al-ahwar*) and other parts of Iraq by Yale art historian Michael Woods, documents in a very disturbing manner Saddam's draining and destruction of the marsh region after the 1991 Intifada when rebels retreated into this area. We also viewed "Iraq in Its Fragments," especially the sections on the Mahdi Army's activities in southern Iraq, and the section on the problems faced by Kurdish farmers and their families in the rural areas of northern Iraq.

One of the most popular films was the HBO television production, "Baghdad High." This film documents the lives of four Iraqi males as they prepare for their final comprehensive examinations during their final year of secondary school. What struck students most was the similarity of interests and the fact that the Iraqi youth were from different ethnic backgrounds, long-term friends, but demonstrated no sectarianism.

To offset the pessimistic tone of the films and take account of some of the positive developments that have occurred in Iraq since 2003, we incorporated YouTube video clips (several in Arabic) that were produced by Iraqi youth, as well as those produced by U.S. television channels such as MSNBC. What was interesting to students was how attracted Iraqi youth were to Western music and popular culture, and to Western sports. Among these visuals was an anti-sectarian music video by Iraq's most famous "rock star," Kazim al-Sahir, called "Please Love Me!" (*Ahbini!*). Many of the video clips that highlighted Iraqi youth had a very positive quality because youth often expressed great hope for the future now that Iraq had shed authoritarian rule and violence had receded. The films and videos allowed students to connect text with visual imagery, thereby facilitating a more effective contextualization of the course readings.

Because students obviously required significant historical and political background before they could participate in the Iraqi Parliament simulation, it was scheduled during the last month of the class. To structure the simulation and make it manageable, we organized it around the two of the most central and sensitive issues that Iraq has faced since 2003: security and oil. We divided the eighteen members of the class into nine of Iraq's most prominent political parties, including the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council (ISCI), the Da'wa Party, the Iraqi National Accord, the Tawafuq Front, the Iraqi Islamic Party, the Fadila Party, the Sadrist Trend, the Kurdish Democratic Party, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Each party was tasked with developing a position paper that outlined its suggested solution to the security problem and the extraction and distribution of Iraq's extensive oil wealth (hydrocarbon law). In the position paper, students were required to detail the party's objectives in the simulation, and the strategy they would use to entice other political parties to support these objectives. In effect, the position paper required each party to articulate its "private" as well as "public" persona. The position paper was also designed to have students learn the requisite ideological and behavioral parameters of their respective political party. In this sense, the position paper was designed to enhance the realism of the simulation.

Once students submitted their party's position paper two weeks prior to the simulation, they were required to engage in a lengthy period of "negotiations" with parties with which they shared an ideological perspective and hence might be able conclude agreements prior to the simulation. Students were required to maintain a daily log that discussed the logic and results of these interactions. Half of two class sessions during the month prior to the simulation were devoted to researching the latest developments in Iraqi politics in the Department of Political Science computer lab. Here Davis and the course assistants were able to help students find many additional resources that facilitated their preparation for the simulation.

The simulation itself took an entire class period of three hours (the course met once per week). During the first forty-five minutes of the class, each party was required to make an opening statement outlining its policy regarding passage of a new security and oil law. Following these rhetorical interventions, the parties broke for an hour and a half to engage in negotiations with other parties as they attempted to assemble the necessary votes, through coalitional strategies, to be able to pass a security

and an oil law that accorded with their party's policy objectives. Davis and course assistants expedited meetings among parties in other class rooms. At the end of the hour and a half period, students reassembled to conduct a vote on the security and oil issues. Following the vote, the remainder of class time was used for debriefing as each party contributed its conclusions about the functioning and results of the simulation.

As for the results, students representing the more nationalist parties in the Iraqi Parliament were able to create the necessary coalition to pass both a security law and an oil law. The laws that were passed accommodated the views of a large number of political parties whose goals could be considered, grosso modo, nationalist, rather than regional or sectarian in orientation. While this vote may not accurately reflect the current trends and dynamics of the Iraqi Parliament, it should be noted that the Parliament did pass an oil law in May 2009 and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) has begun exporting oil from the Kurdish region for the first time in the country's history. Violence continues to occur in Iraq. However, in many areas of the country, security is the best it has been since the spring of 2003, indicating that important progress has occurred. In this sense, the outcome of the simulation was not that far from the reality of contemporary Iraqi politics.

What was most striking about the simulation was how much the students learned in this exercise. It is no exaggeration to say that students learned as much if not more about Iraqi politics through preparing for and engaging in the simulation as they did from the readings, films, and video clips that they had studied earlier in the course. Why was this the case?

In his study, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the late Brazilian educator and anthropologist, Paulo Freire, distinguishes between the banking theory of education and the problem posing approach to education. By "banking theory," he means, of course, the time worn and highly ineffective educational process of having students memorize "facts." For Freire, this type of activity does not constitute meaningful learning but rather promotes submissiveness to authority. True learning must be based on developing critical thinking skills. The problem posing approach constitutes real education in Freire's view because here the learner is required to apply the concepts and knowledge that s/he has learned to solve a particular problem.

Students learned the validity of Freire's theory through participating in an exercise that required them to both apply what they had learned and solve problems. The diligence and excitement with which students approached this process underscored Freire's arguments. Once students moved from an abstract and passive learning process (even if they found the blogs, books, and articles that they read and films and video clips very interesting), and began to apply what they learned, Iraqi politics came alive in a way in which it had not up to that point in the course. The competition that emerged during the two week period of "negotiations" prior to the simulation, and during the simulation itself, provided an incentive for students to obtain more detailed information that would give them a competitive edge in trying to achieve their goals.

Combining readings, visual imagery in the form of films and video clips with a capstone simulation proved to be a very effective pedagogy. Student evaluations of the course were very positive and reflected especially well on the simulation. Many indicated that the complexities of Iraqi politics became much clearer as they were forced to situate their party within a much larger political context. It was very satisfying to see the extent to which the simulation worked to integrate other pedagogical elements by helping to clarify the intricacies of Iraqi politics.

The simulation demonstrated how complex the problems that Iraq faces are in a way that readings could not. The learning process transcended Iraqi politics because students could see that trying to negotiate solutions to political problems on a national level is a difficult and complex process. The simulation forced students to view the Iraqi political process from different angles. It also helped them better understand how political institutions function and the benefits of democratic and participatory politics.

Organizing a simulation can be difficult, especially in a large class, because all students require significant amounts of attention during the process of running it. If our simulation is an indicator, then the rewards can be great. In an era in which it is essential to attract young people to develop greater interest in international affairs, both in the United States and in other countries, course simulations seem certainly to be one of the most effective ways to create such interest.

Eric Davis is professor of political science; Andrew Spath and Brian Humphreys are Ph.D. candidates; and Maroun Soueid is an undergraduate senior; all at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. For further information about the Iraqi Parliament simulation and a copy of the course syllabus, contact Eric Davis at davis@polisci.rutgers.edu.

LANGUAGE ANNOUNCEMENT

As readers may be aware, TAARII is committed to producing a bilingual newsletter in English and in Arabic. We regret that we are now printing our newsletter in English only. We are seeking funds to resume printing a bilingual newsletter and to include full Arabic translations of English-language newsletters on our website. We appreciate your patience and understanding in the meantime.

WORKSHOP ON "MEMORIES OF IRAQ"

PETER WIEN, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

As in many nations of the world, different Iraqi groups have constructed their image of the national community on the basis of visions of the past. When the U.S.-led invasion of 2003 did away with the tight embrace of a dictator claiming hegemony over the definition of the nation's nature, the gates were open for an often chaotic re-negotiation of state narratives. Yet, the resilience of a distinct Iraqi narrative has been remarkable and different from Western politicians' and journalists' doomsday scenarios of a break-up of Iraq into its different constituencies.

On May 1 and 2, a group of internationally recognized Iraq and Middle East specialists — many of them former or current recipients of TAARII fellowships — came together at the Department of History of the University of Maryland for a workshop on "Memories of Iraq" to talk about these Iraqi narratives. Peter Wien convened this workshop for the Middle East Studies Initiative at the University of Maryland, with the support of TAARII, to discuss different visions of Iraqi identity, based on shared and divergent narratives about the evolution and nature of the nation. Nadje Al-Ali, Orit Bashkin, Magnus Bernhardsson, Hamit Bozarslan, Géraldine Chatelard, Eric Davis, Dina Khoury, Peter Sluglett, and Elizabeth Thompson presented and debated multiple ways Iraq has been conceptualized, imagined, and sentimentalized. The workshop was part of an ongoing conversation about the legacy of 90 years of modern statehood, which started with TAARII's founding conference in Amman in January 2005 and continued at the workshop "Rethinking the 1958 Revolution" last November at Williams College.

Khoury of George Washington University in Washington, D.C., opened the event in the evening of May 1 with a keynote speech. Khoury, who had just returned from field research in the Middle East, talked about her recent book project on *War and Remembrance in Iraq*, and her experiences doing oral history interviews with veterans of Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s, who are now living in exile in Syria and Jordan. Khoury gave insights into the theoretical and practical difficulties of analyzing remembrances that are shaped by the experience of exile and continuing conflict. A central question of her talk was why "memory talk has become such part and parcel of the politics of identity that is wreaking havoc in Iraqi political culture and society." During the 1990s, Iraqi intellectuals and writers set individual memory as a form of resistance against the hegemonic state narrative of the regime in order to de-legitimize it. Memory talk has thus become an important means for the formation of notions of individual citizenship but it is at the same time distracting from more fundamental issues such as social justice. Khoury cautioned against overstating the division between personal remembrance and institutionalized memory. So far, no one has made an attempt to re-write and re-place the official version of the Iraqi war literature that was produced by order of the regime during the war of the 1980s. As a matter of fact, this official version continues to shape the individual stories of Khoury's interviewees — many of them former dissidents.

The actual workshop started the following morning with an opening address by Sluglett of the University of Utah, the doyen of historians of modern Iraq. Sluglett gave an overview of the development of historiography about Iraq, highlighting the evolution from the political, state-centered history of the 1960s and 70s towards approaches of a younger generation that are informed by the social sciences. This overview provided the background for a discussion about the role of historians in a responsible interaction with the Iraqi past that loomed large for the rest of the day. The presentations were spread over two panels on "Memories of State, Memories of the Community," and "Neglected Spaces and Iraqi Memories Abroad." In the first session, Bernhardsson of Williams College, Davis of Rutgers University, and Bozarslan of the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris presented different perspectives on the meaning of public or social memory for national narratives in Iraq. Bernhardsson emphasized the difficulty of doing research about history and memory during an ongoing violent conflict, especially when public attention in the U.S. is shifting so rapidly from Iraq at center stage to "war fatigue," as has happened in the course of the past two years. Bernhardsson therefore questioned whether there would ever be an iconic image representing the memory of this war, like Robert Capa's photography "Loyalist Militiaman at the Moment of Death" became for the Spanish Civil War. Nevertheless, Bernhardsson pointed out that the ransacking of the Iraqi National Museum — a shrine of Iraq's national history and collective memory — was an event that received a lot of attention in Western media, highlighting the link between archaeology and state building in Iraq. Bernhardsson explained from his own research how, since World War I, occupying forces and dictators have defined what is to be considered as memories and artifacts of value in Iraq. Davis, in turn, showed from a political science perspective how the past has been engineered into "acceptable" public memory since the inception of the modern state in 1921. He focused primarily on a concept of memory as a means to mobilize social support. He presented Ba'thist versions of the state next to the current revival of memory about Iraq's first dictator Abd al-Karim Qasim, as well as the recent emergence of cross-sectarian spaces in Iraq that are in need of shared visions

of the Iraqi past. Davis said that civil society organizations had a special responsibility to fill these spaces.

In contrast, Bozarslan claimed that it is difficult to reconcile politics of memory that are diametrically opposed such as those of the Iraqi Kurds and the Iraqi state. He defined "families, tribes, and to some extent cities and the political organizations as the main actors of memory construction" in Kurdistan. Decades of open warfare, the mass killings, and deportations of Kurds during the last years of the Iran-Iraq War turned the Kurds in northern Iraq into a separate community, struggling to find its position between cross-border nationalism and the local memories of conflict and violence. Bozarslan attested that the different levels of memory politics — regional, Iraqi-Kurdish, and those of the individual political movements — largely converge or are complementary, but that memories of individuals, or those specific to local units or gender groups are suppressed by the large narratives.

In the second session of the day, Bashkin of the University of Chicago, Al-Ali of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and Chatelard of the Institut français du Prôche Orient discussed the positions and experiences of specific groups in regard to dominant national narratives. Bashkin offered a detailed analysis of the 1941 Farhud pogrom in Baghdad as a particularly complex and difficult object of memory. She drew from memoirs of Iraqi Jews published over the past decade and contrasted their generally gloomy image of Jewish life in Iraq after the foundation of the state, with detailed accounts in the same texts highlighting the neighborliness and protection within tightly knit social communities confronted with an attacking mob during the Farhud. Bashkin also offered a picture of the Iraqi Jewish community as separated from Arab society with a presentation of the involvement of young Jews in nationalist activities during the 1930s. She concluded with reflections about the difficulties of writing the history of the Farhud, without applying language and concepts from Holocaust studies, when different memories intersect. Al-Ali drew attention to the changing experiences of women in Iraq over time, where memories of the early activities of the women's movement in Iraq contrast with the relative gain in rights during the period of the Ba'thist dictatorship and the submission of women under an ideological image as mothers of warriors during the Iran-Iraq War, to mention some examples of Iraq's "conceptualization as a gendered nation." Women's life stories and their memories reflected the general lines of conflict in Iraqi society at all times. Al-Ali portrayed vividly how difficult it is for women today to come to terms with legacies of discrimination and violence, demands for political participation, and the growing influence of a sectarian state narrative. All this, according to Al-Ali, has had a negative impact on the position of women in Iraqi society today. Chatelard concluded the second session with the stories of a number of Iraqi intellectuals who live in exile in Jordan and Syria today, where they constitute "an Iraqi public sphere across borders." Chatelard recounted how they are currently in a process of creating a collective memory about their student years in Baghdad during the 1990s. Their experiences as writers in exile stand in contrast to their lives during the decade of sanctions, when they belonged to an intellectual avant-garde that had gained rare access to books on post-structuralist theory and social sciences, despite their country's isolation under sanctions. Thus, Chatelard questioned, too, whether Iraqi society had been under the total control of the Ba'thist regime. Instead, groups such as a network of intellectuals were able to constitute autonomous social spaces inside Iraq. Nowadays, the same intellectuals are trying to offer an alternative identity model to Iraqis distinct from the narrow image of dictatorship and control and founded on their shared experiences.

The concluding remarks and discussion of the papers by Thompson from the University of Virginia and the Wilson Center made clear that it is first of all important for historians, to preserve the memories that were addressed in the workshop. People's desire for justice is based on these past experiences that shape the expectations of how justice should come in the future. Thompson emphasized to what extent Iraqi and American patterns of collective memory collided in this respect when the U.S. leadership likened the invasion of 2003 to the liberation of Europe from Nazism in World War II. For Iraqis, as for many Arabs, it is the memory of the period of colonial submission after World War I that makes sovereignty of state and culture a prerequisite for all other societal and political demands that the U.S. promised to bring to Iraq. Especially at times of crisis and massive historical change, the memories of these past experiences shape the political choices that people make. Nationalism and authoritarian rule offered, according to Thompson, an alternative of security and sovereignty for people disappointed by the corruption of the colonial period. Currently, as old regimes in the Middle East are breaking down or losing their legitimacy, Middle Eastern people are again renegotiating forms of sovereignty and authority based on their memory of past experiences and traumas. Hence it is the duty of researchers to voice and analyze a wide array of memories of both the strong and the weak. However, Thompson also stressed that memory and its position in society can only be understood when it translates into action, when it rings a bell with a significant part of the society or an important group within it, and thus comes to be accepted as a valuable part of the past. The history of Iraq has shown that for a group like the officer corps of the Iraqi army, the creation of an esprit de corps based on memories of past events, such as the 1941 Gailani movement, has been crucial in vying for power. To draw this parallel, however, implies a pessimistic prospect for Iraq's political future.

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