

The Emergence of the American University Abroad

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
under the Executive Committee  
of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

2018

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This dissertation explores the relations of independent American universities abroad to one another and to American higher education through a mixed-method comparative case study of three eras (1919-1945; 1946-1990; 1991-2017). Applying insights from the study of organizations and social movements, it investigates 1) the formation, evolution, and eventual maturation of an organizational field of American universities abroad; and 2) the strategies field actors utilize to align frames about American universities abroad with values of potential supporters in the United States. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze data that come from archives, news media, institutional websites, interviews, and an original database. Findings have implications for study of international higher education, American higher education, and American foreign relations. I argue that over the course of a century, the American university abroad has emerged as a distinct institution and structural feature of American higher education. Episodic cooperation among various American universities abroad has served to organize the field to the extent that its “rules” eventually became institutionalized. Instances of continuity and change in the field’s rules are often the result of pressures emanating from U.S. higher education and foreign policies. Meanwhile, the field of American universities abroad, representing the frontier of American higher education, has continually enlarged the latter’s boundaries with each successive period of global expansion.



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## ACRONYMS

AAICU	The Association of American International Colleges and Universities
AALE	American Academy for Liberal Education
ABET	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
ACBSP	Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs
ACG	American College of Greece
ACP	American College in Paris (later AUP)
AICU	The Association of International College and Universities
AICU-E	The Association of International College and Universities—Europe
ASHA	American Schools and Hospitals Abroad
AUAF	American University of Afghanistan
AUB	American University of Beirut
AUBG	American University in Bulgaria
AUBiH	American University in Bosnia and Herzegovina
AUC	American University in Cairo
AUCA	American University of Central Asia
AUD	American University in Dubai
AUIS	American University of Iraq, Sulaimani
AUN	American University of Nigeria
AUP	American University in Paris (previously ACP)
AURAK	American University of Ras al Khaimah
CEU	Central European University
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
C-RAC	Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions
FRACHE	Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education
GAU	Georgian-American University
IIS	International Institutional Services
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
KAFU	Kazakh-American Free University
LAU	Lebanese American University
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NECA	The Near East College Association
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
REP	Office of Regional and External Programs (American University of Beirut)
SACS	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIA	United States Information Agency



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am eternally grateful to my advisor and the sponsor of this research project, Oren Pizmony-Levy. He saw my passion for this subject before I did and tactfully drew out my awareness of it. He has always let me think out loud, even when those thoughts were ill formed. Oren is a model of patience, but also of infectious enthusiasm. His excitement about this project from its embryonic stages to its completion never wavered and it spurred my own. He is a credit to the academic life.

A couple years ago, I cold called Lisa Anderson. That she agreed to advise my work has been one of my nascent career's great fortunes. Her insights on American universities abroad in particular and higher education in general have been invaluable. I had a sense of what I wanted to write about before we met, but I only started to see the big picture after she came on board. If there is any clarity in this manuscript it is because she helped me to brush away the clutter.

I have had the privilege of conducting this research under the auspices of some of the world's greatest educational institutions. Certain faculty members at these universities have made innumerable contributions to my work. Noah Drezner, Carolyn Riehl, and Andrew Delbanco joined Oren and Lisa on my dissertation committee. I am sincerely appreciative of their time and talents. I could not ask for a more distinguished and thoughtful group of advisors. Current and former Teachers College faculty members, such as Gita Steiner-Khamsi, Mary Mendenhall, Garnett Russell, Elizabeth Buckner, and Kevin Dougherty, have also left their imprints on this project along the way. Special thanks go to Nancy Green Saraisky, who has always made me feel that my research was important and that I was capable of completing it. Ted Purinton and Jennifer Skaggs of the American University in Cairo invited me to contribute a chapter to their book, which provided a helpful early opportunity to work out some of the ideas

that found their way into this manuscript. Elisabeth Anderson sponsored me as a Visiting Scholar at NYU Abu Dhabi, where I conducted much of the research for Chapters Six and Seven.

Throughout the project I received assistance from a wide range of graduate and undergraduate students. Phoebe Linh Doan was always collegial and too kind in sharing her advanced statistical expertise. Abda Kazemi adeptly transcribed dozens of interviews. Hayat Seid, Giulia Turchetti, and Jakub Bartoszewski also provided transcription assistance. The intrepid Allison Davis made multiple trips to the archives of the American College of Greece on my behalf in order to access and digitize the papers of Louis Vrettos. Kris Ahn capably performed, often on short notice, numerous and vital web-based research tasks. An assemblage of volunteer graduate student research assistants helped me to create an initial database of American universities abroad in the early part of 2015. I am deeply grateful to each of these aides.

Over the past few years, several organizations have provided important financial and in-kind research support, including the Center on Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California; the National Security Education Program; New York University Abu Dhabi; and Columbia University's Harriman Institute and Teachers College.

I am indebted to the more than 50 individuals who participated in the research project as interview subjects. Without their voices, Chapters Six and Seven would not have been possible. Andrew Wachtel and Celeste Schenk let me be a fly on the wall of the AAICU annual meeting, which was a turning point in my research. I am much obliged to them and the other meeting participants for welcoming me so warmly. I also extend thanks to my former colleagues and students at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. They changed my life in immeasurable ways. Val Rust, Carine Allaf, and Dawn Dekle wrote the letters of recommendation that brought

me to Columbia University. Once I got there Ryan Allen and Emily Richardson made things enjoyable. Thor Halvorson, Eric Brown, and JP Schnapper-Casteras have repeatedly gone out of their way to express confidence in me. I am grateful for their encouragement, which has been supplemented by periodic sage advice from long-time mentors Charlie Blaich, Kathy Wise, Rick Legon, and Susan Johnston.

My parents—Juanita and Mike Farley, Mark Long, and Betty Long— and my in-laws, Steve and Beth Burroughs, have provided essential emotional and material support, for which I will be forever grateful.

Stacie Long has done everything and more to get us to this point. Together we have the power of standing still. These pages belong to her. So do I.



*Dedicated to the memory of Athanasios Moulakis (1945-2015),  
who showed me what an American university abroad could be,  
and whose erudition, wit, and humanity continue to inspire me.*



## PREFACE

While the influence of Laurence Veysey's 1965 classic *The Emergence of the American University* on this research project is unmistakable, its precise origins lie in my experience as an administrator and lecturer at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS), where I lived and worked from 2010-2014. As Director of Communications, I was responsible for framing the young institution to external audiences. Different audiences required slightly different points of emphasis. Yet there seemed to be one thing everyone wanted to know: "are you a *real* American university?" That question presupposed the existence of *fake* American universities. Indeed, AUIS was born in an era when fabricating American universities had become a global trend. Suppliers too often fell short of the mark of educational quality the label was meant to signal. Far from flattery, imitation had come to indicate the sincerest form of forgery. These interrogators, then, were right to ask about our authenticity. But nothing vexed me more. Of course, *we* were a real American university, I would tell them. But the wider circumstances of unrestrained diffusion of the model had presented the university with a serious legitimacy problem. AUIS was neither chartered nor accredited in the United States. Instead, I stressed alternative indicators of American bona fides: English as the medium of instruction, liberal arts curriculum, and American faculty. I also pointed to student-centered teaching methods, continuous assessment, a not-for-profit financial model, and citizen board of trustees. By and large, these features were convincing. But how did I know to highlight them? Institutional characteristics that I held up as distinctively American came to me seemingly by osmosis. How could I—a provincial twenty-something whose only experience with American education outside the United States was with my present employer—make credible claims about the nature of an American university abroad? In a way, this study is my attempt to answer that question.





## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION—AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES ABROAD

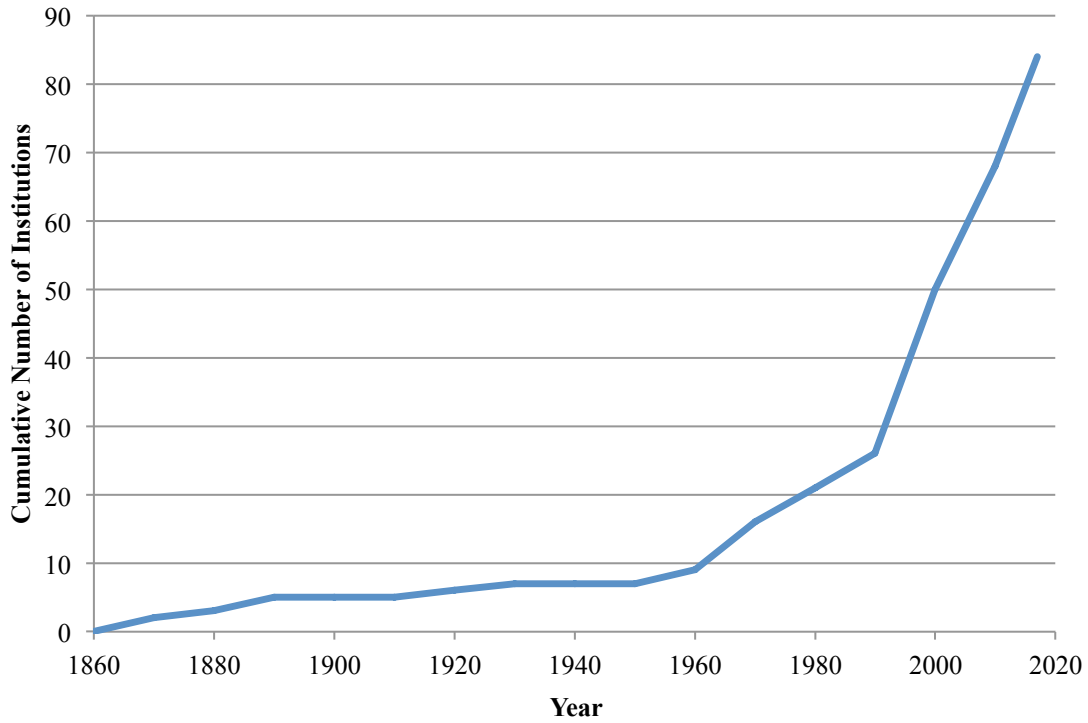
In May 2015, a Jordanian hotelier began creating a university in Malta ostensibly modeled on the venerable American higher education institutions in Beirut and Cairo. The American University of Malta has been a source of unending controversy on the small Mediterranean island ever since. The episode has unearthed concerns there about the process of internationalization, the nature of public-private partnerships, and the manifold implications of proprietary higher education, among other problems. It has also led some observers to question more generally the diffusion of independent American-modeled universities abroad. In an article about the launch of the American University of Malta in *Inside Higher Ed*, renowned international higher education scholar Philip Altbach suggested, “the whole ‘American University of (fill in the name)’ deserves critical attention” (Jaschik, 2015).

This dissertation devotes critical attention to two primary and related problems about independent American universities abroad: their relation to one another and their relation to American higher education. The first problem has become especially important in the wake of rampant growth of American universities abroad during the 1990s and 2000s (cf. Figure 1.1). Contemporary American universities abroad have their roots in a few colleges created by missionaries in Istanbul and Beirut during the 1860s. By 1990, there were approximately 25 American universities abroad, mostly located around the Mediterranean. Yet in 2017, there were 80 of them in more than 55 different countries across the globe (cf. Figures 1.2 and 1.3), with an estimated cumulative enrollment of nearly 200,000 students.<sup>1</sup> The dubious quality of many of these newer enterprises has been a source of considerable anxiety among advocates for the more established institutions, which worry that the newcomers will sully their hard-earned individual and collective reputations.

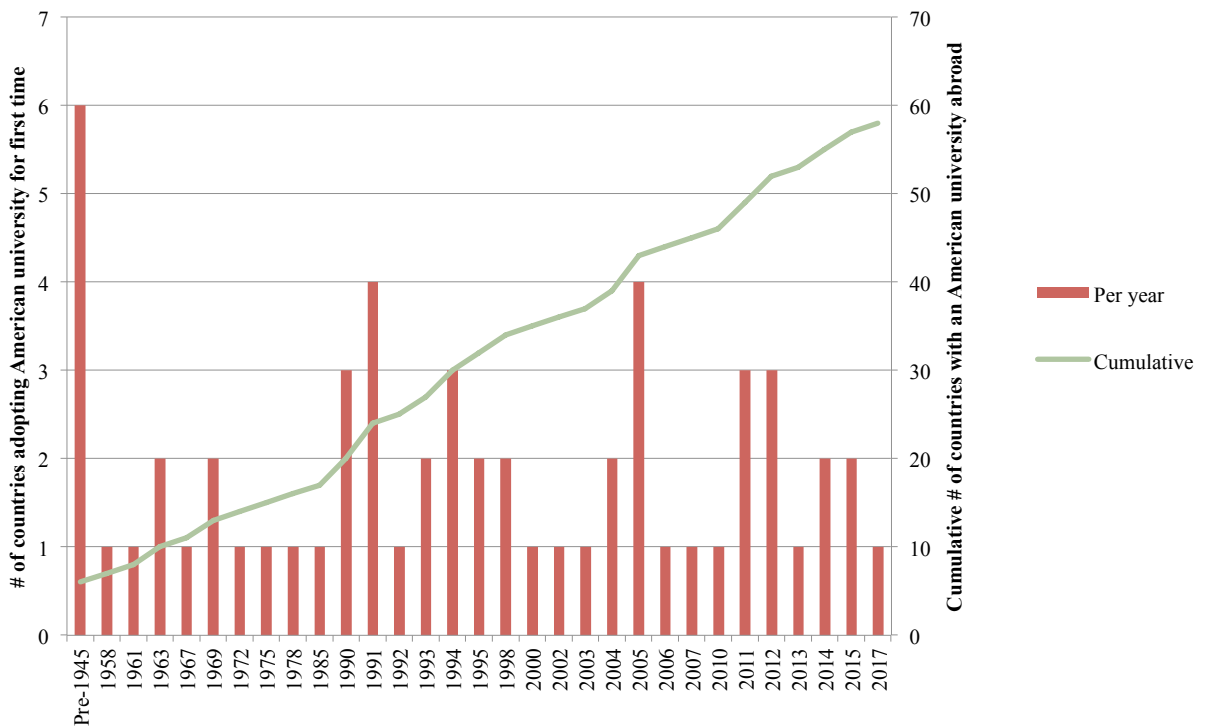
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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for a list of institutions.

**Figure 1.1** Cumulative number of American universities abroad



**Figure 1.2** Number of countries with an American university abroad



**Figure 1.3** Location of American universities abroad in 2017



*Note:* Map created with Carto location intelligence software.

The second problem has to do with the boundaries of American higher education. Most American universities abroad use English as the language of instruction. Many employ a sizable percentage of American citizens in the administration and faculty. Some enroll American students. More than a few are even chartered and accredited in the United States. American universities abroad seem at once to be both a part and separate from American higher education. Classifying them properly has clear policy implications. If American universities abroad—or some sub-set of them—are a part of American higher education, they might then be entitled to its benefits, including access to federal research funding and student financial aid.

For these reasons alone, American universities abroad are worthy of scholarly consideration. But they take on added significance at a time when the American public is losing trust in its higher education institutions (Fishman, et al., 2017; Gallup, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2017). Americans are increasingly divided about the purposes of a college education,

with opinions split along partisan lines. The country's higher education leaders have responded with a litany of conferences, op-eds, and commissions aimed at regaining the public trust. While these efforts are necessary and important, I contend that they are more likely to be successful if supplemented with a view from abroad. Not only do independent American universities abroad enjoy widespread popularity in their communities and bi-partisan support in the U.S. congress, but what is most valuable about American higher education emerges clearly when it is practiced outside the United States. While discourse about higher education in the United States and around the world has shifted unequivocally toward its conceptualization as a private good (Buckner, 2017a), leaders of, and advocates for, American universities abroad have been remarkably consistent in promoting their public benefits. As such, study of these institutions represents a unique opportunity to reflect on under-appreciated, yet essential features of American higher education.

The global rise of populism (Moffitt, 2017) and the renewed prospect of fascism (Albright, 2018) also heighten the significance of American universities abroad. Before the United States' ascent to global preeminence and throughout subsequent periods characterized by "disastrous oscillations between overcommitment and isolationism," American universities abroad have remained steadfast representatives of American values overseas (Kissinger, 1979, 1476). These "outposts" have also been barometers for foreign reception of American influence. For the most part, when America has thrived on the world stage, so too have American universities abroad. When the country's moral authority has been challenged, its educational institutions have felt the repercussions. Whether and how these institutions are able to respond to the most recent pressures—from the assault on academic freedom at Central European University (Crăciun & Mihut, 2017) to repeated attacks on the campus of the American

University of Afghanistan—indicates the substance of American ideals and their resonance abroad. Study of American universities abroad, then, is a chance to understand America’s role in the world; what it has been, what it is, and what it could be.

### Research design

This research project asks *to what extent do the many American universities abroad represent a single institution? And to what extent is the American university abroad an institution of American higher education?* In order to answer these questions, I have designed a mixed-method comparative case study of three eras (1919-1945; 1946-1990; 1991-2017) of independent American-modeled higher education institutions operating exclusively outside of the United States. I draw on key insights from the study of organizations and social movements to explore 1) the formation, evolution, and eventual maturation of an organizational field of American universities abroad; and 2) the strategies field actors utilize to align frames about American universities abroad with values of potential supporters. I employ both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze data that come from institutional websites, news media, 11 different archives, more than 50 interviews, and field notes I took while visiting 11 American universities abroad in six countries on three continents.

I argue that over the course of a century, the American university abroad has emerged as an identifiable institution of American higher education. Although by the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century leaders of these colleges and universities would stringently disagree about the significance of any shared traits, one could begin to properly speak of ‘the’ American university abroad as one could, for example, the historically black college or minority serving institution. The American university abroad has been characterized less by a particular organizational structure and more by a fealty to certain distinctive aspects of American higher education, viz.

independent governance, a liberal arts orientation, and quality assurance via regional accreditation. To support these claims, I demonstrate that American universities abroad have periodically come together to make sense of their altered circumstances. In so doing they have continually organized their field in ways that has ensured survival amid various existential and reputational threats. In these instances, the field's leaders strategically framed particular universities and the wider field in ways that would resonate with various audiences in the United States. The repetition of these frames would come to constitute the substance or 'rules' of the field. I highlight how developments in U.S. higher education and foreign policy have impacted American universities abroad, accounting for both continuity and change in the field. I also describe and categorize the institutions that constitute the field; identify the key actors, their motivations, and strategies for success; and consider the implications of findings for the field's future development.

The manuscript unfolds as follows: an introduction to a theoretical framework; an overview of data sources, collection methods, and analytical strategies; four largely chronological analytical chapters; and a conclusion in which I summarize findings and interpret their implications. Chapter Two introduces readers to key analytical constructs from the organizational and social movement literatures. Chapter Three reviews the comparative case study and glonacal agency heuristics that structure the analysis in subsequent analytical chapters. Chapter Four explores the consolidation of the field of Near East colleges after World War I and follows its development through the Great Depression and Second World War. Chapter Five examines the decline of the Near East College Association, the rise of a field of American colleges in Europe, and an attempt to unite these parallel fields. Chapter Six addresses the proliferation of American universities after the end of the Cold War with special attention to two

regions where substantial growth occurred: a) Eastern Europe and Central Asia and b) the Middle East and North Africa. Chapter Seven investigates how established institutions at the center of the field responded to the spread of new American universities and analyzes how effective those responses have been. I close the manuscript by reviewing my findings and addressing their implications for various scholarly audiences. I then consider what the answers to my research questions reveal about the history, current state, and future of the field of American universities abroad.

In the rest of this chapter, I clarify key terms, stake out the significance of this study for three scholarly audiences, and make summary remarks about the study's larger aims and purposes.

### Terms and definitions

American universities abroad are an historic, self-identifying population of higher education institutions. They are distinct from other expressions of American higher education overseas. Indeed, leaders of American universities have often considered branch campuses and study abroad sites of U.S. universities competitors for key resources like students and attention from news media. Independent American universities abroad lay claim to a longer history and better representation of American higher education than these other forms. Consider briefly a comparison with branch campuses. Among extant branch campuses of U.S. universities, the oldest is SAIS Europe, which was founded in 1955 in Bologna, Italy as a branch of the Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Study (Lane, 2011). By the time that campus was established, there were already more than a dozen independent American universities abroad, some almost 100 years old. In 2017, there were 77 active international branch campuses of U.S. universities, roughly equivalent to the number of independent

American universities abroad. Notably, however, 25 international branch campuses of U.S. universities closed between 2004-2016 (Cross-Border Education Research Team, 2017). By contrast, I was able to identify only one instance of an American university abroad having closed between 1991-2017.<sup>2</sup> Leaders of these institutions contend that their relative permanence—and therefore rootedness in their communities—ensures a more faithful representation of American higher education.

The expression *American university abroad*, if understood in a strict sense, can be somewhat misleading on two accounts. First, my use of the term “American” refers exclusively to the United States. Kleypas and McDougall (2012) use it similarly when writing about American universities abroad, “not to suggest that the U.S. is the center of the Americas, but to call attention to how the label ‘American’ is an identity that universities outside the United States choose, construct, and perform” (xii). Indeed, the qualifier “American” in educational matters typically implies the influence of American higher education institutions on the structures or practices of higher education institutions in other countries, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as the “Americanization” of higher education.<sup>3</sup> This influence is not in question. To the contrary, its relevance and potential as a model for other nations is well known and reflected in the spread of its distinctive institutional forms (Altbach, 1998, 62). American community colleges, for example, have been modeled in countries as diverse as Brazil, Israel, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Vietnam (Pizmony-Levy et al., 2012; Spangler & Tyler, 2011), as have liberal arts colleges in

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<sup>2</sup> The American University of Baku in Azerbaijan closed in 2000 (R. Aqua, personal communication, March 23, 2017). The American University in Moscow and the American University of Mongolia both remained open during this period, although their degree granting programs were transferred to other institutions or suspended, respectively.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Americanization’ originally referred to the domestic U.S. practice of assimilating immigrant groups through education (Mirel, 2010). But then, with increasing specificity, came to connote the influence of the United States on numerous aspects of societies across the world, including educational policies and practices. Cf. the Americanization of: British higher education (Hodges, 2014); Israeli education (Ackerman, 2000); Canadian education (Barlow and Robertson, 1997); Nordic management education (Engwall, 2015); South Korean legal education (Kim, 2012); Danish journalism (Rasmussen, 2014), etc.



England, Palestine, and Singapore (Godwin, 2013). But the emergence of American universities abroad, as understood here, denotes something besides influence. When a community college or liberal arts college is founded abroad the national source of its inspiration may remain implicit, whereas American universities abroad make manifest their claims to American patrimony.

Second, many, if not most, American universities abroad have neither the graduate level programs nor the research capacities necessary for qualification as universities in the modern sense. Instead, I employ “university” as shorthand for a wide range of higher education institution types—comprehensive universities, liberal arts colleges, graduate schools, etc.—that confer degrees at the bachelor’s level (ISCED Level 6) or higher. For the purposes of this study, then, an *American university abroad* is any higher education institution located outside the United States that labels itself “American” and issues degrees at the bachelor’s level or higher. I also apply the term to institutions that do not use “American” in their names but are members of an inter-organizational association or consortium of American universities abroad (viz. the Near East College Association and the Association of American International Colleges and Universities). I omit institutions with names that clearly refer to regions in the Americas such as Central American University, a private, Jesuit institution in El Salvador. I also exclude institutions that conflate U.S. and Canadian heritage such as Houdegbe North American University in Benin. I have also left out non-degree granting study abroad sites such as the American College in Spain and the American College of Norway.<sup>4</sup> Others employ the phrase “American-style universities” for the same general category of institutions (Kleypas & McDougall, 2011; Noori & Anderson, 2013). I prefer “American universities abroad,” which is the nomenclature used by actors in the field and consistent with the most recent texts (e.g., Purinton & Skaggs, 2017).

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. the list of American universities abroad in Appendix A.

## Literature review

American universities abroad have been infrequent subjects of inquiry for three audiences: readers of institutional histories; policy-makers in international relations; and scholars of American studies. Histories are available for the American University of Beirut (Anderson, 2011; Dodge, 1958; Munro, 1977; Penrose, 1941/1970) and the American University in Cairo (Murphy, 2005; Sharkey, 2013). Policy relevant literature about American universities abroad has typically come from U.S. think tanks that issue reports with recommendations for institutions and governments, primarily in the Middle East, about the challenges and opportunities of American-style education (Albright & Hadley, 2016; Bertelsen, 2009; Ghabra & Arnold, 2007; Robison, 2005). Finally, the field of American studies has drawn attention to postmodern, expatriate explorations of globalization by considering the hermeneutics or politics of “performing” an American university (Kleypas & McDougall, 2012; Noori, 2016). A recent book on the leadership challenges of American universities abroad (Purinton & Skaggs, 2017) brings yet another perspective to this topic. My study—the first of its kind—will contribute to this diverse body of literature by addressing the development of the entire field over the course of a century. Consequently, this approach should appeal to three additional audiences, scholars of: international higher education, American higher education, and American foreign relations.

*International higher education.* Scholars acknowledge the origins of the contemporary trend to internationalize higher education in the 1980s when internationalization became a strategic response of nations and institutions to liberalization of trade policies, improvement of technology, and heightened awareness of national competitiveness (deWit, 2002, 216; Lane, 2011, 12; Lane & Kinser, 2011, 86). According to Jane Knight, the internationalization process consists of two separate but closely linked pillars: “at home” and “cross-border” (Knight, 2010,

208). Examples of the former include changes to curriculum to incorporate more international content or perspectives (Altbach, 2006, 69); adoption of English in the classroom (Altbach, 2006, 66-67; Hazelkorn, 2014, 250-51); the pursuit of international accreditation (Khoury & Lindsay, 2011, 78-79); and national strategies to compete in international rankings (Hazelkorn, 2014, 246, 249). Knight (2013) proposes three generations of cross-border education. The first promoted student/faculty mobility. The next generation facilitated program/provider mobility; and the third features educational hubs (174-75). By focusing on the relation of American universities abroad and in the United States, this research project represents a unique opportunity to study the intersection of the at-home and cross-border pillars of internationalization.

The literature on the internationalization of higher education also stresses the unequal nature of contemporary cross-border activity, linking it to neoliberal reforms of the 1980s. A major finding from this tradition is that countries from the global north export higher education services for profit to countries in the global south who import higher education providers to meet growing demand for access (Altbach, 2006, 70; Altbach & Knight, 2007, 292-93). Unfortunately, this body of research largely ignores the practice of international higher education before the 1980s.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, it does not adequately reflect critical features of American higher education abroad during the first few decades of the postwar era. In cases where international education scholars do look at the internationalization of American higher education during this period, the emphasis is on student exchange and study abroad programs (Hoffa, 2007; Tsvetkova, 2008). Much recent work has been done on the development of branch campuses (Altbach, 2006, 65; Farrugia & Lane, 2012; Lane, 2011). But no studies in this tradition, to my knowledge, have considered independent American institutions abroad in the postwar era as an element of the internationalization of higher education. Collective action among institutions, too,

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<sup>5</sup> Notable exceptions include de Wit (2002), de Wit & Merckx (2012), and Hoffa (2007).

is understudied in this body of research, although Beerkens (2002) has offered a typology for such arrangements. Accordingly, a review of these institutions during this time frame allows for examination of alternative stimuli and justifications for internationalization as well as different organizational and inter-organizational forms.

*American higher education.* Scholars of American higher education have failed to appreciate the importance of its practice outside the United States. Leading texts about U.S. higher education do not even so much as acknowledge the existence of American colleges beyond the country's borders (Cohen, 1998; Cole, 2009; Delbanco, 2012; Geiger, 1993, 2015; Graham & Diamond, 1997; Labaree, 2017; Lazerson, 1998; Levine, 1986; Lucas, 1994; Mattingly, 2017; Reuben, 1996; Rudolph, 1962/1990; Stevens, et al., 2018; Thelin, 2004; Veysey, 1965). Yet, during the interwar period American colleges in the Near East received ample national news coverage associated with multiple nation-wide fundraising campaigns. Studies of American higher education in the postwar era celebrate the sector's growth. This was the golden age for America's research universities. Community colleges and comprehensive institutions were on the rise, too. But the country's many small private colleges suffered. And vast disparities among institutions became a corollary of increased access and government funding. Notably, these same developments affected American institutions in the Near East and Europe, although the long-term effects often differed. This study marks an original attempt to steer historians and historical sociologists of education toward an international perspective when writing about American higher education institutions.

*American foreign relations.* While some international relations scholars have begun to consider the significance of American universities abroad vis-à-vis American soft power or public diplomacy (Bertelsen 2012/2014; Noori, 2013/2016), they limit their attention to a

handful of institutions and underappreciate their roles during the interwar period. This study extends that work by illustrating how high level American officials perceived the value of the colleges abroad; how America's foreign policy positions complicated the colleges' roles in their communities; and how the colleges came together to negotiate responses to these challenges. The American university has figured prominently in the history of the Cold War (Levin, 2013; Lowen, 1997; Schiffrin, 1997; Simpson, 1999). Yet there has not been a corresponding investigation into how the 'war of ideas' affected American universities abroad, many of which were in critical cold war battlegrounds (Berghahn, 2001; Trentin, 2012; Westad, 2005). When Cold War scholars have considered international education, they limit their focus to student mobility (Bu, 1999; Scott-Smith, 2008; Shannon, 2017; Snow, 2008) or participation of U.S. universities in modernization and nation-building projects (Ekbladh, 2011; Koikari, 2012; Latham, 2000; Marquis, 2000). This literature recognizes the influence of American exchange programs such as the Fulbright and the International Visitor Leader Program, which introduced foreign elites to American universities and established strong links between the participant and the United States. Indeed American efforts throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to target foreign elites and opinion leaders, who were considered key actors in warding off Soviet influence and the expansion of communism, is well chronicled in the literature (Arndt, 2005; Hart, 2013). However, as this study will demonstrate, American universities abroad are largely, and mistakenly, absent from these discussions.

### Aims and purposes

The foci of this research project are independent American universities abroad. Other expressions of American higher education such as international branch campuses, non-degree granting study abroad sites, and state-controlled foreign institutions that are regionally accredited

in the U.S. are not represented. Furthermore, the focus within the subject of independent American universities abroad is on inter-organizational cooperation. Other important related concerns are also beyond its scope. Although it does address certain institutions, it cannot provide detailed narratives of the development of important individual colleges and universities. Instead, I use the development of particular American universities abroad as a lens to view a general American university abroad. In turn, the American university abroad becomes a perspective through which one can see, on the one hand, American higher education and, on the other, the world and America's role in it. I try to show how the American university abroad developed in such a way that it has become a peripheral, yet periodically significant structural feature of American higher education. In order to understand this development, it helps to have a sense of how scholars approach the study of organizations and social movements, a subject I turn to in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I use a cultural-institutional lens to examine American universities abroad. This framework integrates key insights from the study of organizations and social movements. An institutional approach to the study of organizations highlights how the ‘field’ that organizations operate in shapes their development. A cultural approach to social movements emphasizes how organizations strategically ‘frame’ initiatives in order to resonate with potential supporters. Combining these perspectives renders a comprehensive framework for study of American universities abroad that admits both structure and agency as factors in both continuity and change. In this chapter, I elaborate on the field and frame constructs and then synthesize them into a unified schema for application in subsequent analytical chapters. I refer to this particular composition as a ‘field-frame’ perspective.

### Fields and the institutional approach to studying organizations

American universities abroad constitute an organizational field. An organizational field is a grouping of organizations that provide similar services or produce similar products, as well as suppliers, customers, and regulatory agencies (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In other words, a field is a small world of organized activity in which actors share certain key understandings or logics of what goes on there. Accordingly, the organizational field of American universities abroad comprises the higher education institutions themselves together with membership organizations, donors, and accreditors. Inter-organizational relationships have been a central focus of inquiry on fields (Walker, 2012, 576). Research indicates that organizational fields coalesce in the wake of exogenous shocks (Corbo, 2015; Zapp & Powell, 2016).<sup>1</sup> After

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<sup>1</sup> Exogenous shocks in the sociological tradition are akin to the “critical junctures” of historical institutionalism. Cf. Capoccia and Kelemen (2007). Several distinctive features of historical institutionalism undergird the field-frame perspective that I propose—especially its attention to creation, reproduction, development, and structure of institutions over time as well as its penchant for the comparative case study (Fioretos, 2011)—but because the

disruptive events, organizations with similar interests come together out of a shared concern for efficiency or to make sense of an altered environment (Wooten & Hoffman, 2016, 5). Such “sensemaking” (Weick et al., 2005) can occur in conferences or ceremonies or other “field-configuring events” (Lampel & Meyer, 2008). Identifying the shocks and motives for collaboration associated with field formation or transformation are fundamental undertakings in the exploration of American universities abroad.

The organizational field construct comes from the sociological branch of neo-institutional theory,<sup>2</sup> which developed in the late 1970s and early '80s to emphasize how the symbolic role of an institution's formal structure can explain homogeneity among organizations in structure, culture, and output. Meyer and Rowan (1977) argued that organizations in the same environment end up looking alike out of a shared concern for legitimacy. An organization that adopts practices and procedures common to other organizations—even if doing so has no bearing on, or even undermines, its efficiency—increases its legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, 340). Accordingly, the new structures may be only loosely coupled with actual organizational behavior. By “ceremonially” incorporating the formal structures prevalent among those perceived to be legitimate, organizations reflect the “myths” of their environments (346). Consequently, organizations that share an environment tend to look alike, i.e., they are *isomorphic* with their environment. In analyzing the environment of American universities abroad, we might ask what the myths are and what ceremonies do the universities perform to incorporate them?

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analytical tools of the sociological perspective are more attuned to the particular problems of international organizations, I do not incorporate this literature into the framework. Admittedly, though, there are numerous compatibilities.

<sup>2</sup> Although Peters (1998) recognizes seven distinct institutionalisms, there are generally only three recognized traditions of institutional theory in the social sciences: rational choice, historical, and sociological (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Over the past decade, discursive institutionalism has emerged as a fourth pattern of inquiry (Schmidt, 2008).



DiMaggio and Powell (1983) extend Meyer and Rowan's argument by describing the mechanisms that promote institutional isomorphic change. Whereas Meyer and Rowan speak of an "environment," DiMaggio and Powell's operative construct is the "organizational field." Once an organizational field is established, those within it and any new entrants are subject to isomorphic changes, of which there are three mechanisms: coercive, mimetic, and normative. Coercive isomorphism stems from political pressure. Mimetic isomorphism describes patterns of organizational emulation during periods of uncertainty. Normative isomorphism is associated with organizational changes due to the formal education and professional networks of actors within fields (DiMaggio & Powell, 1981, 150-52). Instances of isomorphism serve as critical evidence for the existence of an organizational field. A key task in analysis of the field of American universities abroad, therefore, is identification of such occurrences.

The source of convergence may not always be intrinsic to the field. Fields can overlap with or become "nested" within other fields (Hüther and Krücken, 2016), so that the same organization faces pressures from multiple distinct fields. Most individual American universities abroad are members of several organizational fields, including their host country's higher education system, American higher education, and the field of American universities abroad. How an organization responds to these competing pressures depends on how embedded it is within each field. For example, Geiger (2015) has used the organizational field construct to explain developments in American higher education between the two world wars (532). If the field of American universities abroad were nested in the field of American higher education during that time, it should have experienced similar pressures.

Of course, not all organizations in a field experience the same pressures. Attention to a field's spatial dimensions can help to explain differential results. The very notion of a field

suggests boundaries. Indeed, in each field there is a “dominance hierarchy” among organizations, often conceptualized as center and periphery (DiMaggio, 1983; Shils, 1975). The center refers to organizations perceived as elite and legitimate. Those at the center can frame the field in ways favorable to their interests and are therefore able to acquire and manage resources efficiently; those at the periphery, less so. Consequently, the more embedded institutions are in the field, the more likely they are to survive. Wooten and Hoffman (2016), summarizing DiMaggio and Powell, explain, “An organization that appeared legitimate increased its prospects for survival because constituents would not question the organization’s intent and purpose” (5). Deeply embedded organizational models then become seen not as one among a range of legitimate options, but rather as *the* appropriate model.

A “logic of appropriateness” permeates more institutionalized fields (March & Olsen, 2013). For example, Buckner (2014) has argued that the growth of private higher education institutions after the end of the Cold War reflects the international development community’s agenda for how nation-states ought to structure higher education. Her argument is situated in a world society framework (Meyer et al., 1997). World society theory uses the organizational field of international NGOs and inter-governmental organizations to account for the institutionalization of a new model of society after World War II. The field promotes Western enlightenment norms, reflected by trends toward increasing democratization, human rights, development planning, and the use of science in decision-making (Schofer & Meyer, 2005, 900). International organizations propagate this resultant world culture through blueprints or scripts that legitimate behaviors by individuals, organizations, and governments (Chabbott, 2015, 10). The content of these scripts typically reflects larger “institutional logics” that organizational actors can use to justify actions or stances (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton et al., 2012).

The individual and organizational actors who shape the discourse, norms, and structures that guide organizational action within a field are referred to as institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana et al., 2008; Beckert, 1999; Maguire et al., 2004; Weik, 2011). Fields vary in the degree to which they allow for change via entrepreneurship. The more institutionalized a field is, the less likely an entrepreneur will be able to alter it. Dorado (2005) developed a typology of the degree to which fields are receptive to change by entrepreneurs. Fields that admit low levels of opportunity for change by entrepreneurs are “opaque.” Those where entrepreneurs can readily introduce new logics or forms are “transparent.” “Hazy” fields are those where opportunities for entrepreneurship exist but are not visible to all.

Entrepreneurs’ capacities for influence on a field can vary according to their position in the field and social skills they possess (Fligstein, 1997). Institutional entrepreneurs also exert influence over a field’s members and prospective members by setting criteria for inclusion. Who gets to set the criteria and what carrots or sticks are associated with compliance or violation is contested. In this sense, organizational fields are spaces for “strategic action” (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). Conceptualizing fields as contested spaces helps to account for diversity of organizational forms. As a field develops, the correspondence of organizations’ formal structures and actual activities can become less tightly coupled. Loose coupling irritates the organizational field’s traditional adherents. Divergence enlarges but also complicates a field, in which case it becomes “patchy” (Quirke, 2013). Wooten and Hoffman (2016) explain:

Not all organizations face the same pressure to conform. Fields that have weak oversight mechanisms, multiple logics, or constantly shifting constituent demands create a context in which organizations have more freedom. As a consequence, marginal or periphery field members can more easily side step isomorphic pressures and instead make alternate claims for legitimacy that rely on niche-status and uniqueness within the institutional landscape (9).

McAdam & Scott (2005) suggest that identifying “dominants,” “challengers,” and “governance units” should be the starting point for any field-level analysis (17). Indeed, analysis of the organizational field of American universities abroad should address how fields are structured. It can do so by determining which organizations are at the center and the periphery and to what extent the field is nested in another, larger field. It can review respective claims for legitimacy and identify who is enforcing the field’s rules and how. Analysis should locate institutional entrepreneurs, ascertain their motives, and explain the reasons they are able to impact the field. It should also seek to understand the dominant logics that motivate the field at any given time.

Organizational field research is primarily concerned with *established* organizations. But my inquiry seeks also to interpret the genesis of *new* American universities abroad. Unfortunately, organizational theory is not well suited to explain the creation of organizations.<sup>3</sup> For analytical assistance, I turn to scholarship on social movements, which has been more invested in the emergence of new organizations, as well as in instances of collective action among them.

#### Frames and the cultural approach to studying social movements

During various intervals of their existence, American universities abroad have constituted a social movement. Scholars in this tradition were initially concerned with explaining coups, riots, and various other forms of social or political insurgency not strictly germane to the study of universities. But the literature has since evolved in directions decidedly relevant to such an examination. For at their core, social movements are “networks of informal interactions between

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<sup>3</sup> A notable exception is Aldrich & Ruef (2006), especially the chapter titled “Entrepreneurs and the Emergence of New Organizations.” A sociology of entrepreneurship has emerged as a strand of organizational studies (Thornton, 1999) but “has been critiqued for its lack of coherence and intellectual distance from the sociological mainstream” (Ruef & Lounsbury, 2007, 1).

a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities” (Diani, 1992, 1). American universities abroad represent a social movement whenever their network of colleges, membership organizations, and advocates takes collective action in support of American-modeled higher education. Recurrent instances of collective action among these groups justify this conceptualization and provide a suitable starting point for analysis. In what follows, I highlight three aspects of social movements relevant to American universities abroad: framing, political opportunity, and mobilizing (McAdam et al., 1996).

A frame is an answer to the question, “What is it that’s going on here?” (Goffman, 1974/1986, 8). Or rather, “What holds these elements together?” (Creed et al., 2002, 37). Frame analysis originated in sociology, but has since been adapted by other fields, especially policy studies (Rein & Schön, 1996) and political psychology (Brewer & Gross, 2005; Druckman, 2001; Nelson & Oxley, 1999). Social movement scholars developed the concept further in response to resource mobilization theory’s inability to explain why some grievances and ideologies were more successful in mobilizing resources than others (Lindekilde 2014, 2). Snow et al. (1986) attributed success to social movement organizations’ (SMOs) capacity for aligning their frames with intended recipients’ schemata of interpretation. Frame alignment occurs when “some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary” (Snow et al., 1986, 464). When SMOs align their frames effectively, they induce participation and support from individuals. With added participation, organizations are able to, among other outcomes, mobilize resources more effectively.

Snow and his colleagues propose four strategies that social movement organizations utilize to align their frames with potential supporters: bridging, amplification, extension, and

transformation. Frame bridging “involves the linkage of an SMO with... unmobilized sentiment pools or public opinion preference clusters” (Snow et al., 1986, 467). Frame amplification refers to “the clarification and invigoration of an interpretive frame that bears on a particular issue, problem or set of events” (Snow et al., 1986, 469). A social movement organization may also “extend the boundaries of its primary framework so as to encompass interests or points of view that are incidental to its primary objectives but of considerable salience to potential adherents” (Snow et al. 1986, 472). In other instances, “new values may have to be planted and nurtured, old meanings or understandings jettisoned, and erroneous beliefs or ‘misframings’ reframed... in order to garner support and secure participants” (Snow et al. 1986, 473). This is what is meant by frame transformation. By identifying these processes at play in the establishment and support of American universities abroad, I can explain how movement actors enlist new participants and secure additional resources.

Using the strategies above, framers align their initiatives with potential participants’ other concerns. In order to understand why the content of a frame resonates or why a framing strategy is successful requires an understanding of the context of the intended recipients of a given frame.<sup>4</sup> The concept of political opportunity is helpful in explaining which frames work and which do not. The fundamental supposition is that “exogenous factors enhance or inhibit prospects for mobilization, for particular sorts of claims to be advanced rather than others, for particular strategies of influence to be exercised” (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004, 1457-1458). This is especially true of *transnational* social movements, for which “understanding changing organizational populations requires attention to the larger global political context in which these

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<sup>4</sup> There are “at least seven distinct target groups relevant to the life histories of most SMOs: adherents, constituents, bystander publics, media, potential allies, antagonists or countermovements, and elite decision-makers or arbiters” (Snow et al., 1986, 465, FN 2).

organizations operate” (Smith et al., 2017, 4). The implication is that analysis of a transnational social movement like American universities abroad must be situated in a global political history.

A political opportunity structure is “consistent—but not necessarily formal, permanent or national—dimensions of the political environment that either encourage or discourage people from using collective action” (Tarrow, 1998, 18). As such, Joachim (2003) argues, it influences frame alignment strategies in three ways:

(1) it functions as a ‘gatekeeper’ (Mazey, 2000), privileging certain frames and marginalizing others; (2) it provides a ‘tool kit’ for action by providing material and symbolic resources for social actors (Swidler, 1986); and (3) it creates ‘windows of opportunities’ for action because of its dynamic nature (251).

Interpreting the role of the political opportunity structure vis-à-vis the American universities abroad movement will contribute to understanding why some frames were elevated and others relegated. Unlike many of the subjects of scholarship in this area, the purpose of collective action for American university abroad SMOs has been to secure private funding. But the fundamental idea that external factors affect SMO ability and strategy for action still applies. In this sense, the *philanthropy* opportunity structure is just as important. Similarly, the constraints on American universities abroad often come from U.S. regional accreditors, which might be best understood as “private governments” because they are empowered to exercise government functions in a specific arena (Selznick, 1969 quoted in McAdam & Scott, 2005, 11).

Joachim (2003) underscores three political opportunities in framing efforts: access, allies, and political alignment (251-252). Symbolic events such as major political crises can recast the definitions of political problems, allowing for alternative policy prescriptions via conferences and lobbying. In these environments, movement actors can gain access to influential allies, who have stronger connections to critical resources like money or prestige. Finally, changes in political alignments can move individuals or parties more amenable to movement frames into

positions of power. The political opportunity structure is not static. Contemporary movements and counter-movements (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996) as well as past framing strategies (Phelps Bondaroff & Burke, 2014) can alter its configuration. The notions of access, allies, and political alignment provide useful concepts for analyzing the frames and framing strategies of the American universities abroad movement.

Of course, a favorable political opportunity structure alone is not sufficient to explain the fortunes of a movement (Joachim, 2003, 252). It must have the resources to take advantage of the environment. The social movement literature uses the concept of mobilization to explain how frames reach the political opportunity structure. Mobilizing structures are the assemblage of resources that make collective action possible (McCarthy, 1996). Joachim draws attention to several mobilizing resources: organizational entrepreneurs, a heterogeneous international constituency, and experts. As noted in the review of organizational fields above, entrepreneurs have the resources and the will to shape the discourse about an issue. Joachim observes that they also “care enough about an issue to absorb the initial costs of mobilizing, bring with them a wealth of organizing experiences, are well-connected, and have vision and charisma” (2003, 252). Their skills are also critical in mobilizing a diverse constituency. Heterogeneity in the movement population makes it harder for opponents to label the movement as myopic and allows actors to genuinely advance multiple frames simultaneously. The presence of participants with more extreme views also reinforces the legitimacy of more moderate frames, a phenomenon known as the radical flank effect. Legitimacy also comes from experts, i.e., both those insiders with experience of movement concerns and academics with technical knowledge, whose testimonies can enhance the credibility of frames (Joachim, 2003, 252).



It is apparent that frames are the product of a movement's external environment and internal resources. Accordingly, a comprehensive frame analysis of American universities abroad as a social movement should survey frame alignment strategies, the movement's mobilization structures, and the political/philanthropy landscapes in which the movement operates. But in the context of American universities abroad, focusing on a single movement organization can be misleading because there are often competing narratives issued from inside and outside the movement. Also, the history of American universities abroad suggests undulating patterns of movement activity. Yet important developments still occur at low tides of mobilization. Shifting the focus to the organizational field would provide a fuller account of growth. Some social movement scholars have studied an organizational type or local chapters of organizations (e.g. McCarthy & Wolfson, 1996). In doing so, they have incorporated the concept of organizational field but do not often use it as the unit of analysis. What is needed is integration of field and frame constructs.

#### Cultural-institutional synthesis: The field-frame perspective

Although study of organizations and social movements originated as distinct traditions, integrating them for the purpose of strengthening analysis has become increasingly common over the past quarter century (McAdam & Scott, 2005; Walker, 2012). One reason for doing so is that they already share numerous explanatory mechanisms (Campbell, 2005). Each understands itself as an open system, inter-connected with a larger environment. Accordingly, both are concerned with legitimacy and recognize the influence of entrepreneurs in shaping developments.

Institutional theory's scripts, blueprints, and logics are conceptually tantamount to social movement's frames. And the former's organizational field is a fuller elaboration of the latter's

mobilization structures. Indeed, the field construct has proven a “fruitful linking mechanism” between organization and movement theorists (Walker, 2012, 577).

Numerous studies bring the two traditions together to enhance the overall explanatory power of an argument. For example, Walker observes that too often “movement theorists emphasize change while organization theorists assert coherence and stability” (Walker, 2012, 582). But when integrating them, like Armstrong (2003) does in her study of the rise of the gay rights movement, we are reminded that institutionalization is a process, not an outcome. Armstrong’s cultural-institutional approach artfully assimilates the organizational field into a conventional framing argument to explain how some frames become institutionalized and therefore more potent during different periods of political opportunity.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Rao et al. (2000) found social movement theory especially useful for understanding how new organizational forms emerge. The social movement literature’s emphasis on framing alternatives helped the authors to understand the process of de-institutionalization that must occur for new models of organizations to supplant old ones.

Notably, as Strang & Soule (1998) observe, both traditions address diffusion, too. Diffusion refers to “the spread of something within a social system” (266). Simply put, “Something diffuses when more and more people do it” (266). Diffusion has typically been the purview of scholars concerned with innovation (Rogers, 1995). But the concept is also used to explain the rise of collective action: “the argument is that practices diffuse as they are rendered salient, familiar, and compelling” (Strang & Soule, 1998, 276). Diffusion arguments have also flourished in institutional literature because of their “theoretical attention to the larger environment, to the way cultural models condition behavior, and to historical context and change rather than comparative statics” (Strang & Soule, 1998, 268). Campbell (2005) observes that

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<sup>5</sup> I borrow the term cultural-institutional from Armstrong (2003).

organizational theorists' interest in organizational bandwagons corresponds to social movement scholars' historical attention to fads and riots (54). Yet, diffusion is "too often a black box... a mindless mechanical transfer of information from one place to another" (Campbell, 2005, 55). Still, the recognized capacity of these approaches to account for incidence further justifies combining them in examination of the global diffusion of American universities abroad.

Conceptualizing American universities abroad as both an organizational field and a social movement will facilitate exploration of continuity and change, including periods of enlargement or growth. What follows is an explication of the cultural-institutional lens synthesized into a field-frame perspective and applied to the subject of American universities abroad.

"Growth" refers to the diffusion of the American university abroad model over space and time. A model has diffused because it has become institutionalized. Institutionalization presupposes a field. An organizational field initially forms and then periodically coalesces after an exogenous shock forces organizations to come together and make sense of their changed environment. When an organizational field legitimizes structures and practices, which are communicated via scripts or blueprints, they become institutionalized. Frame analysis enables an understanding of the process of institutionalization by probing the content of the scripts; how they are communicated; the strategies that underlie their substance and their dissemination; and, ultimately, why they do or do not resonate with intended recipients.

Successful alignment of frames induces participation. Increased participation means greater access to resources and more allies who can promote the movement organization's frames. In order to induce participation, framers must align their organizations with potential participants' schemata of interpretation. Institutional entrepreneurs exercise their social positions and skills to determine which frames are most likely to succeed. The content of frames is

informed by developments in the political opportunity structure. To ascertain the pertinent context for frames requires familiarity with international political and cultural history. When framers mobilize to seize political opportunity, their frames are more likely to achieve desired results. If a frame is considered successful, it is repeated. When repetition of frames leads to more participation, the frames become legitimized. When legitimacy extends over a long enough period of time, the frames become institutionalized, i.e., they become taken-for-granted and not subjected to as much scrutiny.

The continued association of certain frames with one type of organization institutionalizes the organizational type as well. Institutionalized organizations are perceived as more legitimate than alternatives. Organizations perceived as legitimate are more able to attract resources and survive. A logic of appropriateness emerges that constrains options for new entrants to the field. New entrants therefore end up converging in structure—though not necessarily in practice—with extant organizations in the field. Those on the periphery may make alternative claims to legitimacy, which diversifies the composition of the field. Meanwhile, radical flank effects reinforce the legitimacy of those at the center.

Taken together, these factors combine to account for the major developments in the field of American universities abroad over the past quarter century. The framework rests on a series of assumptions. First, one cannot understand the emergence of organizations of a particular type without understanding the historic role of established organizations of the same type.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in order to understand the role of established organizations requires awareness of the larger field in which they operate. And, finally, knowledge of a field necessitates appreciation for how the field is and has been framed. The implication of these assumptions is that exploring the field and its frames is an effective means of understanding a phenomenon.

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<sup>6</sup> In this sense, the framework is consistent with the tenets of historical institutionalism.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION METHODS, AND ANALYTICAL STRATEGIES

### Introduction

I designed the research project with two multi-level heuristics in mind. These models inform the research questions, data collection strategies, and analytical techniques. The first is the “glonacal” agency heuristic developed by Simon Marginson and Gary Rhoades (2002). They encourage researchers to attend to the complex ways in which global, national, and local forces interact—often simultaneously—when studying higher education phenomena. The second heuristic is the comparative case study (CCS) model articulated by Lesley Bartlett and Frances Vavrus (2017). They identify three “mutually imbricated” axes for exploration: vertical, horizontal, and transversal (6). The vertical axis corresponds to the global and national levels in the glonacal heuristic, while the horizontal axis calls for study of multiple local sites. Critically, though, the transversal axis compels researchers to trace developments at multiple sites and multiple levels *over time* in order to fully explain social phenomena.

This dissertation addresses two related, overarching research questions

- 1) *To what extent do the many American universities abroad represent a single institution?*
- 2) *To what extent is the American university abroad an institution of American higher education?*

I explore these questions through four sub-research questions around which I build analytical chapters:

- i. How did an organizational field of American universities abroad form during the interwar period?*
- ii. How did the field evolve in the postwar era?*
- iii. Why and how did the field expand in the 1990s and 2000s?*
- iv. Why and how did the field’s central actors react to expansion?*

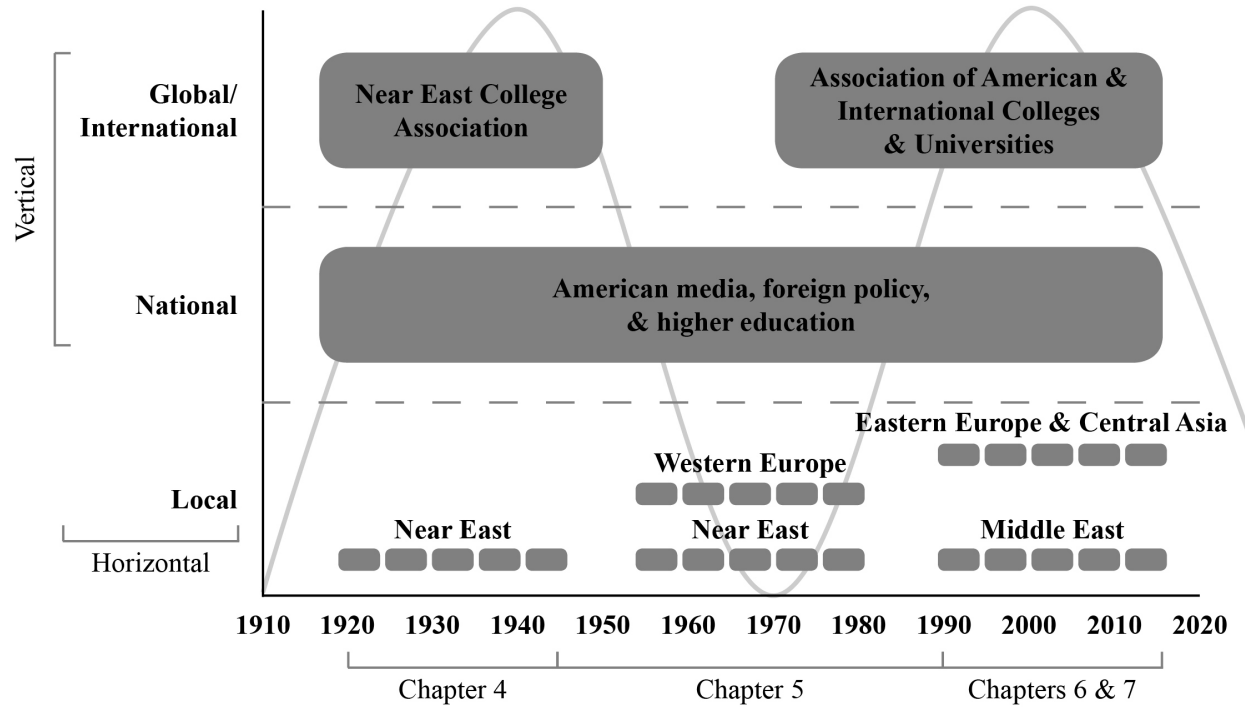
The glonacal agency and comparative case study heuristics guide where (spatially) and when (historically) I look for evidence to answer these questions (cf. Figure 3.1).

This research proceeds from a philosophy of science known as critical realism. Increasingly influential in the social sciences (Gorski 2013; Jackson 2011; Lopez & Potter 2005; Patomäki 2001; Scott 2013), this paradigm stakes out a position between the epistemological certainty of positivism and the epistemological relativism of post-modernism. Critical realists accept the naturalist's contention that there is a real world independent of our minds and can thus be measured empirically and explained causally. The history of knowledge is linear and accumulative. At the same time, critical realists acknowledge the existence of layers to that reality constructed by our minds, which obligates social scientists to seek the deeper meaning of social phenomena. Knowledge can therefore also be non-linear, non-accumulative. The translation of these foundational principles—mind-world dualism *and* reality with socially constructed depth—into a coherent philosophy of science calls for the application of positivism's rigor to post-modernism's emphasis on understanding. The result is a "refinement" of the practice of social science, in which the goal is to be "objective about subjectivity" (Lopez & Potter, 2005, 9, 14).

The specific combination of methodology, research questions, and epistemology above is best served by a mixed-methods research design (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2013, 147; Scott, 2013, 10). As shown in Table 3.1, a mixed-methods research design calls for the best possible evidence to support answers to each question (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). In order to understand how the field of American universities abroad formed, evolved, expanded, and reacted (questions 1-4), evidence is supplied by rich and diverse qualitative data sources ranging from archives to interviews to institutional websites. This study approximates a convergent mixed-methods research design in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected more or less simultaneously and results are compared as part of the analysis (Creswell, 2013). I describe these

and other analytical strategies in detail after reviewing the various methods I employed to collect data.

**Figure 3.1** Comparative case study and glonacal agency approach to the study of the field of American universities abroad



Note: Adapted from Bartlett & Vavrus (2017, 3).

**Table 3.1** Matrix of research questions, data sources, and analytical methods

<i>Ch.</i>	<i>Research Questions</i>	<i>Time Period</i>	<i>Sources of Evidence</i>	<i>Methods</i>
4	Why and how did an organizational field of American universities abroad form?	1919-1945	Archives	Qualitative: grounded theory; frame analysis
5	How did the field evolve?	1946-1990	Archives, news articles	Qualitative: grounded theory; frame analysis
6	Why and how did the field expand?	1991-2017	Archives, interviews	Qualitative: grounded theory; frame analysis
7	Why and how did the field's central actors react to expansion?	1991-2017	Archives, interviews, news articles, field notes, and institutional websites	Qualitative: grounded theory; frame analysis; media analysis Quantitative: Chi-square tests

## **Exploring an organizational field using qualitative methods**

I utilize an assorted array of qualitative data collection and analytical strategies through an approach known as “methodological bricolage” (Kincheloe, 2005, 335). “Bricoleurs” employ “any means necessary” and “as many methods as possible to make their way through a world of diverse meanings” (Kincheloe, 2005, 332). Bricolage is similar to “scavenging,” in which unconventional data collection and analytical strategies are employed to explore marginalized populations (Murphy et al., 2017). The point is to immerse myself deeply in the subject of American universities abroad without concern for methodological boundaries, while still maintaining methodological rigor. Indeed, qualitative data sources in this study consist of interviews, documents supplied by interviewees, archives, news media, institutional websites, and field notes. And analytical techniques are borrowed from comparative case study research, grounded theory, and frame analysis. I describe my data collection methods and analytical strategies below.

### Data source: documents

Documents are used in social science research to provide background information and historical insight; suggest questions for interviews; contextualize data collected during interviews; and verify findings or corroborate evidence from other sources, among other purposes (Bowen, 2009, 29-30). Documents in this study include correspondence, promotional brochures, meeting minutes, and other materials supplied via archives, individuals, and websites.

*Archives.* Primary source documents from archives constitute a substantial component of the data for this study. Archival data is important for three primary reasons: identifying key developments in the field of American universities abroad, revealing how important decisions were made in organizing the field, and discerning which frames were used to communicate about



the field and its members institutions. I consulted 12 archives—seven physical (in four countries on three continents) and five digital—to collect evidence for this research project (Table 3.2). I made digital copies of items from the physical holdings and downloaded copies from the online archives. Then I made a master list of all archival documents I collected and merged them to create a multi-archive timeline.

Archives proved indispensable for learning about efforts to organize the field. The earliest attempt at consolidating the field of American universities abroad was the formation in 1919 of what would later become the Near East Colleges Association (NECA). This was a New York-based advocacy organization for six American colleges in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. In order to track the association's development, I visited its archives at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City. This archive consists of correspondence, administrative records, and fundraising materials from 1928-1943. Several archives located at Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library also provide insights into the field's development at this time through correspondence among trustees and presidents of NECA member institutions.

NECA's successor organization—the Association of American International Colleges and Universities (AAICU; pronounced 'eye-koo')—was established in 1972. AAICU is a membership organization for presidents and provosts of select American universities abroad. There are two key archives for AAICU materials. One is preserved at the American College of Greece, where the association's founder had been president. His collection of papers there includes meeting minutes and correspondence with member presidents and other institutional representatives from 1972-76. The other pertinent AAICU archive consists of meeting minutes from 2008-2016. Responsibility for this digital archive rotates every two years along with the

leadership of the consortium. I accessed the materials in 2017 as they were shifting from the American University of Paris to the American University of Central Asia.

I accessed additional materials pertinent to both of these organizations at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Its Near East College Association archive includes lobbying and promotional materials, annual meeting reports with member profiles, and fundraising proposals to the U.S. Congress and the Ford Foundation between 1919-1951. These materials and others in the AUB archives provide a wealth of critical evidence for the early formation of an organizational field of American universities abroad. Materials from AUB's AAICU archive portray the subsequent development of the field. Among them are issues of the short-lived *AAICU Journal*. AUB archives also furnished vital material for identifying how the highest profile American university abroad framed itself over the course of a century and a half, especially during and after the Lebanese civil war of the 1980s. Accreditation reports, presidential remarks, and international press clippings provide insight into the university's unique relationship with the United States vis-à-vis its influence in the wider Middle East. Archives there also allowed me to trace the university's numerous educational initiatives throughout the Middle East, including its formative role in the establishment of the American University of Sharjah. I also visited archives at George Washington University, where the papers of Roderick French, the founding chancellor of the American University of Sharjah, are kept. The archives at the American University of Sharjah provided a further glimpse into the development of that institution, especially with regard to how insiders framed the initiative.

**Table 3.2** List of archival sources by chapter

<i>Archive</i>	<i>Collection(s)</i>
<b>Chapter 4: Field Formation, 1919-1945</b>	
American University of Beirut Archives & Special Collections	Near East College Association
Burke Library Archives, Columbia University	Near East College Association Records, 1928-1943
Rare Book & Manuscript Library Collections, Columbia University	Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Records, 1904-1989 George A. Plimpton Papers, 1634-1956 Virginia Crocheron Gildersleeve Papers, 1898-1962
Rockefeller Archives Center	Commonwealth Fund Records Davison Fund, Inc. Records Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller Records
<b>Chapter 5: Field Evolution, 1946-1990</b>	
American College of Greece	Louis Vrettos Papers
American University of Beirut Archives & Special Collections	AUB in the Press (International) Near East College Association Regional and External Programs Role and Impact of AUB
Burke Library Archives, Columbia University	Near East College Association Records, 1928-1943
CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) [online]	N/A
Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library [online]	Allen W. Dulles Papers
Foreign Relations of the United States [online]	[Multiple]
National Security Archive, Gelman Library, George Washington University [online]	N/A
Rockefeller Archives Center	Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller Records Rockefeller Brothers Fund Records
<b>Chapter 6: Field Expansion, 1991-2017</b>	
American University of Beirut Archives & Special Collections	Related Bodies
American University of Sharjah Archives	Newspaper Clippings
Special Collections Research Center, Gelman Library, The George Washington University	Roderick French Papers
Wikileaks Public Library of U.S. Diplomacy [online]	N/A
<b>Chapter 7: Field Maturation, 1991-2017</b>	
AAICU Digital Archive	N/A
American University of Beirut Archives & Special Collections	AUB in the Press (International) AUB Related Bodies

I also used archives to glean American officials' opinions of American universities abroad. Because the practice of diplomacy can require a level of discretion not easily elicited through qualitative research interviews, an alternative, and more reliable, means for determining diplomats' reactions is through analysis of diplomatic correspondence (Michael, 2015; Walby and Larsen, 2011). Thus, I searched several online databases for mentions of each American university abroad as well as related terms such as "American universities," "American colleges," etc. These databases provide evidence for how United States government personnel—especially diplomats—interpreted the establishment or presence of American universities abroad. The Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series presents the official documentary historical record of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity through the administration of Ronald Reagan. It is an important source for discerning the perceptions of American universities abroad by American government personnel before the end of the Cold War.

I also consulted the National Security Archive and the CIA Records Search Tool (CREST). The National Security Archive operated by George Washington University is the largest repository of declassified U.S. documents outside of the federal government. Searches therein reveal correspondence between the president of American University of Beirut and the U.S. State Department about Soviet activities in the Middle East at the height of the Cold War. CREST was established by executive order in 1995 and since it opened in 2000 has included 13 million pages of declassified CIA documents. Before January 2017 access was restricted to a physical site in College Park, Maryland. But all its data is now available online. This tool was particularly valuable for learning about how key actors in America's intelligence community interpreted the effects of the Lebanese Civil War on the American University of Beirut.

These various archival sources were helpful in understanding how American government officials have interpreted American universities abroad in former eras. But the field experienced substantial growth in the 1990s and 2000s. I wanted to know how American officials, especially diplomats, interpreted the proliferation of American institutions. Yet, federal law embargoes diplomatic records for their first 25 years. Accordingly, I sought to obtain diplomatic records pertinent to American universities abroad during the period 1992-2017 through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. In July 2016, I piloted an initial FOIA request for diplomatic records produced in the United Arab Emirates during the period 1992-1998 that mention the American universities in Dubai and Sharjah. I chose these parameters for the pilot request because a) if successful, I could conceivably expand the date and location ranges in subsequent requests; b) two institutions were both established in this short period and would allow me to easily compare and contrast how they were being framed; and c) I would soon be traveling to the UAE and might be able to follow up in person on any information that might be included in the report. Unfortunately, the Department of State pushed back the estimated completion date for my request multiple times. At the time of this writing—20 months after the pilot request—the request has not been fulfilled. Consequently, I elected to use publicly available classified diplomatic correspondence from the Wikileaks Library of US Public Diplomacy. Its searchable database includes revealing cables such as one sent by the U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait in 2004 concerning the challenges posed by the American University of Kuwait and American University of Sharjah to the Embassy's public diplomacy goal of enlisting more Kuwaiti students for postsecondary study in the U.S.

*Documents from individuals.* Individuals supplied other critical documents. If an interviewee mentioned an important document such as a feasibility study or funding proposal, I

would often ask for a copy of it. This practice accounts for how I obtained the original funding proposal to establish the American University of Armenia, the Maltese national accrediting agency's decision letter to license the American University of Malta, and a collection of essays to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American University of Beirut. I was also able to utilize key documents I procured during my employment at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani such as the minutes from the first board of trustees meeting and the business plan for the university proposed by the consulting firm McKinsey.

*Institutional websites.* I obtained further primary and secondary source materials from websites of American universities abroad, media outlets, and government agencies. Official documents and information obtained from these sites represent significant lenses for understanding how affiliates of American universities abroad frame their initiatives, how others interpret them, and what were the critical steps in establishing and sustaining these institutions. I searched each institution's website for incorporation documents, accreditation reports, stories from alumni magazines, and other forms of related evidence. Where available, I also collected each institution's official history and mission as well as information on its governance structure, enrollment, and curriculum.

*News media.* I developed three different data sets from media sources. The first was developed to inform my general understanding of institutions, to have ready information on hand for context in later analysis, and to keep me abreast of developments in the field. Since February 2016, I have tracked English-language press attention on American universities abroad by setting up Google Alerts for the phrases: "American university of," "American university in," "American college in," and "American college of." Each morning I receive links to any news

stories that contain these phrases.<sup>1</sup> If I determine that the story includes information pertinent to my project, I save it in that institution's folder on my hard drive.

I developed two other data sets for specific analysis in Chapter 7. One is meant to provide an overview of awareness of individual American universities abroad in the United States. The other is meant to provide an overview of how media sources have framed the field of American universities abroad.

In order to determine how embedded American universities abroad are in the field of American higher education Stateside, I used Lexis Nexus and EBSCO to search for mentions of each AAICU institution across seven media outlets during the period 1991-2017. The media sources were: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Economist*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Archives, Google Alerts, and Google searches for institutions suggested to me all but *USA Today* as pertinent sources for information. I added *USA Today* because it is among the highest circulated national newspapers. I then entered the number of mentions of each institution into a spreadsheet. In order to provide context for the results, I also searched these seven media outlets for mentions of the top, middle, and bottom ranked national universities, liberal arts colleges, and (non-U.S.) global universities according to *U.S. News and World Report*. Recognizing that some AAICU institutions might be at a disadvantage for coverage as a result of their age, I also searched for mentions of five institutions identified as the world's top young universities by the *Times Higher Education Supplement*. I selected the top three as well as the highest ranked institution established in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the highest ranked young university located in the United States. I also entered these results into the same spreadsheet.

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<sup>1</sup> Through this measure I also identified institutions that were not initially represented in the American universities abroad database that I had developed, such as the American University of Myanmar and the American University of North Africa.

I was also interested in determining to what extent independent American universities abroad were understood as a field, i.e. as distinct from coverage of single institutions. Accordingly, I pored through the returns for each institution to identify articles that covered the American university abroad as a model. I looked specifically for articles that mentioned more than one American university abroad or made generalized claims about the model from one institution (usually the American University of Beirut), but were not feature stories about that institution. I then added to that list articles identified in archives (e.g. Swidey, 2003) or my own reading (e.g. Waterbury, 2003) that met these criteria. The result was a dataset of 20 articles.

Data source: interviews

In investigations of educational organizations, interviews with the individuals responsible for them are typically considered a primary means of data collection (Seidman, 2013, 9). In consideration of this study's goals to explore the development of the field of American universities abroad, I too regarded interviews as a suitable means of obtaining evidence. In particular, interviews with field actors such as founders, trustees, and administrators promised to facilitate access to information that is not public record or deserved scrutiny, such as founder motivations, the process of establishing universities, and legitimation strategies. Conversely, interviews with actors in the field of American higher education stateside shed light on the efficacy of framing efforts. In the end, I conducted interviews with 54 key informants (Appendix B).

The initial target population for this part of the study was founders of all American universities abroad established since 1991. I focused on founders because their motivations and ability to frame their initiatives, especially during the founding period, in ways that resonated with multiple key audiences helps to explain the creation of the universities. But there were



several problems in focusing exclusively on this group of elites (Gibton, 2016). The first was difficulty in securing their cooperation. While many founders were amenable to my solicitation for participation in this study, a notable amount either did not respond to multiple requests or declined to participate (cf. Appendix C). Ultimately, I interviewed founders of more than a dozen American universities abroad. Meanwhile, I enlarged the population to include other relevant field actors. On more than one occasion, this approach was rewarded with eventual access to founders. There were other benefits to expanding the population, too. Brenner (2006) contends that interviewing staff or others familiar with elites can also serve to craft questions suited specifically for them (366). This was indeed the case on several occasions.

Another impediment to interviewing founders exclusively concerns memory, both its absence and reliability. Studies dependent on research interviews with organizational founders have suffered from their inability to recall events and motivations from years past (Hewerdine, 2008). Even if founders claim to be able to recall their earlier motivations their narratives may reflect rehearsed narratives (Zacharias & Meyer, 1998). Although, conversely, distance from the project may allow for more honesty, too. Ultimately, interviewing other field actors involved in the establishment and/or subsequent development of American universities abroad, therefore, enabled me to obtain critical data for some institutions and triangulate responses for others. The goal was to get representation from as many institutions in the post-1991 group as possible. I identified other potential participants and their contact information through a mixture of convenience and snowball sampling, viz. by relying on Internet searches, professional networks, and suggestions of past interviewees.

I also sought out interview subjects whose work brought them into varying degrees of contact with one or more American universities abroad. My target population consisted of

leaders of inter-organizational membership associations to which American universities abroad belonged; U.S. regional accrediting agencies; U.S. government agencies and philanthropic foundations that have funded American universities abroad; American higher education institutions that have partnered with one or more American universities abroad; journalists with a focus on international higher education; and U.S. diplomats posted to countries when American universities abroad were established there. As with the population of founders, potential participants were identified through professional networks, institutional websites, and snowball sampling.

Scholars have long regarded the semi-structured interview as an appropriate and effective method in qualitative social science research (Rapley, 2001). In contrast with both the open-ended, almost casual conversation that predominates qualitative educational research and rigid protocols that close off avenues of inquiry, the semi-structured interview format has the advantage of asking all interviewees the same general questions while also providing opportunity to ask unique follow-up questions (Brenner, 2006, 357; 362). I initially developed multiple interview protocols that catered to each participant's role. But after pilot the interviews, I consolidated the protocols into two groups: questions for actors affiliated to specific American universities abroad and questions for other field actors like diplomats, accreditors, and inter-organizational leaders. For the former group, interviews focused on motivations for establishing the university, the process of starting it up, and how respondents understand the role of the institution. I asked individuals in the latter group to articulate the role of their organizations vis-à-vis American universities abroad and to reflect critically on any changes they had noticed in their relationships with these institutions. Sample interview protocols are in Appendix D.

I attempted to conduct as many interviews in person as possible. But given the global scope of this project, such arrangements were seldom feasible. Fortunately, social science research is increasingly accepting of the advantages to remote interviewing (Seidman, 2013, 112; King & Horrocks, 2010). Ultimately, I conducted 21 interviews in person and 31 via phone or Skype. Two additional respondents answered questions in writing. The average interview length was 55 minutes. All except three interviews were digitally recorded. In these few instances I took notes by hand. Either student research assistants or I transcribed all recorded interviews verbatim. For interviews I did not personally transcribe, I verified their accuracy by comparing selected passages of the transcripts to the audio files and edited them where necessary.

#### Data source: field notes

During the 2016-17 academic year, I visited 11 American universities abroad in six countries on three continents to conduct interviews, visit archives, and attend meetings.<sup>2</sup> During and/or immediately after each visit I composed extensive field notes with observations about the individuals and environment with whom and which I interacted. I also followed this practice after attending the AAICU annual meeting at the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in April 2017. These field notes represent important data because they contextualize lived experiences with my subject. Field notes were particularly useful for contextualizing analysis of AAICU meeting minutes in Chapter 7.

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<sup>2</sup> I visited the following institutions. Egypt: The American University in Cairo. Iraq: The American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. Kyrgyzstan: The American University of Central Asia. Lebanon: The American University of Beirut; The American University of Science & Technology. Malta: The American University of Malta. The United Arab Emirates: The American College of Dubai; The American University in Dubai; The American University of Ras Al Khaimah; The American University of Sharjah; and the American University of the Emirates.

## Analytical strategies

My analytical strategies are informed by grounded theory and frame analysis. A brief review of these influences follows before I describe the data collection methods and research strategies employed in this study.

Grounded theory helps researchers to develop explanations for social phenomena that emerge from the data (Charmaz, 2014, 1). It is principally used in studies where another theory is not available. In this study, other theories are available (cf. Chapter 2). But grounded theory's analytical process is still helpful. Practitioners of this approach go back-and-forth between data and analysis as part of an iterative process meant to generate fresh insights about findings. The emphasis in grounded theory's analytical process is on the production of categories. Creswell (2013) identifies the following categories as components of a grounded theory: causal conditions (what factors caused the core phenomenon); strategies (actions taken in response to the core phenomenon); intervening conditions (broad and specific situational factors that influence the strategies); and consequences (outcomes from the strategies) (88). The goal in category development is to keep applying data until they no longer reveal fresh theoretical insights, i.e. until the categories are "saturated" (Charmaz, 2014, 213). Throughout the process of category development, grounded theorists practice selective coding in which a researcher writes a "story line" that connects the categories (Creswell, 2013, 89). This story line is how I relate my findings in each chapter.

Recent research in political science and international relations has begun to identify discourse as a causal mechanism in institutional change (Banta, 2012; Schmidt 2010). I also look to discourse to explain continuity and change in the field of American universities abroad. To this end, the related approaches of discourse analysis and frame analysis can help. Discourse

analysis is “the study of how social reality is linguistically constituted, via analyses of the interplay between texts, discourses, and wider contexts” (Lindekilde 2014, 5). I am particularly concerned with the institutionalization of discourse or the repetition of frames about American universities abroad over time and space, which can be demonstrated “by proving that metaphors regularly appear in the same texts... The ideal is to include as many representations and their variations as possible, and to specify where they are to be found in as high a degree as possible” (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, 5). Whereas discourse analysis is a useful methodology for exploring the emergence of a general phenomenon, frame analysis facilitates investigation of particular instances of a phenomenon. Lindekilde (2014) explains,

where discourse analysis looks at how an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception bring an object into being, frame analysis looks at how existing “objects” or “topics” are framed by different actors, bending their meaning in certain directions (Lindekilde 2014, 8).

The two strategies can be successfully combined (Lindekilde 2014, 40). I do so in this study to identify how actors in the field identify problems, prescribe solutions, and motivate others to support them. I apply these core framing elements (diagnosis, prognosis, motivation) as well as concepts identified in Chapter 2 (political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, influential allies, etc.) as theoretically deduced coding strategies (Lindekilde 2014, 27). Then, I use process tracing to track developments in framing strategies over time (Collier, 2011; George & Bennett, 2005; Tansey, 2007).

*Preliminary analysis during data collection.* I created digital folders for each institution as well as the organizational field as a whole. I then assigned every interview transcript or document I obtained and every field note I created to one or more folders. For example, NECA and AAICU archival documents were placed in the “organizational field” folder, as were interviews with representatives of American higher education membership organizations. Later,

during first and second cycle analyses, I identified content from interviews pertinent to particular institutions and coded them accordingly. I placed transcripts in their respective field folders along with other relevant primary and secondary source documents. Some data sources apply to multiple institutions. For example, Zalmay Khalilzad discussed the origins of both the American University of Afghanistan and the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. I duplicated the file and placed it in both folders.

Throughout the data collection phase, I wrote periodic memos and also used grant and fellowship applications as an opportunity to reflect on my preliminary data. These memos informed the creation of a codebook with provisional etic codes, a “start list” of research-generated codes based on what my preparatory investigation suggested might appear in the data (Miles et al., 2014, 77). But I avoided in-depth analysis of the data until all the transcripts and documents were available (Seidman, 2013, 116). I did not distinguish between codes used for interviews and documents (Bowen, 2009, 32).

*First cycle analysis.* Once data collection had ceased and all data were available, the initial step was to sort all the data—interview transcripts, documents, field notes, etc.—by era of its production. I created timelines in Word documents for the interwar (1919-1945), postwar (1946-1990), and current (1991-2017) eras. Then I read all the data in each era, applied the provisional codes I had developed while also generating new codes in the process, and bracketed notable passages (Saldana, 2013, 18-19). Bracketing was a key strategy in reducing the text. After reviewing all the text in each era, I copied bracketed passages into the timelines and arranged them chronologically. Throughout this process, I composed memos to record ideas for codes, categories, and themes (Maxwell, 2013, 105; Saldana, 2013, 8, 14). I coded all interviews at first on paper (Seidman, 2013, 128, 135; Saldana, 2013, 26) and then transferred passages to a

Word document that arranged aggregate passages by category. Due to the comparatively large volume of documents, I elected not to print them and thus initially coded all documents electronically.

*Second cycle analysis.* Once the data had been reduced, the objective was to apply pattern coding and process tracing to identify patterns of causes or explanations; relationships among people or organizations; and theoretical constructs (Miles et al., 2014, 86-87). I used the CCS heuristic to sort out what was happening at different levels of the field. For example, after reviewing an era as a whole, I disaggregated data in the master timeline by creating sub-timelines for collective action organizations like NECA and AAICU (vertical) and institutions (horizontal). Then I used process tracing to make descriptive and causal inferences, which I communicate in interweaving story lines that narrate developments of both continuity and change in the field during each era.

### **Exploring diffusion of frames using quantitative methods**

A key set of quantitative data concerning American universities abroad complements the qualitative evidence described above. It contains information on usage of terms in mission statements across three categories of higher education institutions. I performed advanced statistical analysis using Stata 14. In the following sections, I describe the data set and the analytical technique I use to examine them in more detail.

University mission statements are markers of institutional legitimacy (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). They can serve as indicators of group solidarity and shared beliefs (Atkinson, 2008). Accordingly, the content of a mission statement can provide insight into how embedded an organization is in a particular field. Mission statements can therefore serve as useful data sources to determine the extent to which AAICU members have shared beliefs and whether

institutions at the periphery of their own field and the center of the field in which they are nested share those beliefs. To that end, I collected mission statements from institutional websites and then aggregated them into three comparison groups: AAICU regular and associate member institutions; self-identifying independent American institutions abroad not affiliated with AAICU; and the top 25 liberal arts college in the U.S. according to U.S. News and World Report (Table 7.4). I then ran searches for terms Morphew and Hartley (2006) identify as common among American higher education institutions (e.g. diversity, liberal arts, service, teaching, research, etc.). I then supplemented that list with terms AAICU uses in its discourse (e.g. independence, community, culture, international, etc.). I searched for the terms across the three categories of institutions using NVivo. Then I performed a chi-square test of independence to determine if there is a significant relationship between categories of institutions and their usage of certain terms in their mission statements.

### Limitations

The study's design is intended to mitigate flaws in data collection and analysis. Still, I acknowledge certain limitations to the study. For instance, some American universities abroad are under-represented in this study because I was not able to obtain data via interviews, documents, or field notes. It appears that many of these institutions are new, private, for-profit institutions of uncertain origin and quality. Their proliferation is an important chapter to the story of the emergence of the American university abroad. Yet, due to the absence of key data, I am unable to analyze them thoroughly.

Another limitation concerns my interview sample, which is skewed—by design—heavily toward Americans. Archival and secondary source documents from websites, too, even if not



American, are in the English language. Perspectives of other pertinent actors (e.g. ministry officials, prospective students, academics leaders of competing institutions) are not represented.

### Reflections on data collection

My experience collecting data for this project explains much about the phenomenon under investigation. For example, where archival material is and is not collected indicates how embedded American universities abroad are in the field of international education. A search of online UNESCO archives returned no results for the terms “Near East College Association,” “Association of American International Colleges and Universities,” or “American University of.” The absence of key organizations from the field of American universities abroad in the database of one of the most important international education organizations suggests that American universities abroad draw their legitimacy from other sources. Similarly, the fact that Union Theological Seminary (UTS) is the home of the most extensive NECA archives, illustrates the deep connection between the first American universities abroad and Protestant Christianity.

At the same time the limitation of the NECA archive at UTS to the years 1928-1943 meant that I had to piece together both the origins and demise of the organization from other sources. Even though the association survived into the 1970s, the collection of documents from only these years supports an interpretation of the Second World War as a critical juncture or exogenous shock that fundamentally changed the trajectory of the organization. While I was able to discern what happened using supplemental records at the Rockefeller Archives Center, I had no such luck exploring the development of AAICU from the late 1970s through the early 2000s. I was the first person to request the papers of Louis Vrettos at the American College of Greece, which detail the founding of the organization from 1972-1976. I interpreted the absence of sources reporting cooperation among American universities abroad during the next two and a

half decades as evidence for the field's struggles. The next mention of AAICU in any of the archives I consulted does not occur until the early 2000s. The organization's official records at present only go back to 2008 and are kept as a zip file, the responsibility for which changes hands every few years. The paucity of information on AAICU and how it is maintained demonstrates how fragile the organization at the center of the field is.

Conversations I had with interviewees also changed how I thought about which institutions to highlight in the study. This was most pertinent to the American universities in the Caribbean. American universities emerged there during the 1980s and began to proliferate right around the same time that American universities did in other world regions. I spoke with founders of two Caribbean institutions—the American University of Antigua and the American University of Integrative Sciences. Like nearly all other American universities in that region, they are medical colleges. And almost all of their students are American citizens who are being trained for careers in the United States. These institutions tend to cater to minority students—African Americans and second-generation immigrants. After an initial expectation to include them in the study, I ultimately excluded them because they are borne of categorically different circumstances, i.e., having to do with the American Medical Association's perceived arbitrary control over admissions at U.S. medical colleges despite a shortage of doctors in the United States (N. Simon, personal communication, August 16, 2016). While certainly interesting and an important expression of American higher education abroad, I concluded that their cases were not a priority for the study.

The mere act of soliciting interviews also disclosed key insights about the field. Many individuals I contacted were eager to speak with me, which I interpreted as an unmet demand for information about these institutions. Indeed, more than a few offered to put me in touch with

publishers. At the same time, a surprising amount of individuals declined to speak with me; some were even curt and seemed suspicious of my inquiry. It appeared that others were intentionally avoiding me after months of attempts to make contact. Those who abstained from participating in the project tended to represent younger institutions and/or those making non-traditional claims to American authenticity. These experiences underscored the value of conceptualizing the field of having a center and periphery. I had to work much harder to reach institutions at the periphery. That the voices of more than a few of these institutions are ultimately represented in the study renders it considerably more comprehensive.

### Conclusion

In this research project, I explore the development of the field of American universities abroad. I am able to do this rigorously and comprehensively through the use of a mixed-methods research design informed by the glonacal agency heuristic and comparative case study (CCS) model. Through the use of 54 semi-structured interviews with actors in the field, extensive primary and secondary source material, and field notes developed in visiting 11 American universities abroad, I am able to trace the development of individual institutions, university consortia, and the entire organizational field. Using analytical techniques informed by grounded theory and discourse/frame analysis, I am able to identify patterns of motivations and strategies to establish and sustain these institutions over time. I then use these categories to create a convincing narrative that explains the emergence of the field of the American universities abroad.



## CHAPTER FOUR: FIELD FORMATION, 1919-1945

### Introduction

By the early summer of 1919, the half-century experiment of American collegiate education in the Near East was nearly over. The Great War had taken its toll on both Robert College in Constantinople (est. 1863) and the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut (est. 1866). For reasons both ideological and tactical, neither institution suspended operations during the war. Their Christian service-oriented missions compelled them to continue their regular educational practices despite the harsh conditions. Each also possessed substantial physical assets they feared the belligerent, Axis-aligned Ottoman government would be all too eager to seize if the colleges were not actively utilizing them. Voluntary hospital services and discounted student fees only aggravated their financial health. The combined effect of these practices was a collective deficit of approximately \$650,000.<sup>1</sup> The sum far exceeded the means of the colleges' small donor bases, consisting of only a few individuals. Six months after the war, trustees of both colleges considered closing them (Historical Statement of the Near East College Association, 1940, 1).

A quarter century later, the experiment was, in fact, far from over. Robert College and the re-named American University of Beirut<sup>2</sup> had not only survived, they were in far better condition than before the war. While still shaky, especially in the midst of yet another war, the financial burden diminished, enrollment improved, and influence increased. A New York-based non-profit association now handled their fundraising and various administrative functions. The pool of contributors had multiplied exponentially. There were even new American colleges in Greece and Egypt. Admirers in Algeria, Morocco, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan wanted to establish American colleges as well (Annual Meeting Minutes, 1943).

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<sup>1</sup> Roughly \$9.2 million in 2018.

<sup>2</sup> The trustees voted to change the name in 1919 and the New York State Board of Regents approved it a year later. For more on the impetus to change the name and the hurdles in doing so, cf. Penrose (1941, 171-72).

In the ensuing chapter, I explore this reversal of fortune. How did an established and vibrant field of American colleges in the Near East develop from loosely related, practically insolvent Christian colleges during the inter-war period? I summarize my argument thusly: in an effort to mobilize resources more effectively and conduct their operations more efficiently, Robert College and the Syrian Protestant College consolidated key administrative functions into a shared New York City office following the First World War. Constantinople Woman's College joined them shortly thereafter. Each college maintained its independence through separate boards of trustees, but the new association's professional staff and elite network of volunteer board members conducted fundraising operations and faculty recruitment, among related duties, on behalf of the institutions. This development was consistent with wider changes in American philanthropy at the time, which was becoming larger in scale and more international in scope. Before, during, and after the First World War depressed economic conditions and humanitarian crises in the Near East were widely reported in U.S. new media. As a result, the American philanthropic community was generally receptive to solicitations for support in this area of the world. The association aligned its messaging to leverage this predisposition among potential donors and invested significant resources to raise the profiles of its members, which grew to six colleges before the end of the 1920s. Fundraising and advocacy continued apace throughout the 1930s, during which time repetition and refinement of successful frames induced widespread participation in the Near East colleges movement. The content of the frames defined the substance of the field, which legitimated member colleges among key audiences in the U.S. and abroad. By the end of World War II, the association had successfully organized the field of American colleges in the Near East, which had become a veritable institution.

In the rest of this chapter, I unpack this argument in two parts. First, I consider the evidence for field formation by describing the structure of the emergent field and tracking its changes throughout the inter-war period. In so doing, I identify the context for the field's development as well as the field's boundaries, explaining how they were drawn and enforced. Second, I analyze the various frames issued about the field and its members. I examine their content, sources, and effects. Ultimately in this chapter, I seek to articulate: the environmental *conditions* that enabled the field to emerge when and where it did; the organizational *processes* that enabled the field to coalesce over a quarter century; and the rhetorical *strategies* that substantiated those processes.

#### Analysis Part I: Organizational Field

The organizational field has become the central construct in neo-institutional theory because it accounts for how organizations become similar in structure and practice. It can therefore assist in explaining the growth of types of organizations, including American universities abroad. An organizational field refers to a group of organizations “that, in aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 148). Did the American colleges in the Near East during the interwar years meet this criterion? Observers at the time certainly believed so. Writing to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. about the recently established American University at Cairo, comparative education scholar Paul Monroe considered the upstart college “part of the whole general program of American and Christian endeavor in Moslem lands. I think this entire field should be studied as a unified problem and some unified program agreed upon” (Monroe, 1924). Indeed, to recognize the colleges as a collective at the time was also often to acknowledge a problem, viz., unchecked growth. Monroe feared that the field would soon become “overstaffed with institutions inadequately supported, and which

cannot possibly all receive or justify the claim of adequate support” (Monroe, 1924). Out of a similar concern did Stephen P. Duggan, the director of the Institute of International Education, write to American College of Sofia trustee Arthur E. Bestor, “I think it is now time to consider frankly the entire situation of the American colleges in the Near East” (Duggan, 1931). In this section, I take up Duggan’s challenge and analyze the American colleges in the Near East during the period 1919-1945 as an organizational field.

### *Background*

Research on organizational fields suggests that they often emerge in the wake of exogenous shocks. Disruptive events force organizations to come together to make sense of their changing environments (Wooten and Hoffman, 2016, 14). In the United States, the Great War stimulated a particular pattern of sense-making that incorporated two gradually significant features of American society. The first was the development of scientific management, the theory of organizational efficiency advocated by Frederick Taylor and perfected by Henry Ford. The efficiency zeitgeist diffused throughout American society. In the realm of philanthropy, “the increasing reliance on large-scale, highly organized, businesslike approaches” was the “most characteristic feature of American giving in the first years of the war” (Curti, 1988, 258). Indeed, the foundations “embodied the outlook of the new industrial economy, admiring and promoting stability, order, and—their favorite word—efficiency” (Geiger, 2015, 479). John D. Rockefeller, Henry Pritchett, and other foundation leaders would usher in a managerial revolution in American higher education built around efficiency (Thelin, 2004, 239).

Another emergent condition of American life during this period was the development of an international worldview. The First World War brought the dangers of Europe’s excessive nationalism to America’s doorstep. Consequently, many Americans, especially among the urban,



coastal elite, came to consider cultural relations among nations a viable corrective to violent conflict. Generally considered the epicenter of the Great War, the nations of the “Near East” region were of particular concern to the American public, elite and mass alike. The term “Near East” was widely used then to connote what we would today recognize as Eastern Europe and Southwest Asia and to a lesser extent North Africa. But the contours were arbitrary. The term could be used to refer to “Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and Persia” while excluding the Balkans and Arabia (Hall, 1920, x). Others were more inclusive. An exhaustive survey of American philanthropic efforts in the region after the war

bounded [it] by Italy and the Adriatic Sea on the west; by the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea on the south; by Baluchistan, Afghanistan and Turkestan on the east; and by the Caucasus mountains, the Black Sea, the Ukraine, Poland, Hungary and Austria on the north (Ross et al., 1929, 4).

American missionaries had been living and working in these lands for a century (Daniel, 1970, xi). As a result of their long and diffused presence in the Near East, there were Christian colleges throughout the region. By the end of the First World War, the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut as well as Robert College and the Woman’s College in Constantinople had become the standard bearers. But there were plenty of others. William Hall, a member of the faculty at Beirut and frequent commentator on the Near East, observed then that

these three colleges, while typical, do not stand alone as representative of America’s gift to the higher education of the East. From Assiut to Teheran is a circle of institutions, some perhaps not so well known as those already mentioned, but all centers of light, influence, and power for the districts in which they are placed. Of the well-known American Christian colleges in Armenia and Turkey there are Euphrates College at Harpoot, Anatolia College at Marsovan, Central Turkey College at Aintab, St. Paul’s College at Tarsus, Central Turkey Girls’ College at Marash, International College at Smyrna and Teachers College at Sivas (Hall, 1920, 159-60).

Despite the established work of the missionaries, it was not until the first reports in 1915 of what would later be recognized in many parts of the world as the Armenian genocide that the

American public would truly turn its attention to the Ottoman territory. The Near East Relief, a private charitable organization established in 1915, would successfully raise over \$100 million from the American public to provide services to the Armenian diaspora (Daniel, 1970, ix). After the Great War, it continued its efforts, aided by the American Relief Administration, which Congress established with an appropriation of \$100 million in 1919. Thus, “by the end of World War I, the idea of providing American money, food, medicine, and other supplies in response to foreign emergencies had become well entrenched” (Rosenberg, 2003, 249).

Not surprisingly then, America’s cultural elite had discussed cooperation among certain of the Near East colleges before and during the First World War. Alongside representatives of mission boards, “cultural capitalists,” whose wealth derived from their families’ industrial ventures and was re-invested into distinctly cultural enterprises, increasingly populated the boards of these colleges (DiMaggio, 1982, 35). Accordingly, the colleges were apt recipients of the “protestant philanthropy” that characterized American charitable giving in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Curti, 1988; Wuthnow and Hodgkinson, 1990). One of the trustees’ chief concerns was how best to navigate a transformed political landscape. The missionary educators who established and operated these institutions spent decades cultivating relationships with Ottoman officials in order to retain their Christian character. It was clear, though, that the new conflict would jeopardize this arrangement. A proposal for a “Union of American Colleges in the Near East” consisting of Robert College, Constantinople College, and Assyrian-Protestant College [sic] anticipated the need for collective effort to protect their autonomy:

Whatever political changes occur in the Turkish Empire American institutions will need to show a solid front and take a firm position in matters affecting taxation of college property, and educational and religious freedom. The recent attempt to enforce unusual restrictions respecting religious teaching and curricula may need to be resisted, and the college officials will need to have a very strong

American support. It is not fair to expect the college officers to carry the entire burden (Union of American Colleges in the Near East, n.d.).

Of course, opportunities for collaboration extended beyond government relations. Some trustees saw cooperation as a means of enlarging the small pool of donors who were financing the same group of colleges. Among those with such foresight were Constantinople College's Charles R. Crane and George A. Plimpton. Writing to Crane's business manager and legal advisor during the war, Plimpton highlighted the fundraising advantages:

I know there are people who want to put a lot of money into these enterprises. They will not do it, of course, until the war is over, but a plan properly devised showing the increased economy and effectiveness through cooperation will strongly appeal to them, and there was never a better time to bring this about than at present (Plimpton, 1917).

Even though Crane, Plimpton, and others were involved in planning a formal pattern of cooperation during the war, Cleveland H. Dodge is regarded as the architect of the blueprint that went into effect in 1919. In this formulation, Robert College and the Syrian Protestant College would jointly contribute to a New York based office. His plan was "to give to each college a sound business management; to secure funds to cover the deficits incident to the war, and to work out a financial program which would enable the institutions to operate like privately endowed colleges in America, that is, to receive their support from the income of endowment plus students' fees" (Historical Statement, 1940, 1). The instrument for such activity was variously known as "the joint office" or "the American headquarters" or "the Fund" of the Near East Colleges until it incorporated as the Near East College Association (NECA) in 1927.

While they are often sustained for other purposes, organizational fields can initially emerge out of shared concerns for efficiency (Wooten and Hoffman, 2016, 5, 14). In the wake of the Great War, efficiency provided a compelling rationale for cooperation, and "there was widespread enthusiasm in higher education for the kind of centralization and coordination that

had been imposed to win the war” (Geiger, 2015, 427). In accordance with this eagerness, the new association provided a range of services for member colleges that improved efficiency in the areas of governance, finances, purchasing, human resources, and communications. For each member college the association: arranged board meetings and kept minutes; acted as liaison between boards in New York and presidents abroad; prepared materials for annual financial audits; purchased equipment and text books; interviewed candidates for staff and faculty positions; scheduled speaking engagements for presidents and faculty; and developed promotional materials (Cooperation Between the Near East Colleges, 1931, 8-9).

### *Fundraising campaigns*

By far the most important work the association performed for the colleges during the inter-war period was in the area of fundraising. During the 1920s it waged several successful campaigns, raising \$1.1 million in 1922; \$2.5 million in 1926; and \$15 million in 1929. During the Great Depression, funds were not as easy to come by. But a large-scale campaign to raise \$650,000 to stabilize the colleges was conducted between 1935-1938. These various campaigns had significant immediate and long-term effects. They saved the colleges from financial ruin, raised their profiles in the U.S., and consolidated the field.

Before the war, the colleges’ revenues largely came from tuition and the philanthropy of an undersized coterie of trustees. But the model was no longer sustainable. Given the extent of their war obligations, “it became necessary to discover new friends” (Historical Statement, 1940, 2). In 1921, the Joint Office facilitated a donation of \$37,000 from the Commonwealth Fund toward the operating expenses of the American University of Beirut. This was the first substantial contribution from beyond the colleges’ parochial network and the association would later credit it for stimulating additional gifts and paving the way for later campaigns (Historical

Statement, 1940). The first campaign kicked off in April 1922. It enabled the three colleges to pay their war debts and meet their operating expenses for the next two years. The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial was the largest contributor. It made a donation of one-third (\$366,666) of the campaign goal conditional upon collection of the other two-thirds before July 15 of that year. Matching grants was a common Rockefeller technique for motivating other donors (Geiger, 2015, 446). Within four months, the “Emergency Fund” raised \$1.1 million. The campaign held events in 25 cities and solicited donations from 1,500 individuals. More than \$450,000 came from donors in New York City.

The next campaign—the Fund for Near East Colleges—commenced during the spring of 1925 to raise \$2.5 million for five years of operating expenses for five institutions, International College at Izmir and the American College of Sofia joining the three institutions from the prior campaign. By the beginning of 1926, more than 4,000 individual donors had committed a combined \$2,505,318. The Fund attributed its success to the myriad newspaper editorials all over the country that endorsed the colleges (Historical Statement, 1940, 3). This technique proved more efficient at soliciting funds than did the cumbersome process of setting up events in cities across the country.

The last major drive for funds in the Roaring Twenties was its most successful, yielding \$15 million. Dodge’s death in 1926 effectively initiated the campaign by forcing the joint office to incorporate. Since 1919, its expenses had been carried on Dodge’s personal account. When it became official in 1927, the new Near East College Association commemorated its formalization by launching another campaign, this time to secure endowment funds. Writing to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. at the end of 1928, the association’s director, Albert Staub, explained that raising funds for endowment meant that the association “will not have to make an annual appeal to the

American public for so large an amount for operating deficits” (Staub, 1928). Over the two and a half years of the campaign, it integrated lessons from the previous two campaigns, utilizing both mass media and private gatherings to raise funds. It produced its own promotional materials, too, including a quarterly newsletter and several brochures. In the middle of the campaign, Staub told Rockefeller, “over 13,000 subscriptions have been received, representing practically every state in the Union and every country in the Near East, indicating a wide-spread interest in the work of these institutions” (Staub, 1928). A year later, 3,000 more donors had made contributions. The largest single gift came from the estate of the late engineer and industrialist Charles M. Hall (\$3.5 million). Edward S. Harkness gave \$1 million and Rockefeller, Jr. provided \$500,000.

The timing of the campaign could not have been better. The last gifts came in just before the onset of the Great Depression, another exogenous shock that would re-stimulate the search for efficiency in the field. After the crash, the association put fundraising on hold, opting instead to build good will for future campaigns. A few years into the crisis, the association considered the country’s new financial condition “an opportunity to work out plans for cooperation, economy, and greater efficiency, just as the directors of banks and business corporations are using the period of depression as a chance for consolidation and economic readjustment” (Cooperation, 1931, 12). But by the middle of the decade, the colleges were on the brink again. In the U.S., income from the endowments declined sharply. In the Near East, the purchasing power of the dollar had been reduced to 60 cents. Among other concerns, the colleges were struggling to pay faculty salaries and association dues (Brown, 1938).

In January 1935, the association announced a \$100,000 emergency fund, a seemingly paltry sum in light of the millions raised a few years earlier. But there were problems from the start. Formerly reliable donors and supporters, including trustees, were unable or unwilling to

contribute. Some were too absorbed with domestic humanitarian efforts. Others felt that the large contributions they made during the '20s obviated them from making additional donations so soon after. Meanwhile, growing isolationism cast a pall over the whole endeavor. By August 1936, the association doubled down on fundraising. Allen W. Dulles became chair of the Five-Year Stabilization Fund that sought pledges for \$600,000 to keep the colleges above water.

The Stabilization Fund was the association's most sophisticated advancement operation to date. At the heart of the effort was identification of new donors. The association had information for 11,500 prior contributors and 19,000 non-contributors. A public relations firm hired to conduct day-to-day operations identified an additional "2,600 names of liberal wealthy people whose record of giving since 1932 indicated that they would be good prospects" as well as "500 names of people receiving salaries over \$50,000" (Brown, 1938, 8-9).

Supplementing the personal solicitations was a robust publicity campaign featuring numerous print and video resources. Among the publications were: 1,000 copies of "An Appraisal of America's Investment in Six Near East Colleges," a 40-page detailed analysis of the individual colleges and their collective value; 5,000 copies of "Who 'Gladly Teach' in the Near East," an illustrated booklet with profiles of faculty; 6,672 copies of a mailed leaflet of "Facts" about the colleges; 2,000 copies of a five-page question and answer pamphlet; 5,000 copies of an illustrated booklet intended for use beyond the stabilization campaign called "An American Investment Worth Saving"; and 12-page newsletters sent quarterly to more than 20,000 prospects. The operation also sent prepared news stories and op-eds to more than 30 New York newspapers, many of which printed them verbatim. When the *New York Times* did so, the association copied it 500 times and circulated it to key prospective donors. The campaign also developed a 48-minute color film, "American Campuses in Near East." It was shown in 33 cities

around the country as part of a traveling road show that also included lectures from the visiting presidents of member colleges (Brown, 1938).

While impressive in their own right, the NECA campaigns reflected the state of voluntary support to American higher education during the period. American universities stateside also prospered, especially during the mid-to-late 1920s (Geiger, 2015, 491). During the decade after the Great War, contributions to higher education grew from \$65 million to \$148 million (Cohen, 1998, 161). Foundation philanthropy was a significant feature of higher education during this era, but only for a select few. The five largest foundations gave approximately 86 percent of their disbursements to only 36 institutions from 1923 to 1929 (Thelin, 2004, 239). In light of this stratification, NECA's ability to obtain foundation funding is all the more impressive. Funding for American colleges and universities became scarce during the Depression, but institutions were able to survive on savings. As a result, the field of higher education managed better than most other sectors of American life during the Depression. Few colleges closed during the 1930s, but nearly all were still burdened by the very real possibility of shutting down (Levine, 1986, 185-86).

The parallel fundraising results are evidence for how the field of American universities abroad was "nested" in the field of higher education stateside (Hüther and Krücken, 2016). Participants in one field are affected by developments in another field when they overlap. The degree to which a member of one field experiences developments in another is contingent on its level of embeddedness in both fields. During the interwar period, the Near East College Association was deeply embedded in both the field of American colleges abroad and the field of American colleges stateside.



### *Field composition*

These various fundraising campaigns were the product of a shared desire for more efficient acquisition of resources. While this common concern brought the extant colleges together and gradually solidified the field, not all members of the field were equally motivated by economic concerns. Consistent with research on organizational fields, later entrants to the association joined to imitate the successful colleges already in the field. Adopting the structures and practices of extant organizations in the field imbues new participants with legitimacy. Colleges that appear legitimate have greater chances for survival because their stakeholders (e.g. donors, government officials, students) are less likely to challenge their actions (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Wooten and Hoffman, 2016, 5). The motivation to establish Athens College exemplifies this path to cooperation. While incorporated by prominent Americans in New York in 1926, the impetus came from the Greeks themselves. One of the association's brochures from the period explains, "[t]he history of the movement goes back to widespread agitation in Athens among alumni of Robert College" (Broadcasting International Good Will, 1927). With nationalist sentiment and policy on the rise in Ataturk's Turkey, Greeks wanted their own Robert College. Staub explained how to start the university and dictated the terms for the association's support. If the Greeks raised sufficient funds for buildings and the government furnished the land, the association would recruit faculty, design the curriculum, and, eventually, secure endowment support (Historical Statement, 1940, 6; Staub, 1924, 3). The impulse for the college was imitation in order to obtain legitimacy; the byproduct was efficient acquisition and management of resources.

Not all entrants to the field during the interwar period were as keen on cooperating. The American University at Cairo (AUC), for example, continuously resisted consolidation during

the interwar period. Founded in 1919 by Charles R. Watson with support from the Presbyterian mission in Egypt, AUC declined multiple opportunities to join the Near East College Association. At root was a sectarian squabble. After visiting the campus, Rockefeller Foundation President George E. Vincent pinpointed the problem in an internal memo:

One of the professors at Beirut expressed the opinion that the Cairo institution, backed by the Presbyterians of the Pittsburg [sic] and Philadelphia areas, is extremely conservative. He had heard reports that Cairo people had deprecated the migration of students from Egypt to Beirut on the ground that the latter institution was dangerously liberal, if not radical, in its theology (Vincent, 1924).

A later analyst would understatedly conclude, “Watson was so opposed to working with AUB that nothing could be done during his lifetime” (Murphy, 1987, 118). Watson died in 1948. The two institutions would not join a collaborative venture together for another few decades.

The relationship of the American University at Cairo to the other American colleges in the Near East during the interwar period demonstrates how the nascent organizational field was structured. In each field there is a “dominance hierarchy” among organizations, often conceptualized as center and periphery (DiMaggio, 1983; Shils, 1975). The center refers to organizations perceived as elite and legitimate. Those at the center can frame the field in ways favorable to their interests and are therefore able to acquire and manage resources efficiently; those at the periphery, less so. Consequently, the more embedded institutions are in the field, the more likely they are to survive. Members of the Near East College Association, principally via the American University of Beirut, were more connected to the mainstream of American higher education and therefore more legitimate. The president of Vassar College had taught at the Syrian Protestant College. Some leading scholars at Yale and Princeton had also begun their careers on the faculty there. Many American diplomats in the region with ties to American academia also had teaching experience at either Robert College or AUB (Williams, 1945, 251).

Conversely, the American University at Cairo's position at the margins of the field was a considerable handicap during its first decade in particular. In order to survive, non-embedded organizations must make alternate claims to legitimacy, emphasizing their uniqueness or niche status (Wooten and Hoffman, 2016, 9). Yet, in a letter to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., AUC board chair Hermann Lum states that Watson mistakenly believed people "would give without urging" if they had only "heard of the work that had been accomplished and the great possibilities for the future" (Lum, 1927). Watson's inability to leverage his friendship with Rockefeller for critical funds illustrates the hazards of the periphery. In a letter to Arthur Woods, Rockefeller acknowledged the bind that he faced with respect to AUC:

Quite aside from the merits of this enterprise, I do not see how I can wisely make a contribution to it without standing ready to contribute to any other similar educational institution in foreign lands. Except that my warm friend, Dr. Watson, whom I so greatly admire, is the President, I should not give the enterprise a second thought (Rockefeller, 1924).

As noted earlier, American philanthropy had become particularly concerned with efficiency after World War I. Foundations like Rockefeller's were more likely to support educational causes that would maximize benefits, as is evident from his letter to AUC trustee William Bancroft Hill declining the latter's appeal for support: "for me to contribute to isolated educational enterprises in different parts of the world, however worthy, has not commended itself as a course likely to result in the accomplishment of the greatest good" (Rockefeller, 1925). Seventeen years later, after the United States had entered World War II, Hill would solicit Rockefeller again, this time making the case for the importance of AUC during the war. But Rockefeller would admit no exception, reiterating his policy of not donating to "isolated" institutions despite his friendship with and admiration for Watson:

I realize fully that the American University at Cairo is playing a part in this situation of real significance. Because I have so long regarded as a very warm and

highly esteemed friend the president of the University, I have often wished it were possible for me to give current financial aid to his institution (Rockefeller, 1942).

Rockefeller's professed veneration for Watson was not lip service. In 1926, Rockefeller gave Watson \$5,000 to shore up his family's finances, which had depreciated after his wife had fallen ill. That Rockefeller would donate to Watson himself but not his organization makes even more evident the advantages of cooperation and becoming embedded in the field. Indeed, while AUC scraped by during the inter-war period, Rockefeller's foundations donated over \$1.1 million to the Near East College Association and would continue to contribute after the Second World War.

#### *Role of U.S. government*

American funding for the colleges during this period came almost exclusively from private sources. The increased emphasis in America on international coordination did not include much of a role for government. Indeed, the 1920s were "characterized by a proliferation of private domestic organizations with international interests" (Ninkovich, 1982, 16). Alexis de Tocqueville had recognized the habit of Americans forming voluntary associations nearly one hundred years earlier. The continuation of non-governmental organizing during the post-war period owed to this tradition as much as to an "old-line liberal distrust of statist meddling in intellectual affairs" and "a complementary faith in the superior virtue of grass-roots involvement," (Ninkovich, 1982, 13). A corollary to these ingrained motivations of distrust and efficiency was a desire not to interfere in the politics of other nations. American philanthropists and cultural internationalists alike expected to practice disinterested humanitarianism abroad. Indeed, "there evolved by the end of the 1920s a private institutional system for the conduct of cultural relations. This network was characterized by a comfortable correspondence between idealist ends and nonpolitical organizational means" (Ninkovich, 1982, 22).

The Department of State created a division of cultural affairs in 1938 in order to help coordinate private efforts. But eventually public funds found their way to the colleges. The first dispensation went to Robert College. The \$73,000 donation supported various programmatic and capital expenses (Daniel, 1970, 235). When the Second World War began, the combination of the Beirut and Istanbul colleges' "influence and their plight made them ideal instruments of Near Eastern cultural policy" (Ninkovich, 1981, 51-52). Accordingly, "In the first months of the American participation in World War II the State Department made grants for scholarships, equipment, and visiting professorships. While the amounts were small, they helped [AUB] emerge from the war without a heavy indebtedness" (Daniel, 1970, 236).

The U.S. government's foray into international philanthropy presented a dilemma for the colleges and the government. The former recognized that federal funds would make them appear less than disinterested, which was the source of their local legitimacy. Meanwhile, government officials were conscious of the local perceptions and wanted to draw an "explicit contrast between European imperialism and disinterested American policy" (Ninkovich, 1981, 52). Accordingly, the government made a series of small, covert grants-in-aid to the association to keep the colleges above water during the Second World War (Ninkovich, 1981, 52-53).

World War II would muddle the colleges' claims of disinterest in other ways as well. After the U.S. declared war on Germany, Robert College President Walter Wright became acting chief of the Near East Section for the Office of Coordinator of Information. Wright asked the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, to clarify the official position of the U.S. government on the colleges:

The American Colleges of Istanbul cannot continue uninterrupted operation without the active support of the U.S. government. The position of the college with reference to the government of Turkey gives unusual importance to the

problem we are facing.<sup>3</sup> Is the continued operation of these American colleges during the war of sufficient importance to the government of the US in maintaining its prestige in Turkey and surrounding countries to warrant the active support of the government (Wright, 1941a)?

Wright was concerned that “Under existing conditions the colleges are bleeding to death through the steady decline in their American teaching force, whom the U.S. government has repeatedly urged to leave” (Wright, 1941b). Turkey would remain neutral through much of the war, eventually aligning with the Allies in 1945. But colleges in Sofia and Athens wound up in Axis-controlled territory. American College of Sofia President Floyd Black tried to stay in Bulgaria after it joined the Axis Powers, but the college was forced to close (Dulles, 1941).

#### *Field boundaries*

Organizations at the center of a field attempt to define its boundaries in part by deciding who can and cannot enter. By the late 1920s, the field generally discouraged the establishment of any new American colleges in the Near East. In a comprehensive survey of philanthropy in the Near East, which included among its committee members numerous trustees, faculty, and staff of NECA institutions, the authors contend,

While the *existing* institutions, native and foreign, should be utilized to the full, there is serious danger that certain organizations will elect to enter the new field without a knowledge of the costs and difficulties, only to fail dismally. Careful coordination of American efforts in the various countries is a prime necessity (Ross et al., 1929, 9; original emphasis).

Yet, by the end of the inter-war period, the Near East College Association was being sought out by national leaders and was eager to assist in the establishment of new colleges in Algeria, Morocco, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan (Annual Meeting Minutes, 1943). Between these poles

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<sup>3</sup> The Turkish government had recently pulled Turkish scholarship recipients from German universities and sent them instead to Robert College for engineering training.

there was even a debate, prompted by surging Turkish nationalism, over whether to turn the colleges over to native control (Brown, 1932; Burns, 1932; Riggs, 1932; Cooperation, 1931).<sup>4</sup>

In order to understand the shifts in policy, it helps to conceptualize the organizational field as a space of strategic action (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012). Fields are not static, especially not emergent ones. Actors in the field have different conceptions about what is important and strive to shape the issues that members confront. Thus, the field is dynamic. Even if the status quo is preserved, it is because certain actors sought to maintain it. Eventually, though, the field evolves according to the shifting interests of its members, which can change with each entry and exit (Wooten and Hoffman, 2016, 8). Who were the actors that shaped the field during the inter-war years?

### *Institutional entrepreneurs*

During this period, the various college presidents and trustees all left their imprints on the field. The most influential were those individuals whom organizational field researchers recognize as institutional entrepreneurs. These are key actors who shape the discourse, norms, and structures that guide organizational action within a field (Maguire et al., 2004). I highlight here two such institutional entrepreneurs whose actions had a profound influence on the field: Cleveland H. Dodge in the 1920s and Allen W. Dulles in the following decade. Dodge was uniquely positioned to devise the cooperative association that became the Near East College Association and mobilize the resources to launch it. He had strong connections to three Near East colleges. His grandfather was among the founders of the Syrian Protestant College, where his son, Bayard, had been on the faculty since 1913. His sister, Grace Dodge, had chaired the board of trustees for Constantinople Woman's College. And he himself had been chair of the Robert

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<sup>4</sup> Bliss hinted at this possibility for Beirut years earlier in his *Atlantic* essay: "it is our purpose to render ourselves, not indispensable, but, as soon as possible, *dispensable*, and we shall go elsewhere just as soon as the ideals of education and of life cherished by us are adopted here" (Bliss, 1920, 664; original emphasis).

College board of trustees since 1908 and would remain so until his death in 1926. During the war, in an effort to keep the colleges open, he leveraged his friendship with Woodrow Wilson to advocate neutrality. After the U.S. entered the war, Dodge urged the president to refrain from declaring war on the Axis-aligned Ottomans, as well.<sup>5</sup>

Dodge's contributions to the association continued even after his death in 1926. The eponymous Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation, established in 1917, would become the association's most reliable contributor, with annual donations made through the 1960s (Goldenberg, 2017, 136). Furthermore, his name would be invoked posthumously as a solicitation technique. In an appeal to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. for a campaign contribution, the association's director wrote, "As he was responsible for merging the work of these institutions into one office, I feel that no finer tribute could be paid to his memory than to finish the task of endowing these institutions to which he had committed himself" (Staub, 1928). When the campaign was completed, the *New York Times* attributed its success to Dodge:

With this fund the name of Cleveland H. Dodge will be for all time associated... Both East and West have reason to be grateful to Cleveland H. Dodge. His practical statesmanship was matched by an unusual fervor of spirit and a great generosity of heart and mind (quoted in Near East Colleges Newsletter, 1930).

"Hearts and minds" would later be associated with Cold Warrior Allen W. Dulles, too. Indeed his involvement with the American colleges in the Near East during the 1930s and '40s foreshadows strategies he would later employ as the first civilian and longest tenured director of the CIA.<sup>6</sup> Prior to this role, Dulles had been a foreign service officer and then an attorney with an international law practice at the New York firm of Sullivan & Cromwell. While practicing law,

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the relationship between Dodge and Wilson, cf. Grabill (1970).

<sup>6</sup> I find no recognition of Dulles's connections to the Near East colleges in his numerous biographies (Grose, 2006; Mosley, 1978; Srodes, 1999), a surprising oversight given the depth of his involvement and the CIA's strategic use of higher education institutions abroad to influence elite opinions during the 1950s (Saunders, 2000; Scott-Smith 2004). In my review of the secondary literature, only Altan-Olcay (2008) acknowledges the connection, and briefly at that.



he chaired the board of trustees for the American College of Sofia and served on the board of Robert College. But it was his tenure as committee chairman for the large-scale ad hoc Five-Year Stabilization Fund for the association that would publicly link him with the colleges. After the Second World War, he would serve as president of the association's board of directors.

Dulles' influence on the colleges was no less meaningful than Dodge's. His leadership of the Stabilization Fund kept the colleges solvent during the Great Depression. The campaign itself utilized Dulles' public profile. The association's newsletter assessed his participation thusly: "With such a distinguished career as a background for appraising the worth of the Near East Colleges... Mr. Dulles pays high tribute to these institutions in accepting the chairmanship of the Executive Committee" (Near East Colleges Newsletter, 1937). Dulles' most lasting contribution would lie in his re-framing of the colleges as American assets, an activity that I address in the following section.

### Analysis Part II: Frame Alignment

Frame alignment has become the principal idea in the study of social movements because it explains why individuals support and/or participate in social movement organizations (SMOs). It can therefore assist in explaining the growth of movements, including American universities abroad. A frame is an answer to the question, "What is it that's going on here?" (Goffman, 1974/1986, 8). Or rather, "What holds these elements together?" (Creed et al., 2002, 37). Frame alignment occurs when "some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary" (Snow et al., 1986, 464). When SMOs align their frames effectively, they induce participation and support from individuals. With added participation, organizations are able, among other outcomes, to mobilize resources more

effectively. Organizations frame issues any time they communicate with potential supporters. Of course, the media and other actors also influence issue framing.

Analysis of the frame alignment strategies of the Near East colleges can demonstrate how the field overcame resistance to its growth. Initial opposition to cooperation among the colleges by leading figures in American education and politics illustrates the challenges to the movement's success. For instance, in the process of incorporating the Near East College Association after Dodge's death, Staub asked Henry Pritchett to become a trustee. Pritchett was president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, in which capacity he had helped establish pension plans for Robert College, Constantinople College, and the American University of Beirut. Familiarity with the colleges did not necessarily endear him to their cause. Upon declining the invitation, Pritchett writes, "I have also some doubts as to the wisdom of establishing an agency to support six of the colleges in the Near East which are scarcely comparable one with another, either in aim or in equipment" (Pritchett, 1926).<sup>7</sup> Pritchett was not alone in his disapproval. Former Secretary of State Elihu Root, too, was averse to the alliance. Responding to Pritchett, Root acknowledged his "very kindly feeling and good opinion of the older American Colleges in the Near East as a civilizing influence," yet maintained that it "does not follow, however, that the proposed new institution in Athens, or that the consolidation, is wise" (Root, 1926). He derided the proposal to incorporate as "one of those which 'to be hated needs but to be seen.'"<sup>8</sup> Yet, five years later, the incorporated colleges would become the beneficiaries of a \$15 million national campaign. Ten years later, they would be framed as six

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<sup>7</sup> NB Pritchett did become a founding trustee of Athens College, but resigned after a year due to health problems (Pritchett, 1927).

<sup>8</sup> The line is from Alexander Pope's epic poem *An Essay on Man* (1734/1881): "Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,/As, to be hated, needs but to be seen" (44). As a favor to Edward Capps, a Princeton classicist and former U.S. Minister to Greece, Root lent his name to the incorporation of Athens College even though his "opinion of the enterprise was not very favorable" (Root, 1926).

units of one great American university abroad. In this section, I explain how the organizational field of American colleges in the Near East during the period 1919-1945 negated resistance to its movement by successfully employing frame alignment strategies that eventually garnered widespread support.

Frame analysis of the Near East colleges between the wars reveals a significant transition in their primary conceptualization from Christian to American. When these colleges began to cooperate—i.e. when the organizational field first began to form—their master frame was Christian. A master frame, according to Benford and Snow (2000), is a general “algorithm that colors and constrains the orientations and activities of other movements” (618). In contrast, an organization frame is movement-specific. They go on to explain, “Just because a particular SMO develops a primary frame that contributes to successful mobilization does not mean that that frame would have similar utility for other movements or SMOs” (619). In 1919, a Near East college was at its core a Christian college. The utility of this frame was universal for all colleges in the field, whether they were members of a social movement organization in the field (e.g., the Near East College Association) or not. Yet by 1945, a Near East college was framed primarily as an American college. Throughout this period, the interpretive scope encompassed both Christian and American, but the frames issued by the Near East College Association—i.e., the organization frames—would gradually shift the master frame.

*Frame: Christian*

In what sense were the Near East colleges Christian? Before the Great War, the colleges were Christian in tradition, administration, and curriculum. Indeed, these common characteristics allowed observers to organize them mentally long before the colleges organized themselves. Each was established by—though independent from—a mission board. The administration and

teaching staff were often graduates of divinity schools. And religious instruction was a central part of student life in and out of the classroom. Notably, however, the colleges typically refrained from outright proselytization. Founder of the Syrian Protestant College, Daniel Bliss, saw no need for a Christian college to convert students. At a groundbreaking ceremony in 1870, he reconciled the two notions in what became a legendary speech:

The College is for all conditions and classes of men, without reference to color, nationality, race, or religion. A man white, black, or yellow, Christian, Jew, Mohammedan, or Heathen, may enter and enjoy all the advantages of the institution for three, four, or eight years, and go out believing in one God or many gods or no God; but it will be impossible for anyone to continue with us long without knowing what we believe to be the truth and our reasons for that belief (quoted in Bliss, 1920, 666).

In Constantinople, too, the colleges would practice an inclusive version of Christian education. Though prescribed Bible study and chapel attendance would eventually become concerns for the administrations. While President Caleb Gates of Robert College sought to preserve the traditions, his counterpart at Constantinople College was inclined to be more flexible. Seeking the counsel of one of her trustees, Mary Mills Patrick explained that Constantinople College makes “the effort of having our public religious exercises of a character that would not offend non-Christian students” (Mills Patrick, 1914). In his response, George Plimpton approved of her approach:

I believe [the college’s] policy should be so broad and so liberal that all races and all sects can gather under its roof for their best possible advancement... Keep the spirit of the institution Christian, and if I understand Christianity properly it is big enough for every other religion to come under its influence (Plimpton, 1914).

At least one college in the Near East was not as catholic in its orientation. Charles Watson had established the American University at Cairo with a more explicit goal of spreading Christianity. In a letter to Rockefeller, Frederick Taylor Gates, a Baptist clergyman and advisor to Rockefeller’s father, denounced Watson’s motivations as a romantic scheme in contrast to the colleges in Constantinople and Beirut: “There are institutions now existing and supported by

American money in Mohammedan countries that we must all admit are very highly successful and not romantic at all” (Gates, 1921a). So long as it held onto a fantasy of conversion, Cairo, in his assessment, would not be one of them. In a subsequent letter, he would drive home the point that “So far, we see in the Near East no conversion of Moslems and practically no attempt to convert them... It appears that [Watson’s] school differs in no respect from the Government schools, except that his school exercises a christianizing [sic] influence and the Government schools do not teach religion” (Gates, 1921b). Notably, Watson’s ideology would evolve considerably over the next two decades, eventually aligning AUC’s mission, if not practices, with the other Near East colleges.<sup>9</sup>

Framing colleges as instruments of conversion was clearly problematic. While it was evidently attractive to a sufficient number of supporters to launch and sustain the college, this organizational frame precluded widespread support. But a master frame of Christianity was still critical to securing resources. Starr Murphy, one of Rockefeller’s advisors, expressed the expectation succinctly in a letter to George Vincent advocating the Rockefeller Foundation’s support for the American University of Beirut: “Beirut is a Christian institution in a non-Christian land, and it has to rely on support from this country” (Murphy, 1920b). In order to secure support, it was in the interest of Near East colleges to align their frames accordingly.<sup>10</sup>

The Near East College Association and its earlier embodiments would successfully frame their organizations as Christian in various ways throughout the inter-war period. It often aligned frames with a liberal or progressive reform-minded Christianity.<sup>11</sup> This organization frame

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<sup>9</sup> See Ch. 5 of Sharkey (2008) for a convincing argument and compelling tale of Watson’s changing views on the university’s mission. She contends that continuous Muslim anti-missionary agitation forced him to change goals and tactics, ultimately reframing AUC as an educational and cultural bridge between the U.S. and Egypt. Murphy (1987) also acknowledges this development (66).

<sup>10</sup> NB Starr Murphy and Howard Bliss had been classmates at Amherst College (Murphy, 1920a).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Tyrrell (2010), who shows how late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Americans welcomed the soft power returned to the country by American-led Christian reform movements abroad.

portrayed the colleges in stark terms, as all that stood between Christian civilization and the outbreak of another catastrophic war. Among the first fundraising materials that the new joint office produced for Robert College and the Syrian Protestant College was a 12-page booklet titled “The Only Way.” It interpreted the colleges’ survival through the Great War as a divine mandate to peace and enlightenment, framing them as the instruments by which a distinctively American expression of Christianity would rescue the region. The brochure opens by quoting scripture, “‘Pillars of cloud by day and of fire by night,’<sup>12</sup> guiding the youth of the Near East to high levels of Christian manhood and useful citizenship, two American institutions in this troubled quarter of the Earth are performing a glorious service for humanity” (Only Way, n.d., 2). It emphasized that that the colleges “have co-operated in a spirit of fraternal harmony with American missionary activities in the Near East. In fact, they serve largely to supplement and carry forward these splendid Christian enterprises.”

These frames amplify values and beliefs shared by the colleges and prospective supporters in the United States. Frame amplification is an alignment strategy that refers to “the clarification and invigoration of an interpretive frame that bears on a particular issue, problem or set of events” (Snow et al., 1986, 469). By framing the colleges as extensions of missions, the brochure seeks to mobilize “sentiment pools” among Protestant philanthropists who value the missionary cause. And in framing the colleges as the sole structures capable of lifting the region out of turmoil, it emphasizes the shared belief or presumed relationship between education and peace. This frame alignment strategy was successful. The joint office secured \$100,000 to begin paying off the colleges’ war-time debts.

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<sup>12</sup> Exodus 13:21: “By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night” (NIV).

Beyond mobilizing support for the colleges throughout the 1920s, a Christian frame also served to legitimize the organization that facilitated their cooperation. Consider this testimonial from the prominent progressive pastor Harry Emerson Fosdick in one of the Near East College Association's earliest publications after incorporating:

Such eminently useful service as is being done in the American College at Beirut, for example, is of inestimable benefit, alike to the cause of the Christian religion and to the cause of international understanding in the Near East... Altogether, the Near East College Association offers as bona fide an opportunity for investment in intelligent and influential Christian service as I know (Fosdick, 1927a, 18).

This endorsement exemplifies the strategy of frame bridging, commonly employed by the association (Snow et al, 1986, 467). It presents the association as a resource to individuals already oriented to international Christian service but lacking an organizational base for acting in pursuit of that interest. The frame bridges the social movement organization and the unmobilized sentiment pool. The Christian service framing strategy was not limited to securing donations. The association also framed the colleges as Christian service opportunities in order to recruit prospective faculty throughout the interwar period. Consider this preface to a cross-college faculty application form during World War II:

These institutions stand for the highest ideals in Christian civilization as represented in sound scholarship, Christian character, physical fitness and loyal citizenship; and aim to build up a spirit of brotherhood and mutual helpfulness among all the peoples of the Near East. They welcome to their fellowship of service on the teaching staff men and women who share these ideals and who, in a spirit of unselfish service and cooperation, gladly give of their best for the realization of this aim (Application, 1944).

While a Christian frame was productive at home, it could have the opposite effect abroad. Changing political conditions, especially in Turkey, made drawing attention to the colleges' Christianity a liability. The new Turkish republic's embrace of the West after the war involved a strict policy of secularism in education. Throughout the 1920s and into the '30s, Turkish officials

perceived the colleges' Christian practices—compulsory chapel attendance for non-Muslim students; prayer meetings; bible study, etc.—as insolence, a defiance of Turkish will and regulations (Monroe, 1934).<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, in Greece, even though it was “founded and conducted upon strictly Christian principles,” the newly established Athens College, in contrast to its peers in the Near East College Association, had no missionary heritage (Certificate of Incorporation, 1926). In light of these developments, prudence gradually elevated other frames for the colleges. A decade after the war, the colleges were, as a *New York Herald Tribune* op-ed noted, “still largely supported by persons interested in propagation of the Christian religion. But time has shifted interest from Christian dogmas to what we somewhat provincially call Christian virtues” (quoted in Near East Colleges Newsletter, 1930).

#### *Frame: Character*

The Christian virtues that supporters were interested in propagating were captured by the catchall term “character.” This term dominated rhetoric about American higher education at the time. According to Marsden, character was “the most prominent word in the literature on the role of religion in higher education, since that was a worthy ideal to which religion could contribute without offending modern sensibilities” (Marsden, 1994, 347-48). And it would certainly appeal to major donors. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., for one, headed a symposium on character education for the interdenominational Council on Church Boards of Education in the United States of America (Marsden, 1994, 348).

Upon incorporating, one of the Near East College Association's first promotional brochures quoted a former Turkish ambassador to England:

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<sup>13</sup> After decades of relatively relaxed Ottoman oversight, the colleges in Turkey struggled to adjust to the more bureaucratic reporting structures of the new regime. A 1923-1924 joint annual report included the deadpan line: “According to the tradition of the Colleges we have conformed to the laws of the country” (Report of Robert College and Constantinople Woman's College, 1924, 1).



The unique value of these institutions lies in their emphasis on character building as the foundation of education. ‘I do not know how much mathematics or how much history, philosophy or science you teach at the college, but I do know this—that you make MEN (Broadcasting, 1927).

Of the six colleges the association represented, one was a women’s college and another had been co-educational since 1908. Still, framing the colleges as makers of men or formers of character amplified a particular educational value best expressed in Howard Bliss’ *Atlantic Monthly* essay.

The typical student at Beirut

is daily learning, not merely, not chiefly, from his books, lessons in fairness, in honesty, in purity, in respect for labor and learning and culture, in reverence, in modesty, in courage, in self-control, in regard for women, in the many forces which make for civilization. And wherever this man goes, he makes it easier to foster education, to overturn tyranny, to soften fanaticism, to promote freedom in state and church... (Bliss, 1920, 673).

The Near East College Association would replicate this passage in fundraising materials to signal the character-forming capabilities of its members (cf. Investment in International Goodwill, 1923). Some of the learning outcomes Bliss describes would later be re-framed as benefits of a liberal arts education. At the time, though, they exemplified an approach to education best described as Muscular Christianity, which linked physical and spiritual fitness (Putney, 2001). The association amplified that frame by publishing in their promotional brochures photographs of the Robert College baseball team and students performing agricultural chores at the American University of Beirut.

Advocates of the colleges believed that the cumulative effect of such an educational program was visible and permanent. According to Bliss, “Few are the students from among the thousands who have studied at the Beirut College during the past fifty years who have not received a distinguishing stamp upon their lives which makes them to a greater or lesser degree marked men” (Bliss, 1920, 673). A marked man was one who, separated from the crowd by his

Christian idealism, was destined for leadership roles. The frame echoed the contemporary ideal in American higher education of the “college man” (Clark, 2010; Cohen, 1998, 123; Thelin, 2004, 211). Handlin & Handlin explain,

The great variety of institutions, whatever else they did, aimed to produce a single product—the college man. The years spent in college were to endow the graduates with the cultural equipment to distinguish them in the future, not so much through formal courses of instruction as through participation in the way of life of a community (Handlin & Handlin, 1970, 56).

The marked man and college man similarities demonstrate successful alignment of a frame about a Near East College with prospective supporters in America. It also indicates how the Beirut college was a member of a field nested in the wider field of American higher education.

*Frame: Leadership*

The Near East College Association consistently framed the colleges as producers of leaders. The frame would resonate with Americans, who came to believe after the First World War that colleges were responsible for many of the military’s successes. Levine explains:

On the eve of the war, most college students and faculty still remained apart from the mainstream of American life... the colleges had failed to capture wide support from business, government, and the public. World War I changed all that... In the public eye World War I transformed the college student from a frivolous young fellow into a prospective leader of society (Levine, 1986, 23-24).

As such leadership became a desired attribute of American college graduates, who were increasingly called upon for expertise in matters of diplomacy (Levine, 1986, 36). Many Americans interpreted the Great War as an outcome of the inability to compromise, a failure of Near Eastern and European leadership. Moreover, the local institutions, it was believed, were not equipped to cultivate such leadership. Writing shortly after the war, Hall diagnosed the problem with Muslim schools and universities. They provide an

education that is looking to the past, not to the future. It is an education with no interrogation point. There is no challenging of theories, no questioning of traditions, no outlook into social movements, no testing of accepted doctrines by new discoveries. This education which glorifies and perpetuates the old, opposes the new (Hall, 1920, 143).

By contrast, the forward-thinking, modern, character-forming Christian colleges could be framed as the remedy. Staub became convinced of the frame's potential after visiting the colleges in 1924:

I came away from the Near East conscious of the fact that conditions are more unsettled than ever... There is a genuine desire for modern education and a conscious lack of trained leadership. Without exception the peoples of the Near East are looking to America for this kind of help (Staub, 1924).

Subsequently, the association would amplify the colleges' capacity for producing leaders. It pointed to the colleges' diverse student bodies as evidence of graduates' abilities to transcend deep-seated religious and ethnic divisions. The ability to not only tolerate but cooperate with diverse others was a common trope. A favorite anecdote from Beirut told of two lame students—an Arab and a Jew—arm-in-arm, sharing the college's only pair of crutches during the First World War (Dodge, 1926). The larger implications were that the colleges were invaluable resources for a troubled region and, at the very least, inspired hope that pluralism was possible. One of the association's double-sided postal solicitations quoted Fosdick again in driving the point home:

In the Near East, there is a particular need of a special kind of leadership... The line between Arab and Jew, between Turk and Greek, between Armenian and Greek, between Christian and Christian even, is so deep, so accentuated. The leadership which will help the Near East must be a leadership that has been trained together, so that across the lines that divide the common people, the trained leadership will understand each other and see the good in all. I do not see any other way of achieving the leadership that is indispensable to the Near East, except through these Colleges (Fosdick, 1927b)

The diversity frame was meant to align with a similar one in American higher education. America's colleges and universities framed themselves throughout the 1920s and 1930s as fundamentally egalitarian (Levine, 1986, 160). And indeed the student bodies at most institutions became considerably more heterogeneous during this period (Levine, 1986, 202). Still, the rhetoric and the reality were loosely coupled. Many minorities were kept out of America's elite institutions when character became an admission criterion.

*Frame: Peace*

The diversity frame also cohered to a burgeoning post-war *Weltanschauung*—what historian Akira Iriye (1997) calls “cultural internationalism”—that contributed to a surge in the establishment of internationally oriented organizations immediately after the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>14</sup> Iriye describes the rationale for international cultural cooperation after the First World War:

The postwar internationalists believed that what was really novel about their movement for peace was the stress on cultural, intellectual, and psychological underpinnings of the international order; that at bottom, peace and order must depend on a habit of mind on the part of individuals in all countries... These cultural internationalists agreed that the key to peace lay in cross-national understanding, which in turn had to be built solidly upon active cooperation of cultural elites (Iriye, 1997, 60).

Cultural internationalism was at the core of the rise in exchange programs administered by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Institute of International Education.

Nicholas Murray Butler, who after 1925 presided over the former organization, believed in a “trickle down theory of cultural change” which relied on developing among the world's elites what he called an “International Mind” (Ninkovich, 1981, 11). The theory held that nations were less likely to go to war if their leaders were able to understand each other. Moreover, national

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<sup>14</sup> Notably, the presidents of Robert College, the Syrian Protestant College, and the American University at Cairo attended the meetings in Paris. Dulles was there, too. For more about the American presence at Paris, cf. Walworth (1986).

leaders with international mindsets would be able to influence wider public opinion, mollifying the nationalist passions that hardened into the War to End All Wars. Accordingly, influential “intellectuals and cultural elites of all countries were envisaged as the new crusaders who would be willing to transcend parochial concerns and unite with one another to promote mutual understanding” (Iriye, 1997, 61). Adherents of cultural internationalism in the U.S. believed that the success of the movement—and therefore the prospect of peace—lay in the cultivation of national leaders with international minds.

The Near East College Association seized on this development. Throughout the interwar period, it would frame the colleges as Christian America’s distinctive and concrete contribution to peace. Consider the back page of a quarterly journal it published in 1927: “The Trustees of Six American Colleges in the Near East extend to you an invitation To enlist in a movement that offers a practical program for producing leadership, creating understanding, and inspiring cooperation” [sic] (Near East, 1927). Another pitch from the same year put it even more simply: “A practical means of contributing to world peace is to become a member of the Near East College Association” (Untitled, 1927). Similarly, in the next decade, an annual membership in the association would be described as a “modern form of foreign service” (Next Chapter, n.d.), though notably without promising peace.

Still, throughout the 1930s, the peace frame was central to the association’s appeals, as evidenced from a newsletter issued in the midst of the stabilization campaign:

The trustees invite the generous support of thinking Americans who believe that this country must assume its measure of responsibility for world peace and that there is no more powerful instrument for the promotion of peace and stability than the spread of education and ideals of constructive leadership, liberty, and tolerance (Near East Colleges Newsletter, 1937).

The leadership for peace frame was especially valuable because it bridged two important sentiment pools, those concerned with Christian character formation and those with American influence. It appealed to the religious and the secular, to Protestant philanthropists and cultural capitalists. The colleges had utilized an American frame from the start of their cooperation. In the earliest materials produced by the joint office, the work of the colleges was lauded as “one of the most glorious chapters in American achievement” (Only Way, 1919). It framed the colleges as expressions of American progress and modernity, contending, “the only way to permanent upbuilding of the civilization of the Near East was by the road to universal education. And America, acting through Robert College and Syrian Protestant College, offers the only gateway to that road.” It drew a uniquely American analogy when claiming the two colleges “form the ‘melting pot’ of the Near East in the same sense that America is the ‘melting pot’ of the world.” To underscore the point, the back page featured a photo of Robert College students playing America’s national pastime with the caption: “One reason why the ‘melting pot’ keeps boiling.”<sup>15</sup>

*Frame: American*

Supplementing the Christian frame with an American one was meant to encourage a wider swath of prospective donors to recognize the colleges as their own and to take pride in them. In 1923, Staub would observe in an op-ed, “Very few Americans of today realize how great the influence of Americans has been during the last century in the Near East” (Staub, 1923). Beyond merely informing the American public of the colleges’ existence, the association’s strategy was to convince Americans of their responsibility for the colleges’ welfare.

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<sup>15</sup> The metaphor of America as melting pot entered popular discourse through the 1908 play of the same name by Israel Zangwill (1921). For an intellectual history of the concept’s usage vis-à-vis the tension between impulses to Americanize and assimilate immigrants, cf. Wilson (2010). Steinberg (1974) uses the concept to explain Protestant higher education’s eventual accommodation of Jews and Catholics.

One tactic was to remove any doubt of the colleges' American higher education bona fides. The association compared the three colleges in Beirut and Constantinople to Amherst, Williams, and Mount Holyoke (*America's Outposts*, 1923). It later commissioned a study of the academic programs at the colleges by outside examiners, who rated the three as equivalent to U.S. institutions (Staub, 1932). A brochure from the stabilization campaign anticipated potential donors' concerns about the extent of the colleges' connections to American higher education. It affirmed that all of the colleges have charters in the U.S. and "All adhere to the highest standards of American education and cooperate with American universities in a two-way exchange of graduate students and professors," citing relationships with Johns Hopkins, Vanderbilt, and Columbia as illustrative examples (*Questions About Six American Colleges*, n.d.).

By contrast, Watson considered transplanting American institutions unsound. He explained, "We believe this the right scientific method, not to start out by saying, 'We want to have at Cairo a miniature projection of Oxford, or of Yale or of the University of Wisconsin.' Who knows whether Cairo needs any such institutions" (Watson, n.d., 10)? Rather than obtain legitimacy through imitation, Watson argued for it through his institution's ability to adapt to indigenous context. This line of reasoning would become important decades later, but it did not align as well with contemporary American rationales for support.

Still, the association also wanted to convey that its members were not mere imitations of American colleges. Even though they operated far from U.S. territory, they *were* American territory, almost like private embassies. In its publications, the association variously framed the colleges as American outposts, American broadcasting stations, and American distributing agencies. Through these "transplanted American institutions of education" the association contended that

American ideals are predominant in the reconstruction of Armenia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia just as surely as if America were at the helm of state. For the institutions of these countries are being re-shaped by their native leaders, and the outstanding leaders are American trained (America's Outposts, 1923).

By emphasizing American patrimony, the association could make the case for wider support than the Christian frame alone would engender: "The appeal, therefore, is rightly to the entire American nation, for the obligation to sustain these strategic outposts of Western civilization belongs to no single group or section" (America's Outposts, 1923).

In addition to providing justification for widespread donor support, the American frame aligned the colleges with emergent national values by amplifying the country's evolving role in international affairs. After the First World War, Americans would become increasingly conscious of their country's uniqueness and the possibility that U.S. values could serve as a model for other nations. If this ideology of American exceptionalism would reach a high note in Henry Luce's (1941/1999) entreaty for the 20<sup>th</sup> century to become the American Century, the decades before were a critical warm up period.<sup>16</sup> By the beginning of the 1930s, the Near East College Association was framing the colleges as a distinctively American social movement for international peace:

By associating themselves together in this manner, the six American colleges in the Near East have created a movement that is international in its scope. By interpreting American ideals in education to the students of the orient and by making known in America the spirit and the aspirations of the peoples of the Mediterranean countries, the Association is contributing to a better understanding between many nations. It serves as a medium through which American idealism may be expressed (Annual Report, 1930, 3).

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<sup>16</sup> Luce was involved with Christian colleges in China, an organizational field outside the scope of this paper. He was a member of the United Board for Christian Colleges in China during the 1930s and 40s. China nationalized the colleges in 1949. For more, see Lutz (1971).



The completion of the \$15 million campaign indicates the success of these particular frame alignment strategies. A *Nashville Banner* editorial in the wake of the campaign affirmed its invigoration of the value of internationalism, when declaring that

Colleges in the Near East, supported largely by money from America and manned largely by men and women from America, furnish a striking argument if one is called on to defend this country against a charge of selfish provincialism... All these colleges are busy at a constructive task and it is typical of America that so much money should be so readily procurable for an educational endeavor so far away (quoted in Near East Colleges Newsletter, 1930).

*Frame: Christian and/or American*

During the 1920s, framing the colleges as both Christian and American aligned the movement with significant currents in American life, including higher education. This strategy was so successful that the frames were seemingly inseparable. Many U.S. college presidents of the period “saw Christian and national interests as one” (Marsden, 1994, 265). A Near East college, too, was Christian *and* American. As such, the colleges “represent[ed] a response to a definite need, the Christian interpretation of a message from America to the peoples of the Near East” (Broadcasting, 1927). But by the early 1930s, the entanglement of the frames had presented two problems. On the home front, it was becoming difficult to tease out which frame was more productive. Was it better to emphasize the colleges’ Christian or American features? William Adams Brown argued the former:

In the case of the two younger schools, those in Athens and in Sofia, the initiative has come from the governments concerned who desire American education for their children; and the control has been from the first in the hands of independent boards of trustees. But in the case of these institutions also, it would be true to say that both as to their home support and as to the personnel of their faculty they are Christian institutions and rely upon that fact for their major appeal to the their American constituency (Brown, 1932).

But framing them as Christian at home and American abroad was not that simple. Just as they refrained from proselytizing, the colleges would also need to abstain from agitating. Pressure

from the Turkish authorities in particular was forcing the association to re-examine the relationship of the colleges to the environments. A memo to the trustees explained,

As the American colleges in foreign countries represent Christian America in a very conspicuous way, it is most important that they should be conducted in a matter that will command the respect of foreign peoples... the purpose of educational work in the Near East should be to help the peoples of these countries and not to perpetuate or to propagate American customs or institutions (Cooperation, 1931).

The conceit was that if the colleges could be Christian without converting students to Christianity, they could also be American without instilling in students an American political ideology. This was a challenge for the character building and leadership development programs at the heart of the colleges. Paul Monroe, who had become president of the two colleges in Istanbul, presented the predicament this way:

To many the foreign institution is looked upon as an asset. To many it is looked upon as an obstacle to the complete expression of Turkish culture. There exists this interesting sidelight: that many, even among the latter group recognize unofficially and personally that there is *some* value which we possess, which their own institutions do not achieve, in that such people continue to send their sons to us (Monroe, 1934).

What was this mysterious value? And could it be transmitted without also producing freethinking dissenters that would threaten the development of new national identities? If not, would mere American control suffice to justify claims that the colleges were American? After all, as Monroe had earlier observed, “In a true sense character or moral conduct may be said to be the aim of an American education” (Monroe, 1930, 2).

#### *Frame: Disinterestedness*

Here lay the paradox: Americans wanted influence without interfering. The solution was to frame the colleges as disinterested. The association would contend that while other Western nations had abused Eastern lands, America had no such intentions. This would become a

consistent frame of the Stabilization Fund campaign. A report associated with the campaign clarified the American difference:

Too often in the past, Western civilization has been identified in the mind of the Oriental with armaments and brute force, with exploitation and commercialism in its lowest forms, with organized vice and debasing influences. It is vital to the promotion of better understanding between nations that the West should be known to stand for disinterested friendship and good will... for tolerance and social peace (Appraisal, n.d., 29).

The colleges often cited, as evidence of their disinterestedness, the aim of producing graduates who become loyal citizens of their own nations. William Adams Brown believed “that acquaintance with the spirit and civilization of another nation... renders the student a more intelligent and loyal citizen of his own” (Brown, 1932). Moreover, the notion that Americans had a special aptitude for teaching citizenship was a shared belief of key actors in this emergent field. A Near East College Association newsletter quoted Floyd Black, the President of the American College of Sofia, who explained that

Most private schools in Bulgaria are foreign schools. Some of these schools carry on types of work generally denoted as ‘propaganda,’ meaning that they use their influence to create converts or sympathizers for religious, political or cultural ideas not generally approved in Bulgaria. This association of the terms private school and foreign school is most unfortunate for an institution like the college, which is not concerned with any kind of ‘propaganda,’ but with the training of boys and girls to be good citizens of their country (Black, 1936, 6).

Still, the colleges’ benign purposes could be difficult to substantiate. One campaign brochure argued as proof of the colleges’ impartiality the mere fact of their continued existence:

America’s motives in this educational program have been wholly disinterested. Today, in consequence, the American colleges enjoy a high degree of native confidence, reflected year after year in the enrollment of sons and daughters from leading families and of scores of promising students financed by government scholarships (Who Gladly Teach, 1938).

Disinterest did not mean absence of preference for political system. Association materials continued to stress the importance of the colleges to developing new democratic nations. Nor did

disinterest imply that other nations were welcome to cultivate their own political interests where the colleges operated; it was a zero-sum game. An association brochure identified

The danger... that well subsidized selfish alien interests may gain the upper hand, unless institutions such as the Colleges, which stand for tolerance and good will, for better standards of health and sanitation, for fair dealing and integrity in government and trade relations, can continue to count upon contributions from disinterested sources in America (American Investment Worth Saving, n.d.).

Convincing Americans of the colleges' disinterestedness was only half the equation. For "the worth of the Near East Colleges in spreading goodwill toward America" is derived only "by educating native leaders convinced of America's sincere disinterested motives in serving the youth of this part of the world" (Near East Colleges Newsletter, 1937). The frame suggests that disinterest breeds leaders receptive to American influence. This was not always the plan.

Association materials from the mid-to-late '30s acknowledged that the colleges' new roles transcended the vision of their founders due to world historical events:

Overnight the whole region was opened wide to Western ideas. New nations appeared. Old customs, habits, methods, laws, beliefs were discarded. There has never been such a telescoping of decades and even centuries. ... This bewildering upheaval multiplied the need of leadership a thousandfold (Next Chapter, n.d.)!

Accordingly, promotional materials routinely profiled alumni in leadership roles across society.

One brochure included the section heading "Leaders! Leaders!" (Next Chapter, n.d.).

Disinterest was in some ways a logical extension of the association's peace frame. One brochure made the connection explicit: "Support of these colleges offers a concrete way for Americans to contribute, through educational enterprises entirely divorced from political or selfish aims, to bring about better international relations" (American Education, n.d.). The colleges had continuously been presented to the American public as instruments of "international goodwill." But the transition from an active frame of goodwill to a passive frame of disinterest notably coincides with the passage of the Neutrality Acts during the mid-to-late 1930s. Framing

the colleges in this way was a clear strategy to align them with an American public conflicted about whether to embrace isolationism or internationalism. American colleges abroad with no overt political objectives would presumably appeal to proponents of both views.

The Neutrality Acts of 1935, 1937, and 1939 that aimed to keep the U.S. out of foreign wars were responses to a growing belief that America had entered World War I under false pretenses: that it was duped into conflict by munitions manufacturers and financiers. Public opinion about the wisdom of entering the war would shift wildly during these years. In January 1937, 70 percent of Americans believed entering the war had been a mistake; four years later 61 percent said it was not a mistake (Jankowski, 2017). Allen Dulles became one of America's most prominent internationalists during this period. In *Can America Stay Neutral?*, he argued that

it was not prudent for Congress to put the strait-jacket of mandatory neutrality legislation on our course of action in unforeseen situations. Isolation is not a lasting and sufficient shield for American interests. And it was reckless to think that it could be made so by legislation (Dulles & Armstrong, 1939).<sup>17</sup>

Dulles was no war hawk. Rather, he advocated for peaceable American engagement with the world. This position is consistent with the Near East College Association's peace frame, which Dulles himself amplified in the association's newsletter:

The youth who go out from the doors of these colleges may well hold in their hands the peace of many nations. There is no more powerful instrument for the promotion of peace and stability among nations than the spread of education and ideals of constructive, responsible service to one's fellow men (Dulles, 1937).

The statement was prophetic. Among the delegates to the United Nations Conference at San Francisco in 1945 were 29 graduates of American colleges in the Near East. The association framed that occasion as evidence of the colleges' disinterested influence, stressing that they "do

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<sup>17</sup> First published in 1935. A revised edition was published in 1939.

not try to proselytize or Americanize,” but instead “rear their graduates to be good citizens of their own countries and of the world” (Press Release, 1945).<sup>18</sup>

*Frame: Investment*

The participation of these graduates in developing the UN charter represented a significant return on investment, another favorite frame of the association. The Near East College Association had adopted the slogan “An Investment in International Goodwill” during the early ’20s. It was included in most organizational materials and featured prominently on the association’s letterhead. The phrasing took on added significance during the Great Depression, when so many American investments had diminished or disappeared. Upon beginning its first campaign of the Depression era, the colleges were no longer just *an* investment but *America’s* investment. One fundraising program was titled “An American Investment Worth Saving,” another “An Appraisal of America’s Investment in Six Near East Colleges.” An association newsletter from February 1937 with the title “MOVEMENT AFOOT To Stabilize America’s Investment In Near East Education” [sic] framed the association’s campaign as a means of conserving the millions already invested by Americans in the colleges over the previous 75 years.

A key tactic in the strategy to frame the various colleges as an American investment was to present them as comprising a single university. Association materials from 1937-1938 repeatedly emphasize their unity. One document suggests, “We have in this area what is, in reality, a great American university made up of six units” (Appraisal, n.d.). Another similarly refers to “a great American university with six individual colleges” (American Investment Worth Saving, n.d.). A third echoes the refrain, “The Near East colleges: a great American university

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<sup>18</sup> Virginia Gildersleeve, president of the board of trustees of the Istanbul Woman’s College, was the sole U.S. female delegate to the conference.

made up of six independent units” (Who Gladly Teach, 1938). The scarcity of national resources during the 1930s rendered investments of any kind highly prized. Framing the colleges as an American investment enlarged Americans’ conception of what America’s interests abroad were. And framing the colleges as one great American university made the movement to support them easier to comprehend while it also invigorated a national sense of pride in the colleges.

WHEN ROBERT COLLEGE AND THE SYRIAN PROTESTANT COLLEGE first cooperated after World War I, a joint office framed the colleges as Christian American instruments of peace. By World War II, more than a half dozen colleges were associating through the same frames. But in the intervening years, the emphasis had shifted. A *New York Times* editorial during the association’s last campaign before the Second World War captures the appeal of the ascendant American frame:

The American colleges in the Near East... were founded by Americans, are operated by Americans, and are thoroughly American in policy and practice. These institutions are, in reality, outposts of American democracy. They are accepted and appreciated by the peoples of the lands in which they stand. They are effective agencies for interpreting America’s spirit of goodwill and America’s constructive action for peace in a region which has more than once disturbed the world (Near East Colleges, 1937).<sup>19</sup>

Recognizing that the field of American colleges in the Near East was nested in the wider field of American higher education can help to explain the shift from the Christian to the American frame. By the 1920s, explicitly Christian rationales for U.S. universities

would seem vestigial. The fatal weakness in conceiving of the university as a broadly Christian institution was its higher commitments to scientific and professional ideals and to the demands for a unified public life. In the light of such commitments academic expressions of Christianity seemed at best superfluous and at worst unscientific and unprofessional. Most of those associated with higher education were still Christian, but in academic life, as in so many

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<sup>19</sup> John Finley was one of the founding trustees of Athens College in 1926. He became editor-in-chief of *The New York Times* on April 21, 1937. Less than one month later, the *Times* published this editorial.

other parts of modern life, religion would increasingly be confined to private spheres (Marsden, 1994, 265).

This shift in frame was accompanied by a corresponding change in leadership of America's colleges and universities. Ninety percent of all college presidents serving in 1860 were seminary graduates, but by 1933, no more than 12 percent had such training (Lucas, 1994, 188). Board composition was transformed, too. In 1860, clergymen made up 30 percent of the members of the boards of trustees in private institutions. This figure had dropped to 7 percent by 1930 (DeVane, 1965, 78-79). Corporate executives, lawyers, and bankers replaced them. In 1930, those professions constituted approximately two-thirds of private university board positions (Thelin, 2004, 238). The Near East College Association largely followed this trend, as well. Only one of the association's nine trustees in 1930 had theological training. Of course, the presidents of some of the member colleges were doctors of divinity. But their boards had become more secular. By contrast more than one-third of AUC trustees at that time were educated in seminaries. And in promotional materials, all AUC trustees were identified by their denominations (cf. Watson, n.d., 22).

### Conclusion

At the beginning of the inter-war period, a few unaffiliated colleges started and maintained by Christian missionaries in the Near East began to cooperate in the United States to improve efficiency in fundraising and administration. In doing so, they not only recovered from their precarious financial positions, but they developed endowment funds that would allow them to withstand the Great Depression and World War II. In the two decades between the wars, the Near East College Association solicited more than 36,000 contributions and raised over \$21 million (Historical Statement, 1940, 19). In 1936, the association's six colleges collectively enrolled 3,000 students of 46 different nationalities (Appraisal, n.d., 5). In 15 years, the



association doubled the number of students it served. Along the way, the association began to set standards for American colleges in the region, which many new entrants to the field would imitate. The changes mirrored developments in the larger field of American higher education that it was nested in. Between the wars, enrollment at America's colleges and universities grew five-fold and America's fascination with college life grew considerably (Thelin, 2004, 205; 212).

The field abroad also grew in part due to its successful frame alignment strategies. The association utilized multiple frames that bridged the colleges with unmobilized sentiment pools in America, expanding the colleges' donor base. The frames also amplified values that the colleges shared with Americans, transforming perception of the colleges from instruments of Christian character formation to sites for disinterested American influence via cultivation of internationally minded leaders who would advance peace.

Review of the formation of an organized field of American colleges in the Near East improves our understanding of American higher education stateside during the interwar period. The development of the field illustrates how domestic developments were manifested abroad. Well-chronicled shifts in American voluntary support, leadership composition, and the public profile of higher education also influenced institutions on the other side of the world. Conversely, the preceding account demonstrates how events abroad impacted philanthropy at home. The presence of American institutions abroad in the wake of the First World War provided early cases for large private foundations to test the overseas feasibility of their emergent philanthropic principle of efficiency. Finally, the period under review is significant for its demonstration of how motivations for establishing and sustaining American colleges were linked to national pride in both countries involved. This occurrence highlights the soft power and emergent public diplomacy value of American colleges abroad.



## CHAPTER FIVE: FIELD EVOLUTION, 1946-1990

### Introduction

At the center of the promising field of American universities abroad in the immediate post-war world was the Near East College Association (NECA). An outgrowth of an alliance between Robert College and the Syrian Protestant College in 1919, the New York-based association soon enlisted several other member colleges before incorporating in 1927. It performed a wide range of services for the colleges, from faculty and staff recruitment to purchasing equipment to coordinating trustees' meetings. Most importantly, as evangelist for the colleges, NECA raised their profiles and improved their finances. During the 1920s and '30s, the association conducted several successful campaigns that secured critical operating and endowment funds. By the middle of 1940, the association had collected over \$20 million for American colleges in the Near East (Historical Statement of the Near East College Association, 1940, 19).<sup>1</sup>

The association's acumen in fundraising and administration, in coordination with its elite network of supporters, enabled it to define the substance of the field. Throughout the interwar period, NECA routinely framed the colleges as distinctively American instruments of peace. Both the association itself, in its own promotional materials, and the American media contended that the colleges' emphasis on character building produced the internationally minded leaders required to maintain stability in an increasingly inter-connected world. After the Second World War, there was good reason for the association to be optimistic: it could extend these frames to show how the colleges would be important resources in peacekeeping and reconstruction.

Forty years later, the field was virtually unrecognizable. By the late 1980s, the Near East College Association was gone and there was a sizable population of independent American

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<sup>1</sup> Roughly \$370 million in 2018.

colleges in Europe. These new campuses educated not citizens of the continent, but American students. And a few were even doing so for profit. Some of the older institutions in the Near East were closed or nationalized. Others, including one of the field's peripheral institutions, were transformed from small colleges into large universities. The greatest disruption was in Beirut, where civil war enervated the field's leading institution. This chapter concerns how organizational fields evolve and interact with one another: How did a vibrant field of American colleges in the Near East fall into disarray? How did a cognate field emerge in Europe? And how did the upstart field of American colleges in Europe merge with its counterpart in the Near East?

These sea changes occurred in the context of monumental developments in U.S. higher education and foreign policy. Higher education in America entered its golden age after World War II. The period of 1945-1970 was characterized by unprecedented "prosperity, prestige, and popularity" (Thelin, 2004, 260). After Vannevar Bush linked scientific progress to the national interest in his seminal report to President Franklin D. Roosevelt (Bush, 1945), the federal government and major foundations infused funds into universities for developing the applied, medical, and social sciences. A year after the launch of Sputnik, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (1958), which funded area studies programs and language training institutes at America's universities. A small number of these institutions were "inordinate beneficiaries of the federal research grant bonanza," resulting in what Clark Kerr called the "Federal Grant University" (Thelin, 2004, 276-77). Recipients of federal funding were further awarded influence and standing, which intensified the stratification of the higher education system. Federal funding also became available to institutions indirectly through student financial aid. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (better known as the GI Bill) and Higher Education Act of 1965 significantly expanded access to higher education. In 30 years, enrollment

at America's colleges and universities increased by more than 500 percent, from approximately two million students in 1945 to 11 million in 1975 (Cohen, 1998, 196).

Greater U.S. government involvement in the higher education sector had two noteworthy consequences for American universities abroad. The first was that by favoring large, public research universities, the federal government had inadvertently restructured the funding environment for small, private liberal arts colleges. This development was the source of much anxiety among private colleges in the U.S. during the late 1940s and early '50s. They feared that they would not be able to compete with the rampant growth of their public counterparts (Thelin, 2004, 292). Although in the end they proved "remarkably resourceful and effective in adjusting to the market of student choice," small colleges would never again regain their place at the center of the field of American higher education (Thelin, 2004, 293). The new funding environment would similarly alter the field of American universities abroad, too, which had consisted almost entirely of small colleges that relied on contributions from U.S. donors.

The other result of the transformed higher education landscape that would impact American universities abroad was the enhanced role of accreditors. The new financial aid legislation allowed students to determine where to allocate their grants and loans. But the government needed to incorporate some measure of accountability to ensure that taxpayer dollars were being spent responsibly. The federal government had neither the mandate nor the resources to oversee educational quality. As a result, it came increasingly to rely on regional accrediting agencies to fulfill this function. The Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952 (also known as the 2<sup>nd</sup> GI Bill) required the U.S. Commissioner on Education to publish a list of recognized accreditation associations, effectively asserting them as the legitimate authorities on educational quality (Bloland, 2001, 24). Thereafter, accreditors signaled to the government where students

could spend their federal aid. Accreditors had begun organizing in the 1890s, and participation in their services was voluntary (Brittingham, 2009). But after the 1965 Higher Education Act restricted student financial aid to accredited institutions, accreditation became effectively mandatory and a primary source of institutional legitimacy. By 1968, there was in place a formal process for federal recognition of accreditors (Brittingham, 2009). During the early 1970s, the coordinating body for accreditors—The Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education (FRACHE)—was large and inclusive of specialized agencies (Bloland, 2001, 25), including those that could cater to American institutions abroad.

Meanwhile, America's role in the world had expanded considerably. After World War II, the United States cemented its status as a super power and the global Cold War came to define its foreign relations. The Cold War is often described as a "war of ideas" because the Americans and Soviets battled for the "hearts and minds" of men and women all over the world (cf. Echevarria, 2008). Public diplomacy and development assistance would become the weapons of information warfare. In his 1949 inaugural address, President Harry S. Truman called for American support of developing countries as his fourth foreign policy objective. Congress soon allocated funding for what became known as Point IV Programs, i.e., modernization projects in newly independent nations and other related efforts to combat the worldwide spread of communism. These programs would continue apace throughout the 1950s and find a more permanent home after the establishment of the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1961. Development assistance brought representatives from U.S. universities, especially land-grant institutions, into contact with officials and citizens in developing nations, which created networks of American influence. It also provided further justification for American involvement in foreign education.

America's new global outlook led it to increase its presence in Africa, Asia, and other world regions where the U.S. had previously had limited contact. But America also strengthened its attachment to Europe, where it already had deep ties. After World War II, Western European governments invited the U.S. to play a more active role in economic and military matters (Lundestad, 1986). The Marshall Plan provided economic assistance to Western European countries from 1948-1952, while the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which was created the same year as Point IV programs began, assured a collective defense. One of the key consequences of this economic and military assistance was a more sustained U.S. presence in Europe. In addition to military officers and diplomats, American businessmen, too, came to populate European capitals (Djelic, 1998). American influence grew rapidly in Western Europe after 1945 and eventually reached into the political and cultural realms (Lundestad, 1986, 267). Many Americans and Europeans alike would use education as a tool to foster trans-Atlantic ties. This was a favorable background for the emergence of a new field of American colleges in Europe.

A final notable development in American foreign relations during the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that would have substantial implications for American universities abroad concerns U.S. policy toward Israel. Although Truman went against the advice of his secretaries of State and Defense in recognizing Israel in 1948, American relations with Israel were rather tepid through the Eisenhower administration (Freedman, 2012). The American government refused to supply Israel with arms until John F. Kennedy became president, but the two countries would not develop the strong ties that have characterized the relationship in recent decades until the Nixon administration, when significant security cooperation began (Freedman, 2012). At the same time, Arab nationalism was on the rise. Arab public opinion of the West had started to decline after

World War II, and the region's leaders took increasingly stronger stances against the United States (Vaughn, 2010). America's increasing support of Israel exacerbated these tensions for American universities in Egypt and Lebanon.

American public tolerance for internationalism waned as the Vietnam War escalated. Domestic political crises like Watergate also turned the American gaze inward. The Reagan administration's more muscular foreign policy and neoliberal economic policy created more opportunities for American cultural relations and international education. This time, though, the motives had changed from aid to trade, which did not engender as favorable a political opportunity structure for American universities in the Near East or Western Europe.<sup>2</sup> By the late 1980s, the promise of American higher education abroad was in peril. Throughout the turmoil, though, American universities abroad proved remarkably resilient, and many survived because they were able to adapt to continuously changing circumstances, including pressures from the United States and the countries where they operated. Meanwhile, opportunities for collective action were available, but difficult to identify or operationalize. In what follows, I elaborate on these developments and chronicle the field's evolution between 1945-1990.

#### Part I: The Decline of American Colleges in the Near East

An organized field of American colleges in the Near East emerged between the two world wars. After World War II, the field seemed primed to flourish. Yet it floundered. In this section, I examine how the field changed and how its members framed their activities.

##### *NECA Fundraising Campaign, 1945-1948*

In anticipation of the war's end, the association began mobilizing for a new fundraising campaign in the early part of 1945. The goal was an ambitious \$15 million. The association's

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<sup>2</sup> It was, however, largely responsible for the glut of U.S. branch campuses in Japan during the 1980s (cf. Chambers & Cummings, 1990).



key advantage was its deep-pocketed and well-connected board, led by its president, future CIA Director Allen W. Dulles. A newcomer to the board, the renowned publicist and newscaster Lowell Thomas,<sup>3</sup> was selected to chair the new campaign. Thomas also narrated a new motion picture for the operation called *Outposts of American Education* (1947). He was then serving as board president of one such outpost in Baghdad (*Adventure in International Understanding*, n.d.). The school there proved especially adept at enlisting elite board members, signing up former U.S. President Herbert Hoover; former U.S. ambassador and Under Secretary of State Joseph Grew; and the famed scholar-adventurer Roy Chapman Andrews<sup>4</sup> (*Hoover Named to Board of School in Iraq*, 1946). Beyond the capabilities of these influential allies, the lofty campaign goal also seemed feasible because the same amount had been raised during a national drive at the end of the 1920s. Indeed, the new campaign would utilize many of the same solicitation techniques that had worked in the past: glowing editorials in major newspapers, glorifying testimonials from U.S. government officials, and grandiose claims in promotional brochures.

These various devices framed the colleges following the same general pattern as past campaigns, but updated them to leverage changes in the post-war political opportunity structure. For example, a *New York Times* editorial early in the campaign suggested that support of American colleges in Near East was part and parcel of America's new global leadership role:

A great awakening in culture, education and political awareness is taking place in this cradle of civilization, and Americans would be lacking in responsibility for promotion of world understanding if they failed to follow up and increase their already large commitment of American lives and money in these enterprises (*Our Near East Colleges*, 1946).

Another strategy was to frame the colleges as war allies, veterans who deserved the support of grateful Americans. In a letter that NECA circulated as a fundraising document, a high-ranking

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas was best known for publicizing T. E. Lawrence.

<sup>4</sup> Andrews was, reputedly, the model for the fictional character Indiana Jones.

State Department official lauded the role of the American University of Beirut during the war, suggesting that

military developments might have been quite different had there not been hundreds of officials and intellectual leaders in that area who, as a result of their education in this University, had become acquainted with American ideals. Because of this knowledge the enemies' insidious propaganda had no effect upon them (Henderson, 1946).

The most tried and trusted strategy for the association, though, was to frame the colleges as instruments of peace. In fact, it had become the field's dominant logic about the value of the colleges. If the association could only say one thing about the colleges after the war, it was reflected in a letter from Dulles to John D. Rockefeller III:

In these days when the Near and Middle East loom so large as a factor in world affairs we, in the Association, feel that our work in promoting education and scholarship through the Near East Colleges can be a real contribution toward the preservation of peace (Dulles, 1946).

To that end, linking the colleges with the United Nations and its Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was a virtually inevitable campaign strategy. The notion that the colleges were established vehicles for achieving UN goals was the subject of an entire campaign booklet. The inside cover quotes the UNESCO charter and states underneath it (in all caps): "The American colleges in the Near East have been working for more than three quarters of a century to achieve these purposes" (Adventure in International Understanding, n.d.). The text on the opposite page, above a photo of NECA trustee Virginia Gildersleeve giving a lunch for the 29 graduates of American colleges abroad who served as delegates at the United Nations charter conference in San Francisco, builds the bridge between the colleges and the new world order: "For more than eighty years a group of American colleges—outposts of American culture... have been teaching the principles of the democratic way of life—the very principle for which the United Nations fought" (Adventure in International Understanding, n.d., 1).

After establishing the colleges' utility vis-à-vis the mission of the new global governance organization, the booklet turned to practical matters. Neither the United Nations nor the association of these American colleges would survive without sufficient resources. It implicitly called for donations in observing that, "War is an expensive business. Unfortunately no country is willing to spend for peace what it is frequently called upon to spend for war. Any amount of money spent for the right kind of education is an investment in peace" (Adventure in International Understanding, n.d., 13). Finally, it explicitly beseeched readers to join the association's directors, who "have assumed this increased responsibility as their answer to the challenge which faces the American people to make the United Nations Charter workable for future security and peace" (Adventure in International Understanding, n.d., 15).

The campaign was a failure. After three years, it had raised only 16 percent of its goal. Rather than extend the drive, the trustees opted to shut it down. Still, the \$2.4 million it collected was critical for the colleges. Donations from 3,000 contributors provided: emergency operating funds for all colleges, a new library for AUB, rehabilitation of buildings damaged and looted by Nazis at Athens College during the war, and even a small fund to help establish Damascus College (Patton, 1949, 5-6). But considering the association's past successes, resurgent internationalism in American society, and the college's dire needs, the campaign was an utter disappointment. The colleges operated in the black during the war, but afterward inflation, rates of exchange, and increased operational costs led to deficits. Endowment returns began to decline, too (Patton, 1949, 2). A mere couple of million dollars would not restore the colleges' financial health. What went wrong?

The association interpreted the problem largely as a lack of momentum triggered by the Depression and worsened by the war. In a report to the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the association's new director William Patton explained that

because of the financial stringency of the of the 1930's and the lack of adequate staff in the office, the large rolls of givers who so often and generously contributed to these different appeals were never sufficiently preserved or cultivated. Nor was contact maintained with the many prospects who had been interested. As a result, the Near East College Association had to start afresh with each campaign to secure new lists of prospects that went beyond the relatively few permanently interested supporters (Patton, 1949, 1).

There were other organizational problems, too. The drive was announced in the summer of 1945, but the campaign headquarters could not secure office space until May of the following year, effectively delaying the start by a whole year. Another setback was the retirement in 1947 of the association's founding director, Albert Staub, who had so ably coordinated the productive campaigns of the interwar period.<sup>5</sup>

Organizational inefficiencies may well have hampered the association's ability to meet its goals. But contemporary developments in the American higher education landscape militated against its success as well. Immediately after the war, most private colleges were grasping at straws. Even Harvard routinely fell short of its campaign goals into the early 1950s (Thelin, 2004, 284). Immediate postwar voluntary support for higher education was exceedingly low. Consequently, private colleges across the country found it increasingly difficult to generate sufficient income to keep pace with rising costs. And capital was largely unavailable to expand or improve campus facilities or academic programs (Geiger, 1993, 42). Widespread apprehension at private colleges was spurred on by the Truman Commission Report (1946),

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<sup>5</sup> The AUB endowment more than tripled after the high-water mark campaign that closed out the 1920s. Bayard Dodge, President of AUB from 1923-1948, would later say, "It was due chiefly to the faith and ability which Albert W. Staub possessed that the University was able to recuperate from the war and develop in the years that followed" (Dodge, 1958, 62). Staub's putative talents are difficult to reconcile with his successor's description of the disorderliness of the organization.

which called for greater government investment in the country's public research universities. Indeed, the federal government would soon supplant the foundations as the greatest source of revenue for higher education, which would lead a number of foundations to retrench or withdraw from the arena altogether (Thelin, 2004, 282).

This particular development did not affect the campaign. For decades, some arm of the Rockefeller fortune supported the Near East College Association. And the first postwar drive was no exception. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund donated \$25,000 in 1946 and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. made multiple personal gifts totaling \$245,000 in 1947 (Agency Report, n.d.). During past campaigns, Rockefeller donations had a multiplying effect, inciting other large contributions. However, no such catalysis occurred this time around. There were no other large gifts and very few were designated for endowment (Patton, 1949, 7). Why did this trusted strategy fail to mobilize adequate contributions this time?

The association's frame alignment strategies during the campaign were basically ineffective. While they were not too far afield from past campaigns, the frames differed in critical ways. For example, the association miscalculated by so strongly linking the colleges with UNESCO. Despite the fanfare surrounding its establishment, Americans' interest in the organization turned out to have been a flash in the pan. Contemporaneous attempts by other higher education associations (such as the American Council on Education) to frame their activities as consistent with UNESCO goals also failed to generate support (Hawkins, 1992, 187-189). More importantly, after two world wars fought in the lands where the colleges operate, framing them as peacekeepers was considerably less credible.

In short, 1945-1948 was a terrible time to undertake a fundraising campaign and the association failed to frame the colleges in ways that would overcome the environmental

constraints. But while private colleges in America were generally able to adjust to the new environment, the association never fully recovered. Past campaigns served to organize and strengthen the field, but this one unmoored the association. The immediate post-war years were the beginning of the end for NECA. The association continued its regular activities through the 1950s. It still produced newsletters, solicited foundation grants and annual fund donations, and held benefit concerts. But it no longer had the capability to stimulate a widespread movement as it had in earlier decades. By the early 1960s, the association had terminated its fundraising operation (Hall, 1963). In the early 1970s, it created a subsidiary services company—International Institutional Services (IIS)—to handle purchasing and related functions for clients abroad. By that time, NECA was a shell of its former self. It had eight members, but after Robert College merged with the American College for Girls and terminated postsecondary degree programs in 1971,<sup>6</sup> the American University of Beirut was the only one operating at the tertiary level (Near East College Association, 1972).

#### *Field Evolution, 1949-1971*

What did the field of American colleges in the Near East look like with a weakened and then eventually non-operational organization where its center had been? While American higher education was entering its golden age, American higher education abroad, on the whole, was considerably less luminous. Although, of course, some institutions did shine as stratification became a characteristic feature of the field. Indeed, the campaign of 1945-1948 revealed the patchiness of the field. Institutions in the Levant were in generally better condition than those in Turkey and Greece. Even though AUB had accumulated a deficit of over \$400,000 by the middle of 1948, the association felt that “its situation is not as critical as that of its sister institutions in

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<sup>6</sup> Part of the Robert College campus was turned over to the Turkish government for the establishment of Boğaziçi (Bosphorous) University, which considers itself a public university descendant of the private college (cf. Freely, 2012).

Turkey and Greece” (Near East College Association, 1949a, 3). At least one major donor agreed. Staff at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund believed that the needs of the three NECA colleges in Syria and Lebanon (i.e., American University of Beirut, International College, and Damascus College) were “fairly well provided for” by “corporations and individuals.” But Robert College, the American College for Girls, and Athens College were disproportionately suffering from accumulated and current deficits as well as postwar rehabilitation needs (Rockefeller Brothers Fund, 1949). Robert College in particular was on the brink of closing (Packard, 1949). And to make matters worse, measures intended to keep the field evenly spread were having the opposite effect. The association’s rigid disbursement policy for undesignated gifts made it difficult to channel funds to the most needy institutions (Packard & Creel, 1949).

Meanwhile, the field began to re-center around two institutions. During the first quarter century after the war, the American University of Beirut continued to enhance its already sterling regional profile. At the same time, the American University at Cairo<sup>7</sup> began to transcend its parochial origins and move to the center of the field. These institutions’ prestige and influence enabled them to acquire resources in a new funding environment and to shape local and international perception of American universities abroad.

For its first 25 plus years, the American University at Cairo operated on the periphery of the field of American higher education institutions in the Near East. Its marginal status owed principally to its founder’s stringent resistance to joining or collaborating with the Near East College Association. Sectarian and regional prejudices were the basis of Charles Watson’s aversion. The Presbyterian from Pennsylvania simply could not fathom cooperating with the

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<sup>7</sup> The American University *at* Cairo became the American University *in* Cairo in 1961 after a high-ranking Egyptian official complained that use of the former preposition made the capital city sound like an unimportant village (Murphy, 1987, 150).

Congregationalists from New York. Watson drove the point home in a letter to the Rockefeller Foundation:

A last observation should be emphasized that we are not a part and never have been a part of the Near East Colleges Association and therefore should not be confused with that movement, historically born of a separate educational movement and in a separate part of America (Watson, 1946).

Such intransigence was not without consequences. While AUC was able to raise \$3 million during its first quarter century (American University at Cairo, 1946b, 5), it was forced to do so without the support of the major foundations, which looked askance at what was perceived as inefficiency (Project Memorandum, 1948, 2). Moreover, while many Americans had become familiar with the American University of Beirut and Robert College through national and regional media, the American University at Cairo “barely announced its appeal to the public” (American University at Cairo, 1946b).

Organizations at the center of a field can frame the field in ways favorable to their interests and are therefore able to acquire and manage resources efficiently; those at the periphery, less so. After John McLain became president of AUC in 1955, more emphasis was placed on fundraising (Murphy, 1987, 126). In accordance with a new priority to cultivate corporate and foundation donors, McLain established an office for the university in New York and hired a Ford Foundation administrator to run it (Murphy, 1987, 126; 128-29). McLain even began communicating with the American University of Beirut and Robert College from time to time (McLain, 1961, 1). During McLain’s tenure, the university framed itself as less overtly Christian, although, he still conceived of AUC “as a continuing representation of a Western Christian institution living a life of unselfish service in a sister country that receives this institution with welcome and gratitude” (McLain, 1961, 3). More importantly, at this time, AUC started to become an elite, comprehensive university. McLain wanted to focus on quality over



quantity and admissions would continue to become increasingly selective. In a letter to university supporters, he explained

The focus of the university is to be on graduate studies, research, creative writing and publication. We will not minimize teaching and we will not neglect the undergraduate faculty but the challenge of our effort must be sought on the advanced levels (McLain, 1961, 2).

McLain's vision to promote graduate-level research would position the university to take advantage of a new funding environment that favored graduate-level universities over undergraduate colleges. But the university's development in this direction was by no means inevitable. Robert College provides a helpful contrast. In 1958, its new president tried to resurrect the college, which in his estimation had fallen into a "static state." He was determined that Robert College "shall become once again the leading American institution of higher learning in the Middle East" (Walz, 1958). But his solution was to strengthen undergraduate degrees so that they would be equivalent to those offered by accredited institutions in the U.S. (Walz, 1958). The gambit failed. Robert College would never regain its place at the center of the field. Its eminent statesman status enabled it to secure vital stopgap resources from the U.S. government and private foundations up through the 1960s. But the writing on the wall was clear: the post-war funding environment favored research universities. And, of American higher education institutions abroad, there were only two.

There were direct financial advantages for higher education institutions that developed in this direction. After 1949, the U.S. government became a major donor to the field through technical assistance grants. American universities abroad and their surrogates would argue that since they had been modernizing their host countries for decades, they were uniquely positioned to fulfill America's new foreign policy objectives. "Invaluable work inspired by Point Four ideals has been carried on in the area for many years by the American University at Cairo and by

the educational units of the Near East College Association,” Hal Hoskins wrote in a leading political science journal. Hoskins, who co-founded both the Fletcher School of Diplomacy at Tufts University and the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, explained, “Until World War II, in fact, these schools provided almost the only continuing contacts between the United States and the peoples of the area... It remains for the United States only to augment these efforts in order to accomplish many things” (Hoskins, 1950).

Augmentation ensued. Point IV funding provided AUB with over \$800,000 to offer 120 scholarships for students from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Liberia, Libya, Aden, Cyprus, Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon (Penrose, 1952). After its establishment in 1961, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) would become the primary vehicle for government support of AUB and AUC. The agency’s American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) unit doled out \$15.2 million in grants to AUC during the 1960s. In 1969, the agency created a \$36 million endowment for the university (Comptroller General, 1978). By the early 1970s, USAID funds accounted for more than 30 percent of AUB’s \$16 million annual budget (Mideast Tensions Find an Echo, 1971).

The American universities in Beirut and Cairo were also well positioned to take advantage of advancements in large-scale private philanthropy. There were three basic areas of support from philanthropic foundations to higher education in the post-war era: 1) medical and health sciences; 2) research infrastructure (fellowships, libraries, associations, etc.); and 3) social and behavioral sciences (Geiger, 1993, 93). Beirut and/or Cairo would benefit in each of these areas. The Rockefellers had consistently supported AUB during the interwar period, primarily via donations to NECA. Indeed, that support continued into the 1950s with a five-year \$500,000 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation for construction of a medical school (Beirut School

Expanding, 1953). The Rockefeller Foundation also supported Arab Studies at the university, while the Rockefeller Brothers Fund contributed to research in education, psychology, and sociology (Dodge, 1958, 100).

By contrast, the American University in Cairo had a less successful track record in securing Rockefeller support. Despite the warm friendship of AUC's founder Charles Watson with John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the latter's various philanthropic entities had resisted the former's entreaties for support throughout the interwar period. Little would change after the war. Although Rockefeller and his son David both made personal contributions to AUC in recognition of their personal esteem for Watson during the institution's first post-war campaign, Rockefeller organizations continued to find fault with the university (Dana, 1959). For instance, in an internal memo, a Rockefeller Foundation staffer praised AUC's results and predicted increasing capacity for regional influence, given the university's new outlook and geo-strategic position. However, he posited, "the University's financial and fund-raising policies seem to be a little devious and at times a bit high-handed" (Creel, 1946). When the Rockefeller Foundation realized that AUC was using a capital campaign to pay its debts, it once again declined the university's solicitation for assistance.

Fortunately for AUC, the Ford Foundation would soon emerge as the largest philanthropic concern in the world. Ford specialized in establishing or strengthening social and behavioral sciences programs at major private universities (Thelin, 2004, 283). The foundation would provide a series of small grants to support faculty and staff salaries at AUC in the early 1950s. It also helped to establish and then subsequently maintain the university's Social Research Center with a quarter million dollar grant (Murphy, 1987, 127). In 1958, a \$335,000 operations grant allowed the university to run without a deficit for the first time in many years

(Murphy, 1987, 141). During the Six-Day War, it even provided AUC with a critical emergency loan (Murphy, 1987, 176). Ford's patronage of AUC, though, paled in comparison to the American University of Beirut. In 1953, it was the largest single recipient of Ford's Near East portfolio. During that year, it took nearly a third of all grant monies that the foundation dispensed in the region: \$350,000 for its liberal arts and sciences program, \$200,000 for its economic research institute, and \$500,000 for the establishment of a college of agriculture with an experimental farm (23 Grants for Near East, 1953).

Such substantial support from the United States government and American private foundations was made possible in no small part by the universities' reputations. How were the universities framed at this time? The public profile of the American University of Beirut was based on the success of its alumni. The university was renowned throughout the Near East and the West for producing influential graduates. Stopping by the university's exhibit at the 1964 World's Fair in New York, U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and Ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson marveled at the university's accomplishments. Kennedy proffered that, "More world leaders have been educated at the American University of Beirut than at any other institution I can think of—even Harvard." Stevenson remarked on how he was

constantly reminded of the influence AUB exerts through its many distinguished alumni throughout the Arab world... I believe this is a tribute to private American education, and I am sure it is a value to the United States prestige in the Middle East, and a help in conducting our foreign relations (AUB Exhibit at New York's World's Fair Draws Distinguished Visitors, 1964).

The notion that American universities abroad were assets for United States foreign policy was not new. America's ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, had realized the value of Robert College to America's regional interests before World War I. Government support to the colleges during World War II also implied awareness of their utility for wider

American aims. But after the war, government officials began to acknowledge this function more explicitly. A 1957 staff study prepared by the Department of State on U.S. objectives and policies for the Near East included the simple, declarative line: “We should continue to support the American University of Beirut” (Boggs, 1957). Notably, even those outside the government were pushing the foreign policy frame, as well. The director of the Near East College Association suggested as much eight years earlier when soliciting funds from the Rockefeller Foundation: “These colleges might justifiably be considered vital elements of American foreign policy—aids which are the more effective because they are not organs of propaganda but rather answer an ever increasing demand from the peoples of the countries concerned” (Patton, 1949). But framing the colleges as instruments of American foreign policy was problematic. On the one hand, doing so made a clear case for the significance of the institutions, a critical step in directing resources to them. On the other hand, the frame also made it harder for colleges to claim disinterest, which was the foundation of the field’s legitimacy. Eventually, the tension would lead to controversy at Beirut and Cairo.

Immediately after the Second World War, a frame of disinterest still reigned among American colleges in the Near East. During the Spring of 1946, new AUC President John Badeau explained the college’s policy toward involvement with local issues: “For twenty years we have steadily maintained with our students and public the policy that as an *American* institution we are entirely neutral in partisan political matters” (American University at Cairo, 1946a). But by the end of the decade, the specter of communism would complicate the professed disinterest among institutions in the field. Soon, the Near East College Association began to frame the colleges as combatants to the feared political ideology. Its 1949 Christmas solicitation asserted,

Many of the Near Eastern peoples are making the change, after years of foreign rule, to self-government. Communists, exploiting a corrupt past of peasant domination and division of populations according to race, sect, and social stratum, are now threatening the constructive efforts of these new governments with a program of atheism and violence (Near East College Association, 1949b).

American colleges in the Near East did not consider repelling communism to be interfering in local politics. Instead, communism was a non-partisan scourge the colleges could castigate as a part of their service missions. Despite its waning influence, the Near East College Association was primed to extend its frame of the colleges as humanitarians to envelop anti-Communism. It positioned Athens College, in particular, as a critical American resource in the new fight. In a proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation, the association painted a stark picture:

It would be particularly unfortunate for an American school in Greece to admit that it could not find the means necessary to maintaining scholarships for 400 boys at a time, when... 28,000 Greek children have been abducted from Greek communities by Communists and have been sent to Russian satellite countries for education and indoctrination... We are convinced that we are not exaggerating by saying that the failure of Athens College to meet the responsibilities described above would be interpreted in Greece as an American failure, indicating the weakening of American interest and its determination to continue the struggle (Near East College Association, 1949a, 6).

The association doubled down on the frame, replicating it in a proposal to the Ford Foundation a year later:

The American public, and doubtless our government, continues to hope that assistance given abroad will be accepted not as an excuse (for passive reliance on US) but as an incentive to intensified local efforts, to increased determination to rebuild the broken fabric of society as a bulwark against the Communist danger. Athens College is such a bulwark... (Near East College Association, 1950, 2).

When the college's president embarked on a speaking tour in the United States, the *New York Times* summarized the theme of his talk by quoting him: "Education is America's best weapon for fighting Communist propaganda in Greece" (Education Held Red Foe, 1951). There was a ready, albeit cautious, audience for this frame stateside. During most of the post-war era, higher

education rhetoric focused on capacity for colleges to educate citizens for a democracy and conduct research for national defense. But between 1948 and 1953, a potent anti-Communism permeated higher education (Thelin, 2004, 274). This was the height of the Second Red Scare when Senator Joseph McCarthy and the House un-American Activities Committee intimidated American society. Many higher education institutions implemented loyalty oaths, and academic freedom was under constant threat. In this environment, positioning an institution as a buttress against communism could yield advantages.

The perceived threat of communism extended beyond the Balkans. In the new global Cold War, the Near East would become a critical battleground (Trentin, 2012; Westad, 2005). At AUB, the leftist student body's flirtations with communism were a continual source of concern for its President, Stephen Penrose, until his death in 1954 (Anderson, 2011). Penrose, a veteran of OSS, the precursor to the CIA, was especially vigilant about Soviet propaganda. In a speech at Princeton, he recounted a recent Soviet attempt to infiltrate the AUB campus:

The American University of Beirut was during the past year the specific object of Communist efforts to provoke internal disturbance and to upset the effective operation of the institution. Fortunately, I was given advance warning of their intention and was in a position to take vigorous action as soon as the trouble showed signs of breaking. As a result we were able to dislodge a Communist cell which had been established among certain students in the University, mainly Iraqi and Palestinians (Penrose, 1951).

President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles were both wary of calls to support the American University of Beirut. On a trip to the Near East in 1958, Dulles "recalled that during his visit five years ago, eggs were thrown at him by Communist demonstrators in Cairo, and the Lebanese Government had asked him not to visit the American University because of expected Communist demonstrations" (Rountree, 1958). A year later, during a National Security Meeting, the president, less sanguine about winning Arab hearts and

minds, countered an adviser's laudatory remarks about the value of Robert College and the American University of Beirut to American interests by repeating what happened to Dulles (Gleason, 1959).<sup>8</sup>

Concern over communism intersected with another U.S. foreign policy challenge that would have far greater impact on the field of American colleges in the Near East. The Soviets would seek to exploit Arab antagonism to the partition of Palestine. Penrose explained, "For obvious purposes in the Arab world, Israel is publicly declared to be the tool of Anglo-American imperialism, the obvious implication of which is that the Arab countries should look to Soviet Russia for a reestablishment of their territorial rights" (Penrose, 1951). The most immediate practical consequence for the universities in Beirut and Cairo was that students became sympathetic to the plight of Palestinian refugees and increasingly hostile to the Western nations they held responsible for it. Even before the establishment of Israel, American diplomat and presidential advisor George Kennan warned that partition of Palestine could lead to closing or boycotting of AUB, AUC, and other American educational and philanthropic institutions in the region. He sensed that U.S. prestige in the Near East "suffered a severe blow" when the U.S. sponsored a recommendation in the United Nations to partition Palestine. As a result, the country's "strategic interests in the Mediterranean and Near East have been seriously prejudiced" (Kennan, 1948).

Kennan's assessment was prescient in some ways, specious in others. Israel would indeed come to complicate the presence of AUB and AUC in the new republics of Lebanon (1943) and Egypt (1952). Intermittent military conflict with Israel during the next three decades would disrupt both campuses through the suspension of courses and/or temporary evacuation of

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<sup>8</sup> One of Eisenhower's advisers, George Allen, refuted the president's interpretation. He thought that the attacks on Secretary Dulles at AUB came from pro-Nasser rather than from pro-Communist students (Gleason, 1959).



expatriate faculty and staff.<sup>9</sup> Each institution would face significant threats of government interference, too. And for the first time, anti-Americanism became a substantial hurdle to the universities' development. In 1946, the American University at Cairo could boast that the letter President Truman sent to the college on the occasion of Badeau's inauguration, "received the widest publicity in all the Arabic papers, thus greatly enhancing the position and influence of the University in the eyes of all Arabic-speaking readers" (American University at Cairo, 1946b). Not two decades later, though, the institution would have to fend off allegations from Egyptian government-owned newspapers that as a front for the CIA, AUC was complicit in a U.S. plot to overthrow the Nasser regime (Smith, 1965).

At the same time, parallel accusations emerged in Beirut. Arab nationalists charged that AUB was a tool of Western imperialism that was sheltering CIA agents and insulting Islam. If that were not enough, Western liberals were simultaneously criticizing university administrators and trustees for not doing enough to protect the free exercise of academic speech. Covering its centennial year celebration, the *New York Times* found "this major outpost of new-world thought in the Mideast embattled from without and within" (Brady, 1966). Five years later, the same newspaper would extend its lamentation for the university, asserting "The Beirut University's current difficulties stem less from internal problems than from America's changing role in the world." After the establishment of Israel, AUB "appeared caught in the contradictions of its existence." Simply put: "Israel, and the identification of the United States Government with the Israeli cause in the Arab mind, is, of course, at the core of the university's tenuous status" (Mideast Tensions Find an Echo, 1971).

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<sup>9</sup> For more on how Arab-Israeli hostilities impacted the campuses, cf. institutional histories of AUB by Anderson (2008; 2011) and of AUC by Murphy (1987). Anderson's perspective is notable for its attention to student movements.

Kennan, Penrose, and other American Cassandras would not have been surprised to find that “one of the oldest and most distinguished American cultural institutions abroad... had reached its low point, in the outside world at any rate” (Mideast Tensions Find an Echo, 1971). But the furor in the outside world belied a stubborn reverence within the region for the American universities. Not unlike Turkish attitudes towards Robert College during the 1920s and ’30s (see Ch. 4), local authorities realized the value of the institutions in Beirut and Cairo at the same time they railed against foreign interference. At the end of the day, they still wanted their children to be educated at American institutions. Even Nasser, a formidable opponent to American involvement in the region, sent a daughter to AUC. He also acknowledged the institution as an important resource in restoring American-Egyptian relations (Bergus, 1968). A decade later, a U.S. government audit of AUC’s endowment would effectively affirm Nasser’s opinion, noting “the University was virtually the only American presence in Egypt during the break in diplomatic relations from 1967 to 1973” (Comptroller General, 1978).

This was the flip side of framing the institutions as vehicles for international relations. Neighboring countries would find the frame beneficial as much as the Lebanese and Egyptians. When meeting with Americans, Jordan’s prime minister would emphasize that five of his cabinet members were AUB graduates as a means of paving the way for Jordanian-American friendship (Department of State, 1953; Hoskins, 1950b). Some national leaders would seek U.S. government help for establishing their own American universities. Libya’s prime minister solicited Vice President Richard Nixon’s support in establishing an American university in North Africa. According to notes from that conversation, the prime minister, “did not think it made any great difference where the university was established—whether in Tripoli, Tunis, or Morocco” (Department of State, 1957). The Shah of Iran told President Eisenhower “that he would like

very much to see an American university in Tehran such as now exists in Cairo and Beirut” (Aurand, 1958). The President of Cyprus informed President Kennedy that his government, too, was eager to have an American university. He suggested that its Western influence would be particularly valuable in reconciling Greek and Turkish Cypriots (Talbot, 1962).

Given the growing profiles of the American universities in Beirut and Cairo during the 1950s and '60s, it is perhaps not surprising that U.S. government officials began to consider the establishment of American universities as a means to fulfill foreign policy objectives. The Statement of U.S. Policy for sub-Saharan Africa in 1958 includes a recommendation to “Promote and assist surveys of the educational requirements of the area, including the possible desirability of an American university along the lines of the existing American institutions in the Near East” (National Security Council, 1958). An adviser to President Lyndon B. Johnson even suggested the establishment of an American university in Israel (Rostow, 1967).

THE FIRST QUARTER CENTURY of the post-war era was a turbulent time for American higher education institutions in the Near East. Two important structural features of the field can help to explain the volatility. The first is that the field’s members had never been as uniform as the Near East College Association had let on. During the interwar period, it had framed the colleges as equal units of one large American university (see Ch. 4). Into the postwar period it continued to disburse undesignated funds equally among the colleges. These measures fostered the impression that the colleges were homogenous: they spoke with one voice and earned a single income. The truth was that the field consisted of two distinct sub-populations: liberal arts colleges and comprehensive universities.

The second critical structural feature of the field is that it was “nested” in the field of higher education in the United States (Hüther and Krücken, 2016). The institutions abroad, then, experienced changes resulting from pressures affecting both fields. Indeed, in many ways, the changes in the field abroad mirrored those in higher education stateside. For instance, both fields became increasingly reliant on U.S. government and private foundation grants. As a result both became significantly more stratified. Research universities grew in importance, while small colleges struggled or closed. But experience of the same phenomenon produced different results in the two fields. In the U.S., there were thousands of institutions to absorb the blow. Between 1945-1975, 325 private colleges closed in the U.S. without much impact on the field (Cohen, 1998, 187). The small size of the field abroad, however, meant that each closure was disproportionately impactful. During the post-war period, American colleges closed in Iraq, Syria, and Bulgaria and were nationalized in Turkey, Iran, and even China.<sup>10</sup>

The American University of Beirut and the American University in Cairo avoided similar fates by differentiating themselves as research universities. Yet they still faced constant pressures: financial, social, and regulatory. Even with increased support from government and foundation sources, rising costs made balancing budgets an exercise in futility. This situation, too, could find an analogy across the Atlantic. By the end of the 1960s, notes Geiger, “The leading private universities—Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale—each faced deficits in their operating budgets that averaged more than \$1 million” (Geiger, 1993, 243). And when the American public perceived nothing but trouble at AUB and AUC, this too fit into an emerging tendency among the U.S. media to frame American higher education as an endangered sector (Thelin, 2004, 336). American universities abroad feared government

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<sup>10</sup> Closure references are to The American School for Boys (1950), Damascus College (1957), and American College of Sofia (1942). Nationalization references are to Robert College (1971), Alborz College, also known as the American College of Tehran (1945), and Yale-in-China (1949).

intervention (which also demonstrates how they were further nested in their national higher education fields). So did American universities at home. American higher education had become “a troubled giant,” marked most by decline in public confidence (Thelin, 2004, 318). As such, American universities at the beginning of the 1970s were “placed in the position of defensively shielding their fundamental purposes against unsympathetic or hostile critics” (Geiger, 1993, 252).

Acknowledging how the field of American higher education institutions in the Near East was nested in the larger field of American higher education enables us to see how the fields were different, too. Proponents of American universities abroad actively and repeatedly framed them as vehicles for promoting peace, fighting communism, and maintaining or establishing friendship with other nations. Critics framed them as tools of Western imperialism and fronts for a coup-minded CIA. Both sets of frames reflect pressures unique to the field abroad. All universities must respond to the vicissitudes of the societies they serve, but as institutions symbolic of an entire nation, American universities abroad also faced the added pressure of managing anti-Americanism.

“By 1970, one piece of conventional wisdom,” observes historian John Thelin, “was that the prototypical American university was under duress because ‘its center had failed to hold.’” But, he argues, “The problem was not that the center had failed, but rather that the modern American university had no center at all” (Thelin, 2004, 316). Thelin was lamenting the absence of a credible mission at the heart of the university, but the metaphor could be extended to the whole field of American higher education, as well. This defect had an analogue abroad. After the decline of the Near East College Association and the ensuing stratification, what remained of

American higher education in the Near East seemed less the default center of a nested field than two islands off the coast of American higher education.

## Part II: The Rise of American Colleges in Europe

While American colleges were on their last legs in the Near East, they were just starting to walk in Europe. Between 1962-1972, American higher education institutions were established in Paris, Rome, and London. Two more were set up in Switzerland. There were similar projects in Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Luxembourg. The first among this new crop of American colleges in Europe—the American College in Paris (ACP)—was the brainchild of Lloyd Delamater, a former U.S. State Department official based in Paris. A review of the college’s origins illustrates how the emergent field would come to be structured and framed.

Delamater was particularly mindful about how the college was framed. He recognized early on that obtaining legitimacy as quickly as possible would be essential to its long-term survival. In a memoir about the founding of ACP, he recalled

As the months went by in early and mid 1962 my main role was to see that everyone became increasingly assured that the new college was not “an experiment” or whatever doubtful title would be used to destabilize the near miracle from occurring (Delamater, n.d., 21).

In order to control the narrative about the upstart college, Delamater swiftly and adroitly enlisted an all-too-eager American press. In its first year, ACP received coverage in *The New York Times*, *Time*, and CBS. Each outlet framed ACP uncritically, as Delamater had hoped. The *Times* even quoted straight from the college’s brochure describing the initiative as a

full-fledged American incorporated, directed and administered institution of higher learning, designed especially for students who want to benefit from life in a leading European intellectual, artistic and cultural center, while at the same time taking a complete American college curriculum for credit and transfer (Blair, 1962).

One reason the American press found the initiative newsworthy was that Delamater regarded what he was doing as novel. He would refer to ACP as “the first American college to be founded abroad” (Delamater, n.d., 1). CBS evening news coverage at the time echoes the interpretation:

For the first time in history there is now an independent American college in Europe. And it’s not being chauvinistic to say that this whole thing is a tribute to typically American community spirit, to private enterprise, and to private initiative (Kearns, 1963).

Beyond managing the press, Delamater took steps to enhance the institution’s legitimacy in other ways. He recruited American expats in Paris to serve as the founding board. Although, notably, they did not contribute financially; nor did the U.S. government or foundations. Instead Delamater invested his own modest finances and devised a unique business model. A *Time* Magazine essay from 1962 called attention to the college’s “shoestring budget of \$57,000, derived entirely from student fees of only \$570 a year. What makes this possible is his big hidden asset: the 300 or more U.S. professors who descend on Paris each year for research and sabbaticals” (U.S. College in Paris, 1962). After the *New York Times* article appeared, ACP would receive upwards of 75 letters per day from prospective faculty (Delamater, n.d., 11). The presence of American faculty from accredited U.S. institutions served a key legitimating function. Delamater could credibly claim ACP’s academic experience was equivalent to that of the U.S. higher education institutions where they regularly taught.

Enterprising and spirited Americans soon began creating colleges elsewhere on the continent. Among the many entrepreneurs during this period was Fred Ott, director of plans for the U.S. Air Force’s division of dependents’ education overseas, who helped to develop schools for the children of U.S. expatriate military families. One such school was established in Leysin, Switzerland in 1960. In 1963, school authorities added the American College of Switzerland for

its graduates to continue their studies (School for the World, 2013).<sup>11</sup> Nearby in Lugano, American teachers of the American School in Switzerland spun off Franklin University (named after American founding father Benjamin Franklin) in 1969. That same year, an American journalist set up the American University of Rome. John Cabot University was established there, too, a few years later as an affiliate of Hiram College (Ohio). Meanwhile, a British entrepreneur established Richmond, the American International University in London. While not an American citizen, Cyril Taylor lived in the United States for many years. He was educated in Massachusetts (Harvard MBA), worked for a major American company in Kansas and Ohio (Proctor & Gamble), and started a study abroad company for American students (American Institute for Foreign Study). He married an American, too (Taylor, 2013).

That Americans were responsible for establishing American universities in Europe was not a departure from the Near East model. American missionaries had established colleges in the Near East (and China) since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What was different was whom these colleges were for. In his memoir, Delamater explains that he considered the new college

a way of de-provincializing fine young students, largely American... I developed a strong belief that a student at an American college located in Paris and living in the French/European community, rather than on an isolated campus in the USA, would grow intellectually and culturally as nowhere else, in addition to becoming more moral citizens of the world (Delamater, n.d., 2).

By the 1960s, the United States had firmly assumed a world leadership role. Accordingly, more Americans were living abroad. Not just individuals, but families, too. Delamater saw the American College in Paris as a solution to a growing “problem” these families were encountering. This is how the American press framed the establishment of the college as well. *The New York Times* observed that the advent of ACP would “solve the difficult problem facing the American student who wants to start his college career in Europe and transfer at a later date

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<sup>11</sup> The American College of Switzerland closed in 2009.



to a good university in the U.S.” (Blair, 1962). *Time*, too, considered the “annual problem of some 4,000 college-ready children of Americans living in France or neighboring countries” (U.S. College in Paris, 1962). Franklin University, American University of Rome, John Cabot University, and Richmond all enrolled almost exclusively American student bodies, many of whom were not degree-seeking students. Study abroad became an increasingly popular option for American students after the war (Hoffa, 2007; Loss, 2011). And the new American colleges in Europe seized the opportunity.

BEYOND GEOGRAPHY, the new field of American colleges in Europe featured several notable differences from its historic counterpart not so far off to the East. Its founders, though still Americans, were entrepreneurs not missionaries. Support came not from the philanthropy of America’s cultural elite but the tuition dollars of students’ families. The American colleges in the Near East were framed as indispensable tools for promoting peace via moral instruction of future leaders. The new American colleges continued the theme of character formation but for Americans living abroad.

Another framing strategy was particularly effective in securing legitimacy. Framing the colleges as pragmatic cultural pioneers resonated with American elites, who, in the words of Volker Berghahn, were keen “to project an image of the United States not just as the political and economic-technological leader of the West, but also as its cultural hegemon” (Berghahn, 2001, 287). During the 1950s and ’60s, Berghahn argues, America was fighting one Cold War against the Soviets and another against condescending Europeans. Intellectual and well-traveled Americans like Delamater were aware of Europeans’ derisive attitudes toward American culture. Consequently, the U.S. poured millions of public and private dollars into Western Europe to

represent America “as a nation whose cultural achievements were at least equal to those of Europe” (Berghahn, 2001, 288). Higher education was one cultural area where the U.S. might have a comparative advantage. Loss (2011) notes that,

In addition to claiming 50 million lives, World War II destroyed much of Europe’s educational and cultural infrastructure. Not only had Germany’s great universities been ruined—disgraced by their complicity with the Nazi regime and now depleted of much of their best young talent—Germany’s brutal military conquests had also laid waste to education systems across Europe (Loss, 2011, 5.3).

Meanwhile, higher education in the United States was in its golden age, and the American liberal arts college was a cultural achievement ripe for export. Compared to the ascendant comprehensive university, the liberal arts college required fewer resources and was therefore easier to initiate. And compared to the uniquely American community college, the equally distinctive liberal arts college had the added benefit of prestige. Because the new institutions would recruit from elite American families, especially the cosmopolitan and/or expatriate subsets, the liberal arts college presented itself as an imitable model.

### Part III: An Attempt to Consolidate the Fields

By the early 1970s, there were two fields of American higher education institutions operating outside the United States. On first glance, they could hardly have been more different. The budding one in Europe catered to American students seeking transferrable credits or two-year degrees. The fading one in the Near East served local populations with four-year degrees and extension programs. The American colleges in Europe had enrollments in the hundreds and focused on undergraduate education. The American universities in the Near East registered thousands of students and featured graduate-level research. A diverse range of American entrepreneurs created the organizations in the European field. Missionaries started the Near East institutions, which in some cases were a full century older than the Continental newcomers.

Yet, for many across the two fields, there was an irrepressible feeling of kinship. In the early part of 1972, Louis Vrettos proposed a new organization that “would serve to bring these schools together on issues of common interest like accreditation, governmental and foundation grant qualification and representations, public relations and exchange of information among the member institutions” (Vrettos, 1972a). Vrettos, the President of Pierce College in Athens,<sup>12</sup> invited the presidents of more than a dozen institutions in Europe and the Middle East to come together to plan the new organization. The response to his invitation was “overwhelming and instantaneous” (Vrettos, 1972b). Damon Smith, president of the American College in Paris, was among the willing participants. He was of the mind that,

While the problems of the various American-related colleges in Europe and the Middle East are often as disparate as the Colleges themselves, it would certainly seem useful to explore the possibility of establishing some means whereby the institutions could develop more regular contacts which could... facilitate the exchange of information on matters of common concern (Smith, 1972a).

#### *Planning Meeting in Athens, 1972*

Identifying those common concerns would prove challenging when the representatives of nine institutions met at Pierce College in April 1972 to sketch out the contours of this new resource. One of the first problems was determining whom the new association would serve. Those assembled began to realize that “American” was not as descriptive as once thought. In letters and records of conversation from this period, the potential members of this new association variously referred to their organizations as “American-related,” “American-inspired,” “American-sponsored,” and/or “institutions of American origin,” none of which helped the organizers ascertain more detailed traits they might share. Walter Leibrecht, the founder and

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<sup>12</sup> American missionaries founded Pierce College in Smyrna (now Izmir) in Turkey in 1875. It relocated to Greece in the 1920s. In 1973, its undergraduate programs began to operate under the name Deree College. Pierce remained as a secondary school. Today, both Pierce and Deree are divisions of the American College of Greece, which is incorporated in Massachusetts.

president of Schiller College in West Germany, observed that most participants faced two problems vis-à-vis the American label: they are not so “American” after all and they have students from multiple countries (Minutes, 1972, 4).

Meeting participants voted to drop the word “American” from the new association’s name. But it still needed membership criteria. Christopher Thoron, president of the American University in Cairo, suggested, “The association should be as broad as possible” and “have loose criteria” (Minutes, 1972, 7). A permanent address, furnished classrooms and offices, and an academic year that leads towards a degree ought to qualify an institution for membership (Minutes, 1972, 7). These rather innocuous standards sidestepped a quite controversial issue. Some participants realized that the new association would gain its legitimacy from the credibility of its members. And behind the scenes there was concern about admitting as members the proprietary Schiller College and the underdeveloped American University of Rome (Maza, 1973c).

In the foreground lay a more pressing issue. When the group began to consider other potential members for the association, Herbert Maza, president of the Institute of American Universities, a study abroad site located in Aix-en-Provence, suggested several Israeli universities and American college programs in Israel. Membership of Israeli institutions, however, was a non-starter for AUB and AUC. Farid Fuleihan represented the American University of Beirut at the meeting. The university’s registrar stated flatly, “we will not be able to participate” if schools from Israel are part of the association (Minutes, 1972, 11). Thoron also expressed concern: “If funds support Israeli schools the Egyptians will not participate” (Minutes, 1972, 12). On the other hand, Fuleihan acknowledged, if the new association were to exclude Israeli institutions, it would invite criticism. Thoron agreed that programs in Israel would

definitely seek to join the association, leaving him to conclude that it “presents a very difficult problem” (Minutes, 1972, 12).

Vrettos proposed a compromise. The new entity would be called the Association of International Colleges and University-Europe (AICU-E) and would invite as associate members those Middle Eastern institutions represented at the current planning meeting (Minutes, 1972, 13). A press release following the meeting would note that, “The member institutions of the Association have several common characteristics; They are all American-sponsored schools; They are organized in programs compatible with colleges in the U.S.A.; All instruction is in English” (Press Release, 1972a, 3). During the meeting, AICU-E had also adopted bylaws and elected officers, including Vrettos as President. Before its next meeting in the fall, it would incorporate in Massachusetts. With housekeeping matters taken care of, all that was left was to figure out what the new association would do. At the end of the meeting, ACP’s Smith expressed his confusion about the purposes of the association (Minutes, 1972, 17). Others seemed to have a better understanding. The press release listed as its purposes:

Cooperation among all the member institutions in the exchange of information; serving as a unified and additional source of publicity about the member institutions among the colleges and universities in the United States; Conducting studies on standards of member institutions; Facilitating exchange of faculty and students between the schools; Publication of periodic newsletters and reports (Press Release, 1972a, 1).

### *Accreditation*

For Vrettos and a few other charter members, AICU-E had a clear, primary purpose: accreditation. In 1971, the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education (FRACHE) ruled that “nonprofit institutions of higher education established by and intended primarily to serve United States nationals outside the United States and its territories are eligible for consideration for regional accreditation” (Minutes, 1971). The new association might

undertake some of the other activities listed in the press release. But Vrettos saw from the start its greatest value as an accreditor. In his initial letter, soliciting participation in the planning meeting, he opened with the statement, “For some time the various American-related Colleges and Universities in Europe and the Middle East have been concerned with accreditation and recognition questions” (Vrettos, 1972a). He even modeled the association’s bylaws off of two regional accreditors’ (Vrettos, 1972c).

It is understandable that this issue would be of concern for Vrettos and his colleagues. While not without flaw or controversy, regional accreditation had become institutionalized practice in the U.S. Regional accreditors were both less interested and less well equipped to assess the quality of institutions abroad. Yet, accreditation would become inextricably linked to the business model of American institutions abroad. Students of unaccredited institutions could not transfer credit to accredited institutions in the U.S. Graduates of unaccredited institutions were not eligible for graduate school in the U.S. Without these guarantees, many institutions would struggle to enroll American students. This was particularly true of the American colleges in Europe that were not recognized by national governments either. In his welcoming remarks to the first full meeting of AICU-E in November 1972, Vrettos described the challenge and opportunity of accreditation:

It is my impression from others that many of our professional colleagues believe that this group will not reach any significance, that it is another Don Quixote adventure but I tell you unless we make this organization work our students will continue to have problems in transferring stateside, and our institutions will have to continually justify their existence with every American institution with which we involve ourselves. We can achieve a status and recognition among our American sister institutions if we want it (Vrettos, n.d.)

The solution that Vrettos and many of his peers preferred was for the new association to accredit its members. And for the next several years, AICU-E would pursue that goal. Of course,

there were numerous problems with this pursuit. The first was urgency. In a letter to Vrettos in December 1972, the association's secretary, Herbert Maza, advocated haste after his recent visit to the U.S.: "We must get going quickly since there has been open criticism of study in Europe (including some of our members) and the accrediting associations are planning to evaluate programs outside the U.S. We must have visitations as soon as possible to back up our informational data files" (Maza, 1972b). Maza's letter points to a second difficulty: the unclear role of the U.S. accreditors vis-à-vis foreign institutions. This confusion presaged yet a third challenge. The European Council of International Schools,<sup>13</sup> the International Council of Academic Institutions, and now the Association of International Colleges and Universities-Europe were, in the words of Damon Smith, "attempting to accomplish the same or nearly the same objectives" (Smith, 1972b). The prospect of competition or redundancy concealed yet another hiccup: not everyone wanted AICU-E to be an accreditor. This was especially true of the Middle Eastern institutions, although Haigazian College and Beirut College for Women supported the accreditation initiative. But, Haigazian President John Markarian noted in a letter to Vrettos, there were two other institutions whose support would be critical to success in the accreditation venture:

While it is true that there are one or two institutions like A.U.B. and A.U.C. which probably need the accreditation less than others, it would seem to me that they could be of considerable help to the Association and to the other Colleges in it by joining in and helping to provide some of the resources for establishing external criteria and teams of experts (Markarian, 1972b)

In the end, AICU-E would not accomplish its goal of becoming an accreditor. After two AICU-E member institutions applied to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in 1974, it eventually discarded the plan. In 1981, Deree College would become the first association member to earn regional accreditation in the United States.

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<sup>13</sup> ECIS was co-founded by Lloyd Delamater.

### *Challenges to Cooperation*

The American University of Beirut had become lukewarm to cooperating with other American institutions abroad, especially on issues of recognition and accreditation. A similar attempt had been made a few years earlier. The Ford Foundation had convened a number of regional institutions in Jericho to discuss the possibility of creating an organization that would assist with international recognition issues (Fuleihan, 1972a; Markarian, 1972a), though, as Fuleihan noted in declining the invitation to meet in Athens, “nothing practical resulted” (Fuleihan, 1972a). More to the point, AUB did not share the accreditation or recognition problems Vrettos outlined in his invitation. The American University of Beirut was the oldest and most visible American university abroad. It had long been successful in bi-lateral negotiations with governments about degree recognition. Still, upon realizing “that the scope of the Conference is somewhat broader than we had originally understood it to be,” AUB president Samuel Kirkwood thought better of the declension and sent Fuleihan to Athens anyway (Kirkwood, 1972). Nothing happened there that led Fuleihan to believe membership in the association would provide sufficient return on investment. A month later, AUB officially declined the formal invitation to join the association (Fuleihan, 1972b).

Fortunately for AICU-E, AUB’s absence was balanced by AUC’s enthusiasm. Its president, Christopher Thoron, was eager to participate. After the first meeting, he told Vrettos that he was “prepared personally to work for the success of this organization” (Thoron, 1972). The participation statuses of Cairo and Beirut in this new cooperative venture with other American institutions abroad represented a notable reversal of their approaches to the Near East College Association. The personal inclinations of the AUC president in each instance explained much. While Watson’s regional and sectarian preferences encouraged nonalignment, Thoron’s



experiences suggested the utility of a more cooperative approach for AUC. A former naval reservist and Foreign Service officer, Thoron had a diplomat's understanding of AUC's relationships with other American institutions.

Still, Beirut's reticence to join the association was understandable. Its *raison d'être* may have been clear to some, but its secondary purposes were seemingly infinite. Beyond its prioritization of accreditation, the association began to link itself to the study abroad movement. A press release after the November 1972 meeting claimed the association "for the first time groups American inspired institutions in Europe so that they can be of greater service to those seeking academic facilities while abroad and also for those who plan to complete their education with study abroad" (Press Release, 1972b). The issue was simply not pertinent to Middle East institutions. A few months later, the AICU-E executive committee proffered that the association actually has two thrusts: 1) information exchange and public relations; and 2) accreditation (Minutes, 1973). A month later, Vrettos sketched out yet another. In handwritten notes toward a contribution for an edited volume on American education abroad (Thomas, 1974), the AICU-E president proposed that as membership spreads, "it will be quite plausible that students at any of these institutions will be facilitated to take a term or so at other schools and thus involve themselves in the culture and specializations of those colleges" (Vrettos, 1973c). The idea harkens back to the old Near East College Association frame of the colleges as units of a single university.

Vrettos never finished the essay. In fact, beyond a couple of press releases in 1972, the association did not have much to say about itself to the outside world during its first few years. Maza told Northeastern University president Asa Knowles in 1975 that AICU (which by this point had dropped the E) had not printed any materials "because we have been meeting these

three years to explore goals, problems, methods, and experiences” (Maza, 1975). The association finally settled on a member directory for its first publication. The foreword acknowledged that member colleges vary in age, level, curriculum, housing, and non-profit status before contending,

What they have in common is that they are independent of any state system; that they are international in that they combine education of two or more cultures, and that they are administered by experienced professional educators dedicated to the full-time service to their institution and its excellence (Draft Directory, n.d.).

The frame was more aspirational than factual. The American College in Paris, for one, relied almost exclusively on itinerant faculty members.

The introduction mentioned still other shared characteristics of members: a liberal arts curriculum supplemented with professional and technical programs; use of the American course-credit system; a faculty composed of several national backgrounds in birth and education; commitment to their host nations (Draft Directory, n.d., 1).

At its base, this loose consortium of colleges is committed to promoting international mindedness... The member institutions of the AICU, in separate and unusual ways, strive to maintain undergraduate programs capable of transcending national frontiers, yet utilizing the experience gained from within a distinctive culture (Draft Directory, n.d., 1).

Reference to international mindedness recalls former Near East College Association peace frames during the heyday of cultural internationalism (see Ch. 4). The directory frames the association as a link between the old and new internationalisms: “there is a growing awareness that the AICU institutions are basically alike... However different they were in their struggles to be born, their essential likenesses constitute the initial phase of” the strengthening of the international community (Draft Directory, n.d., 2). The introduction closed by distinguishing AICU institutions from mere study abroad programs. Instead they fulfilled a much more

important function in the new field of international education, analogous to valued institutions in the United States:

Year-abroad programs come and go, but the mainstay of international education may, ultimately, rest on the small AICU institutions with commitments to their chosen communities, and to the world as continuing service-minded structures, much as the small private college in America stays in the vanguard of quality, innovative and personalized learning (Draft Directory, n.d., 3).

The directory was disseminated to all colleges and universities in the United States as well as to a few pertinent U.S. government offices in May 1976. Each of the dozen or so members also received 100 copies (Minutes, 1976a). Notably absent from the directory was the American University in Cairo. Christopher Thoron died in 1974. A year later his successor, citing over-commitment, withdrew AUC from the association (Byrd, 1975). Maza, for one, could not help but notice the irony. Recalling that first meeting in Athens in a letter to Vrettos, he lamented “after all their insistence to keep Jerusalem out, we are now left with no one from the Middle East” (Maza, 1976).

A final complication for collective action concerned proprietary institutions. From the start of the association, some members expressed concern about the inclusion of Schiller College (Maza, 1973c). Later, the association would break ties with the for-profit American College of Amsterdam after allegations of impropriety (Maza, 1973b). But initially, profit seeking was not an automatic disqualifier for participation in membership organizations at home or abroad. Schiller was relegated to the margins because AICU members found its president’s approach to the association “casual and presumptuous” after he took a leadership position with a competitor organization (Smith, 1973). The American College of Amsterdam was expelled because of concerns about its academic quality (Maza, 1973a). For some AICU members, including President John Vrettos, their for-profit status was incidental.

Similarly, FRACHE was inclined to accredit proprietary institutions in the United States, but first sought a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service. In January 1973, the IRS determined, “The admission of profit seeking organizations into the membership of nonprofit organizations is inconsistent with tax exempt status under 501 (c) (3) of the Code. Accordingly, we rule that your tax exempt status may be jeopardized by such admissions” (American Council on Education, 1973). In the wake of the ruling, the president of a for-profit American college in Luxembourg offered to withdraw its AICU membership application (Johnson, 1973), but Vrettos regarded the response premature because “we are not far enough down the road in the organization to differentiate between profit and non-profit institution” (Vrettos, 1973a). In relaying the exchange to Maza, Vrettos even suggested that the Luxembourgian leader had over-reacted to the IRS opinion on non-profit status (Vrettos, 1973b). Damon Smith of ACP, however, believed that clarifying the membership situation vis-à-vis proprietary institutions would have to be resolved before the association could develop further (Smith, 1974). In 1975, the association finally established the principle that full members must be non-profit chartered or incorporated educational institutions operating outside of the United States (Minutes, 1975a). The episode is invaluable for its demonstration of how the boundaries of the field were contested.

THE MID-1970S WAS THE NADIR of American higher education abroad. Neither AUB nor AUC were members of AICU. Enrollment declined in the colleges located in Europe (Minutes, 1975b). The civil war began in Lebanon. Haigazian College President John Markarian was kidnapped (Minutes, 1975c). And AICU struggled with meeting attendance, even failing to achieve quorum in at least one meeting (Minutes, 1976b). The field-frame perspective helps to explain the association’s evident complications as well as draw attention to its few successes.

The first five years of the Association of International College and Universities represent an attempt to consolidate two fields of American higher education institutions abroad. The ruling of the accreditation coordinating body that allowed recognition of American institutions abroad served as an exogenous shock that forced Louis Vrettos to think about ways to make sense of the new environment. From his symbolically and geo-strategically important vantage point in Greece, a part of both the new European field and the old Near Eastern one, he and other organizational entrepreneurs came together to determine how their institutions could cooperate to mutual benefit. Vrettos and like-minded peers were struggling with accreditation issues in the U.S., which indicates both how the nascent field of American colleges in Europe was nested in the wider field of higher education in the U.S. and that its position in the field it was nested in was on the periphery. The additions of the more established AUB and AUC would have helped the field to gain legitimacy. But framing the association as an accreditation agency and linking it to study abroad did not mobilize the institutions in Beirut and Cairo. Further, the use of so many frames in such a short period of time made the association's purpose difficult to comprehend.

Despite these difficulties, the association persisted. And even though AUB and AUC departed, AICU demonstrated the capacity to merge two fields and define a new field. By consolidating the historic Near East and upstart European higher education institutions under the singular "American" moniker the association legitimized multiple approaches to American higher education abroad. By focusing on their commonalities, member institutions began to identify shared characteristics. In materials like the directory, the association defines what it meant to be an American institution abroad by framing members as independent, English-language, internationally-minded liberal arts colleges located in and around Europe. These frames, in turn, served as implicit standards of a new field. If AUB and AUC were islands above

a drowning field off the coast of American higher education, the establishment of AICU revealed there was, in fact, an archipelago. It would remain to be seen whether the frames resonated with potential adherents and whether the new field could move from the periphery of the larger field of American higher education in which it was nested. But, by the mid 1970s, the foundation was laid.

#### The American University of Beirut, 1977-1990

The experience of the American University of Beirut during the late 1970s and throughout the '80s is as a useful allegory for the whole field of American universities abroad during this period. The Lebanese Civil War devastated the field's most important institution. At first classes continued as usual and enrollment remained steady, although the student body became increasingly Lebanese and Muslim and its long celebrated cosmopolitanism disintegrated. Regional elites began sending their children to safer destinations, while local Christian students could not access West Beirut (Rebuilding Begins at School in Beirut, 1977). Eventually disruptions became commonplace and classes would be suspended for long stretches. Before long, the university struggled to recruit qualified faculty (Howe, 1978). Then came a decline in U.S. government support after Congress sought a more balanced geographical distribution in aid (Nes, 1978).

New president Harold Hoelscher attempted to divert attention away from the war. He began to re-frame the institution as a comprehensive university. According to the *New York Times*, he “stressed that the school could have no significant role simply as a liberal-arts undergraduate school or as a solely Lebanese institution.” Hoelscher, a chemical engineer by training, wanted the institution to focus less on cultural capital and more on human capital:

There's a massive program of modernization in the Arab world and it is manpower-poor... There's a need for managers—business managers, farm

managers, industrial managers, project managers—and we're going to offer programs to train them. Our students must come out with more than theory (Howe, 1978).

This represented a major shift in how the university framed itself. It was still committed to producing leaders. But technical expertise, not character, is what would now constitute leadership. A critical implication of the new outlook was a changing role for Americans. Often implicit in the character-as-leadership frame was the necessity of Americans to cultivate it. But the development of technical expertise does not inherently require an American presence.

Meanwhile, as it had done during World War I and World War II, the university hospital was not charging fees. And as it had in those instances, it accrued substantial debts. By the late 1970s, the university was operating a \$20 million deficit (Howe, 1978). It obtained an \$8 million loan from Lebanese government. And by the start of 1984, it had cut the shortfall to \$7.5 million. While it still looked bleak, there were new gifts from first time contributors and a realistic expectation that the U.S. government might come through with an emergency grant to offset the remaining deficit (Minutes, 1984). But the worst was yet to come.

In January 1984, AUB President Malcolm Kerr was assassinated in his office on campus. A wave of murders, kidnappings, and threats followed (West Beirut, 1986, 4). “West Beirut is a desert stalked by ravenous wolves” begins a confidential CIA report that assessed the university’s situation in light of the increased violence (West Beirut, 1986, 1). The report refers to AUB as “A Lamp Set on a Hill in Danger” (West Beirut, 1986, 4) and lays out in detail the dire condition of the university:

The increasing lawlessness in West Beirut has curtailed markedly social and economic activities of western institutions, and at the same time has made them more susceptible to blackmail. The American University of Beirut has been disrupted badly and its future is in doubt. AUB continues to perform badly needed services, however, and key militia leaders will seek to protect it (West Beirut, 1986, 2).

It acknowledged that the university “has survived previous rounds of Lebanese internal violence” but “is now facing the greatest threat to its existence” because “The campaign is directed against AUB’s role in promoting western democratic values” (West Beirut, 1986, 4). *Washington Post* columnist David Ignatius interpreted the situation as “the slow death of a great liberal institution in the Arab world” before finally lamenting, “It saddens me to watch its demise” (Ignatius, 1986).

### Conclusion

A review of American higher education institutions abroad during the postwar period reveals many notable shifts. The geographic centers of activity in the fields moved from the Near East to Europe and from New York to Washington. Founders were no longer American missionaries but entrepreneurs. And their business models relied more on the support of parents’ tuition dollars than the largesse of old money cultural capitalists. There were new sources of legitimacy, too. The Near East College Association and, at first, the American College in Paris could promote their institutions through valorizing American media coverage. But before long, accreditation would supplant that strategy.

Developments in American higher education were responsible for many of the changes overseas. It is well known that greater federal government and foundation patronage of higher education restructured the ecology of colleges and universities in the United States after World War II. Until now, it has been less apparent what the effects of this restructuring were on American colleges beyond the nation’s borders. The most notable change occurred along with the channeling of funds to elite comprehensive institutions, which accelerated stratification in the field by elevating the American universities in Beirut and Cairo at the expense of the smaller colleges in other parts of the Near East. The IRS ruling in 1973 that rendered for-profit



institutions ineligible for regional accreditation in the U.S. led AICU to ultimately adopt a policy that required its members to operate as non-profit organizations.

Developments abroad impacted higher education in the U.S., as well. The budding field of American colleges in Europe provided sabbatical opportunities for America's college and university professors and viable study abroad sites for students without foreign language skills. Establishment of new colleges in this period also provides evidence for the vitality of an institutional model perceived to be in rapid decline. Cohen (1998) contends that the demise of the liberal arts college began after the emergence of the modern research university around the turn of the century and accelerated after WWII, a result of the model's inability to compete with lower cost community colleges and comprehensive universities (191). Kimball (2014) rejects this interpretation, arguing that liberal arts colleges only entered a period of decline after 1970 due to the advent of honors programs at state universities (258). The establishment of American liberal arts colleges in Europe during the 1960s and early 1970s supports Kimball's view. Furthermore, the testing of a business model built almost exclusively on student tuition, and therefore the capacity for higher education to persist without support of traditional voluntary sources, paved the way for proprietary higher education, which would emerge as a significant force in American higher education at the end of the 1970s (Thelin, 2004, 341).

Yet profit was not the principal motivator of cross-border higher education during this era. Initiatives in Amsterdam, Luxembourg, and elsewhere on the continent did operate for profit. But these institutions operated on the margins of the new field. At its center were institutions like the American College in Paris. Delamater's inspiration for founding ACP concerned, to use an anachronistic term, student learning outcomes. He wanted to develop in American students an international mind. To this end, ACP represented a continuation of

interwar frames furnished by the Near East College Association, but applied to American visitors, not local residents.

Positive media coverage of the American College in Paris suggested Americans could take pride in their new colleges in Europe. But any American soft power of real value was derived principally from the large universities in Beirut and Cairo, which became symbols for America's strengths and weaknesses. American and foreign government leaders wanted to replicate their successes, while critics wanted local governments to wrest control of the institutions from authorities they perceived as neo-colonial invaders. They could be bridges of friendliness one day, a wall of hypocrisy the next. This dual symbolism is notable because international relations scholars have treated the institutions as soft power assets for America *or* challenges to sovereignty for host countries.

The collective action to establish and sustain the Association of International Colleges and Universities demonstrated how diverse the label "American" had become. The ambiguous concept enabled leaders of American colleges in Europe and the Near East to agree to organize while pursuing different agendas. "American" therefore represents what anthropologists have called a multi-vocal symbol or what sociologists deem a keyword. When actors convene under its imprimatur, they can both agree and argue about its meaning. In light of what was going on in Beirut, AICU's decision in 1988 to add the word "American" to its name could be interpreted as an act of defiance. But the addition also reflected changes in the institution's membership, which had doubled since 1972 to nearly 20 institutions. And with the end of the Cold War on the horizon and having grown more comfortable with America's Israel policy, members were less bashful about their American heritage. Soon, the ends of the Lebanese Civil War and global Cold War would usher in even more growth and change.

## CHAPTER SIX: FIELD EXPANSION, 1991-2017

### Introduction

Observers of American universities abroad at the end of the 1980s were not optimistic about the field's prospects. The field's flagship institution—the American University of Beirut—was under constant threat of closure. The other two American colleges in Lebanon were similarly beleaguered by the civil war there. Meanwhile, many of the American liberal arts colleges in Europe were struggling to keep pace with rising costs. These conditions hampered opportunity for collective action via the Association of American International Colleges and Universities (AAICU). The association had neither realized its goal of becoming an accreditor nor had it significantly improved the profiles of member institutions in the United States. In 1990, the field seemed more likely to contract than expand.

Yet, the most visible development in the field of American universities abroad during the next quarter century was growth. In 1990, there were approximately 25 American universities abroad. By 2017, there were more than 80. Of institutions in the field at that time, two-thirds had been established in only the past three decades. The dissolution of the Soviet Union created opportunities for new political elites and private entrepreneurs to introduce an alternative model of higher education that would develop leaders in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. In the Middle East, the Lebanese Civil War, the terror attacks of September 11, and the Iraq War all occasioned openings for American higher education abroad, as well. Growth occurred beyond these regions, too. During the last two and a half decades, independent American universities have also been established in Western Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia as well as Latin America and the Caribbean. This was the era of the globalization of the American university abroad.

Two political moments were particularly salient. The first was the U.S. response to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The Soviet Union dissolved on December 26, 1991. In the U.S., the common interpretation of this event was that democracy had vanquished communism, an inevitable result of the “third wave” of worldwide democratization (Huntington, 1991). While some analysts regarded the continuing rise of democracy as evidence that the “end of history” was nigh (Fukuyama, 1992), others deemed the “extinction” of communism a challenge to Western complacency (Jowitt, 1992). Calls for the U.S. to promote democracy in former communist countries were widespread (Diamond, 1992). And assisting nascent democracies became a key organizing principle of U.S. foreign policy throughout the 1990s (Carothers, 1999). The notion that American-modeled universities had a key role to play in these efforts received bi-partisan support in Congress. The sense of opportunity was palpable and the plans seemed feasible.

With the Cold War increasingly a relic of the past, the value of public diplomacy seemed to diminish and, in 1999, the Clinton administration and Congress agreed to shut down the United States Information Agency (USIA). But active democracy promotion would get a shot in the arm during the George W. Bush administration. The neoconservative Bush Doctrine maintained that U.S. political and security interests were best served by the spread of liberal democratic values and institutions abroad (Monten, 2005). This rationale was among those used to justify military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq. And this hard power was to be accompanied by a resurgence of soft power—disseminating American values—to fight the global war on terror (Pamment, 2013). The neoconservative movement that dominated U.S. foreign policy during the 2000s would furnish key allies to founders of American universities abroad.

The expansion of the field of American universities abroad across the globe also occurred in the context of the worldwide diffusion of neoliberalism. In the wake of the Cold War, the victorious West advanced a political ideology of strong individual private property rights, the rule of law, and institutions of freely functioning markets and free trade (Harvey, 2005, 64). Countries around the world began adopting neoliberal policies in all sectors of society. Although neoliberalism is not a unified and coherent doctrine (Peters, 2011, 107), it is characterized by a set of policies associated with “government through the market” (Peters, 2011, 176) or, as Harvey put it, “the financialization of everything” (2005, 33). In the context of higher education, neoliberal policies call for reducing state subsidies, shifting costs to the market and consumers, demanding accountability for performance, and emphasizing higher education’s role in the economy (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002, 284).

Two particular manifestations of the contemporary pattern of neoliberal privatization are important in understanding the growth of American universities abroad: 1) the creation of new private higher education institutions and 2) the generation of revenue at all types of universities through market-like activities—what is sometimes called academic capitalism. In recent decades, many countries, seeing their own national public university systems under duress, authorized establishment of private higher education institutions (Levy, 2010, 124; Buckner, 2014). By 2017, private higher education institutions enrolled one-third of all post-secondary students worldwide (Levy, 2018). And there are now more private than public higher education institutions (Buckner, 2017b). The development of more private higher education options served functional and institutional purposes. It helped countries absorb rising demand in the new “knowledge economy” by conforming to an emergent international norm that regarded privatization as the appropriate way to meet that demand (Buckner, 2017b). Still, in many

countries, the private higher education sector was less reputable than the public sector, and the American character of a private university could provide a powerful signal of quality and reputation.

Concurrent with the growth in number of institutions has been a rise in the worldwide practice of academic capitalism—the pursuit of market and market-like activities by various groups of university actors to generate external revenues (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004, 11).<sup>1</sup> Decline in state support has forced universities to become more entrepreneurial. As a result, higher education institutions are increasingly reliant on patents, intellectual property, and consulting contracts, among other revenue sources. Due to the scarcity of these opportunities, academic capitalism has also been linked to an emergent competitiveness agenda (Cantwell & Kauppinen, 2014; Portnoi, et al., 2010). Global economic competition between nation-states, the formation of nation-wide and transnational political coalitions that advocate stronger linkages between higher education and industry, legislation that promotes competition among universities, and the design and redesign of higher education institutions to make them more competitive have all served to transform higher education the world over (Kaidesoja & Kauppinen, 2014, 173-182). Pressures and opportunities associated with academic capitalism have rendered U.S. universities more amenable to invitations from abroad to provide a wide range of services to initiatives in higher education by governments and private entrepreneurs, alike.

The combination of decline in state support and calls for increased access has led to creative developments in privatization. Traditionally, private higher education could be categorized as religious, elite, or demand absorbing (Levy, 2010, 125). But neoliberal

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<sup>1</sup> The World Higher Education Database, which tracks the development of new higher education institutions, records a drop in the number of new private higher education institutions established after 2000. This could represent the end of the movement or merely a lag in reporting (Buckner, 2017b). There is no equivalent indication that academic capitalism is slowing down.

privatization has resulted in new types that do not correspond as well to the conventional classification schemes: the creation of spin-off companies from public universities, the establishment of for-profit universities, the development of for-profit arms of public universities, and higher student fees in public institutions (Currie, 2004, 45). Moreover, after the World Trade Organization's (WTO) General Agreement in Trade in Services (GATS) identified education as a tradable service in 1995, foreign providers also became eligible to compete in many new markets previously restricted to domestic providers. This development has led to a proliferation of cross-border initiatives, including a growing number of "foreign-backed" universities (Lanzendorf, 2015). Higher education institutions that brandish a distinct national heritage have proliferated during the past two decades, especially in the Middle East. The American University in Cairo was established in 1919, but Egypt also now hosts the French University in Egypt (2002), the German University in Cairo (2002), the British University in Egypt (2005), and the Egyptian Russian University (2006).<sup>2</sup>

The confluence of third wave democratization with the globalization of privatization and internationalization in higher education provided conditions ripe for the establishment of new American universities abroad. Yet, the infusion of activity was not accompanied by oversight from a central authority. As a result, the field came to be populated by new and varied institutional forms, logics, and actors. There were recognized, heterogeneous models in AAICU institutions, but the scripts and blueprints associated with them were not well understood. Consequently, attempts to emulate them did not often produce genuine replicas. In other words, the field was "hazy" (Dorado, 2005). Thus, opportunities for institutional entrepreneurship were available, but only to those that could see through the fog. In this chapter, I explore these changes to the field by asking: where, why, and how did growth occur? Who was involved in the

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<sup>2</sup> For a list of more foreign-backed universities in the Middle East and North Africa, see Appendix E.

development of individual institutions? And what patterns of growth have had the greatest impact on the field?

In order to answer these questions, I rely heavily on interviews that I conducted with founders and other individuals involved in the establishment of new entrants to the field during this period. While I conducted interviews with representatives of American universities across the world, I limit my findings to two geographic regions in this chapter: 1) Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia; and 2) the Middle East and North Africa. I selected these two regions because they experienced the greatest amount of growth during the period under consideration. Comparing them helps to identify instances of convergence and divergence in the American university abroad models.

#### New Entrants Part I: Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia

The most striking thing about the American university in its formative period is the diversity of mind shown by the men who spurred its development.

—Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (1965), p. vii

Over the past 30 years, approximately 20 independent American universities have been established in the Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia region (cf. Table 6.1). The founders of these young institutions have come from diverse backgrounds. Some, like Camilla Sharshekeva (American University of Central Asia), were accomplished local academics. Others, such as Denis Preić (American University in Bosnia and Herzegovina), were ambitious entrepreneurs. Of course, they could be both, as was economist Ion Smedescu (Romanian-American University). Some were returning émigrés like Sharif Fayeze (American University of Afghanistan). Others like regional state university president-cum-minister of higher education Erezhep Mambetkazyev (Kazakh-American Free University) were rooted in their communities. There were benevolent outsiders like American diplomat John Menzies (American University in



Bulgaria) and savvy interlopers such as businessman Hassan H. Safavi (American University for Humanities) among them, too. Some brought considerable experience in American higher education to bear on their projects. Armen der Kiureghian was on the faculty at UC Berkeley when he co-founded the American University of Armenia. Others were less informed. Jansen Raichl set out to create the Anglo-American University immediately after returning to Prague from a brief period of study abroad as an undergraduate in Britain. Still, all were admirers of American higher education.

Not surprisingly, these figures' motives were as dissimilar as their resumes. Armen der Kiureghian and Sharif Fayez both believed an American university would become a vital resource for strengthening national capacity in the wake of a natural disaster and amid armed conflict, respectively. Erezhep Mambetzkaziyev selected the American model after Kazakhstan's president charged him to develop an institution that would meet international standards. Richard Lukaj hoped the advent of an American university would stimulate change in other higher education institutions in Kosovo and throughout the Balkans. A mixture of patriotism and profit motivated Jansen Raichl. Yet, their separate impulses led them to the same idea: establish an American university. In what follows, I describe how founders and supporters of American universities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia mobilized resources associated with new political opportunities to establish their institutions.

#### *Political opportunity structure*

Institutional theory maintains that periods of social upheaval can make societies receptive to new ideas (Greenwood, et al., 2002). Indeed, the establishment of American universities in these regions tended to follow regime change. New institutions emerged in two such waves: 1) immediately before and after the end of the Cold War (i.e., late 1980s through the mid-1990s);

and 2) in response to later revolutions and/or armed conflict (i.e., early-to-mid 2000s). A third period, associated with economic development, may be under way at present.

Even before the dissolution of the Soviet Union produced newly independent nations, the Soviet policy of glasnost facilitated the establishments of American universities in Armenia and Russia. After a 1988 earthquake had devastated Armenia, Armen der Kiureghian saw an opening to establish a university that could supply the level of expertise needed to support the re-building of the country. He explained,

The motivation for it was the 1988 earthquake. When the earthquake happened in Armenia, Gorbachev was in Washington and there was this... melting of the ice between the U.S. and Soviet Union. Suddenly, there was a love affair between the two countries. At the time of the earthquake, I was in Washington. So there was an outpouring of sympathy and attention towards this earthquake (A. der Kiureghian, personal communication, October 6, 2016).

Kiureghian seized the opportunity. In a letter to the Armenian General Benevolent Union, a California-based philanthropic foundation, soliciting initial funding, he and a colleague framed the project as a vehicle for both pragmatic educational reform and amicable international relations:

based on the American system [it] will have a tremendous symbolic value. The curriculum and the method of instruction will be based on the American approach, characterized by its openness and free flow of information. It will immensely contribute to boosting the psychological state of the Armenian people and will provide a continuous source of friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and the United States (Agbabian & Kiureghian, 1989).

The foundation agreed to fund all of the university's start-up costs. Moreover, as a result of the political thawing in Washington and Moscow, Kiureghian and his partners found an unencumbered government in Yerevan. Kiureghian recalled that

the Socialist Republic of Armenia—the government, the Supreme Soviet of Armenian (SSR)—welcomed that enthusiastically. It was amazing. They immediately issued government orders to “find a piece of land appropriate for this. So and so, look into it” and “make this electricity available to develop the

campus. ...So and so, do this. So and so.” I mean, they just started to run it. So it was no political opposition. To the contrary, they were just enthusiastic about this... the government was fully behind it. The Soviet government was fully behind it. They would do whatever the laws were necessary for that to happen (A. der Kiureghian, personal communication, October 6, 2016).

Edward Lozansky, too, leveraged the warming relationship between the Cold War foes to start the American University in Moscow. A Russian dissident exiled to the U.S. since the late 1970s, Lozansky was able to develop a relationship with President Gorbachev’s top science advisor. Before long, both Gorbachev and President George H. W. Bush had endorsed the project, the curriculum for which focused on Western economic theory and business practices (Clines, 1990; McCombs, 1990). Though a nuclear physicist by training, Lozansky chose business as the first academic program at the American University of Moscow in order to train Russians in free market ideas (E. Lozansky, personal communication, December 17, 2016).<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, as regimes were collapsing throughout Eastern Europe, Lebanon still sizzled. Its 15-year civil war ended in 1990, but political instability continued well into the decade. This meant that for many years the Near East’s most prestigious university, the American University of Beirut, was inaccessible to the region’s elites who had counted on the university to vault their children into positions of prominence in public service and private enterprise. John Menzies, an American Foreign Service officer, recounted how the challenges in Beirut were perceived as opportunity in Bulgaria:

It began as a request from the Bulgarians. You know I was there [in] the '89 period when Todor Zhivkov fell and shortly thereafter people began to say to me, I began to hear from Bulgarians, “why not move the American University in Beirut to Bulgaria?” And my response to them I thought would satisfy them was to say, “we can't do that. But if you meet the following conditions, I'll help you establish one here.” And the conditions were pretty rough. You've gotta provide facilities, buildings for the university and for faculty. You have to provide all

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<sup>3</sup> Degree-granting programs at the American University in Moscow were folded into the International University in Moscow during the late 1990s. Lozansky maintains the American University of Moscow as a quasi-salon promoting American-Russian relations (E. Lozansky, personal communication, December 17, 2016).

local costs. And you have to provide student housing, that kind of thing. And I said this in '89 and early '90. I thought that was the end of the story because that's a tall order (J. Menzies, personal communication, August 10, 2016).

But the story had only just begun. The fall of Communism involved more than a change in political ideology and orientation to economics. Entire societies were transformed. In late 1989, “Formerly-secret, pro-democracy societies emerged to become the ruling elite” in Bulgaria (Lavery & Lavery, 1993). And the new political class had different ideas about education. In an article about the founding of the university, a former president and faculty member of the American University in Bulgaria explained, “Because the agenda-setters in the new Bulgaria were primarily academics, they were particularly fascinated with the idea of establishing a western-style university... An American-style education based on intellectual reflection and experiential learning was deemed essential” to move the country toward stable democracy and a market economy (Lavery & Lavery, 1993). In short, they were ready to meet Menzies’ challenge.

Such was the case in the new Kyrgyz Republic as well. Scott Horton, a New York-based attorney and trustee of the American University of Central Asia since the mid-1990s remembers,

the early years of the republic [were] completely dominated by an education mafia. All the senior figures in the government were all professors, research scientists and so on. And it follows that they had this very aggressive attitude towards education. I mean they really wanted to support the educational sector. And I think there was a shared view that what occurred during the Soviet periods was embarrassing, not great. And it lagged behind the accomplishments of the Europeans and North Americans (S. Horton, personal communication, August 24, 2016).

The new elites required new status markers. Thus, new educational institutions were necessary.

Horton recalled that during the Soviet period

the children of the elites would go to St. Petersburg, I mean this small list of very elite institutions. But especially, going for higher education at a prestigious institution in Moscow or St. Petersburg, [was] a huge deal. I mean that was like a flagship in the U.S. Like Princeton in the making. And I think there was a sense

after the revolution that “yeah, that wasn’t going to happen anymore” (S. Horton, personal communication, August 24, 2016).

Accordingly, American higher education practices became an attractive alternative to the failed status quo throughout post-Soviet territories (see Appendix F for more illustrative examples). And many well-positioned Americans were ready to help them. The notion that liberal democracy had vanquished communism permeated American society. Increasing numbers believed that American universities could produce citizen leaders for these new republics. Not everyone, though, was sanguine about the model’s applicability. Even those that were positively inclined to help could be skeptical. Marshall Christensen had recently retired as the president of a small, Christian liberal arts college in Oregon when a friend asked him to help build an American college in Kazakhstan. He recalls being surprised,

because I knew that Kazakhstan was part of the Soviet Union, or had been. And I asked him more about their program. He said, “well, East Kazakhstan State University wanted to start a business program.” And I was almost dumbfounded. Because I said, “well, you’re telling me that after the break-up [of the] Soviet Union they want to study a free enterprise orientation to business?” And he said yes. I said, “are they wanting to study in English? In the English language?” And he said “absolutely.” And then the third question I asked was, “they must know that you represent a Christian organization?” He said yes. To all three questions (M. Christensen, personal communication, July 27, 2016).

Affirmation of the general model would continue into the new millennium. Second wave institutions were established in locations where Americans had been engaged militarily—Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan—or where revolutions had heightened American government interest, such as Georgia. In the former contexts, the presence of an American university could symbolize sustained American engagement even after troop withdrawal. Former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad interpreted the support of Afghan leadership, including former President Hamid Karzai, for the American university there accordingly: “I think psychologically this was also reassuring to them. That means that we’re not going to abandon them again, so to

speak” (Z. Khalilzad, personal communication, August 4, 2016). Ken Cutshaw, an attorney and executive, explained the opportunity to establish the Georgian-American University in similar terms:

Even though they'd been out under communism for a decade by that time, you know, and Saakashvili was already the president. The Rose Revolution had occurred. And there was a leaning toward the West... Georgia is the third largest [recipient] of USAID during that decade of the 90s into the 2000s. It's always been like Israel, Egypt, or Egypt, Israel. Georgia was number three for USAID. So it was very... the people, the perception, anything related to the West, particularly America, was a positive (K. Cutshaw, personal communication, August 26, 2016).

In addition to identifying the political opportunity structures amenable to the establishment of American universities abroad, these examples demonstrate the logics or rationales that founders and supporters used to promote their institutions. American universities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia were variously framed as conduits for the transfer of expert technical knowledge, vehicles for the diffusion of free market economic principles, credentialing institutions for new elites, and/or symbols of friendship between nations.

#### *Sources of financial support*

A diverse range of donors would find something appealing in one or more of these frames. Individuals, foundations, businesses, and governments have supported American universities abroad in post-Soviet spaces. Philanthropist George Soros has made substantial contributions—both personally and through the Open Society Foundation—to establish and sustain the American University in Bulgaria, Central European University, and the American University of Central Asia. He is not alone among individual donors in his interest in supporting American higher education in these regions. The American universities in Armenia and Kosovo rely heavily on those countries' diaspora communities in the United States. Local sources of

support are critical, too. Several Afghan businesses have made major donations to the American university there. A consortium of local and international corporate investors provided start-up funds for the American University of Mongolia. Local governments sometimes provide in-kind resources in the form of land or facilities, as was the case with the American University of Armenia and the American University in Bulgaria. Many national governments are not inclined to provide financial resources to private institutions. Yet, the Bulgarian government donated \$2.5 million in the American University of Bulgaria's earliest days (Lavery & Lavery, 1993).

The United States government has been a major, if begrudging and inconsistent, donor to American universities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The United States Agency for International Development has been the primary vehicle for the disbursement of funds, of which the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) has been the largest beneficiary. Since its establishment in 2005, AUAF has collected over \$100 million from USAID. The American University of Bulgaria was also a major recipient of funds from the aid organization, especially in its first decade. By 2003, USAID had donated nearly \$60 million to AUBG (Phillips, 2004). The American University of Central Asia has received over \$30 million from United States government sources, including \$6 million through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (Kerry, 2015).

### *Mobilizing structures*

Universities do not acquire such essential resources automatically. An array of structures assists them in mobilizing support. The social movement literature has highlighted the importance of mobilizing structures in accounting for large-scale social change. Simply put, mobilizing structures are the assemblage of resources that make collective action possible (McCarthy, 1996). In the context of establishing or sustaining a university, mobilizing structures

can refer to those resources that facilitate the acquisition of critical start-up funding and practical knowledge. As such, I address here two mobilizing structures that interviewees highlighted as particularly valuable in the process of establishing an American university abroad: institutionally related foundations and institutional partnerships.

Some institutions appeal to donors through tax incentives. American universities abroad that operate as non-profit organizations are eligible to receive tax-deductible donations if they are incorporated in the United States. The American University of Armenia, American University in Bulgaria, and Central European University benefit from this arrangement. The American Universities of Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Kosovo as well as the Kazakh-American Free University are not incorporated in the U.S., but are affiliated to U.S.-based charitable foundations that raise and/or manage funds on their behalf. These institutions and/or their affiliates are also all eligible for annual disbursements from the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) unit of USAID, which provides grants of up to \$2 million for construction, equipment, and/or supplies. Institutions that do not meet these criteria can still benefit from the program. While neither incorporated in a U.S. state nor affiliated with a charitable foundation, The American University of Mongolia was able to access ASHA funding by partnering with the University of Alaska Fairbanks, which became the primary grant beneficiary.

Many new American universities in former communist countries have relied on the support of partner institutions. Kazakh-American Free University and the American University of Central Asia began as programs at local state universities before spinning off on their own. According to Horton,

...a group of the faculty at Kyrgyz State University decided to form the Kyrgyz American faculty with the idea that they would get a license for an experimental



program to begin to introduce American liberal arts and sciences college-style courses and learning into Kyrgyzstan's largest university... But then it was a couple years after that. Might it be 1996 or 1997, there was a decision taken to actually set up a university called American University in Kyrgyzstan. I think that was largely because of a sense that you couldn't have the structure of the old Soviet-style university and have an American liberal arts and sciences college. There was too much conflict going on there (S. Horton, personal communication, August 24, 2016).

Stateside institutions, too, have been critical resources for American universities abroad, especially in the start-up phase. By partnering with a more established institution, a less mature university can accelerate its progress and, therefore, impact on the society it seeks to serve. Such was Richard Lukaj's rationale for partnering with the Rochester Institute of Technology, an arrangement that was "fundamental from the beginning." He elaborated:

We had no interest in starting from scratch on an academic product that was in evolution. We wanted to deliver the first student a first-rate level product and with full accreditation and full diploma recognition worldwide and that was a critical impetus to bringing something that is actually valuable to the market versus something that is a work in progress and some day we may get it right (R. Lukaj, personal communication, September 23, 2016).

Similarly, the University of Maine provided AUBG with a wide range of indispensable support from the very start. Their work included faculty, staff, and student recruitment; curriculum and academic policy design; and administrative training (Lavery & Lavery, 1993). Indiana University manages a USAID/Open Society-funded endowment for the American University of Central Asia. The University of California provides the same service for the American University of Armenia. Stanford Law School writes and publishes textbooks for a legal education program at the American University of Afghanistan.

Partnerships, however, can be fickle. Because they are often relationship-based, not many last beyond their instigators' involvement. Ken Cutshaw, co-founder of Georgian-American University, negotiated a partnership with Claudio Grossman, then dean of the Law School at

American University in Washington, D.C. “I have to say [the relationship] with American was very strong at the beginning,” Cutshaw told me. “It's not as strong now since I stepped away. And Claudio stepped away. There's really no ownership of it anymore. So, I think our MOU actually expired last year and I'm not sure if we even renewed it” (K. Cutshaw, personal communication, August 26, 2016). While some partnerships fizzle, others explode. An upstate New York newspaper reported, “For more than four years beginning in 2006, SUNY Canton ignored explicit warning signs about the crumbling finances of the American University in Bosnia and Herzegovina (AUBiH), its questionable academic integrity and its president’s alleged erratic behavior” (Amaral, 2013). Ultimately, the partnership failed so spectacularly that the SUNY central office changed its policy of decentralization with respect to international agreements. Afterward, Albany would approve all partnerships with foreign university partners.

In addition to mobilizing resources, partnerships also served a crucial legitimizing function. In many instances, partnerships brought initial accreditation by awarding degrees under the imprimatur of the U.S. institution. Such arrangements between U.S. institutions and American universities in Bulgaria, Kosovo, and Kyrgyzstan enabled the latter institutions to make immediately credible claims to international quality. The American University of Armenia leveraged the founding support of the University of California to earn its own accreditation later. Other institutions have found national or programmatic accreditations, such as ABET (engineering) and ACBSP (business), sufficient indicators of quality in markets that may not be able to distinguish between the abstruse accreditation categories in the United States.

### *Institutional challenges*

American universities abroad face many distinctive challenges not faced by their counterparts stateside. Despite social upheavals that made new ideas about education more

palatable, local conditions could still present barriers. Interviewees spoke of the myriad ways in which indigenous expectations, cultures, and structures were incompatible with distinctive features of American higher education. Even in Afghanistan, where many of the cabinet ministers had been educated in American universities, fundamental misunderstandings about the locus of control in American universities recurred. Fayeze observed:

One problem that Afghanistan has got is they think all universities in the United States are under the U.S. government. I've been for years, I've been telling them "no, U.S. universities are independent. Some states are helping them, but there are many private universities in the United States. Some of the best and the largest are private universities." I kept telling them in my interviews, some of them just could not believe that. "How can a university function without control by the government" (S. Fayeze, personal communication, March 8, 2017)?

American universities in post-Soviet spaces were often the first or among the first private universities in their countries. So they could precede the laws and regulations that would come to govern them. Many interviewees spoke of their institutions' struggles with obtaining legal standing, let alone a favourable one. Some institutions, like the American University of Armenia, could tolerate the ambiguous regulative environment. Kiureghian remembers:

On the day that the university opened its doors, Armenia became an independent state. Then there were no laws. There were no laws and we started operating with very vague, very uncertain set of laws and rules. There was no legal system, really. The Soviet legal system didn't foresee something like this and there was no Soviet government anymore. There was a new government that was trying to come up with a constitution, trying to come up with new sets of laws. So it took a while. I don't remember how many years, maybe three or four years before... oh, during that period, I think they put us under some interim government, some kind of... there was a piece of paper issued by the Soviet Socialist Republic that said "yes, you can establish a university." They recognized us as a university. So that was a simple paper, not a solid document to provide us a clear status. So for a while, we didn't have a clear status until they established what is known as funds. Non-profit organizations in Armenia now are recognized as funds (A. der Kiureghian, personal communication, October 6, 2016).

Kiureghian's recounting of his institution's legal travails highlights how closely linked the university's development was to the country's. This association was common for many

American universities abroad during the period. Still, others believed an uncertain legal situation only exacerbated their other problems. In Kosovo, the task was not only to find legal footing for a private institution, but a foreign one at that. Lukaj put it this way:

So, imagine a newborn country that didn't yet have any laws for how a foreign educational product can even be provided at all. In Kosovo [it] did not exist. The infrastructure in the ministry of education had not been established in any real, formal way. Yes, there were offices called that. But, the law packages were still in evolution. The idea of a private, non-profit educational project in the country did not exist. There was no such thing. Education was done as a public service in the region and the idea that someone would pay tuition, let alone a sizable tuition, to send their students to college was unthinkable. So you were dealing with every layer of disadvantage for a non-profit school (R. Lukaj, personal communication, September 23, 2016).

Beyond legal, there were cultural incompatibilities. Interviewees commonly cited institutional governance as a cultural challenge. Christensen put it succinctly:

One failure, I would say, is trying to introduce the idea of a Western-style board of directors or board of trustees. Mambetzkaziyev would often ask, "Well, how can we be more like a Western university?" And I talked with him about what it would mean to have local people on his board of trustees or directors. He selected some people, some business people he knew. What he soon found out is they looked at it as a way to line their own pockets. Get contracts, for example. And the whole mentality just didn't work. So he backed off of that and I agreed (M. Christensen, personal communication, July 27, 2016).

Another difficulty in meeting local expectations concerned the form or type the institution would take. Many American universities abroad operate as liberal arts colleges. Accordingly, their missions place greater emphasis on teaching than research. Horton pointed out that in Bishkek, this has been a source of contention between the institution and the local authorities:

I mean research universities really have a different focus. We're not that. And, by the way, sometimes we get pressure from the government, saying "you should be a research university." No. Maybe at some point in the future we would do that. But we're still at the point of really realizing a vision of being a liberal arts college (S. Horton, personal communication, August 24, 2016).

Equally challenging was convincing skeptical Americans of the feasibility of establishing an American university abroad. This was true for the proposed projects in Blagoevgrad, Pristina, and Kabul. Fayeze had a hard particularly hard time enlisting supporters in Washington. He related his experience of a trip there in 2002:

Several meetings were arranged for me to talk to the president of Georgetown University, president of the American University in Washington, president of George Washington University and some other university presidents from around Washington. I talked to them about the possibility of establishing an American university in Afghanistan and some of them were very surprised and kept asking me if Afghanistan was ready for such a university (S. Fayeze, personal communication, March 8, 2017).

If Fayeze could write off most Americans' ignorance of conditions in Afghanistan, he expected more nuanced sympathy from experienced American diplomats, such as Ambassador Robert Finn. Fayeze reports that the ambassador told him "he was not going to discourage me from establishing this university but he assured me that USAID would not provide any funding for this university" (S. Fayeze, personal communication, March 8, 2017).

Indeed, many interviewees expressed dismay at the perceived stinginess or misplaced priorities of U.S. government officials, especially those at USAID. John Menzies construed the problem thusly: "[USAID] see[s] it as a draw on their funding. As a permanent draw. They'll never let an American university go under. That's sort of an unwritten rule. But they will resent every dollar they have to spend on a project that is seen as not their own" (J. Menzies, personal communication, August 10, 2016). Other U.S. agencies were perceived as obstinate, too. Menzies reports that his USIA superiors laughed at him when he came to them with the idea of establishing an American university in Bulgaria. "We got started and it was because of the Bulgarian input—it wasn't American," Menzies told me. "I had to fight my own Embassy about this" (J. Menzies, personal communication, August 10, 2016).

### *Organizational entrepreneurs*

Considering such “studied indifference and opposition,” as Menzies put it, how did American universities in these regions ever advance beyond the idea phase (J. Menzies, personal communication, August 10, 2016)? Research on institutional entrepreneurs has highlighted how their personal characteristics enable them to take on more or less ambitious projects (Battilana et al., 2008). One such trait in particular surfaced from my interviews: grit.<sup>4</sup> Many interviewees described in great detail how their passion for creating an American university abroad helped them to overcome long odds. Sharif Fayeze and Richard Lukaj are representative figures in this respect. In his memoir, Fayeze tells of returning to Afghanistan as the first minister of education in 2002 after decades abroad:

After my work as minister finished, I stayed on in Kabul to begin work on my biggest dream: an American University of Afghanistan... I installed myself in a bullet riddled house with no electricity on the outskirts of Kabul and began the slow and fitful process of creating an entirely new kind of university. A kind of university Afghanistan had never seen before (Fayeze, 2014).

His optimism was soon tempered by the lukewarm reception he received when shopping his idea in Washington. But he did not back down. He told me that friends advised him to needle USAID in particular:

And they told me that I have to work very hard and push them and criticize them and keep arguing with them and it worked. It really worked. Sometimes they would get fed up with me. Some of them would leave the meetings. But I kept pushing (S. Fayeze, personal communication, March 8, 2017).

In 2005, USAID provided startup funds to launch the university.

The founding of the American University of Kosovo a few years earlier seemed equally improbable. When Richard Lukaj, an American financier and son of Yugoslavian refugees,

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<sup>4</sup> Grit has been linked to entrepreneurial success. Cf. Mooradian, et al. (2016).

began to assemble a team, the representative from the Rochester Institute of Technology, asked him,

“Do you realize, this is a major undertaking? It is not a simple thing to organize a few people then set up a university. It takes a great deal of resources.” And I retorted that there is one thing that I did know a lot about and that is that capital migrates to good ideas. And if we all agree this is a good idea and we are willing to be part of that idea, I suspect we will be able to raise the money. And that was the humble beginning (R. Lukaj, personal communication, September 23, 2016).

Once the team was in place, they devised a schedule to open the university. Lukaj recalls that

there was some talk, I guess, at RIT about a planning cycle and they thought a couple of years. And we said, “look, if we analyze this for a couple of years, then we will never do it. Because I know for a fact that it is going to be daunting and analyses are going to say that the odds are against us, so we need to get a plan in motion to actually open our doors in three to four months.” And we did (R. Lukaj, personal communication, September 23, 2016).

I asked Lukaj if they had commissioned a feasibility study. He explained,

“We didn’t actually do one, but knew probably that if we did one it would say that it would never be feasible at that particular moment in time. The odds were grim. So this was, in some respect, willed into existence despite the fact that normal feasibility analysis would have suggested that it is improbable” (R. Lukaj, personal communication, September 23, 2016).

### *Influential allies*

These tales about the unlikely origins of American universities in Afghanistan and Kosovo accentuate the determination of visionary founders. But they also indicate the support of teammates. Indeed, research on organizational entrepreneurs acknowledges that they rarely act alone. Successful entrepreneurs build coalitions; they enlist influential allies. Lukaj was able to sign up some high-level American diplomats to serve on the founding board. They and other supporters were instrumental in negotiating with the local government about moving large sums from international bank accounts, because, according to Lukaj, “Ultimately, it took the

involvement of the prime minister in Kosovo to legitimize the transfers and make it possible to kick off” (R. Lukaj, personal communication, September 23, 2016).

Perhaps the greatest change in fortune during the embryonic stages of what would become the American University of Afghanistan occurred when Zalmay Khalilzad became U.S. ambassador to the country in 2003. Khalilzad, a native Afghan, was an alumnus of the American University of Beirut. Fayeze recruited him to the project and his support proved vital in the face of an intransigent USAID. Khalilzad commissioned a feasibility study, which, according to him,

was sort of a compromise between those who thought that we should only be doing elementary education, which was the institutional preference of USAID, and the Minister [i.e. Fayeze] who wanted to have a university and people like myself who were positively inclined... The data’s there and there is the preference of the management. You know the ambassador, in my case, and others in the Afghan leadership wanted it. So all of that then I think helped persuade them (Z. Khalilzad, personal communication, August 4, 2016).

After Khalilzad pushed USAID to provide funding, the project soon attracted other high-profile supporters. Chief among them was First Lady Laura Bush, who became a visible advocate for the university’s mission to educate Afghan women.

American diplomats have proven influential allies for American universities throughout Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The USAID administrator—the agency’s top official—visited AUBG at the insistence of the university’s board chair, a former U.S. ambassador to Bulgaria. Shortly thereafter, USAID pledged assistance for the next four years (Lavery & Lavery, 1993). Ken Cutshaw cited the role of U.S. embassy staffers in facilitating the Georgian-American University’s certification with the Georgian government. When interviewees spoke of the role of diplomats vis-à-vis the university, it was usually in the context of helping to secure foundational resources. But American officials have helped to keep them



from closing, too. Badruun Gardi, a trustee of the American University of Mongolia, relayed that:

Both the U.S. embassy in Mongolia and USAID, they are extremely supportive. The U.S. ambassador actually just recently sent down a few letters that she wrote to different universities and faculty within universities to kind of nudge them to work with us as well. So she has been personally very supportive of our initiative and when she heard that we were going through some issues she was one of the first few people to kind of set up meetings and talk about how to make sure that it doesn't end up closing (B. Gardi, personal communication, May 11, 2017).

Having allies in the U.S. Foreign Service was helpful. But having them in Congress could be even more so. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell helped the American University in Bulgaria to get a line item in the foreign appropriations bill (Lavery & Lavery, 1993). The text of the bill “Expresses the sense of the Congress that: (1) U.S. citizens give every consideration to founding or sponsoring American schools in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to serve as study centers for U.S. ideas and practices; and (2) the American University of Blagoevgrad in Bulgaria is to be commended for its efforts in founding an American school to serve such purposes.”

Befriending local government officials could also prove advantageous. The first president of the American University in Bulgaria convinced the Bulgarian prime minister to work support for AUBG into talking points during his meeting with the U.S. Under-secretary of State. This tactic led to an additional one million dollars in U.S. government support for the university (Lavery & Lavery, 1993). Of course, local allies could be a source of potential controversy, too, as this cable from the U.S. ambassador to Kosovo indicates about Behgjet Pacolli:

Pacolli is a controversial Swiss-Kosovar multi-millionaire who made his fortune through a series of lucrative deals between his company Mabetex and the Russian and Kazakh governments. He has been viewed with suspicion in the past because of rumored connections to the Russian political elite and the late former Yugoslav

President Slobodan Milosevic... On the more reputable side, Pacolli is also the principal donor to the American University of Kosovo (Kaidanow, 2006).<sup>5</sup>

Many American universities abroad benefited from friends in high places. Christensen pointed out that Kazakh-American Free University's

first honorary degree was to the president of the country. So, that's an important part of the story, too, because from the very beginning we had a connection at the very highest level. I mean you couldn't ask for a better scenario in terms of political influence (M. Christensen, personal communication, July 27, 2016).

Horton similarly stressed that "The government was really, really important" for the development of the American University of Central Asia. He continued:

And the fact that senior people in the government really appreciated us. And I think we were helped by, we got into a period very quickly, where the president, the prime minister, various ministers in different governments in the region would send their kids to AUCA. So we have those secret connections in the background, where we would be helped out and taken care of (S. Horton, personal communication, August 24, 2016).

DURING THE PERIOD 1991-2017, a wide range of individuals and organizations collaborated to establish independent American universities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and concomitant political revolutions opened the door for new ideas about education. New political elites and entrepreneurs admired the American higher education model with its associations to ascendant global ideologies like free trade and democracy. They leveraged the new and favorable political opportunity structure by framing their ambitions in ways that aligned with values of potential American allies across a number of professional sectors from the academy to diplomacy to finance. These alliances enabled the projects to gain access to vital American financial and technical resources that turned ideas into universities. Yet, these largely post-Soviet territories were not the only sites for the growth of the

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<sup>5</sup> Pacolli would later serve briefly as president of Kosovo and, at the time of this writing, serves as the country's foreign minister.

independent American university abroad model during this era. In fact, new institutions also sprouted in more familiar terrain.

### New Entrants Part II: Middle East & North Africa

Since the end of the Cold War, more than a dozen independent American universities have been established in the Middle East and North Africa (cf. Table 6.2). New institutions in the Gulf account for much of the growth. The United Arab Emirates alone has five self-identifying American universities. Kuwait has two. So does Iraq (both in the country's northern Kurdistan region). Palestine and Jordan are now sites of independent American universities abroad for the first time, while Lebanon added several more. Sovereign rulers and politicians, church leaders, and entrepreneurs have established these institutions. Some are lavishly financed, others more modestly so. Some follow the traditional distinctions for control (private/public) and operations (proprietary/not-for-profit). Others have more complicated arrangements. The American University of Ras al Khaimah, for instance, bills itself as "an independent, public, state-owned, non-profit, coeducational institution." In this section, I examine the spread of independent American higher education in the Middle East and North Africa by describing how founders and supporters of these institutions mobilized resources associated with new political opportunities.

#### *Political opportunity structure*

Large-scale political developments in the Middle East and North Africa during the past quarter century facilitated the diffusion of independent American universities. These developments included armed conflict and peace processes as well as significant shifts in national economic policy and demographics. The Lebanese Civil War was among the most consequential regional events. Earlier, I related how it influenced the establishment of the American University in Bulgaria. The same war was also directly responsible for the creation of

American universities in Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates. Until the mid-1970s, the American University of Beirut was renowned for its cosmopolitanism, enrolling students from all over the world. By the start of the civil war, the student body had become almost exclusively Lebanese and Muslim. Hiam Sakr, an AUB alumna, created the American University of Science and Technology (AUST) in East Beirut because the largely Christian population there could not travel safely to AUB or the Lebanese American University (LAU) on the West side of the city. Her institution now enrolls over 5,000 students.

During the war, AUB's board and senior administration were well aware of the precarious situation it was in. If the region could not come to it, it would go to the region by establishing an office of Regional and External Programs (REP) to help other Middle Eastern countries build capacity in agriculture, education, and medicine. During the 1980s and early '90s, the office had consulted on the development of universities in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman. So, it was well positioned in 1996 to accept an invitation from the Ruler of Sharjah, Sultan bin Muhammad Al-Qasimi, to establish an American university in his emirate. In an interview with me, the founding vice president of REP, Abdul Hamid Hallab, recalled when he first learned of the proposal:

Well, we came and we met him. And he was a fascinating man. He asked to have a university established. And I asked him, "why the American University of Beirut? Why did you come to us?" And he smiled. And he said, "because we had advanced your culture and education so much. And now it is your turn to return the favor" (A. Hallab, personal communication, September 28, 2016).

Hallab and AUB were often asked to help set up universities. They almost always declined the offers because they came from entrepreneurs seeking to develop proprietary institutions. Accordingly, Hallab made it a habit to discern a would-be founder's motives as early in the conversation as possible. He made no exception with Sheikh Sultan:

I said, “Your Highness, do you think the university will make profit? That you will be able to gain from it?” And he was indignant! He stood up. He said, “Do you know who I am? I am the ruler of this country. Do you think I want to make money on my people? I will not. And therefore withdraw what you just said.” I said, “I withdraw.”... He said, “I will fund it to whatever level it needs. But don’t say that I will make money on my own people.” And this is how we went. He spared no funding whatsoever (A. Hallab, personal communication, September 28, 2016).

Hallab reported that the non-profit character of the initiative was the most important element in AUB’s decision to participate. That Sheikh Sultan’s wife had been a student at AUB when the civil war broke out was also a factor (Nahawi, 1997). The inability of Emirati elites like her to access the region’s most prestigious institution severely limited their options. Another of the ruler’s ostensible motivations was his respect for American higher education’s role in vaulting the United States to global supremacy. In the foreword to the American University of Sharjah’s application for candidacy with the Middle States regional accrediting agency, founding chancellor Rod French suggested:

What is perhaps most striking in light of the historic association between the U.A.E. and Britain and the fact that the Ruler’s two graduate degrees were earned in the U.K. is the fact that he chose to create a university organized on the American model. He recognized the preeminence of the American university system at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (French, n.d., 6).

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the replicability of the American model took on added significance. After 9/11, attendance at U.S. universities became a less viable option for many Middle Easterners. U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait Richard LeBaron attempted to explain the drop-off in a cable to Foggy Bottom:

...anecdotal evidence suggests that the decline in numbers of Kuwaiti students studying in the U.S. is attributable to three main reasons: misperceptions on visas, suspicions about attitudes in the U.S. toward Arabs and Muslims, and increased competition from local and regional ‘American’ or American-affiliated universities (LeBaron, 2005).

With regard to the last factor, LeBaron added that Kuwaiti parents often ask embassy officials “why should I send my son or daughter to America when they can go to AUK or GUST for a similar education, without being subject to visa and border hassles or discrimination” (LeBaron, 2005)?<sup>6</sup>

The Lebanese Civil War and 9/11 clearly had a significant impact on the field of American universities abroad. Another conflict in the region would also spawn new institutions in the field. The most immediate opportunity provided by the Iraq War was in the country’s semi-autonomous Kurdistan region, where American forces were greeted as liberators. Political leaders there were eager to leverage the infusion of U.S. resources and goodwill by establishing an American university in the Kurdish city of Sulaimani. The founder of that university and his supporters were quick to frame the initiative as a resource for unifying the country’s ethnic and sectarian divisions by using a practical liberal arts curriculum to cultivate tolerant leaders for a burgeoning, pluralist democracy. In a feature on the project during its embryonic stages, the *New York Times* quoted one of the Iraqi organizers: “We want them to study the ideas of Locke, the ideas and writings of Paine and Madison... We want them to understand what democracy is—not only majority rule, but also the rights of minorities. They should be well rounded” (Wong, 2007). This representative framing of the proposed university’s mission aligned with the neoconservative ideology guiding U.S. foreign policy at the time. And it helped secure an initial investment of \$10 million from the U.S. Embassy, which lent credibility to the founder’s solicitations from other sources.

The American presence in Iraq also influenced the creation of an American university in the UAE, albeit more circuitously. Sheikh Saud bin Saqr al Qasimi became crown prince of the

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<sup>6</sup> The Gulf University of Science and Technology was the first private university in Kuwait. The University of Missouri-St. Louis served as founding partner and offers dual enrollment.

emirate of Ras al Khaimah after his older half-brother criticized the American invasion of Iraq. Because his brother's position contradicted the UAE's stated support of the U.S., Sheikh Saud's father dismissed the crown prince, who went into exile. Upon becoming ruler himself, Sheikh Saud went on to establish the American University of Ras al Khaimah when George Mason University decided to withdraw its branch campus from the emirate.

The peace process could instigate new entrants to the field, as well. American involvement in the Oslo Accords in 1993 stimulated the establishment of the Arab American University-Jenin. One of the founders, Palestinian entrepreneur Nabih Badawi,<sup>7</sup> told me that he was "ambitious to have students from Palestine and Israel mixed together, make peace." Before long he linked up with Tom O'Neil, an administrator at Cal State-Stanislaus, who was excited by Badawi's vision. More importantly, he believed that many other Americans would be, too.

O'Neil recalled the mood at the time:

So there was I think at that point, with the peace accords that were talked, in the hopes for peace in the Middle East. There was sort of a kind of an enthusiasm that was generated just I think in the consciousness of the Americans that we might just be on the brink of actually peace in the Middle East, which of course did not happen. But it was the beginning of that and I think this had a direct relation to that in terms of forming educational alliances (T. O'Neil, personal communication, July 26, 2016).

The interest was sufficient for Badawi and O'Neil to get audiences with high-ranking officials in the State Department and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, including Yasser Arafat.

War and peace were not the only levers of opportunity. In the 1990s and 2000s, Middle Eastern countries joined a global trend in opening up their higher education systems to private providers. American universities were the first or among the first private universities in

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<sup>7</sup> Badawi also attempted to establish the American University of Ethiopia during the late 1990s, but was swindled by a local partner who ran off with his initial investment (N. Badawi, personal communication, May 18, 2017). Cf. Hagos (1997).

Palestine, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. Former president of American University of Kuwait, Marina Tolmacheva explained the attraction of private higher education there:

One reason why private universities thrived from the beginning in Kuwait is that national institutions only serve the nationals or occasionally some quote unquote exchange students, those who are admitted on either exchange scholarships or maybe are extended educational charity by the Kuwaiti government. People who come with families, or form families while they are residents in Kuwait, but are not Kuwaiti citizens, their children are not entitled to Kuwaiti [public] education (M. Tolmacheva, personal communication, December 1, 2016).

The United Arab Emirates also restricted higher education access to citizens. So when the trend to privatize converged with the trend to internationalize, a unique opportunity was created for independent American universities. Jihad Nader, former provost of the American University in Dubai, put the benefits in market terms:

The fact that AUD had a first mover advantage was determinant in the success of AUD because for several years AUD was the first and only non-local institution of higher learning in the Gulf—not only of the UAE—that had institutional accreditation from the U.S. by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (J. Nader, personal communication, November 2, 2016).

War and peace, as well as privatization and internationalization, enabled conditions for independent American universities to develop in the Middle East. The examples above demonstrate how the circumstances that brought the universities about informed the ways that founders and early supporters framed their endeavors in order to secure critical resources. Sheikh Sultan's insistence that the university operate as a not-for-profit institution and pledge to fund the institution commensurate with better American universities in the U.S. induced the participation of the American University of Beirut. In Iraq and Palestine, framing the new colleges as tools for healing war wounds elicited financial or institutional support from key American partners. In Kuwait and Dubai, framing the colleges as private and international was sufficient to meet rising student demand for those features.



*Source of legitimacy: accreditation*

What strategies have independent American universities abroad in the Middle East pursued to make credible their claims to general excellence and capacity to produce leaders? Among the most common responses to that question was the pursuit of U.S. regional accreditation. Of the 16 independent American universities abroad founded in the last 30 years in the MENA region, only three have earned U.S. regional accreditation (American University in Dubai [SACS]; American University of Sharjah [Middle States]; and Al Akhawayn University [NEASC]). Yet, even those that do not have it still regard the distinction as *sine qua non*. Some interviewees, especially those affiliated with institutions in the UAE, indicated that accreditation was the defining characteristic of an American university abroad. Sheikh Saud told me, “The whole idea of the American University of Ras al Khaimah is that we are a university that is accredited by an agency in America” (S. al Qasimi, personal communication, March 21, 2017). The president of that institution, Hassan Hamdan al Alkim, agreed and noted a movement in the UAE toward accreditation even among institutions that do not self-identify as American:

We, as an American institution, are pursuing SACS accreditation... But for others like Ajman or Abu Dhabi—although they have the WASC—it’s not necessary for them to get it. Although, there is a trend in the UAE in general that these programs and these institutions be accredited in the States (H. al Alkim, personal communication, October 18, 2016).

Indeed, in the UAE, multiple public institutions have earned U.S. regional accreditation (e.g., United Arab Emirates University [WASC] and Zayed University [Middle States]). While in Jordan, where the market is less accreditation-saturated, the pursuit of regional accreditation allows the American University of Madaba to carve out a niche among the country’s 20 other private universities.

Officials at the American University in Dubai use regional accreditation in the U.S. to combat concerns about its proprietary status. When I asked Jihad Nader if there were ever any conflicts between his institution's profit-seeking and academic obligations, he cited the institution's SACS accreditation as evidence to the contrary. The university's objective, he stated, is

to have and run successfully a private, for-profit institution in which academic stakes proceed us which might seem an insurmountable challenge—like a contradiction of terms—but we have proven that it is not that. Yes, you can have a private, for-profit university and at the same time excel academically and get all of these accreditations and build up your reputation (J. Nader, personal communication, November 2, 2016).

Several university officials I spoke to, like Nader, used accreditation as a blunt force instrument intended to dull an observer's sensitivities to other potential sources of anxiety. Indeed, for Sheikh Saud, too, the great value of accreditation was its ability to “simplify the message” that the university meets international standards of quality. He elaborated:

For me, it was important for us to have an outside benchmark, accreditation system. So the idea is to be accredited by an American agency, which will hold the university to such standards by which they can compare each other... accreditation is just like when you get an auditor. PriceWaterhouse. They audit you. They see, “ok. This is where you are.” I think it's very important. You make yourself understood by someone else (S. al Qasimi, personal communication, March 21, 2017).

In addition to its function as a validator of institutional quality, Sheikh Saud appreciated that accreditation provided a blueprint for how to more efficiently build an institution. In other words, the accreditation process

allows us to have a shortcut. You know, people... all of us have choice. There is no point for all of us to be inventors. Sometimes it's just simply we have to follow and learn from others. So, it's for me, I think it's a shortcut. There is... these accrediting agencies in the United States have done a lot of work to get where they are. Why do I want to invent it? Let me do it. You know copy/paste (S. al Qasimi, personal communication, March 21, 2017).

Saud's comments reveal the extent to which the American higher education model has been standardized and made replicable.

Yet so few independent American universities in the region have obtained U.S. regional accreditation. How do they convey legitimacy to their constituencies in lieu of accreditation?

One strategy is to accentuate the institution's integrity. The American University of Kuwait has taken this approach. Marina Tolmacheva explains:

AUK prides itself on having the strongest academic integrity because the national university does not have this reputation and whether it is... I don't want to mention the word corruption, or just rumors it was very important for us to maintain both official rules and to listen to what might have been an indication of what may have been a lack of straight dealing (M. Tolmacheva, personal communication, December 1, 2016).

Another institution has taken a more defiant stance against accreditation. Muthanna Abdul Razzaq, founder and president of the American University in the Emirates, expressed annoyance when I inquired about his institution's involvement with U.S. regional accreditors:

And when you ask about accreditation, and this is the last, what I am going to say, this is the wrong concept. They do everything to please the accreditation boards, which is I don't like it. You should please your students and you will get the accrediting by force. When I graduate leaders and become my reputation up and up, those accrediting bodies would be forced to give me the accreditation. Why should NEASC or SACS or Amideast, let me... You know, knowledge is power. If you are more original than me, you will practice the power in me. It's very simple, so let us go to the main objective: what's my mission? My mission is not to get accreditation. It is my vision. My vision is not to get accreditation. Accreditation will be the by product, not the main product (M. Razzaq, personal communication, October 1, 2016).

Razzaq and representatives of other institutions without regional or programmatic accreditation are forced to make alternative claims to legitimacy. Razzaq, for example, emphasizes that his institution follows the "American system." But without linking the American University in the Emirates to any guarantors of quality, either via accreditation or institutional partnerships, the institution will struggle to move from the periphery of the field.

*Source of legitimacy: partnerships*

Earlier in the chapter, I demonstrated how institutional partnerships could serve as key resources for mobilizing support. In so doing, I emphasized the technical benefits that experienced partners can bring to development projects. This strategy was also implemented in the startup efforts for independent American universities in the Middle East. Not unlike the University of California's arrangement with the American University of Armenia, the American University of Beirut was initially contracted to provide advice and technical assistance for the development of the American University of Sharjah. AUB officials agreed to design curricula; identify library, lab, and engineering needs; prepare an organization chart, administration manuals, and job descriptions for senior positions; recommend recruitment criteria; and develop a timeline for implementation (Hallab, 1996). The Beirut institution, however, was still attempting to recover from the Civil War, and soon in over its head. So, Hallab offered to find a substitute partner. Beyond providing technical services to get the project up and running, the goal was to identify an institutional partner whose reputation would bestow legitimacy to the project.

Hallab recalls:

I started searching. I went to MIT. And I went to Harvard. But I was offended by how much money they wanted before they come here. And so I did not take that kindly and I told His Highness we should not buy our way. And the American University in Washington was much more amicable and amenable for us to deal with them (A. Hallab, personal communication, September 28, 2016).

Hallab's sticker shock helps to explain why so many independent American universities abroad begin without substantive institutional partnerships. When Barham Salih and colleagues were planning the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS) they were optimistic about finding a partner to perform the role that American University had for the American University of Sharjah. Minutes from an early AUIS board meeting note, "It was agreed that we should not

‘reinvent the wheel’ but rather benefit from the existing body of experience both in the US and in other ‘American universities.’” Multiple trustees advocated affiliating AUIS with an institution in the U.S. “in order to ‘transfer’ methods to our administrative and academic staff.” DePaul University accepted the idea of a “loose affiliation” but not a full partnership. Trustees divvied up responsibilities to pursue partnerships with: Columbia, Boston College, Brandeis, Johns Hopkins, Southern California, Olin School of Business, the New School, and Rice (Minutes, 2006). In the end, AUIS was not able to secure a foundational, wide-ranging institutional partnership with any of the above-mentioned universities, though it would have success eventually in forging ad hoc programmatic partnerships. Salih later suggested to me:

I still think if we can do joint programs with these universities, this is the way. We have not been very successful at it, even though that is changing a lot. People are coming from the United States to realize that AUIS is a huge institution. It is not a gimmick. So to have Stanford work with us on the law program, to have Stanford work with us on the leadership academy and governance school, is huge (B. Salih, personal communication, May 23, 2017).

The American University of Kuwait was able to secure the name brand that Salih and his colleagues were hoping for when Dartmouth University agreed to provide foundational support.

But the legitimizing effect was inconsistent. Tolmacheva remembers:

Periodically [Dartmouth] has had huge influence. Sometimes it would be lessened and then it might come back again. One thing that they have not done is that they did not have a flow of Dartmouth faculty to AUK which AUK may have welcomed at least for purposes of prestige (M. Tolmacheva, personal communication, December 1, 2016).

The pursuit of partnerships in the development of the American universities in Sharjah, Iraq, and Kuwait reveals both an awareness of an existing model and a recognized strategy for achieving it, not unlike the “copy/paste” blueprint provided by accreditation.

*Sources of legitimacy: Endorsement from U.S. officials*

In lieu of, or as a supplement to, accreditation, some American universities abroad in the Middle East have become particularly adept at obtaining endorsements from high-profile figures in the U.S. government. Testimonials come in many forms, but a prominent one is the commencement speech. The American University in Dubai (AUD), for one, has successfully courted a wide range of bi-partisan graduation speakers, including Democrats Bill Clinton, Madeleine Albright, George Mitchell, and Dennis Kucinich, as well as Republicans Colin Powell, Margaret Spellings, Ray LaHood, and James Baker. Jihad Nader, the long-time former provost at the American University of Dubai, recalled the spectacle of Secretary Baker's appearance at AUD's first commencement. Nader had just finished his first semester on the faculty there, when Baker visited:

And so I thought of this as a very interesting and unique experience. The first of its kind to take place here in the UAE in Dubai. That there's a private institution that was graduating its first class at its first commencement and that the keynote speaker was the former Secretary of State of the United States (J. Nader, personal communication, November 2, 2016).

Nader was impressed by the implicit endorsement of the institution from such an important figure so early on in the young university's existence. Other American leaders have used the first commencement as a platform to express support for budding American universities abroad. President Clinton provided a video message to the American University of Bosnia and Herzegovina for its first commencement. First Lady Michelle Obama and former First Lady Laura Bush did the same for the inaugural commencement at the American University of Afghanistan.

Of course, support from eminent Americans can go beyond the rhetorical. President Clinton funds a scholarship for U.S. students to study at AUD. Other distinguished Americans

contribute their time, talents, and resources through service on boards of trustees. In addition to high-ranking local officials, the American University of Kurdistan in Duhok, for example, features on its board of trustees former U.S. ambassadors Peter Galbraith and Zalmay Khalilzad as well as the presidents of the American University of Beirut and the American University of Paris. Indeed, numerous American universities abroad in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have utilized their boards of trustees to strengthen institutional connections to American politics and higher education. Yet challenges still remain.

### *Challenges to institutions*

The new independent American universities in the Middle East experienced many of the same challenges as their counterparts in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. These included recruiting faculty and staff with experience in American higher education; navigating mismatched legal environments; and incorporating American-style institutional governance structures and practices. Marina Tolmacheva remembered,

One problem of the early university was that while some organizers had a business or an organization experience, it was not in higher education. Those who were professionally engaged in higher education were usually faculty. Sometimes, maybe they had the experience of chairing a department but not in the United States. Therefore, what was lacking was administrative experience in the United States (M. Tolmacheva, personal communication, December 1, 2016).

Experienced academic administrators are assets for any institution. But doubly so when trying to develop a dual culture university. Majdi Dayyat stated that one of the American University of Madaba's biggest challenges is figuring out

how to comply with two requirements for the same institution. Especially the Jordanian law is very tough and there are a lot of borders and barriers to comply with the American [accreditation requirements]... So we are facing a challenge between two different cultures beside what you need for the requirements of the accreditation. And still we are stuck in that area (M. Dayyat, personal communication, November 8, 2016).

The cultural challenges can be just as perplexing for accreditors. One area where cultural differences are manifested most visibly is in institutional governance. Mike Johnson, a former vice president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and member of the accrediting team for the American University in Dubai, told me that discerning how institutional governance works at candidate institutions is often the most difficult task in the accreditation process (M. Johnson, December 13, 2016). Barham Salih explained the problem of citizen trusteeship this way:

The idea of an independent university supervised by a board? Any Iraqi knows that it has to be managed by the state. And we don't want to do this. And the motto has always been, "we need to create an independent university that does not violate the Iraqi law." I don't know how you will write this. If it does comply with the law, it will look like any other state university... This has not been easy (B. Salih, personal communication, May 23, 2017).

Marina Tolmacheva anticipated such difficulties before she arrived in Kuwait. The university's founder and board chair, a member of the Kuwaiti ruling family, tried to ease her concerns:

Sheikha Dana personally told me that it would be exactly like in the United States. Well, by Kuwaiti law it can not be exactly like in the United States. So it is not just the board. It is Kuwaiti legislature including starting with the law on private universities. But not only that. All the employment laws, immigration, and so forth. All of that is part of their reality that we have to work with (M. Tolmacheva, personal communication, December 1, 2016).

Managing multiple cultural expectations, navigating rigid legal restrictions, and practicing American-style institutional governance are just a few of the many challenges new independent American universities in the Middle East face. I demonstrated earlier in the chapter that the new institutions in post-Soviet spaces also faced these same challenges. That these complications occur in multiple, distinct contexts suggests that they may be endemic to the model, at least in its formative stage.



### *Institutional entrepreneurs*

Despite these challenges, upstart independent American universities in the Middle East endured. One of the primary reasons they could withstand the myriad obstacles was the personal qualities of the individuals responsible for them. Sharif Fayez and Richard Lukaj demonstrated grit in the face of adversity in Afghanistan and Kosovo. Founders of American universities in the Middle East have proven as unwavering. I highlight here two such institutional entrepreneurs. Hiam Sakr related to me the opposition she experienced during the process of obtaining a license for the American University of Science and Technology. Hers would be the first American university in Lebanon not to have the backing of an organization:

What I felt is, they are not used to have one person that would come. It was always a missionary issue and it started as such and then when we were the first to start a private one and there comes a woman and not a man, in a country of men...to have a woman that is asking to start it... Really, I had tears in my eyes whenever I got: "To whom do you belong? To any sect? To any party? To any politician? Who's behind you?" And it was a will that really took me some time. And when there's a will, there is a way. And I did it (H. Sakr, personal communication, October 24, 2016).

Determination is an essential characteristic for organizational entrepreneurs. Charisma could help, too. Among those I interviewed for this study, none was more captivating than Barham Salih. An experienced Iraqi Kurdish politician, Salih waged a charm offensive on wealthy individuals in and outside of the country to marshal resources to start and sustain the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. He told me:

I used every political skill I had in order to ask them to fund dinners and whatever else. One businessman was telling me that this is the most expensive dinner he has ever been to. I had to say it was the worst part of it, being a fundraiser for these, because you have to be nice to people you don't like... I am usually very reserved when it comes to asking for favors, but when it comes to this university, I don't feel shy (B. Salih, personal communication, May 23, 2017).

Frankly, Salih could not afford to be shy. In its early years, the university operated on a shoe-string budget, a source of constant anxiety for the university's president, Athanasios Moulakis.

According to Salih

Moulakis would call me and say "Barham, we have run out of cash. We cannot pay salaries next week." And that literally would mean, I have to rush back, go to people's homes and say "Well, your city is in need of your help. We cannot do this. We cannot do that." And had we not started, I wonder whether we would have, any of us would have, the motivation to really make sure that this has become too big to fail, in a way (B. Salih, personal communication, May 23, 2017).

Salih, who chaired the university's board until his term expired in 2016, has raised over \$200 million for AUIS. But its incessantly precarious financial condition stands in stark contrast to, for example, the American University of Sharjah. When I asked Salih why he and his colleagues did not wait to secure a firmer financial foundation for the university before launching, he echoed Richard Lukaj, saying:

If you don't throw yourself in the deep end, and you don't give yourself a way back, a way out, the obstacles, the idea of an independent university that will have to be funded by private sources and these stingy business people who will not pay you a penny unless you really be very nice to them, and be very persuasive, who would have thought that in 10 years, we would have raised \$200 million dollars? It's impossible. But my point of view was "let's do it. Let's launch the program." Even though if this is a small English program, then it becomes a reality... So to me the vision was right, the plan was very complicated. And to be fair, I did not personally abide by the [feasibility] plan. I literally pushed everybody and myself into the very deep end with no way out. We really had to swim to make it happen. Otherwise, had we not done that, we still may be at the planning stage (B. Salih, May 23, 2017).

These anecdotes about overcoming adversity to establish and sustain American universities abroad serve to emphasize a broader theme from my interviews about the importance of vision and determination in the institution-building process. While wider political opportunities may have been made available, the establishment of these institutions was by no means inevitable.

### *Influential allies*

Institutional theory recognizes the enabling role of entrepreneurs' personal characteristics, like grit and charisma, to achieve ambitious goals. This literature also highlights the significance of an entrepreneur's position or status within a field (Battilana et al., 2008). Individuals more deeply embedded in a field or those with higher social status have greater capacity to shape the discourse about issues pertinent to that field. Again, Barham Salih serves as an illustrative example. While Salih was an outsider to American higher education, he was well positioned in the field of Iraqi and international politics. The former deputy prime minister of Iraq and former prime minister of the Kurdistan region, Salih was able to build a coalition of influential allies in Iraq and America who would advocate the university's cause, including key American academics, journalists, and diplomats. The U.S.' senior adviser to the Ministry of Higher Education in Baghdad during the occupation, John Agresto, was one of the early organizers and then later served as provost. Noted Middle East scholars Fouad Ajami, Kanan Makiya, and Henri Barkey served on the board of trustees. Thomas Friedman wrote multiple columns about AUIS in the *New York Times*.<sup>8</sup> And U.S. ambassadors Ryan Crocker and Zalmay Khalilzad arranged partial start-up funding from the U.S. government.

Khalilzad's role is particularly notable. Beyond securing funding, he helped to make the initiative more palatable to authorities in Baghdad, who were not eager to see an American university in the Kurdistan region. Khalilzad contributed, he told me, by ensuring that "the prime minister and the minister of higher education in Baghdad didn't object, because we wouldn't have done it. But there wasn't a great enthusiasm there." In addition to his political maneuvering in Baghdad, Khalilzad mediated between Salih and rivals within his own political party, who "were not entirely positive" about the university (Z. Khalilzad, personal communication, August

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Friedman (2007; 2014a; 2014b; 2016).

4, 2016). Jalal Talabani was at the time president of Iraq and leader of Salih's political party.

Talabani's wife, Hiero, was a powerful figure in her own right and an opponent of Salih's.

According to Khalilzad, Hiero

didn't want the word Iraq mentioned. "Why should it be called the American University of *Iraq*? Just call it American University of Sulaymaniyah,' so to speak. I sort of said, "well, given that Kurdistan was part of Iraq and given that the Iraqi government has to authorize it, the education ministry has to approve that this be done, and our relationship is also important with the central government, its perspective is important for us, that's the compromise, the framework with which the proposal was formally submitted by Barham" (Z. Khalilzad, personal communication, August 4, 2016).

These examples demonstrate the importance and difficulty of securing support of political leadership in multiple spheres: American, local, and national. The case of the establishment of the Arab American Universtiy-Jenin corroborates this interpretation. Nabih Badawi related to me how difficult it was to get a license for the university from the Palestinian authorities. Yet the State Department was able to arrange a meeting between the president of Cal State-Stanislaus and Yasser Arafat. As Badawi remembers, it was at midnight in his hotel in Washington, "And he was in his pyjamas, and he signed the approval. Otherwise, I think they would not do it. It came to him directly to sign it, so he signed it directly" (N. Badawi, personal communication, May 18, 2017). When I asked an otherwise loquacious Tom O'Neil if they had not been able to procure that blessing from Arafat would they still have been able to pull off the project, he replied only with a terse "no" (T. O'Neil, personal communication, July 26, 2016).

DURING THE PERIOD 1991-2017, more than a dozen new independent American universities were established in the wider region that was the ancestral home of the archetype. The Lebanese Civil War, 9/11, the Iraq War, and the adoption of neoliberal national policy reforms all represented political opportunity structures favorable to the replication of the model. Established

leaders and ambitious entrepreneurs alike exploited these new opportunities. U.S. universities and regional accreditation supplied blueprints for legitimacy, while allies in American higher education and politics helped the architects of these new ventures withstand critical and oftentimes recurrent challenges. The haziness of the field allowed those with vision to seize the opportunities for entrepreneurship. Low levels of institutionalization allowed new actors to experiment with unconventional forms, selectively employing structures and practices associated with their forbearers in Europe and the Near East, all while still asserting their American-ness.

### Discussion

New entrants to the field of American universities abroad in both regions during the period 1991-2017 had much in common (cf. Figure 6.3). Both movements were precipitated by exogenous shocks that created political opportunities favorable to new ideas about education. Private education soon became fashionable in both territories, and the American model was the preferred brand. Still, institutions in both regions perceived U.S. accreditation as the primary source of legitimacy, although institutions in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have been more successful at obtaining regional and programmatic accreditations. American universities in both areas rely heavily on partnerships as practical resources for building and sustaining programs as well as markers of legitimacy. And institutions in both territories have affiliated themselves with high-ranking U.S. officials through commencement speeches, scholarships, and board service. At the same time, implementing citizen trusteeship is one of the greatest challenges for these institutions.

By contrast, the Eastern European and Central Asian institutions have more substantial university partnerships and have had more success fundraising through institutionally related foundations in the United States. Of new entrants in the Middle East, only the two American

universities in Iraqi Kurdistan have designated fundraising organizations in the United States. The new American universities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have had more success than their counterparts in the Middle East obtaining funding from the U.S. government. Still, growth has been more intense in Middle East. The thrust of growth in Eastern Europe began approximately five to seven years earlier than in the Middle East, which might account for some of the differential outcomes like accreditation status.

Considered together, the new entrants followed in the tradition of American universities in certain ways and set new trends in others. Like their predecessors in Europe and the Near East, the new institutions emerged from newly hospitable political conditions. Yet past exogenous shocks failed to produce growth of such volume. The sheer size of the field's enlargement during this period speaks to the significance of the fall of the USSR and the spread of neoliberalism. Favorable conditions were similar across more countries than ever, yielding the American university abroad as a popular policy solution. During the 1970s, accreditation became an important source of legitimacy for the new American universities abroad in Europe. But it was not until the 1990s and 2000s that new entrants began to consider it indispensable. These new entrants employed frames about training leaders, facilitating peace, and signaling friendship between nations, as had the Near East College Association and Association of International Colleges and Universities in previous eras. The addition of the free market frame in Eastern Europe and Central Asia represented an innovation based on the particular circumstances of the fall of communism.

In addition to this script change, new entrants also modified the blueprints by institutionalizing partnerships as a key mobilizing structure and source of legitimacy in establishing and maintaining American universities abroad. What the American University of

Armenia and American University in Bulgaria did by partnering with U.S. institutions during the planning phase was like Newton and Spinoza discovering calculus simultaneously yet independently. Numerous other institutions in the field would follow suit to sustain their programs and provide legitimacy, especially when lacking accreditation, and later entrants would imitate the scheme as well. The institutional partnership innovation had the added effect of reinforcing the connections between American universities abroad and the wider field of American higher education it was nested in.

### Conclusion

The growth of independent American universities during the 1990s and 2000s demonstrated the popularity of the brand, if not necessarily a nuanced understanding of the distinctive features of American higher education. Additions in post-Soviet spaces and the Gulf enlarged a field that had been limited largely to the Mediterranean. These new entrants also made the field of American universities abroad as a whole significantly more complex. Not only were there now more institutions in new locations, but also myriad new: interpretations of the form and content of American higher education; arguments for the significance of American higher education; founder motivations; actors involved (both supporters and opponents); challenges to institutions; frames for mobilizing support; structures to convey those frames; and sources of legitimacy.

Some changes brought the field into closer contact with American higher education. The movement to internationalize higher education in the United States that arose during the period made many stateside institutions more interested in partnering with foreign counterparts. And the rise of academic capitalism enabled American universities to participate in the movement without hurting their bottom lines. Furthermore, the opportunity to become regionally accredited

in the United States allowed American universities abroad to make more credible claims to equivalency with the sources of their emulation. At the same time, the inability of many institutions to achieve accreditation could serve as evidence for just how unlike the fields actually were. Meanwhile, the American higher education establishment would become increasingly circumspect about the growing association of the “American” brand with proprietary outfits and diploma mills.

**Table 6.1** Independent American universities established in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, 1990-2017

Institution	Location	Year	Founder type	Primary Source of Legitimacy
Anglo-American University	Prague, Czech Republic	1990	Local entrepreneur	U.S. regional accreditation (WASC)
American University of Armenia	Yerevan, Armenia	1991	American academics of Armenian descent	U.S. regional accreditation (WASC)
American University in Bulgaria	Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria	1991	Local academics and American diplomat	U.S. regional accreditation (NEASC)
American University in Moscow (closed)	Moscow, Russia	1991	Russian émigré academic	Endorsement from high-profile officials
Central European University	Budapest, Hungary	1991	American philanthropist	U.S. regional accreditation (Middle States)
Romanian-American University	Bucharest, Romania	1991	Local academic	English language; American faculty
American University of Central Asia	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	1993	Local academics	U.S. regional accreditation (Middle States)
American University for Humanities (closed)	Tbilisi, Georgia	1994	British-Iranian entrepreneur	U.S. national/program accreditation (AALE)
Kazakh-American Free University	Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan	1994	Local academic	U.S. national/program accreditation (ACBSP)
American University of Baku (closed)	Baku, Azerbaijan	1995	American organization of Azerbaijani émigrés	N/A
Kazakh-American University	Almaty, Kazakhstan	1997	Local academic	Membership in U.S. higher education association (AAC&U)
American University of Kosovo (now RIT Kosovo)	Pristina, Kosovo	2002	Local and American entrepreneurs	U.S. regional accreditation (Middle States)
American University of Bosnia & Herzegovina	Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina	2005	Local entrepreneur	U.S. national/program accreditation (ACICS)
University American College Skopje	Skopje, Macedonia	2005	Local entrepreneurs	U.S. national/program accreditation (ACBSP)
Georgian-American University	Tbilisi, Georgia	2005	Local and American entrepreneurs	Co-owned and administered by American citizens
American University of	Kabul, Afghanistan	2006	Afghan émigré	USAID funding



Afghanistan			academic	
American University of Mongolia (suspended)	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	2012	American entrepreneur	Founded by American citizens
American University of Moldova	Chisinau, Moldova	2015	Cypriot entrepreneur	English language
American University of Ukraine	Kiev, Ukraine	TBD	Georgian politician/entrepreneur	U.S. university partners

**Table 6.2** Independent American universities established in the Middle East and North Africa, 1989-2017

Institution	Location	Year	Founder type	Primary Source of Legitimacy
American University of Science & Technology	Beirut, Lebanon	1989	Local entrepreneur	U.S. national/program accreditation (ABET)
American College of Dubai	Dubai, UAE	1990	Branch campus	English language
American University in Dubai	Dubai, UAE	1995	Branch campus	U.S. regional accreditation (SACS)
Al Akhawayn University	Ifrane, Morocco	1995	Sovereign	U.S. regional accreditation (NEASC)
American University of Sharjah	Sharjah, UAE	1997	Sovereign	U.S. regional accreditation (Middle States)
American University of Technology	Beirut, Lebanon	1998	Local entrepreneur	N/A
American University of Culture & Education	Beirut, Lebanon	2000	Local entrepreneur	N/A
Arab American University-Jenin	Jenin, West Bank	2000	Local entrepreneur	Founding partnership with U.S. university (Cal State-Stanislaus)
American University of Kuwait	Kuwait City, Kuwait	2004	Sovereign	Partnership with U.S. university (Dartmouth)
American University of Madaba	Madaba, Jordan	2005	Church	Incorporation in U.S. state (New Hampshire)
American University in the Emirates	Dubai, UAE	2006	Iraqi entrepreneur	American citizens on board of trustees, administration, and faculty
American University of Iraq, Sulaimani	Sulaimani, Iraq	2007	Local politician	American citizens on board of trustees, administration, and faculty
American University of the Middle East	Kuwait City, Kuwait	2007	Local entrepreneur	English language
American University of Ras al Khaimah	Ras al Khaimah, UAE	2012	Sovereign	American citizens on board of trustees, administration, and faculty
American University of Kurdistan	Duhok, Iraq	2014	Local politician	American citizens on board of trustees, administration, and faculty
American University of North Africa	Tunis, Tunisia	2017	Local entrepreneur	English language

**Table 6.3** Comparisons of new entrants (1989-2017) to the field of American universities abroad by region

	<i>Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia</i>	<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>
Founder profile	Entrepreneurs; academics	Entrepreneurs; politicians/sovereigns
Political opportunity	Regime change	Policy change
Frames	Expert technical knowledge/international standards of quality; free market principles; credentials for new elites/training leaders; bi-national friendship	Facilitators of peace; training leaders; private/independent of government control; international standards of quality
Sources of funding	U.S. government; diaspora philanthropy; tuition	Tuition; local government
Mobilizing structures	Institutionally related foundations; U.S. university partners; board of trustees	U.S. university partners; board of trustees
Sources of legitimacy	Accreditation; institutional partnerships; endorsements from U.S. government leaders; board of trustees	Accreditation; institutional partnerships; endorsements from U.S. government leaders; board of trustees
Challenges	Legal; governance; experience with U.S. higher education	Legal; governance; experience with U.S. higher education
Allies	U.S. diplomats; U.S. university partners; local government officials	U.S. diplomats; U.S. university partners; local government officials

## CHAPTER SEVEN: FIELD MATURATION, 1991-2017

When one sees these several universities as comprising *an* institution rather than a series of separate enterprises, when one discovers their spokesmen addressing a national academic audience beyond their own particular flock, their disagreements take on an entirely new aspect.

—Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (1965), p. vii

### Introduction

The worldwide growth of American universities abroad during the 1990s and 2000s had revitalized a distressed field. New entrants inspired optimism about the growing relevance for established institutions, as well as the viability of the model in still yet other locations around the world. In 1998, *The Economist* noted the diffusion of the independent American university model to the United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan. The article cited 454,000 foreigners studying at universities in the U.S. as evidence of “a hunger” for American education and suggested leaders at the center of the rejuvenated field were keen to satisfy it: “Next, if Douglas Denby, president of the Association of American International Colleges and Universities, has his way, will be China and South Africa” (United States: Subversive Values, 1998).<sup>1</sup> It appeared that American universities abroad were ascendant.

The infusion of new actors, logics, and forms as a corollary to the growth, however, challenged the field’s conceptual boundaries and brand integrity. Few new entrants to the field were wholly committed to the principles of American higher education as understood by AAICU institutions. American University of Beirut President John Waterbury captured the dilemma succinctly in a 2003 essay, observing “Many private institutions in the Middle East now claim to offer an ‘American education,’ but some of them offer only the name and not the content. Some

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<sup>1</sup> Denby was president of John Cabot University in Rome. The reference to China was not made cursorily. In 2005, the director-general of the Nanjing province’s Department of Education, in affiliation with the Coordinating Council for International Universities (CCIU), a U.S.-based NGO, commissioned American University to write a report on the feasibility of establishing an independent, English-language American university in China (American University, 2005). By the end of the period, however, no such institution would take root in China.

of these new American institutions may well earn the adjective a bad reputation” (Waterbury, 2003, 65). Indeed, the prospect that bad faith actors would besmirch the good name of American universities abroad seemed all too feasible.

Problematic newcomers were buoyed by three inter-related global developments in higher education: privatization, corporatization, and accountability. By the late 1990s, a post-secondary educational credential had become a requirement for participation in the “knowledge economy” (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). And the global diffusion of neoliberal education policies encouraged private providers to help meet the increased demand. Entrepreneurs around the world began to realize that they could make money off the booming industry. In the United States, the rise of the for-profit model disrupted an established higher education system and raised questions about academic quality and student debt (Breneman et al., 2006; Ruch, 2001; Tierney & Hentschke, 2007). But its ascent was tempered in the 2010s. In 2015, for-profit higher education institutions enrolled only ten percent of U.S. students (Ginder, et al., 2016, 8), and more than half of proprietary institutions in the U.S. operated as less-than-two-year institutions (Ginder, et al., 2016, 4). For-profits remained marginal players in American higher education. Few other countries, though, had a tradition of private, not-for-profit higher education. In most higher education systems, profit making has been part and parcel of privatization: private universities were for-profit universities by definition. As a result, new universities were increasingly likely to take proprietary form.

Another important consequence of neoliberal privatization during the period was that higher education institutions increasingly resembled businesses. Free market policies that stimulated competition and regulatory environments that promoted accountability changed the way universities operated (Giroux, 2002; Steck, 2003). In order to compete for scarce resources,

especially student tuition, universities prioritized marketing and communication efforts to gain an extra edge over their peers. Even established universities routinely abandoned historic visual identity markers for “abstract, eye-catching, corporate-like logos” (Delmestri, et al., 2015, 122). In the neoliberal knowledge economy, universities were not just educational institutions—they were brands. And in education, the best brand is American. Waterbury has pointed out, “the word ‘American’ is to education, what ‘Swiss’ is to watches” (Waterbury, 2003, 66). With limited legal protections on the highly valued “American” name, entrepreneurs found it an increasingly attractive option.<sup>2</sup>

Knowledge economies are more dependent on the university than industrial economies. Authorities are under increased pressure to hold universities accountable than in the past, due to their enlarged social significance (Alexander, 2000; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). These pressures have resulted in widespread implementation of quality assurance mechanisms, including accreditation. But “foreign-backed” institutions like many American universities abroad do not often face the same pressures as their local peers. Too often, national systems have neither the capacity nor the interest to rigorously evaluate foreign providers. Altbach and Knight (2007) observe that even if pertinent regulatory frameworks are present, they “usually do not apply to providers outside the national education system. This loophole permits bona fide and rogue foreign providers to avoid compliance with national regulations in many countries and makes monitoring their activities difficult” (300). Private higher education institutions could further evade scrutiny through accreditation mills that supplied specious certifications. In 2005, the American Academy for Liberal Education (AALE) awarded full accreditation to the American

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<sup>2</sup> The American University in Washington, D.C. has threatened litigation against multiple American universities abroad for use of the “American” name, including the American University in Bulgaria and the American University of Myanmar (Minutes, 2011; C. Kerwin personal communication, March 28, 2017; C. Klawter, personal communication, April 16, 2017).

University for Humanities. This ostensibly mundane event was in fact a nightmare scenario for the historic standard-bearers of American universities abroad: an American accreditor had certified a diploma mill in the Caucasus (Bollag, 2006a).<sup>3</sup>

The rise of disingenuous proprietary institutions exploiting American branding and weak quality assurance regimes stacked the deck against the field's legitimate actors. Yet, remarkably, the field survived the period with its reputation largely intact. That is because its leaders would rally to defend *an* institution. When Waterbury had asserted that there was a right and a wrong way to be an independent American university abroad, he was representing the institution of the American university abroad as much as the American University of Beirut. Accordingly, he, AAICU, and other actors at the center of the field would take measures to re-define the substance of American higher education abroad. In so doing, these colleagues began to address audiences beyond their own campuses. Of course, their public statements did not always reach their targets and they sometimes masked considerable disagreements. Here lies the excitement of their story. In this chapter, I ask how did the field's established institutions respond to the proliferation of American universities abroad? What has been the effect of these responses? In order to answer these questions as thoroughly as possible, I utilize a variety of data collection and analytical strategies (cf. Table 3.1).

#### *Defining the field via AAICU communications*

Since the early 2000s, AAICU has employed several strategies to articulate the fundamental properties of American universities abroad. One approach has been to use its own communications channels. In 2002, the association launched the *AAICU Journal*. Published annually by the American College of Thessaloniki, the now discontinued periodical featured

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<sup>3</sup> The U.S. Department of Education suspended AALE's accrediting authority in 2006 and revoked it in 2007 (Basken, 2007; Bollag, 2006b). In 2010, AALE voluntarily withdrew its application to regain accrediting authority (Hebel, 2010). The American University for Humanities continues to operate.

essays by faculty and administrators at member institutions, as well as invited guests on various issues pertinent to American universities abroad. In his introduction to the third issue, AAICU president John S. Bailey, of the American College of Greece, used the platform to propose a common mission of member institutions: “Our ultimate mission as members of the AAICU is to instill in young people timeless values, making them useful to society, and, by extension, good citizens and good leaders in both their countries and in the world at large” (Bailey, 2004). In service of that common mission, the third issue included entries on the challenges associated with building a curriculum that features information literacy as a student learning outcome, maintaining an American-style library abroad, and teaching foreign languages.

The lead article of that issue was a direct attempt at pinning down the elusive institutional characteristics that Waterbury might say give the “American” adjective a good reputation. In “What is *American* about American Higher Education? How Culture Shapes Universities Abroad” Barbara Brittingham (NEASC) and Diane Stromer (formerly of AUBG) affirm that the form of American higher education is its distinctive marker:

*An American education suggests an institution with a distinct approach to curriculum, assessment, and governance, one offering a four year undergraduate degree taught in courses that earn credits in a curriculum that has a liberal arts (or general education) component as well as a major. The presence of a governing board and a student services function that looks after undergraduates and creates a co-curricular experience for them are also specifically deemed American* (Brittingham & Stromer, 2004, 24).

They also contend that compliance with form alone is insufficient to earn the “American” appellation. To truly be an American university abroad, one “must incorporate and reflect important elements of American culture” (Brittingham & Stromer, 2004, 24). They then suggest five aspects of American culture common to American-style institutions abroad: “an optimistic belief that people can improve themselves, the importance of freedom of choice, the habit of

forming associations and groups, a commitment to the free sharing of ideas and opinions, and a pragmatic approach to problems” (Brittingham & Stromer, 2004, 25). The essay concludes with a table illustrating how these characteristics are manifested in the mission, admissions, curriculum, library, and student services of American colleges and universities (Brittingham & Stromer, 2004, 34-36).

An even clearer articulation of the field’s boundaries emerged during AAICU’s annual meeting in Cairo in 2008. The association issued a statement of principles signed by the presidents of its 18 member institutions at the time. The “Cairo Declaration”<sup>4</sup> represented the field’s new rules:

AAICU is a leadership organization representing academic institutions conceived and organized on the American model of higher education. Institutional autonomy, vouchsafed by independent boards of trustees, and accreditation by a major recognized U.S. accrediting authority are conditions of full membership (AAICU, 2008).

By elevating independence and regional accreditation, the association relegated alternative claims to legitimacy. But just as Brittingham and Stromer suggested a few years earlier, form alone was an inadequate descriptor of what truly differentiated American universities abroad from other institutions in their immediate environs. There were cultural considerations as well:

With strong roots in their respective host countries—where they enjoy wide recognition—they are embedded in their international settings. AAICU members are therefore capable of bridging cultures and fostering dialogue among nations within the framework of the American liberal arts tradition. They are both expressions of and vehicles for the growing international acceptance of the U.S. system of higher education and the increasing importance of English as the language of international communication (AAICU, 2008).

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<sup>4</sup> Not to be confused with another Cairo Declaration. In 2009, delegates of Arab nations to the UNESCO-sponsored World Conference on Higher Education issued their own “Cairo Declaration” that outlined goals for how institutions in their countries can advance peace and development.



Notably, the Cairo Declaration addressed the problematic growth of the field head on. It distinguished AAICU institutions from imitators by stressing the former's links to American higher education:

AAICU's capacity to monitor educational quality is of particular value at a time when institutions proliferate which claim to follow and satisfy U.S. standards. AAICU institutions provide, furthermore, tested venues for increasingly popular study abroad programs, assuring the compatibility of credits with U.S. practices and providing the benefits of extensive knowledge of the host countries (AAICU, 2008).

These functions require that AAICU "serves as an advocate for American style higher education overseas" (AAICU, 2008). At the same time, the association acknowledged that not all newcomers are duplicitous by offering to provide "guidance to new institutions that share its aspirations and values" (AAICU, 2008). The document was published on the association's website and promoted in stories on member institutions' websites. The president of the American College of Thessaloniki, Richard Jackson, excerpted sizable passages of the text in a *Mediterranean Quarterly* article outlining the case for the Obama administration's support of AAICU institutions (Jackson, 2009). That was the extent of the Cairo Declaration's dissemination.

#### *Defining the field via American news media*

In addition to using their own communications sources to stake out the field's boundaries, AAICU members have articulated the significance of the field via essays and op-eds in specialized and national American media outlets. Writing to an audience of foreign policy elites in 2003, John Waterbury suggested the value of institutions like AUB in the Middle East lies in their capacity to educate leaders:

American institutions in the region help provide an education that encourages the open debate of issues, the cultivation of a skeptical attitude toward received wisdom, and habits of weighing and assessing evidence in an effort to solve real

problems. Those institutions do not train large numbers, but they also have a far-reaching impact because they train leaders in all walks of life (Waterbury, 2003, 67)

In the same *Foreign Affairs* essay, he further argued that the significance of the mission to educate future leaders is enhanced by the institutions' abilities to link the field of American higher education with foreign communities:

These American institutions are not islands; they are thoroughly enmeshed in their regions' societies through their faculty, students, staff, and trustees. But their American roots are strong and nurtured by constant contact with U.S. academia. They are points of vibrant contact and exchange between our societies (Waterbury, 2003, 68).

In a *USA Today* op-ed in 2008, David Arnold, president of AUC, also used the leadership frame to express the value of American universities abroad, which, he pointed out, are "almost identical in curriculum and teaching styles to private liberal arts institutions in the USA." Arnold attempted to align the leadership frame with an American public that had been conditioned to expect only "war, terrorism and injustice" when confronted with news from the Middle East. His advocacy for American universities abroad suggested a solution to the despair, but still painted a stark picture:

Those of us involved in higher education in this region believe that as we teach young leaders to embrace rigorous analysis and intellectual tolerance, radicalism can be trumped. Conversely, if higher education fails to provide the abilities young Arabs need to succeed in modern society, hopes will be dimmed, and minds closed (Arnold, 2008).

A third president framed American universities abroad as producers of leaders, but proposed that the evidence for this is best manifested in post-communist and post-conflict countries when fractured societies attempt to unify. In a 2011 op-ed in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Athanasios Moulakis, suggested that this has been the case at numerous American universities abroad, including his institution, the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, "where

young Arabs, Kurds, and Turks, whose grandfathers and fathers would have feared and persecuted one another, exchange classroom notes, play sports together, and interact in English.” These three presidents from three different institutions wrote to three different audiences but used the same frame to express the significance of their institutions. This outcome suggests a shared logic about what American universities do.

Influential allies in mainstream American news media, especially the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, have advanced the AAICU leadership frames and added their own justifications for supporting the institutions. For more than three decades, national columnists Tom Friedman and David Ignatius have written unabashedly about their admiration for American universities abroad, both the general model and particular institutions. Both writers have framed American universities abroad as under-appreciated instruments of American soft power. Friedman has referred to them as “literally factories of pro-Americans” (Friedman, 1995), while Ignatius has lauded the “bedrock of goodwill” they have created (Ignatius, 2005).

Generally, though, American press coverage of the American universities abroad model has been intermittent. I highlight two periods of activity between 1991-2017. The apparent contradiction between Middle Eastern students’ enmity for U.S. foreign policy and affinity for U.S. higher education drew attention from multiple outlets in the early 2000s.<sup>5</sup> *The Economist* framed the dilemma thusly,

America used to sell well in the Arab world. Banks, cars, appliances, even a brand of tinned fava beans, Egypt’s national food, boasted happily of their American origin. But with America threatening to strike Iraq, and with sporadic boycotts slashing sales of American goods, there is only one American product whose appeal remains undented: education (Education, still in demand, 2002).

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<sup>5</sup> John Waterbury captured the phenomenon succinctly in the aphorism, “Hate your policies, love your institutions,” the title of his 2003 essay in *Foreign Affairs*.

The *Boston Globe Magazine* utilized the same frame, contrasting the popularity of American universities in the Middle East with boycotts of American brands and opposition to American policies: “In the sinkhole of anti-Americanism in the Middle East, higher education is the last untainted American export” (Swidey, 2003). During this era, actors within and outside of the field framed the American university abroad in economic terms. Arnold (2008) and Moulakis (2011) referred to the model as an “export” as did *The Economist* (Education, still in demand, 2002), the *Boston Globe* (Swidey, 2003), and Ann Kerr (2002), the widow of slain AUB president Malcolm Kerr. Others preferred to emphasize the indigenous character of the institutions. Waterbury distanced AUB from the association, telling the *Economist* in 2002, “We’re basically seen as a local institution” (Education, still in demand, 2002). The contradiction seems to be academic, though, as institutional leaders would selectively frame the institutions as both exports of American values and expressions of indigenous cultures.

Another instance of increased media exposure occurred when a group of four American university abroad presidents visited the U.S. together in 2007. Their trip was covered in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and the *Washington Post*. The *Chronicle*’s editorial board interpreted the purpose of their tour as conveying the message: “don’t forget about us.” In the feature piece, they frame American universities abroad as expressions of American values and as fundamentally distinct from start-ups abroad that make false claims to American patrimony. Arnold suggested, “these four institutions represent the best aspects of American education, society, and culture. And in many ways, they’re the best possible face this country could be putting forward in the region” (Leaders of American Universities, 2007). Joseph Jabbra of the Lebanese American University echoed the sentiment:

We wanted that to be made clear to our supporters in the United States, to the American people, and make sure that they feel that these institutions are outposts

there. Perhaps this is the best investment that all of us can make in that part of the world, in order to make sure that it changes and it changes for the better (Leaders of American Universities, 2007).

The presidents also seized the opportunity to position themselves in contradistinction to inferior quality imitators, the sorts of institutions that Waterbury decried in his 2003 essay. He doubled down on that opinion with the Chronicle:

I assume my colleagues have been rather disturbed by some of the institutions that have come along and established themselves. Often, they will pop “American” somewhere in their title because it sells, which is already an indication of the reputation of American higher education, but it is for profit. It is often groups of business people in Jordan or in Saudi Arabia, even in Syria. They could be doing hotels or restaurants, but they say, “Gee, there is all this demand out there, so why do we not do a university?” And you talk to them, and you say: “This is like talking to a manager in a Marriott. What is this? What are they doing?” (Leaders of American Universities, 2007).

Arnold nuanced Waterbury’s concern by elaborating on the substance of the difference he and his colleagues perceived:

we have a strong commitment to a liberal-arts education, which is different from what is being thought about and talked about at a large number of these new universities. They are looking at IT, computers, engineering, business, but they are not building new liberal-arts colleges for the most part (Leaders of American Universities, 2007).

Jackson Diehl of the *Washington Post* was persuaded by the quartet’s message, which he concluded was

encouraging evidence of why a mission to spread liberal and democratic values in the Middle East is not quixotic. To a large and growing extent, U.S.-chartered or accredited universities are training the elite of countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, the Persian Gulf states and, soon, Iraq. They are teaching women equally with men; opening programs in Western-style journalism; offering cutting-edge courses in capitalism, science and Page 1 politics; and providing a refuge for free intellectual and political debate (Diehl, 2007).

These opportunities to define the substance and boundaries of the field are important for AAICU institutions because they are so rare. More commonly, media outlets have featured

individual institutions. The establishment of American institutions in what many readers might consider unlikely places has been a hook for coverage of the American universities in Armenia, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Mongolia, among others. The American University of Beirut's attempt to rebuild after the Lebanese Civil War and the role of the American University in Cairo during the Arab Spring also generated coverage. Toward the end of the period, Central European University and the American University of Afghanistan made headlines due to threat of closure from political and physical attacks, respectively. Still, the most mentioned American universities abroad—large research institutions—penetrate the U.S. media only slightly better than a second-tier American liberal arts college (cf. Tables 6.3 and 6.4). Furthermore, of more than 2,500 mentions of AAICU institutions in seven different national and international news publications over the course of a quarter century, fewer than 20 articles are about the field of American universities abroad (cf. Table 6.5). In these texts, the colleges are primarily framed as instruments of American soft power and cultivators of leaders who can contribute to national development.

American and international media seldom recognized individual institutions, and the field even less so. The geographic distance of the field's institutions from the continental United States accounts for much of its invisibility. But central field actors' approaches to the political opportunity structure can also partially explain the gap. The citizenship and leadership frames that the field's spokespersons employed during this period evoked similar frames issued by and about the Near East College Association in an earlier era (cf. Chapter 4). This strategy positioned the contemporary colleges as inheritors of an important historical mission and distinguished them from inferior quality imitators. However, framing strategies that emphasized societal benefits were generally misaligned with American and international public discourses about higher

education, which had shifted toward neoliberal interpretations of higher education as a return on investment to individuals (Giroux, 2002; Marginson, 2007).

Another obstacle to promoting the model at this time was the concurrent development of an institutional approach to international higher education more closely linked to the center of the field of American higher education. The branch campus is the international higher education trend most familiar to Americans, especially in the context of the Middle East and North Africa region. Doha's Education City, which furnishes branch campuses of six U.S. universities, and NYU Abu Dhabi, in particular, have dominated stateside discourse about American higher education there to such an extent that actors in the field of independent American universities abroad have felt overlooked. A series of features in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* examining the growth of branch campuses prompted former American University of Sharjah Chancellor Rod French to remind the paper and its readers of another expression of American higher education in the region, "a locally sponsored, totally indigenous university organized on the American model and developed to meet American standards." He acknowledged, "The opening of small branch campuses in the gulf by American universities represents a very significant development, but it is possible that an indigenous model promises more pervasive and enduring consequence to the region" (French, 2008).

French was trying to make the case that independent American universities abroad are worthy of more recognition from an American audience because they are a truer manifestation of the ideals of American higher education. In an interview with me, Karin Fischer, the *Chronicle's* international correspondent, suggested that presidents of American universities abroad she has encountered tend to view themselves and their institutions as integrated into the field of American higher education:

They see themselves as part of the American higher education system and in the same way as the President of, I don't know, the University of Michigan or University of Kentucky will come by our offices to say hello and to talk about their issues and you know, they want to be seen as leaders on certain issues... they're not thinking we're solely the solution to this, but they are coming because they want some legitimacy. And we're not, probably, going to be that helpful because we have a pretty high bar (K. Fischer, personal communication, December 12, 2016).

The high bar entails finding a hook for a generally parochial American readership. When

I asked Fischer what would get her attention, she responded:

I don't write nine out of ten stories that are pitched to me. It's hard. We're a national publication, so you know, if somebody calls us and says "you know, we're working with this American University of whatever whatever." Hmm, "okay, so are a lot of people..." As the international reporter, I'm often trying to figure out what's going to speak most to an American audience and what's either going to be practical and interesting for them and useful for them in their day-to-day (K. Fischer, December 12, 2016).

AAICU and its representatives responded to the propagation of institutions at its periphery by re-drawing the boundaries. In its own communication channels and the national media, the center of the field articulated its values and attempted to distinguish itself from imitators. The liberal arts curriculum that trained future leaders who could unify their societies and interact meaningfully with Americans, represented the "gold standard" of American higher education. Business-oriented programs, on the other hand, were nothing more than cheap knock-offs. Yet, the political opportunity structure yielded a public discourse about higher education that was only sporadically favorable to amplifying these frames. Furthermore, this retrenchment and unified presentation of a clear sense of value in the wake of a perceived threat masked the diffidence AAICU members actually felt about their collective enterprise.



### *Debates within the field*

In her opening remarks at AAICU's annual meeting in 2017, Celeste Schenk, president of the American University of Paris, acknowledged "periodic breast-beatings" about whether the association's mission is strong enough for it to exist (field notes, April 21, 2017). A review of minutes from annual meetings in the past decade and my own field notes from the 2017 meeting corroborates this description. From 2008-2017, AAICU meeting participants repeatedly struggled to achieve consensus about organizational goals and strategies to achieve them. Furthermore, their internal debates suggest less of a shared mission than public statements about the field indicate.

The Cairo Declaration ratified independence and accreditation as criteria for membership in the association. But that did little to quell internal debates about the permanence of those principles. In 2013, the association's bylaws and membership committee considered membership of branch campuses before ultimately deciding against it. Saint Louis University, American University of Central Asia, and American University of Kosovo each issued degrees from institutions based in the United States.<sup>6</sup> But the committee thought it better to seek out other independent American colleges abroad. That same year, the committee discussed whether the membership criterion of U.S. regional accreditation was too stringent, although it eventually agreed to maintain the requirement (Minutes, 2013). At stake was more than mere access to a club. AAICU's membership criteria denoted the organizational forms the field's central actors considered legitimate.

The proliferation of new organizational forms suggested still other possibilities for potential members. How would AAICU handle "American style" institutions? The fuzzy label was sometimes attached to private universities that used English as the primary medium of

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<sup>6</sup> Saint Louis University (MO), Bard College (NY), and Rochester Institute of Technology (NY), respectively.

instruction. LAU President Joseph Jabbra resisted engaging such institutions. He argued for the fundamental importance of the association serving member organizations incorporated in the U.S. but who operate abroad. “If we open it up to American style” he suggested at the 2016 annual meeting, “we have lost the purpose of this organization.” He advocated two slightly different membership criteria: 1) incorporated in the U.S while operating abroad and 2) regionally accredited in the U.S. (Minutes, 2016). The episode prompted Haigazian University President Paul Haidostian to ask: “What is this organization? What is American-style education abroad?” He acknowledged that accreditation is important but questioned its utility as a criterion for membership, noting that non-American universities in Lebanon pursue regional accreditation in the U.S. (Minutes, 2016). A year later, Andrew Wachtel, president of the American University of Central Asia, wondered, “Why are we fetishizing American accreditation? Why are we even fetishizing independence?” He implored the association to place instead more emphasis on the liberal arts as a membership criterion. But Mary Merva, provost of John Cabot University, called for the re-affirmation of accreditation as the substantial and defining characteristic of AAICU, not liberal arts or any other characteristics that might be considered “American” (field notes, April 21, 2017). These debates demonstrate the degree to which the field’s rules and borders are contested.

Meanwhile, a parallel debate unfolded about the association’s communication and advocacy functions. During the 2008 annual meeting, the marketing committee proffered that the association has as its primary mission the obligation to defend the brand of American higher education abroad. It identified several threats to the brand, including: “takeovers from larger institutions; bad schools (degree mills); proprietaries; and branch-campuses” (Minutes, 2008). The Cairo Declaration that came out of the meeting concluded with a case for support of

American universities abroad by various U.S. government agencies as well as corporate and foundation donors. Subsequently, AAICU members affirmed the association's role in advocating the field by endorsing joint presidential tours of the U.S. But the wisdom of the approach was soon disputed. In 2011, the association's communications and advocacy committee suggested a counter position:

After considerable discussion on the nature of the association and its goals, the Committee takes a broad view of advocacy to include working with foundations, media and US federal and congressional authorities, but at this time it cannot recommend the use of resources on a regular basis for advocacy in light of the differing institutional goals and characteristics of the member institutions, and of their current advocacy practices (Minutes, 2011).

Instead, the committee urged individual members to promote the association where it fits with their own practices. Celeste Schenk expressed disappointment with the advocacy committee's position. The institutional cooperation committee that she chaired wanted greater AAICU advocacy (Minutes, 2011).

The issue was far from settled. When it was brought up again in 2013, Andrew Wachtel suggested that AAICU-sponsored advocacy in the United States was simply not worthwhile. Joseph Jabbra disagreed, noting that officials in Washington had been impressed by AAICU since they began their advocacy outings six years prior. John Cabot University President Franco Pavoncello echoed the sentiment, but suggested that it would be useful to identify a "common denominator" to earn a better return on their investment because Congress would be more sympathetic to collective concerns. The association voted to continue regular representation of AAICU presidents in Washington, D.C. (Minutes, 2013).

The heretofore-parallel membership and advocacy debates began to converge in 2014. At the time, Congress was seeking to re-authorize the Higher Education Act. Presidents of several member institutions, especially those in Western Europe, were particularly concerned that the

definition of foreign institutions in the text of the proposed bill might render them ineligible for Title IV funding (i.e., federal financial aid programs). In January of that year, a delegation of AAICU member presidents visited with officials in Washington while seeking an amendment that would exempt them from restrictions on other foreign providers. Minutes from the 2015 annual meeting note: “The utility of doing so was evidenced by the fact that some of the people they met were completely unaware of AAICU institutions, and almost none of them realized that AAICU existed” (Minutes, 2015).<sup>7</sup>

Those convinced of the prudence of lobbying as a collective for an amendment in the Higher Education Act soon realized a problem: who exactly were the AAICU members? By now membership and advocacy concerns were one and the same. Minutes from the 2016 annual meeting formulate the problem neatly:

The specific [bylaws and membership] committee concern is that the Association... is comprised of a disparate group that could not be presented persuasively to Congress. Indeed, when the Association has gone to Congress to lobby for things like federal financial aid provisions, we have not put the entire group forward, since we know they will not accept it due to some members not being accredited or incorporated in the US (AAICU, 2016).

Celeste Schenk suggested that the heterogeneity of the association’s membership is its strength, but she also wanted “to make sure that the 19 members who meet the criteria of Congress, can have the benefits associated with this (e.g., certify loans, Pell grants, etc.)” (AAICU, 2016). By the end of 2017, Congress had not yet passed the re-authorization. And the AAICU identity crisis remained unresolved.

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<sup>7</sup> Allan Goodman, president of the Institute of International Education, corroborated this interpretation of AAICU’s profile, telling me: “You and I are the only two, other than their presidents, the only two people on earth that know this association exists. Because every time I mention this to somebody, they think there are only two American universities abroad: Beirut and Cairo. And have no idea there has been an association around for a bit” (A. Goodman, personal communication, January 5, 2017).

At the 2017 meeting, Celeste Schenk acknowledged that AAICU was in “crisis” (field notes, April 21, 2017). AUB and AUC presidents and provosts did not participate, which some members interpreted as a signal that AAICU is no longer important to them. But attendance was low across the board. Some explained the poor showing as merely a function of meeting in such a far-flung place as Bishkek. Still, the question remained, was this new crisis a unique setback or only the latest iteration of an endemic flaw? David Horner, president of the American College of Greece, averred that the association’s bylaws had institutionalized instability (field notes, April 21, 2017). The leadership changes every two years among member presidents and there is no permanent staff. In 2014, members discussed whether to move towards becoming a “full association” or remain a “largely consultative group” (Minutes, 2014). A year later, it debated whether it should become an accrediting or rankings agency (Minutes, 2015). In each instance, the status quo prevailed.

Institutional theory recognizes the capacity of exogenous shocks in enabling field actors to coalesce and determine strategies to meet new challenges (Wooten & Hoffman, 2016). I have highlighted two such jolts. The growth of the field that threatened the reputation of established institutions provided AAICU with newfound purpose. It responded by writing new rules, the first of which made accreditation mandatory for participation. Doing so was an attempt to standardize the field by downgrading alternative claims to legitimacy such as institutional partnerships. At the same time, it served to tighten the yoke between the fields abroad and stateside, which would make clearer to actors in both their nested relationship. The second blow occurred in the context of the re-authorization of the Higher Education Act, which exposed cracks in the association’s conceptual foundation. The competing demands of AAICU’s membership were once again challenging the feasibility of collective representation.

By the end of the period, AAICU was still trying to make sense of its murky mission. There seemed among members an almost vestigial need for collective action. But the saliency of common denominators like accreditation, independence, and the liberal arts were debated behind closed doors. Heterogeneity among member institutions, institutionalized instability, and settled differentiation of the field's center from the periphery largely inhibited further collective action. Continued discussion about advocacy, rankings, and accreditation suggests opportunity for entrepreneurship exists, but has not been exercised.

#### The impact of privileged discourse on the rest of the field

Institutional theory would suggest that, despite whatever internal discord it may experience, from its privileged position at the center of the field, AAICU has had the opportunity to shape discourse about the meaning and significance of American universities abroad (Maguire et al., 2004). Indeed, in its public statements via its own communications and through the press, it has articulated a model demarcated by independence and accreditation. AAICU has also emphasized the liberal arts curricula and non-profit financial model of member institutions as well as their strong roots in local communities. The association has suggested that the significance of their institutions lies in their capacities to bridge cultures and foster dialogue between American and foreign societies. Have those various logics penetrated other audiences? Have individual actors in the field adopted their scripts? What about the institutions themselves? In this section, I explore the extent to which actors in the fields of American higher education and American universities abroad share understandings about the meaning and significance of American universities abroad as defined by AAICU. I use two sources to determine how well AAICU has used the bully pulpit: interviews and mission statements.

Some of the newer actors in the field were keenly aware of AAICU and its legitimating function. When I asked Hassan Hamdan al Alkim of the American University of Ras al Khaimah about the value of regional accreditation, he linked it to AAICU, which had not been part of our conversation:

Well, first of all, as an American institution you cannot be a member of the American institutions outside the States [i.e. AAICU] without having candidacy from either of the six accrediting bodies in the States or being fully accredited by one of these accrediting agencies. So for us to be part of this conglomerate, part of the American consortium outside the States, we have to have the accreditation... When I visited AUC in Cairo, I realized that they are members. So, I said to my office, “let’s approach and see how can we be part of this consortium...” (H. al Alkim, personal communication, October 18, 2016).

It was clear to me that some interviewees had incorporated the AAICU membership criteria into their understanding of what constituted a legitimate American university abroad. For instance, Craig Evan Klafter of the American University of Myanmar<sup>8</sup> observed,

There are educational institutions that use the “American University of” name. Vietnam is one. There is one in Bangladesh as well. They don’t fit the model. They’re not incorporating in the United States. They’re not non-profit. They don’t operate a liberal arts core. And they don’t have or are not pursuing accreditation (C. Klafter, personal communication, April 16, 2017).

But the typical interviewee was less comprehensive. Illustrative examples follow for how various actors in the field interpreted the substance of American universities abroad.

### *Interviews: independence*

In the Cairo Declaration and other communications, AAICU proclaimed that institutional independence granted by an autonomous board of trustees was a hallmark of American universities abroad. Interviewees representing institutions at the center and periphery of the field affirmed the salience of this feature. Barham Salih admitted to the difficulties in establishing and

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<sup>8</sup> After this manuscript was prepared Klafter informed me, “the Myanmar government is forcing AUM to close” (C. Klafter, personal communication, March 20, 2018).

maintaining a governance system marked by citizen trusteeship in an environment that did not value such practices. But he also insisted, “I was not going to surrender the independence of the university because the essence of the university is free thought, free expression, independence from political gimmick” (B. Salih, personal communication, May 23, 2017). Scott Horton, too, pointed to the independent board of trustees as an emblematic feature of the model:

One of the notions from the beginning was if you’re going to be a real American-style college, you’re not a juridical subset of the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic. You’re autonomous. You’re independent. You have your own board of trustees. The board of trustees was viewed as a key distinguishing factor. And it was an agreement reached between Mr. Soros and the Kyrgyz government that the board of trustees would be created (S. Horton, personal communication, August 24, 2016).

Hiam Sakr saw the value of independence as more pragmatic. The independent board at American University of Science and Technology meant that “we don’t belong to parties or there is no power of anybody outside the government ruling us. And in this way... nobody can convince us to change a grade, or have any kind of leniency... or submission to anyone” (H. Sakr, personal communication, October 24, 2016).

#### *Interviews: accreditation*

The other pillar of the American university abroad model as defined by AAICU is U.S. regional accreditation. Haigazian University President Paul Haidostian recalled the origins of AAICU’s appreciation for the quality assurance measure:

I think in the early 2000s, the interest to be regionally accredited was becoming important for many of them, if not all of them in one way or another. So in my first years, a number of them were not accredited regionally. Maybe one had lost accreditation during the Lebanese war and then had regained it in the late ‘90s. So then they asked a representative of [NEASC], Dr. Barbara Brittingham. She attended those meetings for a couple of years. I remember introducing the concept. And saying that NEASC is open if people are interested... Some were accredited. Others were not. Others were not interested. Some were saying, “hey, why not for us?” But the reason was more, “OK, a competitive edge could be created.” It guarantees a closer relation to the USA. So this brand of “American”



could be better with accreditation (P. Haidostian, personal communication, April 22, 2017).

Accreditors I spoke to acknowledged a surge in interest from international institutions beginning in the early 2000s (cf. Bollag, 2005; Morse, 2008). But the interest and capability of accreditors was generally not commensurate with AAICU's expectations. Representatives from NEASC, SACS, and WASC acknowledged that international accreditation is simply not a significant part of their portfolios and therefore they do not invest many resources into the initiatives. Each noted the difficulties they experienced in assembling qualified evaluation teams for overseas travel in general, let alone to locations that might also have a State Department warning. Barbara Brittingham, the commissioner of NEASC, told me that the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) discussed whether to set up a separate commission to accredit international institutions exclusively. But the measure was voted down. Besides, Brittingham noted, "I've heard from a couple of the American-style institutions abroad that they didn't really want that. They wanted to be in with everybody else" (B. Brittingham, personal communication, December 19, 2016).

Absence of accreditors' interest should not be misconstrued as a misunderstanding about demand. Judith Eaton, president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), observed that accreditation is "highly coveted whether you like the U.S. or not, whether you want to be like us or not, whether you think we are a royal pain or not. There is that keen awareness of the legitimizing nature of U.S. accreditation" (J. Eaton, personal communication, December 14, 2016). Indeed, nearly all interviewees indicated in some fashion their belief that accreditation is a marker of what makes an institution abroad "American," so much so that interview respondents from institutions that were not accredited in the U.S. often informed me that they were "pursuing" accreditation with one of the regional agencies. But when I mentioned

this to Mike Johnson of SACS, he was quick to point out that “There is no such status as pursuing accreditation” (M. Johnson, personal communication, December 13, 2016).

Still the quest for accreditation—official or not—can have a significant impact on institutions. Eaton observes:

U.S. accreditation, as with quality assurance in other countries, is very much part of the culture and history of this country and it is reflected in for example a particular notion of the independence of higher education, a particular notion of academic freedom, our particular notion of who has responsibility for key academic functions like curriculum, like teaching and learning, like research and the finances that accompany that (J. Eaton, personal communication, December 14, 2016).

Eaton’s comments suggest that the specific practices and structures that accreditation ensures ought to constitute the character of an institution. But my interviews revealed, for the most part, a disconnect between awareness of the normative effects of the accreditation process and the legitimizing effect of having it. Instead of an ideological aspiration for institutions to achieve distinctive American qualities, it is simply a necessity for competing in a fierce market. In a fairly representative comment, Eileen Servidio-Delabre, one of the founding board and faculty members at the American Graduate School of Paris, explains:

American accreditation. That is what makes us attractive... we are not doing MBA's. Everyone wants an American MBA for whatever reason. But even with international relations and diplomacy, there is still a lot of the population, in a lot of countries, [who] still want an American masters. It still means something to them, they feel it's better or it would be more recognized (E. Servidio-Delabre, personal communication, April 4, 2017).

Interview findings suggest that American universities abroad on the periphery of the field are coerced into regional accreditation primarily as a result of the neoliberal competition phenomenon. By contrast, AAICU member institutions, and those that aspire to join the association, tend to approach accreditation as a normative obligation.

*Interviews: liberal arts*

The AAICU mission statement refers to the association as “a consortium of independent, non-for-profit, higher education institutions located outside the United States and based on the American liberal arts model.” The liberal arts permeated my interviews with representatives of institutions inside and outside the consortium as well as actors in the field of American higher education. Nearly everyone I spoke to highlighted his or her appreciation for this distinctively American approach to undergraduate education.

Barham Salih, who was educated in Iraq and Britain, credited his children, both of whom were educated in the United States, for planting the seed of desire to establish a liberal arts institution in Iraq. He told me:

I went to Princeton to meet with my daughter to visit her. Again, this gave me that impetus, that catalyst that this needs to be done. And again I realized early on that American liberal arts education is preferable to the British system (B. Salih, personal communication, May 23, 2017).

When the American University of Armenia first opened, it was a graduate-level institution specializing in applied sciences. It has since developed into a comprehensive university. Armen der Kiureghian identified the liberal arts curriculum as one of the reasons the American model has attained global preeminence, telling me:

I think the American approach to higher education is recognized in the world as being the best in many ways as opposed to European or other countries. There are a number of characteristics that make it strong. One is the liberal arts approach (A. der Kiureghian, personal communication, October 6, 2016).

Kiureghian’s institution came later to the liberal arts. Others incorporated it from the start. When I asked John Menzies if his Bulgarian colleagues understood what it meant to be an American university, he replied, “Well, we tried to instill that in everybody. You knew that it was going to be honest and honorable and high academic standards and liberal arts in its fundamental

approach. That it would teach more than just a narrow field” (J. Menzies, personal communication, August 10, 2016).

Interviewees from non-AAICU institutions acknowledged the centrality of the liberal arts to the American model as well. Jihad Nader of the American University in Dubai expressed the significance of the American university model thusly:

In fact it even affects the educational experience that students get with all of the extracurricular activities and emphasis on the whole student development, the holistic approach to higher education. Allowing students to major in or specialize in a specific subject but not or never without also being exposed to the liberal arts, the humanities, or social sciences, etc. All of these subjects that are an integral part of their education (J. Nader, personal communication, November 2, 2016).

American University of Mongolia trustee Badruun Gardi saw the liberal arts as fundamental to re-conceptualizing the university. Its first iteration as an engineering school had failed,

And so the idea in the inception for AUM was that we should create a university that is kind of an American style liberal arts higher education institution that really promotes first and foremost critical thinking and to have a high quality kind of center of excellence within the country (B. Gardi, May 11, 2017).

American higher education leaders underscored the centrality of the liberal arts, too. Allan Goodman, president of the Institute for International Education used the approach to explain the significance of American universities abroad. This exchange from our interview encapsulates his understanding:

Goodman: ...I know [the American University of] Iraq only because I've gone there a couple of times. I think very well of it and I'm very glad it exists.

Long: ...Why is it a good thing that that the American University of Iraq exists?

Goodman: I think the more, this gets back to the heart of what you might wrap into the definition of “American.” If it has some component of a liberal arts education. Not liberal in liberal versus conservative sense but in a liberal curriculum approach to what is on offer (A. Goodman, personal communication, January 5, 2017).

Perhaps not surprisingly, other leaders in American higher education shared this interpretation. Richard Detweiler is president of the Great Lakes College Association, which oversees the Global Liberal Arts Alliance. The GLAA is a consortium that links many AAICU institutions to Midwestern liberal arts colleges. When I asked him about the purpose of the arrangement, he pointed to a unique shared interest:

The fundamental issue we have in common is that we are advocating for an approach to education that is not understood and its frequently not acceptable in one's own nation. Now historically that was not true in the United States but it is today. Liberal arts is a very beleaguered approach to education in the United States. So in fact in the U.S. we have all of those same problems of trying to convince people that what we do is worth while and it has the right kind of impact (R. Detweiler, personal communication, December 12, 2016).

*Interviews: local communities*

AAICU discourse emphasizes the rootedness of its member institutions in their communities. Interviewees frequently expressed an understanding of what Rod French referred to as the “indigenous model” of American higher education (French, 2008). However, in contrast to, for example Brittingham and Stromer (2004), Hassan Hamdan al Alkim, president of the American University of Ras al Khaimah, interpreted the model with emphasis on American form, but not culture. He explained the relationship of American and Emirati features of his institution:

American is American in terms of the system, but it is local in terms of the culture. Ok? So, we define ourselves as if we're following the American system. But, if you saw our mission, with emphasis on local culture (H. al Alkim, personal communication, October 18, 2016).

Leonidas Koskos, president of the Hellenic American College, on the other hand, considered the complementary interaction of American and Greek cultures the *raison d'être* of his institution:

The vision was about an institution with deep roots not only in the culture of Greece but also in the culture of United States. These two cultures, meet at the level of higher education. Let's say you got the legacy of the American tertiary

education is the excellence, the assessment, all connected with quality. One, let's say the Greek culture is the mental curiosity, the spirit of adventure, sometimes the out of the box not very disciplined. But the matching of these two cultures and mentalities should be to the benefit of the students of the university (L. Koskos, personal communication, May 24, 2017).

Some interviewees, especially Americans, were more restrained about the willful transfer of American culture. Ellen Hurwitz, former president of the American University of Central Asia, characterized the predicament this way:

I think whenever an American university is founded overseas a lot of care needs to be taken that we're not presumptuous in imposing, but rather facilitating and inspiring, critical thinking. And in the context of the tradition, because once you put "American" on it I don't care how open minded we claim, it has an imperial cast to it (E. Hurwitz, personal communication, December 21, 2016).

Craig Evan Klafter suggested that this hypersensitivity to allegations of cultural imperialism might explain the effectiveness of the indigenous model. He made an informal study of American universities abroad in the process of establishing the American University of Myanmar, noting that:

All of them are incredibly sensitive to the needs of the countries where they operate... "This is American imperialism." It couldn't actually be further from the truth. Because if you look at these individual institutions they are incredibly sensitive to local culture, local religions, local values in terms of how they operate. And do it much better than in fact even sometimes the local institutions maybe because they are sensitive to the issue and bend over backwards to make sure that they are responsive to the needs of local communities (C. Klafter, personal communication, April 16, 2017).

### *Interviews: soft power*

The most prevalent frame of American universities abroad in the media is their utility for advancing American soft power. Soft power is the ability to get others to do what you want without resorting to threats or inducements (Nye, 2004). If American universities abroad contribute to American soft power, they would yield, or render more likely, policies and/or public opinion in foreign countries favorable to American interests. AAICU-affiliated

spokespersons and their allies promote this interpretation in the media and in their own communications. Many interviewees, too, understood the value of American universities abroad in this light. Marshall Christensen suggested a benefit of the Kazakh-American Free University was its ability to counter, however modestly, anti-American sentiment:

I think that the good that comes out of American involvement around the world through higher education is far beyond what most American citizens understand. It's incredible. The goodwill. When we started going to Kazakhstan, they didn't know anything about America. Even now, Kazakhstan gets its news mostly through the Russian screen. When Russia's mad at the U.S., the Kazakhs can only wonder what the Americans are up to. But at least in Ust-Kamenogorsk a lot of Kazakhs know Americans. The positive influence that comes from these international relationships at many levels is phenomenal (M. Christensen, personal communication, July 27, 2016).

While Christensen emphasized the effectiveness of cross-cultural relationships in improving America's image abroad, other interviewees pointed to the capacity of American universities abroad to promote leaders, something more expensive hard power resources cannot produce. Zalmay Khalilzad observed of the American University of Afghanistan:

...this university and the 10 million a year to train the future generation is peanuts. It's kind of... we wouldn't know it if it got lost given the amount of money there. So I think that if we can nurture it, sustain it, develop it, for it to be rooted with the resources that are modest. That's I think a very good investment for the United States. It developed future leaders, interlocutors, influence, people who can influence and shape and help their country succeed (Z. Khalilzad, personal communication, August 4, 2016).

Scott Horton echoed the notion that American universities were cost-effective alternatives to America's military objectives. He effectively extrapolated Khalilzad's argument about the American University of Afghanistan to other American universities abroad when he told me:

When you look at what America has to sell to the world today, it's hard to think of anything as attractive globally as university-level education and the college model. Everybody looks at it and says, "wow. This is very good. And very effective." And I would say in terms of U.S. aid programs around the world,

nothing competes with this. We spend incredible sums of money all over the place. Frequently it accomplishes nothing. Really. Frequently it has negative repercussions. This is one of the very few areas—there’s just no doubt. There’s consistent high return on the investment. Very high return... As an American, I’m very hard-pressed thinking that all this military stuff that we push all over the place—bases and bombs and military engagements—ever accomplish anything positive? I’m not going to say “never.” It’s pretty rare. The number of times it’s been a horrible failure and produced misery is very, very high. But the colleges and the education system, that’s something to be proud of (S. Horton, personal communication, August 24, 2016)

Barham Salih made explicit why Americans should be proud of American universities abroad.

To him, they represent the best vehicle in America’s fleet for disseminating the country’s values:

I genuinely believe that this is a tiny fraction for the American foreign policy engagement, what I have been told it has been. But supporting initiatives like this matter because, seriously, the success of America—yes, your military might, your economic might; all is true—but it is the value, the values of America. The values of the U.S. are best modeled in its education system and these campuses (B. Salih, personal communication, May 23, 2017).

Many interviewees interpreted American universities abroad as an unmitigated good. Allan

Goodman even went so far as to promote them as a policy solution. He explained:

After World War II, we had the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad Act, which built the Free University of Berlin and maybe half a dozen other places. And we still have that act today. But we have very little money going into building American universities. And I would, if I were president, put an American University in every country that would have one. And no better investment of our foreign aid money could possibly be made in the education field than to do something like that. So I'm a big fan and supporter of these institutions. I know they are of uneven quality and they live in uncertain regulatory environments. But if they can have three or four elements of what defines (quote) an American university that I mentioned earlier (unquote), if they have those qualities I think it's something our government should be pouring money into (A. Goodman, personal communication, January 5, 2017).

*Interviews: not-for-profit*

AAICU’s war on imitators turns on the appropriation of the “American” brand by proprietary institutions. It is no surprise that the first line of the AAICU mission statement emphasizes the non-profit operating model of member institutions. I interviewed representatives



of more than a half-dozen proprietary American universities abroad. Their collective defenses of the for-profit model fall into three categories: 1) we are accredited; 2) no one is getting rich; and 3) there is no other way. The first defense was that used by Jihad Nader about the American University in Dubai. The second defense is illustrated by responses from Ken Cutshaw of the Georgian American University and John Ryder of the American University of Malta:

Cutshaw: Is anyone getting rich off it? No. And people are paid at a much different standard in Georgia than they are in the U.S. So even Michael as president of the university still has a very modest salary from our standards. I think he's reasonably compensated within that environment (K. Cutshaw, personal communication, August 26, 2016).

Ryder: [The founder] is putting a fortune into this, I mean hundreds of millions of euros into this function and he's not getting it back. Ever. And he knows that. He's not a fool. He knows that. I mean they may reach a point where it starts to turn a small profit, you know year to year but it's not in his lifetime going to ever add up to that. So this is not a money-making operation (J. Ryder, personal communication, March 15, 2017).

The third defense was presented to me by George Arveladze, the would-be founder of the American University of the Ukraine. He suggested that selling shares to investors was the only means of obtaining foundational capital for a project like this in Ukraine:

What we were putting on the table was that this is a business project. This is a business model. Unfortunately, we're not so luxurious to say that, you know, I mean we're not that fortunate to have the luxury to say that we can have a non-profit university. Because Ukraine right now needs a lot of investments in education. The government doesn't have this money to invest in it. So, you need private money to be attracted (G. Arveladze, personal communication, August 17, 2016).

Arveladze never indicated the possibility of obtaining funds through philanthropy.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> At the time I spoke to Arveladze, he was planning to open the university in Fall 2017. By the beginning of 2017, the project was suspended indefinitely after investors withdrew funding for political reasons (O. Friedman, personal communication, February 21, 2017).

### *Interviews: alternative claims*

Some interviewees, mostly from institutions in the Middle East, advanced claims to American-ness that do not overlap with any AAICU discourse. Hassan Hamdan al Alkim, Muthanna Abdul Razzaq, and Hiam Sakr cited their institutions' use of the credit system as evidence of their American bona fides. In a representative statement, Al Alkim explained:

But in the UAE, I think, I could simply say that the majority, maybe 98% of the institutions follow the American system. Without calling themselves American. Because they are based on the credit hour system... The way these credit hours are divided between general education to faculty requirements to major requirements to electives, this subdivision is being based on the American model (H. al Alkim, personal communication, October 18, 2016).

While this taken-for-granted feature of American higher education is not highlighted in AAICU discourse about the distinctive characteristics of independent American universities abroad, other actors at the center of the field do emphasize it, viz. accreditors. When I asked Mike Johnson, former vice president of SACS, what initial indicators his site teams use to assess institutions abroad, he replied:

And so when we go to an institution located abroad and we see a credit hour structure, we see a sequencing of courses that carry a student in a fairly coherent fashion from a first post-secondary year to a fourth post-secondary year. That model is very familiar to our reviewers and so they tend not to have any problems with it. And you know I may be wrong but to me that's the characteristic of what I think of when I hear someone calling themselves "American University of" (M. Johnson, personal communication, December 13, 2016).

Given the culture of accreditation in the UAE and other Gulf countries, it is not surprising that independent American universities abroad in these areas would adopt this claim to legitimacy.

### *Mission statements*

When comparing mission statements of AAICU and non-member institutions (cf. Tables 7.4 and 7.5), it is clear that they use much of the same language with the notable exception of "liberal arts." Chi-square results show a statistically significant difference, with 65 percent of

AAICU institutions using the term in their mission statements; only 24 percent of non-AAICU institutions include the expression. When comparing aggregate AAICU institution mission statements to the top 25 liberal arts colleges in the United States, statistically significant differences occurred with reference to the terms “excellence” and “integrity.” AAICU institutions were twice as likely to describe their missions with these terms than were liberal arts institutions in the U.S. Otherwise the two sets of mission statements largely resemble each other.

The findings suggest that, for the most part, independent American universities abroad at the center of the field employ legitimated scripts to the same degree as institutions at the periphery. However, AAICU institutions cohere somewhat more and have differentiated themselves from those at the periphery of the field by emphasizing their liberal arts profile. This finding supports an interpretation of the field as patchy. Furthermore, the percentage of AAICU institutions that use the term liberal arts in the mission statements is roughly equal to that of the top 25 American liberal arts colleges. Considering these two findings together supports an interpretation of the field abroad as nested in the field stateside.

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS AND MISSION STATEMENTS suggests that distinctive features of the independent American university abroad model advocated by AAICU do resonate with actors in the U.S. and abroad. However, my findings also indicate that AAICU’s scripts are not incorporated in toto, but rather selectively, depending on other environmental circumstances.

### Conclusion

The field of independent American universities abroad during the period 1991-2017 was marked by complexity. Low levels of oversight at the beginning of the period enabled a wide range of actors to leverage political opportunities and establish new forms of American universities abroad. Although there was a recognized model, it was not well understood by new

actors in the field abroad or even stateside. Consequently, new American universities abroad varied considerably from their predecessors in form and content. More mature institutions perceived the dubious quality of a number of these latest “American” colleges and universities as a threat to their hard-earned, established profiles. As a security measure, the field’s central actors gradually ceded authority to validate the overseas model of American higher education to U.S. regional—not national or programmatic—accreditors. The Association of American International Colleges and Universities had long considered the prospect of serving as an accreditor for this very purpose. But the U.S. regional agencies were more legitimate arbiters of quality. This strategy also served to tighten the yoke between the fields abroad and stateside.

Yet the expectations of AAICU were misaligned with the capacities and interests of accreditors. Accreditors did not see international institutions as an integrated part of American higher education and often had limited capacity to ensure their quality. The regional accreditors also welcomed institutions with characteristics anathema to AAICU member institutions, including for-profit and government-controlled universities. As a result, proprietary, public, and/or non-liberal arts institutions could still claim to be legitimate American universities through partnerships with American universities and, in cases such as the American University in Dubai, U.S. regional accreditation. The question of who exactly spoke for the field became more complicated. AAICU, accreditors, and the diverse institutions themselves (even American University in Washington, D.C.) would all make claims on the brand. And determining just exactly what constituted an “American” university abroad became more contested than ever. Efforts to articulate the nuance of the preferred model were limited by a political opportunity structure only periodically receptive to the field’s traditional framing strategies. Meanwhile pressures from the field stateside were felt during congressional efforts to re-authorize the

Higher Education Act. Attempts at collective action were contested within AAICU on the grounds that the use association resources did not serve all members. And the association's own governance system had institutionalized instability.

Yet, AAICU institutions had more in common than they recognized. New entrants to the field with unconventional views about what constituted "American" higher education only served to reinforce the legitimacy of actors at the center. Furthermore, the association's scripts were reaching actors at the periphery of its own field and at the center of the field in which it was nested. By the end of the period the center had held, even though those holding it were less sure of their grip. The uncertainty AAICU members felt was a product of their success in differentiating themselves from those that were merely riding the brand's coattails. The actions the field's central actors had taken years earlier to solidify their claim on American higher education abroad had now become taken for granted. While American universities abroad never got the recognition they wanted in the U.S., AAICU's responses to the proliferation of proprietary institutions did have salutary effects on the field. It had kept "American" from getting a bad reputation—at least in education.

**Table 7.1 Number of appearances by AAICU institutions in selected media, 1991-2017**

Institution	Washington Post	New York Times	USA Today	Wall Street Journal	Christian Science Monitor	The Economist	Chronicle of Higher Education	Total
American University of Beirut	280	359	21	45	87	15	67	874
American University in Cairo	180	335	50	43	106	12	76	802
Central European University	21	81	3	14	29	23	39	210
Lebanese American University	54	40	5	9	24	1	20	153
American University of Paris	25	64	15	3	15	2	7	131
American University of Afghanistan*	32	44	5	12	15	0	11	119
John Cabot University	5	24	2	13	10	1	4	59
American University of Iraq, Sulaimani*	9	26	0	5	10	0	9	59
American University of Rome	8	21	2	1	9	5	0	46
American University in Bulgaria	4	15	1	3	6	0	8	37
American University of Sharjah	5	6	3	0	1	0	15	30
American College of Greece	9	15	2	0	0	1	1	28
American University of Nigeria	15	3	0	3	1	1	3	26
Forman Christian College*	6	6	2	0	2	0	2	18
American University of Central Asia	2	5	0	0	6	1	2	16
Richmond, The American International University in London	2	7	0	1	0	0	1	11
American University of Kosovo*	2	1	0	0	4	0	4	11
Al Akhawayn University*	1	5	0	0	0	0	3	9
American University of Armenia	2	1	0	0	0	0	4	7
Haigazian University	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	6
Franklin University	0	4	0	0	1	0	1	6
American College of Thessaloniki	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	4
Institute for American Universities	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	4
CETYS	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	3
Saint Louis University-Madrid*	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Irish American University	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 7.1 (cont.) Number of appearances by AAICU institutions in selected media, 1991-2017**

	Washington Post	New York Times	USA Today	Wall Street Journal	Christian Science Monitor	The Economist	Chronicle of Higher Education	Total
Total appearances	664	1073	111	152	328	63	280	2,671
Median appearances	4.5	6	0	0	2	0	3	2

**Table 7.2 Number of appearances by comparison institutions in selected media, 1991-2017**

<i>US News &amp; World Report Ranking (out of 311)</i>		Washington Post	New York Times	USA Today	Wall Street Journal	Christian Science Monitor	The Economist	Chronicle of Higher Education	Total
National Universities	1. Princeton University	4,129	10,353	1,047	2,145	932	467	2,201	21,274
	156. Oklahoma State University	319	503	633	105	52	8	198	1,818
	231-300. Valdosta State University	17	18	6	6	3	1	33	84

*US News & World Report Ranking (out of 233)*

National Liberal Arts Colleges	1. Williams College	584	2,292	140	226	166	16	372	3,796
	117. Elizabethtown College	58	53	19	13	5	0	39	187
	173-229. Albright College	51	48	23	2	12	0	44	180

*US News & World Report Ranking (out of 1250)*

Global Universities	5. University of Oxford	2115	5291	377	1132	475	1143	1499	12,032
	623. Memorial University of Newfoundland	9	36	4	8	10	2	12	81
	623. Pusan National University	9	11	2	6	6	3	0	37

*Times Higher Education Ranking 2017 (out of 200)*

Young Universities	1. Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (1969)	2	30	0	7	7	6	1	53
	2. Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (1991)	18	96	17	60	18	16	21	246
	3. Nanyang Technological University (1991)	19	79	2	34	18	10	22	184
	9. Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (2009)	1	13	0	1	0	6	2	23
	21. University of Texas at Dallas (1969)	85	164	23	60	17	6	82	437



**Table 7.3** Frames employed about the American university abroad model in the media

	Leadership	Soft power	Liberal arts	Democracy	Export	Peace	Local	American higher education
Friedman (1995)	X	X	X					
Economist (1998)	X			X	X			
Cohen (2000)			X					
Ignatius (2001)		X						
Kerr (2002)					X			
Economist (2002)		X					X	
Waterbury (2003)	X	X	X				X	X
Swidey (2003)		X						
Ignatius (2003)		X						
Ignatius (2005)		X						
Ignatius (2005b)		X						
Ignatius (2006)			X					
Chronicle (2007)	X		X	X	X		X	X
Diehl (2007)	X	X		X				X
French (2008)							X	
Arnold (2008)	X		X		X			X
Moulakis (2011)	X	X	X		X		X	
Friedman (2012)								X
Adeeb (2013)		X	X					
Ignatius (2016)		X						

**Table 7.4 List of institutions in mission statement analysis**

<i>AAICU (26)</i>	<i>Non-AAICU (38)</i>	<i>Top 25 Liberal Arts</i>
Al Akhawayn University (Morocco)	American College (Cyprus)	Williams College
American College of Thessaloniki	American College of Dubai	Amherst College
American University in Bulgaria	American College of Higher Education (Sri Lanka)	Bowdoin College
American University of Afghanistan	American College, Madurai	Swarthmore College
American University of Armenia	American Graduate School of Paris	Wellesley College
American University of Beirut	American International University Bangladesh	Middlebury College
American University of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan)	American University Managua	Pomona College
American University of Iraq, Sulaimani	American University for Humanities (Georgia)	Carleton College
American University of Kosovo	American University in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Claremont McKenna College
American University of Nigeria	American University in Dubai	Davidson College
American University of Sharjah	American University in Moscow	Washington and Lee University
Central European University (Hungary)	American University in the Emirates	Colby College
CETYS (Mexico)	American University of Acapulco	Colgate College
Forman Christian College (Pakistan)	American University of Culture and Education (Lebanon)	Harvey Mudd College
Franklin University (Switzerland)	American University of Kurdistan	Smith College
Haigazian University (Lebanon)	American University of Kuwait	United States Military Academy
Institute for American Universities (France)	American University of Madaba	Vassar College
Irish American University	American University of Malta	Grinnell College
John Cabot University (Italy)	American University of Moldova	Hamilton College
Lebanese American University	American University of Mongolia	Haverford College
Richmond, The American International University in London	American University of Myanmar	United States Naval Academy
Saint Louis University-Madrid	American University of North Africa	Wesleyan College
The American College of Greece	American University of Phnom Penh	Bates College
The American University in Cairo	American University of Puerto Rico	Colorado College
The American University of Paris	American University of Ras al Khaimah	University of Richmond
The American University of Rome	American University of Science and Technology (Lebanon)	
	American University of the Middle East (Kuwait)	
	American University of Tunisia	
	American University of Vietnam	
	Anglo-American University (Czech Republic)	
	Arab American University-Jenin	
	Girne American University (Cyprus)	
	Kazakh-American University	
	La American University (Nicaragua)	
	Saint Monica the American International University (Cameroon)	
	United States International University (Kenya)	
	Universidad Americana (Paraguay)	
	University American College Skopje	

**Table 7.5 Results of chi-square tests for inclusion of terms in mission statements by institution type**

	AAICU Institutions	Non-AAICU Institutions	Top 25 Liberal Arts
Liberal arts***	17/26 (.65)	9/38 (.24)	18/25 (.72)
Independent*	9/26 (.35)	3/38 (.08)	9/25 (.36)
Private	3/26 (.12)	8/38 (.21)	2/25 (.08)
Diverse	17/26 (.65)	16/38 (.42)	17/25 (.68)
Service	19/26 (.73)	17/38 (.45)	12/25 (.48)
Community	20/26 (.77)	23/38 (.61)	19/25 (.76)
Students	21/26 (.81)	32/38 (.84)	19/25 (.76)
Learning	17/26 (.65)	24/38 (.63)	19/25 (.76)
Teaching	16/26 (.62)	18/38 (.47)	12/25 (.48)
Research	16/26 (.62)	17/38 (.45)	7/25 (.28)
Faculty*	18/26 (.70)	13/38 (.34)	12/25 (.48)
International**	14/26 (.54)	19/38 (.50)	3/25 (.12)
Global	16/26 (.62)	23/38 (.61)	9/25 (.36)
Excellence**	20/26 (.77)	23/38 (.61)	7/25 (.28)
Leader(ship)	19/26 (.73)	19/38 (.50)	18/25 (.72)
Culture	15/26 (.58)	16/38 (.42)	12/25 (.48)
Free(dom)	12/26 (.46)	15/38 (.39)	8/25 (.32)
Critical thinking	12/26 (.46)	16/38 (.42)	10/25 (.40)
Respect	13/26 (.50)	15/38 (.39)	5/25 (.20)
Integrity**	16/26 (.62)	19/38 (.50)	4/25 (.16)
Responsible	18/26 (.70)	23/38 (.61)	16/25 (.64)

Note:  $\chi^2$  ranges from .21 to 17.82, df =2; \* p-value <.05; \*\* p-value <.01; \*\*\* p-value <.001



## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION—THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY ABROAD AS AN AMERICAN INSTITUTION

To make sense of America may require the act of reaching at least some distance beyond it.

—Laurence Veysey, “The Autonomy of American History Reconsidered,”  
(1979), p. 477

There is a long tradition of American higher education outside the United States. Its roots reach back into the 1860s when American missionaries first established colleges in the Near East. Borne of separate geographic and sectarian backgrounds, these organizations operated separately until the First World War generated political and economic conditions of common concern. Over the course of the following century, the various American universities abroad periodically came together to make sense of their changed environments. Collective action in different eras enabled them to raise funds, set standards, and/or thwart competitors. These recurrent acts of organizing and re-organizing served to structure the field of American universities abroad. Leaders set boundaries for who could participate and wrote the rules for how to do so. The rules were communicated via news media, joint print publications, and, in later years, institutional websites, all of which served as blueprints and scripts for the field’s actors, observers, and new entrants. By the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, actors at the center of the field inscribed independent governance, a liberal arts outlook, and U.S. regional accreditation into the rulebook. Colleges and universities that followed the rules were awarded legitimacy as well as its trappings, i.e. resources, stability, and enhanced survival prospects (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Those that made alternative claims to legitimacy only strengthened the position of the rule-makers. As a result of these inter-related processes, the American university abroad emerged as an identifiable institution.

Institutions are enduring features of social life (Giddens, 1984). So much so that we often take them for granted, neglecting to realize that they have been there all along. In a period of almost 100 years, the American university abroad emerged as a distinctive though often imperceptible institution of American higher education. What changed and endured was often a result of pressures emanating from American higher education and foreign policy. During the interwar period, American colleges in the Near East made claims to American authenticity through the citizenship and Christian principles of the administration and faculty, who were framed as disinterested facilitators of peace and democracy. After the Second World War, as the United States became a superpower, U.S. foreign policy complicated the Near East colleges' association with America. Meanwhile, the addition of American liberal arts colleges in Europe created opportunities for American faculty and students to continue their work and study outside the United States. Preoccupation with U.S. regional accreditation—which requires institutions to adopt patently American structures and practices—in the 1970s and then again in the 2000s, reinforced the links between the field abroad and American higher education Stateside. Furthermore, starting in the 1990s, contact between U.S. universities and American universities abroad increased significantly in the form of institutional partnerships. Through individuals who return to their campuses and even those who remain but participate in institutional partnerships or accreditation site visits, American universities abroad have served as critical resources for internationalizing U.S. campuses. The field of American universities abroad is a structural feature of American higher education.

### Implications

These findings have implications for scholars of international higher education, American higher education, and American foreign policy.

*International higher education.* Scholars of international higher education will appreciate how American universities abroad have helped to internationalize universities in the United States. Institutional partnerships between American universities stateside and abroad have created opportunities for the former's faculty to conduct research abroad, its students to study abroad, and its administrators to develop their leadership skills abroad. These partnerships have also proven valuable revenue sources for American universities in a neoliberal era where traditional forms of support have declined. America's head start on the global shift toward privatization in higher education has enabled U.S. universities to become service providers and its personnel to become international experts on the practice of private higher education. The advent of American universities abroad in former Soviet territories after the end of the Cold War and in the Gulf proved ideal marketplaces for U.S. universities to ply their emergent trades. Furthermore, the American university abroad has become a model for other nations to imitate for participation in international education as evidenced by the proliferation of "foreign-backed" universities in the Middle East and North Africa.

My work also shows how non-state actors can address issues of educational quality, which is largely seen as the exclusive domain of states. But from its bully pulpit at the center of the field, the Association of American International Colleges and Universities (AAICU) has the capacity to yield greater conformity to rules that promote high standards among poor quality imitators in many countries. And even if others do not play along, by elevating independence and regional accreditation, the association has relegated alternative claims to legitimacy. New entrants to the field with unconventional views about what constitutes "American" higher education only serve to reinforce the legitimacy of actors at the center.

*American higher education.* Study of the organizational field of American universities abroad yields two unique insights about American higher education. The first is that its borders are larger than typically understood or appreciated. While the onset of international branch campuses have extended the global footprint of U.S. institutions, the “indigenous model” makes claims to a longer history and better representation of American higher education outside the 50 states. Indeed, since the 1920s American universities abroad have been framed as outposts on the global frontier of American higher education. These institutions have served as U.S. higher education’s experimental laboratories, testing the viability of distinctively American forms and practices abroad like accreditation, the liberal arts curriculum, and citizen trusteeship. As a result, every period of expansion of the field of American universities abroad has also been an extension of the boundaries of American higher education.

Each frontier furnished a new opportunity for pioneers to work out uniquely American higher education puzzles: how to gain influence in a nation without interfering in its politics; how to be at once an identifiably American institution and yet not a tool of U.S. foreign policy; how to educate citizens of one nation using the distinctive curriculum and teaching methods of another. These high-minded concerns buttressed American universities abroad during wars, recessions, and regime changes. Yet, on every frontier there are outlaws. And over the years, certain American universities abroad have developed reputations for unrepentant cultural imperialism, crooked finances, and/or exploitation of students by awarding shoddy credentials. This has been especially the case in less economically developed countries, where privatization is rampant and rule of law is weak (Rodrik, et al., 2004), meaning brigands are likely to find new territory yet.



The frontier metaphor also draws attention to the position of the American university abroad on the periphery of the field of American higher education. Despite its long history and significance, the field has operated largely outside the view of the mainstream of American higher education. The American university abroad enters the public consciousness only intermittently. An analysis of U.S. and international media over the course of a quarter century reveals that the highest profile American universities abroad receive about as much coverage as a second-tier liberal arts college, while others are mentioned even more rarely. Awareness tends to increase with collective action. The national fundraising campaigns in the 1920s and '30s and congressional lobbying of the late 2000s and early '10s heightened press exposure. More often though Americans are reminded of American universities abroad with bad news: bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations at the American University of Beirut during the Lebanese Civil War or, in later years, the American University of Afghanistan. The Hungarian government's efforts to close Central European University have also made headlines. American universities abroad are an afterthought, if thought at all. And yet the American university abroad has inspired deep feeling from influential figures in American society. For over a century, leading journalists, elected officials, and diplomats have repeatedly expressed confidence in these colleges and universities. They have lauded the American university abroad as a promoter of peace, soft power resource, and pragmatic educational reform. It is a small part of American higher education. And yet there are those who love it.

The second insight that study of this field provides is an answer to what is valuably American about American higher education. By contrasting their institutions to their local counterparts and to counterfeiters more broadly, leaders of American universities abroad have a unique vantage point to identify—although not necessarily to communicate—their distinctively

beneficial American characteristics. Looking at American higher education from abroad helps to see the forest from the trees. Since the 1920s, advocates for American universities abroad have framed and re-framed their value in terms of their abilities to cultivate national leaders through the liberal arts and exposure to diversity. They have also consistently framed themselves as private institutions for public benefit, even after global discourse about the purpose of the university shifted away from such aims. In an era when Americans are increasingly skeptical of the benefits higher education institutions return to society, perspective from abroad could be a valued resource in future conversations about higher education's value proposition.

My contention that the American university abroad is an institution of American higher education raises the question of what it means to *belong* to American higher education. Is mere legal status in one of the 50 states all that it takes? That would be a rather low bar, comparable to those institutions abroad whose only claim to American bona fides is their name. Instead, I have made the case that fidelity to American educational ideals is a better marker of belonging to American higher education. Ideals are more fitting criteria for inclusion in the higher education system of a country that considers itself a “nation of ideas.” Louis Menand has shown that Americans have long regarded ideas as social products, the survival of which, “depends not on their immutability but on their adaptability” (Menand, 2002, xii). Following in this tradition, American universities abroad have adapted the highest ideals of American higher education— independent governance, the liberal arts curriculum, accreditation via peer review—across the world. These and other contributions merit more recognition and suggest criteria for belonging to American higher education.

*American foreign policy.* Finally, scholars of American foreign policy will appreciate how over the course of a century, high-level American and foreign officials have perceived the

value of these colleges; how America's foreign policy positions have helped or hindered the colleges' roles in their communities; and how the colleges and their advocates positioned them as uniquely American soft power resources. American and foreign presidents, legislators, and diplomats from the period of the Ottoman Empire to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have recognized American universities abroad as unique soft power resources. Soft power is the ability to get others to produce the outcomes you want without resorting to threats or bribes (Nye, 2004). When advocates of American University of X frame it as an American soft power resource, they are really saying that because of AUX—in the long run—things in country X are more likely to turn out in ways favorable to American interests. And therefore AUX is deserving of more resources. Of course, American interests are not well defined, but generally they have to do with democracy promotion. It is both a compelling and difficult argument to make, which is why it does not get much traction. But those who believe it—like Tom Friedman, David Ignatius, Allan Goodman, and Zalmay Khalilzad—believe it deeply.

At the same time, it is almost always a disadvantage for a university to be perceived as a tool of a foreign government. When and where the policies of the United States government have been severely unpopular, American universities abroad, fairly or unfairly, have suffered the consequences. The cases of American universities in Beirut and Cairo during the 1960s and 70s and, more recently, in Kabul demonstrate the point. Still, these institutions have persevered largely because of the unmistakable contributions they have made to their countries' development. Consequently, no other nation has the influence—subtle and mercurial, as it may be—that the United States does on other countries' educational systems.

## The future of the field

I have tried to show that the multiple American universities abroad represent an institution; a distinctively American one whose fortunes rise and fall with America's place in the world. Admirers believe that American universities abroad represent the best of America, its highest ideals. Still, certain of them also represent the worst, its basest failings. America gave the world the land-grant university, community college, and liberal arts institution. But it also pioneered the for-profit university and diploma mills. America is the land of Harvard University and Trump University. The question is will dual manifestation of American universities abroad—as vitalizing civic resources, on the one hand, and huckster neoliberalism, on the other—continue to co-exist or will one triumph? The field will need a unified mobilizing structure for the latter. The Association of American International Colleges and Universities (AAICU) has been successful in re-asserting the more decent aspects of American universities abroad. When field leaders wrested the narrative about American universities abroad from cheap imitators, they began to re-clarify what is American about American higher education. But sustained efforts will be necessary to keep the threat at bay.

The growth of the field of American universities abroad during the 1990s and 2000s occurred in the era of the internationalization of higher education. Knight (2014) has wondered if the factors that ushered in the era have produced unintended consequences yielding an identity crisis. Altbach and de Wit (2018) have suggested that the era may, in fact, finally be over. Brexit, the election of Donald Trump, and the global rise of nationalism and populism have begun to create conditions unfavorable to international education. Has the American university abroad finally reached the end of the frontier? I do not think so. American universities abroad are likely to survive, if not thrive, in the coming era for four reasons. 1) America's global reputation in

education remains. Even though overall numbers of international students has declined, the United States remains the leading destination for study. Meanwhile, American institutions continue to dominate rankings of international quality. 2) Independent American institutions are better positioned than branch campuses to meet domestic political challenges. Nationalism requires greater service to host community and American universities abroad as “indigenous” institutions have a history of cultivating local ties. Further, the American university abroad has a storeroom of credible institutional frames about its capacity for educating national citizens. 3) American universities abroad also have a collective history of resilience. The social upheavals of the 1960s made collective action among American universities abroad extremely difficult. But American institutions endured as places of prominence in their nations. 4) Finally, collective action has always been most effective among American universities abroad when there is a clear and present danger. The financial destitution of the 1920s and 1930s and the reputational threats of the 2000s mobilized institutions quickly and capably.

The crisis AAICU leaders felt in 2017 is likely a reflection of the pressures resulting from this end of the era. The extant mobilizing structure that was developed in the 1970s may not be suited for the challenges that lie ahead. Permanent leadership will be required to navigate an increasingly complex global environment. Until the Higher Education Act is re-authorized, the status of many of the field’s central institutions with respect to federal funding eligibility will remain unresolved. In the meantime, other challenges await. The function of regional accreditors remains vital, but they largely lack understanding of the role that independent American universities abroad play in the wider field of American higher education. And if accreditors continue to validate proprietary institutions, which seems likely, the field’s central actors will need to determine how to accommodate this development.

Because of its privileged position at the center of the field, AAICU has the opportunity to lead change in these and other areas. The most important area is standard development. In 1927, advisers to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. concluded of the American University at Cairo, “The university, of course, does not deserve the name. It is a high school with some courses encroaching upon the field of the Junior College” (Appelget, 1927). Yet in the span of only a few decades the American University in Cairo had become a leading institution in the Middle East. Many of today’s American universities abroad may not be deserving of the names “American” or “university.” But that does not preclude their eventual development into institutions as valuable to their cities, countries, and regions as the American University in Cairo is to its. Surely, leaders of some of these organizations do not desire to conform to norms that promote educational quality. Yet many do and would welcome the support. AAICU has a unique chance to develop standards and resources that could help newer institutions to mature in ways favorable to the field’s long-term interests. Meanwhile, from its unique station of authority, it could work with governments to compel others to meet standards.

#### Limitations and directions for future research

This study of American universities abroad focused on inter-organizational collaboration. As a result, other salient features of these institutions received considerably less attention. Who are the students and faculty at American universities abroad? What do the curricula contain? What sorts of things have alumni gone on to do and what connections do they maintain with their alma maters? These are all important questions that my study was not able to answer in any great detail. Furthermore, the study’s attention to the relationship between American universities abroad and American higher education meant I was largely unable to attend to the complicated relationships between the institutions and their local authorities. Emphasis on collective action

bounded my study from the end of World War I forward. This choice left a half century's worth of American universities abroad unexplored.

I was conscious that I was preparing a foundational study of American universities abroad. As such, I elected to focus on that particular organizational type without spending too much time comparing them to other expressions of American higher education such as the international branch campus or study abroad site. Another conscious choice was to only gloss the intellectual history that was context for conceptualizing American universities abroad. Yet, if I had been more faithful to Veysey as a model, such work would have constituted a more substantive component of the study. Finally, the study also neglected to report much on local environs, opting instead for generalizations of regional political and economic developments.

Future research can build from the study's limitations. More work on faculty and students and alumni would help readers develop a sense of what it is like to be at these institutions. Still more research can build off this study's primary finding that the American university abroad is an institution of American higher education. It would be useful to elaborate the field even further. This study largely avoided discussion of networks. But anecdotal evidence suggests that their exploration could yield interesting insights about field dynamics. Links between institutions in the field are formed and maintained not only via AAICU but also through a consortium of libraries at American universities abroad (AMICAL), an informal group of admissions counselors, and by institutional leaders with ties to numerous institutions. Consider the following individuals' connections to multiple American universities abroad: Marina Tolmacheva had been a consultant for the American University of Central Asia as a Fulbright Scholar. Later, she was president at American University of Kuwait. Ann Ferren was provost at American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) then a consultant for American University of Mongolia. C. Michael Smith was

president of American University of Nigeria (AUN) and American University of Afghanistan (AUAF). Athanasios Moulakis was interim president of AUAF before becoming president of the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS). Dawn Dekle, too, held leadership positions at AUAF (provost) and AUIS (president) before becoming president at AUN. Winfred Thompson has held chief executive offices at the American universities in Sharjah, Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Kosovo. David Huwiler served as president of AUCA, AUN, and AUBG. Peter Heath was provost at American University of Beirut and chancellor at American University of Sharjah. John Ryder was provost at the American University of Ras al Khaimah (AURAK) and the American University of Malta. Tim Sullivan was provost at American University in Cairo and president at the American University of Kuwait. Sharon Siverts was president of AURAK and American University of Phnom Penh. Walter McCann was president of Athens College and Richmond. Muthanna Abdul Razzaq is founder and president of the American University in the Emirates, a founder of the American University of Kurdistan, and serves on the board of AUAF. Liviu Matei is provost at Central European University and a trustee of AUCA. These myriad connections surely relate to the way the field is structured and framed. Analysis of these networks and those of the faculty, too, presents an exciting opportunity for new knowledge about the field.

Another avenue for research is to take a deeper dive into particular institutions either through single or comparative case studies. The new endeavors in Malta, Ukraine, and Myanmar, for instance, could yield potentially valuable findings about the relationships of these institutions to the fields in which they are nested and/or the processes of internationalization in understudied sites. Comparison of the various expressions of American higher education abroad suggests yet another possibility for extending this research agenda. This approach could examine the independent institutions, branch campuses, and study abroad sites, as well as the newer forms



like Duke Kunshan University and Yale-NUS College in Singapore. Finally, comparing the independent American university abroad to the German, Australian, and Chinese models of higher education overseas could illuminate the various national differences in understanding of the contemporary university.

### Final thoughts

This study contributes to a body of literature that highlights how universities are useful lenses for viewing the world (Stevens, et al., 2018). It also makes the case that the American university abroad allows us to better see the American university. We can make sense of American higher education by reaching some distance beyond it. This study does that by reaching into the past and across the globe to discover new frontiers in American higher education. Study of American universities abroad reminds us of the substance of American educational ideals—-independent governance, liberal arts curriculum, peer review of institutional quality—and provides new rationales for their significance: the applicability of these ideals beyond American shores has been associated time and time again with the development of citizen leaders in pluralistic societies. If it is true abroad, may it also be at home.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: List of American universities abroad in 2017

<i>Institution Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Year Est.</i>	<i>Approx. 2017 Enrollment**</i>
Forman Christian College*	Pakistan	1864	3,200
American University of Beirut*	Lebanon	1866	8,000
American College of Greece*	Greece	1875	2,800
American College, Madurai	India	1881	4,791
American College of Thessaloniki*	Greece	1886	537
American University in Cairo*	Egypt	1919	6,835
Lebanese American University*	Lebanon	1924	8,348
Haigazian University*	Lebanon	1955	650
Institute for American Universities/IAU College*	France	1958	1,000
CETYS*	Mexico	1961	7,600
American University of Paris*	France	1962	1,173
American University of Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico	1963	1,771
Saint Louis University*	Spain	1967	750
American University of Rome*	Italy	1969	500
Franklin University*	Switzerland	1969	352
United States International University	Kenya	1969	6,512
John Cabot University*	Italy	1972	1,324
Richmond, The American International University in London*	United Kingdom	1972	1,000
American College	Cyprus	1975	3,782
American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine	Montserrat	1978	1,000
Girne American University	Cyprus	1985	16,000
American University of the Caribbean	Haiti	1985	
American University of Science and Technology	Lebanon	1989	5,513
Anglo-American University	Czech Republic	1990	990
American College of Dubai	United Arab Emirates	1990	2,250
American Graduate School of Business	Switzerland	1991	
American University of Acapulco	Mexico	1991	
American University of Armenia*	Armenia	1991	1,213
American University in Bulgaria*	Bulgaria	1991	939
Romanian-American University	Romania	1991	10,000
American University in Moscow	Russia	1991	
Central European University*	Hungary	1991	1,448
American University (UAM)	Nicaragua	1992	
Irish American University*	Ireland	1993	150
American University of Central Asia*	Kyrgyz Republic	1993	1,200
American International University Bangladesh	Bangladesh	1994	10,252
American Graduate School of Paris	France	1994	
Universidad Americana	Paraguay	1994	6,500
American University for Humanities	Georgia	1994	250
Kazakh-American Free University	Kazakhstan	1994	3,000
Al Akhawayn University*	Morocco	1995	2,254
American University in Dubai	United Arab Emirates	1995	2,600
American University of Sharjah*	United Arab Emirates	1997	5,675
Kazakh-American University	Kazakhstan	1997	
American University of Technology	Lebanon	1998	3,000
American College of Higher Education	Sri Lanka	1998	
Algerian-American Institute of Management	Algeria	1998	

<i>Institution Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Year Est.</i>	<i>Approx. 2017 Enrollment**</i>
American University of Culture & Education	Lebanon	2000	3,000
Arab American University – Jenin	West Bank	2000	11,300
American University of Kosovo (aka RIT Kosovo)*	Kosovo	2002	500
International American University School of Medicine	Saint Lucia	2003	
Hellenic American College	Greece	2004	
American University of Kuwait	Kuwait	2004	2,500
American University of Antigua	Antigua & Barbuda	2004	1,950
American University of Nigeria*	Nigeria	2005	1,500
American University of Madaba	Jordan	2005	8,000
American University in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia & Herzegovina	2005	250
University American College Skopje	Macedonia	2005	1,006
Georgian American University	Georgia	2005	1,500
American University in the Emirates	United Arab Emirates	2006	2,000
American University of Afghanistan*	Afghanistan	2006	717
La American University	Nicaragua	2007	2,559
American University of Iraq, Sulaimani*	Iraq	2007	1,580
American University of the Middle East	Kuwait	2007	6,000
American University of India	India	2009	
Texila American University	Guyana	2010	422
American International University West Africa	The Gambia	2011	201
American University of Vietnam	Vietnam	2011	
American University of Barbados School of Medicine	Barbados	2011	
Santa Monica the American International University	Cameroon	2012	
American University of Ras Al Khaimah	United Arab Emirates	2012	900
American University of St Vincent	St Vincent and the Grenadines	2012	
American University of Mongolia	Mongolia	2012	
American University of Phnom Penh	Cambodia	2013	
American University of Kurdistan	Iraq	2014	
American University of Myanmar	Myanmar	2014	
American University of Integrative Sciences	Sint Maarten	2014	600
American University of North Africa	Tunisia	2015	
American University of Moldova	Moldova	2015	
American University of Malta	Malta	2017	15

*Notes:* \* Denotes membership in the Association of American International Colleges and Universities (AAICU) in 2017.

\*\* Enrollment includes degree and non-degree students. Figures collected from institutional websites and other online sources. Cumulative enrollment of 58 institutions for which data was available is 181,659. Of these institutions, the median campus size is 1,676 students.



Appendix B: List of individuals interviewed (54)

<i>Name, Title, Affiliation</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Hassan Hamdan al Alkim, President, American University of Ras al Khaimah	In person
Ronald Aqua, Director, Texas International Education Consortium (organization involved in establishment of Al Akhawayn University and American University in Baku)	Remote
George Arveladze, (attempted) Founder, American University of Ukraine	Remote
Nabih Badawi, Co-Founder, Arab-American University-Jenin; (attempted) Founder, American University of Ethiopia	In person
Barbara Brittingham, President, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges (U.S. regional accreditor)	Remote
Marshall Christensen, Co-Founder/Trustee, Kazakh-American Free University	Remote
Ken Cutshaw, Co-Founder/Trustee, Georgian-American University	In person
Majdi Dayyat, Director, American University of Madaba	Remote
Rick Detweiler, President, Great Lakes College Association	Remote
Hassan Diab, VP for Regional External Programs, American University of Beirut; Former Minister of Higher Education, Lebanon (not recorded)	In person
Kathryn Dodge, Consultant, American University of Madaba	Remote
Peter Dorman, Former President, American University of Beirut (not recorded)	In person
Judith Eaton, President, Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)	Remote
Richard Ekman, President, Council of Independent Colleges	Remote
Sharif Fayez, Founder, American University of Afghanistan; Former Minister of Higher Education, Afghanistan	Remote
Ann Ferren, Former Provost, American University of Bulgaria; Consultant, American University of Mongolia	In person
Karin Fischer, Senior International Reporter, <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i>	Remote
Badruun Gardi, Trustee, American University of Mongolia	Remote
Susan Gillespie, Founder/Director, Institute of International Liberal Education at Bard College	Remote

<i>Name, Title, Affiliation</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Allan Goodman, President, Institute of International Education	Remote
Paul Haidostian, President, Haigazian University	In person
Abdul Hamid Hallab, Former Consultant, American University of Sharjah; Former VP for Regional External Programs, American University of Beirut	In person
Scott Horton, Founding Trustee, American University of Central Asia	In person
Ellen Hurwitz, Former President, American University of Central Asia	Remote
Mike Johnson, Vice President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (U.S. regional accreditor)	Remote
Neil Kerwin, President, American University	Remote
Zalmay Khalilzad, Former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan and Iraq; Trustee, American University of Afghanistan	In person
Armen der Kiureghian, Co-Founder and President, American University of Armenia	Remote
Craig Evan Klafter, Founding Rector, American University of Myanmar	Remote
Leonidas Koskos, President, Hellenic American College (Greece)	Remote
Carmen Lamagna, President, American International University Bangladesh	Written
Edward Lozansky, Founder and President, American University in Moscow (not recorded)	Remote
Richard Lukaj, Co-Founder and Board Chair, American University of Kosovo	Remote
Ernesto Medina, President, American University of Managua	Remote
John Menzies, Founder, American University of Bulgaria	In person
Jihad Nader, Provost, American University in Dubai	In person
Bill O'Brien, President, American College of Dubai	Remote
Jerry O'Brien, Director, American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (USAID)	In person
Tom O'Neil, Co-Founder, Arab American University-Jenin	Remote
Mary Ellen Petrisko, President, WASC Senior College and University Commission (U.S. regional accreditor)	Remote
Milo Pinckney, CEO, American University of Integrative Sciences	Remote
Sheikh Saud bin Saqr al Qasimi, Founder, American University of Ras al Khaimah; ruler of Ras al Khaimah	In person

<i>Name, Title, Affiliation</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Jansen Raichl, Founder, Anglo-American University (Czech Republic)	Written
Muthanna Abdul Razzaq, Founder and President, American University of the Emirates; Co-Founder, American University of Kurdistan	In person
Richard Rupp, Coordinator for relationship between Purdue University Northwest and Bayan College (Oman)	Remote
John Ryder, Founding President/Provost, American University of Malta	In person
Hiam Sakr, Founder and President, American University of Science and Technology (Lebanon)	In person
Barham Salih, Founder, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani	In person
Eileen Servidio-Delabre, Founding Board and Faculty Member, American Graduate School of Paris	Remote
Neal Simon, Founder and President, American University of Antigua	In person
Peter Stearns, Former Provost, George Mason University	In person
Cyril Taylor, Founder, Richmond, the American International University in London	In person
Marina Tolmacheva, Former President, American University of Kuwait	Remote
Brian Whalen, President, Forum on Education Abroad	Remote

Appendix C: List of individuals solicited but not interviewed (50)

<i>Name, title, affiliation</i>	<i>Status</i>
Atiku Abubakar, Founder, American University of Nigeria	No response
Serhat Akpınar, Founder, Girne American University (Cyprus) and American University of Moldova	Never scheduled
Pradeep Alexander, Founder, American University of India	Never scheduled
JJ Asongu, President, Santa Monica the American International University (Cameroon)	No response
Patrick Awuah, Founder and President, Ashesi University College	Never scheduled
Masrour Barzani, Founder, American University of Kurdistan	Never scheduled
Regsuren Bat-Erdene, Co-Founder, American University of Mongolia	Never scheduled
Jonathan Becker, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Bard College	No response
Saju Bhaskar, Founder, Texila American University (Guyana)	Never scheduled
Victor Billeh, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, American University of Madaba	No response
Marjan Bojadjiev, Provost and Founding Dean of the business school, American College Skopje (Macedonia)	Never scheduled
Gary Brar, Founder, American University of Barbados	No response
Ken Dunn, Co-Founder and Interim President, American University of Phnom Penh	Never scheduled
Dale Eickelman, Professor of Anthropology, Dartmouth University; Coordinator for relationship between Dartmouth and American University of Kuwait	Declined
Ovidiu Folcut, Rector, Romanian-American University	No response
Shafeeq Ghabra, Founding President, American University of Kuwait	No response
Jeff Gima, President, AMICAL (consortium of American university abroad libraries)	Never scheduled
Thomas Goetsch, Co-Founder, Kazakh-American Free University	No response
Vartan Gregorian, President, Carnegie Corporation; donor to multiple American universities abroad	Declined
Chris Hall, Former President, American University of Kosovo	Declined
Hugh Hallman, Co-Founder, Kazakh-American Free University	No response

<i>Name, title, affiliation</i>	<i>Status</i>
John Hicks, Executive Director, International University of Grand-Bassam	No response
Ghada Hinain, Founder, American University of Technology (Lebanon)	Declined
Mohaned Hussanin, Senior Administrator, American University of the Middle East	No response
Charles Johnson, Consultant, American University of the Middle East (Kuwait)	Declined
Martha Kanter, Former Under-Secretary of Education, U.S. Dept. of Education	No response
Miriam Kazanjian, Founder, Coalition for International Education, an organization that has assisted AAICU's lobbying efforts	Declined
Robert Kenney, Co-founder, American University of Mongolia	No response
Amirlan Aidarbekovich Kussainov, Founder and President, Kazakh-American University	No response
Alex Lahlou, President of American University of Leadership (associated with Algerian-American Institute of Management and American University of Libya)	Never scheduled
Earl Lewis, President, Mellon Foundation; donor to multiple American universities abroad	No response
Sherryn Mangalagama, Founder, American College of Higher Education (Sri Lanka)	No response
Lance de Masi, President, American University in Dubai	No response
Manmadhan Nair, Founder, American International University (St Lucia) and American University of St Vincent	Never scheduled
Roy Nirschel, Co-Founder and President, American University of Vietnam	Declined
Fahad Al-Othman, Founder, American University of the Middle East	No response
Victor Patrick, Manager, American College of Higher Education (Sri Lanka)	Never scheduled
Denis Prcić, Founder and President, American University in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Declined
Elizabeth Redden, Senior International Reporter, <i>InsideHigherEd</i>	No response
Donald Ross, Founder, Irish American University	Declined
Elias Bou Saab, Founder, American University in Dubai	Never scheduled
Shaika Dana Nasser Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah, Founder, American University of Kuwait	No response

<i>Name, title, affiliation</i>	<i>Status</i>
Hani Salah, Founder, American University of Malta	No response
Louis Sell, Former U.S. Diplomat; Former Trustee of American University of Kosovo	No response
Dinesh Shukla, Founder, American International University West Africa	No response
Elizabeth Sibolski, President, Middle States Commission on Higher Education (U.S. regional accreditor)	Declined
George Soros, Philanthropist; donor to multiple American universities abroad	Declined
Chris Spirou, Founder, Hellenic American College (Greece)	No response
Bruce Taylor, Former President, American University of Phnom Penh	No response
Nasser Zayyat, Spokesperson for Sadeen Group, American University of Malta	Never scheduled

## Appendix D: Sample Interview Protocols

### *General protocol for interview of an individual affiliated to an American university abroad*

1. Where did the idea for [name of institution] come from?
2. How did you become involved? Who else is involved in the project? Is everyone on the same page, especially with respect to mission, curriculum, etc.?
3. What were the motivations of those involved for establishing the university? What is your vision for it?
4. How are you implementing your vision? What steps are you and others involved taking to ensure that your vision will be realized?
  - a. Which resources and relationships have been indispensable in the process of establishing the university?
  - b. Do you have models?
5. Has there been anything surprising or disappointing about the process of establishing the university?
6. Have there been any areas of contention thus far?
7. Tell me about [name of institution's] governance structure.
8. Who are the students at [name of institution]? What about the faculty?
9. What role do you see [name of institution] playing in [name of country]?
10. How does [name of institution] differ from other universities in the country/region?
11. How was the name “[name of institution]” selected?
12. In what ways is [name of institution] “American”? In what ways is it [adjectival form of host country] or non-American?
13. Would it have been easier or more difficult to establish a different kind of university in [name of country]?
14. Do you and others consider [name of institution] as an extension of a recognized model or as a unique innovation?
15. To what extent did your personal/academic/professional background influence your interest in and ability in establishing this kind of university?

### *General protocol for interview of an individual unaffiliated to an American university abroad*

1. Can you share your opinions on specific American universities abroad that you have encountered? How did you come to know about these institutions?
2. As a collective body—if one could be understood to exist—do you think American universities abroad have been particularly successful? Are various U.S. and foreign domestic stakeholders interpreting them the way their institutional leaders hope?
3. Have you observed any patterns of resources (financial, legal, etc.) or relationships (with donors, partners, etc.) that are particularly notable among American universities abroad?

4. What do you see as some of the biggest challenges or opportunities to the continued growth of these types of institutions?
5. Do you get the sense that there is an appetite either abroad or in the U.S. for increased coordination among these institutions?
6. Are there any additional observations that you would share on this topic?
7. Is there anyone else you would recommend that I speak to about American universities abroad?



Appendix E: Foreign-backed universities in the Middle East and North Africa

<i>Institution Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Est.</i>
French University in Armenia	Yerevan, Armenia	1995
French University in Egypt	Cairo, Egypt	2002
German University in Cairo	Cairo, Egypt	2002
British University in Dubai	Dubai, UAE	2004
Canadian International College	Cairo, Egypt	2004
The British University in Egypt	Cairo, Egypt	2005
Ahram Canadian University	6 <sup>th</sup> of October City, Egypt	2005
German Jordanian University	Amman, Jordan	2005
Canadian University Dubai	Dubai, UAE	2006
Egyptian Russian University	Cairo, Egypt	2006
Lebanese Canadian University	Beirut, Lebanon	2007
French University in Dubai	Dubai, UAE	2007
German University of Technology in Oman	Muscat, Oman	2007
Lebanese French University	Erbil, Iraq	2007
Emirates Canadian University College	Umm Al Quwain, UAE	2008
Lebanese German University	Jounieh, Lebanon	2008
Lebanese-French University of Technology and Applied Sciences	Tripoli, Lebanon	N/A
Turkish-German University	Istanbul, Turkey	2013
British University of Nicosia	Nicosia, Cyprus	2014
German Business School	Tunis, Tunisia	2015

## Appendix F: Illustrative long excerpts from select interviews about American educational values

### **Scott Horton**

“...our mission isn’t to turn local communities into little colonies of America that operate like America. They have their own values and their own ideas. If they decide they want to be little Americas, ok. But I don’t expect that. Nor do we think it’s the mission of the university to encourage them to be that. But, there’s certain values that we have that we want to introduce. That includes critical thinking, definitely open space for dissent that may be politically incorrect. And this is an area where if I look over the last 15 years of Kyrgyzstan where we’ve had two revolutions, it presented real tests for us, where I’ll say things like, governments come to us and say, ‘the Maximum Leader is coming in and is going to give a presentation and you will ensure that the entire faculty and student body are there and we will give you the signals about when to applaud [laughs],’ to which we say ‘we’re delighted to have Maximum Leader come and talk but we don’t give signals to people about when to applaud. And if he comes and talks he has to agree that he will receive and answer questions because that’s what we expect of all people that come and talk here.’ And they’re just shocked! But that’s the way we work. And I think at several of these events, I was there at one of them, where students got up and asked very aggressive critical questions. The government later was just furious, wanting to discipline this person. Our president at the time said, ‘we’re very proud of these students. You think they are fresh and insulting to you? You should see how behave they with us; they’re even worse!’ And that’s good. That’s what we want. We don’t want people who feel cowed and intimidated. And for a student to stand up in an assembly with the president of the nation and do this, bravo! That’s what we want.”

### **George Arveladze**

“I come from former Soviet Union. And Soviet Union was very ugly. It was an ugly country, I mean. In many ways. And it couldn’t be otherwise because the market was not dictating the beauty. The beauty was dictated by the politburo. So everything was ugly. And there was no style and no, you know, nothing. Nothing looked cool. Everything looked Soviet. And we had a very specific image of this Soviet that we don’t like. Vice versa, we have a specific image of the American that we looked up to as children. Then when we first came to see we were fascinated. And I really do think that American schools are really amazing... You have some of the best schools in the world... So I also have those images. It’s not just the environment, it’s the culture that we want to kind of duplicate and reproduce here. This kind of aura, you know, of being in a place where everybody enjoys to learn and to excel. This is something that really distinguishes in our minds and in our imagination, you know, American schools from what we had as schools in the part of the world where we were born. For you, when I say an ‘American university’, you’re never gonna be able to understand this term the way I understand it, ok?... For you, this is something that is yours, it’s for granted. And there’s something that you don’t like and there’s something that you like. You have a normal view of it. But for us it’s a comparison to this ugliness that we had and what you have.”

### **Marshall Christensen**

“President Nazarbayev understood that we were outsiders from the United States. But because of the relationship that Mambetzkaziyev had with Nazarbayev he trusted it. And the remnant of the KGB, they wanted to get rid of us. One day they came to Mambetzkaziyev and said, ‘Look, you know that these people’—we didn’t represent a church, but we were believers; we were

Christians. And the KGB said to him, 'Look...!' They said to the president of the country, 'You need to get rid of these people because they're Christians.' Well, Nazarbayev is a fair-minded man, but Mambetzkaziyev went back to his office. This is still in Almaty in those days. Now the capital is moved from Almaty to Astana. He went to the president's office. And it's a fascinating little story. Nazarbayev raises this question, 'you know, are you comfortable with these Americans?' And there was this colonel, his aide-de-camp was actually in the room, listening to this conversation. And Mambetzkaziyev says to Nazarbayev, 'Look, don't get rid of these people. We need them.' Meaning Kazakhstan needs them. And what he said to me personally, he had even said to students when he asked me to address students in this college, he said to the president, he said, 'We need their values.' That was fascinating! He actually confronts Nazarbayev with the fact that we had something pretty important to offer academically as well as in terms of values; integrity, I guess. Eventually, after half an hour or however long this meeting took place in the president's office, Mambetzkaziyev walks out of the office with the colonel, his aide. And the colonel turned to him and said, 'I have been working with President Nazarbayev long before the fall of the Soviet Union and' he said, 'I have never, in all my life, heard anyone confront him, speak up to him, the way you did.' [laughs]"