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Establishing Peace and Conflict Studies Programs in Iraqi Universities: Necessary Conditions and Short-Term Implications

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Abstract

ABSTRACT

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Peace and Conflict Studies was unknown as a field of academic inquiry in Iraq when the 21st century began. Just over a decade later, formal institutional entities had been established to explore the subject at three Iraqi universities. Using a participatory action research methodology, this dissertation explores two questions: 1. What are the conditions that promote or impede establishment of a university-based program in peace and conflict studies in Iraq?, and; 2. Once established, what are possible outputs and outcomes of these programs over the first few years of their existence? This study consisted of 67 interviews, three focus groups and hundreds of hours of my first-hand observations. I argue that the presence or absence of three conditions has determined the success of efforts to establish peace and conflict studies programs at Iraqi universities: an inviting political climate; entrepreneurial or charismatic university leadership; and the availability of financial, intellectual and relational resources. I conclude that even in the first few years after a program's establishment, it is possible to observe not only tangible outputs such as students graduated, public events conducted and papers published, but also intangible outcomes such as increased awareness and understanding by students and other program affiliates of critical concepts related to peace and conflict and the creation of a platform for future learning and practice in peace and conflict studies.

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ESTABLISHING PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES PROGRAMS IN IRAQI

UNIVERSITIES: NECESSARY CONDITIONS AND

SHORT-TERM IMPLICATIONS

Thomas Hill

A DISSERTATION

in

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Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

in

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ESTABLISHING PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES PROGRAMS

IN IRAQI UNIVERSITIES:

NECESSARY CONDITIONS AND SHORT-TERM IMPLICATIONS

To my beautiful, strong and wickedly funny wife, Michelle,

and my uproarious children, Justin and Cooper,

for all the laughter, light and love you have brought to my life.

ABSTRACT

Establishing Peace and Conflict Studies Programs in Iraqi Universities:

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Thomas Hill

Sigal Ben-Porath

Peace and Conflict Studies was unknown as a field of academic inquiry in Iraq when the 21st century began. Just over a decade later, formal institutional entities had been established to explore the subject at three Iraqi universities. Using a participatory action research methodology, this dissertation explores two questions: 1. What are the conditions that promote or impede establishment of a university-based program in peace and conflict studies in Iraq?, and; 2. Once established, what are possible outputs and outcomes of these programs over the first few years of their existence? This study consisted of 67 interviews, three focus groups and hundreds of hours of my first-hand observations. I argue that the presence or absence of three conditions has determined the success of efforts to establish peace and conflict studies programs at Iraqi universities: an inviting political climate; entrepreneurial or charismatic university leadership; and the availability of financial, intellectual and relational resources. I conclude that even in the first few years after a program's establishment, it is possible to observe not only tangible outputs such as students graduated, public events conducted and papers published, but also intangible outcomes such as increased awareness and understanding by students and other program affiliates of critical concepts related to peace and conflict and the creation of a platform for future learning and practice in peace and conflict studies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

Peace and Conflict Studies was almost unknown as a field of academic inquiry in Iraq when the 21st century began. Just over a decade later, however, the language of peace and conflict had begun to infiltrate the academic sphere to the extent that three formal institutional entities had been established to explore the subject at Baghdad University, the University of Duhok and the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani.

Different in form and scope, yet similar as spaces for academic inquiry into an unfamiliar field, these three university-based programs were much too young at the time of this research to be evaluated in terms of what impact they might make on Iraq's social or political spheres. There were still, however, important questions to be addressed about these fledgling programs, about the early development of peace and conflict studies in Iraq, and about the outputs and short-term outcomes these programs have produced.

This study deeply explores two questions, in particular:

1. What are the conditions that promote or impede establishment of a university-based program in peace and conflict studies in Iraq?

2. Once established, what are possible outputs and outcomes of these programs over the first three years of their existence that relate to conflict transformation?

This study covers the period from September 2000 until June 2012, ending prior to the start of the 2012-13 academic year in Iraq. The large majority of the research on which this study is based took place in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and in New York between May 2009 and November 2013. It consists of 67 interviews, three focus groups

and hundreds of hours of my first-hand observations. The study was conducted using a participatory action research methodology, through which the many research participants were invited to contribute to the formation and exploration of research questions that might strengthen their own scholarship and practice in the field of peace and conflict studies. All interviews, consequently, were semi-structured.

Sixty-one of the interviews were conducted in English because the scholars and students involved in the programs being studied had gained English language proficiency, at least in part because most peace and conflict studies literature has been written in English. For five of the interviews conducted in Duhok, I was assisted by a co-researcher who fluently speaks English, Arabic and the Badini dialect of Kurdish. He was, at the time, a candidate for a Master of Arts degree in peace and conflict studies at the University of Duhok, which he subsequently completed in January 2012. For one interview in New York, I was assisted by a professional Arabic-English interpreter.

The modern history of Iraq is long and complex, and most of it falls beyond the scope of this study. Relevant aspects, particularly those having to do with the contemporary higher education system and contemporary Iraqi approaches to peacebuilding, will be examined in order to contextualize this study and to more meaningfully determine conditions that promote or impede establishment of university-based programs in peace and conflict studies in Iraq, and possible outputs and short-term outcomes of such programs.

This study consists of nine chapters: Chapter 1 reviews the literature related to conflict transformation and peace and conflict studies, and establishes the conceptual framework upon which this study rests; Chapter 2 provides an overview of the Iraqi

higher education system, and to a limited extent, the Iraqi political and social systems, in

which these new university programs must operate; Chapter 3 serves as an introduction to

the analytical framework that is used to examine the cases of the programs studied and to

the methodology of the study; Chapter 4 is the case study of the University of Duhok's

Master of Arts program in peace and conflict resolution studies; Chapter 5 is the case

study of the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani's Center for Peace and Security

Studies; Chapter 6 is the case study of the University of Baghdad's Educational Unit for

Peace Studies and Human Rights; Chapter 7 examines other cases, including those of past

failed attempts to form university programs related to peace and conflict studies in Iraq;

Chapter 8 raises questions about the acceptance of peace and conflict studies by the Iraqi

higher education establishment through an exploration of seven cases of Iraqi graduate

students who obtained master's degrees in the field outside Iraq; Chapter 9 offers

conclusions and articulates questions emerging from this study worthy of future

exploration.

CHAPTER 1

Literature Review

The field of peace and conflict studies, barely 60 years old as an academic pursuit in the West, is a much newer scholarly proposition in Iraq. As recently as mid-2008, there were no degree-granting programs in this field at any of Iraq's universities, and today there is still only one such program, a Master of Arts program at the University of Duhok. Two small centers formed in the years following the United States-led invasion that toppled the former regime of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein: the Center for Peace and Security Studies at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, and the Unit for Peace Education and Human Rights at Baghdad University's College of Education. Of those two, only one remains because the AUIS Center for Peace and Security Studies ceased to operate in 2011 after a little more than two years in existence.

This paper investigates the cases of all three of Iraq's recent university-based programs in peace and conflict studies, and other attempts to form similar programs. In order to examine these cases, it is necessary to explore the conceptual foundations of peace and conflict studies, specifically how university-based programs might contribute to conflict transformation, and consequently, peacebuilding, and which obstacles university programs must overcome in order to play a constructive role in conflict transformation.

Since peace and conflict studies began to emerge as a distinct academic field following the end of World War II, many scholars have argued that formal and informal education should be utilized to make the world a more peaceful place. These arguments center on the idea that educational institutions – primary, secondary and tertiary – ought

to promote values of inter-group tolerance and non-violence and provide future leaders

with critical skills needed to address conflicts constructively, while informal education

could serve similar purposes with adults.

Universities, in particular, have been seen at least since the 1960s as actors with

an important role to play in peacebuilding. In 1969, 200 scholars from around the world

gathered in Vienna for the First World Conference on the Role of the University in the

Quest for Peace, and spent five days attempting to articulate a link between universities

and world peace. They concluded that universities owned an awesome responsibility to

take a leadership role in what we now call peacebuilding, to stop merely theorizing about

the causes of deadly conflicts, and to begin acting in order to reduce systematic violence

worldwide. In his final report, Dr. Harold Taylor, the conference rapporteur, wrote:

> There is a particular kind of action which universities can take because of their
> crucial position as the breeding ground for new talent. We must organize our
> teaching research and curriculum so that not only the youth but the public at large
> are taught to work for peace and against war (First World Conference).

There is a distinction that is important to draw between peace and conflict studies,

most often explored at the university level, and peace education, which ordinarily occurs

in primary and secondary schools, and in informal education. Peace education aims to

replace a "war culture" with a "peace culture" (Aspeslagh and Burns, 1996, p. 46)

characterized by non-violent approaches to conflict, equality, justice, and respect for

human rights and the natural environment. Peace and conflict studies, meanwhile, has an

even more ambitious goal: seeking not only to educate students about these phenomena,

but also to prepare them as critical thinkers and scholars capable of analyzing and

understanding the underlying causes of political and social violence, and of developing

and promoting peaceful approaches to conflict though research and other action (Harris et al., 1998).

This paper mostly will leave aside questions related to peace education, and will concentrate on the specific situation of peace and conflict studies, or peace studies as it sometimes is known, and how the development of programs in the field in Iraqi universities could have conflict transformation outcomes.

Johan Galtung, regarded as the father of modern peace studies, describes the field as an applied social science that is critical, empirical and constructive, and consequently is dedicated to the promotion of peace, where peace is defined as "the absence/reduction of violence of all kinds; peace is nonviolent and creative conflict transformation" (1996, p.9). Galtung sees peace and education as compatible political projects that can work in concert to produce outcomes similar to health studies: "not unrealistic total triumphs of good over evil, but better deals, with less suffering, from violence as from disease" (p.17). The purpose of peace and conflict studies is to enact social and political change leading to reductions in violence – both direct and structural – in order to achieve what he calls "positive peace." Galtung prescribes a "two-step channel: the researchers, communicating with the people, who then exercise pressure on the elites" (p.28), and advocates for universities as promising sites for peace and conflict studies.

Galtung has argued that peace and conflict studies should be developed into a robust field of graduate study focused on knowledge and skills training. "Badly needed in the world would be postgraduate training, in as many places as possible, for a Master of Peace and Conflict Resolution, similar to a Master of Business Administration. There is no substitute for creative conflict resolution in the search for peace" (1996, p.36).

Seemingly in response to the call of Galtung and other pioneers in the field, peace and conflict studies has grown rapidly as an academic project. The first U.S.-based peace studies program opened at Manchester College in 1948; in 1959, three of the first major research centers in the world all came into existence: the Peace Research Institute Oslo, the Lancaster Peace Research Center in the United Kingdom, and the Center for Research on Conflict Resolution at the University of Michigan (Harris, 2007, p. xii). In 1985, there were four graduate programs in the United States; by 2000, there were 80 in the U.S. and 130 worldwide (Windmueller et al., 2009). By 2007, more than 400 centers or programs existed internationally that were engaged in peace research or teaching (Meyer and Shuster, 2007).

Though the field is growing globally, the U.S. remained the overwhelming leader with 257 of the 390 institutions that reported having graduate or undergraduate programs or research centers in 2007 (Meyer and Shuster, 2007). Peace and conflict studies, however, continues to be a difficult proposition at universities in the Middle East, where only a handful of centers and programs exist in Israel[1], Egypt[2], Lebanon[3], Turkey[4] and now, Iraq.

Recognizing the uneven distribution of peace and conflict studies programs worldwide, it is important to ask why such programs – and the thinking that underlies

---

[1] For example, there are: the International Program in Conflict Resolution (http://www.resolution.tau.ac.il/) and the The Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research (http://www.tau.ac.il/peace/) at Tel Aviv University; the Master of Arts (MA) Program in Peace and Conflict Management Studies at the University of Haifa (http://www.tau.ac.il/peace/); the MA program in Conflict Research, Management and Resolution (http://crmr.huji.ac.il/en/) and The Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace (http://truman.huji.ac.il/?cmd=about) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and The Conflict Management and Negotiation Program at Bar-Ilan University (http://faculty.biu.ac.il/~steing/conflict/programenglish.htm).
[2] *Alexandria University offers a master's degree in peace and conflict studies (http://www.alexu.edu.eg/index.php/en/faculty-of-commerce?id=8671).*
[3] The Institute for Diplomacy and Conflict Transformation and The Institute for Peace and Justice Education, both at the Lebanese American University (http://campaign.lau.edu.lb/special-initiatives/institute-diplomacy-and-conflict-transformation)
[4] The Master of Arts Program in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Sabanci University (http://conf.sabanciuniv.edu/)

many of them – may not be considered to be as relevant in non-western contexts as they are in the west. One reason might be the very structure of it that contributed to the field's growth in the U.S. As peace and conflict studies began to grow in the 1970s and '80s, ideas of rigor and professionalism began to take hold. Scholars from such divergent fields as law, psychology, management, sociology, international relations and religion "were now asking how their research might be brought together to provide resources for dealing with some of the troublesome problems threatening human societies" (Melchin and Picard, 2008, p. 27). Kenneth Boulding, economist and systems scholar who was among the early proponents of peace studies in the U.S., applauded the idea that the emerging task of the peace and conflict researcher was "to take folk knowledge, much of which is actually quite valuable but parts of which may be misleading, and to build on it the knowledge that comes out of the scholarly methods of research, testing, and theory" (1987, p. x). Some contemporary scholars have questioned whether such a direction for the field, which amounted to privileging western approaches to conflict, was sensible.

> Decades later, we are inclined to greet this distinction with caution. We have witnessed too many disasters created by so-called scientific approaches to human problems, and we have come to appreciate the considerable wisdom to be found in the traditional practices of diverse cultures. Still, Boulding's point was that managing conflict is complex and difficult … Scholarly knowledge must build upon folk knowledge. We need to study this complexity and verify which skills do indeed lead to more humane responses to conflict. This is the task of scholarship (Melchin and Picard, 2008, pp. 27-28).

The tension between practice and theory – and between local knowledge and foreign knowledge – lies at the very heart of peace and conflict studies. Embedded in the field is an acknowledged diversity in methods and respect for different sets of knowledge. Dietrich refers to the rejection of one fundamental principle guiding peacebuilding as an

acknowledgement of "the many peaces" (2011, p. 10) and writes that such

contextualization would be considered "weak thought" by philosopher Gianni Vattimo

because it "does not resort to an ultimate principle such as God, reason, law, human

rights, development, justice, progress or the like" (2011, pp.8-9).

Of course, peace and conflict studies does have a guiding principle: that more

peaceful approaches to conflict always are preferable to more violent approaches.

Interestingly, because of this normative orientation, questions often emerge about

whether peace and conflict studies should be considered as an academic discipline or

merely as a political project or an ideology. Brunk argues that peace and conflict studies

qualifies as a discipline because "many disciplines are defined by the range of problems,

or the *subject matter* they study" and that for that reason, peace and conflict studies:

> which takes as its subject matter the problem of human conflict and its peaceful
> resolution is no less a discipline than many of the other well-recognized academic
> disciplines which have emerged over time (2012, p. 11).

Similarly, Alger, in an essay entitled "Peace Studies as a Transdisciplinary

Project" concludes that peace studies "does have the qualities of a discipline," mainly

because "research in the past couple of decades has produced a great advance in

understanding of the causes of war and other forms of seriously disruptive conflict"

(2007, p. 300). He notes, however, that peace and conflict studies is unlike many other

social science disciplines because the agenda of the field is not only to explain a

phenomenon, but also "to acquire knowledge that can be applied in developing strategies

for achieving a vision of a more peaceful world in the future" (p.300).

How, though, does peace and conflict studies conceive of the relationship

between peacefulness and conflict? And what might the knowledge generated by the field

suggest as a conceptual framework for realizing "the more peaceful world" that Alger and others envision?

First, it is important to understand that most contemporary peace and conflict studies scholars do not view conflict as a phenomenon to be eradicated in pursuit of peace or increased peacefulness. Most theorists instead proceed from thinking consistent with Collins' basic articulation of conflict theory – "that human beings are sociable but conflict-prone animals" (1974, p.59). Their basic assumption is that conflict is a naturally occurring phenomenon that may be conducted with or without violence, and that, in addition to occasional – sometimes spectacular – violent episodes, man has been seeking and utilizing increasingly non-violent methods to address conflicts throughout human history (Ury, 2000; Pinker, 2011). Kenneth Boulding (1989) writes that 85 to 90 percent of human activity is dedicated to what he calls "inclusive peace" and that "[m]any conflicts are relatively peaceful, do not result in direct violence and are resolved or managed by other means" (p.462).

Consequently, to develop more peaceful societies, it is mostly necessary to ensure that conflict functions as a constructive force rather than as a destructive one (Kriesberg, 1998). The work of peacebuilders often centers on moving destructive conflict in constructive directions. Consequently, conflict transformation becomes the functional task of any person, organization or institution that engages in peacebuilding (Galtung, 1996; Jeong, 2010; Lederach, 1995a, 1995b; Ryan, 2007; Dietrich 2013). This study will pursue the proposition of Galtung regarding universities as potential peacebuilding actors, and will investigate the possibility that universities in Iraq have special capacities to initiate conflict transformation work in their own settings.

7

Matyók (2011) explains the link between peace and conflict studies and conflict transformation in his conceptualization of the field's development in the United States since 1960. He describes four waves, culminating in a relatively recent emphasis on conflict transformation rather than conflict resolution or conflict management

> Forms of alternative dispute resolution showed up on the social scene first. The second wave pursued professionalization in the 1970s, the third focused on the structural nature of conflict and human needs, and wave four moved the field toward a transformation focus under the umbrella of peace studies (pp. 295-296).

Understanding that conflict need not be destructive is one element of conflict transformation. It is equally important to know what is meant by increased peacefulness, as the objective of constructive conflict transformation. Thus, I will proceed by exploring the concepts of peace, and peacefulness, and how they can be constructed and enhanced, according to some of conflict transformation's major theorists and critics. Once peace and peacefulness have been fully considered, I will return to a discussion of conflict transformation, and how peace and conflict studies education might serve as a catalyst for it.

<u>Building peace</u>

Galtung was among the first to offer a vision of peace significantly different from the typical realist dichotomy that offers only two conditions: war, characterized by physical violence, and; peace, characterized by an absence of such violence. Though he does not at all share Hobbes' pessimistic outlook on man's natural tendency toward violence, Galtung does build upon Hobbes' suggestion that "war consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting, but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known" (Section One, Chapter XIII, "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind

as Concerning their Felicity and Misery). Galtung grounds his thinking in a definition of peace that requires not only "the absence/reduction of violence of all kinds," but also "nonviolent and creative conflict transformation" (Galtung, 1996, p.10). He argues that the creation of peace means "reducing violence (cure) and avoiding violence (prevention)" where violence exists in two forms: "direct violence, where there is a sender, and indirect violence," which he also calls "structural violence because it comes from the social structure itself" (Galtung, 1996, p. 2).

Further articulating Galtung's distinction, Curle writes that Galtung "divides violence into personal violence, physical and psychological; and structural violence, by which he means uneven distribution of resources and uneven distribution of power over resources" (Curle, 1971, p.11). Similarly, Elise Boulding (1995) describes structural violence as the accumulation of inequalities and power differentials. She argues that there is a need for balance or "structured equality" that can be brought about by "caring empowerment of the differently abled." Consequently, she asserts that it is not economic development that paves the road to peace, but human and social development (p. 198).

Galtung's complex vision of violence not only creates a foundation for further development of peacebuilding theory and practice, it also establishes a framework for distinguishing between two different types of peace: negative peace and positive peace. Situations characterized by lack of direct violence qualify as negative peace, whereas only situations that are free of structural or indirect violence can be considered positive peace (Galtung, 2012). Curle equates "positive peace" and "social justice" and asserts that "[t]he two together constitute peace in the full sense" (p.27).

Thus, Galtung lays out an "eightfold path" to peace framework that contains negative and positive peace indicators in each of four power realms: cultural, military, economic and political (Galtung, 1996, p.3). He argues that such a complex framework is needed to truly represent all of the factors that must be considered in order to construct sustainably peaceful societies.

> Experience with single-factor peace theories has generally been negative. Kant hoped for republics and democracy, liberals for free trade and democracy, Marxists for social production and guided democracy, mondialists for a strong UN. Peace did not follow in their wake (Galtung, 1996, p.3).

There is some disagreement among modern peace theorists about Galtung's thinking. Kenneth Boulding offers strong criticism of Galtung's conceptions of peace in his 1980 essay, "Twelve Friendly Quarrels with Johan Galtung." Primarily, Boulding criticizes Galtung's overestimation of the effect of structural factors upon conflict, and his failure to acknowledge the dynamic nature of most conflict systems, which "prevents him sometimes from perceiving the real discontinuities and the patterns of the world" (K. E. Boulding, 1980, p. 12). Boulding argues that Galtung makes a major error by equating structural oppression and physical violence because "[v]iolence in the behavioral sense ... is a 'threshold' phenomenon, rather like the boiling over of a pot" and that it " ... represent[s] 'breaks' in the system rather than uniformities" (p. 22). According to Boulding, the phenomena Galtung qualifies as "structural violence" actually "belong to systems that are only peripherally related to the structures which produce violence" (p. 23).

> [T]he metaphor of structural violence ... is that poverty, deprivation, ill health, low expectation of life, a condition in which more than half the human race lives, is 'like' a thug beating up the victim and taking his money away from him in the street, or it is 'like' a conqueror stealing the land of his people and reducing them

10

to slavery. The implication is that poverty and its related ills are the fault of the thug or the conqueror and the solution is to do away with thugs and conquerors ... Violence, whether of the streets and the home, or of the guerilla, of the police, of the armed forces, is a very different phenomenon from poverty (K.E. Boulding 1980, p. 22).

Boulding also fails to see "positive peace" as a meaningful descriptor and calls it a "most unfortunate" term "by which Galtung seems to mean any state of affairs which gets high marks on his scale of goodness … It is not in any sense the opposite of negative peace" (K.E. Boulding 1980, p. 13).

In addition, Boulding takes issue with Galtung's rejection of hierarchy as a useful form of social organization and his characterization of it as an absolute obstacle to peace. "Hierarchy," Boulding offers, "is the price we pay for any organization beyond the small group in which everybody can communicate with everyone else" (K.E. Boulding, 1980, pp.16-17).

> It would almost seem as if Galtung would regard the last ultimate whimper of the universe, according to the second law of thermodynamics, in which all things are equal temperature and equally distributed throughout space so that nothing more can conceivably happen, as the ultimate heaven, or perhaps one should say Nirvana, towards which all of this uncomfortable and unequal structure of stars and planets, life and society, will eventually move. (K.E. Boulding 1980, p.14)

Despite Galtung's criticism of oppression and inequality as drivers of violence and obstacles to peaceful conflict transformation, Boulding believes that Galtung fails to articulate a sufficiently clear vision of peace – what his "ideal world looks like" – and consequently "tends to underestimate the costs of equality" (K.E. Boulding, 1980, p.15). Boulding's vision of peace is far less absolute than Galtung's. As a self-described "evolutionary theorist," Boulding is concerned with finding states of peaceful equilibrium, based on relational modalities that will produce more peaceful outcomes. He

writes that "[t]he dominant mode of relationship is interaction, not 'struggle,' " (K.E. Boulding, 1980, p. 9).

Boulding argues that structuralists – such as Galtung – are too likely to believe that peace can be attained simply by changing societal structures to produce desired social outcomes, without recognizing that some negative developments in the short-term may, in fact, be needed to produce those desired outcomes. "The structuralist sees pollution in the structure whether it is smoke, slums or vice and says 'away with it.' The evolutionist sees pollution as part of the price of evolution itself" (K.E. Boulding, 1980, p. 15).

Boulding's conception of peace rests on the belief that certain social, political or economic behaviors tend to produce certain behaviors on the part of others. Encouraging behaviors that will produce peaceful responses, he suggests, is a potentially more fruitful path to peace than aiming for a revolution that may change systems but will leave people's relational behaviors intact.

> An increased threat against the threatener can only increase the probability of war. There are no technical solutions to this problem. There are only political and moral solutions. Fortunately, these are available. Anything that exists must be possible. Stable peace exists, so it must be possible. It is not only possible, it is necessary, and it must be expanded (K.E. Boulding, 1995, pp. 86-87).

Lederach and other more recent theorists have sought to reconcile Galtung's emphasis on structure with Boulding's focus on evolution and relationships. Building sustainable peace requires both structural shifts away from oppression and toward equality, as well as renewed emphasis on constructive social processes that will result in stronger relationships and peaceful behaviors that are likely to be reproduced and refined. This integration of Galtung's and Boulding's thinking can be seen in the definition of

peace offered by Ricigliano: "Peace is a state of human existence characterized by sustainable levels of human development and healthy processes of social change" (2012, p. 15).

Ricigliano's vision of peace stands in stark definition to what often is called the liberal peace, which, according to Richmond, is a hegemonic concept that "provides the 'good life' if its formulas are followed, for all, and without exception, and even if it rests on a coercive introduction through invasion or peace enforcement" (2012, p. 42). The liberal peace, which guides much of contemporary international relations theory, focuses on "democratization rather than the promotion of social justice … [accepts] certain levels of dominance and intrusive governance in order to receive related, progressive freedoms. Equality is not a key issue, rather security and stability discursively construct international life" (Richmond, 2012, p. 43).

> To counter this universal and hegemonic discourse, peace might instead be contextualized more subtly, geographically, culturally, in terms of identity, and the evolution of the previous socioeconomic polity. This means that one should be wary of a theoretical approach, or an empirical analysis, or a policy, which suggests that the institutions, norms, regimes and constitutions associated with peace can be applied equally across the world (Richmond, 2012, p. 45).

Thus, the main characteristic of peace, according to peace studies, that distinguishes it from peace seen through the lens of international relations theory, is peace studies' emphasis on process free of predetermined outcome, consistent with Boulding's evolutionary thinking. This vision of peace also acknowledges Galtung's assertion that building peace must involve a variety of actors in the political, military, economic and cultural spheres of society. This shift accelerates the move away from

overly simplified notions of peace as the absence of war towards more complicated and

context-specific visions of peace and peacebuilding.

> A third transformation ... sees peace as an unfolding potential that grows out of
> the pursuit of peace. This suggests that the further we move toward attainment of
> our present notion of peace, the more highly developed our future image of peace
> will be and the possibility of achieving this new image. This is dramatically
> different from the perspective that looks on peace as a return to conditions before
> war broke out, or that looks upon peace as a resolution or settlement of certain
> conflicts so that people can return to other pursuits, assured that the settlement
> will guarantee the peace. Instead, the broader definition of peace reveals a
> diversity of human activities through which peace can be pursued, implying that
> all occupations have peacemaking potential (Alger, 1991, p. 245).

Another interpretation of this idea can be seen in the work of Ury (2000), who

proposes 10 roles that can be played in order to build peace: provider; teacher; bridge-

builder; mediator; arbiter; equalizer; healer; witness; referee and peacekeeper. Some of

these roles mainly address structural conflict factors (i.e. provider and witness) whereas

others focus on behavioral causes of conflict (i.e. teacher and mediator) and still others

are mostly concerned with relational elements (i.e. bridge-builder and healer).

More recently, the Institute for Economic and Peace (IEP) has further reinforced

the notion of the dynamic nature of peace and introduced a nuanced idea of peacefulness

as a measurable condition determined by particular structural and behavioral factors.

Each year since 2007, IEP has released its Global Peace Index (GPI) that seeks to

determine the most peaceful and least peaceful states in the world. It has established 22

indicators in three categories: ongoing domestic and international conflict; societal safety

and security, and; militarization (http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/about-gpi).

Although the GPI seeks only to measure negative peace, it takes into account some

factors that seem more related to structural violence than to direct violence, such as

"number of jailed population per 100,000 people" and "number of internal security officers and police per 100,000 people" (http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/about-gpi). Untangling structural violence from direct violence – and, consequently, distinguishing negative peace from positive peace – may not be as clear cut an endeavor as Galtung seems to suggest.

Lederach acknowledges the difficulty of trying to focus exclusively on either structures or behaviors that cause violence as "a fundamental paradox in the pursuit of peace." He credits Curle for promoting "a value orientation in favor of less powerful groups attaining a voice if peaceful relations and restructuring are desired outcomes" (1995b, p. 14). At the same time, Lederach asserts that individual orientations must shift if sustainable peace is to be built. He points to Paolo Freire's conception of social change as "personal and systemic transformation" (1995b, pp. 19).

> Peacemaking embraces the challenge of personal transformation, of pursuing awareness, growth, and commitment to change at a personal level … Peacemaking equally involves the task and priority of systematic transformation, of increasing justice and equality in our world. It is the construction of the global community involving the tasks of changing oppressive systems, sharing resources fairly, and promoting nonviolent resolution of conflict between peoples ... (Lederach, 1995b, pp. 19-20).

Lederach concludes that social conflict "emerges and develops based on the meaning and interpretation people involved attach to action and events" and that in this way "conflict is connected to meaning, meaning to knowledge and knowledge is rooted in culture." (1995b, p. 8). Lederach takes what he calls a "social constructionist" stance toward conflict because "[p]eople from different cultural settings have developed many ways of creating and expressing, as well as interpreting and handling conflict." Although

Lederach acknowledges the conflict models that other theorists have developed, he concludes that "understanding conflict and developing appropriate models of handling it will necessarily be rooted in, and must respect and draw from, the cultural knowledge of a people" (1995b, p.10).

Ricigliano (2012), in turn, proposes an SAT model of peacebuilding that is consistent with Lederach's emphasis on local knowledge, and also acknowledges that conflicts are systems unto themselves: dynamic, unpredictable, highly complex and with inter-related elements. The SAT model – structural, attitudinal and transactional – posits that most peacebuilding work is transactional in nature, but that to be broadly effective it must be undertaken with an effort to affect structural domains such as governance, economics or rule or law, and/or attitudinal issues such as intergroup relations, social capital or core grievances.

> The transactional domain suggests itself as a more accessible place to start a systemic change process than either the attitudinal or structural domains. Any decision to enact attitudinal or structural change must be the product of some transactional activity (Ricigliano, 2012, p. 37).

The establishment of a university program in peace and conflict studies may be best understood as a transactional mechanism that can facilitate peacebuilding by providing an avenue to structural or attitudinal change. Such a program can encourage critical thinking and reflection about existing structures – and prevailing attitudes – that contribute to the unique conflict dynamics present in a particular society or community. Shifting norms away from violence within structures and attitudes may be the primary challenge in peacebuilding, and as Ricigliano suggests, a transactional entry point – such

as a university program in peace and conflict studies – may be needed to begin the process.

As Galtung, Curle, Lederach and Ricigliano would agree, conflict is multidimensional, occurring at multiple levels (international, intergroup and interpersonal), in multiple forms (political, military, social and economic), based on a range of factors (culture, needs and structure), and can lead to different forms of violence (direct and structural). Building peace in the face of such complicated conflict systems requires an equally nuanced approach, which some theorists define as conflict transformation.

Transforming conflict in pursuit of increased peacefulness

Conflict transformation is a relatively new body of theory that seeks to respond to increasingly complex understandings of conflicts that may be "asymmetric, marked by inequalities of power and status" and "protracted, crossing repeatedly into and out of violence and thus defying cyclical or bell-shaped models of conflict phases" (Miall, 2003, p.3). Conflict, as envisioned by theorists such as Galtung, Boulding, Curle, Kriesberg and Lederach, demands intervention that addresses not only power issues that lie at the heart of realist thinking, and unequal access to resources as Marx might suggest, but a full range of issues including identity, history, culture and social organization.

Conflict transformation theorists distinguish themselves from two schools of thought that preceded them: conflict resolution and conflict management. Conflict resolution aims to address the needs of parties in conflict and "is about how parties can move from zero-sum, destructive patterns of conflict to positive-sum constructive

outcomes" (Miall, 2003, pp.4-5). However, as Lederach writes, the concept of conflict

"resolution may conceptually and subtly promote the impression that conflict is

undesirable and should be eliminated or at least reduced" (1995, p.16). Some theorists

question whether ending conflict is either possible or desirable.

Conflict management takes a more circumspect view on that issue and accepts

both the inevitability and possible benefits of conflict in many relationships. It raises

questions about "how to design a practical, achievable, cooperative system for the

constructive management of difference" (Bloomfield and Reilly in Miall, p.3). As

Lederach notes, however, conflict management also is a "[h]eavily Western" concept

built on the assumption that "conflict follows certain predictable patterns and dynamics

that could be understood and regulated." (1995b, p.16).

Conflict transformation theorists draw on both sets of thinking, and conclude that

conflicts must not be reduced to the re-imagining of parties' positions at the urging of

external actors in order to achieve acceptable short-term outcomes. Rather, the parties to

a conflict themselves must undertake a change process in order to alter conflict dynamics

and, as Galtung suggests, "to channel [conflict] energy constructively" so that they, their

relationships and the structures through which they interact all are transformed into a

more peaceful state.

> Unlike resolution and management, the idea of transformation does not suggest
> we simply eliminate or control conflict, but rather points descriptively toward its
> inherent dialectic nature. Social conflict is a phenomenon of human creation,
> lodged naturally in relationships ... [T]ransformation more closely acknowledges
> what social scientists have been suggesting for some time about the role and
> dynamics of social conflict: it moves through certain predictable phases
> transforming relationships and social organization" (Lederach, 1995b, p. 17).

In his 2003 analysis of conflict transformation theories and practices, Miall raises the question, "Is there a theory of conflict transformation?" and concludes that "[a]t the very least, the foundations of a theory of conflict transformation have now been laid" (p.2). Nonetheless, Miall acknowledges that there is no uniform agreement among theorists or practitioners about basic concepts, that terminology is "inconsistent" and that there is no clarity about whether "conflict transformation" means an entirely different set of concepts from those employed by the fields of conflict resolution and conflict management. Miall concludes that "a distinctive theory of conflict transformation is indeed emerging," and that it "draws on many of the familiar concepts of conflict management and conflict resolution."

> [I]t also rests on the same tradition of theorising about conflict. It is best viewed not as a wholly new approach, but rather as a reconceptualisation of the field in order to make it more relevant to contemporary conflict. (Miall, 2003, p.3).

Ryan argues that conflict transformation is a new concept in name alone, that it always has been "the goal of peace and conflict research," and that it also was the "aim of mainstream international politics," until it was sidetracked by the emergence of realism during the World War II era. Ryan points to Curle as "an early advocate of the idea, identifying peacemaking, development and education as the three key 'tools for transformation' " and to Vayrynen for identifying four areas in which conflict transformation might occur: transformation of actors; transformation of issues; transformation of rules and norms, and structural transformation (Ryan, 2007, p.17).

No matter who is responsible for popularizing the term, Ryan acknowledges that "[t]he person who has probably done the most to develop the transformation approach to destructive conflict is Johan Galtung" (2007, p.20). In fact, the concepts of so many other

theorists appear to be connected to or grounded in Galtung's work that this paper

approaches Galtung's conflict transformation theory as the foundation upon which other

theories have been developed. As Galtung's visions of peace and conflict are highly

structural, so too, is his approach to conflict transformation.

Galtung depicts conflict transformation as a revolutionary process that will

require serious alteration of existing cultures and structures that have supported violence.

His language leaves little doubt that he supports a mass effort that would re-shape

society. He writes that "conscientization, raising the general level of consciousness, will

and must take place" and that "[t]he goal is an acceptable formula, defining a new

formation; new structures, new institutions" (Galtung 1996, p.265). In order for this to

happen, Galtung argues that conflicts must not be hidden from view. All parties to a

conflict must be aware of all of its elements, including the "deep culture" and "deep

structure." Only with such awareness will it be possible to address the fault lines. He

writes of "lifting" attitudes and assumptions and contradictions "up from the

subconscious, partly even from the unconscious."

> Following Paolo Freire we refer to it as conscientization and to the opposite
> process as deconscientization. The process is basic, for how can a conflict be
> consciously transformed unless the parties to a conflict are conscious subjects,
> true actors? Otherwise, the conflict will transform the actors as objects ... The
> party is only a passenger taken for a ride, not a driver presiding over the process.
> (Galtung, 1996, p. 74)

To Galtung, conflicts must be made conscious, and education stands as the

vehicle for consciousness-raising that is a vital part of conflict transformation. He insists

that knowledge must not be kept secret lest it become "cultural violence." He sees peace

research with the people as "peace education," and insists that peace researchers always

must be "in dialogue with the people, always retaining complete academic freedom" (Galtung, 1996, p. 28). Of course, this is one place where universities – and peace and conflict studies programs, in particular – can be seen as potential conflict transformation actors.

Galtung questions how information about peace and conflict should be disseminated. Directly to the people? To the elites who make political decisions? He settles on a possible process in which "the researchers, communicating with the people, who exercise pressure on the elites. This may easily be the most effective channel, at least is there if adequate access to media, if the country is not too big, and if there is a generally democratic ethos" (Galtung, 1996, p.28).

Galtung's language evokes images of an ongoing political struggle to achieve new international norms on methods to reduce violence.

> [C]onflict transformation is a never-ending process. Old or new contradictions open up. Negative or hopefully, positive conflict energy of the A or B varieties is continually injected into this formation. A solution in the sense of a steady-state, durable formation is at best a temporary goal. A far more significant goal is transformative capacity, the ability to handle the transformations in an acceptable and sustainable way (Galtung, 1996, p.90).

Other conflict transformation scholars are as resolute as Galtung in their belief that societies are in need of new methods for addressing conflicts and building peace. Some of them, however, are much less convinced of the need for revolution. For example, Kenneth Boulding, who defines himself as an "evolutionary" thinker, seems unconvinced that Galtung's calls for a worldwide overhaul of conflict systems will produce its desired effect. "There are some things about the world that are bad and he

21

wants them to be better. This is fine, but most change is not a result of normative

evaluations" (Boulding, 1980, p.10).

Kriesberg begins his response to this challenge with a reminder that "social

conflicts are socially constructed, and they often can be restructured and reframed so they

become a shared problem that requires a joint solution." Raising consciousness about

conflict is important, Kriesberg acknowledges, but he does not assume – as Galtung

seems to do – that "conscientization" will unleash political forces that will result in a

desired transformation. Rather, Kriesberg argues, that significant attention must be paid

to a process of shifting attitudes of specific conflict actors and, consequently, "the

relationship between the erstwhile enemies."

> … [T]ransforming transitions come about when a new way of thinking about their
> conflict becomes dominant in each of the primary adversaries. They each come to
> believe that the strategy they had been pursuing cannot triumph or they cannot
> gain more by continuing it, and an accomodative strategy promises to offer a
> better alternative. This is a more general statement than the suggestion that a
> negotiated settlement is reached when the adversaries are in a hurting stalemate
> and a formula for a settlement seems possible and acceptable. (Kriesberg,1998, p.
> 217).

Dietrich (2013) offers a more tangible description of conflict transformation that

explains in part why and how an educational institution could be well-positioned to

facilitate such a process. He writes that "[t]ransforming a conflict does not consist in

random change, but in change that allows participants in a system to become aware of

additional choices" (p. 9).

> Conflict transformation is the search for new perspectives and options in relation
> to the   problem. However, the problem itself is not what is fundamentally
> problematic; what is problematic is the manner in which we address the problem
> (Dietrich, 2013. p. 9)

Power

One important element of the relationships in which conflicts exist, of course, is power. Galtung and Kriesberg agree that perceptions of power can become a significant obstacle to constructive transformation. As Kriesberg (1998) writes:

> … the argument of traditional 'realists' is that wars are prevented by having the military strength to prevent attack. On the other hand, critics of that approach argue that as each side arms to deter the other, the resulting arms races generate mutual fear and hostility and escalate disputes into wars (p. 171).

Kriesberg argues instead that "[t]he critical matter about social conflicts is that no side is in full control," that – in fact – the very existence of a conflict suggests that "[e]fforts to exercise power are contested." Still, parties to a conflict may interpret "inequalities in resources" as indicators of relative power. He suggests instead that resources might be thought of as "inducements" that could be utilized to help transform relationships (p.16).

Galtung is similarly critical of the "'realist' assumption that only military power counts" as "the least realistic of all" (1996, p. 2). He argues that such simple polarized representations of power – which he calls "cognitive simplifications – (1996, p.91) lead to errant conclusions, misguided strategies and, consequently, failures to reduce violence. If parties invest in simplified ideas of their own relative power, escalation and tension may result, "depriving themselves of possible avenues for successful conflict transformation" (Galtung, 1996, p.92).

Galtung is supported on this point by Deutsch, who suggests that powerful groups and individuals often undermine themselves by relying too heavily on what he calls a "chronic competitive" approach to conflict. Such approaches are characterized by

23

unilateral attempts by powerful parties to impose their will on less powerful parties without considering other dimensions of power and conflict.

> Reliance on competitive and coercive strategies of influence by power holders produces alienation and resistance in those subjected to the power. This, in turn, limits the power holder's ability to use other types of power based on trust …and increases the demand for scrutiny and control of subordinates (Coleman, 2006, p.136).

Despite Galtung's and Kreisberg's basic agreement regarding the effect of power on matters related to conflict transformation, they predictably separate once again in terms of prescription. Kriesberg advocates for individualized strategies for transformation of particular power-laden conflict relationships while Galtung offers prescriptions for broad categories of conflicts: structural conflicts; frustrations; elementary actor conflicts and complex actor conflicts. For example, in structural conflicts, Galtung argues that four steps must be taken to achieve conflict transformation. First comes "confrontation," which he defines as "selecting an issue that encapsulates the general conflict … stating the issue clearly, and stating the desired outcome." Next comes "struggle," by which he means non-violent action that succeeds when "all parties are convinced that they cannot force the other to submit." Third comes "decoupling," which Galtung presents as "cutting the structural tie to the repressor and/or exploiter"; he offers "Gandhi's famous non-cooperation" as a prime example. Finally, there is "recoupling," meaning the construction of a "horizontal structure

> with human rights instead of repression, equity instead of exploitation, autonomy instead of penetration, integration instead of segmentation, solidarity instead of fragmentation, participation instead of marginalization (Galtung, 1996, pp.93-94).

Kriesberg distances himself from such formulas for structural change aimed at achieving new global approaches to conflict when he writes "there is no single conflict

resolution formula for ameliorating every conflict and preventing each from becoming more destructive" (1998, p. 366). For Kriesberg, each conflict must be approached individually and appropriately, and many methods must be developed in order to do so. "Thinking about each case as freshly as possible, and not assuming it is just like another struggle, is a good general rule" (1998, p.366). It is important to note that Kriesberg rarely employs the terminology of "conflict transformation." Instead, he writes mainly of "conflict resolution" through processes that transform relationships. How conflict is conducted – not only the context in which it is conducted – defines those relationships.

> … [C]onflicts waged and terminated destructively tend to perpetuate destructive relations. Such persisting cycles, however, can be broken. To interrupt and alter those tendencies requires wise transformation policies, resolutely pursued (Kriesberg, 1998, p. 333).

Lederach likewise builds a version of conflict transformation theory that focuses on the relationships of parties in conflict. Lederach, however, is more explicit and specific than any of his predecessors or contemporaries in describing and defining how such "transformative" relationships can be constructed – and how they must be based upon a principle of respect for local knowledge. This is Lederach's major departure from Galtung, who seeks broad-based understandings of how particular types of conflicts ought to be transformed. Lederach advocates for an elicitive approach to conflict transformation that emphasizes humility and caution – rarely seen in Galtung – when setting out to shift structures and norms.

> The principle of indigenous empowerment suggests that conflict transformation must actively envision, include, respect and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting. This involves a new set of lenses through which we do not primarily 'see' the setting and the people in it as the 'problem' and the outsider as the 'answer.' Rather we understand the long-term goal of

25

transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting (Lederach, 1995a, p. 213).

Lederach builds on the work of Curle, one of the earliest professors of peace education whose thinking emerged from a background in education and social psychology. Curle is no mere critic of actors in conflict. Like his contemporary Galtung and his intellectual protégé

Lederach, Curle is concerned with building models, testing them against actual cases, and considering how they might be applied in pursuit of future peace. His primary units of analysis are the relationships that exist in both violent and non-violent situations, and he is interested mainly in determining whether they are balanced in terms of power, whether there is awareness of existing conflict and how both balance and awareness might be increased. Curle's basic analytical framework is much simpler than Galtung's "eightfold path" to peace schema. Curle offers a matrix for plotting a relationship based on the amount of balance and level of awareness of conflict that exists. Curle is unapologetic that his approach to peace is laden with the value that "it is right to change the condition of the happy slave" (1971, p.5). Though he does not explicitly use the term "conflict transformation," Curle writes about the possible "transformation of unpeaceful into peaceful relationships" (1971, p.24). Thus, he defines peacemaking as:

> making changes in relationships so that they may be brought to a point where development can occur … The essence of these relationships is that the smaller or weaker partner is helped to develop his potentialities and that, in the process, he contributes to the development of the stronger. (1971, p.16).

Lederach pushes forward on Curle's (and Galtung's) point that "education, or conscientization, is needed when the conflict is hidden and people are unaware of imbalances and injustices" (Lederach, 1995b, p.12). Lederach argues that once awareness

of conflict rises, demands for change follow. Since these demands often are unheard or

ignored on account of the very power imbalance that underlies a conflict, Lederach

suggests that this is the stage at which advocates for those favoring change tend to enter a

conflict environment in an attempt to balance power through confrontation, which may

be violent or non-violent. One outcome of such confrontation may be a new awareness of

interdependence between the parties and an acceptance of negotiation or mediation as a

path forward.

> Successful negotiations and mediation lead to a restructuring of the relationship
> and deal with fundamental substantive and procedural concerns. This result is
> what Curle refers to as increased justice or more peaceful relations (Lederach,
> 1995b, pp. 13-14).

In this way, Lederach begins to reconcile Galtung's structural approach to conflict

transformation with Kriesberg's primary emphasis on transformation as a mechanism for

re-imagining relationships between conflicting parties. Lederach uses Curle's framework

to help complicate thinking about transformation of relationships and conflicts. He points

out that the second and third stages of conflict transformation, as defined by Curle –

advocacy and mediation – may appear to be contradictory because advocates often seek

to "increase the overt expression of conflict" in order to produce greater awareness of

conflict leading to change while mediators tend to work towards mutual understanding

and a decrease in the adversarial nature of relationships within a conflict.

Despite this "impression of incompatability," Lederach offers:

> [T]his framework … suggests the inverse: that the longer-term progression of
> conflict toward justice and peaceful relations must integrate and view these
> activities as necessary and mutually independent in the pursuit of just change and
> peaceful transformation (Lederach, 1995b, p. 15)

Lederach broadens this concept by explaining that conflict transformation is both descriptive and prescriptive. On one hand, it assumes an understanding of conflict as a force that can be constructive or destructive. It also prescribes an approach to peacebuilding that encompasses "changing destructive relationship patterns" and harnessing the energy of conflict "as a transforming agent for systemic change" (1995b, p.18).

Miall seeks to bring together these differing strains of thought about conflict transformation by synthesizing Galtung's emphasis on the process of transformation with Curle's and Lederach's emphasis on local knowledge and history. Miall suggests building on Galtung's conflict triangle:

> On to 'contradiction' we can add 'context'; on to 'attitudes,' 'memory,' and on to 'behaviour,' 'relations.' This recognizes that the meaning of a conflict depends largely on the context out of which it arises. The attitudes the parties have towards one another are shaped by previous relationships. The behavior they adopt is not purely reactive, but is based on their memory of what has happened in the past, and expectations of what may happen in the future … Context, relationships and memories are all part of the tissue connecting the contradictions, attitudes and behaviors in the conflict formations, within the wider background in space and time (Miall, 2003, p.8).

Continuing this added focus on conflict context as a key for successful conflict transformation, Miall proposes the addition of "context transformation" to Vayrynen's four realms of conflict transformation (actors, issues, rule and norms, and structures). Miall's vision of context, however, is inconsistent with Lederach's view that context includes mainly the "relational and cultural" aspects of a particular conflict. When Miall explains what he means by "context," he writes of "changes in the international or regional environment" and mentions the end of the Cold War as an example. Vayrynen's original model likely would categorize this example as a structural transformation, which

he defines as "more profound than limited changes in the composition of actors, issues or rules" and depends upon either a significant change in the "distribution of power between actors" or a "qualitative change" in their mutual relations, such as the "extent of communication and interdependence" between them (Vayrynen, 1991, pp.5-6).

Miall's attempt to introduce context as a new category into Vayrynen's model is useful, but in order to do so successfully, he would need to adopt a less structural and systemic understanding of context to become more consistent with Lederach's call for serious consideration of the "human and cultural resources from within a given setting" (2003, p.10) as a major factor in conflict transformation processes. Vayrynen's model, in fact, does not dismiss specific relational and historical contexts as significant factors in conflict transformation, but rather embeds them in his four types of transformation. He writes of the "social, economic and political dynamics of societies" as reasons why "[c]onflicts are continuously transformed even if efforts to resolve them explicitly have not made any visible progress" (1991, p.4).

Identity

One way that such transformations can occur is through changed understandings of identity. Raising awareness of direct and structural violence, as Galtung argues, represents one important element of conflict transformation. Shifting attitudes and behaviors, as Kelman and Ricigliano suggest, constitutes another important step toward transforming conflict systems in more peaceful directions. A third path to conflict transformation may be found through the development of more nuanced views of one's own and others' individual and collective identities, including the recognition or

misrecognition of actors who may be perpetrating or experiencing violence in their societies.

Tilly (2002) defines identities as "always assertions, always contingent, always negotiable, but also always consequential. Identities are social arrangements reinforced by socially constructed and continuously renegotiated stories" (p. xiii). Taylor (1994) offers that identity is "something like a person's understanding of who they are, of their fundamental defining characteristics as a human being" (p. 25) and that "[n]onrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (p.25).

Misrecognizing other groups' identities can lead to development of inaccurate images and perceptions of them. Oberschall (2007) writes that particularly in ethnic conflicts, misrecognition increases because "each group possesses its distinct frame and collective myths about ethnic relations, and these will become more distinct in a crisis" (p. 23). Political powers often take advantage of this phenomenon in order to build group cohesion and support for their leadership.

> We accept as true what fits our cognitive frame, and we reject as false what is discordant. Our frame is a social construction promoted by trusted authorities … The frame transforms the arbitrary, the uncertain, the unfamiliar, and the questionable into values, beliefs, and opinions that are certain and beyond question. (p. 22)

Lederach (1997) offers that extremely negative perceptions of other groups in conflict can produce fear, leading to a search for security that may be found in group identity. Defending that identity becomes tantamount, and violence may be the chosen course of action in this "fight for survival … of the group identity" (p.15). The use of violence only increases fear of the other group, leading to more and more violent actions.

Such conflict frames and attitudes persist long after physical violence ends. As Oberschall writes:

> According to the paradox of peace making, the adversaries' relationship has become more hostile and less trusting; rigid and extreme views about one another have embedded in collective myths that have the force of truth; each considers itself the victim of the other's aggression (2007, p.186).

Thus, conflict transformation must include explorations of identity, even if such critical reflection runs counter to existing political projects. Increasing self-awareness of group identities and possible misrecognition of such identities on every side of a violent conflict is a form of "conscientization" as envisioned by Freire and a basic precondition for the type of critical peace and conflict research that Galtung, Lederach and other conflict transformation theorists envision.

Dietrich (2013) offers the most complex and integrated model to date of conflict transformation that he acknowledges to be an outgrowth of Lederach's work. Dietrich's theory, which he calls "elicitive conflict transformation" (p. 202) seeks to reconcile issues of identity, power, history, culture and politics. He begins with a two-dimensional triangle originally proposed by Lederach that shows categories of peacebuilding actors, with grassroots actors at the base, mid-level leaders in the middle and high-level leaders at the top. He then suggests that the triangle may actually be sort of a "matryoshka doll" with inner nested layers that represent the spiritual, mental, socio-emotional and sexual dimensions of actors that "unmistakably seep through the mask of the personae and that unmistakably contribute to a [conflict] episode" (pp. 201-202).

Dietrich then steps back from the triangle, and presents a bird's eye view of it, which shows a three-dimensional pyramid with justice, security, harmony and truth

representing each side of its base. Finally, he completes the model by showing horizontal

bands around the surface of the pyramid as seen from above, such as awareness,

community, politiciary and global.

> To emphasize the aspect of balance, I employ my diagram as a metaphorical floor
> plan derived from Lederach's pyramid. If one side is overburdened, the building
> will collapse. Likewise, if a single aspect is overemphasized in conflict work, for
> example security, then harmony will be undermined and truth and justice will be
> destabilized ... Applied to conflict work, this metaphor emphasizes that all
> individual and social interactions in the conflict must be considered … While
> working on one, we must not lose sight of the others (2013, p. 207).

Such a complex and integrated model of conflict transformation suggests a need

for individuals who are well-prepared to undertake multi-dimensional conflict work with

an ability to view the system as a whole and for its parts, and to act upon it in both ways.

As Dietrich writes, "conflict professionals cannot be expected to be specialists for every

possible combination" but that "they must be expected to be knowledgeable about the

interactions among the layers and areas, and about the ways in which they function"

(2013, p. 207). Preparing individuals to approach conflict transformation in such a

specific, yet holistic manner would appear to be a complicated task in itself. Thus, at this

point, I will turn to consideration of the role of education in conflict transformation.

Education as the catalyst for conflict transformation

All of the theories -- and strains of theories – that this paper has investigated so

far explain broadly how conflict might be transformed, both in terms of relationships and

structures. But how and why might such changes actually occur? Galtung outlines many

specific possibilities for addressing conflicts of different types at different levels in order

to produce desired structural shifts. Kriesberg insists on the need for focusing on

relationships. Curle and Lederach offer clues for how relationships might be altered, and also how context, history and culture must form the foundation of any conflict transformation effort. Dietrich reminds us that each conflict episode is so unique that we must pay close attention to foundational issues such as justice, security, harmony and truth, as understood in particular conflict contexts.

What role can higher education play in transforming conflicts? Before attempting to view conflict transformation through an educational lens, it is necessary to develop a better understanding of why education might be an effective method for transforming conflicts, and more specifically to consider what forces could be harnessed in order to transform relationships that define conflict, as well as the political, social and economic structures in which those relationships are embedded.

Kelman provides important thinking about the social psychological processes at work in conflict transformation. He focuses on changes in conflict actors that occur when they think of themselves as members of groups rather than as separate individuals. Through his work on interactive problem solving workshops with Israelis and Palestinians, Kelman has come to understand the connection between the attitudes that Galtung describes and the behavioral and structural change he seeks. Kelman writes in a 1997 article, "Group processes in the resolution of international conflicts: Experiences from the Israeli-Palestinian case," that the workshops

> ... are designed to produce changes in the workshop participants themselves ...
> These changes at the level of individual participants are a vehicle for promoting
> change at the policy level. Thus, the second purpose of workshops is to maximize
> the likelihood that the new insights, ideas, and proposals developed in the course
> of the interaction are fed back into the political debate and the decision-making
> process in each community. One of the central tasks of the third party is to
> structure the workshop in such a way that new insights and ideas are likely both to

be generated and to be transferred effectively to the policy process (Kelman, 1997, p. 214).

Drawing on the thinking of Lewin, who argued that changing attitudes of a group may be a more effective strategy that seeking to make similar changes with individuals, Kelman provides justification for Curle's, Kriesberg's and Lederach's emphasis on the relational aspects of conflict transformation. Baron (2004) writes that Kelman sought to create a common identity – or shared fate – in workshop participants, and that this connection enabled them to consider possibilities for conflict transformation they otherwise would not have entertained.

> It can be argued that an attitude situated in a relationship is different than an attitude viewed at an individual level. This analysis can, in turn, be seen as a type of reframing Kelman's concept of identification-based attitude change, which rests on the continued salience of that relationship. Viewed in this context, attitude change for both Lewin and Kelman is tied to movement at the relational or group level (Baron, 2004, p.17).

Kelman (1965) explains that these shifts become possible because attitudes are merely the collection of images that individuals create and hold of other people, groups and objects. Images, Kelman writes, "can be characterized in terms of the affect toward the object that they carry -- the degree to which the individuals tends to approach or avoid, to like or dislike, to favor or oppose this object." Images include "not only the individual's conception of the object at present, but also his view of its past and future. (p. 24). These images and attitudes include "the conceptions that individuals have of their own nation, of other nations, and of the international system as a whole" (pp. 25-26).

Lederach, citing Kelman, writes that conflict "transforms perceptions of self, others, and the issues in question, usually with the consequence of less accurate understanding on the other's intention and decreased ability to clearly articulate one's

34

own intentions" (1995b, p.18). Thus, to transform relationships that define how conflict is pursued, such images and perceptions must change. Kelman's work suggests that such change is undertaken most successfully in a relational context, creating somewhat of a circular (or perhaps spiral) pattern of pursuing relational transformation of conflicts by seeking to alter images and attitudes within a relational context.

Also drawing on Kelman, Elise Boulding argues that shifting images and attitudes requires a shared commitment on the part of conflict actors to envision a future together. In describing a set of future "imaging" workshops she conducted in 1985, Boulding notes that some participants – particularly youth with previous relationships between them – have an easier time with the exercise while adult academics struggle, a situation she attributes to their investment in their "present activities," otherwise known as the status quo (E. Boulding, 1995).

Education thus emerges as a promising potential mechanism for shifting images and attitudes related to conflict, particularly if an instructor can be envisioned as a third-party leading a group of students through an exploration of conflict with a focus on the political manifestation of critical concepts. It may be worthwhile to consider again Kelman's (1997) argument that "[o]ne of the central tasks of the third party is to structure the workshop in such a way that new insights and ideas are likely both to be generated and to be transferred effectively to the policy process." Envisioning Kelman's interactive problem solving as an educational process provides a model for how education might play a role in shifting societal norms in the direction of conflict transformation, which Miall (2003) describes as "a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships,

interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflicts" (p.4).

Lederach emphasizes the need for elicitive approaches to building peace that "actively envision, include, respect and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting" so that "we understand the long-term goal of transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting" (Lederach, 1995a, p.213). One promising vehicle for such transformations of conflicts to occur, Lederach argues, is "education, or conscientization … when the conflict is hidden and people are unaware of imbalances and injustices" (1995b, p.12).

The idea that individuals must attain higher levels of awareness of hidden conflict or violence before they can effectively begin to address it emerges from the work of Freire, who argues that oppressed individuals and groups must begin to liberate themselves through "conscientization" which he defines as the "deepening of the attitude of awareness" (2000, p. 109). Education can support this process, Freire maintains, but only if the educational process is "dialogical" where dialogue is defined as "the encounter of men and women in the world in order to transform the world" (2000, p. 129). Thus, the traditional hierarchy that separates teachers and students must be transcended, "resolv[ing] the contradiction between teacher and student" (p. 129).

Because Freire's vision of oppression runs parallel to Galtung's notion of structural violence, Freire's dialogical educational program can be conceptualized as a path to positive peace. Only education that succeeds in awareness-raising about structural imbalances and proceeds non-hierarchically can facilitate conflict transformation and enable participants to pursue positive peace.

Little research has been conducted into the conflict transformation potential of

peace and conflict studies programs. One recent study, however, by Kivimaki (2012),

describes how a master's class in conflict studies at Universitas Tanjungpura in West

Kalimantan, Indonesia, provided a platform for formation of the West Kalimantan Ethnic

Communication Forum that worked to diminish ethnic violence in the province. " …

[U]niversity teaching can be capacity building that empowers local peace actors for

conflict prevention," (p. 105). Kivimaki explains in great detail a three-year process that

began with an MA class and culminated with the Pontianak Declaration by leaders of 10

ethnic groups that "ethnic tension will no longer be considered as a special condition that

would exempt people from the legal consequences of their actions" (p. 145). Based on the

example he offers, Kivimaki argues that:

> academic diplomacy can transform violent demonstrative action and a shooting
war into   a verbal battle, for example, by offering academic dialogue and
educational platforms as   forums for the explication of arguments about the disputed
issues (2012, p. 148).

It should be clear, however, that in order to produce such conflict transformation

outcomes, university programs such as the one in West Kalimantan must succeed in

raising awareness of conflicts in their own settings, and must not reproduce the structural

conditions that have contributed to violence. Peace and conflict studies programs also

must build the capacity of students to be active agents of change in their societies. As

Maire A. Dugan writes:

> [S]tudents should leave a graduate peace studies program not only with the skills
> to be successful and productive members of the academic community - a litmus
> test in any graduate program - but also with the skills necessary to translate
> research findings into practical contributions to peace. To return to our definition,
> it is, after all, the goal of peace studies to make a contribution to the attainment of
> a more peaceful and just human condition (1989, p.79).

Although peace education is not the focus of this study, it may be useful to consider briefly the need for an activist approach to peace and conflict studies in the context of criticism that peace education has received. Ben-Porath (2006) argues that contemporary approaches to peace education have been ineffective because they are "all too often based on definitions that are either too broad or too narrow" (p. 74). Peace educators, Ben-Porath claims, favor either a "pedagogic approach" that focuses on development of "identifiable capacities" for violence reduction and thus promote a rather modest vision of peace that is limited to ending or avoiding direct violence (pp. 61-62) or take a "holistic approach" that seeks "to devise a comprehensive program to eliminate all aspects of violence" (p. 65). Both approaches are over-simplified and too "apolitical." She writes that the "failure to envision a different future is the weakest side of peace education approaches" and that the presentation of vaguely peaceful images or the promise of marginally-improved relations are not sufficiently compelling alternatives to people experiencing actual violence.

Lederach and other conflict transformation theorists such as Curle and Kriesberg offer constructive thinking that can be applied to this situation. They argue that it is necessary to develop actual approaches to conflict and violence that are both culturally and contextually appropriate in order to build peace. Kivimaki, writing about the West Kalimantan case, points to specific approaches such as "how to devise mutually beneficial strategies that prevent the communalization of inter-ethnic crimes, the escalation of political campaigns along ethnic lines and the exceptionalization of conflict situations so that violence becomes natural or acceptable" (2012, p. 148)

By this view, the fields of peace education and peace and conflict studies must be brought into conversation with one another so that students of either field may gain both the necessary awareness to recognize violence and conflict, as well as the necessary knowledge and skills to respond to it in pursuit of peaceful outcomes.

Consistent with such thinking, Ben-Porath proposes an approach to civic education in wartime she terms "expansive education" that would accommodate patriotism through notions of pluralism and "shared fate," focus on visions of a peaceful future that encourage "questioning the basic assumptions of war" (p.129) and, above all, understand and represent itself as a political project intended to build truly democratic peace. Expansive education stands as one possible model for critical peace and conflict studies that could respond to the need for awareness-raising about both direct and structural violence while accommodating and addressing socio-political realities in Iraq and elsewhere.

This study aims to articulate how peace and conflict studies is emerging as an academic field in Iraq. Understanding necessary conditions for establishment – and at least short-term outcomes – of university peace and conflict studies programs will help to explain how they might, as Ricigliano (2012) writes, serve as transactional entry points that ultimately could contribute to structural and attitudinal shifts in Iraq's conflict dynamics, thus facilitating constructive conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Next, I will turn to a discussion of the context of Iraqi higher education, against which the formation of peace and conflict studies programs must be viewed and considered.

CHAPTER 2

Context: Higher Education in Iraq

Why might higher education be central to the pursuit of peacebuilding in Iraq?

One reason is the long history of higher learning in Iraq and its central position in the

country's historical memory, even though the contemporary story of formal higher

education in Iraq is relatively brief. The Baghdad Law College, established in 1908, often

is recognized as Iraq's first modern institution of higher education (Marr, 2012). The

University of Baghdad became Iraq's first public university when it combined several

colleges and academies into a single institution in 1958 (Republic of Iraq; Harb, 2008).

However, the land now known as Iraq has a long and rich experience with higher

learning that stretches back more than 1200 years to the establishment of the Bayt al-

Hikma (House of Wisdom) by the Caliph al-Mansur, who moved the capital of the

Abbasid Caliphate from Damascus to Baghdad. "Over time, the House of Wisdom came

to comprise a translation bureau, a library and book depository, and an academy of

scholars and intellectuals from across the empire" (Lyons, 2009, p. 63). The House of

Wisdom, which has been called "a prototype of the modern university," reached its zenith

during the reign of the Caliph Al-Mamun (813-833) (Davis, 2005, pp. 4-5):

> Caliph al-Mamun [t]ook a great interest in the work of the scholars at the House
> of Wisdom, going there regularly to discuss the latest research, royal funding, and
> related matters directly with his experts and advisers. He also emphasized greater
> study of mathematics and astronomy in the work already under way (Lyons, 2009,
> p. 69).

Support for higher learning surged in Baghdad, and many other notable

institutions emerged and thrived over the following centuries. The Nizamiyah College

was founded in 1065 A.D. to teach Shafite Law, one of the four major Islamic schools of

law, and continued to operate for more than two-and-a-half centuries (Le Strange, 1983).

In 1185:

> [t]he traveler Ibn Jubayr attended prayers in the Nizamiyah on the first Friday after his arrival in Baghdad … and he describes it as the most splendid of the thirty and odd colleges which then adorned the city of East Baghdad … Ibn Jubayr further reports that in his day the endowments derived from domains and rents belonging to the college amply sufficed both to pay the stipends of professors and to keep the building in good order, besides supplying an extra fund for the sustenance of poor scholars (Le Strange, 1983, pp. 298-299).

The value attached to higher learning in Baghdad during this period was such that an even grander institution, the College of the Mustansiriyah, was built in 1233 by the Caliph Mustansir. More than 80 years after the Mongol siege of Baghdad had destroyed much of the city and its vast libraries, including the famed Bayt al-Hikma, in 1258, the College of the Mustansiriyah was described as "the most beautiful building then existing in Baghdad" (Le Strange, 1983, p. 269).

> [T]he Mustansiriyah surpassed everything that had been seen in Islam. It contained four separate law-schools, one for each sect of the Sunnis, with a professor at the head of each, who had seventy-five students (Fakih) in his charge, to whom he gave instructions gratis. The four professors each received a monthly salary and to each of the three hundred students one gold dinar a month was assigned ... According to Ibn-al-Furat there was a library (Dar al-Kutub) in the Mustansiriyah with rare books treating of the various sciences, so arranged that the students could easily consult them, and those that wished could copy these manuscripts, pens and paper being supplied by the establishment. (Le Strange, 1983, p. 267)

The modern state of Iraq would not come into existence for almost another 600 years, when, in the aftermath of World War 1, the former Ottoman Empire provinces of Baghdad, Basra, and, finally, Mosul, were joined together as a single entity under British occupation. Iraq gained its independence in 1932. A military coup d'etat led by army

officers Abd al-Karim Qasim and Abd al-Salam Arif overthrew the monarchy and led to

the founding of the Republic of Iraq in 1958 (Abdullah 2011; Tripp 2007).

Iraq's ties to such ancient institutions as Bayt al-Hikma and the College of the

Mustansiriyah helped to make education and higher learning central components of Iraq's

efforts to develop a national identity. As one oft-repeated Arabic saying goes: "The

Egyptians write, the Lebanese publish, and the Iraqis read." Davis writes of "Iraqis'

persistent emphasis on education" (2005, Strategies, p. 4). And, indeed, as Qasim sought

to consolidate the new republic, one of his tactics was to expand education, particularly

higher education, through "a new initiative to organize and expand Baghdad University."

As part of this effort, Qasim appointed Dr. Abdul-Jabbar Abdullah – a famous Iraqi

physicist who was educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology – as the

university's second president in 1959 (Abdullah, 2011, p. 121).

Higher education, as it is known today, expanded greatly in Iraq with the

establishment of several new universities in the 1960's and 1970s. Al-Mustansiriya

University (named after the ancient college) opened in 1963, Basra University and Mosul

University in 1967, and the University of Technology in 1975 (Republic of Iraq). The

first university in the Kurdistan Region – the University of Sulaimani – opened in 1968

(University of Sulaimani). As of 2012, there were 30 public universities throughout Iraq:

19 under the direct control of the Republic of Iraq's Ministry of Higher Education and

Scientific Research (MOHESR) and 11 under the Kurdistan Regional Government's

MOHESR (Republic of Iraq; Kurdistan Regional Government). At least 38 private

universities and colleges existed across Iraq in 2012: 28 of them overseen by the

Republic of Iraq's MOHESR and 10 by the Kurdistan Regional Government's MOHESR

(Republic of Iraq; Kurdistan Regional Government). By 2005, the most recent year for which statistics were available, Iraq had a total enrollment of 425,000 in its tertiary education institutions – an increase of eight percent since 2000; 36 percent of students were female (UNESCO, 2009).

Higher education first thrived in Iraq throughout the 1960s and 1970s. As Braude writes, "[t]he University of Baghdad enjoyed a reputation as the Harvard of the Arab world from its beginnings … and into the 1980s, with schools of medicine, engineering, agriculture and law yielding graduates who became leaders in their fields across the region" (2003, p. 171). The University of Baghdad's College of Law "rivaled its trend-setting counterpart faculty in Cairo" (p.174). Students from around the Arab world also flocked to the University of Baghdad's College of Medicine and College of Science (Harb, 2008).

However, these gains were short-lived. Soon after Saddam Hussein assumed the presidency of Iraq in 1979, the landscape of higher education changed drastically as the Ba'ath regime began to utilize the universities primarily as political tools (Harb, 2008; Dawisha, 2009).

> One of the most damaging ramifications of Baathist control was the brain drain inspired by the persecution, imprisonment, and assassination of faculty members and students. Thousands of university professors left to work in neighboring countries or in the West. Those who remained in Iraq had to contend with a lack of new research materials and a dearth of contacts with the outside world. This situation became especially acute after the imposition of UN sanctions following the first Gulf War in 1991 (Harb, 2008, p.3).

Saddam's politicization of the universities was all-encompassing, and grew more intense after Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980, starting a brutal eight-year war. The Iran-Iraq war ultimately provided the Ba'ath regime with its justification for carrying out

the destruction of thousands of Kurdish villages throughout Iraq's northern provinces during the 1980's. But in 1981, with Kurdish unrest beginning to percolate on the campus of the University of Sulaimani – located approximately 100 km. from the Iranian border and, at the time, the only university in the majority Kurdish provinces – the regime "jumped on this excuse and closed the university by issuing one of Saddam's whimsical decrees" (Fikrat, p.3). The Iraqi government ordered the university transferred to Erbil and renamed it as the University of Salahaddin. "Some of the student body and staff were translocated to the city of Hawlair (Erbil) and became the nucleus of the University of [Salahaddin]. Others were scattered throughout the Iraqi university system, while still others were fired (employees) or expelled (students)" (Fikrat, p. 3).

Soon, throughout Iraq, non-members of the Ba'ath party were banned from holding most university positions (Abdullah, 2011). As a consequence, "the line between academic responsibilities and party tasks became blurred for many academics" (Sassoon, 2012, p. 272).

> [F]or example, the president of al-Anbar University, himself a party member, wrote a letter complaining bitterly about the intervention of a [Ba'ath Party] branch member whose job was to oversee activities in the university. He criticized this comrade because, although he lacked any experience in academic work, he was making academic decisions about student examinations, assigning new teachers, and demoting others in breach of all rules (Sassoon, 2012, p. 272).

The end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988 did not bring Iraq and its universities back to a state of equilibrium. Saddam's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and subsequent loss of the Persian Gulf War to a United States-led coalition in 1991 led to a schism in Iraqi higher education – and the country's political structure more generally. A series of uprisings against Saddam's weakened regime began, first among Iraq's predominantly Arab Shi'a

population in southern Iraq, and then among the predominantly Kurdish population in the

north. However, Iraqi government forces reasserted their control, and forcefully put down

both rebellions. Fears in the north, where Saddam's regime already had destroyed

thousands of Kurdish villages during its *al-Anfal* campaign in the 1980s, sent hundreds of

thousands of people fleeing toward Iraq's borders with Turkey and Iran. The result was

passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 688, which called on Iraq to end

repression of its own people and created the rationale for establishment of a no-fly zone

north of the 36th parallel (just south of Erbil) patrolled by coalition forces, which forbade

entrance by Iraqi aircraft. Another no-fly zone was established south of the 32nd parallel

(south of Baghdad), but it was not effectively patrolled and, consequently, the Iraqi

government maintained control of southern Iraq (Tripp, 2007; Abdullah, 2011).

The establishment of the northern safe haven enabled the mostly Kurdish

population of the northern governorates of Erbil, Duhok and Sulaimani to create the

Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in 1992. Among its first acts was to re-open the

University of Sulaimani and to establish the University of Duhok (Kurdistan Regional

Government). During its first 20 years of existence, the KRG gradually gained greater

autonomy from Baghdad, a process accelerated by the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq that

toppled Saddam's regime and the adoption of the 2005 Iraqi Constitution that formally

recognized the right of autonomous regions to form and control many of their own

affairs.

> … [T]he Iraqi Kurds not only possess their most powerful regional government
> since the creation of Iraq … but also play a very prominent role in the Iraqi
> government in Baghdad … The actual division of power between the Iraqi
> government and the KRG, however, remains in potential dispute (Gunter and
> Romano, 2011, pp. 39-40).

In practice, the Republic of Iraq's MOHESR and the Kurdistan Regional Government's MOHESR operate independently of each other in many respects. However, the KRG's ministry must comply with Iraqi laws pertaining to higher education; any failure to do so would risk the possibility that degrees conferred by universities in the Kurdistan Region would not be recognized by the MOHESR in Baghdad (personal communication, June 15, 2011).

Universities in the Kurdistan Region and elsewhere in Iraq also continue to operate under the same basic architecture, for example, using an admissions system that relies overwhelmingly on scores on the baccalaureate examination taken by all students at the conclusion of secondary school, although separate baccalaureate exams are administered in the Kurdistan Region than elsewhere in Iraq. A 2004 report prepared by UNESCO about the challenges of education in Iraq described the process as:

> The Ministry defines the level of attainment needed for acceptance in special fields of study, based on the number of students and the ranking of the university (Baghdad, Mosul and Basrah were the 3 top-ranking universities). The highest gradings are required for medical studies and engineering. The placement system also considers other facts, like repetition of a year, knowledge of additional languages and the permanent residence of the student (p. 83).

Another similarity that persists between universities in the Kurdistan Region and throughout the rest of Iraq is the relatively poor stature of the social sciences. The 2004 UNESCO study found that sociology, philosophy, psychology and anthropology were taught in just five of the 20 universities that existed at the time, and that only six universities offered specific studies in political science or its equivalent. The greatest proportion of students (32 percent) were enrolled in education colleges, with the next-largest group studying natural sciences, engineering and agriculture (28 percent).

Students studying social sciences were grouped with those in law colleges (15 percent),

so it was impossible to know just how many were focused on social science. The

apparent lack of emphasis on social science in Iraqi universities stems largely from the

purpose for which most Iraqi universities initially were established: to train civil servants

to fulfill the basic administrative needs of the state.

> The first purpose for the Higher Education system in Iraq was to produce 'governmental employees' rather than a knowledge community. This philosophy is still dominant today, when the university teacher's main task is teaching, not research (Al-Kubaisi, 2012, pp.54-55).

The United Kingdom-based Council for Assisting Refugee Academics published

a study in 2012 that sought "to analyze the school curriculum of post-invasion Iraq, and

to examine whether it satisfies the aims of advocates for educational change" (Al-

Kubaisi, p. 53). The study's lead author instead found himself compelled to focus on the

difficulties of conducting social science research in Iraq, which he attributed largely to

"the absence of training in Social Science research methodologies in Iraqi universities"

(p.53). He found no rigorous courses in research methodology with the exception of a

statistics course focused on designing surveys at the University of Baghdad.

> The courses studied by both undergraduates and postgraduates where we can find the term [m]ethodology included in the curriculum of the Social Sciences generally aim to teach technical tools, such as how to select a subject, building the literature search, how to refer to the sources, and so on … . This produces students who do not differentiate between terms such as: 'introduction' and 'conclusion,' 'induction' and 'deduction,' 'description' and 'interpretation,' and … 'quantitative' and 'quantitative methods'. The social science faculties at Iraqi universities are still dealing with the issue of method as an instrument, and not a specialized scientific field, so it is taught in the first or second year as part of the necessary introductive tools for the student (Al-Kubaisi, p. 55).

An exhaustive literature search of English-language materials, combined with

inquiries of Arabic- and Kurdish-speaking academicians working in the social sciences,

has suggested that very little has been written on the broad subject of the social sciences in Iraqi universities. Furthermore, very little has been written about the notion of field research, applied research, and even less about the specific subject of peace and conflict studies. Thus, most of the information in this study about the contemporary context of the social sciences, field research and applied research in Iraqi universities has emerged from my own field research, which includes a decade worth of formal interviews and informal conversations with Iraqi academicians, as well as my own first-hand experiences of the universities during at least 25 visits to Iraq from 2003-13.

My own observations of a 2010 workshop hosted by New York University's Center for Global Affairs confirm Al-Kubaisi's conclusions. During the workshop, six professors from the University of Duhok, along with faculty members from three other Iraqi universities, worked together to strengthen the University of Duhok's existing Master of Arts program in peace and conflict resolution studies. There was general agreement throughout the workshop about the importance of including a research methods course that would prepare students to conduct field research, quite different from the legal research methods they had been taught in the past. The professor who had taught the earlier methods course was the most adamant about the need for change.

> Because of the admissions system, it is not always certain that students will have needed skills. Some students did not have research skills ... It needs a full course, beginning with [approaches], the types of [approaches] and the types of researcher and his characteristics, and ways of choosing problems of research. [Also] how to collect scientific materials? How to distribute it? How to write it? (personal communication, September 27, 2010).

More than a year earlier, the University of Duhok professor who was the first director of what was then called its conflict resolution center identified a lack of emphasis

on original research – particularly field research – as one of the great shortcomings of modern Iraqi universities. He expressed his hope that the fledgling University of Duhok MA program in peace and conflict resolution studies, then in its first year, would inspire students and faculty alike to undertake field studies that could have practical applications.

> In the ordinary fields, like law or economics or business or administration or medicine or geography, our system does not depend on researching – both for professors [and] students. We have research, for example for master's classes. But it is not a good way … people look at three or four references, and say 'OK.' Professors also make research not for scientific topics, just for administrative matters. The research project is very weak in our universities. In our universities, we do not teach methodology. In our system, I can describe it as not the ways of researching, but the ways of writing of research. There is a deep difference ... We do not have research in our universities. We have professors who teach only about how to write research, not about how to conduct research. Many professors do not understand the difference (personal communication, May 26, 2009).

Yet, when the University of Duhok unveiled its revised MA program in January 2012, it did not include a research methods course. Instead, a course on the role of Sharia Law in Peacebuilding had been inserted in its place. No such course had been discussed by professors at the curriculum development workshop. This example highlights the difficulty of introducing new subjects or courses within the contemporary Iraqi university system, which is still quite centrally controlled, either at the level of the ministries of higher education, the university itself, or at the college or departmental levels.

As this case also demonstrates, religious influence on Iraqi universities also has become an important factor that influences the acceptance of new fields of study. It is important to note that the intersection of religion and higher education is not a new development in Iraq. From the ancient colleges of Baghdad that emphasized study of different schools of Islamic thought to the 1960s activism of the Shiite Da'wa party at Baghdad University that resulted in 4000 students annually taking part in Ashura

processions, religious groups have been present and active on campuses (Kirmanj, 2013, p. 119). Since the ascent of the Iraqi government of Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki in 2006, however, some critics have argued that the influence of religion – from Shi'a groups in particular – has been too great. A member of the Iraqi parliament in 2012 who was a former professor at the University of Duhok voiced concern about what he interpreted as the growing link between religion and politics, expressed by the fact that:

> The Da'wa party thinks it should have as many people as possible in the Ministry of Higher Education, and also interior and defense … This is the political thing. The only way to have influence is to have as many people as possible in every institution and try to control it (personal communication, January 17, 2012).

Al-Kubaisi shares a similar concern that religious influences are limiting academic freedom at Iraqi universities, much in the way that the Ba'ath party formerly demanded consistency of thought and expression. He writes of "mental violence" (p.62) being committed against Iraqi academics in the aftermath of high levels of physical violence that have declined since 2008 (Iraq Body Count).

> The mental or psychological violence could be represented in the following three representative aspects. Firstly, university curricula (particularly in humanities colleges) are old fashioned and oriented by religious, sectarian and sub-sectarian biases. Secondly, scholars are prevented from teaching subjects that are classified by administrative staff as sensitive according to the city that the university lies in. The truth should only have one face and one interpretation in this location, and should be reached by this particular way, which highly hampers the academic freedom in searching truth. Thirdly, most of the research in Iraqi universities is poor and below international standards because of administrative censorship (such as secret informers recently appointed in universities and colleges and surveillance cameras recently installed) according to limited religious, sectarian and subsectarian constraints and the party ideologies of administrative staff (who were appointed by their parties leaders) which form the governmental body. The international standards, topics, and methods are regarded by administrative staffs as subversive and hostile, so when the researchers approach the prohibited triangle (sex, religion and politics) they face the accusation of being unbelievers and secular, a threat that makes academic freedom very vulnerable and even nonexistent (Al Kubaisi, pp.62-63).

Faris Nadhmi, a social psychologist and former professor at Baghdad University who now teaches at Salahaddin University in Erbil, writes about "[a]cademic corruption in the Iraqi universities" as one of the phenomena resulting from the outsized contemporary influence of political Islam in Iraq (Nadhmi, 2013). He points to the policies of the Ba'ath regime as the first source of the corruption, but that "[t]he roots of that corruption became deeper after the political change in Iraq in 2003, and it took very clear manifestations specifically in social and humanitarian colleges, with assertion that these manifestations extend far beyond Iraq to include many Arab and developing countries" (2014, p. 97).

> As a result, the current academic activity in Iraq became unable to produce education and knowledge in a systematic, stable and solid way. But, it produces researches or studies that usually do not offer a real treatment for the society's problems, whether on the explanation and analysis level or on the reform and change level. The academic activity is also a producer of graduates [who] lack the critical thinking, objecting and offering different possibilities which make them foreigners ... to their speciality to the point of forgetting what they have studied days after their graduation (2014, p. 105)

Nadhmi cites two primary reasons for the corruption that has infiltrated Iraqi universities: "learned helplessness ... due to years of bitter marginalization and intimidation" and "learned horror ... recently acquired as a result of assassinations, kidnappings and physical and moral abuse the academics have been exposed to for obvious intellectual or sectarian reasons, or for undisclosed personal retaliatory reasons" (2014, p. 106).

An example of Nadhmi's observation emerged during the 2010 workshop at NYU, when one University of Baghdad professor noted that she and her colleagues

needed to be extremely careful in how they approached the Ministry of Higher Education

about new programs because "the ministries keep changing, and we have religious and

ethnic differences in everything we do" (personal communication, October 1, 2010).

Regardless of the influence of religion, it is clear that the ultimate authority to

create new courses or programs is concentrated within the higher education ministries in

Baghdad and Erbil, and at times, with the university presidents who have influence

within the ministries. Musa al-Musawi, president of the University of Baghdad from

2003-2012, noted that his university, which had more than 60,000 students enrolled, has

created 475 different masters or Ph.D. programs.

> If we want to open a new subject or a new program, all we have to do is have a
> suggestion from somebody that there is a need for such and such a specialty in the
> B.Sc. or M.Sc. Of course the M.Sc. is much easier ... We have to have a
> feasibility study for new studies. If this happens, then it is forwarded to me and I
> will form a committee from the people in these studies. Then they will propose it
> to the university council, [which] I chair. I will forward it to the council, and we
> will see what is the importance of this, what is the need for it in Iraq. How many
> students do we have to accept each year? Are there any staff members who can
> teach and supervise the students? If this is ok, then we will approve it and send it
> to the Ministry of Higher Education for approval, which is a routine approval if
> the university council has approved it (Musa al-Musawi, personal communication,
> February 23, 2012).

Even when there is high-level interest in introducing new subjects, teaching

capacity stands as a serious constraint in Iraqi universities. The 2004 UNESCO study

showed that just 28 percent of faculty had Ph.Ds while 39 percent had master's degrees

and a full 33 percent had only bachelor's degrees. During the two decades leading up to

2008, the percentage of Iraqi faculty who held doctoral degrees averaged just 36 percent,

and most of those had been awarded by Iraqi universities, which had been degraded by

war and international sanctions (Harb, 2008). The result has been a:

two-tiered knowledge system: on the top tier are the older university faculty members who received PhDs in countries such as the United States, Great Britain and France; on the tier below are teachers who graduated from Iraqi universities during the 1990s, a time when international isolation diminished the quality of education available within Iraq (Harb, 2008, p.10).

The shortage of well-qualified faculty is a constant refrain throughout the Iraqi university system. The report of a 2005 UNESCO Roundtable on Revitalization of Higher Education in Iraq claimed that "[s]ince 1990, 30 to 40 percent of the best-trained professors have departed and migrated to neighbouring countries and to Europe and North America" (UNESCO, 2005, p.4). Nearly 500 more academicians were killed in Iraq from 2003-2012 (List of killed, threatened or kidnapped Iraqi Academics).

Nadhmi highlights a specific dynamic that has contributed to the overall low quality of contemporary Iraqi university faculty: large numbers of professors who have chosen to retire once they have reached legal retirement age, thus creating staff openings for younger, less-qualified professors and instructors appointed through what he calls "the ominous quota system" that favors "local alumni or graduates" (2014, p. 104).

[D]eans and department directors become forced in many cases to accept the appointment of instructors (teachers) that suffer from academic and educational illiteracy … Appointing these people happens because they were recommended by a sectarian authoritarian party or a militia-religious office, which … act under no law or regulation … [a]s if the university, state and country become personal booty (treasure) to those rushing to loot and distribute it among their partners in the raid. (2014, p. 104)

One response to the desperate need for a new generation of qualified faculty has been a pair of scholarship programs managed by the ministries of higher education in Baghdad and Erbil. The Higher Committee for Education Development in Iraq (HCED), sponsored by the Iraqi prime minister's office, started a program in 2009 that initially planned to send 500 graduate students to the United States and the United Kingdom.

Students qualifying for the awards were to receive scholarships covering full tuition, fees, books and travel plus a $1,950 monthly living stipend. Master's students received two-year scholarships while Ph.D. students received up to five years of support. All students qualified for up to one year of intensive English language study before beginning their academic programs. As of late 2012, approximately 2000 students had been accepted into foreign universities with 652 in the United States, 267 in the United Kingdom and smaller numbers in Australia, the Netherlands and France (EducationUSA, Higher Committee for Education Development in Iraq).

The KRG ministry of higher education started a similar program in 2010 – the Human Capacity Development Program – that has budgeted $100 million annually until 2014 to send students abroad to study for master's and Ph.D. degrees at "approved universities in 28 countries" Students in the KRG-sponsored program receive full tuition, fees, travel and an $1800 monthly stipend for up to two years for master's degree study, and three-to-five years for Ph.D. study. Students also receive up to six months of intensive English language study. More than 4500 scholarships were awarded between 2010 and 2013. (EducationUSA, Human Capacity Development Program).

With such a shortage of faculty in traditional disciplines, it is not surprising that there has been little movement toward establishing a new interdisciplinary field such as peace and conflict studies within the Iraqi university curriculum. Most of the energy of both ministries has been focused on maintaining and strengthening existing departments in the aftermath of three decades of dictatorship, war, international sanctions, military occupation and religio-political violence. Plus, universities in Iraq face ever-growing

enrollments. The World Bank estimates that tertiary enrollment in Iraq grew by 33

percent from 2002 to 2005, when it reached 424,908 (World DataBank). Enormous

growth of the student body began to occur at almost the same time as the system

struggled to cope with vast devastation to its infrastructure, caused mainly by looting in

the aftermath of the 2003 United States-led invasion. In 2004, estimates of the amount

needed to rebuild the university system ranged from $1.2 billion to $4.8 billion

(Schweitzer, 2013).

Still, higher education officials acknowledge the need for development of new

fields of study, such as peace and conflict studies. Dlawer Ala`Aldeen, the KRG minister

of higher education from 2009-2012, called establishment of the field within the

Kurdistan Region "absolutely needed … but it's not something that will naturally evolve

and come into existence if you don't actively invest in it" (personal communication, June

12. 2011). The difficulties of developing such a new field of study, he said, include a lack

of what he called "a curriculum pathway" and "a professional pathway," meaning that

students and their families must understand which skills such a field would teach, and

what types of jobs might await graduates after completing their programs (D.

Ala'Aldeen, personal communication, June 12. 2011)

> I personally think it's a worthy project, not only at the MA level, but also at the
> BA level. We could incorporate it into existing programs as modules. We don't
> necessarily need a degree in conflict resolution. But you could have a module
> within a degree, within an existing bachelor course that has such components. But
> then later, post-graduation, people could choose these aspects, these subjects to
> further their education and specialize in them. In five-to-10 years' time, we could
> have a good pool, a good critical mass, of experts in this field who would then
> sustain the process ... We need Ph.D. holders. We need people who could think
> and sustain it via long-term plans. It's a right start in terms of first preparing the

experts, who would then work backwards. Because the moment you introduce a new course in the university at the graduate or undergraduate level, you would then come under pressure of the people who would teach it. They have to be proficient or fluent in the local languages – and the language of study, which is Arabic in most cases, or Kurdish -- very little English. So it is a right start by having MA holders and then to work backward – and forward with Ph.Ds. (D. Ala'Aldeen, personal communication, June 12, 2011).

However, Ala'Aldeen's enthusiasm for the subject might have been explained in part by his apparent knowledge that I had been working on projects with university partners related to peace and conflict studies for a decade by the time I interviewed him. When addressing the subject, he spoke about "an effort like yours" and later said, "This is like an open door you're pushing. Impediments I can't see. But it has to be done properly, rather than imposing a system that is not compatible with our structure" (D. Ala'Aldeen, personal communication, June 12, 2011).

The KRG's minister of higher education was not the only top university official who interpreted my questions about peace and conflict studies as somehow related to a personal ambition on my part to establish the field. When I met with Musa al-Musawi, the former president of the University of Baghdad, in early 2012, I asked him about the small unit for peace studies and human rights that exists at the university's college of education, and how faculty at the unit could develop it into a more robust research center or department. He responded primarily by telling me the process I should follow to expand the field at his university. Al-Musawi and I engaged in the following conversation:

> Al-Musawi: I think this subject is very important, in my opinion. There are sufficient academic staff who can teach it. It is a course of study for two years. Go ahead with your suggestion and I will support it.

Me: You have already the educational unit [for peace studies and human rights at the College of Education].

Al-Musawi: Yes, we have. We might adjust the subject or make a new subject.

Me: But who should come forth to make the proposal?

Al-Musawi: You email it to me, of course saying that Duhok is doing this subject, and others, and that it is an important subject. I will forward it to the specialist people, to the psychologists. And then they study it. I will email it to them and make a link between you and them to have a dialogue about it. At the end of the day, we might reach a conclusion.

Conversations such as those have complicated the process of determining whether a genuine and structurally-necessary interest exists in peace and conflict studies among university leadership in Iraq, beyond the small number of faculty members and students who are eager to develop the field. And it has been almost impossible to gauge the level of interest in peace and conflict studies by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Baghdad during the course of this study. During the summer of 2011, I submitted several formal requests to interview Ali Al-Adeeb, the minister, through two of his advisors, and received assurances by telephone and email that an appointment would be set for me, but it never was. In February 2012, I spoke with Abdul Sahib Najib, an advisor to the minister who was attending a higher education conference in Washington, D.C. and explained the purpose of my research to him. "The minister would like this very much," he said. "Currently, there is democracy and human rights now taught. The minister wants to change it to this thing you said [peace and conflict studies]." I was told that the Iraqi cultural attaché in Washington, D.C. would arrange a Skype meeting between Al-Adeeb and me, but again, no meeting was scheduled after my formal request to the cultural attaché. I wrote an email to Dr. Abdul Sahib on November

21, 2012, informing him that I would be in Iraq and available to meet the minister from

January 3-22, 2013. I received a reply on January 20, 2013 that read:

> Welcome Professor Thomason Hill
> We would like to inform you with the consent of the Minister to meet with you in
> order to discuss your research is marked by the development of peace and conflict
> studies.
> With appreciation
>
> A. Dr. Abdul Sahib Najim Abdallah
> Adviser to the Minister of Higher Education
> (A. Sahib Najim, personal communication, January 20, 2013)

I quickly replied by email that I would be in Iraq for a few more days, asked when

and where I could meet with the minister and supplied my mobile telephone number. As

of February 2014, I had not received a reply.

Higher education leaders in Iraq who either suggest that a foreign researcher

should be the one to introduce a new program or who express interest and then refuse to

meet with a researcher altogether could be understood as the cultural product of Iraq's

long, complicated and often negative experience with external powers. As Muhsin al-

Musawi, former professor at Baghdad University and current professor at Columbia

University writes:

> Between 1960 and 1990, hundreds of Iraqis received their doctoral degrees from
> American schools in every field of knowledge, including law, economy,
> management, finance, media, engineering, and medicine. It should certainly have
> been surprising to them that between April 2003 and June 2004 that the help of
> American junior professors was being enlisted to lay out the constitutional and
> institutional mapping for post-Saddam Iraq. Local authorities since the so-called
> independence [in 1932] … proved to be aware of cultural dynamics. They were
> noticeably aware of culture as an effective ideological means for hegemony.
> Foreign powers demonstrated (and are demonstrating) not only inadequacy, but
> also superficiality in dealing with Iraq's structures of feeling, tempers, symbols
> and lifestyles. Local authorities also showed readiness to reinvent tradition;
> foreign powers on the other hand thought then, and think now, in terms of might,

physical coercion, and other disciplinary means as deployed in the hinterland (Al-Musawi, 2006, p. 44).

At least one other serious structural impediment exists in the Iraqi higher education system that has prevented peace and conflict studies from establishing roots. Throughout Iraq – both in the central-government controlled region and the Kurdistan Region – the discipline one studies at the bachelor's level determines the discipline one can study at the master's and Ph.D. levels. Small shifts are possible – for example from psychology to social psychology, or from private law to international law – but attending the Agricultural College as an undergraduate means that it is impossible, subsequently, to study at the College of Arts or College of Law for a graduate degree. Consequently, offering a program at the master's level – when there are no bachelor's programs to feed into it and no doctoral programs to prepare graduates as future professors – means introducing an intellectual discontinuity into a system that places high value on consistency of thought.

The University of Duhok professor who first led its conflict resolution center said he understood the importance of bringing together a diverse cohort to study peace and conflict, but that the program organizers – at the College of Law, where the program was established – were deeply constrained by the issue of disciplinary consistency. Although they invited students to apply if they had bachelor's degrees in law, political science, sociology, anthropology, or media studies, the program's first cohort consisted of four male, Kurdish students, three of whom had undergraduate degrees in law and one who had a degree in media studies.

We tried to get students with many different backgrounds. We tried to get students with many different governorates, from many different [ethnicities], male and female … at last we depended on their degrees. You can't accept a student whose average is 70 for example, and not accept another one who is 75, just because the person with 70 is from a history background or because she is female or because he is from another religion ... Here it is very strange for a man to hear about a man whose background is in physics and is applying for a program in conflict resolution … There will be many speeches. People will say 'How can a person whose background is in physics get a masters degree in conflict resolution?' This is our real problem in our society (personal communication, May 26, 2009).

Higher education plays an important role in Iraq's national identity, linking the contemporary state with the great academic achievements of its ancient predecessors. However, Iraqi universities in the modern era have enjoyed only a relatively brief period of distinction that ended once Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath party came to power. Severe limits on academic freedom preceded three wars that gradually decimated Iraq's intellectual class. More than a decade of international sanctions robbed the universities of needed material resources. The years that followed what many Iraqis hailed as their liberation from Saddam's regime have been marked by even more challenges for Iraqi universities. New limits on academic freedom, this time by religiously-inspired political actors, poorly trained faculty, a lack of understanding of the social sciences and modern research, highly centralized systems, and a rigid structure that provides few opportunities for even ambitious faculty and students to innovate have combined to create an environment that is relatively hostile to the emergence of new fields of study, particularly one as interdisciplinary and critical in nature as peace and conflict studies.

60

CHAPTER 3

Analytical Framework and Methodology

This study attempts to answer two foundational questions about the development of peace and conflict studies in Iraq:

1. What are the conditions that promote or impede establishment of a university-based program in peace and conflict studies in Iraq?, and;

2. Once such a program is established, what are possible conflict transformation-related outputs and outcomes of these programs over the first three years of their existence?

I have addressed each question through an inductive process that has involved observation and analysis of the cases studied. Based on my observations of each case – including the observed failed attempts to establish programs – I have induced a general set of conditions that I have then used to analyze all three of the primary cases.

To address the first question, I examined each case for three specific conditions:

- To what extent did a favorable political climate exist that facilitated the establishment of the program in peace and conflict studies? To evaluate the political climate that existed in each case, I examined perceptions of political openness that contributed to – or, at least, did not impede – development of new areas of academic inquiry, as well as levels of personal security felt by academicians and students that translated into their comfort exploring new and critical lines of inquiry represented by peace and conflict studies;

- To what extent did entrepreneurial or charismatic university leadership play a role in establishing the program? In each case, university leadership played decisive roles in establishing the programs that came into existence. Participants in and observers of each of the new programs pointed to the importance of leaders who looked beyond day-to-day management of the university to the development of students and faculty as societal leaders.

- To what extent did the availability of resources – financial, intellectual and relational – help to facilitate the program's establishment? The three cases suggest that the availability of new resources catalyzed the development of each new program, and the form of these resources played a role in determining how each program matured.

To address the second question, I limited the scope of my analysis to the three cases of successful establishment of peace and conflict studies programs at the University of Duhok, Baghdad University and the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. I analyzed the data – mainly interviews with administrators, faculty, researchers and students involved with each program, but also my personal observations as well as some public documents related to each program. This analysis helped me to produce a typology of possible conflict transformation outputs and outcomes from a peace and conflict studies program within the first three years after its establishment. I completed my analysis by examining each of the three cases for each type of possible conflict transformation output and outcome.

In order to identify outputs and outcomes that would qualify as potential contributors to conflict transformation, I relied heavily on the thinking of four theorists: Curle, Galtung, Kriesberg and Lederach. Galtung, alone among them, sees conflict transformation mostly in structural terms. He writes that "[c]onflict generates energy. The problem is how to channel that energy constructively" (1996, p.70).

Curle, Kriesberg and Lederach, meanwhile, all approach conflict transformation as a process of shifting relationships between individuals, groups and institutions. Curle writes about the possible "transformation of unpeaceful into peaceful relationships" (1971, p.24). Kriesberg defines conflict transformation as "a process of shifting attitudes of specific conflict actors" (1998, p. 217). Lederach maintains a focus on the relational aspects, but offers a much deeper vision of conflict transformation as a process that "must actively envision, include, respect and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting" (1995a, p. 213). The development of peace and conflict studies programs at Iraqi universities is deeply entwined with Lederach's thinking that effective and constructive conflict transformation must be a home-grown process that encourages the development of greater awareness of conflict by its many stakeholders, and then builds local capacity to address it appropriately and in context.

I examined each of the case studies for both structural and relational conflict transformation outcomes. However, it was the focus on "people and resources within the setting," as described by Lederach, that served mainly to inform my identification of programmatic outputs and outcomes with the potential to contribute to conflict transformation (1995a, p. 213). Almost all of the outputs and outcomes identified are either people or resources that could be mobilized for the purpose of conflict

63

transformation "within the setting" of contemporary Iraq. Very few of the outputs and

outcomes noted contained the types of structural dimensions that Galtung envisions,

although that observation is consistent with the idea that structural changes tend to occur

over a period of time much longer than the period of this study.

The relatively brief period of this study also is important to note because it

informed selection of relevant analytical categories. I distinguished between outputs and

outcomes by relying on common definitions of these terms used in literature related to

logic models used in management, international development and, more recently,

peacebuilding. Church and Shouldice (2002) write:

> An 'output' is an immediate, tangible result of an intervention that is necessary to achieve the objectives. For instance, an output of a Track II diplomacy initiative could be the number of leaders it had in attendance. An 'outcome' on the other hand is the short-term result of a programme or project that is partially generated by the outputs. Using the same example, an outcome of this initiative could be a formal set of recommendations endorsed by all participants from both sides. Finally, 'impact' is the overall or long-term programme effects or changes in a situation (p.8).

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide usefully

connects these analytical categories to specific timeframes in which they might occur.

Outputs are defined as "the direct products of program activities" and outcomes as

"specific changes in program participants' behavior, knowledge, skills, status and level of

functioning"; the guide states further that "short-term outcomes should be attainable within

1-3 years, while longer-term outcomes should be achievable within a 4 to 6 year

timeframe" (p.2). Because of the relative newness of all the programs studied, when I

refer to "outcomes," in this study, I mean only short-term outcomes. I did not examine

possible conflict transformation "impacts" of the programs studied because the timeframe

of the study was much too brief. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation considers impacts to be

"intended or unintended change … as a result of program activities within 7 to 10 years"

(p.2).

Relying on those definitions, I arrived at a typology of conflict transformation

outcomes and outputs from the programs studied. Below I list each of the analytical

categories, along with rationale drawn from the conflict transformation literature:

Outputs

1. *Students graduated with degrees in peace and conflict studies*: The need for

individuals trained to think critically and undertake critical research projects is embedded

in several of the conflict transformation theories discussed earlier in this paper. The first

of Vayrynen's (1991) four realms of conflict transformation is transformation of actors,

referring at least partly to those stakeholders in any given society who have the needed

skills and training to catalyze transformations. Curle (1971) writes of advocacy and

mediation as his second and third stages of conflict transformation, suggesting that well-

qualified individuals must be available in any society to undertake those tasks. And

Lederach, as mentioned previously, writes that "[c]onflict transformation must actively

envision, include, respect and promote the human and cultural resources from within a

given setting," further insisting that actors in the field "understand the long-term goal of

transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting"

(1995a, p. 213).

Dugan, meanwhile, offers that graduates of peace and conflict studies programs

should obtain core academic skills as well as "the skills necessary to translate research

findings into practical contributions to peace" (1989, p.79). Developing a cadre of

university graduates in peace and conflict studies within Iraq thus would seem to support processes of constructive conflict transformation.

2. *Public or semi-public events that encouraged critical consideration about topics related to peace and conflict studies*: Events that increase public awareness about existing conflict in Iraq could help to facilitate the process of "conscientization" about which Freire, Galtung and Lederach all write, helping to reduce the likelihood, for example, that structural violence in Iraq is hidden from public view, leading to what Galtung considers cultural violence.

3. *Research papers related to peace and conflict studies*: The development and dissemination of papers by Iraqi scholars that capture and convey deeper understandings of peacebuilding processes and conflict factors represents a key piece of Galtung's vision for the role of peace research in conflict transformation. Galtung conceptualizes the process of peace research catalyzing conflict transformation as a "two-step channel: the researchers, communicating with the people, who then exercise pressure on the elites" (1996, p.28). Such a process would be impossible without the production, publication and/or presentation of new locally-based research on peace and conflict studies in Iraq.

Outcomes:

1. *Increased awareness and understanding by students or program graduates of critical concepts related to peace and conflict:* Any awareness-raising related to peace and conflict suggests a process of conscientization, consistent with earlier discussions in this paper. In particular, however, peace and conflict studies programs at Iraqi universities appear to be particularly appropriate spaces for students to consider power and identity issues in ways that might catalyze conflict transformation. Problematizing

traditional realist approaches to the role of power in conflict, as both Galtung (1996) and Kriesberg (1998) suggest, opens possibilities for new thinking that can lead to conflict transformation. Similarly, peace and conflict studies programs that encourage consideration of identity as a complex and critical concept can help shift inter-group attitudes in a group setting, as Kelman (1997) writes, and can transform conflict dynamics by diminishing the type of non-recognition and misrecognition of group identities that Taylor (1994) considers violence.

2. *Increased awareness and understanding by faculty and other university staff of critical concepts related to peace and conflict*: Similar to the way that peace and conflict studies programs can contribute to conflict transformation by enhancing students' awareness and understanding of critical concepts, such programs can have a similar effect on university faculty and staff. In the process of preparing to teach new courses and undertake new research projects, faculty and staff come into contact with conflict transformation concepts – mostly in published literature and preparatory workshops – that raises their awareness of conflict dynamics, and complicates their previous understandings of power, identity and other dimensions of conflict in Iraq.

3. *Establishment of a platform for future learning and practice in peace and conflict studies. This category includes three primary subsections: a. Program affiliates (students, graduates, faculty and staff) planning or taking next steps toward further learning or practice in peace and conflict studies; b. new relationships between program affiliates with a community of scholars and practitioners beyond the university working on issues related to peace and conflict, and; c. desire among program affiliates for expansion of these programs*: The importance of a platform on which a field of peace and

conflict studies can be built at the university level in Iraq as a contribution to conflict transformation emerges mainly from the thinking of Lederach (2005), who challenges the more traditional concept of critical mass as the primary determinant of successful social movements. "At a popular level," Lederach writes, "social change advocates often understand their goal as creating the numbers that count, what in everyday coinage has come to be called 'arriving at the critical mass' " (2005, p.88). Instead, he suggests that, "[i]n social change, it is not necessarily the amount of participants that authenticates a social shift. It is the quality of the platform that sustains the shifting process that matters" (p.89).

Building a strong platform for the development of peace and conflict studies in Iraqi universities seems mainly to be a relational task. The emergence of a community of individuals interested in continuing their scholarship or practice in peace and conflict studies connects to the thinking of Kelman (1965), who explains how it is easier to produce shifts in images and attitudes in a group rather than in an individual setting. Similarly, the ability of a university-level community to connect to the broader field of scholar-practitioners in peace and conflict studies speaks to its capacity for developing new relationships and for reimagining relationships in ways that can transform conflict dynamics, as Kriesberg (1998) writes. Lastly, eagerness for expansion of peace and conflict studies programs by program affiliates may indicate an understanding by actors in the Iraqi higher education context that such programs have relevance in their society to make contributions to conflict transformation. Also, such support by program affiliates may indicate that they already have accepted the notion of "shared fate" (Baron 2004;

Ben-Porath 2006) in Iraq, and wish to see their institutional platform contribute to further transformation of conflict dynamics in this way.

In addition to discussing whether and how these outcomes have been achieved at each of the programs, I will address the limitations of these outcomes, specifically those that manifest in feelings and expressions of uncertainty among program students, graduates or faculty about how to apply new ideas related to peace and conflict to existing university and societal structures.

<u>Methodology</u>

I generated the data for this study primarily through interviews with affiliates of the three programs studied, as well as with officials of the universities and the Iraqi higher education system. I conducted a total of 67 semi-structured interviews between May 17, 2009 and February 7, 2014. Fifty-one of these interviews took place in Iraq: 24 in Duhok; fifteen in Sulaimani; nine in Erbil; two in Baghdad, and one in Kirkuk. I conducted follow-up discussions by email or Facebook with 21 of these research participants. I conducted 13 interviews from New York: three in-person interviews; four by Skype; five by email and one by Facebook. I also conducted three interviews in Washington, D.C. Lastly, I facilitated three focus groups: one with nine Iraqi professors in New York on October 1, 2010; one with four students at AUIS on January 8, 2011 and one with seven students at AUIS on May 31, 2011. These focus groups offered me insight into different viewpoints within these groups about issues related to the development of peace and conflict studies at Iraqi universities.

All of these interviews and focus groups focused primarily on the period between September 2000 and June 2012, prior to the start of the 2012-13 academic year in Iraq.

Although there were significant developments related to the programs studied in the second half of 2012 and throughout 2013, it became necessary for me to set an end point to the study so that I could properly analyze the data generated without constant updates and revisions. In particular, the University of Duhok Peace and Conflict Studies Master of Arts program demands further exploration in a future study related to its activities from mid-2012 through the start of 2014, but those events are beyond the scope of this study.

Sixty-one of the interviews were conducted in English because the program affiliates had gained English language proficiency, at least in part because most peace and conflict studies literature has been written in English. For five of the interviews conducted in Duhok, I was assisted by a co-researcher who fluently speaks English, Arabic and the Badini dialect of Kurdish. He was, at the time, a candidate for a Master of Arts degree in peace and conflict studies at the University of Duhok, which he subsequently completed in January 2012. For one of the interviews in New York, I was assisted by a professional New Jersey-based Arabic-English interpreter who had been hired by New York University to help support a curriculum development workshop with Iraqi university faculty members. I used my intermediate Arabic language skills during these six interviews to follow the responses of the research participants, and at times communicated with them directly in Arabic, but I did not possess a sufficient level of fluency to enable me to conduct these interviews without the assistance of a co-researcher or interpreter, which, of course, presented a communication barrier. I believe it was a minor obstacle, but it is still worth noting.

In addition to interviews, I conducted at least 200 hours of observation, particularly at the University of Duhok and at AUIS. I co-taught two MA courses at the University of Duhok in 2009-10 and conducted workshops related to peace and conflict studies at AUIS in 2010 and 2011. These teaching assignments mostly enabled me to gain insight into the views of students at both institutions related to peace and conflict studies. I recorded these observations in field notes that helped to inform my subsequent interviews.

The study was conducted using a participatory action research approach. Many of the many research participants were invited to contribute to the formation and exploration of research questions that might strengthen their own scholarship and practice in the field of peace and conflict studies.

I protected the confidentiality of most research participants by coding their interviews. I refer to only eight research participants by name in this study: three university presidents; one research centers director; one minister of higher education, one deputy minister of higher education, one professor at Queen Mary University of London, one former program director at the United States Institute of Peace and one former program director at Conflict Management Group. For the rest, I coded the interviews using a system that noted each whether the participant was a professor (P), a student (S), or a graduate of a peace and conflict studies program (P&CS grad). I then added a number to each one. I also noted the date and physical location where each interview occurred. I compiled all of this information into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that I maintained separately from the interview transcripts.

I utilized a case study method to analyze and present the data. Almost all of the interviews and observations focused on particular institutions or programs being studied. I examined the interview transcripts for references to the major themes of the study: establishment of peace and conflict studies programs at Iraqi universities and outputs and short-term outcomes of these programs. In some limited instances, affiliates of one program referred to another program, and I then included those references in the data of the program about which the reference was being made.

For each of the three primary cases – the University of Duhok's Master of Arts program in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies, Baghdad University's Educational Unit for Peace Studies and Human Rights and the American University of Sulaimani's Center for Peace and Security Studies – I then further divided the data into sub-categories related to major themes of the study. For example, for each case, I examined each interview and focus group transcript, as well as my field notes, for references to factors influencing the establishment of the program. I followed this same process for each of three categories of conflict transformation-related program outputs and three categories of conflict transformation-related short-term program outcomes. Once this data was divided into these categories, it became the foundation for me to write the three individual case study chapters: Chapter 4 (University of Duhok's Master of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies Program); Chapter 5 (American University of Iraq, Sulaimani's Center for Peace and Security Studies) and Chapter 6 (University of Baghdad's Educational Unit for Peace Studies and Human Rights)..

I also scoured the interview and focus group transcripts for references to other attempts to establish peace and conflict study programs at Iraqi universities. I discovered

two primary efforts, and presented them as micro-cases in Chapter 7 (Other Efforts to Establish Programs in Peace and Conflict Studies). I also gleaned information from the data about individuals who left Iraq to obtain graduate degrees in peace and conflict studies. I analyzed this data for themes related to these individuals' experiences that spoke to the broader question of establishing peace and conflict studies at Iraqi universities. This data and analysis served as the basis for Chapter 8 (Peace and Conflict Studies in Iraq: Individual Cases).

This research investigates questions related to the development of peace and conflict studies broadly in Iraq. However, two of the three programs studied were located at universities within the Kurdistan Region, which contains just three of Iraq's 18 provinces. The third program was located in Baghdad, Iraq's capital. The vast majority of interviews and observations I conducted in the course of this study occurred within the Kurdistan Region, for two main reasons: 1. almost all of the institutional activity related to peace and conflict studies in Iraq during the time period of this study took place at universities in the Kurdistan Region, and; 2. high levels of direct violence outside of the Kurdistan Region during the period of this study made it too risky for me to visit university campuses in those areas to conduct interviews and observations. However, I have remained in frequent communication with academicians from all parts of Iraq – through email and occasional face-to-face meetings in the Kurdistan Region and in the United States – leaving me confident in my assertion that this study is representative of institutional activity related to the establishment of peace and conflict studies programs at Iraqi universities countrywide.

Next, I will present each of the cases of the three programs studied at the University of Duhok, the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani and the University of Baghdad. I will examine which factors contributed to each program's successful establishment, and then will investigate which conflict transformation outputs and outcomes those programs have produced.

CHAPTER 4

University of Duhok

How has the University of Duhok, a public institution located in the northernmost of Iraq's 18 governorates, established in 1992 with just two colleges and 149 students, become the country's leading university in peace and conflict studies? Certainly, the university experienced enormous growth as an institution in its first two decades; by the end of 2011, the university had expanded to include 17 colleges with more than 11,000 undergraduate and 500 graduate students (University of Duhok). Rapid, growth alone, however, does not explain why a new, critical field of study has taken root there.

The University of Duhok's first formal exposure to the field of peace and conflict studies occurred in the fall of 2000, when the dean of the university's College of Arts, as part of a 22-member delegation from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, took part in a two-week-long workshop focused on conflict resolution training at Columbia University (Center for International Conflict Resolution, April 23, 2002). The following summer, the same dean from the University of Duhok was among 20 participants in a follow-up workshop in Beirut aimed at developing an academic consortium with representatives from the other two public universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq as well as with representatives of Columbia University and American University in Washington, DC. The University of Duhok subsequently created a small conflict resolution office that was supposed to house its efforts to participate in the consortium. However, this office's activities were limited mainly to communicating with the other consortium members about possible future projects. One of the founders of this office said that the University

of Duhok did not have any expectation of conducting courses or research related to peace and conflict studies at that time (personal communication, September 26, 2010).

The office did, however, conduct at least five meetings between December 2002 and March 2003 at which at least five new members from the university's faculty were welcomed to the group. The university's president attended the fifth meeting of the office on March 8, 2003 and communicated his support for the endeavor (personal communication, March 17, 2003).

The United States' military invasion of Iraq and overthrow of former president Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003 began to open space for greater innovation at the University of Duhok. This space opened, in part, because representatives of international universities and institutes suddenly could travel freely to Iraq for the first time in more than a decade. The University of Duhok responded to this opportunity by hosting a five-day workshop in August 2003 that aimed at developing a university-level conflict resolution curriculum and was facilitated by three American academicians. Five University of Duhok professors were among the 13 participants in that workshop. No formal university curriculum in peace and conflict studies emerged from that workshop, but it served as a vehicle for further exploration of the subject.

In mid-2004, the consortium, with the University of Duhok as its coordinating member, applied for and received approximately $34,000 from the United States Institute of Peace (personal communication, July 25, 2005) for professors from all three universities in the Kurdistan Region to conduct a series of lectures about different disciplinary approaches to conflict resolution at their own and other campuses in the Region. The final event of that series, in the spring of 2005, was a meeting for 40

students from the University of Duhok and Salahaddin University in Erbil, Iraq (personal communication, September 26, 2010).

In 2007, the United Nations-mandated University for Peace (UPEACE) began a project supporting development of university master's degree programs in peace and conflict studies in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The University of Duhok was one of 16 universities selected to participate in the three-year capacity-building program that was intended to support curriculum development, to strengthen teaching abilities of professors at those universities and to facilitate contact between participating universities (http://www.upsam.upeace.org/about/). As part of this project, four representatives from the University of Duhok attended a UPEACE-sponsored curriculum development workshop in Alexandria, Egypt in April 2008, after which the University of Duhok decided to open a Master of Arts degree program in peace and conflict resolution studies (personal communication, September 26, 2010). The first four students entered the program in October 2008 (personal communication, May 17, 2009) and completed it in 2010. By January 2012, all of the first eight students who entered the program in 2008 and 2009 had successfully completed their master's degrees.

Meanwhile, in the summer of 2010, the University of Duhok began cooperating with New York University's Center for Global Affairs on a new project funded by the British Council that aimed to strengthen the new field of peace and conflict studies in Iraq. The program was intended to improve the quality of the University of Duhok's MA program, and also to expose selected faculty from other Iraqi universities to the curriculum development process. Over the 18-month span of the project, five professors from the University of Duhok twice visited New York to take part in curriculum and

course development workshops, and two other professors from the university each participated in one of the workshops.

The University of Duhok received approval from the Kurdistan Region's Ministry of Higher Education to implement a revised and expanded MA program in peace and conflict resolution studies in mid-2011. This new program began in January 2012, with 10 students participating. Top leaders of the university at that time viewed the program favorably, especially because of the cohort's relative diversity; two of the 10 new students were women while two others were affiliated with the Kurdistan Islamic Union (the main opposition political party in Duhok), one of whom was a former member of the Iraqi parliament. The president of the University of Duhok said in an interview that peace and conflict studies was "an important subject" that would support his broader goal of diversifying the university's profile to emphasize subjects other than engineering, medicine, law and the natural sciences, which have been Iraq's most respected areas of study since the establishment of its first modern universities in the 1950s. "We have a dream," he said in June 2011, "to be the leading university in social science in Iraq" (A. Khalid, personal communication, June 19, 2011).

To develop this case study, I conducted 21 interviews: one with the president of the University of Duhok; one with the KRG Minister of Higher Education; eight with professors who had taught in the MA program; one with Victoria Fontan of the UN-mandated University for Peace; one with a member of the Social Affairs Office of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Duhok; eight with the first eight graduates of the university's MA program in peace and conflict resolution studies, and one with an MA student in the program's third cohort. I also drew on information that emerged from four

other interviews: one with a professor at the University of Sulaimani; one with the former research centers director at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS); one with a student at AUIS, and one with a graduate of the MA program in Peace and Reconciliation Studies at Coventry University in the UK who offered observations about the University of Duhok. I conducted follow-up interviews by email with nine of those individuals.

I gained particular knowledge of the University of Duhok case through many first-hand observations that began with my first visit to the university in August 2003, as a representative of Columbia University's Center for International Conflict Resolution. Between 2003 and 2012, I made at least 15 visits to the University of Duhok. I delivered a one-day workshop about peacebuilding concepts to undergraduate students in March 2005. I later co-taught two courses in the MA program: Practices of Conflict Management in May 2009 and Multiculturalism in November 2009. I also served as director of a project in 2010-11 that brought six of the professors in the University of Duhok's MA program to New York University for two curriculum development workshops in September 2010 and September 2011, and, as a consequence, was able to engage in many informal conversations about the university and the program during that time.

Analysis of the case

In order to understand the significance of the University of Duhok's development of a Master of Arts program in peace and conflict studies, it will be necessary to apply the

analytical framework to it that was described in Chapter 3 of this paper. Three core

questions will be considered:

- To what extent did the University of Duhok exist within a political climate –

  including issues of personal safety and regional security – that was favorable for

  the establishment of its MA program in peace and conflict studies?;

- To what extent did entrepreneurial or charismatic university leadership play a role

  in establishing the program?

- To what extent did the availability of resources – financial, intellectual and

  relational – help to facilitate the program's establishment?

After those questions are explored, the program's outputs and short-term outcomes

will be articulated and examined, also using the framework described in the previous

section, in order to develop a greater understanding of possible outputs and outcomes of a

new MA program in peace and conflict studies within three years of its founding in a

locale that recently had experienced large-scale violent conflict.

In order to generate knowledge about the conditions that made possible the

establishment of the University of Duhok's MA program, 54 of the research participants

were asked to explain why Iraq's first degree-granting program in peace and conflict

studies was established in Duhok. In later interviews, some of the ideas that emerged

from earlier interviews were presented to research participants in order to test their

validity. Some of the reasons mentioned most frequently included:

- Duhok's favorable political climate, characterized by extremely low
  levels of political violence and in which there is very little meaningful
  dissent from the rule of the Kurdistan Democratic Party; there
  consequently is little concern about providing a platform for faculty and

students to engage in a form of education that encourages critical thinking and action;

- The president of the University of Duhok's personal desire to expand the mission of his university and to educate a group of individuals with strong skills in areas such as negotiation and conflict analysis who might become leaders in the public and private sectors;
- A wealth of resources available to the university, including relationships with international universities, and faculty who have demonstrated interest and developed intellectual capacity over almost a decade through repeated exposure to core peace and conflict studies concepts during participation in numerous projects with international partners in the field.

I will explore these proposed factors individually in order to develop a clearer understanding of them and their power to explain the successful establishment of the University of Duhok's MA program in peace and conflict studies.

Duhok's favorable political climate: First and foremost, research participants pointed to the relative physical security of the city of Duhok and the Kurdistan Region, in general, compared to other cities and regions of Iraq. In the first five years after the U.S.-led invasion that toppled the former Iraqi regime, there were fewer civilian deaths from "short-duration armed violence" in Duhok than in any other governorate in Iraq; of a total of 60,481 such deaths, just 25 of them occurred in Duhok (Hicks et al., 2011). By contrast, in the other two governorates that compose the Kurdistan Region, 155 civilian deaths occurred in Sulaimani, the fourth lowest figure in Iraq, and 295 took place in Erbil, the sixth lowest figure. By far, the most reported civilian deaths due to short-term violence took place in Baghdad, 27,050, accounting for 44.7 percent of all of Iraq's violent civilian deaths during the period studied (Hicks et al., 2011).

Furthermore, not one academician from Duhok was among the 471 academicians identified by the Brussels Tribunal as having been killed in Iraq during the period 2003-

2011; in fact, the list did not mention any academicians as having been killed in the

Kurdistan Region (Brussels Tribunal, 2012). By contrast, more than 80 have been

identified as having been killed from Baghdad University alone (Adriaensens, 2009).

A nine-person group that included six professors from the University of Duhok

and one each from Baghdad University, Kirkuk University and Sulaimani University,

addressed the issue of physical security as a necessary component to development of a

university program in peace and conflict studies during a focus group in New York on

October 1, 2010. One University of Duhok professor asserted:

> The issue remains clear to everyone that there is an obstacle to creating similar
> centers like Dohuk in the rest of the Iraqi universities. Most of them were affected
> by the security conditions so that there is a huge hesitation in forming such
> centers and even to attend workshops about these matters. Sometimes invitations
> are addressed to professors but they apologize that they cannot attend … [T]he
> presidents or deans avoid these issues. They are scared for their own safety ... In
> the Kurdistan region from 1991 to this day the Kurdistan security has been more
> welcoming to these kinds of advances. (personal communication, October 1,
> 2010)

However, there was not universal agreement on this issue. One University of

Duhok professor who previously taught at Al-Qadisiyah University in the southern Iraqi

city of Diwaniyah, said the fear of direct physical violence was not as great an obstacle to

establishing peace and conflict studies as concerns among the academic community about

supporting a subject that is foreign in its origins. Those concerns, however, appeared to

be rooted in fear of becoming identified with foreign intrusions into the Iraqi higher

education sector.

> There is no fear as [another professor] mentioned, but they look at it as a strange
> study and imported from abroad. That is why they are not encouraged to form that
> center and there is an Arabic proverb saying the human being is the enemy of
> what he ignores. In 2003, we tried to start a center for the study of human rights at
> Al-Qadisiyah University. I was the head of the law department at the time. The

president of the university was afraid to propose this to the ministry of (higher) education. The ministry instituted a decision to teach human rights all over the universities although we were the only one to do it before [that time]. The resolution was in 2004 … But we lost [the opportunity] to be known as the ones who had the first initiative because of the university president (personal communication, October 1, 2010).

The professor who first raised the security issue responded to his colleague by pointing to his own experience teaching about human rights at Mosul University. He suggested a clear connection between concerns for personal security, career security and the acceptance of new subjects that could be seen as foreign in origin.

With regard to the human rights course I used to teach at Mosul [University], there were large disagreements on whether to the keep the subject or cancel it and there was also the security issue. They renamed the subject [as] "academic culture." If it is proposed now, they will consider it as a foreign concept (personal communication, October 1, 2010).

This exchange highlighted the need for security – political as well as physical security – as a necessary precursor to establishment of a program in peace and conflict studies. Professors, students and university leaders certainly need to feel physically safe when trying to establish new areas of study; they need to feel secure that their projects will not open them to criticism about being too-closely-affiliated with foreign actors, which consequently could endanger their careers as well as their physical well-being.

The political situation in Duhok may be the most stable in all of Iraq. The governorate of Duhok generally is considered the strongest of strongholds for the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), founded in 1946 under the leadership of legendary Kurdish leader Mullah Mustafa Barzani. The first of the KDP's 24 branches is based in Duhok. In the election to determine representatives to Iraq's parliament in March 2010 – the Kurdistan Alliance – consisting nominally of the KDP and the Patriotic Union of

Kurdistan (PUK) – received 332,951 votes or 78.4 percent of all votes cast in Duhok governorate. But the PUK was represented in name only; the top nine vote-getters for the Kurdistan Alliance, who all won seats in parliament, were KDP-backed candidates. One seat went to the Kurdistan Islamic Union (Independent High Electoral Commission).

This high degree of political unity has contributed to the creation of an environment that is considered safe for discussion of difficult subjects. One research participant who lives in Erbil, a Kurdish Iraqi man who earned his undergraduate degree at Mosul University and his master's degree in peace and reconciliation studies in the United Kingdom and consequently has been an interested observer of the UoD's new program, saw Duhok's political climate as particularly appropriate for exploration of themes such as identity and collaborative negotiation that are central to peace and conflict studies.

> Duhok is a different case. Duhok, among the Kurds, is one family. They can talk about peace, they can accept each other. They can [use] the win-win approach. Even if they use the win-lose approach, they will not lose anything because they are the same family. But here in Erbil, and in Sulaimani, I cannot give much more than I take. I have to take more. There are Arabs, there are Turkmen, there is PUK, there is [KDP]. The same in Sulaimani, [where] there is Gorran (an opposition political party). In Baghdad, there are Shi'a and Sunna and others. So if you talk about peace, the first thing they will say is 'Teach the other side peace and then come to me. And then we can sit together'. In Duhok, the case was easier because they are all the same family, the same tribe. They are all the same color (personal communication, June 13, 2011).

Such a high degree of political unity does not exist anywhere else in Iraq. Only in three other cases in the 2010 election did a single electoral list command more than 50 percent of the vote in a single province: Al-Iraqiyya (also known as the Iraqi National Movement) took 63.2 percent of the vote in lightly-populated Anbar province and 56.3 percent in Ninewa province. The Kurdistan Alliance received 67.4 percent in Erbil

province, home to the capital city of the Kurdistan Region, but two PUK-backed

candidates won seats in parliament, compared to eight for KDP candidates and four

others for minor parties. Even Sulaimani – known as the stronghold of the PUK and the

regional counterbalance to the KDP's power in the western part of the Kurdistan Region

for more than 30 years – did not approach Duhok's level of one-party rule. In the March

2010 elections in Sulaimani, the PUK won the same number of seats in Parliament – six –

as the opposition group Gorran, whereas the KDP won two seats. Two seats went to two

smaller Islamic parties (Independent High Electoral Commission).

Still, as the 2010 election results demonstrated, there is a relatively high degree

of political agreement throughout the Kurdistan Region. Some participants in the

University of Duhok program believe that this situation opens space for consideration of

difficult explorations of peace, violence and conflict, especially on university campuses.

One of the first four students to enter the University of Duhok MA program suggested

that talking about subjects related to religion and peace, for example, was more possible

on campuses throughout the Kurdistan Region than in other parts of Iraq.

> [To] the society in Kurdistan in general, maybe this study is normal … If you're
> talking about religion and other things, maybe if you're in the south of Iraq and
> other places, it may be difficult. The religious parties control everything (personal
> communication, May 18, 2009).

The only female professor who taught in the first two years of the University of

Duhok MA program believes that political leaders in Duhok are unlikely to be concerned

by discussions of contentious topics related to peace and conflict because they do not feel

any threat from the academic community. Born in Baghdad and having lived for 16 years

in Mosul, she has observed that elsewhere in Iraq, even an academic discussion about a topic such as religion and peace may be viewed by political leaders as a challenge to their authority.

> [In Duhok] they are not looking at it as political opinion. But if we go to Baghdad and try to open a center for high studies, I think it will be the opposite … [I]f you take a subject like 'Peace and Islam' [the Shi'a] will never accept 'Peace and Islam' from the idea of the Sunni because the majority of them are Shi'a … And if you take the conflict in Iraq – the conflict between Shi'a and Sunni, between Arab and Kurdish since 2003 – it will be a big problem because the central government never will accept this idea that there is a real problem between them … in Baghdad it will be so difficult. Many professors have political backgrounds. They will not accept this kind of study unless they know which kind of subjects will be in the syllabus (personal communication, June 18. 2011).

The relationship between political openness and creation of optimal condition for the study of peace and conflict from an academic perspective is complicated by the question of how political openness is defined. Some observers of politics in Duhok see it as a closed space due to the unchallenged one-party rule of the KDP. The party's Kurdish nationalist agenda – that, among other things, calls for the certain return of the disputed city of Kirkuk to Kurdish control – strikes some as incompatible with the critical stance of peace and conflict studies. As one student from the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, observed, a KDP-controlled city, almost by definition, cannot possess the level of openness needed for a true pursuit of peace and conflict studies.

> Duhok is one of the two main cities that [KDP] is running. Do you really expect that the real thing of peacebuilding will rise in the university while the leaders of the city [who] are working on the universities are asking to gain Kirkuk back from the 'claws of the Arabs'? For example, we have two famous idioms. First Kirkuk is the 'heart of Kurdistan' and it is the 'Jerusalem of Kurdistan.' You know what? In hearts that have these ideas, you won't find any prophets of peacebuilding in Duhok, unfortunately, I would say (personal communication, June 5, 2011).

86

However, professors and leaders of the University of Duhok offer a different view. They believe that their political leaders have little concern for what happens at their university. Exactly because KDP leaders in Duhok have few worries about their own political survival, those involved with the MA program in peace and conflict studies said that space has been left open for critical studies to occur at the university. The president of the University of Duhok insisted his institution was "the most liberal institution in all Iraq" and that the city's political climate actually made that possible.

> Duhok is the best environment to speak about democracy because there is no fear from the competition. Nobody here is forced to be tied to any party, including the president of the university. Believe me. I am not related to any party. It is true that I voted for KDP, but I am one of the top [critics] of them … They are not afraid. They believe, at least the major party here believes, that all the people here are good for them – even if they are carrying opposite thinking, still they are part of their loyalty (personal communication, June 19, 2011).

One University of Duhok professor who has been active in the development of peace and conflict studies since 2003, noted that the university's first forays into the subject were actually the result of activist tendencies on the part of university leadership and faculty. He pointed out that these tendencies were fed by the combination of relative physical safety in the Kurdistan Region and concern over simmering tensions that existed between the KDP and PUK in the aftermath of the civil war they fought in the 1990s.

> We realized that our students are very interested in this field, and we began searching for ways to bring about a program. In addition to that, the political sphere in Kurdistan was more peaceful [than elsewhere in Iraq]. There was a peace agreement between the two parties [KDP and PUK], and there was an intention to unite. This was a big motive toward establishing such a program, in order to stabilize peace in Kurdistan through such programs ... It was weak connection between the two parties. We thought that through such a program, the peace might become stable (personal communication, Sept. 26, 2010).

87

One of the University of Duhok's first four MA graduates in peace and conflict studies meanwhile argued that the political contestation that resulted in massive demonstrations in other parts of the Kurdistan Region in 2011 – particularly in Sulaimani – actually attracted the attention of political leaders to the universities, and reduced the likelihood of professors and students engaging in any exploration of radical concepts related to fluid identities and structural violence that are fundamental to peace and conflicts studies.

> I think the space of freedom in Sulaimani is much bigger than in Duhok. There are many different parties there, and the people listen. If [the parties] say 'Go to the street,' they go to the street. Here we have a very small Islamic party, but they don't want to make relations bad between them and KDP. PUK, Socialist Party, they have small offices here, but they don't want to make the KDP angry, so they don't do anything here ... People here really are tired from the authorities [who] say 'We are going to do this or this.' But the people here understand that the authorities are not going to do anything outside the [political] program … Peace and change come not just from demonstrations … [W]e should think also how to change the party and the people, and the government and civil society. They complete each other, I am sure (personal communication, June 18. 2011).

The physical security that the academic community has enjoyed in Duhok since 2000, combined with unquestioned political stability seem to have created a foundation for scholars and leaders at the university to engage in a process of critical thinking about peace and conflict studies that has made possible the development of the current MA program. In the University of Duhok's case, it can be argued that such a safe political space has served as a necessary, but insufficient condition to explain the successful establishment of an MA program in peace and conflict studies. To understand the full set of conditions that have contributed to the program's creation, it is necessary to examine the role of university leadership and available resources for the project.

88

The influence of the president of the University of Duhok: Asmat M. Khalid

helped to found the University of Duhok, and remained as its president 19 years later at

the end of 2011. Many of the professors and students interested in peace and conflict

studies throughout Iraq point to his support for the university's MA program – and the

field in general – as one of the primary factors behind its emergence. Comments from

professors and students indicated that the president's strong support was instrumental in

the establishment of the program both because he was committed to it as a vehicle for

expanding the social sciences and because administrative success in Iraq depended upon

the presence of a bold leader. One professor who taught in the MA program argued

during the 2010 focus group in New York that:

> The [security] situation in Duhok is the same as Sulaimani and Erbil and they
> didn't do the same as Duhok. Why is this case? In Iraq it is personal and not
> institutional. The president must accept the new idea and create the contacts
> (personal communication, October 1, 2010).

Dr. Asmat's personal influence seems to have been a factor in many of the steps

taken by the University of Duhok that resulted in establishment of its MA program in

peace and conflict studies. According to one of the professors involved with

establishment of the university's initial conflict resolution office, the president was not

involved in the nomination of the university's representative on the delegation that visited

Columbia University in 2000 and Beirut in 2001, but he did authorize the formation of

the office after the 2001 workshop (personal communication, September 26, 2010). He

began to personally engage in email correspondence with a representative of Columbia

University's Center for International Conflict Resolution in July 2002 to express the

university's interest in engaging more deeply in collaborative projects related to conflict

resolution (personal correspondence, July 12, 2002). Dr. Asmat also personally ensured

that the 2003 workshop would occur at the University of Duhok by directly contacting

one of the workshop's organizers at Columbia University and persuading him that, in the

aftermath of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, it would be possible – even preferable for the

Iraqi contingent – for three American academicians to come to the University of Duhok

rather than to conduct the workshop at its originally-planned location in Cyprus (personal

observation).

> I was insisting to participate and to carry [out] the first meeting at University of
> Duhok because we believed [in] the subject and we were serious to lead such [an]
> important program and to show the people that Kurdistan is a safe place and [that]
> people there … are pro peace. It was successful step, and as you know, we did our
> best to carry out the program in a perfect level (personal communication, April
> 24, 2012).

Five years later, in 2008, the decision to partner with UPEACE also rested with

Dr. Asmat. He recalled his meetings with Victoria Fontan, head of the Peace and Conflict

Studies program at UPEACE, as the key events leading to the University of Duhok's

participation in the UPEACE-led program. "I met Victoria more than one time and after

discussions we decided to work together in the peace program," Dr. Asmat wrote in an

email (A. Khalid, personal communication, April 24, 2012).

Dr. Asmat authorized the university's delegation to travel to Alexandria, Egypt,

where the initial curriculum for the MA program was set. This project fit into his larger

plan not only to expand the social sciences, but to internationalize the University of

Duhok. In 2006, Dr. Asmat called for the creation of an International Relations Office,

the first such office at any of Iraq's universities (University of Duhok, International

Relations Office). One of the professors who taught in the first year of the MA program

explained that a good idea for a new program is not enough for it to become reality

within the Iraqi higher education system. "The leadership must listen and accept the

idea," she said. "(Dr. Asmat) always tries to make a new department, a new study"

(personal communication, June 18, 2011).

Some observers of Dr. Asmat both inside and outside the University of Duhok

believe that the president's close connections with leaders of the KDP enabled him to

take the bold step of creating an MA program in a field of study that is formally

unrecognized in Iraq. When asked in the summer of 2011 how the University of Duhok

succeeded in starting a brand new master's program in 2008 – after a very brief review

process – the Kurdistan Regional Government's Minister of Higher Education Dr.

Dlawer A. Ala`Aldeen said only that the ministry was pleased with the program and was

about to offer approval of the university's expanded MA program. "We recently

approved it in principle," he said. "It's been ongoing for the last two or three years. We

simply allowed it to continue." (D. A. Ala'Aldeen, personal communication, June 12,

2011). Dr. Asmat pointed to the early success of the program in terms of graduating all of

its first eight students as the main reason for its continuation.

> After two years when our agreement with University of Peace finished, we
> continued the program from [the] University of Duhok and the Ministry of Higher
> education accept[ed] that (decision) because the program was successful and
> important; we hope that we will start more research work and we are serous to
> work hard to be the leading university in this field (personal communication,
> April 24, 2012).

A professor and former dean from the University of Sulaimani who spent several

years trying to convince his university's leadership to open a research center or program

in conflict resolution or peace studies saw Dr. Asmat as the difference between his

institution's failure to establish the field and the University of Duhok's success.

> Asmat opened this program [in Duhok] because, for 18 years he is president of
> this university. He doesn't have any problem with power. He has money. He can
> make decisions. He can do anything because (Kurdistan Region president)
> Massoud Barzani supports him. That's first. Second, they need this science
> because it's part of policy ... Maybe they create this department and after five or
> six years they will need advisors on negotiation. Negotiation is a science. Third,
> maybe they need this subject because they have many different ethnic groups
> living in the Badinan [Duhok] area – Yazidi, Muslim, Christian people are there,
> Arabs, Kurds, Turcoman – maybe they are afraid before [anything] happens, they
> want to create good specialists for negotiation to build peace in this area. I think
> it's a good idea for them. Maybe … they opened this [program] … to say to
> people 'We have good relationships with other [major] universities in the world.'
> For them, it's very important and would be very good ... [Asmat is] working
> under the umbrella of the KDP, and they have full power (personal
> communication, June 6, 2011).

Although Dr. Asmat insisted he and the University of Duhok were politically

neutral, he welcomed interactions with party leaders, and apparently viewed the MA

program as a popular project with KDP leadership. One of the professors who taught in

the MA program noted that before the 2010-11 academic year began, former Kurdistan

Region Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani (who, again, became Regional Prime Minister

in March 2012) met with the University Council, and that in that meeting Asmat

highlighted the University of Duhok's commitment to developing peace and conflict

studies. If there were any questions remaining about the strength of Asmat's political

connections to KDP leadership, they vanished in March 2012, when Barzani selected him

to serve as the Minister of Education for the Kurdistan Region, bringing to an end his

tenure as president of the University of Duhok.

> [T]his center is considered the first center in Iraq. The president of the university
> has informed those who are in power that we have established a center for peace

and conflict resolution … Personally, the ex-prime minister Nechirvan Barzani, showed his readiness to support our efforts … [He] said he is happy to support such a center. (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

Asmat's political sensibilities clearly played a major role in his decision to offer ongoing support for the development of peace and conflict studies at the University of Duhok. He acknowledged that part of his motivation for supporting an expansion of the MA program was based on his understanding of future needs within Iraq's – and more specifically, Duhok's – political establishment.

We do believe that, first of all, it is an important subject. Second, our ability and capacity inside the university now is more than before. And the last point is that there is a market demand for the graduates, especially in the foreign affairs ministry and in political parties (personal communication, June 19, 2011).

Of course, Dr. Asmat did not act alone. He was aided by a capable vice president of international relations – who headed an office created by Asmat – and a handful of faculty members who were willing to work with him in the program's development. The organizers of the UPeace program acknowledged that the University of Duhok's enthusiasm for international partnership was a major reason it was selected to participate in the program that facilitated creation of MA programs in peace and conflict studies across the Middle East. Dr. Victoria Fontan, director of the Peace and Conflict Studies Department at UPeace, said that her university had a choice between three Iraqi universities as potential partners, and chose the University of Duhok because it was "the most welcoming and the most dynamic," a situation that was enhanced by what she called the "charisma" of the university's vice president for international relations and the faculty leader of the MA program. "[I]f I was to do it again, we know it's not the perfect

93

partner … [but we'd] probably still choose Duhok" (V. Fontan, personal communication, June 7, 2010).

It cannot be stated with certainty that the University of Duhok's MA program in Peace and and Conflict Studies would not have started – or continued – without the considerable support of a powerful, charismatic university president. However, it is evident that Dr. Asmat's support for the program played a major role in its establishment and early success.

Availability of dedicated resources for peace and conflict studies: The University of Duhok has enjoyed access to peace and conflict studies resources – relational, intellectual, and financial – that no other university in Iraq has enjoyed. Some of these resources have been inextricably linked to each other, as will be demonstrated, and these interconnections have further contributed to the successful establishment of the MA program.

Relationships with international partners stand as perhaps the most significant resource that the University of Duhok has had at its disposal and has effectively marshaled in support of the MA program's development. As noted earlier, the University of Duhok's first international relationship related to peace and conflict studies began with Columbia University and the other members of the ACCCR in 2000-01. At that time, the University of Duhok was the newest and smallest of the three universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Yet it volunteered to host the first curriculum development workshop in August 2003, and subsequently took the lead on a project proposal submitted to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in 2004 requesting support for a

series of conflict resolution-focused training courses and lectures that occurred at the three universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq during the first half of 2005. Agreeing to take a leadership role in these projects created an institutional burden on the University of Duhok to organize events and manage funds, but also to serve as a communications focal point with the international partners, such as Columbia University and, later, UPeace.

One professor who had been involved with peace and conflict studies at the University of Duhok since the 2003 curriculum development workshop, noted that the university's ability to develop peace and conflict studies hinged on its ability to communicate with international partners. As evidence, he pointed specifically at the 2005 meeting in Erbil for 40 students from the University of Duhok, Sulaimani University and Salahaddin University that served as the culminating event of the USIP-supported project. On the day of that meeting, faculty from the University of Duhok first met Dr. Victoria Fontan, who later became director of the Peace and Conflict Studies Department at UPeace, but who, at that time, was serving as a conflict resolution consultant at Salahaddin University in Erbil.

> After the availability of internet service in the university, the door [was] opened for us to enter this new world … [F]rankly, the MA program in Duhok returns to our knowledge of Victoria. Without that workshop, which was conducted in Duhok and Sulaimani and Erbil, and meeting with Victoria in Erbil, there would not be a possibility to make an agreement with UPeace (personal communication, Sept. 26. 2010).

The value attached to international partnerships at the University of Duhok is high. After the University of Duhok began its MA program as part of UPeace's project,

students in the Duhok program almost immediately pointed to its international

dimensions as its greatest asset.

> This study is not only in the University of Dohuk. There is a connection with the
> University for Peace from the United Nations. We expect that this will help us in
> Kurdistan or in any part of the world. When you have a certificate for studying
> with a university related to the United Nations, it makes you very happy because
> you studied at a famous university. It makes people respect you, respect your
> certificate. It makes it possible for you to do many things in the future that other
> people cannot do (personal communication, May 18, 2009).

The UPeace project facilitated short-term teaching visits to the University of

Duhok by three international instructors, including Dr. Fontan and me. The first MA

students in peace and conflict studies at the University of Duhok consequently gained in-

class access to experienced, international instructors of peace and conflict studies, a

resource that was not available to any other university in Iraq. One MA student saw the

international instructors' participation as central to the program's early success.

> I do not believe the University of Dohuk could continue in this study without the
> University for Peace. The subject is very new ... It's the professors who come
> from outside, not the professors here [who make it successful], because there is a
> different mentality (personal communication, May 19, 2009).

The University of Duhok professor who led the MA program at its outset agreed

with students who felt that the participation of international faculty gave the program an

advantage in terms of having a profile unlike any other graduate program at the

university. He believed that the link with UPeace as an international partner, as well as

with the visiting international faculty who co-taught courses with University of Duhok

faculty, also helped Duhok's professors overcome their relative inexperience teaching

subjects such as Practices of Conflict Management and Principles of Peace and Conflict

Studies.

96

In this first year, we had the opportunity to let other professors participate in this program. This is what we can't have in other programs … professors from abroad to participate in our program. This does not happen in other programs in our university. The main problem is that this program is very new for our students and for most of our professors. Also, we do not have many scientific references in this subject, especially in Arabic. We have some small references, especially in negotiation, but they treat negotiation mainly as an administrative problem. So, we haven't references specializing in negotiation as one of the means or ways to resolve conflicts. Also, in English we haven't enough references. We hope in the future we will have a library that will become larger and larger with references in this topic (personal communication, May 20, 2009).

Students and faculty participating in the first year of the University of Duhok's MA program routinely mentioned a lack of academic sources – in any language – as a major impediment to continuing their studies about peace and conflict. After my first co-teaching assignment at the University of Duhok, in May 2009, I submitted reports to UPeace and to the University of Duhok that noted the problems for students and faculty posed by lack of access to academic resources about peace and conflict studies. One section of my report to UPeace read:

Dohuk University students have very few written resources – books, journals or articles – on which they can draw to learn about specific topics within the field of peace and conflict studies. I loaned several of my personal books to students during the course, but it is obvious that the university needs to invest in at least a small foundational collection of books, and if possible, some of the leading journals in the field. Language complicates this issue since there are many more books in this field available in English than in Arabic, and all the students expressed continuing frustration that their reading comprehension skills were not strong enough to understand standard academic writing. I made a personal offer to select, order and arrange for delivery of a small collection of books if the university were willing to cover the costs of the books and shipping (Hill, May 20, 2009).

I subsequently recommended that the University of Duhok start a small library of books related to peace and conflict studies by purchasing the entirety of the The Berghof

97

Foundation for Peace Support's list, "One Hundred Resource Books for Conflict

Transformation" (Berghof Foundation). I ordered the books through Columbia

University, had most of them shipped to the University of Duhok in February 2010 and

carried the rest with me to the university in March 2010. The University of Duhok

invested approximately $3500 of its own resources to obtain this small collection.

The University of Duhok's relatively small financial investment to purchase 100

books served to further distance itself from any other university in Iraq in terms of

institutional intellectual resources related to peace and conflict studies. It also highlighted

the role of small amounts of financial resources in the establishment of the University of

Duhok's MA program in peace and conflict studies. As has already been established, it

was the grant from USIP to the University of Duhok in mid-2004 that catalyzed the

opportunity for partnership between the university and UPeace. That grant was for a total

of $34,000, to be divided among the three universities in the Kurdistan Region (personal

communication, July 25, 2005).

In 2010, the University of Duhok co-developed a proposal for submission to the

British Council in partnership with New York University's Center for Global Affairs.

The proposed two-year project called for faculty from the two universities to work

together in two intensive workshops in New York to further refine the University of

Duhok's MA curriculum and courses in peace and conflict studies. The British Council

approved the NYU-Duhok project and granted it approximately $150,000. Those funds

enabled five professors to travel to New York twice – in September 2010 and September

2011 – and two other professors to travel to New York once to work with NYU faculty to

completely re-conceptualize the MA program's curriculum and approach to teaching about peace and conflict studies. Two NYU faculty members also traveled to the University of Duhok in January 2012 to observe their colleagues teaching at the start of the revised MA program. Most of the funds for this program were devoted to travel expenses. Responses by University of Duhok professors to program evaluation questionnaires indicated that these funds made a huge difference in several professors' approaches to teaching. One wrote:

> I was hoping by the end of the project to be able to teach subjects in the Masters Program for Peace studies … in the same style of Americans and I think after the end of the workshop I am capable of teaching in the same style and manner … The most important thing is that it is necessary to involve the student in the whole learning process and create the impression that s/he has a role in this process, and that will not be a successful process without this role. I intend to assign students to the duties similar to those seen in New York, where I think that these duties stimulate the mind to think creatively (Naman).

Another wrote:

> There is no doubt that the [usefulness of what] we have learned in the workshops was [great] … There is no doubt that this work can be applied as lessons with students. By mastering the process we will be able to bring the attention of students on the subject of self-control and management of the situation and solve the problem and the idea of gradual change based on dialogue (Naman).

The University of Duhok has made considerable investments in developing and maintaining relationships with international partners such as Columbia University, the United Nations-mandated University for Peace and New York University. These relationships have facilitated the process of obtaining the intellectual resources needed by the University of Duhok first to establish and then to strengthen its MA program in peace and conflict studies. The institutional relationships that the University of Duhok has developed with its institutional partners have – on at least three separate occasions –

unlocked access to financial resources that have been relatively small in amount, but have been quite significant in terms of creating opportunities for the intellectual development of the university's faculty and students in peace and conflict studies.

The creation of the MA program in peace and conflict studies at the University of Duhok clearly was facilitated by: a political environment that did not discourage critical thinking at the university, and may have welcomed it; a strong university president who supported development of the program as part of his vision for creating a modern university, and; the availability of resources, both financial and relational, that enabled program organizers to design and carry out activities that kept it moving forward.

Next, I will examine the early conflict transformation results produced by the University of Duhok's MA program in terms of both tangible and observable outputs and slightly more difficult-to-detect short-term outcomes.

Outputs and Outcomes of the UoD's MA Program in Peace and Conflict Studies

The University of Duhok's MA program in peace and conflict studies has had a profound effect upon the participants in it, graduates, students and faculty alike. Members of all three groups claimed increased knowledge of and interest in peace and conflict studies. They also noted significant changes in their conceptualization of peace and conflict, shifts that they attributed to participation in the program. All of the program's first eight graduates said that their intended professional paths had changed as a result of studying about peace and conflict. Likewise, eight University of Duhok faculty members who taught in the program during its first three years of operation reported that they had

changed their teaching approaches to align them more closely with core principles of conflict transformation – encouraging more critical thinking and student-centered learning – as a result of teaching in the program.

These general observations emerged from a systematic application of the analytical framework described in Chapter 3 to the University of Duhok's MA program in peace and conflict studies. Following is a full analysis of the program's conflict transformation outputs and outcomes.

Conflict transformation outputs

1. **Students graduated with degrees in peace and conflict studies**: All eight students admitted into the MA program in peace and conflict studies in the Fall of 2008 and 2009 had succeeded in obtaining their master's degrees by the end of January 2012. Each student completed a master's thesis, examining topics that included politics, education and media in the Kurdistan region and elsewhere in Iraq. The subjects of these theses included: The Role of Electoral Laws in the Peaceful Management of Conflict in Iraq; The Role of TV Channels in Peacebuilding, Case Study: Kirkuk; The Role of Schools in Building Coexistence in Multicultural Societies, and; The Problem of Disputed Territories in Iraq: Obstacles and Solutions. One professor who taught in the program saw these graduates, with their varied research interests, as the needed first seeds for continued growth of peace and conflict studies in Iraq.

> To have some graduates specialized in this field … will be good support for this field of study … especially in a society like Iraq, where we have different kinds of conflicts. They will be a big help in solving these conflicts. We still have some conflicts in Iraq – the Article 140 conflict, the sectarian conflict in some places, in addition to all of the political conflicts. These graduates will

contribute to finding some solutions to these conflicts (personal communication, June 18, 2011).

The number of graduates from the program is anticipated to increase in coming years. Ten new students were admitted to the program in January 2012, and the university's current plan is to admit 10-to-12 new students each year. Dr. Asmat suggested that the program does not need to become much larger than that to meet the needs of Duhok society

> I want to have a large number of the people with small education about peace. As you go up to the top of the pyramid, you have very specialized people but they are a very little number. This [peace education] should be through [primary and secondary] education and media – not through higher education (A. Khalid, personal communication, June 19, 2011).

Dr. Asmat, who left the presidency of the University of Duhok in 2012 to become the Kurdistan Regional Government's Minister of Education, reported that he was in the process of trying to have the law authorizing the ministry amended in order to mention that the "first goal" of public primary and secondary education in the region is "to support peace building" (A. Khalid, personal communication, June 3, 2013).

The first eight graduates of the MA program stood as its most tangible output. They also created opportunities for a variety of other outputs and short-term outcomes to occur as a consequence of their academic and professional activities related to peace and conflict studies.

2. **Public or semi-public events that encouraged critical consideration about topics related to peace and conflict studies**:

The University of Duhok's MA program in peace and conflict studies did not

itself conduct any public or semi-public events during its first three years of

operation, but the university's conflict resolution center, which is inextricably linked to the MA program and remains from the time of the university's entrance into the ACCCR, did conduct one public program in April 2011. The event was a one-day meeting at the university that brought together representatives from non-governmental organizations that work in the so-called disputed territories between Ninewa and Duhok governorates. One of the first group of MA graduates said that those present from the university were its president, Dr. Asmat, one of professors who teaches in the MA program, three of the MA program graduates and at least one of its students at that time.

> It was a gathering of people. One of the activities of the center was to gather the researchers, and in the audience citizens and all the NGOs who work in the disputed areas, to present suggestions and solutions, and there was a dialogue between them (personal communication, June 16, 2011).

One of the MA students who was, at that time, in the process of writing his thesis, saw the meeting as a constructive example of how the MA program, its students, graduates and faculty, could engage practically in matters related to peace and conflict in Iraq by contributing meaningful scientific research to field practitioners.

> In that meeting, [the NGO representatives] said they have some problems carrying out their projects: reconstruction projects and social projects. I told them we can have a survey in each of these regions to know the kinds of conflicts, the parties to conflicts and we can analyze the conflicts in this region, and each NGO that wants to carry out a project in these areas [would] have a previous idea of the kinds conflicts in these areas so they can deal with these conflicts [by] making use of the theory of doing no harm. By doing some projects, they are making some conflicts, moving the potential conflicts into overt conflicts. I think this is one of the ideas we can use with this program, for those who are holding MAs. (June 18, 2011).

Not everyone saw this event in positive light. One of the MA graduates in attendance saw the meeting as a relatively meaningless exercise because there seemed to be no follow-up. "[There was] only one meeting – [for] NGOs in Mosul and Kirkuk," he said. "They just talked. There were no answers" (personal communication June 17, 2011).

Two of the first four MA graduates also reported conducting events in late 2010 and early 2011 that aimed to disseminate knowledge about peace and conflict studies to broader audiences around Duhok. Two of the MA graduates worked with one of the professors to deliver six days of lectures in three colleges at the university: the College of Law, the College of Arts and College of Economics and Administration.

> In each college, we chose some different students from different backgrounds, different religions, different nations, different political parties in Kurdistan. We asked them some questions about the level of peaceful coexistence between them. It was great, actually. It was a dialogue between all students and us. We just talked together about our problems, about why people from different religions don't talk together, don't sit down together. It was the first time in Duhok University something like this happened (personal communication, June 17, 2011).

Conducting such an event raised expectations for the center to organize more public events in the future, and for the MA graduates to serve as a bridge between the university and civic organizations concerned with issues of peace and conflict. One of the MA graduates noted that the event demonstrated the convening power of the university, and that the institutional support needed for it was minimal, coming in the form of institutional permission and attendance by Dr. Asmat.

> The university can help us. We have a center for conflict resolution. We can use this center to do many things in civil society. We can work with NGOs ... I have

an MA and they have a program. They need lecturers, someone to work with them. They didn't have any relations with the university (personal communication, June 17, 2011).

The same two MA graduates said they also conducted four workshops in secondary schools – two inside the city of Duhok and two in surrounding areas, and received support for this project from the National Democratic Institute, a United States-based NGO. The MA graduates said they showed a documentary film related to human rights and another about the federal, multicultural arrangements in India and Switzerland that are designed to protect the rights of minorities. One of the same two MA graduates reported that he personally gave at least 15 brief seminars or workshops, lasting one to two hours, on subjects related to peacebuilding during the first half of 2011 to several civic groups in and around Duhok.

> I gave a very good seminar for two hours about why we are not accepting each other in areas where there are many different groups. I have given more than 10 seminars about immigration in conflict areas, and the issue of religion in conflict areas ... Maybe more than 15 seminars, workshops total in last six months (personal communication, June 18, 2011).

The existence of the MA program led to development of both public and semi-public events – at University of Duhok, in public secondary schools and with civic organizations – that encouraged critical thinking related to peace and conflict studies. Some of these events were produced formally by the university, while others were the product of graduates from the MA program working in their new roles as community activists and educators.

3. Research papers related to peace and conflict studies:

All of the first eight MA program graduates wrote master's theses to satisfy the University of Duhok's degree requirement. Three of the MA graduates presented versions of their theses at a conference sponsored by Queen Mary University London in Amman, Jordan in February 2012, "Conflicts and Identities in Contemporary Kurdistan in Comparative Context." Two of the faculty members in the MA program also presented papers at that conference, entitled "Iraqi Women and the Vision of Peace in Iraq according to UN norms," and "The Concept of Peace-Building."

For the MA graduates, it was their first chance to engage with scholars internationally about the subjects they had studied in the MA program. One of the graduates who presented his paper at the conference wrote in an email afterward that the University of Duhok graduates demonstrated analytical capacities superior to those of students from other attending universities from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

> [T]he conference was worth [attending]. We did our presentations well. Frankly speaking, the papers presented by Duhok participants were more academic, simply because we have more knowledge about conflict resolution and peace studies. We were more successful in how to analyze the conflict and to present the conflict from many perspectives. This was the first test to know and realize that we have something different. I mean a different knowledge (personal communication, March 2, 2012).

One of the MA program's faculty members, who was appointed director of the University of Duhok's Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies in 2012, has edited one collection, *A religious vision for tolerance and peace*[5], and published six

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[5] Sedeeq, J. ed. (2012). *A religious vision for tolerance and peace*. Duhok, Iraq: Khani Press (Arabic).

articles[6] on subjects related to peace and conflict studies since he began helping to

develop the MA program. He also published two separate papers[7] on the website of the

project Cultural Bridges to Reconciliation in Iraq that is implemented by the United

States-based NGO International Relief and Development (www.tfpb.org). Another of the

MA program's faculty had an article entitled The Role of Iraq's National Reconciliation

in Peacebuilding[8], published in the online journal Perspectives on Global Issues,

produced by New York University graduate students.

The first four students admitted to the MA program also published in the form of

a monograph a brief study that they completed as part of their coursework, entitled "The

Disputed Area: Shekhan," about the small city of Shekhan that sits between Duhok and

Mosul and is claimed both by the Iraqi central government and the Kurdistan Regional

Government. The study drew criticism from university leaders who felt it should have

been published by the university's own press and by KDP leaders, who felt that the

inclusion of interviews the students conducted with residents of Shekhan highlighted the

party's failure to manage the simmering conflict over the city. One of the MA students

recalled that he received a telephone call from one of the local party leaders

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[6] Sedeeq, J. (2011). The development of conflict resolution field. *University's Message Magazine*, Duhok University, 12, 39-42.
Sedeeq, J. (2011). The conflict from conflict resolution's perspective. *Hizel Journal*, 18.
Sedeeq, J. (2010). Conflict resolution approaches. *University's Message Magazine*, Duhok University, 9, 50.
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Sedeeq, J. (2006). Mediation in international conflict resolution, *Journal of Duhok University*, 9, 330-343.
[7] Sedeeq, J. (2012). Conflict resolution: Basic concepts (part one). http://www.tfpb.org/?page=view&id=79.
Sedeeq, J. (2012). Conflict resolution: Basic concepts (part two). http://www.tfpb.org/?page=view&id=80.
[8] Abbou, A.A. (2010). The role of Iraq's national reconciliation in peace-building. *Perspectives on Global Issues*, 5(1). http://www.perspectivesonglobalissues.com/archives/fall-2010-conflict/iraq-national-reconciliation

[He] said it was too negative and damaged their position. It was all politics ... They said it was all negative because of the direct interviews with people. One of the interviewed citizens in that area explained his anger and fear [in the study] by saying 'I fear that everything will fall. I fear that maybe the conflict will erupt any moment. The reality is that relations are still unbalanced and incorrect. The strong one is the one [who is right]. Also, some negative elements from the past, from the [1990s] are still working.' … He was too frank. I wrote the interviews without any modifications.

The [KDP leader from Shekhan] contacted me and asked 'Why did you not make any modifications to the interviews?' It was the truth. I did not make any modifications. My mission was to write about the facts, the realities. It would not be acceptable for me to make any modifications because I am a researcher (personal communication, June 16, 2011).

The existence of the University of Duhok's peace and conflict studies MA program has led to the publication of one journal article, the production of five academic papers presented at one international conference, two academic articles on a website devoted to the subjects of peace and reconciliation and one monograph that demonstrated to the authors the power of primary source research to stimulate discussion about contentious political issues related to peace and conflict.

Conflict transformation outcomes

1.   **Increased awareness and understanding by MA students and graduates of critical concepts related to peace and conflict studies:**

Simply beginning participation in the MA program served to raise awareness among students about ideas such as the difference between constructive and destructive conflict and about the possibility of individuals and groups possessing different identities that could change or be negotiated, including gender identities. Most of the students said they had never before been exposed to such concepts prior to participating in the program. One MA graduate who was among the first four students admitted to the

program said he and his colleagues found these ideas to be "strange," but worthy of

deeper consideration.

> … [A]lways I thought conflict was destructive. But when you study conflict
> and everything about conflict, no, you realize there are many sides of conflict
> that can be constructive. There are many things about Human Rights we had
> not heard before. Sustainable human development, was a very interesting
> subject also. Dr. Victoria [Fontan] gave us a lecture also about gender. All the
> information in this subject was very, very strange for us ... She was talking
> about a man who marries another man, and it was very strange for us …
> Finally, we said maybe there is a difference between our society and other
> societies. But many things in the past we said were strange in the Middle East
> and they became [normal] (personal communication, May 18, 2009).

One student from among the second group admitted to the program in 2009 said

her participation in the program raised her awareness of the possibility of multiple

perspectives on one situation, and the roles of identity and culture. She said she

previously viewed everything around her only from a Kurdish, Muslim perspective.

> Now, when another person does something, I am making myself in [her] place.
> Before I wasn't doing that. I think all this I learned from this program, from peace
> and conflict. Even in the religion, sometimes when I was reading the Quran, I
> would go past some sections. Now, sometimes I realize and analyze some sections
> [related to] this program, peace and conflict. It's new for us. I think it's important
> for all Muslims to know about peace and conflict programs ... You know that
> [most] Iraqis are Muslim. Now I have become more open to [other] cultures …
> It's not dangerous for you to know something about someone else's identity and
> culture. It won't remove your identity and culture. I feel we must know other
> people's identity and culture in order to deal with them better. This is the point I
> focused on [in my research] to make peaceful coexistence in societies like Iraq
> (personal communication, June 20, 2011).

All of the first eight students in the program reported an increased awareness of

core concepts related to peace and conflict. This raised awareness is a necessary first step

toward developing increased knowledge and understanding of these concepts. The

University of Duhok's MA program has led to a much deeper understanding of those concepts by students and graduates of the program.

The most fundamental – and deepest – new understanding developed by students who have participated in the program seems to be around the definition of peace, and what constitutes a peaceful society. All of the program's first eight students reported that they had developed a much fuller comprehension of what peace actually means. Unlike the relatively superficial awareness of key concepts that emerged from merely participating in the program, this deeper understanding emerged through the processes of reading, performing secondary source research and participating in class discussions. This ongoing engagement with the subject matter has enabled students and graduates to draw linkages between their previous academic specialties and the core concepts of peace and conflict studies. One member of the program's second four-student cohort said he developed a more complex understanding of peace that the one he had developed in his undergraduate study of law.

> I was thinking of peace through the idea of international law. After finishing this program, I started to realize that peace is something inside a person himself or herself, or inside a society. It is something internal, not something international. I was not thinking that [Duhok] was a multi-ethnic society. Now I am thinking about how they are living together, since they are from different backgrounds. I would have loved to get an MA in law, but now I feel lucky that I gained more informative knowledge ... To get an MA in law, you gained some old information, static information. This field is a new one, and you got some dynamic information. This field is in progress (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

> One of the first four students who joined the program drew a distinction between

peace, as it often is conceptualized as the possible end result of a discrete high-level

political process, and peace as a condition that can be promoted or pursued by many

different sectors of society.

> The difference really is, before I started, I thought peace was just what happens in the talks between the politicians. Now I understand much better that peace has to start from the grassroots, from the people. I understand … that people can work on peace without anything from the government, like NGOs ... also religion. What peace means now is that people understand each other, accept each other, work together and trust each other. These are the main things for peace we should think about (personal communication, June 18, 2011).

A third student, who belonged to the first group to enter the program, described

his personal journey that participation in the MA program facilitated. He found particular

power in the idea of cosmopolitanism, that belonging to the community of other humans

supercedes belonging to all other communities (Appiah, 2006). He saw this concept as a

potential path toward greater peace in Iraq.

> Before I started, my idea was that all people here in Kurdistan and in Iraq should be Muslims or obey Muslims by Sharia. After I finished this program, my ideas became changed … My idea now is everyone is human. Everyone has the right to life, despite his religion, his nation. We all can live together, if you are Christian or you are a Jew or you are Yezidi. We all can live together. But we need the government to help us to make some laws in our society. If you see me and [another student who] is Yezidi and I am Muslim and we make many activities together. We talk about religion and the nations here in Iraq. Sometimes we face some problems in this society. Some students will say to me 'You are not Muslims, how can you say this?' When they see me with [a Yezidi student], they think I am Yezidi, maybe. But my ideas have changed. I am happy. Now I understand the life better than before 2008. We should say thank you for peace studies for Iraq (personal communication, June 17, 2011).

A graduate of the program, who also belonged to the program's first group of

students, said that before he entered the MA program in 2008, his understanding of peace

was "[n]o war -- only no war," but that after completing the program he became able to "

analyze everything and do deep research about it. I can analyze the facts and present

111

solutions." He referred to an example presented in one of his classes that showed a poorly

constructed bridge collapsing after a rabbit hopped over it as an analogy for the

difference between proximate and structural causes of violent conflict. "In 2008, I

thought the rabbit was responsible," he said. "Now I don't think the rabbit is responsible,

but maybe the construction of the bridge." (personal communication, June 16, 2011). The

student explained that completing his MA studies helped him understand that approaches

to reducing violent conflict and building peace must be specifically tailored to each

context, and that there were no universal solutions that could be applied to Iraq.

> Are there conflicts in the region? In Shekhan? In Kirkuk? The disputed areas are a great possibility to fall into armed conflict. We still don't have solutions and on how to avoid such conflicts from happening. When it comes to the local or internal armed conflicts, internationally, there [are] no unique adopted solutions. Everything concerning solving the conflicts is in doubt. There is no fixed theory. There are no magical solutions. Everything depends on very specific and local and unique circumstances. Every location has its own circumstances. There is no magic [formula] available (personal communication, June 16, 2011).

One of the students from the second group to enter the program said that studying

peace and conflict helped him deepen his understanding of democracy and human rights,

which had been his primary academic interests before entering the program. The study of

peace and conflict helped him grasp the broader importance of promoting rule of law and

its everyday implementation.

> I didn't know anything about means of peace or how to resolve or manage or contain or settle conflict. Now I know. I know what democracy [is] and how to teach people according to its principles. Now I know the benefits of making relations that are suitable for the state [and] how the UN has a great role in countries suffering from conflict. Also, civil society's role, how to protect women against discrimination – honor killing and other kinds of discrimination – also the role of international, non-governmental organizations, like Human Rights Watch … Before I came to these studies, I didn't know anything about these matters.

Now I know. All I knew before I came to these studies was about law and the courts, and how to protect the rights of someone stealing from someone or killing someone, or how to establish a company … [P]eace is not only the absence of war. It is establishing humanity, paying attention to every individual, protecting all their rights ... [a]ccording to democratic principles. Before I did these studies, I did not have any ideas about these matters (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

One of the second group of students that entered the program, in 2009, wrote his master's thesis about "The Problem of Disputed Territories in Iraq: Obstacles and Solutions." He reported that he gained deeper insights into the complexity of resolving the many territorial conflicts that exist between Iraq's central government and the KRG. When he entered the program, he mainly understood and ascribed to the KRG's point of view that disputed territories such as the oil-rich city of Kirkuk must legally become part of the Kurdistan Region; after two years of studying peace and conflict, and completing his own original research, he found his own outlook on the situation becoming less rigid and began to believe that leaders on all sides needed to rely less on history and more on contemporary realities in order to help them find appropriate approaches to conflicts over territory.

Maybe before, if you asked somebody here, you will hear that 'There is a conflict, and there are historical and geographical factors, and we have the right to obtain [the territory].' Maybe if you had asked me, I would just have seen the historical and the geographical, and the ancient political part … But if you have information about this field, your mind will be expanded. Maybe you will understand that it has changed and you must work with the changes. It is like it is now. For example, I asked about the cultural factors, related to the solution of the disputed territories. I read Samuel Huntington's book 'Who are we? [: the Challenges to America's National Identity']. He asked about the cultural view of American people towards territory. He says as a factor of nationality, the geographical factor is not important. All Americans change their residency lots of times in one year. But here for us, we say that it has been our area since ancient times and it will remain our area. Mullah Mustafa Barzani said 'If there were nobody in Kirkuk,

Kirkuk would remain [part of] Kurdistan.' It is the reverse of the American vision. Maybe it is this field's vision (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

The same student explained that his understanding of peace not only had deepened through his participation in the program, but his understanding also grew about why many inhabitants of the Kurdistan Region viewed peace in relatively simplistic terms. He argued that many people had endured such terrible violence in the 1980s and 1990s that they were unwilling or unable to see current conflicts – even potentially violent ones – as serious threats to peace.

> Maybe in the beginning, before this [program], we said 'There is peace and there is war.' Here we have a state of absence of peace. Ordinarily, we lived here under war. I was born in 1981, and we had war until 2003. When you're ill, you will feel how much illness is bad, so not to be ill is very important. For that reason, we have here the idea of the importance of peace. But maybe our view of how to arrive to peace is different than yours. Before, we understood that if there is no war, there is peace. Now I understand, that it is … not black or white. It is not, when you have no war, you have peace. For example now, in the disputed territories, we have no war. We are not killing maybe. But there is no peace. The situation is different. For example, Kurdistan has a lot of problems with Iraq: about the natural resources; about the borders of Kurdistan about the powers of Kurdistan; about changing the *peshmerga* (Kurdish militia) into the Iraqi Army ... I think until we have all of these problems – and the great one is the disputed territories – until we settled all of these conflicts, we live under the absence of peace. Maybe at first we think, if we have no war, we have peace. But now it's not like this (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

Dr. Asmat, president of the University of Duhok, expressed satisfaction with the positive change he observed in the first two cohorts of students who completed the MA program. He said they exhibited "[c]ritical thinking," were more "open minded" and capable of "logical discussion" than they were when they entered the program, and also

114

improved their English language skills through their engagement with English language texts and English-speaking professors who took part in the program.

> Through my daily meetings with some of the students, I see that they have been changed an acceptable percentage at the beginning toward what we were expecting them to be. That is a very optimistic outcome. The second is now they started to love that specialization and that subject very much so that they will go out and continue to build their capacity in that direction (A. Khalid, personal communication, June 19, 2011).

The students and graduates of the MA program all have gained more nuanced understandings about the meaning of peace, and how best to pursue and achieve it. The students, in general, abandoned their basic thinking that only political figures can contribute to peacemaking, and how both international and local groups are needed to address the particular conflict factors that emerge in different conflict contexts, most notably their own in Iraq.

2. **Increased awareness and understanding by faculty and other university staff of critical concepts related to peace and conflict studies:**

Six University of Duhok faculty members who taught courses during the first three years of the university's peace and conflict studies MA program acknowledged that they learned about concepts related to the subject that they previously had not considered. One prominent example mentioned by several of the professors was the concept of mediation as a process for parties in conflict to develop their own solutions to disputes, with the help of a trained facilitator who does not possess authority to make a final decision. Because five of these six professors had backgrounds in law, this western conception of mediation was especially interesting to them.

When I read some references about [alternative dispute resolution], they spoke about mediation and the mediator and that he doesn't have authority to make the decision. It really was a strange thing for me. Here [in Iraq] the mediator is like an arbitrator, He gives his decision and others are obliged to follow it (personal communication, May 26, 2009).

The University of Duhok professors who participated in a two-year program with New York University's Center for Global Affairs aimed at strengthening the MA curriculum pointed to that program as a catalyst for increasing their awareness of core concepts. One of them mentioned the idea of considering different perspectives among conflicting parties as a compelling idea he had not previously considered.

Frankly speaking, I had limited information about conflict and peace studies. This [subject] is not included in international law. It's not a great part of this field. During my experience in this field, teaching students and also doing supervision [of a master's thesis]… I realized the field of peace studies is a comprehensive field. The ways of conflict resolution are different, especially concentrating on the role of the mediator and his role in [reconciling] the points of view of the two parties. When I came back from New York, I tried to develop my information in peace studies (personal communication, June 18, 2011).

All of the professors reported that teaching and advising in the program caused them to see their previous academic specializations in at least a slightly different light. One professor who has focused on the study of public administration said he became aware of the connection between conflict, corruption and underdevelopment in Iraq.

During the supervision of [a thesis about the role of corruption in conflict in Iraq], I realized that corruption is preventing development, and by preventing development, it is a cause for conflict escalation. They have plans for development, but why is it not practiced? Why is it not on the ground? Because of corruption (personal communication, June 23, 2011).

One of the professors said he became aware that the interdisciplinary nature of peace and conflict studies opened opportunities for researchers to undertake complicated, practical projects that fall outside the domains of more traditional disciplines. He

116

recognized that peace and conflict studies could encourage production of high-quality,

policy-oriented research while advising a master's thesis about the so-called disputed

territories that are claimed both by the Iraqi central government and the Kurdistan

Regional Government.

> I discovered we can write and arrange some studies of fields that nobody else has the authority to do – only this field of science. I told my student to go [a high official of the KRG] ... He was very happy to get this student, and granted the student very important documents. He supported us with some important documents … [and] we [are] going to provide the government with some scientific outcomes for these areas. This research is going to tackle all sides of the problem of the disputed areas: geographic side, political, ethnicity … No field of science can [bring] all these subjects together in one thesis except this field (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

Several professors noted that they were surprised to learn about the breadth of

peace and conflict studies, and that the field represented an opportunity to bring together

strains of thought as diverse as political science, sociology and economics. One professor

said he realized that peace and conflict studies could contain many different subjects, not

only those directly concerned with politics as he originally had thought.

> I got broader knowledge about this new field of study. I was thinking before that this was a sub-field that deviated from another science. But after joining this program, I realized it was a specific field and it should be promoted and developed. After our trip to the U.S., and meeting with some people who specialized in it, I realized this is a program that should be continued and it should not just be one course or two courses. When I participated in this course … I realized this field is connected to all of the other fields. Economics has a role in this field. Politics has a role in this field. Sociology has a role in this field. This is a broader kind of study. It is not just a limited one (personal communication, June 22, 2011).

A key to professors' developing such awareness of the linkages between peace

and conflict studies and their previous academic specializations seemed to be their

willingness to acknowledge their unfamiliarity with the new field, and to continue to

investigate it nonetheless. One professor who specialized in Shar'ia Law said he never had thought systematically about the connection between religion, peace and conflict before he was asked to teach a course on the subject in the MA program. "It's something strange and apart from my field but interesting at the same time, because it's something important for our society," he said (personal communication, June 22, 2011).

University of Duhok faculty who taught in the MA program during its first three years also reported changes in thought that went beyond raised awareness of the subject. For some, who lived through Iraq's violent conflicts of the 1980s, 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century, teaching about peace and conflict from an academic standpoint helped to reduce their cynicism, thereby creating opportunities to think more analytically about what is actually needed to create possibilities for peace. One professor who taught a course entitled "Conflict in Iraq" began to see peace as a state of mind.

> Before I was thinking of peace as to be strong, or to have a chance, or it is a joke. There is nothing called peace. When I got involved in this program, I received information that peace was more of a special thing, that peace has some stages to be established. To live in a society, how to think we are living in a peaceful way or not, you should analyze the situation, the society and [determine] whether we are living in a peaceful situation or not … For example, if you think you are Christian and I am Muslim, and you are from this tribe and I am from that tribe, then we are not living in a peaceful situation. Peace is to change the minds of the people (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

Another professor with a law background who taught a course entitled "Multiculturalism," began to think about the different levels of society at which peace must be built. Rather than seeing violent conflict as the only possible prerequisite to peace, he thought about how well-written laws could help to bring about peaceful outcomes.

118

I was thinking, from my field of study, that peace was an idiom used in armed conflicts. This kind of situation, that peace was something that came after armed conflict. After joining this program, my conception has changed. Now I am thinking that peace is related to society, that peace is related to the tribe, that peace is related to the family, and even that peace is related to the person himself. I was thinking about peace at the top stage. Now I am thinking about peace as the ground base ... The tools of peacebuilding are not only related to those who are in power, but also to the ordinary people in society … Now when I am looking at drafts of legislation, I am thinking 'Is this legislation going to provide more peace for the people?' 'Is it going to remove differences from the people?' Now, I am looking at it from different points of view (personal communication, June 22, 2011).

A professor who specializes in public administration and who taught a course

entitled "Peace and Development in the Middle East" said that teaching in the program –

and, especially, advising a master's thesis about the role of television in peacebuilding in

Kirkuk – helped him to develop "a broader idea of the concept" of peace.

I was thinking of peace as something else. Now I am thinking of peace as related to all fields of science. It's not just related to law or to politics or to economics … I had supervised a thesis about media and development 10 years ago … Now my ideas about how can media play a role in peacebuilding has changed … [The student who wrote the thesis about television and peacebuilding in Kirkuk] came up with two opposing conclusions: that media can play a positive role or a negative role … Now I have a better idea about the role of television and media (personal communication, June 23, 2011).

Some University of Duhok faculty members began to share their new knowledge

by publishing articles in journals and newspapers[9], and appearing on public affairs

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[9] Sedeeq, J. ed. (2012). *A religious vision for tolerance and peace*. Duhok, Iraq: Khani Press (Arabic).
Sedeeq, J. (2011). The development of conflict resolution field. *University's Message Magazine*, Duhok University, 12, 39-42.
Sedeeq, J. (2011). The conflict from conflict resolution's perspective. *Hizel Journal*, 18.
Sedeeq, J. (2010). Conflict resolution approaches. *University's Message Magazine*, Duhok University, 9, 50.
Sedeeq, J. (2009). The concept of conflict resolution, *Towards Peace*, 1.
Sedeeq, J. (2009). The conflict and its positive aspect. *University's Message Magazine*, Duhok University, 7, 11.
Sedeeq, J. (2006). Mediation in international conflict resolution, *Journal of Duhok University*, 9, 330-343.
Sedeeq, J. (2012). Conflict resolution: Basic concepts (part one). http://www.tfpb.org/?page=view&id=79.

television programs, motivated by the new conceptual connections that teaching about peace and conflict had helped them to make. For example, the professor who taught "Peace and Development in the Middle East" became increasingly convinced that uneven distribution of public resources was fueling conflict in the Kurdistan Region. He was interviewed twice on Nalia Radio and Television (NRT), once on January 22, 2011 about corruption in KRG investment projects, and once on March 20, 2011 about delays in passing the KRG budget. He also was interviewed by journalist Yadgar Fayaq on the NRT program "Tawtwe" about the Iraqi budget process in January 2012 (personal communication, June 18, 2013). The professor saw Kurdistan Regional Government policies as limiting opportunities to build peace in the region.

> My idea about the fair distribution of resources … [concerns] salaries. It is not fair. Another thing is there needs to be a system for fair distribution of resources by region. Sometimes, the government spends many more resources in one region than in another. In the next budget, there should be a fairer distribution of resources (personal communication, June 23, 2011).

A professor who taught a course in the MA program about research methods demonstrated that he had made important connections between the protection of human rights and reconciliation as necessary elements of a peaceful society peace. In an article entitled, "The Role of Iraq's National Reconciliation in Peacebuilding," published in the online journal Perspectives on Global Issues, he wrote:

Sedeeq, J. (2012). Conflict resolution: Basic concepts (part two). http://www.tfpb.org/?page=view&id=80
Al-Saffar, A. (2011, April 17). In Kurdistan Region there is no commitment to budget law. *Evro*, p. 6.
Abbou, A.A. (2010). The role of Iraq's national reconciliation in peace-building. *Perspectives on Global Issues*, 5(1). http://www.perspectivesonglobalissues.com/archives/fall-2010-conflict/iraq-national-reconciliation

Reconciliation is important and a necessary step to rebuild communities in accordance with the legal foundations of democracy, to face the heritage of human rights violations, to hold perpetrators of crimes liable, and to be fair to the victims of such violations through strategies and mechanisms that will ensure criminal, social, and economic justice. Reconciliation is also a significant factor in repairing damage at the community and institutional levels, as well as rehabilitating spoilers and reintegrating them into society. In addition, reconciliation is a critical component of political reform and a peaceful transition of power. It also works to maintain the separation and independence of powers, as well as to ensure individual rights and public freedoms (Abbou, 2010).

Dr. Asmat, the university president, expressed a belief that the very act of teaching courses in the MA program helped to strengthen the professors' intellectual capacity related to peace and conflict studies, and consequently enhanced the institution's ability to provide peace and conflict studies education. "The university got experience in this," Dr. Asmat said. "The university now has started to have a better understanding of it. We trained them and we were trained at the same time" (A. Khalid, personal communication, June 19, 2011).

The president also demonstrated that he had developed a keen understanding of peace and conflict studies as an academic endeavor, and what the needs of an academic program in the field should be in order to facilitate meaningful learning by students about the subject.

To be an expert in peace studies, you should have knowledge about different subjects. The teachers, individually, should be experts in different subjects, but not in peace. But finally the students will get a degree in peace. It is not important that most of these teachers will be specialized in peace. They are dealing with supporting subjects: political science, history, geography, international law. It is more or less a complementary education related to the daily needs of the global [community] (A. Khalid, personal communication, June 19, 2011)

Through their teaching and advisement of students, professors in the MA program developed sharper understandings about how peace and conflict were related to their

121

previous academic specialties. Developing these new connections between theory and

practice enabled them to better encourage critical thinking in the classroom and to

contribute their voices to public conversations related to policies that have the potential to

transform existing conflict and to contribute to greater peacefulness in Iraq and in the

Kurdistan Region.

3. **Establishment of a platform for future learning and practice in peace and conflict studies:**

     The University of Duhok's MA program in peace and conflict studies has created

a physical and virtual space where program affiliates can explore possibilities for

future study and practice in the subject, develop relationships with scholars of peace

and conflict studies and professional practitioners of peacebuilding, and discuss and

make plans for expansion and further development of the program. I will examine

each component of this platform.

a. *Program affiliates planning or taking next steps toward further learning or*

     practice in peace and conflict studies:

     Involvement with the MA program has shifted the intended academic and career

paths of almost every person who has taught or studied in the program. Several of the

MA students and graduates mentioned their desires to continue their studies about

peace and conflict as a consequence of studying for their master's degrees. Others

pointed to changes they already had made in their professional practice to

accommodate new ideas they had learned about peace and conflict. Professors have

begun teaching new subjects away from their traditional disciplinary specialties.

Seven of the first eight graduates of the program all reported that they had changed their career plans as a consequence of studying peace and conflict.

Several of the students and graduates of the MA program explained that their new interest in peace and conflict studies had inspired them to pursue related doctoral degrees at international universities, as no Iraqi universities offered Ph.D. studies in their field. The student in the second cohort who wrote her thesis about "The Role of Schools in Building Coexistence in Multicultural Societies," said: "Maybe I [will] get my Ph.D. in peace education … Now I like these studies more than law. Before I thought nothing was more important than law. But now I believe there is another thing this is not less important than law" (personal communication, June 20, 2012). This student's interest in the field helped to convince her that her primary contribution to conflict transformation in Iraq could be to share the concepts she has learned with primary and secondary school teachers.

> Insh'allah, I will make a book and publish it. That is my aim ... I want to teach in some schools, like the College of Basic Education. I want to teach about education because … I want to be with the new teachers to make my students understand my MA thesis (personal communication, June 20, 2011).

Another student said he was "[h]oping to apply for Ph.D. [studies] later this year, maybe in England" (personal communication, June 21. 2011).

The dream that several students expressed about continuing to study about peace and conflict presented all of them with a similar dilemma, however. The field of peace and conflict studies is not considered by most of the Iraqi higher education establishment to be a distinct area of graduate study. The University of

Duhok's MA program is the only degree-granting program in the field in all of Iraq. And by the students' own admission, there is insufficient teaching and research capacity among the faculty to allow for the pursuit of doctoral degrees. One member of the MA program's second cohort pointed out that neither success at the MA level nor enthusiasm for continued studies seemed to be enough to convince faculty and university leaders to create further opportunities for learning about the subject.

Of course, I want [a] Ph.D. Here it is difficult. We have no special institutions to work here. For example, in the College of Law, we have a center, but it is just a room. I asked the college, if you let me lead this center, I can work with the NGOs and I can do a lot of things. But they will not let me. Here, if you have no institution, maybe they will make me go to a field far from this field. I will try to continue these topics. I will try [to study] for Ph.D (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

Though not all of the MA graduates and students expressed a clear desire to study for doctoral degrees, all of them did convey passion for continued learning about peace and conflict studies, possibly through teaching or by supporting existing faculty members in their teaching. One of the students in the MA program's second cohort said he would be interested in studying for a doctoral degree, but also would be content to learn through support of current faculty.

Dr. Asmat has an idea to involve those with MA degrees as co-teachers, as assistants … It will be beneficial for the new students. It will be beneficial for the MA holders. And it will be more easy for the Ph.D. holders. This way more people will be involved. If, for example, I am involved, I will have to study more, and this will be good. It is not [just] a matter [of teaching]. Sometimes the Ph.D holders think the MA holder do not have the right to teach. It is not an honor or

something like that. We have to look at it a different way; how to involve more people and how to get more benefit from those people (personal communication, June 18, 2011).

One student in the first group to join the MA program explained that he came to the program primarily in an attempt to gain a credential that would allow him to teach at the university level. Exposure to the field sparked his interests in ways he had not anticipated.

[W]hen I studied some subjects like Human Rights and Democracy in the Middle East, these subjects changed my mind … Before I had some [negative] ideas about other religions, about other nations. But now, no, I want them to be my friends. I want to make something in common [with them] ... (personal communication, June 17, 2011).

The first eight students in the MA program are not the only ones with interest in continuing to learn about peace and conflict. As part of the University of Duhok's agreement with the UN University for Peace that began the MA program, two students from the University of Duhok were selected to study for their MA degrees at the University for Peace's main campus in Costa Rica and earned their degrees there in 2009 and 2010. Another staff member at the University of Duhok previously had received a master's degree in peace and conflict studies from the University of Tromso in Norway. As of January 2012, all three of those students were studying for their Ph.D.'s in fields related to peace and conflict studies – though none of them specifically in the field – at different European universities (personal communication, June 19, 2011). The student who earned his master's degree in Norway was studying for a Ph.D. in International Studies and Social Sciences at Coventry University in the United Kingdom, and

was focusing his research on peace education, specifically the question of how to

reduce bullying in public schools in the Kurdistan Region.

> I will be looking at how the cultural violence is embedded in the society and becomes systemic. It influences the education system, too. You probably know how the education system [is] in Kurdistan … [P]robably you also know how the method of teaching is based on banking information system of Paolo Freire. Even in the university still they are using the same system where the students learn one approach to the questions, so the whole system is upside down, and as Galtung said, imposing culture is violence. I will probably research about the bullying in primary school the proactive and the reactive aggressiveness on bullying pupils and being a victim. I will see how [prevalent] is the problem and how do they deal with it. At the end, I might enlighten those who are working [to] change the curriculum to put in their consideration these things by providing training for teachers or by introducing [a] peace education syllabus. I will try to see what can best … fit for the society (personal communication, October 18, 2011).

Faculty who teach in the MA program reported receiving many inquiries from

potential master's students. One professor expressed his belief that the interdisciplinary

nature of the program attracted the interest of many potential students.

> We led all the graduates to think about this new field of science. One of the reasons is this field can accept graduates from different fields like Arts, Geography, Law, Sociology, everything. Now, all the students who have the bachelor's degree are thinking of this program and that they have the chance to get an MA in another field, a broader field (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

Increased interest in peace and conflict studies produced tangible changes in

professional practice for faculty members, students and graduates of the program. One

faculty member, a professor of public law who also serves on the Shura Council that

drafts and reviews legislation for the Kurdistan Regional Government, offered several

examples about how his deepened understandings of peace and conflict studies have

changed his approaches to lawmaking.

Now I am thinking that my role is bigger than it was before in making the drafts of this legislation so the decisions will be in the benefit in one person and against another person. But the legislation is to be applied to all (personal communication, June 22, 2011).

The professor, who teaches the MA course entitled "Multiculturalism," said he noticed a potential problem with a bill defining who might head the meetings of a local foundation board. The law, as originally written, contained an ethnic qualification that the professor saw as potentially contributing to ethnic divisions in the region.

I noticed that the legislation [said in] the first article … that the person who should apply for this position should be a Kurd. They changed it by the help of the other members of the committee and reframed it to read 'The person should be a resident of Iraqi Kurdistan' and avoided mentioning their ethnicity. The ministry was saying it should be one of the residents of Iraqi Kurdistan. The new article is more respectful of the people, so they accepted the new draft (personal communication, June 22, 2011).

The professor said he also influenced the Shura Council to take an action he believed was more peaceful by altering proposed legislation about "the right of the [KRG] parliament to resolve the rights of the regional councils" (personal communication, June 22, 2011) in two ways. He said the Council decided that if the term of a municipal council ends without a new election, that "does not prevent" the Council "from exercising its functions to [satisfy] the public need" (personal communication, June 7, 2012). Also, in early 2011, the Shura Council intervened in a matter involving the dismissal of the chief of the Erbil Municipal Council, ruling that the Minister of Municipalities could not act to dismiss the Council Chief, but rather that such a decision only could occur by a vote of the majority of the Council. "I think all these things can contribute to more peacebuilding," he said (personal communication, June 22, 2011).

127

The professor who taught the "Peace and Development in the Middle East" course said he developed new ideas related to corruption, development and peacebuilding while teaching the course and supervising one student's thesis. These new ideas have shifted his approach to thinking, and also have encouraged him to speak publicly about the subject.

> We used to teach the students development and economy and used some examples from developed countries that don't have a lot of corruption. Now we are seeing how development can be used in some countries such as Iraq, with high levels of corruption … it is the main cause of preventing development. If we want to think about peacebuilding in Iraq, we have to think about the plan of development. How do we re-build the hierarchy of management and administration systems? (personal communication, June 23, 2011).

Only one graduate of the MA program obtained a similar position to the one he hoped to secure before beginning the program: as a lecturer in law at the University of Duhok's School of Law. He said his failure to move in a new professional direction was the result of a lack of opportunities for MA graduates to work in fields directly related to peace and conflict. Even so, he said he tried to incorporate new thinking in his teaching related to his former field of study.

> Now when I lecture in law, I am trying to make a relation between that field [and peace and conflict]. I was teaching children's rights in one of the colleges, so I tried to make use of this field and how not to differentiate between the people, the information I got from this course (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

Two other members of the program's first cohort stood as similar examples of how it might be possible for the MA program graduates to put their new knowledge and skills to use. As mentioned in the previous section, two of the graduates conducted lectures, discussions and workshops for university and secondary school students, and for civic leaders, through partnerships with the University of Duhok, international and national non-governmental organizations. One of those graduates, who holds a day job in

the university's public relations office and continues to work as freelance journalist, said

he has found new outlets as a trainer to share the knowledge he has gained about peace

and conflict studies.

> After the program, I am much [closer] to the peace issue ... Now I am trying to build   many things in this kind of work, in the NGO field and in research. Through my study, I   made a short, 15-page research [paper] about the new Kurdish identity in Iraq after 2003 (personal communication, June 18, 2011).

This MA graduate said he has undertaken the following projects: training

journalists in disputed areas of Ninewa and Kirkuk governorates about the role of media

in peacebuilding for the international NGO International Relief and Development;

helping to facilitate the previously- mentioned workshop at the University of Duhok "for

NGOs in Ninewa about the challenges for NGOs [that] work in the conflict areas";

conducting workshops with the Independent Media Center in Kurdistan about media

dealing with minorities, and; facilitating "two workshops about the main skills for media

working for minorities in Duhok (Lalish) and another one in Al Kush." (personal

communication, June 18, 2011).

> I am still thinking of myself as a media man. But now I have some [ideas] about peace   and conflict management. Before I am just looking at media and dealing with society. Now I am thinking about how we can use media to change society, for building peace and for conflict management. (personal communication, June 18, 2011).

One of the students in the program's second cohort who also works in journalism

said he has not changed his career, but he has changed the way he performs his job. As

director of programming for Duhok's largest television station, he has come to realize

that his decisions – and even his words – could have a tremendous conflict transformation

effect in terms of relationships between groups and the feelings of individuals.

129

Sometimes, now, when I write an article or I prepare a TV show, I can realize the content of this television show or article can hurt somebody or not, can be misunderstood or not. When I write something or when I say something, I am thinking about all the content of my society. I am not thinking of my idea only. I am thinking of the others. Even [I] tell the people around me that 'This is wrong, this is going to hurt somebody' (personal communication, June 18, 2011).

This student – who wrote his thesis on "Media Incitement to Violence and Its Role in Conflict Escalation: Iraq After 2003 as an Example" – came to realize that his influence in this regard went well beyond his own conduct. He said he now tries to work with the news reporters at the television station to help them use fairer reporting techniques and language. He mentioned one instance when he prevented what would have been a disrespectful and inaccurate portrayal of the Yezidi minority religious community in Duhok as devil-worshippers.

I am in charge of seeing the content of the news items or the TV shows. We have some reporters who are new and they are using words that can hurt some people, like the Yezidis in our society, and they are not aware. They are coming from Amadiyah, and they have no direct contact with Yezidis. We are living in Duhok and have direct contact with Yezidis, so we know better than them. In one of the programs, they were using the word 'devil.' I said 'This is going to hurt some people.' … He was using instead of 'aggressive' the word 'devil.' Sometimes in our media content, when the reporter is going to make a report, I advise him to take the opinion of all society. Sometimes they are only interviewing Muslims. After studying this science, I say 'What about the opinion of the Christians?' Maybe they are one percent, but out of 10 people, you have to take one Christian and one Yezidi. It is ok if the eight others are Muslims (personal communication, June 18, 2011).

One member of the first cohort, who before joining the program worked exclusively as a lawyer, founded a local NGO in Duhok, the Aram Organization for Human Rights. The organization has published monographs about human rights and multiculturalism in the Kurdistan Region. In June 2011, the organization wrote and submitted a proposal to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for a

training-of-trainers project intended to prepare 15 activists so they could lead a "dissemination of a culture of peace in the disputed areas" around Duhok. He said he also has taken a more collaborative approach to the divorce cases he often handles in the Duhok court.

> It was useful to build my political side. Now I am well-developed and I have more confidence to participate and be active, and perform and present my activities in the sector of NGO's, human rights and media. I took advantage of this [degree] resolving disputes between men and women in court. Now I am writing and presenting projects and activities to work on human rights and the women's condition. It's all related to my previous study (personal communication, June 16, 2011).

Through the first three years of the MA program, graduates, students and potential students all have indicated a desire to learn more about peace and conflict studies, and also to shift their professional practice to accommodate their new interest in this field. Enthusiasm about the field was clear in terms of expressed desire to study for doctoral degrees, and to support the program through teaching future students, as well as by the growing interest of applicants to the program from Duhok and elsewhere in Iraq.

The professors, students and graduates of the MA program all have shifted their career paths to some degree. Professors have begun teaching new courses distinct from their previous academic specializations, and in so doing, have generated new thinking that could be applied to conflict transformation processes in Iraq. Some students and graduates have gained new career objectives, while others have found new approaches to their current professions that are more in line with standard peacebuilding practices.

b. *New relationships between program affiliates with a community of scholars and practitioners beyond the university working on issues related to peace and conflict:*

131

The existence of the MA program in peace and conflict studies has brought the

University of Duhok, its students, graduates and faculty into contact with other

scholars and practitioners who are working on matters related to peace and conflict.

For example, the three graduates and two faculty members who presented their papers

at the conference in Amman in February 2012 gained exposure to a broader network

of scholars both inside and outside Iraq who are thinking about and working on issues

related to conflict in the Kurdistan Region and elsewhere in Iraq. One of the MA

graduates who wrote a thesis entitled "Media Incitement to Violence and Its Role in

Conflict Escalation: Iraq After 2003 as an Example" noted that news of his research

suddenly brought him into contact with a broader network of scholars and

practitioners.

> When I finished my thesis, I was interviewed by several newspapers, magazines, [radio stations], [TV stations] and electronic websites. Then I received several calls and invitations from several media outlets, cultural centers, academic centers and NGOs to present seminars and provide some others with more information. I also received a couple of calls from one of the most important centers in Iraq regarding media monitoring in one of the southern governorates in Iraq to send them a copy of my thesis to get benefit from the incitement indicators, to be included in their monitoring system. One of the Ph.D.students in Bagdhad University had told [another of the MA program graduates] that he likes to come to Duhok to see me because (I think) he is writing about violence in Iraq. So here we can say that it is a matter of marketing. We should know how to be involved in this field and we have to inform others that we have something new and we can provide help. I have also tried to publish my thesis in Kurdish language (Sorani Dialect), to let people from different dialect (they have less access to Arabic sources) get benefit from this new field of study. An international NGO also is trying to have more information about my topic because as they said, they have a similar project. What is more important is our MA holders have skills, but [they] need to be invested in a right way. [The] Amman conference was a good example (personal correspondence, March 2, 2012).

The MA program also has served to strengthen or develop connections between the university, its faculty, students and graduates with academic institutions such as the University for Peace and New York University. The University of Duhok faculty members who traveled to New York in the autumns of 2010 and 2011 developed new professional relationships with NYU faculty members, with whom they worked on strengthening their course syllabi (Naman, 2012). In addition, during their second visit to the United States, in September and October 2011, six University of Duhok professors traveled to Washington, DC for three days – while one remained in New York to participate in a five-day mediation skills training at the New York Peace Institute – where they had a chance to network with scholars and practitioners from organizations such as 3P Human Security, the Open Society Institute, USAID, Search for Common Ground, and the United States Institute of Peace.

> Many of the people they met are active peacebuilding practitioners, scholars, government and foreign policy personnel, NGO workers, students, and peace advocates. This helped them to expand their professional network with American and international scholars based in the U.S. (Naman, 2012, p. 11)

One of the professors suggested that connecting with other professionals in the field was one of the most important short-term outcomes of the second year of the collaborative project between NYU and the University of Duhok.

> In fact, the most important achievement ... in the second session is to see the new sources on the subject of peace-building and conflict resolution, as well as to meet people who have an interest in a broad peace process (Naman, 2012, p. 17).

Both faculty and students expressed their belief that the international relationships that the MA program has helped to facilitate have changed the face of the University of Duhok, and also helped to demonstrate the legitimacy of peace and conflict studies in

both an academic and practical sense. One professor who has been involved with the subject at the University of Duhok since at least 2002, said that the university's international engagements around peace and conflict studies carried tremendous potential for introducing needed new ideas into Iraqi society.

> I think this program has an effect on the university. It changed the feature of the university. All the programs of the university before had been seen as local programs, but people see the new program as a program having an international aspect … Duhok University wants to prove that she is able to carry on programs like this one, with an international character. The university is willing to benefit its society by providing specialists, facilitators and experts in this field. It recognizes the importance of those experts in other countries, such as the US, so we hope that even a small dispute between husband and wife can be resolved through a facilitator or mediator (Sept. 26, 2010).

MA students and graduates, as well as faculty involved with the peace and conflict studies program have gained meaningful exposure to – and the chance to build new relationships with – a broad network of scholars and practitioners that previously was inaccessible to them. These new relationships not only have stimulated new thinking at the individual level, but according to students and faculty, have the potential to shift institutional practices related to peace and conflict.

c. *Desire among peace and conflict studies program affiliates to expand the program:*

The University of Duhok's MA program in peace and conflict studies accepted four students into its first class in 2008 and four more students into its second class in 2009. Those two classes fell into what effectively was a pilot phase for the program, conducted in partnership with the UN-mandated University for Peace. The University of Duhok received approval in May 2011 from the KRG's Ministry of Higher Education to conduct an expanded master program (personal communication, May 8, 2011). Under the

new program, 10 students were accepted. This desire for programmatic expansion of the

program appeared to be both a reflection of the University of Duhok's intention to

develop greater expertise in peace and conflict studies, as well as a response to

demonstrated demand for the program. One of the professors in the MA program said it

was a genuine interest in the subject that was driving the demand for peace and conflict

studies.

> It is interesting for the professors and students to get this kind of study. When
> we make an announcement that this kind of study will be open next year,
> many people are trying to get information about the study and the conditions.
> They are interested now. Also, they are trying to develop their knowledge
> about this subject … They really want to get certificate in this study. It will be
> important for them in international affairs, or foreign ministry. They're
> interested because they have an idea about how they might use this experience
> in their work (personal communication, June 18, 2011)

The same professor expressed concern, however, that expansion beyond the

program's current size might be excessive. Though there is interest in the field, she

argued that there might not be enough serious, capable students among those interested to

ensure a high quality program.

> I think if the students are less than 10, it will be better, because they will focus on
> the materials, the way of searching for the information. If they would be 10 or 12
> or 14 … how many will actually be understanding the subject? Maybe the others
> will just be [earning their] certificate[s] (personal communication, June 18, 2011).

There already are concerns about the fairness of the student selection process.

Although students with degrees in political science, law, media, sociology and English

language all were invited to apply for the program, five of the available seats were

reserved for employees of the KRG Ministry of Higher Education. One of the professors

in the MA program called this quota "wrong, very wrong" (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

Another criticism related to the program's expansion centered on the university's failure to advertise the program more broadly than it did, and consequently to draw upon a deeper pool of potential applicants. One professor noted that the program's application period the first year was advertised only on posters around the university, ensuring that "[n]o one from outside the area applied the first year," and all of the applicants "were law graduates" except one who had worked in the public relations office of the university. He said that in "[t]he second year we announced it via local TV. Therefore we received applications from many backgrounds – law, psychology, media, [and] politics." The same professor did not expect the high level of interest that the second year's program announcement generated (personal communication, September 26, 2010).

> Once the program was opened, we received many applications from throughout Iraq to join this program. That was a surprise for me. Some people called me from Baghdad, and said they heard about the program and said they wanted to apply. I realized that there is really interest among people to study and to learn in conflict resolution and peace studies (personal communication, September 26, 2010).

Faculty in the MA program, however, remained critical of the university because it did not adequately respond to interest in the program from outside Duhok. The first eight students – all of whom completed their degree requirements by January 2012 – as well as the 10 students who entered the program's third class in January 2012 all considered Duhok to be their home.

> We have discussed before that we should have students from all over Iraq –
> maybe not just from Iraq, but from Turkey and Syria, to make this program

broader – but they gave students only four days (to apply in 2011). It is not enough even for the students here [in Duhok]. We have not been consulted (Personal communication, June 23, 2011).

The expanded program was different from its predecessor program in another way. Unlike the pilot phase, when students participated in the program for free, students entering the expanded program needed to pay six million Iraqi Dinars (approximately 5095 US Dollars at June 2012 conversion rates). One of the MA students in the program's second cohort felt the move toward charging students at a moment when no other investments were being made to the program indicated that the university saw the program more for its income-generating potential than for its possible scientific contributions.

Here, everything is about money, how to collect money, not paying attention to the studies. I think when they are opening 10 seats, they are not thinking about the importance of the studies … I think it is about money and how to collect it. At a time when these studies are so important, we are in need of opening centers and having not only 10 seats – maybe 20 – we are in need of specialists and trainers and separate centers (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

The graduates, students and faculty of the MA program all seemed to agree on one point: that the University of Duhok needed to make a stronger commitment to peace and conflict studies not only by building up the master's program, but also by also by developing a stronger center dedicated to conducting and disseminating research. The university has had a conflict resolution center since at least 2002, but for most of that time, it has been a center in name only; no research projects have been undertaken by the center, and it has never had it own budget to conduct activities. One professor who served as director of the center for four years said it held great promise for the university and for

the local government, but that it needed formal authority to conduct activities as well as a

budget from the university

> To establish a center, we should have some agenda, some financial support …
> This is not a special situation. It is the situation of all the centers in Iraqi
> Kurdistan and in all of Iraq. That's one of the problems (personal communication,
> June 21, 2011).

Several of the MA students and graduates complained that they could be

contributing to the center by conducting research or organizing other awareness-raising

activities that could raise the profile of the center. They said that they have been told by

university leadership that it was not their place as students or young scholars to play such

roles. One of the first group of MA graduates expressed frustration that the center

continued to languish.

> My idea is to just focus on the center. I want this center to be active in the society.
> No one really listens to us. They said 'No, it should be a professor.' They chose
> [one director] and he said 'We will do many activities,' but we didn't see
> anything. Then they said 'We will choose [another director] and we haven't had
> any meeting with him' (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

The desire for continued growth of the MA program and the overall enterprise of

peace and conflict studies at the University of Duhok also exists among the newest cohort

of students who began the program in January 2012. One of those students, a former

member of the Iraqi Parliament, said the first few years of the MA program represented a

"first step."

> We need a lot of education ... [W]e need more students to graduate from this
> project. I believe they should work in different fields so they can make this
> difference. Also, we need a committee, a club, to make us working together for
> our goals. Not just individuals. We need to be together because we have the same
> views and the same goals. We need some kind of meeting. Not necessarily weekly
> or daily. We just need to be together (personal communication, Jan. 16, 2012).

The University of Duhok's decision to expand its MA program in peace and conflict studies to recruit and accept 10 new students each year stood as a tangible response to an expressed demand for programmatic expansion by students, graduates, faculty and, perhaps most importantly, potential students. The first three years of peace and conflict studies at the University of Duhok left faculty, program graduates, students and potential students with a desire to broaden and deepen the university's involvement in this emerging interdisciplinary subject. Despite the program's expansion, some significant desire remained to see the university make an even-greater investment, particularly by consolidating its conflict resolution center into an actual research-producing entity that could generate meaningful policy-oriented research for use by regional leaders.

<u>Limitations of outcomes</u>

Despite the obvious conflict transformation outcomes produced during the University of Duhok's first few years of operating an MA program in peace and conflict studies, significant limitations existed that constrained possibilities for greater contributions to conflict transformation. Chief among these limitations were feelings of uncertainty among program students, graduates and faculty about how to apply new ideas related to peace and conflict to existing university and societal structures.

A lack of clarity about career opportunities began to plague almost all the students in the MA program as soon as they joined it. Three of the students in the program's first cohort wished to become university teachers upon completion of their degrees. They soon found that such objectives were not realistic because MA graduates in Iraq are permitted only to teach undergraduates, and there was no undergraduate program in peace and conflict studies at the University of Duhok.

 One of the program's first group of graduates said he felt badly for one of his cohort-mates, who very much wanted to teach the subject at the university. He said that his friend "went to Dr. Asmat 'Please, I want to be a university teacher,' but Dr. Asmat replied that they don't need his specialization, that it is not needed by the university" (personal communication, June 16, 2011). The MA graduate who observed his colleague's failed attempts to get hired to teach at the university said he and other program graduates and students felt further frustrated by this situation because they believed that the existing faculty did not qualify as experts in peace and conflict studies.

"The teachers had no experience and no past in this study," the MA program graduate

said. "They're not qualified in this subject" (personal communication, June 16, 2011).

> Now I am keeping my distance between myself from the university. I am working and doing my activities not from the university, but from my organization. We have the master's degrees, so we want a little bit of attention and concentration on us. The university is simply not dealing with us as experts [in this subject] … There is a hostile environment in the university towards the master's degree students (personal communication, June 16, 2011).

> Half of the first eight MA graduates and students expressed anger and

disappointment over the lack of job opportunities for them at the university following

completion of their degrees. One of them said he "absolutely" felt "frustrated because I

gained skills and knowledge, and I am willing to spread it out. But there is no way, no

channel, to go through this road" (June 21, 2011). One of the members of the program's

second cohort of students said he did not expect to encounter what felt to him like a

professional dead-end after studying such a dynamic new field.

> Now we don't have jobs. Even when we finish our master's there are no jobs. And it is not fair. And when I talk about jobs, I mean in this field. I can teach in law, but I want to teach in this field ... Teaching or serving our country, to apply it, not only to think on paper, but to practice and apply these principles (personal communication, June 21, 2011).

These graduates' and students' frustrations seemed to have been compounded by

the reactions of some professors at the university, who did not understand the purpose of

studying for a graduate degree that did not lead to a clear teaching track at the university.

One of the first group of MA graduates said "[s]ometimes the other teachers in the

university were joking with us, telling us 'This kind of study is not a very serious one; it

is strangely shaped' " (personal communication, June 17, 2011).

The University of Duhok's president, Dr. Asmat, said that these developments were not at all accidental, but instead were part of the process of modernizing the university. He insisted that master's graduates should not expect university employment – calling such ideas "one of the very, very wrong aspects of life here" – and that graduates of the MA program in peace and conflict studies should be seeking to join other types of organizations in order to help disseminate new thinking about peace and conflict. He said the traditional default of master's graduates to university employment "makes the citizens be dependent on the government without being a productive person. This should be changed to [a competitive] environment and they should be productive before getting any rights." Dr. Asmat noted that the growing number of master's degree holders alone meant that there could not be teaching positions for all of them. "Now the situation has changed," he said, "and they should think about applying their knowledge in practice and in the field … not only in education (A. Khalid, personal communication, June 19, 2011).

Still, more than half of MA program graduates and students struggled during the summer of 2011 with the idea that they needed to create their own professional pathways. One of the MA graduates and one of the MA students who had experience working in media were poised to continue working in that field. One of the graduates continued his work as a lawyer while operating his own nonprofit human rights organization in the evening. The others five all continued to seek places for themselves either at the University of Duhok or at the Duhok Technical Institute, the public two-year institution of high education. One of the members of the first cohort of MA graduates accepted a position teaching about human rights at the Duhok Technical Institute and said that

although he understood the desire of Dr. Asmat to place MA graduates in civil society organizations, that it was unrealistic.

> In the [United States], you can work anywhere you want. There are many opportunities. Here, no. It's different. If you get the MA and don't work at the university, where can you work? … It's hard. It's a good idea, but you cannot make it here. [One of the program graduates] has a position at the university and [another one] also, and I will have a position at the Duhok Technical Institute. Of course we will be involved in many activities about conflict resolution and activities in civil society. But we have to have a position in the university or the institute. Your job can't just be working with the NGOs. Sometimes they have a program and sometimes they don't have a program. We will be without jobs (personal communication, June 17, 2011).

The same MA program graduate explained that introducing new ideas about peace and conflict in a master's program was difficult, but that expecting an entirely new system of professional practice to emerge at the same time was thoroughly unrealistic. Shifting expectations about such matters would take at least a generation, he said.

> Our mission is not easy, here in Kurdistan, here in Iraq. My friends ask me, 'What are you doing?' This is a new idea for our society. You cannot do anything in this society. We have customs. We have traditions. You cannot change anything ... But maybe we can change something for our sons and make a new future for Iraq (personal communication, June 17, 2011).

Students and graduates of the University of Duhok's MA program in peace and conflict studies have been part of a new program that has produced significant conflict transformation outcomes. However, those outcomes have been limited because students not only have had to struggle with unfamiliar concepts in the classroom and in their master's research, but also have discovered that they needed to find new professional pathways to practice in their new field. Finding that certain university employment was not available to them, the graduates and students have explored other professional options, including teaching in other fields, working with nonprofit organizations and

143

attempting to integrate peace and conflict studies with their previous professional

backgrounds. These non-traditional professional pathways led to tensions for the students

and graduates, who wished to engage in professional practices related to their new field

of expertise but did not immediately find clear professional connections with existing

structures both at the University of Duhok and elsewhere in their society.

CHAPTER 5

American University of Iraq, Sulaimani

Why did the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS) spend two years

developing a Center for Peace and Security Studies, and then, seemingly, lose interest in

the project? Is AUIS an appropriate institutional home for peace and conflict studies? Or

are barriers to establishment of the field too great on the AUIS campus?

AUIS, a private university located in the northeastern governorate of Sulaimani,

opened in 2007 with a 45-student undergraduate class and a mission to offer **"**a truly

comprehensive, American-style education in Iraq" on a modern campus "where talented

students in Iraq and the region would come to learn regardless of origin or affiliation"

(http://auis.edu.iq/auis_history). AUIS founder Barham Salih, who has served as deputy

prime minister of Iraq and as prime minister of the Kurdistan Region, told The New York

Times in 2007 that AUIS aimed to **"**develop the political elite of the future, the educated

elite of the future" and also "to stimulate reform in the Iraqi education system" (Wong,

2007).

The primary objective of establishing the university was to provide Iraqi students

with a higher education option "modeled after the famous private universities in Cairo

and Beirut" (Wong) that would offer a stark contrast to the time-worn lecture-based

system found in Iraq's secondary schools and public universities. The Christian Science

Monitor reported in 2008 that AUIS "aims to produce graduates who will be

indispensable to government ministries as well as socially responsible entrepreneurs"

(Arraf, 2008). When the university opened, it had three undergraduate programs:

International Studies; Business Management, and; Information Systems and Computer Technology.

One year after its founding, in late 2008, AUIS had 256 students enrolled (Arraf, 2008) and had 460 undergraduate students by the end of the 2010-2011 academic year (personal communication, June 15, 2011). AUIS graduated its first undergraduate class in June 2012: 37 students with majors in Information Technology, Business Administration, and International Studies (Chung, 2012).

AUIS offered neither a degree nor any specific courses in peace and conflict studies during the first six years of its existence. However, at least some university leaders believed that AUIS' broader purpose included fostering better relations between groups that have engaged in sometimes-violent conflict in Iraq over the past decade. Salih, the university's founder, said "[a]s far as AUIS is concerned, part of the mission of the university is that [peacebuilding], no doubt, at least in part" (personal communication, June 8, 2011). The AUIS provost in 2010 said the university's very existence and format was an effort at peacemaking in Iraq.

> Are we teaching peace studies? No. Are we teaching peace by example? I think we are. Are we doing it through mutual understanding and toleration? … I think the Arabs are going to see the Kurds have some legitimate desires, and the Kurds are going to see that the Arabs are not all Saddamists, and a certain amount of goodwill can come out of it (personal communication, March 18, 2010).

Part of the manifestation of that idea was the development of research centers. In 2009, AUIS hired two staff members – a faculty director and an administrative assistant director – whose assignments included building centers and programs that would complement and enrich the international studies curriculum. The assistant director said they set out to establish centers or programs that would "connect students to other

organizations, institutes, [and] think tanks" because "[f]or the university to grow and

develop, it needed a way to develop relationships in the region and internationally"

(personal communication, May 30, 2011). The Center for Peace and Security Studies

(CPSS) was one of two centers – along with the Center for Regional Studies – that they

founded. The stated mission of the centers was to "integrate different communities of

Iraqi students and produce the next generation of young leaders who can contribute to

building a productive, tolerant, peaceful, and democratic society" (personal

correspondence, June 15, 2011).

Both the research centers director, Denise Natali, and the university's first provost

had planned in 2009 to develop a center focused on peace and conflict studies, but the

precise shape and purpose of the center were unclear. CPSS took its form neither in

response to specific faculty interest nor to student demand. Rather, it was a product of

available financial resources. The United States Department of State offered AUIS one

million dollars in late 2009 to enable 50 non-Kurdish students from outside the Kurdistan

Region to attend AUIS with all tuition and dormitory expenses paid in what was an

effort, the research centers director said, "to diversify the AUIS student population" (D.

Natali, personal communication, June 22, 2012).

> When I wrote the proposal, the initial amount was much smaller – I think about
> 400,000 USD but I am not sure ... [AUIS] somehow got more money. I added a
> section on the research centers, which was a very small amount of the 1 million
> USD total, but which nonetheless served as seed money to get the centers'
> speakers series up and running (D. Natali, personal communication, June 22,
> 2012).

CPSS thus was created, in large part, as a vehicle through which the State

Department funds could be administered. The research centers director acknowledged

that she developed the mission of CPSS so that the National Reconciliation Project –

bringing the 50 non-Kurdish students to AUIS – fit within the domain of the center, and

that two other, smaller projects that focused on bringing speakers to AUIS then were

developed to round out the work of CPSS.

In addition to administering the National Reconciliation Program, the main

activity of the CPSS during its first two years of existence was facilitating the visits of

external scholars and practitioners to the AUIS campus. From March 2010 through

March 2011, CPSS hosted at least 10 international speakers who led at least 15 separate

events aimed at stimulating critical thought and discussion related to issues of peace and

security (http://auis.edu.iq/search/node/CPSS).

Students who attended these events generally reported that they found them to be

interesting and useful. One student who responded to an email questionnaire about his

views on the CPSS-sponsored events said he found the lectures "not very beneficial

because lecturing people without knowing what they [are] looking to get out of the events

makes the event" unfocused "and it ends up without achieving its goal" (personal

communication, July 14, 2010). However, the research centers assistant director said the

value of the events should not be measured in the short term, considering that as of 2011,

AUIS had not "even graduated an undergraduate class yet."

> Externally, I think what we've done over the past nearly two years is to link the
> research centers of the university to major organizations and institutions … some
> really strong research-based institutions: NYU, Georgetown, the Stimson Center,
> USIP, the Carnegie Endowment. In addition, we've been developing linkages
> with research institutes in Turkey, Beirut, and the Iraq Foundation. Making those
> linkages, from an external standpoint, is really important. Bringing people here is
> so essential … That's been huge. The relationships that grow out of that will be
> long-term (personal communication, May 30, 2011).

The intended close integration of CPSS into AUIS' broader mission is a significant theme to emphasize. Though CPSS was founded, somewhat instrumentally, with the idea of exposing students to key debates related to peace and security, it also was developed to support AUIS' overall aim of creating an ethnically, religiously and politically diverse student body that could share the same learning environment in a way that seemed impossible in many communities because of the high levels of intergroup violence that plagued Iraq in the years immediately following the 2003 United States-led invasion and occupation.

For this case study, I conducted 16 interviews: one with the university provost in 2010; one with the university president in 2011; one with the former research centers' director; one with the university founder, who was at the time prime minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government; one with the AUIS dean of students; one with the assistant director of the research centers; one with a tribal leader from Kirkuk who participated in a program at AUIS, and; nine with students at the university. I followed-up by email with all nine of the students.

In addition, I conducted two focus groups with AUIS students: one with four students in January 2011 and one with nine students in May 2011. I conducted these focus groups with students whom I had come to know during a series of events I facilitated for the AUIS Center for Peace and Security Studies in March 2010 and January 2011. During each of those periods, I conducted workshops for students, organized a film screening and a panel discussion related to peacebuilding in Iraq. These workshops and related events enabled me to observe the environment at AUIS related to peace and conflict studies for approximately 100 hours in 2010 and 2011.

Analysis of the case

In order to understand the significance of the American University of Iraq,

Sulaimani's development of the Center for Peace and Security Studies, it will be

necessary to apply the analytical framework to it that was described in Chapter 3 of this

paper. Three core questions will be considered:

- To what extent did the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani exist within a

  favorable political climate that facilitated the establishment of its Center for Peace

  and Security Studies (CPSS)?

- To what extent did entrepreneurial or charismatic university leadership play a role

  in establishing the Center?

- To what extent did the availability of resources – financial, intellectual and

  relational – help to facilitate the Center's establishment?

After those questions are explored thoroughly, the program's conflict

transformation outputs and short-term outcomes will be articulated and examined, also

using the framework described in Chapter 3, to develop a greater understanding of

possible outputs and outcomes of a center dedicated to the exploration of peace and

conflict studies within three years of its founding in a locale that recently had experienced

large-scale violent conflict.

In order to generate knowledge about the conditions that made possible the

establishment of the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani's Center for Peace and

Security Studies and the conflict transformation outputs and short-term outcomes, I

conducted a total of 14 interviews with university leaders and students, two focus groups

with students, engaged in follow-up email and Facebook correspondence with eight of

the students and spent a minimum of 50 hours observing activities at AUIS during and

immediately preceding and following events I facilitated or helped to facilitate on the

AUIS campus in 2010 and 2011.

Some of the factors explaining the successful establishment of CPSS mentioned

most frequently included:

- Sulaimani enjoyed a relatively favorable political climate, characterized by low levels of political violence and high levels of political contestation as manifested through political competition between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and Gorran and through the two months of anti-government protest that took place from February to April 2011. Some research participants also mentioned that the ethnically mixed student body at AUIS created a political environment that was ripe for exploration of issues related to peace and conflict studies;
- The desire of the AUIS founder to develop a university that could educate future leaders of Iraq in skills that would help promote peaceful approaches to conflict;
- Financial resources available to the university, mostly provided by the U.S. Department of State, and relationships with scholars and policymakers who were willing to interact with AUIS faculty and students about questions related to peace and security in Iraq.

It is important to note that some of these factors also were interpreted by some

research participants as placing limitations on the success of CPSS or on any attempts by

AUIS to establish programs related to peace and conflict studies. For example, some

research participants observed that political contestation in Sulaimani also works against

the establishment of new institutions. The former AUIS research centers director noted

that Duhok is somehow "more manageable" than Sulaimani because Duhok, as a KDP

stronghold "is linked to a highly

monolithic voice and strain of nationalism that needs external intervention and support"

(D. Natali, personal communication, June 11, 2013). I will explore these proposed factors

individually – considering their power to facilitate as well as to impede institutional

creation – in order to develop a clearer understanding of them and their power to explain

the successful establishment of the Center for Peace and Security Studies at AUIS.

Sulaimani's political climate: Unlike Duhok, Sulaimani is a politically-divided

governorate. In the March 2010 elections to determine representatives to Iraq's

parliament, the Kurdistan Alliance – consisting nominally of the Kurdistan Democratic

Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) -- received 350,283 or 42.1

percent of the 831,241 votes cast, while Gorran received 298,621 or 35.9 percent. The

Kurdistan Alliance won eight of the province's 17 seats in parliament, while Gorran won

six; three went to smaller, Islamic parties (Independent High Electoral Commission).

Despite Sulaimani's position as the historic seat of the PUK, just five of the Kurdistan

Alliance's elected representatives from the province were members of the PUK. Two

female KDP candidates won seats based on an electoral quota system that reserves 25

percent of seats in parliament for women, and one formally independent candidate won a

seat, although he has strong ties to the KDP (personal communication, June 26, 2012).

Sulaimani governorate long has been headquarters to the PUK. Following the

failed Kurdish rebellion against the Iraqi central government in 1974-75, and with the

KDP shattered as a result, Jalal Talabani and a group of leftist, intellectual colleagues

from the Sulaimani area announced the formation of the PUK on June 1, 1975. Talabani's

statement blamed the failure of the uprising on "the inability of the feudalist, tribalist, bourgeois rightist and capitulationist Kurdish leadership" (McDowall, 2004, p. 343).

Sulaimani's almost unquestioned loyalty to the PUK continued through intra-Kurdish battles in the 1980s and 1990s. The first elections conducted for the newly-formed Kurdistan Regional Government in 1992 resulted in a "dead heat" between the KDP and the PUK, but the results highlighted local political loyalties: "the KDP's overwhelming sway in Dohuk, and the PUK's supremacy in Sulaymaniya and Kirkuk provinces" (McDowall, 2004, p.385). The PUK received 60 percent of votes in Sulaimani, compared to 27 percent for the KDP (McDowall, 2004, p. 394).

The PUK's dominance in Sulaimani began to wane in 2006, when one of the PUK's founders, Nawshirwan Mustafa, left the party over disagreements regarding who eventually should succeed Talabani as party leader. In 2009, Nawshirwan founded Gorran, a party that "campaigned on a pledge to fight government corruption, poor distribution of wealth, lack of services and the [PUK] leadership's inability to deliver Kirkuk and other disputed territories to Kurdish sovereignty" (International Crisis Group, Iraq's Uncertain Future, p. 18). In 2009 elections for the Kurdistan Parliament, Gorran won a majority of votes cast in Sulaimani and captured 25 seats of the 111 seats, while the PUK, with a much broader base throughout the region, won 28 seats.

The sudden political competition in Sulaimani, coupled with the start of the Arab Spring uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, led Gorran to call for the dissolution of the Kurdistan Parliament during the first week of February 2011. Speaking on the television station that he and Gorran control, Nawshirwan announced: "We believe there is now a deep and multi-dimensional crisis existing in the Kurdistan region. It has a political

dimension, as well as economic, social and educational dimensions" (Rudaw, 2012). On

February 17, spurred on by the calls of Gorran, approximately 1000 protesters marched to

the Sulaimani headquarters of the KDP and began throwing rocks at the building.

Security officers fired into the crowd, killing a 15-year-old boy. Three days later, as the

protests continued, a 17-year-old boy was shot and killed. At least one other protestor

died as a result of a gunshot wound during the demonstrations (Amnesty International,

2011).

Protests continued, attracting thousands of participants daily until April 18, when

"security forces violently seized control of Sara Square, the center of daily protests …

and demolished the protesters' podium" (Human Rights Watch, 2011). Protest organizers

told Human Rights Watch that "[s]ecurity forces have fanned out across the city and have

refused to allow protesters back to the site."

The very fact that the Sulaimani protests occurred – and continued for two months

– suggested to some observers and participants that the city possessed a level of political

openness that made it ripe for the study of peace and conflict. The violence that occurred

during the protests, and the forceful way that the protests were ended, however, caused

others to question the reality of Sulaimani's reputation as a politically progressive city

open to new ideas about peace and conflict, compared to other major urban centers in the

Kurdistan Region and the rest of Iraq.

One AUIS student who took part in the demonstrations noted that Sulaimani was

the only place in the Kurdistan region where such demonstrations took place, and that in

the regional capital, Erbil, leaders closed the major public university for more than a

month, sent students back to their homes and did not allow vehicles from Sulaimani to

enter the city in order to minimize the risk of similar protests breaking out there. But the

violence disturbed him.

> I had been participating in the demonstrations and the protests since the first day.
> The first day in front of the headquarters of KDP, some young people, teenagers,
> started to throw stones to the KDP main building. I actually tried to stop them, but
> they didn't listen to me. I became angry and I hated them. While I know that they
> practiced emotionally, and they protested against corruption, nepotism,
> suppression of freedom of speech. I tried and some other people tried to make the
> demonstration peacefully … I don't know why the government tried to make it
> dangerous. They brought thousands of slingshots for the police and the peshmerga
> (militia) ... Actually, I see and I realize that people need to be familiar with
> peacebuilding ...   Some people who are very angry, and said the corruption
> cannot be accepted any more. I see that. It's very necessary to make peace
> between Arabs, and Kurds and Turcomen, but also among us as Kurds (personal
> communication, June 2, 2011)

Another AUIS student estimated that half of the students at the university

supported the protests while half opposed them. He saw this split as an indication that

openness to new ideas in Sulaimani was constrained by fears of losing political power.

> [After a month of protests] a group of students tried to go to protests. Other
> students complained and said we should not take the AUIS name to the protests. I
> thought 'What is their perspective?' Their families are with the PUK. They are the
> sons of rich men. They do not need any change in their lives. They even called us
> traitors for rising up against Dr. Barham, the founder of AUIS. We are not
> Gorran. But when you see people killed and you see the security taking arms
> against us, you have to protest. Their interests were against this (personal
> communication, June 2, 2011).

Students acknowledged the complexity of the political environment in which they

were operating. They emphasized that the protests did take place in Sulaimani – despite

the violence – and that they did not occur elsewhere, indicating a level of openness to

new thinking.

> [P]eople (in Sulaimani) were protesting for about 70 days out of their happiness that
> those authoritarian regimes had been shaken. The opposite happened in Erbil. People
> didn't have the chance to just go outside. What the TVs were showing [in Erbil] was
> that things were fine and there was no need for protests. So I guess Erbil was keeping

the situation under control. As a matter of fact, they captured a few journalists in Erbil and put them in jail. You have some restrictions in Sulaimani, but it's not as bad as in Erbil (personal communication, June 5, 2011).

During a focus group I conducted at AUIS one month before the protests began, two students engaged in a brief exchange that highlighted their feelings that Sulaimani's political environment provided a good – though imperfect – stage for explorations of peace and conflict. Their exchange also demonstrated the high levels of parochialism that continue to exist among AUIS students.

In the past, politics had a big effect on the universities. But I am optimistic that it is getting less and less. We have some politicians who do not want to interfere, For example, Dr. Barham. He does not want to interfere. In Iraq, the parties and the government are not separated, so sometimes it is the parties that affect the universities, but not the government.

What [he] said is only true for Sulaimani. But for Duhok and Erbil, the effect of politics on higher education is increasing day by day. The Minister of Higher Education wants to reform higher education, but the KDP resists him and wants to stall the ministry (personal communication, January 8, 2011).

Long-time observers of Sulaimani's political scene were not nearly as optimistic as students that the city – and its political leadership – provided fertile ground for the growth of new ideas represented by the field of peace and conflict studies. One history professor at Sulaimani University who has been politically active, mostly with the PUK, since the 1970s, mentioned that Dr. Asmat, the president of Duhok University "knows he needs good specialists for the future for the government. Maybe one year he can send them to the United States to study there, to learn … in the English language. But here [in Sulaimani], no." The professor said the public perception of the KDP as a traditional party and the PUK as a progressive party was misleading.

From the first year when the PUK was established in 1975, one of the PUK leaders said 'The KDP they are tribal – not modern – and PUK is moderate. They're tribal, but they work with modern methods. We're modern, but we're working with tribal methods.' Still now, it's like that. You see the city, the university and think it's modern, but the method of the work is not modern (personal communication, June 6, 2011).

Denise Natali, the former AUIS research centers director, who has studied and written about political issues in the Kurdistan Region for almost two decades, also refuted the idea that Sulaimani was a place ripe for intellectual innovation. She argued that the external public perception of Sulaimani as a city that embraces intellectual debate and political dialogue existed only because people "like to hold on to images."

This is absurd. Most of the intellectuals … left [Sulaimani] by 2000. And then you have this mass urbanization process where the people of the villages are now living inside the cities. So [Sulaimani] cannot talk about an urban educated people anymore because the urban educated people either went out to Europe or they went out to Erbil. Who's living in the city now are, literally, the village people. And the reverse is, Duhok, being at the border and having the influences of Turkey, having been the beneficiary of Barzani family power and money and sending students abroad and bringing in very open-minded [people] – and of course an excellent president .... In Duhok, becoming one of the wealthiest cities in all of Iraq, right now, it's a … much more forward-thinking, business-oriented, open-minded region in some ways, in some ways not. But [Sulaimani] is not. It's a very, very parochial city (D. Natali, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

The research centers director pointed to her own experience as evidence that Sulaimani does not actually possess high levels of political openness. She noted that in her previous position as a professor at the University of Kurdistan in Erbil, she often wrote and made public comments critical of the KDP and the entire political establishment in the Kurdistan Region without any backlash. But she found the situation to be different in Sulaimani, where scrutiny was more intense. She ultimately found

157

herself so constrained in what she was able to write that she decided to leave the

Kurdistan Region altogether at the end of 2010.

> I have worked in the Kurdistan Region for years, both in Erbil and [Sulaimani] and had the opportunity to write critical articles and have critical discussions about the nature of governance and the political system in the Region in public forums. Clearly I was given more leeway than Kurdish writers, perhaps because I was a professor or a foreign scholar, and therefore could not necessarily be abducted or threatened the way Kurdish journalists are today. I also made every effort to write objectively and analytically. Still, over time, certain officials and groups would not accept what they perceive are threats to their power, or outsiders revealing the truth about what really happens in their institutions. And some of the biggest constraints were coming from the so-called urban educated leaders, alongside the traditional elites. When I could no longer write and think freely and openly, it was no longer possible to remain (D. Natali, personal communication, June 11, 2013).

Quite separate from – but embedded within – the politics of Sulaimani, the

Kurdistan Region, and broader Iraq, AUIS experienced its own crisis in May 2011 that

spoke to the political conditions and openness to new ideas on campus related to peace

and conflict studies. Scores of Students engaged in a tense protest in response to a rumor

that the university planned to change its name to American University of Iraq,

eliminating any reference to Sulaimani.

Some Kurdish students – who composed approximately 80 percent of the AUIS

student body at the time (personal communication, June 17, 2011) – complained that the

rumored change would eliminate a significant reference to the university's Kurdish

identity. Some non-Kurdish students saw the potential name change as an

acknowledgement of the university's openness to all of Iraq. One student quoted in the

student-run campus newspaper said, "The university is not for a specific kind of people;

it is for all Iraqis, and the name 'AUI' represents that probably" (Hussein). Students

158

started a Facebook page entitled "Let's Save AUIS from AUI."

(http://www.causes.com/causes/612692-let-s-save-auis-from-aui/about)

University leaders insisted that no name change was actually being considered, and that only a new graphic design was in the works. Salih called the crisis "stupid" because "there was no such decision at all. There was no way that the 'S' would be dropped for a variety of political and historical reasons" (B. Salih, personal communication, June 8, 2011). Even so, the resulting protest brought to the surface still-simmering ethnic divisions on campus that existed despite what the university's president called AUIS' attempts to be "an all-Iraqi institution" that engaged in peacebuilding "as the mediated effect of living together in a community of learning" (personal communication, June 5, 2011).

In the weeks that followed, students wrestled with the fallout from the event. One male Arab student said he saw friends "who were close friends … [get] in a big problem with other guys … it was really hard to change their minds. It was really unrelated. They were saying 'It's because we're Kurdish, and you are not [a] Kurd. You are not patriotic.' " (personal communication, May 31, 2011). One female Arab student said her Kurdish flat mates tried to intimidate her into leaving their dormitory.

> When I would not go out, they started to sing the Kurdish anthem. I asked them to stop because I had an exam. They said 'No, it is because you are Arab.' They started singing louder and louder. I don't care about these things. It was very hard ...I used to live in the Arab flat. I had a Kurdish roommate. We were five Arabs and one Kurdish. She said she felt like she was in Baghdad. I told her, to prove I was like her, I told her I would move with her. We moved to the Kurdish flat. She was so happy. I was the only Arab. She was one of the ones teasing me. It was like stabbing me in the heart (personal communication, June 3, 2011).

Kurdish pride about having the university based in the Kurdistan Region combined with lingering resentment and pain over suffering imposed by previous Arab-controlled regimes fueled the controversy. One male Kurdish student majoring in international studies said he participated in the protest "but in a polite way" and understood the anger of the Kurdish students who made critical remarks aimed at Arab students.

> As a student from Kurdistan, and also an Iraqi student, it hurt me when they said they would change [the name]. When you make a decision, especially for a unique organization, at the beginning you should think about it. Adding S or taking away S doesn't make a problem. Why do you change it? What's the problem? Right now, it is important for Kurdish [people] to have this university. It is our right to be proud of this. We have security. No one can deny it. We have a not-bad government … if you compare to Iran, to Syria, compared to Saudi Arabia. I think we had a right to have this name. (personal communication, June 7, 2011)

Another male Kurdish student pointed out that the controversy demonstrated the failure – at least in the short-term – of AUIS' experiment of bringing together students of different backgrounds and having them work collaboratively simply because they share a campus. He mentioned that AUIS prides itself on teaching critical thinking skills.

> On our first chance to do this, it was a complete failure. [The Kurdish students] acted as if it was a conspiracy. They did not take the perspective of the other side … I was really disappointed to see that (personal communication, June 2, 2011).

As a result of the inter-group tensions that emerged, the AUIS dean of students began convening a hand-picked group of students representing all communities on campus for weekly discussions about the issues that divided them. He said he started the discussions because the situation was "ugly, real ugly" and because one "distraught"

Arab student came to his office after the demonstration (personal communication, June 6,

2011)

> What occurred in the aftermath was the Arab students started asking, 'What did
> we do?' It made sense to find a way so some of these people could sit down and
> talk to each other, not the whole student body, not the most militant, but some of
> the most rational ones could sit around a table and talk about some things. We're
> only just beginning. It's been three meetings ... I think there are moments when
> they're deeply constructive. They look each other in the eye and say something.
> There are more moments when they're stubborn and pig-headed. I don't have any
> expectations of massive success. I'm just trying to make a dent (personal
> communication, June 6, 2011).

The fact that this so-called "S controversy" occurred on the AUIS campus brought

to light deep divisions between students related to their identities and ethnicities. The

incident raised questions about whether the political climate on campus was too divided

for true consideration of peace and conflict studies, or if it was, in fact, perfectly ripe to

serve as a platform for such discussions. Similarly, the divided political situation in the

city of Sulaimani called into question its political readiness to handle critical dialogue

about peace and conflict. Sufficient political openness existed for a two-month mass

public demonstration against perceived government corruption to take place in 2011.

Ultimately, though the demonstrations were put down by violent means. The tension

between political openness and political control could be seen best in the form of Salih,

the AUIS founder, who encouraged the university to grow and become a laboratory for a

diverse group of students to engage in critical thinking, and almost simultaneously

discouraged the AUIS research centers director from writing critically about local

politics. Overall, the political climate at AUIS and in Sulaimani was open, but not as

welcoming as it could have been for the development and public discussion of new ideas

related to peace and conflict studies.

161

The influence of the AUI-S founder and the research centers director: AUIS came into existence due largely to the efforts of Salih, who served as the face of the university to donors from the United States and elsewhere as it raised its initial $25 million and then struggled to raise more (Wong). During an interview about the prospect of peace and conflict studies education at AUIS in June 2011, Salih pleaded with me to "[h]elp us raise (the university's) profile."

> I care about this university. I started it. To me, this has been the most important project of my life, and the most difficult one as well. I hate being nice to people I don't like. Especially with fundraising and so on, I have to be nice to some people I don't like. We've had very little help, even from the United States (B. Salih, personal communication, June 8, 2011).

Salih acknowledged the growing importance of peace and conflict studies, and its possible place at AUIS. He called the subject "an area that is needed" and said a degree program "no doubt … would be a very impressive thing, [a] positive thing" that would receive

"commitment from the leadership, both the board as well as the management of the university." However, during two interviews on successive days, he never mentioned CPSS as already having started introducing peace and conflict studies and seemed mostly interested in discussing possible international donors who might fund a larger research center or degree program. Salih mentioned the U.S. Department of State, the European Union, the United States Institute of Peace and the Ford Foundation, and twice asked me whether I was interested in developing a proposal in collaboration with other U.S.-based universities.

[T]he State Department ... I think they would be interested, because [peacemaking] is at the core of US diplomacy. I would be willing to raise some funds for it, but I don't think it would be sufficient to sustain a program like this. You could turn it into a major center where American diplomacy initiatives [take place] on peace and reconciliation. They are spending a lot of money on this outside Iraq. They could do it here. They could do it at this beautiful new campus (B. Salih, personal communication, June 8, 2011).

University leaders pointed to Salih's vision – as well as his political connections -- as a major reason why AUIS came into existence as a place where students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds could come together to study and consider the future of Iraq. The provost in 2010 said:

What had to happen was someone like Barham Salih to say 'I want my [Kurdish] people to be integrated with the rest of Iraq and maybe even to be the leaders of a new Iraq, and a prosperous Iraq.' How do we get there? Let's start a university where we teach practical subjects like business administration and computer science … I added to that we could pull together a university that was American in the fullest sense of the term. It would teach practical subjects with a liberal arts base (personal communication, March 18. 2010).

The former research centers director noted that Salih's influence was "absolutely key" in gaining the resources necessary to found the CPSS. She said, "He was the one who supported … this national reconciliation project" and that he "was savvy enough to know that these types of programs are important" (D. Natali, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

The research centers director herself, however, was responsible for turning CPSS from a well-funded idea into a reality. After the State Dept. made its $1 million grant to AUIS, the research centers director and her assistant director developed a Draft Centers Mission Statement to define the work of the centers. The statement, written in October 2009, claimed that CPSS was "[i]nspired by the challenges and opportunities of peace-

building in post-Saddam Iraq" and that it aimed to "create a space to encourage

cooperation and policy debate between military strategists and post-war reconstruction

practitioners working in Iraq" (Draft Centers Mission Statement, October 8, 2009). The

language of the Draft Centers Mission Statement defined CPSS as a space where AUIS

students – particularly those in the International Studies major – might explore the

tensions between the interdisciplinary fields of security studies and peace studies.

According to the Draft Centers Mission Statement, the types of international partnerships

that CPSS sought to establish should reflect an attempt to bridge the intellectual space

between students and scholars focused on peace and those focused on security.

> … The program aims to establish cooperative relationships with leading
> universities, think-tanks, and international organizations engaged in scholarly and
> pragmatic approaches to strategic planning and conflict resolution, with a focus
> on strengthening the capacity of Iraqis to address their security situation
> constructively and if possible, to respond to it non-violently (Draft Centers
> Mission Statement, October 8, 2009).

The research centers director acknowledged that this approach was intentional,

and at least in part, a consequence of some internal disagreement about whether the

Center should be grounded in notions of peace and conflict resolution or in more

traditional realist approaches to state security. Much in the same way that the Center

itself came into being as a consequence of funding available from the U.S. Department of

State, she said its form was chosen to appeal to a broad international audience of donors

and scholars.

> [T]o create research centers, you do want to be in synch, to be relevant, to get
> funding. To get international attention and respect you look at … what are your
> associates doing across the Atlantic, across the sea? What are the leading areas of
> conflict resolution? So what we did was literally….look across the websites of
> key research institutions or key universities. Everyone here or there has a center

for conflict resolution or security studies. And we went back and forth quite frankly. I was saying I wanted the conflict resolution and I kind of got … persuaded to change it to security studies. And then we made a compromise – ok, we'll do peace and security (D. Natali, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

But, as the assistant research centers director noted, there was no openness among top university leadership for introducing peace, conflict and security issues into the curriculum. "Over time, I think we started to realize that … it was a bit of a stretch," he said. "We started to run before we walked" (personal communication, May 30, 2011).

After leading the research centers for just over a year, the director decided to leave AUIS at the end of 2010 because, she said, there was no real opportunity to do research at an institution that was completely committed to the a liberal arts teaching model. She said that most of the AUIS faculty "are very die-hard liberal arts school professors, who say 'Someone who teaches math, should be able to teach social studies. We're not here to specialize ... [At] the end, they're not a research institution."

I wanted research. I am thoroughly, thoroughly a researcher. So that was quite frustrating. Not only because I couldn't get the support of the higher levels but because there was nobody who specialized that came over to teach … [W]ho was remotely specialized to teach, to head conflict resolution? None of them. Nobody. (D. Natali, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

Salih, the AUIS founder, created the opportunity for CPSS to come into existence and expressed his public support for the development of a more robust center or program at the university related to peace and conflict studies. In order for CPSS to become a functioning entity that hosted campus events that provided a space for students to engage in critical thinking about issues related to peace and conflict, the research centers director and her assistant needed to articulate a content-based vision for CPSS and to realize that vision by bringing external scholars and practitioners to campus. Following the departure

165

of the research centers director from AUIS, it appeared that a new leader would be needed to consolidate CPSS into a sustainable campus institution that could work within the constraints imposed by top university leadership.

No such leader emerged, and the research centers – including CPSS – died a quiet death in late 2011, after the assistant research centers director also left the university and the initial funding from the Department of State was exhausted (K. Long, personal communication, June 18, 2013). AUIS subsequently established the Institute of Regional and International Studies (IRIS), in early 2013, as a successor space to the original research centers. IRIS was conceived of as "a space for regional and international encounters [that] fosters mutual understanding and awareness that reaches across national borders, sectarian divisions, and differing perspectives" (http://auis.edu.iq/IRIS).

IRIS came into existence in March 13 when it hosted the first Sulaimani Forum, a two-day conference that "convened scholars, journalists, and prominent figures in civil society and public life to discuss "The Changing Geopolitics of the Middle East" (http://auis.edu.iq/IRIS). IRIS also aspires to "[convene] meetings and roundtables, [offer] research and teaching fellowships, and [promote] publications and academic exchanges" with "historical, cultural, socio-economic, anthropological and religious dimensions pertinent to present day realities and problems" (http://auis.edu.iq/IRIS). Although it is important to note the creation of IRIS as an institutional successor to CPSS, IRIS and its activities are outside the boundaries of this study, which focuses on the time period when CPSS was active and shortly thereafter.

166

Availability of dedicated resources for peace and conflict studies at AUIS: AUIS had

very limited dedicated resources for peace and conflict studies during CPSS' brief period

of operation: a very small budget to conduct on-campus events; a small collection of

books, and; the social capital of the former research centers director. CPSS' only funds

were part of a $1 million grant awarded by the U.S. Department of State in 2009 to AUIS

for the National Reconciliation Project. Those funds were intended mainly to enable a

group of students from outside the Kurdistan region to attend AUIS, but the former

research centers director said that because she ran the project through CPSS, she was able

to justify using some of funds for related purposes, mainly to support the CPSS speaker

series.

> [W]e had the topic and idea – but immediately, it was the U.S. State Department –
> the Baghdad Embassy's very big interest in the National Reconciliation Project.
> So I'm here, literally a month. As we're writing down to put it on the web, we get
> some kind of email from Baghdad: Can you write a proposal for the million dollar
> student award? And we're going to call it the National Reconciliation Project.
> How can we bring non-Kurdish students up? And we said: 'Ok, where can we put
> this under?' Literally, I don't mean to be so calculating, but it almost fell at the
> same time. So I wrote this proposal. I just got to AUIS and in three weeks I have a
> million dollars. And that became part of this project where we brought Baghdad
> students up for the next five years … [W]hen I wrote the proposal for the million
> dollars, I said: this project will be implemented by the Center for Peace and
> Security Studies … (D. Natali, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

The research centers director estimated that CPSS received approximately

$50,000 out of the $1 million and used almost all of it to cover travel and related

expenses for speakers to come to campus. She said she tried and failed to raise additional

funds for the center and its programs on trips back to the United States.

> When I went to Washington to USIP … they said '[W]e can't give money to you
> guys. We support you, but we're not going to give money to you. You have
> money yourself. You're American University. And I said 'Well, we don't.' And
> he said 'Well, we can't. But we'll do anything to support you.' So I spoke to one

of the women there who asked if I were interested in having our faculty in going to a training session sponsored by USIP where they could introduce conflict resolution strategies into different parts of the curriculum (D. Natali, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

University leadership, however, would not support training faculty in specialties that fell outside the core curriculum, the director said, meaning that there was no chance at developing faculty capacity in peace and conflict studies. "So it was going to be a conflict resolution program in theory," she said, "but a very limited one" (D. Natali, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

Once CPSS was established, the primary resource it possessed was the professional network of scholars and practitioners that belonged to the research centers director. She said she ran the CPSS speakers series by "calling friends to come in … it was literally run off the colleagues that I knew" (D. Natali, personal communication, September 1, 2011). The university did not permit CPSS to develop any independent research projects or publications related to the speakers, so the Center had very little ability to build a dedicated knowledge base about issues related to peace and conflict for the university's faculty and students.

Students attended many events sponsored by CPSS in relatively large numbers (I witnessed five different events in 2010-11 with approximately 50 students – more than 10 percent of the 460-student student body – in attendance). Still, AUIS students noticed the very limited resources – both financial and intellectual – that CPSS possessed. Several students complained that there should have been more events dealing with issues related to peace and conflict studies. One complained that AUIS had not replaced the research

centers director six months after her departure, calling it "a huge problem" (personal communication, June 2, 2011).

> We have to improve ... When the local media covers the problem of research, especially the problem of scientific research, [the assistant research centers director] said 'We have research centers. We research on a lot of issues, for example the Iraqi environment.' I don't know. I don't see any results. I am a student here. How can anyone else outside the university see any result? (personal communication, June 2, 2011).

The research centers director said she realized relatively quickly that the main resource that CPSS had to offer AUIS students and faculty was the knowledge and perspectives shared by visiting scholars and experts in the public events that the Center sponsored. "And so the best we could do is to educate more than research," she said. "To educate through the projects … And I'm not going to undervalue that because it really affected the students in many positive ways" (D. Natali, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

At its inception, CPSS did not have any dedicated print resources for students. As part of a series of events I facilitated at AUIS in March 2010, I purchased 13 books and brought them with me to provide to the university library. These included titles by Johan Galtung, Louis Kriesberg and John Paul Lederach. After reviewing these books, the university librarian wrote in an email to the assistant research centers director that "these are legit[imate] books and the Library really appreciates it" (personal correspondence, March 8, 2010). On subsequent trips to AUIS in January and May-June 2011, I brought short paperbacks about subjects such as conflict transformation, peacebuilding and reconciliation, and provided them to students who participated in workshops I facilitated.

169

These seemed to be the only books about these subjects that AUIS students ever had seen.

Both the AUIS founder and the university president said in mid-2011 that a lack of available resources – both financial and intellectual – was the main constraint preventing them from more fully developing CPSS or another program on peace and conflict studies. The university president suggested that a partnership with a major United States-based university to help develop curriculum would be needed in order to introduce a serious peace and conflict studies program. "There are a lot of people I could imagine engaging with," he said. "As a very tender plant, we would need a stick on which to grow … It could happen. It depends largely on the ability to mobilize resources" (personal communication, June 5, 2011).

Likewise, Salih, the AUIS founder said that expanding efforts in peace and conflict studies "is ultimately about resources. There is interest … To me, like any university program, it requires resources. The way to get the university interested is to get resources" (personal communication, June 9, 2011).

CPSS began its work as a result of available financial resources provided by the U.S. Department of State. In its two-plus years of existence, AUIS did not invest resources in developing faculty or student expertise in peace and conflict studies, but rather focused on exposing students to important concepts and practices through the visits of external scholars and practitioners to campus. University leaders and AUIS students seemed to be in basic agreement that in order for peace and conflict studies to expand its

footprint at the university, more financial and intellectual resources would be needed. Ultimately, those resources did not become available, and CPSS withered for lack of them.

Outputs and Outcomes of the AUIS Center for Peace and Security Studies

From its establishment in late 2009 and extending well past its demise in late 2011, the AUIS Center for Peace and Security Studies (CPSS) generated observable outputs and outcomes related to conflict transformation. Students who participated in events sponsored by CPSS indicated that they changed the way they thought about the concepts of peace and conflict in Iraq, and also about how they engaged in intergroup conflicts on campus. Students who participated in CPSS-sponsored events also reported increased interest in the subject and in learning more about it.

These general observations emerged from a systematic application of the analytical framework described in Chapter 3 to the AUIS Center for Peace and Security Studies. Following is a full analysis of the program's conflict transformation outputs and outcomes.

 Conflict transformation outputs

1.Students graduated with degrees in peace and conflict studies: As AUIS does not have a degree-granting program in peace and conflict studies – or any equivalent to it – there have been no graduates from the university in this field. AUIS graduated its first undergraduate class of 37 students in June 2012. Nine of them completed majors in International Studies; several of those students participated in multiple events sponsored

by the CPSS, and consequently developed basic knowledge of peace and conflict studies (personal communication, July 6, 2012).

2. Public or semi-public events that encouraged critical consideration about topics related to peace and conflict studies: The primary output of CPSS was the public events it facilitated. No exact attendance figures were kept, but in general most events were well-attended. Between 50 and 60 students were present when I screened films in March 2010 and January 2011, and when I facilitated a panel discussion with members of the Kirkuk Council of Notables in March 2011.

One student who attended several CPSS-sponsored events recalled being present for "a panel discussion by an American professor about the relations between Iraq and Turkey" as well as for the discussion with the Council of Notables. He also attended a discussion about conducting research in Iraq with a representative of the Washington, DC-based think-tank, the Stimson Center. "I didn't think about peacebuilding in the past," he said. "After participating in the seminars, I think I might be able to build peace and help my country" (personal communication, May 29, 2011).

Another student who attended the several CPSS-sponsored events said that most of them were lectures about familiar subjects related to Iraqi politics. He participated in two peacebuilding workshops that I facilitated in March 2010 and January 2011, and found them to be different because they focused on developing skills.

> The only thing that was informative for me was your workshops. It directly touched the subjects. The others were mostly about politics and media. They didn't introduce new concepts for me. I liked them, but they were not very, very new (personal communication, June 2, 2011).

One female student said she found the CPSS events to be "effective, but not that effective." She participated in one of the skill-building workshops and said that she and other "students who were in the workshop were able to learn some things (June 3, 2011).

The CPSS-sponsored events were an eclectic collection that included:

- **March 15, 2011** – The Media's Role in Rebuilding Iraq, a lecture by freelance journalist Namo Abdullah;
- **Feb. 10, 2011** – Turkey's New Role in the Middle East, a discussion led by Dr. Henri Barkey of Lehigh University and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace;
- **Feb. 9, 2011** – The Obama Administration, Congress, and Foreign Policy: Implications for the Middle East, a lecture by Dr. Andrew Parasiliti, Executive Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in the United States and Corresponding Director for IISS - Middle East
- **Jan. 4-11, 2011** – Four events facilitated by Thomas Hill of New York University's Center for Global Affairs that included two skill-building workshops for AUIS students, a screening of the film "Pray the Devil Back to Hell" and a panel discussion with three members of the Kirkuk Council of Notables;
- **November 30, 2010 –** US-Iraq Relations, a lecture by Alex Laskaris, United States State Department Regional Reconstruction Team Leader;
- **May 24, 2010** – Post-Election Politics and Power-Sharing in Iraq, a panel discussion;
- **May 12-13, 2010 –** Ethnic Nationalism and Historical Records, and European National Identity and the Complexity of Historical Records, two lectures by Patrick Geary of UCLA;
- **May 4-5, 2010 –** The US-Iraq Strategic Relationship, a lecture by Ellen Laipson, Stimson Center, Washington DC;
- **March 8**-**17, 2010** – Three events facilitated by Thomas Hill of Columbia University's Center for International Conflict Resolution that included a four-day workshop for AUIS students addressing conflict resolution theories and practices, a screening of the film "Encounter Point," and a panel discussion entitled "What Does Peacebuilding Mean in Contemporary Iraq?" that featured three Iraqi peacebuilders;
- **March 28-April 3, 2010** – Philosophy of Freedom, a lecture by Phillip Munoz, University of Notre Dame. (http://auis.edu.iq/search/node/CPSS)

Most of students interviewed gave mixed reviews to the CPSS events. One student who founded the AUIS Council for International Studies Students said some CPSS events

he attended were "not organized, but …also good." He singled out the panel discussion with members of the Kirkuk Council of Notables as being particularly relevant.

> It was kind of primary sources for us, so we could see them with our own eyes and ask questions. It's not an educational way to make peace, but still it is one of the ways to make peace (personal communication, June 7, 2011).

3.Research papers related to peace and conflict studies: CPSS did not publish any research papers related to peace and conflict studies, and did not encourage faculty or students to conduct primary research. One student expressed interest in writing about peacebuilding efforts in Kirkuk for a research paper in one of his courses, but said his professor dissuaded him from attempting anything other than historical secondary-source research. Ultimately he said he "wrote three pages about the composition of Kirkuk and the diversity of the city as a reason there is a conflict between them" in a paper entitled "Kirkuk in History: How Kirkuk Became a Disputed City between Arabs, Turkmen and Kurds" (personal communication, May 29, 2011).

The only writing of any sort that emerged directly from CPSS-sponsored events appeared to be two articles that appeared in the campus newspaper, the AUIS Student Voice. One, an editorial published in May 2010 entitled "Prestigious university shifts future" noted that "[m]ost recently, workshops covered such topics as peace building, leadership and human trafficking in Iraq" and claimed that "some students who attended these workshops and lectures admitted that they have gained new ideas and new perspectives" (AUIS Voice). Another story appeared on January 20, 2011 entitled "Thomas Hill Teaches AUI-S students Peace Building Skills." The story offered details of four events I facilitated on behalf of the CPSS events from Jan.4-11, 2011. The AUIS

student who wrote the article after attending the events said, "[t]he story was published on the first page, and a lot of people read that" (personal correspondence, June 2, 2011).

That same AUIS student, who participated in several CPSS-sponsored events, also published two online articles related to the challenges faced by the higher education system in the Kurdistan Region. In one of those articles, he addressed the relative lack of student-centered learning throughout universities in the Region and attempts at AUIS to introduce the model to its student body (Rasul). The author said that, in his mind, the issue of higher education "is somehow related to peacebuilding in Iraq in general and in the Kurdistan region in … particular" (personal communication, June 15, 2013).

> However, the classes and the curriculum do not discuss about peace building, but the interactions among students, faculty and staff members at the universities in the Kurdistan region after 2003, and at the universities in the other parts of Iraq, especially in Baghdad before 2003, are very relevant with the issue of peacebuilding because before that time there were a lot of Kurdish students who studied in the [m]iddle and [s]outh of Iraq, but now it is just the opposite because currently there are a lot of students -- Arab students and Turkmen students – at KRG universities from the [m]iddle and [s]outh of Iraq because the security situation is terribly bad in these areas. So, right now this diversity of the student body population in the KRG universities is very helpful to build peace, to interact more with students from different backgrounds and even from different languages, to understand each other better. And as we know the more we understand each other, the less conflict we have (personal communication, June 15, 2013).

The CPSS did not aim to produce any written research products, and consequently no faculty or students conducted research or engaged in any academic writing related to peace and conflict studies during the center's existence. University leaders also gave no indication of interest in developing a research agenda or research outputs related to peace and conflict studies; the only writings to emerge from the center were a handful of journalistic articles about CPSS events and on topics related to peace and conflict studies.

175

Despite the relatively brief history of CPSS, the center did achieve some of the outcomes put forth in this study's analytical framework. Mostly, students who took part in CPSS events reported gaining new knowledge about issues related to peace and conflict. The center's activity also provided a platform for possible development of a teaching or research program related to peace and conflict studies, but that platform vanished when CPSS ceased to exist.

1. **Increased awareness and understanding by AUIS students of critical concepts related to peace and conflict**:

    A significant number of AUIS students participated in events sponsored by CPSS. Approximately 50 attended the screening of the film Pray the Devil Back to Hell in January 2011, while approximately 60 were on hand for a panel discussion with three traditional peacemakers from Kirkuk that same month. In January 2010, approximately 60 attended a screening of the film Encounter Point in March 2010 and 50 were present for a panel discussion with three civil-society-based Iraqi peacebuilders. Ten students took part in an introductory peacebuilding skills workshops I conducted in March 2010 and seven participated in a more advanced workshop in January 2011 (Hill 2010; Hill 2011).

    Several students who participated in CPSS-sponsored events, including the peacebuilding skills workshops I conducted, reported that they gained new insights and knowledge about peacebuilding that they found useful. In particular, they

expressed satisfaction about having developed a new ability to examine conflicts from various points of view.

> One thing that I still use when I am speaking is the idea of perspective-taking. We still struggle to see ourselves in other shoes for a moment and understand them. We just emotionally rise up to our causes and take for granted what others think. This never gets things solved. During the workshop, we kind of touched that subject and I became more familiar with that. If you do not take perspective, you cannot compromise and make concessions. Perspective-taking helps you to soften your heart to get to the middle to make a compromise. I was lucky in [one workshop exercise] when we chose a paper. I took perspective taking (personal communication, June 2, 2011).

Another student who participated in the peacebuilding skill-building workshop I led in January 2011 called perspective taking "an idea I always remember" because it reminded him that "you have to put yourself in someone else's shoes" and said that learning the basic skills of conflict analysis – such as identifying positions, interests and feelings of groups engaged in conflict – would help him "to find the root causes of a conflict." The student said that he put these new skills to work when the "S controversy" erupted on the AUIS campus in May 2011, and that experience encouraged him to think he could play a constructive role as a peacebuilder in the future.

> I didn't think about peacebuilding in the past. After participating in the seminars, I think I might be able to build peace and help my country. For example at AUIS, I advised people not to be angry about the name change. It doesn't matter if we remove the S. The university is still in Suli. Many of the students spoke angrily and shouted (personal communication, May 29, 2011).

He said that participating in some of the CPSS events also shaped his view of the anti-government protests in Sulaimani in early 2011. As far as he could tell, few of the core ideas he had learned about peacebuilding – such as the importance of perspective-taking, conflict analysis and dialogue – were utilized by the protesters.

177

> The protestors were very violent. Nine people were killed. Many others were injured. When I heard that some protestors threw stones at the police, I said 'This is not the right way to think about change and reform'. …. Maybe 20 or 30 or 40 students (from AUIS) participated in the protest. They didn't use violent means (personal communication, May 29, 2011).

Two of the students who participated in workshops I facilitated said during a subsequent focus group I convened that they found the idea of peace as something that could be built to be a completely unfamiliar concept. One of them called it an "important and a new idea," said that it was "the first time we have this course in Iraqi universities" and, thus, concluded that education could be an effective mechanism for building peace (personal communication, January 8, 2011). Another student responded that using education for peacebuilding in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq would only be possible if the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research created special courses for students in primary schools, secondary schools and universities.

> Children have to learn how they can live together with different ethnic groups and identities. This is not an easy process. It takes a long time. I say this because I've never heard something like what you've taught us in this workshop before. You tell us new ideas for the first time and I'm an undergraduate student. We've heard the word of peace a lot, but we haven't heard anything about how to establish it in Iraq (personal communication, January 8, 2011).

Other students who participated in CPSS events also emerged with a greater sense of self-awareness about the impact of their own attitudes and behaviors on the level of conflict in Iraq. One Arab student from Baghdad said taking part in some of the CPSS events helped her understand that she was contributing to inter-group tensions with Kurdish students at AUIS, and consequently, to the broader conflicts in Iraq.

The workshop provided some basis for how I should interact with [Kurdish students]. Having to apply it directly with other students made me understand the importance of it ... I was talking in a racist way before … Then I said 'We have to accept that people are different.' … Even my Mom said 'When you started [at AUIS] you were a racist person.' She said it wasn't good. But now [I am] much better. I didn't get there fully. I still have some problems. But I should work on them. … I still have a long way, but this start is most important (personal communication, June 5, 2011).

The same student said that because CPSS events were not actual academic courses "knowledge about these specific concepts is somehow still unclear" but that at least a few of the participating students – she mentioned three by name – came away with new understandings about the importance of true dialogue as a mechanism for building peace. She called it "the most important thing" she learned.

What I learned from my Mom and Dad is to avoid the problems. If you address it directly, it makes it bigger. Actually, the opposite is true. If you do not address it, it gets bigger. You need to start. Maybe we won't resolve it. Maybe our children or grandchildren will solve it. But for now we have to sit and talk about this. Maybe the Kurds will get their independence. And then what? The Shi'a and Sunni could split. Just sitting and talking with people who agree with you is not actually challenging the issue (personal communication, June 5, 2011).

At least in part because of their participation in CPSS-sponsored events, some AUIS students said they were more open to the idea that peace was a necessary goal for Iraq, and not simply a utopian idea. One student who participated in four separate CPSS-sponsored events – two workshops I facilitated, the Council of Notables panel discussion and the event about Turkey's New Role in the Middle East – said he had always believed that peace was an important goal, but was skeptical of possibilities for achieving it in the Middle East. The events he attended convinced him that peace must be a priority.

I believe that peace is necessary for this country because of the history of tensions and conflict … War did not help us and did not get us anywhere. We have to

179

maintain peaceful relations with our neighboring countries (personal communication, May 29, 2011).

Some of the students who participated in CPSS-sponsored events said they became more willing to consider the possibility that levels of peacefulness could improve in Iraq, and that they had a better understanding of what sort of processes and structures they could help to develop that would build peace. During a May 31, 2011 focus group I convened with students who had participated in CPSS events, the issue of the "S controversy" emerged. One male student noted that because it is "a goal of the university" to "create a small Iraq" the approach to the S issue should have involved discussion with students beforehand. A female student asserted that the main importance of the CPSS events was that "we know what is peace."

> I think there are connections. It's not a direct effect. Even if I walk out and say 'That was useless. I didn't get anything out of it.' But maybe when I think about it later, I'll think 'Wait a minute, this is really useful.' … Maybe they had a great experience with peace (personal communication, May 31, 2011).

One of the male students responded by drawing a connection between lessons learned in some of the CPSS events and the student group that came together to address the aftermath of the controversy: "If you work hard to create these groups … If we break the boundaries between the students … we can say we can make peace" (personal communication, May 31, 2011).

Hearing stories of individuals engaged in peacebuilding in Iraq – such as from the three tribal leaders on the Kirkuk Council of Notables who participated in a panel discussion at AUIS on January 10, 2011 – also raised some students' awareness of

peacebuilding practices that already are being utilized in Iraq to help reduce levels of

inter-communal violence.

> If it's not important for the whole world, it's very important for Iraq. I found it very important the panel discussion [with the Council of Notables]. I am from here, from Kurdistan, but I did not know there was such a thing. I was surprised (personal communication, June 2, 2011).

For at least one student, the CPSS events – conducted against the backdrop of

protests at AUIS and in Sulaimani – problematized the very concept of peace. He learned

the concepts of "positive peace" and "negative peace" as described by Galtung (1996) to

apply particularly well to the situation he observed in the Kurdistan Region.

> We have security in Kurdistan, but we are not living in a peaceful region. Journalists are still being killed. Universities are still being dominated by the parties. And we don't have a real opposition, unfortunately. These elements can all be helpful for making peace possible. If you just break peace into its elements, you can … [understand] peace. And what does this peace mean? Is it peace inside our region as an independent region? Or is it a peace between Kurdistan and other parts of Iraq? And then do you have a peaceful country, Iraq, or is it a dream? The picture is vague (personal communication, June 5, 2011).

Overall, students who participated in events organized by CPSS reported

increased awareness of important peacebuilding concepts. Perhaps of greater

significance, they seemed to have gained new capacity to think critically about the

connections between the concepts they learned, their possible applications in practice,

and the context in which they live in Iraq.

2. **Increased awareness and understanding by faculty and other university staff of critical concepts related to peace and conflict**

There is little evidence that CPSS contributed to new awareness and understandings

of key concepts in peace and conflict studies among AUIS faculty and staff. The center's

model, as discussed previously, was mainly to bring visitors to campus who might stimulate discussion among students about issues related to peace and security. No AUIS faculty members had teaching responsibility related to the subject. And the only faculty member who had any direct responsibility related to the center was the research centers director. The center did not have a research agenda, so there were no faculty or staff members involved in research projects related to peace and conflict studies.

AUIS leadership and staff spoke about CPSS solely as a mechanism intended to spark fresh thinking among students, and rarely mentioned any relationship to faculty or staff. As the assistant director of the research centers said, the objective of CPSS was to:

> "[expose] the students to new learning opportunities and discussions about major issues – [such as] the conference about post-election power-sharing … It's almost bombarding the students with information that they would not otherwise be aware of its existence. How many students take that and end up running with it? It's hard to say … Our hope is that these conversations spark [more critical thinking] (personal communication, May 30, 2011).

Athanasios Moulakis, the president and provost of AUIS from 2010 until 2013, called CPSS "a notion" and said there was little connection between the center and the liberal arts-focused academic program at AUIS. "At this point,'' he said, "they are alien bodies, if bodies they are" (personal communication, June 5, 2011).

Still, faculty and staff members often were among those who attended the larger public events sponsored by CPSS. One former AUIS professor, who taught courses in history and English composition and who attended several CPSS events, including the Council of Notables event, said he did not gain any new understanding of core concepts from CPSS events – mainly because he already had a grasp of those theories from his former work helping to develop a program in peace and conflict transformation at a U.S.-

based university – but that he attended CPSS events with "great curiosity" about how to "apply the core concepts in the context of northern Iraq" (personal communication, June 16, 2013).

> What I did come away with … [was] a deeper appreciation for the role of dialogue among interested and influential leaders in centers of conflict. I was also fascinated to see students interact with you and other speakers, and to see them struggle with the idea that some of the long and seemingly intractable problems of the region might be resolved peacefully. I am convinced that as a result of your programs and as a result of the overall efforts of AUIS to encourage students of different ethnicities to live and work together, these students are poised to break some of the old patterns of hostility (personal communication, June 16, 2013).

Overall, faculty and staff were not a focus of CPSS-sponsored programming, but some did gain exposure to new knowledge about contemporary practices in the field – both in Iraq and internationally.

3. **Establishment of a platform for future learning and practice in peace and conflict studies**

CPSS began, at least in part, as a space intended to nurture inquiry about matters of peace and conflict in Iraq at AUIS. By participating in CPSS-sponsored events, some AUIS students developed interest in further exploration of the field and made meaningful connections with individual and institutional actors working in the field. At the time of this research, it was impossible to know whether the Institute of Regional and International Studies would serve as a successor institution that would satisfy the expressed desire of some AUIS students for an expansion of CPSS' work. All that is certain is that CPSS did provide a pilot platform for exploration of peace

and conflict studies. I will next examine the elements of that platform both in terms of what was created and what was missing.

a. *Center affiliates planning or taking next steps toward further learning or practice in peace and conflict studies:*

Students who took part in CPSS events mostly viewed them as opportunities for personal enrichment, but not for shifting the course of their studies or careers. None of the students who participated in CPSS events reported plans to pursue peace and conflict studies in any formal way outside of AUIS, either during or after their undergraduate studies.

Several students did, however, express an interest in learning more about peace and conflict studies. They called for continuing the CPSS-sponsored events and for any other opportunities AUIS could provide to them in the field as part of their training to become future leaders of Iraq.

> Understanding this subject which is called peace and conflict studies is an essential step to improve life in Iraq, which I consider the core of my mission down the line. Lack of understanding or misunderstanding this subject is what we are suffering from and has led to sectarian violence in Iraq ... So more exposure [to] peace and conflict studies is more than welcome (personal correspondence, July 14, 2010).

Students demonstrated their interest in continuing their learning about peace and conflict studies in several ways. The seven students who took part in the skill-building workshop I conducted in January 2011 came to the university for four consecutive days during a holiday from classes. They engaged actively with each other throughout the workshop. Four of them returned for a fifth day to take part in a focus group I convened to discuss the emergence of peace and

184

conflict studies in Iraq. One of them expressed an understanding that further learning and peace and conflict studies was necessary for students such as himself who were majoring in international studies because "[we] are more likely to work in foreign ministry and embassies, and may have the chance to address relations between nations" (personal communication, January 8, 2011). Another student studying international studies said:

> When we work abroad, we will see many different [ethnic groups] and people. If you know how to behave and treat them [well], we won't have any problems. It's an important benefit in terms of [understanding] identity and religions, this sort of thing (personal communication, January 8, 2011).

Students also demonstrated an interest in further learning about peace and conflict studies through their engagement with me during my research. Even after I had completed interviews and focus group discussions with all of the students who had participated in workshops I conducted, several students contacted me to request additional meetings. One student scheduled a meeting with me to discuss his idea for creating a network of student journalists at universities throughout Iraq who could write articles related to peacebuilding that could be printed in the AUIS-Voice student newspaper as well as at other student newspapers. Another student contacted me after she had participated in a focus group, offering to gather a group of her female friends so they could further discuss peacebuilding with me.

AUIS students who participated in CPSS events did not pursue formal education in peace and conflict studies. Some of them, however, but did take small steps to expand their knowledge about the field and sought opportunities to become better acquainted with the field.

b. *New relationships between program affiliates with a community of scholars and practitioners beyond the university working on issues related to peace and conflict:*

For two AUIS students, participating in CPSS events led directly to professional opportunities with international organizations dedicated to international peacebuilding and security. One student who attended a 2010 lecture about "The US-Iraq Strategic Relationship" by Elena Laipson of the Washington, DC-based Stimson Center learned that the organization had an internship program. He subsequently applied, was accepted and served as an intern with Stimson during the summer of 2011. During his internship, he conducted research about different issues related to the Middle East. He wrote an article[10] that was published online by the Stimson Center, which describes itself as "a nonprofit and nonpartisan think tank that seeks pragmatic solutions for some of the most important peace and security challenges around the world" (http://www.stimson.org/about/).

Through her participation in one of the focus groups I conducted, another student learned about a fellowship program conducted by Soliya, a New York-based organization committed to facilitating intercultural dialogue, particularly among youth, with the use of new technologies (http://www.soliya.net). She applied, was accepted and served as a fellow from August 2011 until October 2012. As part of her fellowship, she participated in weekly online dialogues with

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[10] Azeez, S. (September 8, 2011). "Bahrain's Political Crisis: A New Chapter for Iraqi Foreign Policy." http://www.stimson.org/spotlight/bahrains-political-crisis-a-new-chapter-for-iraqi-foreign-policy/

other students and activists from Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Israel. She was the

only participant from Iraq. Fellows were asked to interview people in their

countries about particular topics, and then to share the videos with other fellows

to help foster greater understanding of the perspectives of people in those

countries.

> Soliya has been one of the best experiences I've had in my life. It was the
> greatest window that I had to the world … First, I met many wonderful
> people with different ideas which made me realize that people from different
> backgrounds have different cultures, yet they might share similar goals such
> as peace. Second, I gained skills [about] how to interact with people from
> different backgrounds with the respect to the fact that they are different. And
> that they believe in a certain way because they have had different
> experiences. Third, I have learned a lot about [perspective], and how it is very
> important to be able to look at a certain matter from different [perspectives]
> (personal communication, June 12, 2013).

The same student has found an outlet for the skills she gained through her

fellowship. She volunteers as a mediator in the Qallawa camp for displaced

people from the center and south of Iraq, located just outside of Sulaimani.

> My job is exactly what I have learned from Soliya. My job as a mediator is
> conflict resolution, I solve the conflicts that happen amongst the young
> students whom we teach Arabic, Math, and Art. Those students are mainly
> from Baghdad and the south of Iraq. The camp's situation is miserable during
> both summer and winter. The families live under great pressure of poverty.
> This pressure is reflected from the parents onto the children, who, on their
> part, reflect it on their fellow students inside the classes we teach (personal
> communication, July 2, 2013).

AUIS students were exposed to at least a dozen different scholars and

practitioners in the peace and conflict field through their lectures and

presentations sponsored by the CPSS in 2010 and 2011. It is impossible to say

exactly how many students may have developed important professional and/or academic connections related to the peace and conflict field as a consequence of those interactions, but at least two of them resulted in meaningful professional opportunities.

c. *Desire among program affiliates for expansion of the program.*

AUIS students who participated in CPSS events consistently voiced support for further programming at AUIS related to peace and conflict studies. Some students expressed a desire for more public events of the type that CPSS organized. One student suggested that AUIS – as the only American-style liberal arts higher education institution in Iraq – should take responsibility for organizing such events elsewhere in Iraq.

> I think there should be more events, more seminars, at AUIS and at other universities, about peacebuilding. More people would participate. These events should take place in other Iraqi universities, in Baghdad, in Basra. And I think the politicians need these seminars, too, because they are decision-makers (personal communication, May 29, 2011).

> Other students focused more specifically on what they interpreted as a

need for peacebuilding to become a part of the curriculum at AUIS.

> This is a liberal arts university. We study science, philosophy, history, IT. Why do we not study peacebuilding? If they cannot provide us with a major, they can provide us at least a minor or a course in peacebuilding (personal communication, June 2, 2011).

> One student called for AUIS to find a way to expose students to core

concepts of peace and conflict studies, but was less concerned with the format of education than with an emphasis on content and application of skills.

188

For sure I lack knowledge about these things. It's not just in terms of concepts, but about what I can do. I would love to get more workshops. I think now in Iraq, this is the most important skill that young leaders should be educated about. This will help them lead the country. The people who are in power now are not educated about how to communicate with each other. If these people at AUIS get educated, and then get involved in politics, I think they can make a difference. We need more. We definitely need more (personal communication, June 5, 2011).

Despite her interest in seeing a deeper yet undefined commitment to peace and conflict studies at AUIS, that same student pointed to one possible approach that she did not see as being effective.

[It should not be] a student organization. Once they're formed, you get obligated to go there … Peacebuilding is different. You have to go to it. Don't come by force. If you go by force, you won't benefit from it (personal communication, June 5, 2011).

Several members of AUIS leadership expressed at least hypothetical interest in establishing peace and conflict studies beyond the CPSS. The president and provost in early 2010 said that he and his predecessor had "thought we could have a partnership with Georgetown and Columbia" to develop an academic program in peace and conflict studies. Columbia University's Center for International Conflict Resolution in fact responded to an AUIS request in early 2009 and presented a proposal to support development of a pilot conflict resolution center at AUIS (Center for International Conflict Resolution). But in June 2009, an AUIS staff member wrote in an email message that although "[t]here is an interest" in the proposal, "it has been decided that this fall will be too soon to try implementation" because "we have two new staff members

189

coming on that will be tasked to develop such centers" (personal communication,

June 21, 2009). The CPSS was one of those centers.

Still, as late as mid-2011, AUIS president Moulakis said it "could

happen" that the university would develop an academic program in peace and

conflict studies provided that proper "disciplinary focus" could be found.

> It depends a little bit on how curriculum development turns out. There is a
> big potential for a conflict resolution field … as part of our social science
> offerings, whether as part of a distinct certificate, whether as an elective
> course or whether part of a graduate program. We would need serious
> backing from someone who could do very serious curriculum design. Not
> just in conflict resolution, but in conflict resolution education ...Is it
> education or is it actionable? Is it peacemaking or is it about
> peacemaking? …. I do not think it is the job of this university to be a
> peace and reconciliation institution. We would need to have more political
> weight (personal communication, June 5, 2011).

The activities organized by the CPSS helped to spark student interest in further

learning about peace and conflict studies, helped some students to connect to professional

actors in the field, and helped to generate a desire for an expansion – or at least an

extension – of CPSS activities. AUIS, however, took no observable steps to respond to

student interest, to strengthen the fragile networks that CPSS helped to emerge or, more

generally, to build upon the platform it created for peace and conflict studies at AUIS.

Limitations of outcomes

The most obvious constraint on the conflict transformation outcomes of the CPSS

is the fact that the center no longer exists at AUIS. No programming occurred after 2011,

and consequently the possibility for center-sponsored events to have any effect on AUIS

students or faculty came to an end. It is unclear whether CPSS directly contributed to the

development of the Institute of Regional and International Studies, which opened more than a year after CPSS closed.

Even before CPSS became defunct, however, the center faced some serious constraints in terms of achieving conflict transformation outcomes of the types envisioned by this study's analytical framework: increased awareness and understanding by students of core peace and conflict studies concepts; increased awareness and understanding by faculty or similar concepts, and; creation of a platform for future learning and practice in peace and conflict studies.

AUIS' institutional identity itself posed some of the greatest constraints on CPSS. The university envisions itself as a very traditional liberal arts learning institution and does not see itself as a space for research, thus limiting possibilities for faculty's pursuit of new knowledge. Peace and conflict studies is not a clearly defined discipline, but rather is thought of as an interdisciplinary space for exploration of "the problem of human conflict and its peaceful resolution" (Brunk, 2012, p. 11). It is also often considered to be a normative science defined by

> the belief that peaceful relationships between people and nations are better than unpeaceful ones … [and] that violence is undesirable, and that where the same human goods can be achieved by them, nonviolent means are preferable to violent ones (Brunk, 2012, p. 13).

Although acceptance of such concepts might be near-universal, peace and conflict studies often focuses on development of culturally or contextually specific sets of knowledge that are not usually thought to be universal. It also does not fit neatly into a any single category of the liberal arts, which sometimes is conceptualized as the study of

the "three main branches of knowledge: the humanities (literature, language, philosophy,

the fine arts, and history), the physical and biological sciences and mathematics, and the

social sciences" (liberal arts). As the former AUIS research centers director said:

> The American University is committed to a liberal arts curriculum and much of the reticence was due to the fact that such subject matters of conflict resolution simply were not considered a necessary part of the curriculum (personal communication, June 11, 2013).

Also, because peace and conflict studies is an unfamiliar field to the parents of

AUIS students – and to most of the rest of the adult generation who might employ them –

it is a difficult subject to introduce into the AUIS curriculum. As the former research

centers director explained:

> I have taught at public, semi-private and private universities in the region and I will affirm that political science, international relations, worse still, sociology and the like (conflict resolution) are not subjects that parents (who are the decision-makers) want their kids to study. Look at the enrollments in these areas and the enrollments in fields like engineering, IT, and business. When you are part of a private university that seeks tuition, students and their parents want to study a field that they know they will be employed and lucratively. This is not much different than the U.S. (D. Natali, personal communication, June 12, 2013)

Students in the international studies major at AUIS already are facing a struggle

because they have pursued a degree that does not demand nearly the same level of

scholarly respect that a degree in engineering or medicine commands. Even the student

who obtained the summer internship with the Stimson Center had not found a

professional position in his field one year after his graduation from AUIS.

> Job opportunities are few for IS students in Iraq. Politicians don't care about what IS students know because they believe that they know more than [the] IS students, which is not true always. Without a Ph.D. degree, unless you have networks, it is difficult for IS students to get a good job (personal communication, June 15, 2013).

So, despite its mission to introduce a previously unfamiliar style of higher education to

Iraq, AUIS faces constraints on what the content of that education can be. Offering an

undergraduate degree in international studies – including courses such as Philosophy and

Ethics, British Literature and American History[11] – poses a set of problems to students,

who must find their way into established professional networks through new channels.

Offering an academic program in peace and conflict studies – an even narrower field –

would present even more extreme challenges. Also, AUIS simply does not imagine itself

as a progressive institution in a way that would be consistent with some of the conceptual

foundations of peace and conflict studies programs that emphasize concepts such as

positive peace (Curle 1971, Galtung 1996), structural violence (Galtung), conflict

transformation (Lederach, 1995a, 1995b, 1997, 2005; Miall 2003, Vayrynen 1991) and

processes such as conflict assessment (Schirch, 2013) and dialogue in the pursuit of

mutual understanding (Franco, 2006). Some of these core concepts stand in opposition to

some of core ideals held by the AUIS's founders. As the president and provost in early

2010 – who in 2013 said, "I am not so pollyanna-ish to think that peace comes through

understanding. The more you understand Hitler, the more you hate him" (personal

communication, March 18, 2010). He also said he was "hesitant to think you can teach

[peace] in any direct way … [because] education that is preachy is bad education."

(personal communication, March 18, 2010).

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[11] The AUIS Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies consists of 120 credits (40 three-credit courses) and includes courses in history, politics, mathematics, science, economics, geography, art, computer science and religion. The full degree study plan can be found at: http://auis.edu.iq/sites/default/files/IS%20study%20plan%2008.17.11.pdf.

Another limitation to AUIS' achievement of conflict transformation outcomes has been its reluctance to see itself as an activist institution. The AUIS student who sought to develop a network of Iraqi university journalists focused on issues related to peacebuilding stands as one example. He was hoping to be selected as editor-in-chief of the AUIS Voice during his senior year, partly as a reward for his creative vision and commitment to a more peaceful Iraq through improved communication. Instead, he did not receive the position and was told he was being too bold.

> They said that it is too much for a student newspaper, like a big step or something like that. They wanted to keep it as it was, covering issues related to the university (personal communication, July 12, 2011).

The attitudes of some students posed another obstacle to conflict transformation outcomes at AUIS. There is a great deal of skepticism, both among the Kurdish majority and the Arab minority, that any sort of lasting peace in Iraq is possible. One female student from Baghdad who participated in many of the CPSS events said she was often mocked by friends when she mentioned peacebuilding.

> When I talk about this stuff, people laugh at me 'What are you talking about?' But if you could get some people who think about this, then … if you know other people who support me, or don't laugh at me and don't say 'Don't do that because it's not working.' (June 5, 2011).

Another student who participated in several CPSS events said simply that many AUIS students "do not believe in peacebuilding. They think it is like a joke. They imply that people respond to incentives, and they want to use whatever they can, even violence" (personal communication, May 29, 2011).

Several AUIS students – particularly in the immediate aftermath of the "S controversy" –suggested that Kurdish students, in particular, were more interested in

194

defending the rights of their group rather than working toward a more peaceful future.

One of the Kurdish students who participated in several CPSS events said his relationship

with other Kurdish students began to deteriorate once he began to speak of himself as

Iraqi rather than only Kurdish.

> I have gained a pessimistic outlook about students at AUIS. For example, if you bring up a national question, about nationality, like about Kurdish independence, they all think we should get our independence. But they don't take perspective. They are just emotional. I am very disappointed in some of my friends who just hate Arabs. Because of what has happened in this dark history, they just hate Arabs … I have been questioned and criticized. I have been asked 'Are you Kurdish or are you Iraqi?' I say 'I am Kurdish and I am from Iraq.' They say 'No you should take out the word 'Iraqi' from your dictionary. Students are very hard on this issue. They don't take perspective (personal communication, June 2, 2011).

Achieving meaningful conflict transformation at AUIS clearly also would

require more time than either the brief two-plus-years when CPSS was in operation or

even the six years that the university was open from its inception through the end of the

2012-2013 academic year. It could be argued that the CPSS took small steps toward the

type of awareness-raising or "conscientization" that Galtung (1996) proposes as the most

necessary element for constructive conflict transformation to occur. Still mostly

incomplete, however, is the fundamental shift in attitudes that Kriesberg conceptualizes

as "a new way of thinking about their conflict [that] becomes dominant in each of the

primary adversaries" (1998, p. 217).

The sometimes tense relations between Kurdish and Arab students at AUIS is

only part of the problem. Also often on display are a deficit of trust in the Iraqi state and a

lack of optimism for the future. A frequent theme that emerged in both interviews and

focus groups I conducted at AUIS was skepticism of leadership and political process in

Iraq. Students who participated in a May 2011 focus group argued about whether it was

possible for peacebuilding to occur at Iraqi universities, including AUIS. They eventually

reached consensus around the idea that quality leadership does not currently exist.

> The university is the second step. We have to work on the first step, which is
> making those who are representing us, the leaders, making them people who
> have peaceful minds. That's why I am pessimistic. I don't see those people right
> now (personal communication, May 31, 2011).

Another student affirmed the idea when he said "I think it's hard for us as Iraqi

people to build peace because mainly it is the government people and officials who deal

with these issues" (personal communication, May 31, 2011). Yet another student who

attended many of the CPSS events, defined the problem a bit more broadly shortly after

he graduated from AUIS in 2013:

> Most people are very pessimistic about the future of this country, about the issue
> of building peace, and about the possibility of living together well. There is no
> hope. This is the problem (personal communication, June 15, 2013).

This sense of hopelessness seems to manifest itself, at times, in an underlying

distrust of many things Iraqi: not only in government and political leaders, but also in the

ability of common Iraqi people to pursue and build peace. I observed two examples of

this phenomenon of inter-Iraqi mistrust undermining opportunities for conflict

transformation at AUIS in January 2011. The first instance occurred after I had facilitated

a five-day peacebuilding skills workshop. Two weeks after my departure from the

university, one of my long-time Iraqi colleagues came to AUIS to deliver a follow-up

two-day workshop. Five of the seven students who attended my workshop participated in

the first day of his workshop, and just three were present on the second day. One Arab

student from Baghdad who did not attend my colleague's workshop after attending the

workshop I conducted later said she did not come to the second session because the

facilitator was Iraqi, even though he was also Arab from Kirkuk.

> First you lose trust. He is just like me. He is from Iraq. How can he understand
> peace? He has never lived it. I think it takes time, to start trusting them. No one in
> this world will believe that an Iraqi person has experience with peace. No way
> will we learn about peace from another Iraqi (personal communication, June 3,
> 2011).

The second example of mistrust I observed took place during a panel discussion

with three members of the Kirkuk Council of Notables that I helped to organize and

facilitate. At the invitation of CPSS, the three panelists drove approximately 100 km.

from Kirkuk to Sulaimani to tell the AUIS community about their work as tribal leaders

and community peacemakers. More than 50 AUIS students attended the event, and

listened quietly to the speakers for more than an hour. During the question-and-answer

session that followed, however, one student quickly suggested aloud that the speakers

were "undermining" the formal judicial system by meting out tribal justice. One of the

students who attended several of the CPSS events said he found the Council members to

be important examples "because they were wearing the traditional clothes and they spoke

in their native language," but he did not feel that most of the other students shared his

outlook. "The students seemed to be kind of disrespectful to them," he said. "From my

understanding, the students thought they worked to build peace because it was in their

interests" (personal communication, May 29, 2011).

CPSS, despite its relatively brief existence, served as a meaningful space for

conflict transformation outcomes to begin to emerge on the AUIS campus. The Center

sparked new ideas and interest in the minds of some students, and provided them and

197

others with opportunities to interact with a network of professionals engaged in conflict transformation work beyond the university. A platform for consideration of the ideas of peace and conflict studies began to form. However, too many obstacles – in the form of institutional resistance, resource scarcity, perceived incompatibility with the core curriculum, tense inter-group relations and a broader lack of optimism about the future of Iraq – arose that prevented CPSS from becoming a permanent part of the AUIS landscape.

CHAPTER 6

Baghdad University

How did the University of Baghdad succeed in founding Iraq's first university-based entity related to peace and conflict studies during a time of great political uncertainty in 2005? And how did factors contributing to establishment of the Educational Unit for Peace Studies and Human Rights (EUPSHR) help to determine the range of opportunities available to the unit as well as the range of constraints it would face?

The EUPSHR came into existence against the backdrop of a relatively young university, but one that asserted itself both as a descendent of Iraq's ancient centers of higher learning and as the contemporary national leader in post-secondary education. As of 2012, Baghdad University consisted of 24 colleges, and more than 60,000 students spread across four campuses (University of Baghdad; Musa Al-Musawi). The oldest and largest of Iraq's universities, Baghdad University prides itself on continuing to attract students from across Iraq at a time when there is at least one public university in each of the country's 18 governorates. In terms of sheer numbers of students, faculty, colleges, departments, research centers and publications, it dwarfs all of Iraq's other universities.

> We confidently insist on completing our path of knowledge and fulfilling all the required needs for the development of Higher Education and Scientific Research. This in turn will eventually lead to a new Iraq (Musa Al-Musawi).

The modern institution of Baghdad University, however, was not yet 50 years old when the EUPSHR was founded in 2005. And modern higher education in Iraq was less than a century old. As recently as 1921, when the state of Iraq formally came into

existence, just 15 college degrees were awarded, all of them from the Law College in Baghdad, the country's only higher education institution since its founding in 1908. Soon, though, other colleges were established, beginning with the Higher Teachers' Training College in 1923, the Medical College in 1927, the Pharmacy College in 1936, and the College of Engineering in 1942. A College for Women opened in 1946, followed by the College of Commerce in 1947, the College of Arts and Sciences in 1949, and the College of Agriculture in 1952 (Marr, 2004). In 1957, eight colleges and five other institutes were combined to form the University of Baghdad (University of Baghdad).

Baghdad University's experience with peace and conflict studies began in the summer of 2004, when a group of professors from several Iraqi universities gathered at a meeting facilitated by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Amman, Jordan. Discussions at the meeting included the possibility of creating an institutional home for peace and conflict studies. "At this meeting, [the professors] themselves proposed that we establish a unit at Baghdad University, which we immediately accepted and started giving them advice on how to do it," Dr. Imad Harb, former Senior Program Officer for education at USIP, wrote in an email message (personal communication, May 2, 2013).

With approval from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Educational Unit for Peace Studies and Human Rights was officially founded in 2005 at the College of Education. It had no formal role in terms of developing curriculum or courses, and did not grant degrees or certificates. Just two people were officially connected to the unit: a professor of education and a lecturer, both female. The unit received a small amount of funding from the Ministry of Higher Education, as well as a

few computers, but nothing from the College of Education or from the University of

Baghdad (personal communication, January 17, 2014).

> So our work was limited. [We were] limited to research, small workshops for
> students that we did with respect to peace and human rights. There is evaluation
> every year by the Ministry who after two or three years asked us that there should
> be a staff in our unit. That the staff should be – that their qualifications should be
> at least one with masters degree and two with Ph.D. degrees (personal
> communication, September 30, 2011).

Without any institutional funding, the unit mostly was left to rely on the services

of volunteers. One other female researcher with a master's degree in psychology and

child development joined the unit in 2008; a male researcher with a master's degree in

political science came onboard in 2010 (personal communication, January 5, 2012;

personal communication, January 4, 2012). All four members of the unit carried heavy

teaching loads, and conducted research in their free time. The researcher who joined the

unit in 2008 said in early 2012 that she was teaching seven two-hour classes each week

with a total of approximately 200 students in the college's department of psychology.

> We do our research on the side of the lectures. In morning, I am in the unit doing
> my research. I teach in the evening. No one told us 'Do this.' We feel we can do
> it, so we are working on two sides (personal communication, January 4, 2012).

Analysis of the case

In order to understand the significance of the University of Baghdad's

establishment of an Educational Unit for Peace Studies and Human Rights (EUPSHR), it

will be necessary to apply the analytical framework to it that was described in Chapter 3

of this paper. Three core questions will be considered:

- To what extent did the University of Baghdad exist within a political climate – including issues of personal safety and regional security – that was favorable for the establishment of a unit dedicated to the study of peace and human rights?;

- To what extent did entrepreneurial or charismatic university leadership play a role in establishing the unit?

- To what extent did the availability of resources – financial, intellectual and relational – help to facilitate the unit's establishment?

After those questions are explored, the unit's outputs and short-term outcomes will be articulated and examined, also using the framework described in Chapter 3, in order to develop a greater understanding of possible outputs and outcomes of the EUPSHR within the first five years of its founding in a locale that recently had experienced large-scale violent conflict.

Gaining knowledge about the conditions that made possible the establishment of EUPSHR at the University of Baghdad, and about its conflict transformation outputs and short-term outcomes, was quite unlike the data generation process that I used at either the University of Duhok or the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. The University of Baghdad was relatively inaccessible to western university researchers at the time of this study due to high levels of violence in Baghdad, and resulting fears of university faculty, staff and students. Consequently, I conducted a total of just four in-person interviews about the case: three with researchers at the unit, and one with the university president. I also conducted one telephone interview with the founding director of the unit. I followed up the in-person interviews with email and Facebook correspondence with two of the

researchers. I conducted an interview by email with Imad Harb, the former senior

program officer at the U.S. Institute of Peace, who was closely involved with advising the

University of Baghdad professors about its establishment of the EUPSHR. One of the

unit's researchers also visited New York City as part of a fellowship program conducted

by the U.S. Department of State. At my invitation, he gave a presentation in April 2013 to

a class I was teaching at New York University. The PowerPoint presentation he shared

with the students became part of the data for this study.

I also served as the facilitator – as a contractor for USIP – of a 2007 meeting in

Sulaimani of four representatives of EUPSHR and the Kirkuk-based Civil Society

Organization of Iraq that introduced me to principals of the EUPSHR and enabled me to

speak informally with them about their hopes for the unit. I subsequently interacted with

both the founding director of the EUPSHR and one of the unit's researchers in 2008-09

through their participation in the Iraqi Peace Foundation in that I advised as a

representative of Columbia University's Center for International Conflict Resolution.

I visited Baghdad in January 2012 with the hope of observing some of the

activities of the EUPSHR. However one of the researchers told me it was not possible for

me to visit the College of Education, where the EUPSHR has a small office. Instead, she

arranged for me to meet the two researchers I had not previously known at the apartment

of a friend, and to conduct interviews with them there. I asked one of the researchers why

I could not visit the EUPSHR and she said: "It's dangerous for you and for us. We are

afraid of strangers seeing an international researcher, seeing you with [one of the

researchers] and [the director] and telling somebody" (personal communication, January

4, 2012).

Consequently, the data that forms the foundation for this case is much more limited than for the cases of the University of Duhok and the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. Still, it is important to examine the case of the EUPSHR, even with limited access to information. The EUPSHR was the first institutionalized university program related to peace and conflict studies in all of Iraq. Because it is located in the country's capital and at Iraq's largest and oldest university, the EUPSHR also requires exploration.

Very few factors were offered explaining the successful establishment of the EUPSHR. The two primary factors were:

- The involvement of the US Institute of Peace, which was seen as both a legitimate international institution and a possible source of funds;
- Influential faculty leadership of the effort to create the unit.

It is important to note that an extremely unstable political situation existed in Baghdad at the time of the EUPSHR's founding, and that the city also was suffering from high levels of physical violence. None of the people I interviewed mentioned the potential positive role that the political turmoil in Baghdad and the high levels of violence might have played in the founding of the EUPSHR. However, the willingness of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the College of Education to authorize the unit should also be considered in light of how important it may have seemed to have some institution that was at least nominally dedicated to building peace and protecting human rights. In the next section, I will examine each of these proposed factors individually in order to develop a sharper picture of them as possible explanations

for the successful establishment of the Educational Unit for Peace Studies and Human

Rights at the University of Baghdad.

The involvement of USIP

As mentioned previously, USIP provided the platform for emergence of the

concept for the EUPSHR during the meeting it convened in Amman in the summer of

2004, when five academicians from Baghdad met to discuss possibilities for introducing

some form of peace and conflict studies being implemented at Baghdad University. The

founding director of the unit pointed to that meeting as the most important factor in the

unit's establishment

> I can say that many things were important, but the main thing was a small
> conference   with USIP. We were five [people]. When we were putting ideas to make a
> unit or a center   for human rights and peace studies – it was my idea, my personal
> idea (personal communication, January 17, 2014).

USIP conducted another seminar about "The Civic Mission of Iraqi Universities"

in March 2005 in Sulaimani, where further discussion of the unit's establishment took

place. The institute also provided its advice to professors interested in founding the unit

and engaged directly with ministry officials. As Harb recalled:

> I actually quickly realized that the top-down mindset left from years of totalitarian
> rule and thinking meant that I couldn't simply go straight to the universities. I had
> to take the MoHESR's advice on whom to work with. And I knew that a lot of
> politics went into it. After all, this was `largesse' as far as they were concerned.
> They thought that we [were] bringing in American millions. Of course, we simply
> had good intentions and were hoping that they [would] come up with major
> funding. (We just funded the meetings and the workshops, by the way) (personal
> communication, May 2, 2013).

USIP's involvement also served as a potential constraint on the unit's establishment. As an American institution – especially one founded by an act of Congress and one that receives all of its funding from the U.S. government – USIP did not work publicly with professors or administrators at the University of Baghdad out of fear for their safety (United States Institute of Peace). In his 2008 report on Higher Education and the Future of Iraq, Harb describes a series of activities that USIP supported at Iraqi universities from 2004-2006, but does not mention the specific universities involved or the names of faculty, staff or students who participated.

> It is a sad commentary on the need for conflict resolution programs that the Institute is obliged not to reveal its involvement in most of the activities it sponsors or manages. Were the Institute to make its role publicly known, professors, students, and other participants in Institute initiatives might find themselves the target of violence from groups bitterly opposed to any cooperation between Iraqis and U.S. organizations (Harb, 2008, p.8).

Consequently, the EUPSHR never has been able to acknowledge publicly that it had the backing of a major international organization dedicated at least in part to development and growth of peace and conflict studies. And USIP never was able to establish a high-profile presence at the university.

> Please note that we never at USIP professed that we set up the unit or had anything to do with it. This was highly problematic because of the security situation. We also until today do not identify the people who worked with us or were involved in setting up the unit for their safety. What is recognized is only that people from Baghdad University set up the unit. As far as I know, it still works and is doing what it needs to do (personal communication, May 2, 2013).

Aside from providing the initial platform for establishment of the EUPSHR, USIP also played a small role in subsequent years by involving the unit and its affiliates in small projects that contributed to incremental expansion of the unit's capacity. For

example, in June 2007, USIP convened a two-day meeting in Sulaimani of four

representatives of EUPSHR and the Kirkuk-based Civil Society Organization of Iraq.

Members of both organizations discussed the possibility of developing a journal devoted

to peace and conflict studies, and signed an agreement to jointly develop a program for

"qualifying and training … trainers in the field of Conflict Resolution, [Peace Education]

and Human Rights in the Iraqi schools and universities" (A Common Work Agreement).

EUPSHR also worked on a project with USIP in 2006 to conduct an essay-writing

contest for secondary school students in Baghdad. One hundred schools were contacted,

and 120 essays on the subject of "What do I want from a future Iraq?" were judged with

significant help from EUPSHR. Winners received their awards at ceremony hosted by the

University of Baghdad. As one of the unit's researchers said, "Sometimes the USIP, they

have a project and we contribute to it as a unit" (personal communication, September 30,

2011).

Faculty leadership of the effort to establish EUPSHR

The professor of education who took responsibility for leading the EUPSHR for

its first eight years became known to her colleagues for her strong commitment to peace

and human rights. She also recognized that she alone would not be able to maneuver

through the political thicket of Baghdad University and the Ministry of Higher Education

and Scientific Research to achieve her goal. Although she was quick to take credit for

conceptualizing the unit – calling it "my idea, my personal idea," (personal

communication, January 17, 2014) she also acknowledged that at least four other

academic colleagues – three from Baghdad University and one from Al Nahrain University – were instrumental in helping to get the unit started. "They were very interested in my idea," she said. "They were very interested and said when they spoke in the council of the university, they would support it" (personal communication, January 17, 2014).

The director worked closely with the dean of the College of Education as well as with the assistant to the university president for scientific affairs. She credited the professor from Al Nahrain University with helping her "put this idea on paper" (personal communication, January 17, 2014). Harb writes:

> Our lady `knew her place' (for lack of a better expression). Both as a woman and a Sunni (and this also is dangerous for her), she gave the men in the original group a leading role. They wanted to take the idea themselves because they also knew that they had a better chance. She always knew how to be in the background while the front of the picture was for the men who could protect themselves against being accused of cooperating with the Americans (I. Harb, personal communication, July 10, 2013).

In that original group was one of the savviest political thinkers at Baghdad University, Dr. Riyad Aziz Hadi, who had been chairman of the Political Science department before becoming assistant to the president for scientific affairs. Davis (2005) explains how Hadi in 1980 authored a text, Political Problems in the Third World, that cited typical academic sources in its analysis of other state political systems but that relied almost wholly on post-1979 speeches of Saddam Hussein as the basis for an eight-page chapter on Iraq.

> Any serious political science student at Baghdad University or other Iraqi schools would recognize the discrepancy between the author's analysis of Iraq and his analysis of other non-Western political systems. The student would also certainly

notice Hadi's implicit critique of the Ba'thist regime through his failure to cite any substantive sources when analyzing Iraqi political development and his use of Saddam's speeches instead. The constant references to Saddam's speeches sent a message that the analysis of Iraqi politics must be subordinated to the state's intellectual dictates. This text is intriguing because any Ministry of Higher Education or Ba'th Party official would have found it difficult to criticize it (Davis, 2005, p. 222).

With individuals such as Hadi leading the effort to establish the EUPSHR, the unit faced no significant obstacles.

What I remember is that these people went with the idea to the Ministry and the Ministry loved it. Mind you, our friends knew everyone there; in a sense, they simply shepherded it through and they had their friends in the Ministry hierarchy that worked the Minister. By the way, Baghdad University had, and still does [have], a special place in everyone's heart. There, however, was trepidation on everyone's part about cooperating with the Americans and the Ministry and our friends made sure this was known as their own project (I. Harb, personal communication, May 10, 2013).

Once the unit was established, the director took charge of its operations. She pointed out that "[m]any persons in other universities wanted to establish a unit, but they couldn't" and said the successful start of the unit during a difficult moment in Baghdad was largely due to "my relationships with others – my *summa* – what people knew about me as a person" (personal correspondence, January 17, 2014). The researcher who was initially the only other person directly involved with the unit's activities recalled that early in the unit's existence, the director received a ministry directive that the unit needed to have staff members with backgrounds in law and political science, "She wrote to the Ministry saying 'I don't mind that, just give me assignments' " (personal communication, September 30, 2011).

During the 2007 USIP-sponsored meeting with representatives from Kirkuk's Civil Society Organization of Iraq, the director clearly articulated the unit's need for

greater capacity, especially in terms of training. She advocated strongly for development

of a project that would allow for 20 faculty members affiliated with the unit to come to

Sulaimani and receive three rounds of training from the Kirkuk-based group of trainers

on subjects related to conflict resolution so that the Baghdad faculty would be able to run

workshops on these subjects at the University of Baghdad on behalf of the EUPSHR. She

also voiced concerns about a need for more faculty education in human rights, although

that subject was not a specialty of the Baghdad group. I was present at this meeting and

spoke with the director about these subjects. In an email to a colleague at USIP, I wrote:

> [The director] understands that CSOI will not be providing [human rights]
> training. She and I had a fairly lengthy discussion over dinner the other night
> about the tensions between conflict resolution and human rights, and how they
> come from different schools of thought. She is still eager to have these instructors
> trained in human rights, and I told her that you and I would talk about ways to
> make that possible (T. Hill, email message, June 22, 2007).

The director also moved quickly to ensure that the EUPSHR – despite its lack of

financial resources – would distinguish itself through its approach to peace studies and

human rights. Soon after the unit was established, she instituted a rule that each

researcher at the unit should produce two pieces of original research per year. "And you

know [the director]," said the unit's other researcher at the time of EUPSHR's founding,

"She doesn't accept regular research. It has to be field research" (personal

communication, September 30, 2011).

Political and security conditions in Baghdad

The EUPSHR was established in 2005, at a time of great political transition and

instability in Baghdad. A parliamentary election was conducted in January 2005 to elect a

275-member National Assembly charged with writing a new Constitution for Iraq. The

Constitution was ratified in a national referendum in October 2005. Yet another election

took place in December 2005 to elect a permanent 275-member Council of

Representatives (Stansfield, 2007; Dawisha, 2009).

The main result of the political turmoil of 2005 was that "ethnosectarian identities

were reified into fixed political cleavages" (Dawisha, 2009, p. 284). Political parties

organized and worked almost exclusively along ethnic and sectarian lines.

> Regionally bounded and lacking national membership, these parties were bound
> to evaluate national issues and policies from perspectives that reflected their own
> particularistic interests and concerns, thus contributing not only to the progressive
> fragmentation of the political culture, but also to a policy-making process that
> would be disjointed, incoherent, and more often than not hopelessly deadlocked
> (Dawisha, 2009, p. 284).

The outcome of the December 2005 elections offered a picture of how politically

divided Baghdad itself was becoming. The United Iraqi Alliance (sometimes referred to

as the United Iraqi Coalition), which "included all the major Shi'i religious groups"

(Marr, 2012, p. 288) won 56.5 percent of votes cast in Baghdad, and 34 of the 59 seats

allocated to the province (Kireev). The Iraqi Accord Front, a party appealing to Sunni

voters, received 21.1 percent of votes and 13 of Baghdad's seats (Kireev) while the Iraqi

National List (Iraqiyya), "the main secular ticket and the only major one that one won

votes across sectarian lines" (Marr, 2012, p. 289) won 13.4 percent of votes and eight

seats (Kireev). No other party in Baghdad won more than one seat.

By the time the next parliamentary elections occurred in 2010, the divisions were

clearly established. In Baghdad governorate, the largest proportion of votes – 35.6

percent – and seats – 26 – went to Prime Minister's Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law party

(Independent High Electoral Commission), "a major Shi'i coalition" (Marr, 2012, p.

343). Iraqiyya, again "a secular, cross-sectarian ticket with strong Sunni support" (Marr,

2012, p.344) received 33.2 percent of votes and 24 seats (Independent High Electoral

Commission). The Iraqi National Alliance (the renamed United Iraqi Alliance), which

sought to "assemble all Shi'i parties under one umbrella" (Marr, 2012, p. 341) won 22.1

percent of votes cast and 17 seats. No other party won more than one seat (Independent

High Electoral Commission).

While political dividing lines clearly were drawn during this period, the

government itself

possessed very little capacity to respond to needs of its citizens. Dawisha (2009) writes:

> At times [the government] was virtually non-existent … This was particularly true in the case of Baghdad, the capital city inhabited by some 27 percent of the country's population. This would not only diminish the state in the eyes of its citizens, but also would turn people to services provided by sub-national entities. In Sadr City, a district of Baghdad that is inhabited by over 2 million economically disadvantaged Shi'ites, people received most of their medical needs from a foundation that was controlled by the fiery cleric and warlord Muqtada al Sadr (p. 281).

Although no clear causal relationship can be established, the combination of

highly sectarian politics and poor government responsiveness seemed to contribute to

high levels of violence in Baghdad. By mid-2006, Stansfield writes:

> [V]iolence in Iraq reached appallingly high new levels. But rather than US and occupying forces being the target of this violence, and being directly responsible for the catastrophically high number of Iraqi deaths, conflict in Iraq became internalized between Iraqis themselves. Reports of sectarian-based killings became commonplace, with Baghdad itself becoming ghettoized into Sunni and Shi'i zones which defended themselves ferociously against the actions of Shi'i militias and Sunni insurgent groups respectively. The city became, in effect, the

212

theatre of a civil war, with numbers of killings being, at times, in excess of 100 a day (2007, pp. 205-206)

The University of Baghdad was not at all immune to the violence. The Brussels Tribunal's List of Assassinated Iraqi Academics documents the killing of a faculty member at the University of Baghdad as early as June 9, 2003 (Brussels Tribunal, 2012). On July 6, 2003, an unknown assassin shot and killed an American soldier providing security to a U.S. government higher education advisor on the campus of Baghdad University (Packer, 2003).

Harb (2008) writes that "one of the worst problems facing Iraq's higher education sector is the acute lack of personal security for intellectuals" and that according to Iraq's University Professors Association, as of 2006 "80 percent of assassination attempts on the country's campuses targeted university personnel, that more than half of those killed in these attempts were full or assistant professors, and that half of the assassinations occurred at the University of Baghdad" (p.5). At least 78 professors from the University of Baghdad alone had been reported as killed from 2003-2011 (Brussels Tribunal, 2012).

The extremely poor security situation affected the work of those trying to establish the EUPSHR.

> The conditions under which we worked with our Iraqi partners were rather difficult and fraught with security risks from the start. I specifically began working on the issue (not only the unit but the subject as a whole) as early as the summer of 2004, basically at one of the moments the American endeavor (war) in Iraq was beginning to look confused and ill-advised. The Iraqi army had been disbanded and Paul Bremer was beginning to realize that he and the administration had gone too far in disbanding Iraqi state institutions. The [Coalition Provisional Authority] was distrusted and the Provisional Council did not look like it had the legitimacy necessary to really lead the hoped-for state. Those who had come with the Americans (the exiles) were beginning to divvy up

213

the spoils; and they were many and varied: political and economic (I. Harb, personal communication, May 2, 2013).

Despite Baghdad's deeply divided political culture and its very high levels of violence, particularly against the academic community, EUPSHR came into existence in 2005. Still, the founding director recalled the establishment of the unit during such a moment of increasing violence and divisive politics in Baghdad as "difficult, but not impossible" (personal communication, January 17. 2014).

The support of USIP seemed to have played a positive role, as did the work of a few selected influential members of the unit who advocated for its creation within the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The director of the small unit created a strong foundation for it by setting minimum standards for its work and seeking opportunities for faculty to build capacity in its specialty areas. Next, I will examine conflict transformation outputs and short-term outcomes of the unit by applying the analytical framework described in Chapter 3.

Conflict transformation outputs

1. **Students graduated with degrees in peace and conflict studies:** As the EUPSHR is not a degree- or certificate-granting body, no students have graduated from it. Nor has the unit been responsible for developing any specific courses about peace studies or human rights to be taught by College of Education faculty affiliated with the unit. However, the teaching of certain existing courses at the College of Education may be influenced by the work of faculty members who conduct research at the unit. For example, one of the researchers at the EUPSHR teaches a course about the

214

Fundamental Teachings in Human Rights. One of the research projects he has helped

to conduct at the unit has focused on the challenges of teaching about human rights at

the university, so there are linkages between the unit's work and classroom teaching

at the College of Education, even if the unit's researchers have no formal teaching

responsibilities related to the work off the EUPSHR (personal communication,

January 5, 2012).

2. **Public or semi-public events that encouraged critical consideration about topics related to peace and conflict studies:** The EUPSHR conducts monthly or semi-monthly public events and discussions within the College of Education. For example, it has organized a screening of a film about Mahatma Gandhi and his 1930 Salt March, followed by a discussion of non-violent political action. It also has convened educational seminars for voters prior to elections conducted in Baghdad in 2009 and 2010 (personal communication, September 30, 2011; personal communication, January 17, 2014). The EUPSHR organizes a celebration to recognize the International Day of Peace on September 21 of each year (personal communication, January 5, 2012). In April and May 2011, the EUPSHR facilitated a workshop for 30 students from five departments within the College of Education about the rights of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). One of the researchers in the unit said that participating students received folders containing information about refugees and IDPs in Iraq, including photographs documenting their conditions. In this way, the EUPSHR played a role in what Freire calls "conscientization" – by raising awareness of structural violence occurring within Iraq.

The first thing was they [must] know information about the bad conditions of these people in Iraq. Some of these students are IDPs. They told their stories with tears. I feel they know some information. The immigrant students, when they told us their stories, make us refuse this phenomenon in our society (personal communication, January 4, 2012).

3. **Research papers related to peace and conflict studies**: Researchers at the EUPSHR all spoke about their research products as the most important output of the unit. "The most important thing is to prepare research about peace studies and conflict resolution, reconciliation [and] conflict management," one of the researchers said (personal communication, January 5, 2012).

The actual amount of research projects conducted by the unit, however, has been limited, mainly by the poor physical security conditions that make it difficult for researchers to undertake field research projects outside the setting of the university. Two research papers have been prepared. One of them focused on The Difficulty of Teaching Human Rights at the University of Baghdad, from the perspective of students and faculty. Another study concentrated on The Reality of Violence Facing Students. Results of both studies appeared in a Baghdad-based newspaper (personal communication, September 30, 2011). All of the researchers at the unit complained about receiving insufficient support from the university that would allow them to undertake more ambitious studies.

We are satisfied with our research. The result of this research helped us know many things about peace and human rights in our university ... [But] we are living in an ignorant society. They put the teaching as [our] first role. We support our research. The university does not support our research. We would like to expand it, but without support, you cannot do a great thing (personal communication, January 4, 2012).

216

<u>Conflict transformation outcomes</u>

1. **Increased awareness and understanding by students of concepts related to peace and conflict studies**: Students at the College of Education take part in the EUPSHR's public events and participate in its research projects. However, it is impossible to know how their understandings of critical concepts related to peace and conflict studies may have changed as a consequence of these interactions without interviewing or speaking with some of them. As previously noted, the researchers at the EUPSHR decided not to invite me to visit their office due to concerns about their and my physical security. They likewise have declined to facilitate contact between any of the students participating in their events and me. Considering the fact that approximately 80 faculty members were assassinated at the University of Baghdad from 2003-2011, I have chosen to respect their need not to alert students about their relationship to an American researcher. At some future time when security conditions improve to the point where international researchers can work openly at the University of Baghdad, conducting a study about the effects of the EUPSHR on students would be a worthwhile endeavor.

   One of the EUPSHR researchers offered a possible starting point for future research with University of Baghdad students when she mentioned that she noticed a change in how her students view the concept of peace through a human rights lens.

I teach human rights. I teach peace as part of human rights ... I see the way they look at this subject, it changed from before I started with them … In the beginning, they looked at this subject as a [poor] subject. And sometimes they made [wisecracks] about the subject. That was a few years ago. When they realized that this is different from any theoretical subject – there is dialogue, discussion, movies. Sometimes I give them assignments on a piece of paper asking them to answer a question. Now I see that the subject is close to their hearts (personal communication, September 30, 2011).

The interplay between human rights and peace has been a recurring theme that EUPSHR's researchers have tried to promote. "For peacebuilding we don't have a separate subject," the founding director said, "but we say 'No peace, no freedom, no equality without human rights' " (personal communication, January 17, 2014).

2. **Increased awareness and understanding by faculty and staff of critical concepts related to peace and conflict studies**: Researchers at the EUPSHR report increased understanding of these concepts. One of the researchers mentioned that he has learned about the work of John Paul Lederach and Chester Crocker and "their ideas about peace studies and conflict resolution" as a consequence of his work at the unit. He said he has read some of the approximately 200 books owned by the unit (personal communication, January 5, 2012).

The researcher who was with the director at the inception of the EUPSHR said her research and study at the unit he made her more aware of the impact of her own actions. Again, this suggests that EUPSHR has had a conscientizing effect on its researchers.

There is an issue we don't realize until we talk about peace studies. Through the dealings among each other, either here, or at home, or in college, as human beings, we are prone to make mistakes. When we make a mistake, we think nothing about it. Now I look at making a mistake in a different way. I ask myself – I'm teaching human rights and peace, how could I do that? … When we learn something that is a small scientific thing, we use it in our teachings. Without you realizing it, you're learning something (personal communication, September 30, 2011).

The unit's researchers also have conducted workshops for teachers in other colleges of the university (personal communication, January 17, 2014). It was impossible, however, to know the effects of those workshops upon the university's faculty without speaking or corresponding directly with participating faculty members, which was not possible for this study due to the security constraints noted previously.

3. **Establishment of a platform for future learning and practice in peace and conflict studies:** The EUPSHR is a small office within a huge institution. Still it has created space for the four researchers at the unit to explore questions related to peace and conflict studies, to reach out to a broader community of scholars working on the subject and to consider future possibilities for more ambitious programs.

   a. *Program affiliates planning or taking next steps toward further learning or practice in peace and conflict studies:* The creation of the EUPSHR has inspired two of the researchers at the unit to pursue further study related to peace and conflict studies. The researcher who was one of the founding members of the unit along with the director, and applied and was accepted for her doctoral studies at the College of Education in 2008. She

completed her dissertation in 2012 about the Psychological Effects of

Displacement in Iraq.

The researcher who obtained his MA in political science from the

University of Baghdad has received one of the Iraqi government's HCED

scholarships to pursue his Ph.D. in the United States. He intended to begin

studies in political science at Rutgers University in 2014. The researcher

acknowledged that he has until now had "no specific studies in

peacebuilding or peace studies or conflict resolution" but that through his

doctoral studies in the U.S., he hopes "to gain qualifications in this field"

so that he can return to Iraq and teach and conduct advanced research in

the subject (personal communication, January 5, 2012).

b. *New relationships between program affiliates with a community of*

scholars and practitioners beyond the university working on issues related

to peace and conflict studies: Two of the researchers at the EUPSHR – the

director and her original colleague – as well as the Dean of the College of

Education, were invited in 2008 to join a countrywide organization that

subsequently named itself the Iraqi Peace Foundation (IPF). This brought

the EUPSHR staff into frequent contact with scholars from other

universities throughout Iraq who were interested in peace and conflict

studies, as well as with researchers from Columbia University's Center for

International Conflict Resolution and the International NGO Relief

International, which conducted the project with support from the U.S.

Agency for International Development. The EUPSHR researchers

participated in five countrywide meetings of the group in 2008 and 2009. The EUPSHR director was elected to the IPF's administrative board in February 2009.

The founding director spent four years teaching a one-month summer course about citizenship at the AUIS. "This experience, and opportunity, I got it from the unit," she said (personal communication, January 17, 2014).

The researcher with a political science background utilized his position at the EUPSHR to help him obtain a Civic Education and Leadership Fellowship through the U.S. Department of State that enabled him to study at Syracuse University's Maxwell School for three months in early 2013 (personal communication, March 3, 2013). During that time, he also traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the Alliance for Peacebuilding's annual conference, attended by more than 200 peacebuilding scholars and practitioners working worldwide (personal communication, April 11, 2013).

c. *Desire among program affiliates for expansion of the unit:* All of the EUPSHR researchers mentioned their hopes that the unit would become a larger entity at some point in the not-too-distant future. Specific hopes that they voiced included the formal recognition of the unit as a research center, an institute or a department of the College of Education that could expand its work beyond the boundaries of the University of Baghdad. One of the researchers said:

> We wish to be a department in our college ... We want to connect with other universities, and to do research in all of Iraq. Because of bad support, we work just in our college. We want to extend our research to other governorates. This will be very good research if we do it in all of Iraq. Iraq is a good place to research because of the problems of peace and human rights and security (personal communication, January 4, 2012).

Another of the researchers expressed a desire for the unit to become a national repository in Iraq for peace and conflict studies:

> such as the United States Institute for Peace, or to develop undergraduate studies or graduate studies or certificate. We hope to establish a center of peace at Baghdad University because Baghdad University does not have this study. This study is new to Baghdad University and new to the world. There are courses for political science and law, but we do not study these fields: conflict resolution, peacebuilding, conflict transformation, conflict management, all of that (personal communication, January 5, 2012).

The researcher who had worked with the director since the unit began said she long had hopes that the unit could become "a department that can educate people with a bachelor's degree" (personal communication, September 30, 2011). But she said the director had explained to her that the Ministry of Higher Education "would not allow it to go on because we don't have a specialty in this field" (personal communication, September 30, 2011). The founding director herself, who retired from Baghdad University in June 2013, said she hoped the unit would grow but also that she was "a little bit worried about the unit" following her departure. "I feel we need a person for the unit to be bigger, someone who feels it is a bigger issue" (personal communication, January 17, 2014).

Still, one of the unit's researchers noted that she had an even more ambitious idea: to establish a private college in Baghdad that ultimately could grant bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in peace and conflict studies.

> We could put together an effort in the first four years with them and after that, the people who take the degrees from us, would work for us … This would be an expense at the beginning – because there has to be a startup cost. Afterwards it would be self-supplying because it would be a private college … There has to be a college that specializes and we can utilize professors from law colleges, political science, and also have trainers that specialize. They could give lectures in both theory [and practice]. Students could finish their bachelor's degree and then work on their master's and Ph.D. after they graduate. After they get their Ph.D., they could work for us and they would have a background in peace studies (personal communication, September 30, 2011).

Compared to the enormous university in which it is located, the EUPSHR is tiny: four researchers working on a few research projects and conducting monthly events for students within the College of Education. It faces extreme constraints posed by its lack of financial resources, its inability to conduct larger field studies due t due to poor security conditions in Baghdad and an overall shortage of academic specialization in peace and conflict studies. The EUPSHR nonetheless has held a space for consideration of concepts related to peace and conflict studies during a tumultuous period in Baghdad, and has cultivated an interest among its small research team for further study and for future institutional growth.

Limitations of outcomes

Much more severely than either the University of Duhok or the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, the EUPSHR at Baghdad University faced some extremely serious constraints on its observed conflict transformation outcomes. Most of these

limitations were rooted in – or connected to – the physical security challenges presented

by the high levels of sectarian violence present in Baghdad at the time of this study.

As one of the EUPSHR researchers noted to me during a 2012 interview, it would

have been "dangerous for you and for us" if I had visited the unit to conduct research for

this study (personal communication, January 4, 2012). Consequently, the potential level

of raised awareness by both students and faculty within the College of Education of

concepts related to peace and conflict studies was limited mostly to what could occur

through interactions with EUPSHR researchers who gained familiarity with theory and

practice in the field during their participation in workshops and seminars in other parts of

Iraq and abroad. It seems reasonable to think that any meaningful growth in knowledge

about peace and conflict studies would remain out of reach until EUPSHR researchers

could interact freely and openly with academic colleagues from abroad as well as from

other parts of Iraq.

Another limitation was the closed nature of the group of researchers themselves.

With just four researchers composing the EUPSHR's staff, the unit's reach and capacity

to conduct research remained limited. And, in fact, the size of the staff seemed as if it

would shrink rather than grow due to the retirement of its founding director and the

impending departure of one of the other researchers to attend a doctoral program in the

U.S. Because Baghdad University has shown no inclination to develop courses or a

degree-granting program in peace and conflict studies, the unit had no obvious way to

replace departed members.

Both of these factors – the physical security challenges and the small staff of the

EUPSHR – presented severe constraints on the unit's ability to create a strong platform

for future learning in peace and conflict studies. Serious study of the subject by master's

or doctoral students within the College of Education hypothetically could occur under the

direction of existing EUPSHR researchers. However, the environment at Baghdad

University during the period of this study was not very encouraging of intensive higher

learning in the pursuit of new knowledge. Indeed, some observers of the university saw

instead an emerging culture of corruption mirroring the Iraqi national political system. As

Nadhmi (2014) writes of the area close to the Baghdad University campus where the

EUPSHR is located:

> [I]t became very obvious to any visitor to the printing and copying offices next to
> Bab Al- Muadaam compound in Baghdad, to see the ads attached to the windows
> of these offices such as: (we have all kinds of researches) or (here, we print out
> graduation thesis from the internet). Not only that but they reached a point where
> they started writing masters and doctoral dissertations for a few thousand dollars'
> value, particularly in the social and humane fields. These offices also provide
> public services for students that include copying all their lectures and notes in a
> very small size for cheating purposes … These offices became an "easy"
> alternative [to] thinking and researching at the university's library. The
> university's administration is turning a blind eye on this issue as if it became a
> necessary evil or an irreplaceable framework for the continuation of the
> "educational process" since students are cognitively incapable of writing their
> researches by themselves, knowing that these offices have to be subjected to legal
> criminal accountability through claims held by the university (p. 104).

Without a broad institutional commitment to international principles of academic

integrity, it is difficult to imagine the EUPSHR inspiring a new generation of students to

undertake critical studies in a field as committed to a particular ethical and non-violent

stance as peace and conflict studies. Furthermore, Baghdad University's overall lack of

exposure to contemporary developments in international peace and conflict studies due to

physical security constraints would seem to limit the existing faculty's opportunities to

differentiate between high-quality original research and studies reproduced in an

unethical manner.

CHAPTER 7

Other Efforts to Establish P&CS Programs in Iraq

It would be natural at this point to ask: what other attempts have been made to establish peace and conflict studies programs at Iraqi universities? The cases examined in this study – the University of Duhok's Master of Arts program in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies, the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani's Center for Peace and Security Studies and Baghdad University's Educational Unit for Peace Studies and Human Rights – do not represent the only contemporary attempts to institutionalize peace and conflict studies in Iraqi universities; they are only the most successful attempts, which had resulted in establishment of tangible programs or centers at the time of this study.

There have not been many other attempts, however: two, to be exact, and both of them were rather short-lived. I will briefly examine both of those efforts in this chapter as a way of providing further context to this study and to further test the validity of the analytical framework. For each of these micro-cases, I will explore whether there was, at the time and in the specific site, a favorable political climate for establishment of peace and conflict studies, an entrepreneurial leader willing to serve as a champion for the field, and sufficient financial and human resources to allow for a program to be constructed and consolidated.

The Academic Consortium for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution

As mentioned in the case of the University of Duhok, a 22-member delegation of academicians and political party representatives from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

participated in a two-week long program hosted by Columbia University in the fall of 2000 that introduced participants to conflict resolution as both an academic and practical subject. The Program for Conflict Resolution Training, Institution and Capacity Building for Kurds in Northern Iraq aimed "to increase institutional capacity for conflict resolution and cooperative governance in northern Iraq by creating a consortium that included the three universities in northern Iraq and counterpart institutions of higher learning in the United States" (Center for International Conflict Resolution, 2002, p.1). The most tangible outcome of that program was the formal creation of a network of the only three public universities that existed in the Kurdistan Region at that time: Duhok University, the University of Sulaimani and Salahaddin University, located in the regional capital, Erbil, along with three United States-based entities: Columbia University's International Conflict Resolution Program (which later became the Center for International Conflict Resolution); American University's Center for Global Peace, and; the Conflict Management Group, a non-profit organization based in Cambridge, Mass. Eighteen representatives from the three universities in Iraq, as well as Columbia and American University, wrote and ratified a "vision statement" that announced the creation of the Academic Consortium for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution (ACCCR) on June 25, 2001 during a meeting of representatives in Beirut, Lebanon. The statement asserted that:

> The Consortium seeks to develop close academic and cultural cooperation to augment the capacity of partner institutions for programs and outreach activities related to international and regional conflict resolution, peacemaking among conflicting parties, and the advancement of democratic principles for the establishment of lasting peace. Participants in the consortium include scholars, students, and professionals committed to conflict resolution. Through academic and cultural cooperation, the consortium is working to create an open community dedicated to the generation and dissemination of knowledge for peace .... [T]his

community fosters ongoing collaboration through curriculum development, student and faculty exchange programs, conferences, training partnerships, and joint research and publications. These activities are organized through offices at each member institution, and may at some future date be expedited by the establishment of an independent center for research on ethnic, religious, economic, social and cultural conflicts, and on means by which violence linked to such conflicts may be prevented or renounced (Academic Consortium for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, 2001).

Although the University of Duhok was the only one of the three universities in the Kurdistan Region that succeeded in developing an academic program related to peace and conflict studies, both Salahaddin University and the University of Sulaimani did, in fact, establish small offices in 2001 that aimed to encourage academic thinking about peace and conflict studies on each campus. According to a report shared with Columbia University's Center for International Conflict Resolution (CICR), Salahaddin University conducted meetings of its office on October 24 and 29th, 2001, that "concentrated on how to develop the consortium" (Academic Consortium for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, Salahaddin University Center-Erbil). The University of Sulaimani reported to CICR that it had conducted "a number of meetings" with its members and hoped to begin offering "seasonal training courses to introduce conflict resolution education to students" (ACCCR, 2001). Similarly, the Salahaddin University Center expressed hope that it could conduct "workshops" and "lectures" for students about peace and conflict resolution (Academic Consortium for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, Salahaddin University Center-Erbil).

Activities of the ACCCR mostly were limited to meetings at each university's office until August 2003, when, in the aftermath of the United States-led invasion of Iraq, the University of Duhok hosted a five-day curriculum-building workshop for 13

representatives of the ACCCR that was led by consortium partners from CICR and the

Conflict Management Group. During that workshop, professors and instructors convened

from all three ACCCR-member universities in the Kurdistan Region. The main outcome

of the workshop was establishment of a working group charged with drafting a pilot

undergraduate curriculum in conflict resolution.

> The [Duhok] workshop, although called a curriculum design workshop, was more realistically a needs and capacity assessment workshop. At this stage of the project, and based on what we learned in Dohouk, it would have been unrealistic to deliver a "pre-designed" conflict resolution course and seek to gain acceptance of it … Our expectation is that some form of the actual curriculum will be available as a pilot workshop in mid-spring 2004 (Conflict Management Group, 2003).

The working group, consisting entirely of one representative from each of the

three universities in Iraqi Kurdistan, did not succeed in drafting such a curriculum.

> After several meetings, the working group concluded that an intermediate curriculum was needed prior to the development and introduction of a fully integrated conflict resolution curriculum for the following reasons: First, no conflict resolution courses were currently being offered at any of the three universities. Second, members of the working group and other Kurdish professors in the consortium have not taught a conflict resolution course nor were they familiar with the literature. Third, the group decided it was better to start slowly with familiar subjects and then move toward integrating conflict resolution principles. Fourth, the group decided to offer a comprehensive set of courses, which introduces the concepts of conflict resolution, as a summer pilot series, prior to introducing a fully integrated course (Conflict Management Group, 2004, p. 3).

A former program director at CMG recalled that early in 2004, two or three of the

U.S.-based ACCCR partners collaborated on the creation of a draft syllabus for an

undergraduate course that was intended to serve as a starting point for discussion and

further work by the ACCCR professors in Iraqi Kurdistan. The course was called

"Introduction to Western and non-Western Approaches to Conflict Resolution." The draft

curriculum also did not lead to the development of a standalone undergraduate course in

the subject (T. Johnson, personal communication, Sept. 24, 2013).

> I recall that our professor friends in Kurdistan had serious reservations about the instructional methodology -- essentially, there were three objections: 1) they were unfamiliar with elicitive teaching methods, 2) students were more familiar with the traditional lecture delivery format and, 3) even if they mastered this methodology, they were unsure of how to evaluate students' performance. The professors thereafter decided to link negotiation and dispute resolution teaching with their existing academic fields and disciplines: Sociology and Conflict Resolution, Philosophy and Conflict Resolution etc. (T. Johnson, personal communication, September 24, 2013).

Such disciplinary diversity of ACCCR members posed a bureaucratic challenge

to the professors in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Although the ACCCR's membership

was heavily skewed towards lawyers – and two of the three campus centers, at the

University of Duhok and Salahaddin University, were located in colleges of law – there

was representation of other disciplines. For example, the ACCCR director at the

University of Sulaimani was a professor of history. And one of the more active members

from Salahaddin University was a professor of sociology. This diversity at the individual

level – coupled with the multi-disciplinary nature of peace and conflict studies – made it

virtually impossible in the highly-structured milieu of an Iraqi university to introduce a

course or subject that would be consistent with existing curriculum. The sociology

professor at Salahaddin University tried to overcome this obstacle by inserting subjects

into his two existing courses about social theories and social problems.

> Through the topic of social theories, first year MA students are dealing with the concept of conflict and its types in this course. They are dealing with them as examples and how it has impact on [society]. … In the [undergraduate] course on social problems, we talk about conflicts and types of conflicts. As an example, we talk about the long conflict the Kurds had with the former [Iraqi] government and its impact of the former regime on our society and the whole Iraqi society. Just

like Anfal, the chemical attacks in Halabja and deportation … These types or examples of conflict affected [society] by creating a kind of hatred against the government. So the course includes also how to study these examples, and to make use of them to reconnect people after these events (personal communication, June 12, 2011).

Unable to fit a multi-disciplinary course into a rigid disciplinary system, the ACCCR shifted its focus toward more informal education in peace and conflict studies. The consortium did not implement its plan for a summer lecture series, but instead developed a spring series of lectures in early 2005 by professors from the three Iraqi consortium-member universities at their own and each other's campuses about conflict resolution from their own disciplinary perspectives. Two international members of the consortium also participated in the lecture series, which was supported by the United States Institute of Peace. The University of Duhok coordinated the lecture series on behalf of the ACCCR (personal communication, July 25, 2005).

Following that lecture series, formal ACCCR activities ceased at Salahaddin University and the University of Sulaimani. One professor from the University of Sulaimani and one professor and one lecturer from Salahaddin University – all three of whom had participated in multiple ACCCR events dating back to the October 2000 workshop at Columbia University –cited multiple reasons for the ACCCR's failure to build an institutional home for peace and conflict studies on their campuses: lack of support for the subject by university leadership; lack of adequate intellectual and financial resources and a general lack of understanding about the subject among students, faculty and leaders. The professor from the University of Sulaimani who served as his campus ACCCR director said that the former president of his university had expressed

willingness to support a project related to peace and conflict studies, but after he died in

2004, he was unable to generate support from new university leadership.

> After all my participation in the course in New York, and the meetings in Beirut, in Duhok, I came back and talked to many people. One time I remember we did one course in our faculty for 2-3 weeks. Another time, I did a seminar in a special hall for many hundreds [of people]. I think the university council and the university president were not interested because they did not have any idea what was conflict resolution. And the students, after they come to this [possible] department, how do they find a job? They are not lawyers, not teachers.   … Personally, my idea is they don't have any culture of conflict resolution. For them, it's not important (personal communication, June 6, 2011).

The instructor at Salahaddin University, the only female member among the

consortium's original membership who participated actively in the ACCCR throughout

its four years of operation, saw a lack of interest from university leadership as well as the

challenge of working between disciplines as the main challenges that impeded

establishment of the subject on her campus.

> We opened the center inside Salahaddin University. The president of the university just gave us an office. He didn't participate in anything else. He didn't suggest anything else to us. Physically he supported us, and that's it. He said, 'What you want to do, you can do it.' And that's it. All of our group was not [specialized] in law and conflict resolution, and generally in social relations. We [even] had one engineer, for example. It was not their interest. That's why those people went far away after we attended the workshops. Who stayed? I am from law. Prof Abdulhameed from [the College of Arts] and Barzan from Arts. For the others, it was far away from their [specialization] so they went far away (personal communication, June 13, 2011).

Salahaddin University – and the ACCCR as a whole – suffered a particular

challenge when, in April 2004, one of the most active founding members of the

consortium, Barzan Omer Ahmed, was shot and killed by unidentified gunmen while

driving his vehicle through Mosul, Iraq (Conflict Management Group, 2004; Pagen,

2004). The female instructor at Salahaddin University pointed to Barzan's loss as a

reason the campus ACCCR center was unable to overcome its overall lack of resources.

> Why couldn't we establish a center? Actually we did establish one at Salahaddin University, but [we had no funds]. The truth was there was no cooperation between the group. Just a few people paid attention to the center and tried to do some things. But, as you know, Barzan was killed by the terrorists, and he was the most active person. He opened the office in the university, and supported this office and filled it with books ... When he died, I was still with Professor Abdulhameed. We bought some books. We did a workshop in Salahaddin University .... That was successful. But again, the funds were a problem. Everyone become busy with his jobs (personal communication, June 13, 2011).

> The political environment in Erbil and Sulaimani did not appear to play a

significant role in the demise of the ACCCR. Professors at both the University of

Sulaimani and Salahaddin University said they saw no direct political impediments to the

establishment of peace and conflict studies at their universities. However, they

acknowledged that the lack of interest by political leaders in promoting the field might

have had a detrimental effect. The professor from the University of Sulaimani said the

power of new and critical ideas has not limited development of the subject on his campus.

> People, the leaders, others are only thinking about money. We live now in a period in our country and don't have [rule] of law ... The presidents of the universities and others think it's only about the money, about the posts, believe me, it's nothing more ... The political leaders cannot change the program of the university ... It only depends on the university president in Sulaimani. The president of the university is not a strong man. He can do so many things, but he doesn't do anything ... When he wants to write one letter, 10 times he asks other people. If he decided to open a college of conflict resolution, believe me, nobody would [ask] why? Because the government and the political leaders will say 'You are the professors. You know best the university jobs …' But it depends on the president. I was a member of the university council for eight years. I see all the presidents, when they take power, they become dictators. They don't discuss things with the deans, professors other members of the council. They try to do everything by themselves. They don't [welcome] participation (personal communication, June 6, 2011).

The female instructor at Salahaddin University also did not see political leaders in Erbil as blocking development of a critical new field such as peace and conflict studies. At the same time, she said, those leaders are not ready for types of collaborative approaches to governing that the field often promotes.

> The first step should start from the university. But the political side, the government, I don't think so. Now the benefits is number-one in all subjects – [both] to persons and governments. There is nobody thinking like that in the government in the close future. Maybe in the far future. I think it should be started in the university for the government. Maybe it will be by research, maybe by workshops for government staff (personal communication, June 13, 2011).

The effect of financial resources on the ACCCR also is important to consider. Professors at both the University of Sulaimani and Salahaddin University noted that faculty did not possess any particular expertise in the subject. As the sociology professor from Salahaddin University said, "[t]he difficulty of starting such a project is lack of specialists in this field" (personal communication, June 12, 2011). However, as the University of Duhok case demonstrates, continued engagement with international organizations that offer both projects and partnerships can support faculty and students develop new knowledge, as well as research and teaching skills related to peace and conflict studies. After the 2005 lecture series project funded by the United States Institute of Peace ended, neither Salahaddin University nor the University of Sulaimani received any external funding for ACCCR activities. Interestingly, both of those university chapters of the ACCCR seemed concerned by finances at the consortium's inception. The Salahaddin University chapter responded to a draft consortium budget prepared by CICR with suggestions for increases in every proposed budget category. To a budget line of $1500 for office supplies, the chapter replied "we suggest $3000 per year" and to a

suggestion of $800 for annual meetings costs, the Salahaddin University Center replied

"we suggest $5000 per year for all members" (Academic Consortium for Cooperation

and Conflict Resolution, Salahaddin University Center-Erbil). The University of

Sulaimani also responded strongly to the draft budget prepared by CICR.

> Since the University of Sulaimani cannot financially afford the establishment of this consortium, and we have agreed before in Beirut, that the University of Columbia will provide financial assistance to our consortium, we hope that you'll soon send us the financial aid in accordance with the program discussed in Beirut (ACCCR, 2001).

In 2001, the ACCCR became the first contemporary space for explicit

consideration of peace and conflict studies on Iraqi university campuses. However,

outside of the University of Duhok, it was unable to institutionalize the subject as an

academic field of study and research. Professors at both Salahaddin University and the

University of Sulaimani began to work in the field, but their failure to establish any long-

lasting formal programs seemed mainly attributable to a lack of supportive and

entrepreneurial university leadership, an inability to navigate the inter-disciplinarity of

peace and conflict studies and a shortage of external financial resources that might have

kept more faculty and students engaged in the subject.

Salahaddin University Centre for Conflict Analysis and Reconciliation

In 2010, a small team of professors from Queen Mary University in London (QMUL) received approximately £85,000 from the British Council to help establish a research and teaching center in Erbil, under the auspices of the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The project aimed to: develop master's level courses on conflict and security studies; organize workshops in Erbil about research methods and to help assess further training needs; provide research seminars in London and Belfast about subjects such as comparative approaches to conflict studies, ethno-religious identities and gender and conflict in London and Belfast for Iraqi teaching staff, and, ultimately; to create a university center where curriculum could be developed and research projects housed (Queen Mary University of London) .

The project initially was to take place at the University of Kurdistan-Hawler (UKH), a public university founded in 2006 where two of the QMUL-affiliated faculty were on the teaching staff. When they left UKH, the project was shifted to Salahaddin University and established as a joint effort between the Department of Social Work in the College of Arts and the Department of Law in the College of Law (J. Dingeley, personal communication, June 13, 2011; personal communication, June 15, 2011).

The project consisted of three main activities:

- A visit by three QMUL faculty and another from Queens University, Belfast to Erbil in December 2010. One of the professors on that trip said, "we conducted a series of seminars and workshops on research into conflict and basically scouted around to take note of their facilities, talk to

237

students and identify possible research topics we could tutor students on"

(J. Dingeley, personal communication, June 15, 2011);

- A month-long visit in March 2011 by four Salahaddin University

representatives to London and Belfast. In London, they worked for three

weeks as short-term interns with organizations such as the Hansard

Society, a research institute that promotes democratic governance. One of

the Salahddin University participants from the Department of Social Work

explained the trip:

> We had an internship program specialized for each of us depending on
> our specialty … [W]e had seminars on conceptualizing conflict,
> extremism, terrorism, UK foreign policy. We also had some talks on
> oppositional studies, dealing with foreign policy and also on conflict in
> Iraq. Then we went to Belfast to focus on two things: 1. To have an
> idea about the conflict in Northern Ireland, and the peacebuilding
> process there … and; 2. To try to have some workshops on research
> methodology, qualitative and quantitative (personal communication,
> June 15, 2011).

- A four-day conference in Amman in February 2012 entitled "Conflicts and

Identities in Contemporary Kurdistan in Comparative Context," where six

of the Salahaddin University participants presented papers alongside five

University of Duhok representatives.

These activities did not translate into the organizers' hoped-for establishment of a

program or center related to peace and conflict studies at Salahaddin University; nor

were any standalone courses created by the time the British Council-funded program

expired in mid-2012. Participants in the program discovered that developing an

interdisciplinary center or courses was simply too difficult in the existing context of

Iraqi higher education. One Salahaddin University participant saw the very same

structural obstacles that confronted the ACCCR participants seven years earlier.

> According to the laws, adding or removing a course to the curriculum of a
> department is not very easy. It should be approved by the Higher Education
> conference every two or three years. I think adding [conflict resolution] as an
> individual course will be difficult. One idea is to put different parts of the course
> in different [existing] courses. [i.e. Introduction to the Social Sciences, Human
> Rights]. … If you can't get it approved for a special course, then just put it in
> different courses. It will be more do-able, more feasible (personal communication,
> June 15, 2011).

None of the participants in the program suggested that the political environment

in Erbil was in any way an impediment to the establishment of peace and conflict studies.

However, one participant in the program said that the KRG's Ministry of Higher

Education was unwilling to provide resources for establishment of a research center, and

even "included a letter with the proposal to the British Council that said there would be

no center and no master's program as a result of the project" (personal communication,

June 15, 2011).

> They always have nice words, but no action. Nice ideas. Nice programs. But
> when it comes to action, it is a terrible situation … They think that when they
> have to establish a center, they have to have a huge staff, get a huge [office] and a
> huge budget. They are very afraid of financial things. They don't ask whether we
> have enough professors or if there is another possibility, [such as] 'Could you
> collaborate with other universities?' It's just 'You don't have enough full
> professors, so don't think of it' (personal communication, June 15, 2011).

Once the financial resources provided by the British Council were exhausted, the

project came to an end. So, once again, Salahaddin University did not end up with a

center for peace and conflict studies, any courses in the subject at the undergraduate

or master's level, or any ongoing research efforts. The university had neither a

charismatic, entrepreneurial leader willing to lend support to development of the program nor enough human or financial resources to keep participants in the project engaged with it. The local political climate did not seem to inhibit the formation of a center or courses, except to the extent that the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research failed to provide resources for the project's continuation.

CHAPTER 8

P&CS in Iraq: Individual Cases

Given the very limited nature of programs in peace and conflict studies at Iraqi universities, might Iraqi students seek opportunities in the field outside Iraq? A handful of Iraqi students have done just that in recent years, and reports of their experiences offer further insight into the challenges that lie ahead for peace and conflict studies in Iraq, as well as the institutional obstacles that remain for anyone who devotes themselves to the field.

At least eight Iraqis completed related master's degree programs in peace and conflict studies outside of Iraq between 2007 and 2013. I have interviewed seven of those eight individuals; they came from different backgrounds and followed different paths. Two were women and five were men. Both of the women came from outside the Kurdistan Region – one from Basra and one from Kirkuk – while four of the five men came from inside the Kurdistan Region (although two of them were not born there). Two of the men earned their degrees from the United Nations-mandated University for Peace, as part of its agreement with the University of Duhok. Another of them was a University of Duhok staff member who studied at the University of Tromso in Norway. The woman from Basra received a scholarship from the British Council that she used to pursue a degree from the University of Bradford in the United Kingdom. The woman from Kirkuk received a scholarship from Notre Dame University in the United States to study for her master's degree. The man who did not come from the Kurdistan Region came from Fallujah, and also received a scholarship to study at Notre Dame University in the U.S. One individual was a man living in Erbil who grew up outside the Kurdistan Region, and

received a scholarship from Coventry University in the United Kingdom to study for his master's degree there.

Despite their differences, they all shared in an experience of exclusion from the traditional higher education sector in Iraq once they earned their degrees. Two primary reasons seemed to explain the distance they felt from Iraq's university system: a lack of familiarity with peace and conflict studies in the Iraqi higher education sector, and; the fact that they departed from the traditional system of studying in one discipline throughout their university careers. Their cases offer additional insight into the question of necessary conditions for establishment of university-based programs in peace and conflict studies in Iraq.

The seven students have met with resistance on an individual level that matches the types of resistance that some efforts to establish peace and conflict studies programs have encountered on an institutional level. The students with master's degrees in peace and conflict studies have discovered university systems that – at the very least – did not completely welcome their attempts to forge a path in a new and developing field, and did not match their efforts with dedicated financial or intellectual resources that might have provided some foundation for them to work in their chosen field in Iraqi higher education.

Interestingly, each of them came to peace and conflict studies for very practical reasons, either as a response to their own experiences of violence during the regime of Saddam Hussein (1979-2003); the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), the Persian Gulf War (1991) or the U.S.-led invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq (2003-2011), or as an effort to

make meaning of their own professional work that was somehow affected by the violence their communities experienced during and after at least one of those events.

What follows is a discussion of the forms of resistance encountered by individuals who left Iraq to pursue graduate degrees in peace and conflict studies between 2007 and 2013. I will look at three main reasons for this resistance: rigidity of the Iraqi higher education system in terms of keeping students on a single disciplinary track throughout their entire tertiary education careers; unfamiliarity with peace and conflict studies among the Iraqi higher education establishment, and; fears by students and administrators of possible negative consequences of challenging existing norms related to accepted fields of study and processes for pursuing higher studies. Afterward, I will offer an analysis of these cases that seeks to deepen understanding of the difficulty of establishing peace and conflict studies programs in Iraqi universities.

Rigidity of the Iraqi higher education system

Youssef, born in 1974, received his undergraduate degree in agriculture from Mosul University in 1997. He had little interest in agriculture, but pursued studies in the field because his Baccalaureate examination score qualified him for it and because the alternative would have been joining the Iraqi military. He said he was prevented from continuing with graduate studies because of his Kurdish origin, and moved to the Kurdistan Region after 2000, when he began working with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization. Following the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, he began to work with international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that came to Iraq. One of the organizations he worked with was an American NGO that brought a

group of scholar-practitioners from Columbia University to conduct workshops with its

Iraqi staff in conflict resolution approaches.

> I found that such programs were very interesting for any project … even
> construction needed conflict resolution or conflict analysis … What I witnessed
> during the implementation the project we did, some of the projects done by either
> our organization or some other organizations of my colleagues, sometimes we did
> a bad job of development because sometimes we didn't have the opportunity to
> learn the general situation of that area, to do a conflict analysis of that area. We
> didn't know what were the roots of the problem and what was the trigger [for
> violence]. We didn't know what we should do and what we shouldn't do. This we
> will never know unless we do a community profile, conflict analysis, conflict
> mapping for the place we were working.

> To continue in this field, I thought it was important to go to an academic field and
> to get more and more knowledge. Sometimes I felt I was doing something that I
> didn't have the educational background to do. Why not … get that background?
> From the friends and colleagues that I knew from 2003-06, some of the
> colleagues introduced me to Coventry University that provided me with a
> scholarship to study peace studies… I got the opportunity to join Coventry
> University peacebuilding studies in 2007-08.

> My life completely changed. I am not an agricultural engineer anymore. I am
> someone who has an MA in peace and reconciliation working with civil society
> organizations. I can work with most of the organizations here in Iraq because
> most of them have one concern: doing the projects without [doing harm] and with
> the umbrella of peace … This helped me a lot with my work (personal
> communication, June 13, 2011).

Youssef, now a program director with an international NGO that implements

projects focused on reconciliation throughout Iraq's five northernmost governorates, has

encountered stiff resistance from the higher education sector to his degree. He expected

that he might be allowed to teach in public or private universities, or to continue studying

toward a Ph.D. Instead, he has discovered that his degree is completely unrecognized in

Iraq.

> Really I felt very frustrated when I came back and found out they were not
> recognizing it, even in the embassy in Baghdad they were surprised and said
> 'How did you come here? How are you doing these studies without the

government knowing it?' I said 'I got a scholarship.' It was a shock for me that they didn't recognize it. Even for the government work, they didn't accept me, the universities. Even the private universities, [did not accept me] because they are somehow linked with higher education. They should know the background …. But I returned back and said 'This is the big outcome of the peace studies that I have. I am still alive. I continue moving forward to achieve my goals and objectives. There is a lot of opportunity for me to work.' There are organizations and people who are willing to listen to studies like these. There is always opportunity for people like me. I am fine with my position here. But also I'm feeling sorry because the government people will not have such skills for a long time. But my aim is to give something to people, and still I am giving it, either via the government or via other organizations (personal communication, June 13, 2011).

Maryam, born in 1972, earned a B.S. degree in Applied Physics from the University of Technology in Baghdad in 1994. She had been working for the United Nations World Food Programme in Kirkuk for five years when the regime of Saddam Hussein fell. Soon thereafter, she accepted a position with one of the international NGOs that began operations in Kirkuk, working as a senior program manager, civil society specialist and Arabic-English interpreter. She became involved in a series of workshops about conflict resolution sponsored by the NGO, and conducted by a team from Columbia University, working first as an interpreter and later as a workshop facilitator. By 2005, she decided to apply for graduate studies abroad.

> I was working in the peacebuilding field for more than three years. I was working in that field without having a degree in this field. I was thinking if I wanted to continue working in this field, the next step was to support my experience with an academic degree, There was nothing like this in Iraq, so the opportunity was to look for opportunities and scholarships outside. I was introduced to these institutions and American universities by working with [Columbia University, and with one of the international NGOs working in Iraq] and a group in Lebanon. I was exposed to this study by those people. They opened the door to me to start thinking about how to get a degree from a western institution (personal communication, November 1, 2011).

Maryam received a scholarship from Notre Dame University, began studying

there for a master's degree in peace studies in the fall of 2006 and completed her degree

in May 2008. She does not know exactly how her degree will be received in Iraq because

she got married at about the same time she began her studies, and decided to move to

Canada with her husband following her graduation. She expressed hope that her degree

would provide her with opportunities if she decides to return to Iraq, but also

acknowledged that she likely would encounter obstacles.

> Just having a degree from a university like Notre Dame could give me
> opportunities. The only concern is that … my scholarship was a private
> scholarship. It was not a governmental exchange with another country. This could
> be a concern if they want to argue with me about not hiring with me about my
> degree … either they wouldn't recognize the degree … because it's not [from]
> Iraq … If I want to apply for a position in teaching, that would be a big obstacle
> for me. First they would ask if I have a degree from Iraq. The Education Ministry
> has very strict rules. I think that's the case in every country. Maybe if they have a
> new field or a new college or a new institution with peacebuilding and that need
> people to work in that institution to teach, then maybe my degree would be
> recognized. Then maybe they would recruit people with degrees from recognized
> universities (personal communication, November 1, 2011).

Maryam suggested that the key to developing peace and conflict studies in Iraq

might be the introduction of the subject throughout the primary and secondary education

systems – mainly because teachers with degrees in the field then would be needed.

> We used to think this way in grade 10 'If I go to this field, what is the job I am
> getting with this degree?' … because Iraq is not a place that is very civil society-
> oriented … [T]here is very limited chance for those people with peacebuilding
> degrees to integrate their degrees into practical life. There are no jobs for them.
> The other way of thinking is how to [create] channels for these people to be hired
> with peacebuilding education. It's a two-way process. We were talking if we
> teach this in the primary school, then we will need to have graduates from the
> field (personal communication, November 1, 2011).

Even if such a development occurred, however, Maryam's path to utilizing her degree in Iraq would be complicated, not only because she received her master's degree outside Iraq, with support from a non-governmental scholarship, but also because there is no apparent connection between her undergraduate degree in physics and her master's degree in peace studies. One University of Duhok professor who was familiar with Maryam's case said her educational path would invite skepticism from the Ministry of Higher Education.

> Even now if [Maryam] came back to Kirkuk and was asked what is your last degree and then what is your bachelor's degree … they would laugh and think something wrong happened (personal communication, May 26, 2009).

Omer, born in 1972, earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Mosul in 1995 in the French language. The University of Duhok nominated him to receive one of two available scholarships to study for a master's degree at the Center for Peace Studies at the University of Tromso (UiT) in Norway in 2007, as part of an agreement between the two universities. He earned his Master of Philosophy in Peace and Conflict Transformation in 2009, after writing a thesis entitled "Combating Physical Violence against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan: the Contribution of Local Women's Organization." When he returned to the University of Duhok, he learned that he was not eligible to teach in the university's then-new MA program in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies. Instead, he was put in charge of the university center that administered the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL). He approached the professor who was at that time the director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution.

> I had many objectives in my mind but it was unfortunate the UoD told me that I have to have Ph.D. to be able to teach or do something for the so-called CENTER

for conflict resolution …. I told [the director I could] help master's students of Duhok or come with teachers as a teaching assistant, [but he] he refused to give me any opportunity of teaching (personal communication, October 15, 2013).

After two years back in Duhok, he was accepted into a Ph.D. program in international studies and social sciences, at Coventry University in the U.K., and was connected to the university's peace and reconciliation center. He undertook his doctoral research on the subject of peace education in Iraqi public schools and conducted an analysis of human rights education textbooks and history curriculum. He planned to complete his dissertation in 2014. (personal communication, October 15, 2013).

> I did qualitative studies, interviews. Yes it was difficult because people are reluctant to talk even though the subject was not politics. Sometimes people find it trivial in writing about this subject. And other difficulties related to people like teachers not used to [being] interviewed. Thus, they were happy in one way I was giving them credit. I interviewed curriculum developers, teachers, teachers trainers, etc. I think there is a lot of need of qualitative research to be done in Kurdistan. Basically, I'm writing about the policy of the ministry of education, and the contents of [human rights education and history education] in relation to peace and violence, values and how the contents are delivered [via] the methods of teaching (personal communication, October 15, 2013).

Omer said he hoped to teach about peace studies at the University of Duhok once he completed his doctoral degree.

> [H]opefully I will have more opportunity ... I'm hoping to teach anything the university wanted me to teach - I mean related topics because, as you know, peace studies is interdisciplinary studies. So I can teach human rights, democracy, civic education, etc. However, I know they may tell me that I have to teach only peace and they do not have any subject by the name peace. I may end up – I don't know – teaching English language. But I'm planning to [develop an] elective course of peace if I have opportunity. Also I want to focus on researching and to open workshops of conflict resolution. I'm hoping to better contribute in building peace. There are many things in my mind (personal communication, October 15, 2013)

Ahmed, born in 1982, earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Mosul University in 2005. After the University of Duhok entered into its agreement with the United Nations University for Peace, he applied to become – and was accepted as – the first student who would get to study for his MA in Costa Rica in 2008. He finished his MA in international peace studies one year later.

> At first I was reluctant to do it, but I finally decided to enter the competition among some other students for the one seat UoD got from UPEACE. Fortunately I did. Let me be frank with you. I have never come across such a study before. I had no single idea about it, or what it does deal with. Not only me, but I assume all of social science students in Kurdistan or Iraq … Very few people know about the subject across the country. Now, we have several people who are specialists (personal communication, November 2, 2013).

When he returned to the University of Duhok in 2009, he was disappointed to learn that he could not teach in the new MA program in peace and conflict resolution studies because he did not have a Ph.D. One year later, he wrote: "Honestly, I haven't done anything from what I got my in MA at [UPEACE]" (personal communication, May 22, 2010). Ahmed instead was given an administrative position within the president's office at the university as the director of scientific affairs. He helped to establish a new department of political science and taught an undergraduate course in international humanitarian law for one year before deciding to continue his education abroad. As of late 2013, he was pursuing his Ph.D. in international relations at Durham University in the U.K., focusing on Middle East Politics, particularly "[t]esting leaders' roles in shaping states' behaviours." Ahmed hoped to complete his Ph.D. by 2016, and to return to the University of Duhok to further develop peace and conflict studies (personal communication, November 2, 2013).

249

I aim to teach conflict studies in the Middle East, and IR theory. Part of the plan is to develop curricula on conflict management, and conflict resolution (maybe). This will be done of course with the other colleagues of mine. I plan to have one of the good peace and conflict studies program at UoD at the regional level that could compete with the ones in Israel and Turkey. This is an ambitious step, but nothing is impossible unless we try (personal communication, November 2, 2013).

Daoud, born in 1983 in Iran after his family had fled anti-Kurdish violence in Iraq, received his undergraduate degree in English language and literature from the University of Duhok in 2006 and then began working for the university's media office. He applied and was accepted as the University of Duhok's second candidate to study for an MA degree at the United Nations University for Peace in Costa Rica in 2009. He completed his degree in media, peace and conflict studies and returned to Duhok in 2010 after what he said was "one of the most beautiful years of my life" (personal communication, February 1, 2014). His subsequent experience at the University of Duhok was very similar to his two predecessors from Duhok, Omer and Ahmed, who went abroad to study for similar degrees.

> All the candidates of this [University for Peace] program were entitled to develop two curricula in the field of peace and conflict studies. These developed curricula by the candidates were to be taught back at their universities. Well, this never happened when I return back to Duhok. [Ahmed] was another candidate who graduated from Upeace the year before me and together with him we had four curricula. Actually we tried very hard to get involved with the [University of Duhok's Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution] activities, but we were not welcomed at that time. Both of us started to find another way to deliver what we have learned. In my case, I started to give seminars to professional journalists and media outlets and for the first time, I introduced this filed among Kurdish journalists and media decision makers. Media in post conflict societies, journalists' responsibilities, media ethics, peace journalism, media and the risk of conflict escalation, and other related topics were among the seminars and talks I gave for journalists in Kurdistan. I'd like to mention that I was the first who introduced a curriculum of media ethics at the Department of Journalism at Duhok Technical Institute (personal communication, February 1, 2014).

Finding no opportunity to utilize his peace and conflict studies degree at the University of Duhok, Daoud applied to study for a doctoral degree in comparative politics at the University of Lisbon in Portugal. He was elected as a member of the Kurdistan Region's parliament in 2013, and expressed hope that he would finish his Ph.D. in 2014, but said that his thesis "has nothing to do with peace studies" (personal communication, February 1, 2014). Asked whether he might make use of his peace studies training as an elected representative, he replied: "I don't know. Let's see. I have studied peace studies only for 11 months while my Ph.D. program in politics was four years. Let's see which one will be dominant" (personal communication, February 1, 2014).

Unfamiliarity with peace and conflict studies

Jamilla was born in 1971 and earned her undergraduate degree from the English department at Basra University's College of Education in 1993. She then spent 10 years working as an English teacher in and around Basra. In the aftermath of the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, Jamilla heard that the British Council was offering scholarships for graduate studies in the United Kingdom.

> Then they told me 'Which subject you want?' I wanted to do peace studies. As soon as I opened my eyes to this world there was the Iraq-Iran war in 1980. In Basra, there was always war. Our house was bombed three or four times, and we were inside the house. We were lucky not to be killed. That was my childhood. Then after that, it was 1990 and I got to the university. I was happy. I had grown up and I could do what I want. Then there were economic sanctions after Iraq invaded Kuwait, and another war. We were just looking at the soldiers. They were taking off their clothes so they would not be spotted by the airplanes as they came back from Kuwait. It was terrible to see all that. I thought 'What do I like?'

They gave me the freedom to study what I want to do. I had never had that before. I chose peace (personal communication, June 14, 2011).

Jamilla received one of the British Council scholarships and gained an opportunity to study at Bradford University in the U.K. for a master's degree in conflict resolution, which she received in 2007. Jamilla remained in the U.K. for a couple of years after her graduation, at one point working with an NGO in Northern Ireland, and also doing voluntary interfaith dialogue work with refugees in Bradford: "If I came back here [to Iraq] and didn't have experience, what kind of job can I get?" she asked. She did not easily find a position upon her return to Iraq in 2009. "Nobody knows conflict resolution. 'What is this?' I had to explain it to them" (personal communication, June 14, 2011).

When I came back to Iraq, it was one of the first challenges I met. Where am I going to work? I don't know. I want something in peace studies. I can't just work in any company selling materialistic things. My family said there is a job in Jiyan University. I applied a few other places. Jiyan told me I would teach in the law department, [about] human rights. But this is really something totally different from what I studied. I hesitated to take that position. They said 'OK, you can teach English.' But there is nothing for peace studies, which is one of the big challenges here (personal communication, June 14, 2011).

After six months of searching, Jamilla found a position with an NGO in Erbil, where her family had relocated from Basra. She said she appreciated the opportunity to work on the NGO's project that focused on reconciliation in the territories disputed between the Iraqi central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Hassan, born in Fallujah in 1986, first left Iraq in 2005 – after his family had been displaced by violent battles in his home city — and attended a boarding school in Italy. He twice returned to Iraq in subsequent years, but his second visit in June 2007 lasted just 12 days after a the second bombing of Al-Askari mosque in Samarra led to violence in

Fallujah and prompted his family to flee to Syria (personal communication, February 7, 2014). Hassan moved to the United States and enrolled in Skidmore College later that year, and became interested in post-conflict reconstruction, development and reconciliation. One of his undergraduate advisors told him about the MA program at Notre Dame University; he applied, was accepted and began his studies in 2011. Upon completion of his degree in 2013, Hassan considered a return to Iraq, but realized that no one in the higher education system would recognize his degree because peace studies is not a formalized field in Iraq. Instead, he has remained in the United States and now works with an international NGO that assists with resettlement of refugees, including Iraqis.

> I struggle with that. To even describe [the field] to friends and family, I have to translate it. I usually say *aluum asiyasiya* (political science) … It's close but it's not that at all. I'm just speaking of friends and family. If you go to the higher level, to the Ministry of Higher Education, there is no recognition at all. It saddens me. There is no opportunity to use this degree to rebuild the country. My understanding is that the system that existed 20-40 years ago is still in place. There has been no change, no creativity. It is not even two steps forward, one step back. We are only walking backwards. That's one of the reasons I have not considered going back. What would I do with this degree? Of course here in the U.S., everyone understands the importance of this degree on Iraq. But in Iraq, there is no possibility because of the corruption … One of the depressing facts about Iraq is that you do not have to have a degree to become a minister … while we still have doctors selling vegetables in the streets (personal communication, February 7, 2014).

Fears by students and administrators of possible negative consequences

One of the students who went abroad to study for his master's degree, Youssef, saw both inflexibility and fear on the part of university leadership as obstacles to his potential acceptance as an instructor.

253

I went to Jihan University in Erbil. I went there I gave them all my degrees and my background. I was waiting for three months for them to call me back and say 'OK, you have that degree and you can do a session, especially in the College of Law.' I visited them two-three times over three months. Unfortunately they said 'We don't have that study.' Then I then went to Dijla University ... I told them I can do it in Arabic, in Kurdish, in English. I have no problem. They said they are very interested in my CV – and I talked to   the dean himself – and he said 'I am sorry. I cannot do anything for you. Your name and your CV and your contract should go to [the Ministry of] Higher Education, and definitely this kind of study will be refused, and I will be blamed because I interviewed you. [I'm] so sorry' (personal communication, June 13, 2011).

Following his negative experience with private universities, Youssef decided to abandon his pursuit of a position working or teaching at any of Iraq's public or private universities. He laughed at the very idea of it: "I don't want to lose more time … It is better to give some of what I've got to the people and not to keep it to myself" (personal communication, June 13, 2011).

Jamilla's own fear played a role in her decision to stay outside the formal higher education sector. She graduated in 2007 with a master's degree from in conflict resolution from Bradford University, after writing a thesis about interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Because of the sensitivity of her research subject, Jamilla did not even attempt to have her degree certified when she returned to Iraq.

I wrote about the peacebuilders in Iraq, the religious leaders, Christians, Muslims – Shi'a and Sunni. I was critical of the Sunnis, which is why I'm afraid to give my [thesis to the Ministry of Higher Education]. They need it to certify my degree. I would have to give them my thesis to read it. I was on the side of the Shia more than the Sunni … You have some good examples of Sunni leaders, but not as much as we need (personal communication, June 14. 2011).

As a consequence of the path she has followed, Jamilla also expressed some fear about her future. Because she accepted a foreign scholarship to study in an unapproved field, she had no likelihood of future employment with the government or of receiving

254

any government safety net. "I didn't get permission from the government when I left," she said. "I gave up my 10 years of government service. I won't get a pension" (personal communication, June 14, 2011).

For Hassan, fear has been a major part of his calculation not to return to Iraq. He does not know how he would be received long-term after studying for two degrees in the U.S., and whether he might be a target of violence. He also fears the possibility that no real professional opportunity would await him

> Frankly, I did not think of going back to Iraq for the immediate future. I've always thought about it as part of a long-term plan, once I gain the skills and credibility, I will go back. I have been wrestling with this question. But always have to take into account the security. Recently I was let down by the situation … I came to the conclusion, not only for safety reasons. Also as someone coming back with a degree into a system that does not recognize talent. There is no space for someone like me to be creative, and to make change. The country is ripped by political and also academic corruption. That reality kind of hit me that there is no future for me, at least for now, in Iraq. I still have this goal to return to Iraq, bur sadly it's not going to be this year or next year (personal communication, February 7, 2014).

These seven cases reinforce this study's findings regarding necessary conditions for establishing peace and conflict studies programs in Iraqi universities. The individuals who have left Iraq to pursue master's degrees in the field have encountered institutional resistance (or the anticipation of it in the case of the two students who did not return to Iraq) to the academic paths they have followed. None of them yet has found an academic home in their field of study.

Each of the five master's degree holders interviewed for this study who had returned to Iraq came up against slightly different forms of resistance. Anticipating that the public university system would not easily accept his transition from engineering to

peace and conflict studies, as well as the private scholarship he received, Youssef tried to

utilize his degree in a private university, only to be told that doing so would create some

professional risk for a leader of one private university. Jamilla decided not to present her

master's thesis to Ministry of Higher Education officials because she feared that the

sensitive and critical nature of her research could lead to reprisals against her. Omer

found that even though he received support from leadership of the University of Duhok to

undertake his master's studies, there was no possibility for him to teach or conduct

research in his field upon his return to Duhok because its master's program would accept

only Ph.D. holders to teach master's students in peace and conflict studies. Similarly,

Ahmed and Daoud both received support from the University of Duhok to pursue their

master's degrees at the UN University for Peace, but when they returned to Duhok,

neither was permitted to teach or contribute to efforts to strengthen the university's

Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies.

The institutional obstacles to establishing university programs in peace and

conflict studies should not be confused with the individual obstacles faced by the

individuals whose cases are outlined in this chapter. However, it should be noted that the

three individuals from Duhok – Omer, Ahmed and Daoud – have received continued

support from the University of Duhok in the form of nominations to receive Kurdistan

Regional Government-sponsored scholarships to study for doctoral degrees in the United

Kingdom and Portugal that eventually could qualify them to teach in the University of

Duhok's MA program (although Daoud has moved away from peace studies and toward

political science). Thus, it can be argued that, despite the resistance Omer, Ahmed and

Daoud have met in the short-term, they all might ultimately benefit from the very

conditions that have enabled the University of Duhok to establish its MA program in

Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies: a political environment characterized by lack of

fear about the critical nature of peace and conflict studies; entrepreneurial university

leadership, and; the university's investment of financial and relational resources in the

field. The other individuals whose cases have been described in this chapter have not

enjoyed such benefits from the Ministry of Higher Education or the universities where

they studied at undergraduates, and in fact, all have expressed some concern that the

academic paths they have chosen could cause them professional or personal difficulties in

the future.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusions and Questions

Where has been the outcome of efforts to establish peace and conflict studies at Iraqi universities? The process has been slow and uneven. More than a decade after the first attempts were made to develop programs in the field, one master's degree program existed at the University of Duhok and one educational unit – essentially an informal research center – was in operation at Baghdad University's College of Education. A third program developed by the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, already had opened and closed.

This study primarily has sought to address two questions about efforts to establish peace and conflict studies in Iraq:

1. What are the conditions that promote or impede establishment of a university-based program in peace and conflict studies in Iraq?, and;

2. Once established, what are possible outputs and outcomes of these programs over the first three years of their existence that relate to conflict transformation?

To answer the first question, I mainly relied on observations and accounts of program affiliates and others who had specific knowledge of efforts to establish the three programs at the University of Duhok, the University of Baghdad and the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. Based upon these observations, I was able to determine that three primary factors contributed to the ability of each university's success in establishing its program: the perception of a local political climate favorable to – or at

least not hostile to – the development of peace and conflict studies; the presence of entrepreneurial or charismatic university leadership that supported, at least in principle, the development of peace and conflict studies, and; the availability of financial, intellectual and relational resources that made it possible to establish and sustain efforts aimed at institutionalizing peace and conflict studies.

Analysis of the cases helped to clarify the importance of these three factors. At the University of Duhok, the site of the most successful effort, all three factors were present. The political climate of Duhok, characterized by the unchallenged one-party rule of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, offered sufficient space for academicians to engage in new and critical projects without interference by political leaders. The high levels of political violence felt in other parts of Iraq also was not present in Duhok, leaving scholars unafraid of engaging in new and critical projects, even those that required active partnerships with international actors.

The University of Duhok also benefitted from entrepreneurial leadership embodied mainly by the former president Asmat M. Khalid, who declared it his goal that the university would become "the leading university in social science in Iraq" (A. Khalid, personal communication, June 19, 2011). Dr. Asmat's interest in the peace and conflict studies project was evident from its beginning, when he attended one of the first faculty gatherings on the subject, straight through to his support for establishing Iraq's first master's program in the field in 2008. Even as he prepared to leave the university to become Minister of Education for the Kurdistan Regional Government in 2012, he continued to support development of projects that would enable his university's faculty and students to engage with international scholars in the field.

The University of Duhok also benefitted greatly from its access to resources. It led the successful effort to obtain a grant on behalf of three universities in the Kurdistan Region from the United States Institute of Peace in 2004, built a successful relationship with the UN-mandated University for Peace that enabled it to begin its MA program in 2008, and also cultivated relationships with Columbia University and New York University that made it possible for its faculty and students to engage with international scholars in ways that strengthened the university's teaching and research capacity in peace and conflict studies.

Of course, there were limitations to the University of Duhok's resources. Beyond a $3500 purchase of books, it devoted few of its own financial resources to the project; its relational successes nonetheless enabled it to generate needed financial resources from external sources that made it possible for peace and conflict studies to take hold at the university.

Baghdad University's Educational Unit for Peace Studies and Human Rights (EUPSHR) represented much more of a mixed case in terms of the presence of the identified factors that help to determine successful establishment of a peace and conflict studies university program in Iraq. Researchers at the EUPSHR did not consider the political environment in Baghdad particularly inviting for establishment of new and critical studies, but there were sufficient levels of entrepreneurial leadership and human and relational resources, particularly due to its relationship with the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), that allowed the unit to take root.

The political environment in Baghdad has been difficult and fractured from the time the idea arose to create the unit. Levels of violence in the city were high, and

consequently it was difficult for the tiny group of faculty and researcher to develop anything but the smallest research projects, conducted mainly on the university campus. Still, the group of faculty who founded the center maneuvered successfully to gain approval from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to create the unit.

In terms of entrepreneurial and charismatic leadership, the EUPSHR benefitted from the presence of two individuals: the former chairman of the Political Science department who then served as assistant to the president for scientific affairs, and; a professor in the College of Education who became the first director of the unit. They managed to work collaboratively with USIP in establishing the unit while keeping that international relationship a fact known only to a few people at Baghdad University.

The relationship with USIP proved to be significant for the EUPSHR in terms of generating needed resources, though not financial ones. USIP involved EUPSHR faculty and researchers in several workshops that exposed them to core concepts of peace and conflict studies, and provided the unit with books. That initial engagement with USIP provided EUPSHR with an introduction to other international actors such as Columbia University and New York University that later would involve some of the EUPSHR researchers in other projects related to peace and conflict studies. Baghdad University did not contribute financial resources to the unit during the period of this study.

The Center for Peace and Security Studies (CPSS) at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS) stood as an example of overreliance on one of the three factors – in this case, financial resources – without sufficient quantities of the other two factors.

Program affiliates interviewed were mixed in their assessment of the political environment in Sulaimani as inviting towards peace and conflict studies, although it was noted that high levels of political contestation in the city that began in 2006 may have facilitated an environment in which leaders were more interested in retaining power than in encouraging critical studies.

CPSS came into being mainly due to the sudden availability of funding from the U.S. Department of State. Because of those resources, the center for a time enjoyed support of a charismatic figure, the university's founder. Meanwhile, the university's research centers director worked vigorously to maximize the impact of that funding by attempting to build relationships with international actors and a meaningful research agenda. Ultimately, however, neither the university's founder nor its then-president was sufficiently invested in the idea of CPSS as an entity central to the mission of AUIS. The president in 2011 called CPSS "a notion" and said it was not "the job of this university to be a peace and reconciliation institution" (personal communication, June 5, 2011). Having developed very little in the way of human resources for peace and conflict studies, and with financial resources for its activities dwindling, CPSS died quietly at the end of 2011 after just more than two years of operations.

To answer the second primary question of this study – what were some of the conflict transformation outputs and outcomes of the three established programs? -- it was necessary to view their activities through the lenses of major theorists whose work has become the foundation of contemporary thinking about major conflict transformation: economist Kenneth Boulding; social psychologist Adam Curle; sociologist and mathematician Johan Galtung; social psychologist Herbert Kelman; sociologist Louis

262

Kriesberg; sociologist John Paul Lederach; and political scientists Raimo Vayrynen and Wolfgang Dietrich.

Relying on an inductive process to determine which activities of the three programs had conflict transformation dimensions, I settled on the following typology of programmatic outputs and outcomes:

Outputs: 1. Students graduated with degrees in peace and conflict studies; 2. Public or semi-public events that encouraged critical consideration about topics related to peace and conflict studies, and 3: Research papers related to peace and conflict studies.

Outcomes: 1. Increased awareness and understanding by students or program graduates of critical concepts related to peace and conflict; 2. Increased awareness and understanding by faculty and other university staff of critical concepts related to peace and conflict: 3. Establishment of a platform for future learning and practice in peace and conflict studies.

Each of the three cases demonstrated different levels of the three outcomes. Only the University of Duhok, with its first-in-Iraq degree-granting program, had graduates and, consequently, also produced the most written research, both of which stood as contributions to conflict transformation by providing potential catalyzing actors and knowledge to inform local practice and policy-formulation. CPSS, because of its emphasis on bringing speakers to the AUIS campus, conducted the most public events that contributed to awareness-raising about peace and conflict issues. The EUPSHR at Baghdad University, without graduates, with only a handful of researchers and without an ability to conduct public programs due to Baghdad's physical security challenges, still saw itself as playing a significant role in terms of conscientization (Freire 2000) through

its research and small events related to peace and conflict in Iraq. As one of the

EUPSHR's researchers noted following the unit's 2011 workshop about refugees and

IDPs, it was important for Baghdad University students to "know information about the

bad conditions of these people in Iraq. … The immigrant students, when they told us their

stories, make us refuse this phenomenon in our society (personal communication, January

4, 2012).

Raised awareness stood as a significant conflict transformation outcome from all

three programs. Nearly all of the program affiliates – students, faculty and other

university staff -- who spoke about their new and deeper understandings of peace and

conflict studies, pointed not just to the fact that they had developed more complex ideas,

but also to their newfound self-awareness about how their own thinking had played a

supporting, though indirect, role in Iraq's recent violence. One University of Duhok

professor explained his change in thinking:

> Before I was thinking of peace as to be strong, or to have a chance, or it is a joke
> … For example, if you think you are Christian and I am Muslim, and you are
> from this tribe and I am from that tribe, then we are not living in a peaceful
> situation. Peace is to change the minds of the people (June 21, 2011).

 Faculty, as well as students and graduates of the University of Duhok's MA

program, spoke about their new abilities to see previously uncontested elements of their

society – including ethnic and religious discrimination, government corruption, biased

media reports and legislation favoring one ethnic group – as possible sources of structural

violence. Students at AUIS who had participated in CPSS-sponsored events

acknowledged their own and others' contributions to sometimes poor relations between

Arab and Kurdish students. Researchers at Baghdad University's EUPSHR pointed to

their increased awareness of the poor conditions in which displaced Iraqis live as a result

of violence, and also about the importance of how they treat students and each other.

"When we make a mistake," one of the EUPSHR researchers said, "we think nothing

about it. Now I look at making a mistake in a different way" (personal communication

Sept. 30, 2011).

Such increased awareness contributes to the conflict transformation process

Galtung describes as "lifting" attitudes and assumptions and contradictions "up from the

subconscious, partly even from the unconscious."

> Following Paolo Freire we refer to it as conscientization …The process is basic,
> for how can a conflict be consciously transformed unless the parties to a conflict
> are conscious subjects, true actors? Otherwise, the conflict will transform the
> actors as objects ... The party is only a passenger taken for a ride, not a driver
> presiding over the process. (Galtung, 1996, p. 74).

The other significant outcome of Iraq's university-based programs in peace and

conflict studies has been the establishment of a platform for future learning and practice

in peace and conflict studies. This study identified affiliates of all three programs with

plans for further learning or practice in peace and conflict studies. Several graduates of

the University of Duhok's MA program were trying to gain acceptance into Ph.D.

programs; a handful of students who participated in CPSS-sponsored events at AUIS

sought future opportunities related to the field, and; one of the EUPSHR researchers at

Baghdad University already had gained acceptance into a Ph.D. program in the United

States. At least in the case of the two still-existing programs – at the University of Duhok

and Baghdad University – efforts continued to develop new relationships with

international peace and conflict studies scholars and practitioners. Affiliates of both

programs openly expressed their desires to see the programs expand.

The emergence of such a home-grown community of peace and conflict studies

scholar-practitioners in Iraq is consistent with Lederach's thinking about how

"indigenous empowerment suggests that conflict transformation must actively envision,

include, respect and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given

setting" so that "we understand the long-term goal of transformation as validating and

building on people and resources within the setting" (1995a, p. 213). The responsibility

of this community, as Miall suggests, might be nothing less than catalyzing "a process of

engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary,

the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflicts" (2003,

p.4).

How could such a new and small community of scholars in Iraq meet such an

enormous conflict transformation challenge? It very well might not. As this study has

highlighted, resistance to the field remains high, both at the university level as well as

within the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in both Baghdad and

Erbil. International university partners can help to expand the pool of Iraqi graduates in

peace and conflict studies, but their future acceptance into Iraq's higher education sector

remains in question.

Several other significant questions remain about the institutionalization of peace

and conflict studies at the university level in Iraq. Some of these might be addressed in

future research that perhaps could be conducted by the new group of Iraqi scholars who

view themselves as the country's first true peace and conflict studies researchers.

Examples of open questions include:

- How are these early university programs in peace and conflict studies contributing to changes on their campuses in the discourse of peace and conflict among students, faculty and staff?

- What level of interaction has occurred between the program affiliates at the University of Duhok and Baghdad University and their respective local political establishments? Is there any evidence that the raised awareness among university-based researchers is reaching their political systems?

- How do other Iraqi academicians interested in peace and conflict studies see the two programs at the University of Duhok and Baghdad University? Might these programs serve as models for further expansion of the field to other campuses? Or might they instead be seen as unworthy of replication because of the unorthodox ways in which they were established?

Each of the cases examined in this study suggests its own set of questions worthy of further exploration:

The University of Duhok, because of its higher level of success in terms of institutionalizing peace and conflict studies relative to all other universities in Iraq, invites questions related to how it already might be shaping the direction of the field in Iraq. Are its early curriculum and research choices having an effect on how other scholars in Iraq approach the subject?

How are AUIS faculty and students grappling with notions of peace and conflict studies in the aftermath of the dissolution of the CPSS? As Iraq's self-proclaimed leader

in liberal arts education, how does AUIS – faculty and administration – see itself

accommodating thought and inquiry into matters of violence and peace?

Baghdad University offers some of the most compelling questions regarding the

relationship between peace and conflict studies and high levels of violence. How have the

small projects undertaken by the EUPSHR affected the student participants in the midst

of high levels of direct violence? Has the EUPSHR created needed space for

consideration of peace and conflict studies outside the unit itself? Or does it seem to

university stakeholders that such a broadening of thought must wait until levels of direct

violence in Baghdad decrease significantly from levels seen for most of the first decade

of the 21st century? Since it was not possible for this study, when and how might it be

possible for international – particularly western – peace and conflict studies researchers

to work in open partnerships with Baghdad University staff?

The need for constructive interactions between nascent peace and conflict studies

programs in Iraq and international partners and donors was a theme that emerged in

different ways across all of the cases. Although prominent scholars such as Lederach

consistently emphasize the need for "validating and building on people and resources

within the setting" (1995a, p. 213) in order for conflict transformation efforts to be

effective , it is undeniable that the interventions of institutions such as Columbia

University, the U.S. Institute of Peace, the United States Department of State, the United

Nations-mandated University for Peace, the British Council, New York University and

others all played significant roles in either catalyzing the programs that came into

existence or providing encouragement to program affiliates to continue their programs'

forward progress, slow as it might have been. In the future, how will Iraqi universities

build upon and nurture relationships with international partners while maintaining legitimacy with their own constituencies in peace and conflict studies? And will the Iraqi universities themselves dedicate resources to projects in peace and conflict studies that will transform them from recipients of aid and expertise into true, autonomous actors setting their own institutional objectives and research agendas? If so, how might they do it?

None of these questions will have easy answers. The field of peace and conflict studies in Iraq is in its infancy. Although this study has pointed to some needed conditions for establishment of university programs – as well as some possible outputs and early outcomes – future institutional arrangements remain unclear. One of the most uncertain issues is just how large the field might become. How large should it be to satisfy Iraq's need for scholars who can contribute fresh and constructive thinking related to matters of peace and conflict? How many programs on how many campuses are needed? How many students and faculty should be offered opportunities to study in the field?

To begin to answer these questions, the young field of peace and conflict studies in Iraq might turn to some of its own field's principles to understand that its success may not rely on traditionally-understood forms of power or on overwhelming numbers of participants to produce desired conflict transformation outcomes. Rather, as the field matures – at the University of Duhok, Baghdad University, and perhaps other campuses in the future – it may be instructive to recall Lederach's observation that "[i]n social change, it is not necessarily the amount of participants that authenticates a social shift. It is the quality of the platform that sustains the shifting process that matters" (2005, p.89).

After its first decade of construction, Iraq's university-based platform for peace and conflict studies remained unsteady. Yet, after encountering many obstacles, it remained in place.

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