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The following is a list of panels at the 2020 MESA conference which deal most directly with the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, inclusive of the transnational flow of people, material and ideas across the Gulf, Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

Three of these panels are sponsored by AGAPS and we encourage our members to pay particular attention to those. However, we make this larger list of relevant panels available to our entire community to assist people in finding those that may be of interest. There are many great panels this year to consider.

MESA 2020 panels

(in chronological order)

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- 1) **[P6001] Ordinary Diversity and Social Hierarchies in the Contemporary Arab Gulf**
(Monday Oct 5, 11am)

SUMMARY:

Cities of the Arab Gulf are often described simultaneously as some of the most diverse and the most segregated environments in the world. With foreign residents composing a large part and, in some notable cases, the majority of their population, they are home to a striking national, ethnic, linguistic, and religious plurality. Citizens themselves are characterized by an internal diversity - in terms of gender, religion, ethnicity, tribal belonging, and family origins - which official discourses often leave unacknowledged or even erase, in an effort to promote a homogeneous national identity. While Gulf governments see the large numbers of foreigners as a problem, diversity has been seized by some as an asset - as when the United Arab Emirates uses it to showcase an international image of “tolerance”. At the same time, many Gulf scholars tend to treat this diversity as a mere façade, part of the “urban spectacle” through which cities like Dubai are branded at the global scale – a façade whose flipside would be that of economic exploitation, discrimination, and violence (Davis, 2007; Kanna, 2011).

While recent scholarship has underlined the necessity to go beyond these dualistic representations, with calls to move away from a vision of the Gulf region as an “exception” shaped by the political economy of oil (Fuccaro, 2011), this process has often consisted of replacing the Gulf within already-existing theoretical frameworks, such as that of the “neoliberal” or “postmodern” city (Molotch, Ponzini, 2019; Vora, Kanna, 2018) or of the patriarchal Muslim society. This panel takes a step further by exploring ways to theorize from the Gulf. Based on ethnographic research, contributors thus examine the relationship between



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the ordinary diversity at work in Gulf societies and the social hierarchies that structure them. What types of encounters and conflicts does this everyday diversity bring about? How is diversity displayed, negotiated, or obscured? How do these processes allow us to rethink notions such as segregation and cosmopolitanism, and to question the processes of knowledge production in the region?

Contributions to this panel challenge traditional understandings of segregation in Gulf cities, showing how urban spaces – from hotel bars to the “new Dubai” – allow individuals to bypass dominant social norms. They demonstrate how city-dwellers' sociolinguistic and religious practices foster belongings and affinities that defy the binary politics of citizenship. Finally, they show how theoretical frameworks produced outside the region hamper the analysis of gender-based violence and its structural causes

PAPERS:

- Navigating Belonging and Exclusion in the Cosmopolitan City: An Urban Ethnography of Dubai by AlMutawa, Rana
- Rethinking the segregated city: Territories and sociabilities of alcohol in Abu Dhabi by Assaf, Laure
- Feminist Dilemmas: How to Talk about Gender-Based Violence in Relation to the Arab Gulf? by Mokhtar, Hasnaa
- Noncitizen Belonging: US-Citizen Muslims in Sharjah by Sanchez, Shaundel
- Navigating Sociolinguistic Diversity in the UAE by Stokes, Corinne

2) [P6237] Patronage, Resistance, and Representation in Yemen's War (Monday Oct 5, 11am)

No panel summary

PAPERS:

- Patronage as Containment : the Cases of al-Islah and the STC by Carvajal, Fernando R.
- Framing Conflict in the Middle East: The Case of Yemen and Syria Wars in the European Media by Elayah, Moosa
- Muslim Hunger Strikes as Secular Critique in Yemen by Miller, W. Flagg
- Yemeni smuggling: Land control and selective law enforcement as tools of patronage by Rudicky, Erik



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3) **[P5880] You Must Listen to the Artist! The Gulf's Creative Class in the Twenty-First Century**

(Monday Oct 5, 1.30pm)

SUMMARY:

For years, many Arabs and non-Arabs have seen the Gulf's oil-producing monarchies as cultural wastelands defined by the uneasy co-existence of narrow interpretations of Islam along with vast imported wealth from oil production. Those select Gulf nationals interested in art and in cultural production often traveled to Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, or to the West--reinforcing a narrative of the region as a cultural tabula rasa. What art that has emerged from the Gulf has often been dismissed as lesser work, at best, or propaganda, at worst.

In reality, however, the Gulf has produced generations of musicians, poets, painters, and other cultural producers who have given unique voice to the people of the region while influencing cultures and societies in the Gulf, the Arab World, and beyond. They did so with the support of local organizations and elites. This panel takes the work of Gulf-based artists seriously on their own terms to gain insight into the complex politics of the region, and looks at the development of critical cultural infrastructures that have and continue to help scaffold artistic production in the region.

PAPERS:

- Beyond the Khaleej: Touring Exhibitions, Soft Power, and Creating a Canon of Arab Art by Derderian, Elizabeth
- State of the Art: Culture and Saudi Arabia's New Soft Power Strategy by Fageeh, Hisham
- Sharjah's support for critical arts practice: Ali Cherri's the Digger and Ammar Al Attar's Cinemas in the UAE by Hudson, Dale
- Past-Present-Future: Time-based artistic practices from the Gulf by Sindelar, Melanie Janet

4) **[P5908] The Fixed and the Changing: From Social Movements to Public Policies Across the MENA Region**

(Monday Oct 5, 1.30pm)

SUMMARY:

What explains major policy change in the monarchies of the Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa? Why do the same regimes embark on starkly different trajectories of domestic development, political repression, and foreign intervention at various points in time? Although



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the uprisings of the Arab Spring wrought little outward change from most of these regimes, the past decade (as in years prior) has witnessed tangible policy changes in welfare programs, foreign adventurism, economic diversification and power-sharing arrangements across these countries.

Development policies, for example, might direct state spending in ways that enrich and empower some social groups at the expense of others - new investments in Saudi Arabia's entertainment and tourism offerings contrast with past efforts to target significant state spending at the Kingdom's underdeveloped periphery. New forms of political inclusion or protection, such as Kuwaiti securing women the right to vote in parliamentary elections, can reorder rigid social hierarchies and in turn influence spending decisions. Likewise, domestic repression or even foreign intervention can determine what forms of opposition can safely arise at home and abroad - from fine-tuning the red lines of the Moroccan press code to deciding whether and how to "restore order" by force in Yemen.

Existing literature on the region's monarchies, whether those of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jordan, or Morocco, tends to overlook specific means of effecting policy change in favor of focusing on durable institutions of rule or static coalitions of support. To that end, the papers in this panel examine the drivers of policy change in the monarchies of the Arab world. Drawing on recent fieldwork in respective countries to establish clear policy changes and the mechanisms by which they occur, these papers investigate the role of informal institutions, social movements, and elite threat perceptions in shifting these societies' distribution of wealth, rights, and violence via the power of the state.

PAPERS:

- Assessing the Power of Ideology in Kuwaiti Policymaking by Freer, Courtney
- Gaining Rights through Agenda Setting: by Leber, Andrew; Lysa, Charlotte
- Transforming Yemen: Divergent Saudi and Emirati Intervention Strategies by Parker, Tyler
- Red Lines and Repression: Changing Regimes of Self Censorship in Morocco by Snyder, Patrick

5) [R5916] Citizenship and Belonging in the Arabian Peninsula

(Tuesday Oct 6, 11am)

SUMMARY:

This roundtable is an effort to challenge prevailing assumptions that have long dominated discourse about citizenship and belonging in the Arabian Peninsula. Our scope and purpose involve both theoretical innovation and empirical diversity. Participants are multi-disciplinary, and put forth ideas that move conversation on the politics of citizenship and belonging:



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Beyond oil and arms

Beyond the rentier framework

*Beyond a social contract that exchanges welfare for
loyalty/acquiescence*

*Beyond an exchange of military security for taxation and
political participation*

Beyond a simple state-centric lens

*Beyond the binary of being either local or being a foreign
worker*

Beyond the binary of the GCC or Yemen and

Beyond tribal identities, even when those matter.

Rather than absolutes, there are multiple shades and hues of citizenship and belonging in the Arabian Peninsula. We hope to capture this nuance and complexity in our conversation.

Participants base their contributions on fieldwork. Each will address a subject they think vital to comprehend belonging. To open the conversation, one participant will call attention to the exceptionalizing discourses that have shaped the way we understand the Peninsula. Subsequent specific themes include building effective citizenship outside the state (Yemen), emergent forms of student citizenship (Qatar), the limits of belonging and cosmetic change (Saudi Arabia), mobilization of the bidoon (Kuwait), how minority kafils perform citizenship as migration enforcement (the UAE), citizenship-stripping and feudalism (Bahrain), economic belonging and contestation (Oman) and migrant worker protest as labor citizenship (comparative).

This roundtable is large – by choice. Usually, analysis focuses on the big state of Saudi Arabia or on the small states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE or on Oman or on the rubric of the Gulf Cooperation Council or on Yemen. Rarely are they addressed together even as they share the same space. We are particularly pleased that Yemen is represented in this discussion. Scholarship on Yemen is superb but for far too long, it has been analyzed separately and apart from the context in which it exists.

To ensure coherence and brevity, the chair will ask the same three questions of the participants in the roundtable. Participants can then frame their contributions to address the common questions. We hope to enrich and complicate debate.

CONTRIBUTORS:

- The recent changes in Saudi Arabia in concerts, sports, mixing genders, driving, comedy, art, and small... by Gwenn Okruhlik
- What if we thought about citizenship less as some set of rights that one has (or does not have) and more... by Stacey Philbrick Yadav



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- In February 2011, the biduns or long-term residents who are considered illegal by the state of Kuwait... by Claire Beaugrand
- Can you be a citizen and yet not belong? How do structural and cultural inclusions and exclusions affect... by Crystal Ennis
- Space, Mobility, and Shifting Identities in the in Arabian Peninsula cities In this commentary I draw... by Neha Vora
- My participation will focus on "minority kafils." Foreign residents currently comprise 87.4% of the United... by Noora Lori
- Citizenship theory has moved our understanding of citizenship well beyond a formal legal status, to one... by Zahra Babar
- The Digital Citizen is Dead Offline, Bahrain has revoked the citizenship of at least 738 nationals... by Marc Jones
- My comments for this roundtable address emergent forms of student citizenship in transnational spaces... by Danya Al-Saleh

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6) [P6023] Excavating Modernity in the Arab Gulf: The Case of Kuwait

(Tuesday Oct 6, 11am)

SUMMARY:

In his book on Dubai, Ahmed Kanna astutely recognizes that, "Today it still seems acceptable to present the Arab Gulf in ways no longer so acceptable" of other postcolonies: as traditional, tribal, religiously conservative, and struggling to retain authenticity in the face of overwhelming change (2011: 1). While Gulf rulers are sometimes described as obsessive modernizers steering their societies, for better or worse, into the hypermodernity of 21st century globalism, citizens are portrayed as either passively accepting these top-down changes or lamenting the "loss of local, Islamic values as their countries become enmeshed in global economic systems" (Exell 2016: 69). Tropes commonly drawn upon to depict Gulf societies as inherently bound to tradition and apprehensive of modernity include the existence of strict labor and citizenship laws that seek to preserve a cohesive national identity distinct from foreigners; the persistence of kin-based tribalism and/or upsurge of Islamism in political and social institutions; and the proliferation of heritage-based discourses and practices in local culture industries. However, as Kanna argues, such recourses to tradition in the contemporary Gulf are not "traditional" at all but are specific responses to the experiences of early oil modernity (31).

While significant strides have been made in the literature of the broader Middle East to counter orientalist depictions of the region as a timeless "repository of tradition ... the Gulf seems a recalcitrant holdout" (Kanna 2011: 3). Most scholarly literature that examines the experiences



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of early- to mid-twentieth century modernity in the Middle East has overlooked the Gulf's contributions to the formation of a postcolonial Arab modernism. This has been exacerbated by the deluge of social scientific research on the Gulf's transformations since the late 1990s (especially the UAE and Qatar), which has created the impression that the region only really began to modernize in the context of late 20th century globalization.

This panel disrupts the "tradition versus modernity" dichotomy by which the Arab Gulf is persistently studied. With specific focus on Kuwait, the papers analyze how many facets of the contemporary Gulf assumed to be grounded in "traditional" or "conservative" values—labor laws, tribal politics, Islamist institutions, heritage cultures—were in fact modern products of and responses to modern problems originating in the early oil decades (1950s-1980s). In so doing, these papers excavate the agency of diverse social groups (workers, tribes, intellectuals, artists) alongside that of the state in the construction of a distinct Kuwaiti postcolonial modernity.

PAPERS:

- Being Modern in Kuwait: The Politics of Heritage and Memory Culture by Al-Nakib, Farah
- Muslim Brotherhood and Modernity by Alkandari, Ali
- Labor Law, Segregation, and the Postcolonial State: Kuwait, 1950-1960 by Boodrookas, Alex
- The Social Origins of Opposition to Authoritarian Rule: Evidence from Kuwait by Tavana, Daniel

7) [P5869] Gulf State-Society Relations and New Dynamics of the Rentier Debate

(Tuesday Oct 6, 11am)

SUMMARY:

Political science scholars of the Arab Gulf states base much of their work on the classical concepts of rentier state theory (RST) that began to emerge in the literature during the 1970s. The RST literature offers one explanation for state-society relations for states that have a high dependency on hydrocarbon resources. The social contract between these states and their citizens have implications for the logic of stakeholders in both the political and economic spheres.

Classical rentier state theory (RST), originally introduced by the seminal work of Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani in 1987, is state-centric and emphasizes the authoritarian nature of the state, neglecting the role of other forces that affect the state's political behavior. It has been argued that the rentier variable has a significant impact on the relationship between the state and society (Beblawi, 1990; Chaudhry, 1994; First 1974; Gunn, 1993; Luciani, 1987; Luciani,



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Association for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies

1990; Mahdavy, 1970; Skocpol, 1982; Tanter, 1990; Vandewalle, 1998) to the extent that it co-opted the power of civil society.

Although complacency can be characteristic of some aspects of societies in rentier states, it is important to also highlight the variation and nuance of subnational forces affecting and interacting with the strategic calculation of the rentier state. As RST has become more refined in its approach, the literature has expanded and progressed. It was originally a simplified explanation of state structures, only recently taking into account the domestic political dynamics within rentier states.

A new generation of scholars argue that classical RST heavily emphasizes state structures and inflates the effectiveness of co-optation of subnational actors within the allocative nature of the rentier state (Foley, 2010; Gengler, 2015; Gray, 2011; Gray, 2019; Moritz, 2016). Moreover, after events such as the Arab Spring swept the Gulf and the broader Middle East, a question that has arose in this new classification of scholarship is how subnational forces have affected the power of rentier states.

This panel has been assembled to highlight a new generation of literature that acknowledges that there are subnational political forces, such as the business elite interests, tribal interests, the media, Islamic movements, or youth movements, that shape the variation in these rentier states' foreign and domestic policies. It will offer various perspectives which will question and broaden the literature on how subnational forces affect the power dynamics and effectiveness of rentier Arab Gulf states.

PAPERS:

Discussants: Michael Herb & Emma Soubrier

- The Role of Rentier Legislatures in Shaping Foreign Policy Behavior: The Case of Kuwait and Iraq by Alajmi, Teflah; Alenezi, Nouf
- Identity, Citizenship, and Privilege in Rentier States: The Case of Kuwait by Albloshi, Hamad
- Democracy and the Investment Climate: An Analysis of the Gulf States within the Postcolonial Context by Almuslem, Abdulaziz
- Trajectories of Civil Liberties in Kuwait and Oman: The Applicability of Path-Dependence by Chay, Clemens
- State-Business Relations and Reform in Gulf Rentier Economies by Thafer, Dania

8) **[P5994] [Narratives in Conflict: Articulations of Identity Politics in Yemen's War](#)**

SUMMARY:



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The war scene in Yemen challenges any analysis that reduces the conflict into a mere clash between two distinct sectarian, tribal, partisan, regional, or even global forces, but rather unravels through constant shifting of multi-layered local alliances formed in concert with, sometimes as a response to, foreign interventions. Key to understanding Yemen's change from a 2011 peaceful revolutionary call for regime change into violence since 2015 is exploring with more depth the various narratives that have complicated Yemen's contemporary reality. This panel does not purport to provide a comprehensive account of all narratives that shape Yemen's war-within-war context but features three inquiries organized around the evolving narratives of Yemen's conflict from three distinct angles. The first paper examines the "sovereignty for security" narrative that has provided coalition partners with the rationale to disrupt Yemen and Yemeni lives. The paper pays close attention to how Yemenis have challenged this narrative in ways that have complicated narrations of national identity. The second paper argues that the Houthis are in the midst of a pivotal struggle for their identity, one that is reflected in the group's popular media and which sees the Houthis straddling two divergent self-representations. On the one hand, the group adheres closely to the divisive rhetoric and ideologies of its late founder. On the other, the Houthis feel the increasing need to reach out to broader sections of Yemen's population, and to portray themselves as legitimate representatives of a united Yemeni state. The final paper engages with a specific cultural form capitalized upon by the Houthi media: the zamil, a centuries-old genre of sung poetry likened to a weapon in times of war. It analyzes how a Yemeni family living in Sana'a narrates their experience with the zamil in their everyday lives, offering a phenomenological account of how this media form inserts itself into the mundane against the backdrop of a war-torn city. Together, these papers seek to make sense of key war narratives that Yemen's warring parties tell to each other, and to themselves, and how these narratives help to shape identities, the perception of events, and the trajectory of the conflict.

PAPERS:

- In the Name of Security: A Critique of the Disruptive Force of Foreign Intervention in Yemen by Mahdi, Waleed
- From Believing Youth to Bureaucrats: Adaptive representations of Houthi identity in Yemen's media by Porter, Hannah
- "The Words Pierce Hearts": Affect, Nationalism and Congruence in the Houthi Zamil by Sumner, Emily

9) [P6187] Global Trends and Consumption in Turkey and the Gulf

(Thursday Oct 8, 11am)

No panel summary



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Association for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies

PAPERS:

- Progressive in the West, Backward in the East: Public Discourse of Shalvar in Bulgaria and Turkey by Celikkol, Yasemin
- Shopping in Jeddah: Changing Modes of Gender Segregation in Saudi Arabian Spaces of Consumption by Maneval, Stefan
- The Status of Yoga in the Gulf by Mavrov, Hryhorii

10) [P5868] Intersections and Divergences of Gender Norms and 'Modernity' in the Arab Gulf States

(Thursday Oct 8, 11am)

SUMMARY:

This panel will raise questions regarding the changing role of women in the Gulf by elucidating ways in which these women navigate between the state and society's conception of modernity and tradition, forces often assumed to be in direct opposition. Modernization has manifested itself in the Gulf in a variety of forms, including technologies, (such as social media), economics, (such as neoliberal development discourse), and representative politics, (such as more equitable gender representation). While these variables of modernization are certainly not limited to these categories, they speak to unexpected consequences on the societies of the Gulf and conception of modernity and gender norms within those societies.

Much work has built a corpus of knowledge regarding the tension between the lived realities of women in the Arab world, and the neoliberal growth discourse that assumes that the introduction of programs emphasizing women's economic development will lead to strictly benign outcomes. The consequences of the imposition of 'modernization' on gender inequality evidences how dominant discourses obfuscate the possibility of alternative measures of what constitutes 'success' and 'modernity'(Adely, 2012).

Related to programs, such as gender quotas, aimed at decreasing gender inequality are the widely publicized efforts to increase women's participation in government. Recent decades have seen women in nearly all of the Gulf states rise to visible positions of power, whether in elected parliaments or appointed cabinet positions. Women participation in politics are often state-led, which can raise questions on reassertion of the state's patriarchal authority of if these are signs of tokenism.

Finally, one aspect of "modern technologies" that was initially viewed as a space potentially outside the patriarchal control of the state was the advent of wholly modern technologies, such as social media. Many have written regarding the ways in which social media platforms have challenged the control of the Gulf's traditionally conservative media institutions (Hurley, 2016).



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However, others have argued social media is not necessarily a liberating space free from the top-down imposition of standards and norms that characterize governments, but rather is a space where users disseminate, absorb, and reproduce various standards related to women's gender norms.

While economics, technology and politics are but three lone examples of how 'modernity' has manifested itself, this panel will explore how gender norms are affected by the interplay of both traditional norms and various markers of modernity in the Arab Gulf States.

PAPERS:

- What are Arabian women doing online? And why it matters for gender inequality in Arabia? by Al Zidjaly, Najma
- State Discourses on Women's Empowerment in Qatar: The Ideal Qatari Woman as a Neoliberal Feminist Subject by Liloia, Alainna
- Exploring the Potentials and Limitations of “Cyberfeminism” in Two Gulf States: The Cases of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia by Khamis, Sahar M.
- Gender, National Identity and Status of Women in Gulf Countries by Parvez, Zarqa
- Women’s Representation in Oman: State-Led Inequality by Altaiei, Rafiah

11) [P6000] The Heat is On: Climate Change in the Gulf

(Thursday Oct 8, 11am)

SUMMARY:

*In the first sentence of his book, *Climate Change: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Romm (2018, xiii) states, “Climate change will have a bigger impact on your family and friends and all of humanity than the Internet has had.” Since climate change is caused by human emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG), about two-thirds of which flow from fossil fuel combustion, states that base their economies and political systems on hydrocarbon rents face an uncertain future. The Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE—are quintessential examples of rentier economies based on hydrocarbon exports, together producing a quarter of the world’s oil and about 15 percent of its natural gas (BP 2018). For the Gulf monarchies, climate change poses a difficult conundrum (Krane 2019). On the one hand, successful climate action would undermine the rents that provide for their unique political economies. On the other, continued business-as-usual GHG emissions would undermine the livability of the Arabian Peninsula: Research published by Nature Climate Change projects that temperatures in the Gulf will become “intolerable to humans” by 2100 (Pal and Eltahir 2016, 197).*

How, then, is climate change understood in the Gulf? How do states discuss climate change in



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Association for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies

public rhetoric? How are regimes dealing with the threats outlined above? How might climate action affect governance? How do citizens and elites express their perspectives and concerns? How does religion intersect with environmentalism in local discourse? And what insights can academic work on the Gulf provide to the region, and the world, about the social, economic, political, and geographic causes and impacts of climate change?

This panel delves into these questions by drawing insights from different disciplines (history, economics, political science, art, religion), methodological approaches (fieldwork, interviews, archives, economic data, survey results), and case study focus (one Gulf-wide analysis, a comparison of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, two single-case analyses of Saudi Arabia and one of Kuwait). All papers focus on the intersection of climate change with social, economic, and political dynamics in the modern Gulf. Specific themes include the historical relationship of the Gulf with its environment, a critical analysis of eco-friendly rhetoric and policies, the paradox of hydrocarbon-based economies and increased climate risk, local forms of artistic expression, and religious discourse. Together with our chair, the collected papers deepen the academic conversation about the dynamics of climate change in the contemporary Gulf.

PAPERS:

- Gulf Societies and the Environment in a pre-Climate Change World by Haiduc-Dale, Noah
- Eco-friendly Rhetoric as Reinforcing Performance Legitimacy in the GCC by Sheline, Annelle
- Last Man Standing: Saudi Aramco and Global Climate Action by Krane, Jim
- “I Love You, Urgently”: Art, the Environment, and Social Change in Saudi Arabia by Foley, Sean
- Environmentalism and modern Islamic definitions of morality in Kuwait by Husain, Abdullah

12) [R5886] [Archive Wars: The Politics of History in Saudi Arabia](#)

(Thursday Oct 8, 1.30pm)

SUMMARY:

Saudi Arabia is currently in the midst of a self-induced reincarnation in which associations with Islam and Islamism have become more of an ideological liability than an asset for its state. Conducted with extraordinary levels of censorship, such a reincarnation is meant to portray the image of a modernizing liberal order that mirrors the mimetic fantasies of historical progress idealized by Anglo-American empires and their contemporary ideologues. Archive Wars is an insightful and empirically rich interdisciplinary account of the politics at the heart of such a project, which in fact was conceived in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War and centered at once



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on historicizing a national space, territorializing a secular national history, and refracting both through new modes of capital accumulation.

*The production of history is premised on the selective erasure of certain pasts and the artefacts that stand witness to them. From the elision of archival documents to the demolition of sacred and secular spaces, each act of destruction is also an act of state building. Postwar political elites in Saudi Arabia pursued these dual projects of historical commemoration and state formation with greater fervor to enforce their postwar vision for state, nation, and economy. Seeing Islamist movements as the leading threat to state power, they sought to de-center religion from educational, cultural, and spatial policies. *Archive Wars* explores the increasing secularisation of the postwar Saudi state and how it manifested in assembling a national archive and reordering urban space in Riyadh and Mecca.*

CONTRIBUTORS:

- *Archive Wars: The Politics of History in Saudi Arabia* presents an excellent case study of how a state... by Beth Baron
- "*Archive Wars*" is a fantastic book. Exploring complex themes, based on rich ethnographic and other sources,... by Toby C. Jones
- "*Archive Wars*," among its many accomplishments, offers the reader a powerful reminder that the production... by John M. Willis
- A textured and powerful analysis of post-war politics in Saudi Arabia, one certain to challenge existing... by Attiya Ahmad
- "*Archive Wars*" follows the battles to erase, remake, and monumentalize Saudi Arabia's official history... by Rosie Bsheer

13) [P5813] [Yemen's Futures: Lessons from the Past](#)

(Wednesday Oct 14, 11am)

SUMMARY:

When the five-year old war in Yemen ends or abates, there will be a massive need for international development aid for a country that the UN states is undergoing the greatest humanitarian disaster in the world. No one can predict the future of Yemen's governance and the effectiveness of development in all sectors, but there are lessons from Yemen's past experience that shed light on the pitfalls as well as the potential for rebuilding Yemen. This panel brings together scholars who study Yemen's past and diverse cultural heritage in order to suggest ways the futures of the Yemeni people may evolve. One paper examines the major problems in Yemen with past development efforts, which were inextricably intertwined with the political agendas of the various donors. It argues that lessons from past development policies, both negative and positive, offer options worth pursuing. A second paper focuses on Yemen's agricultural diversity



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of the northern highlands in the 1980s. Although there has been extensive damage to the local agricultural systems over several decades, future aid must include adaptation of effective and sustainable traditional methods. A third paper unpacks the notion of Yemen as a centralized state, noting that there are actually several “wars” going on in Yemen at the same time. The future of governance in Yemen must be approached through a critical understanding of past failures and successes. A final paper provides a Yemeni perspective on the obstacles to Yemen’s governance and development due to the history of autocratic rule, a series of military coups and interference by external powers. Yemen needs a true constitution for the nation which preserves civil governance institutions, equal citizenship and equal rights, freedom of belief and worship, freedom of opinion, equal opportunity, and social justice.

PAPERS:

Discussant: Amat Al-Alim Alsoswa

- "Lessons from Yemen's Past: Restoring Agricultural Diversity in the northern Highlands" by Gingrich, Andre
- The Fiction of a Central Yemeni State by Johnsen, Gregory D.
- Rebuilding Arabia Felix: Will Yemen be Allowed to Develop Itself? by Varisco, Daniel Martin

14) [P6083] Engineering Culture: Understanding the State-led Transformation in Saudi Arabia

(Wednesday Oct 14, 11am)

SUMMARY:

Saudi Arabia has had an eventful past few years. Since the new political elite launched an ambitious plan, Vision 2030, to move away from the country’s oil-dependent economy in 2016, far-reaching reforms have swept various domains of life, from lifestyle and public dress code to government’s bureaucracy and legal system. However, central elements of such concerted efforts have been concerned with transforming the culture, understood as an integral part of achieving political and economic goals. Why does the state give priority and allocate resources to cultural items of the reforms? How is the cultural sphere perceived, defined, and managed by the state? What kind of narrative, identity, and ideology is the state promoting, and how are they connected to the broader economic and political contexts?

This panel takes up these questions by engaging the highly dynamic historical moment of transformation in Saudi Arabia. Contemporary Saudi Arabia presents a rich case where the state presses drastic shifts in identity and institutions, where economic reform is fused with a by-design cultural transformation. The papers of the panel look at the rationale and the origins of state strategies in managing/engineering culture, the transnational/global processes that inform such



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Association for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies

strategies, and the consequences of such interventions. From heritage sites, to security, to law, and religion, the papers explore different sites where the state engages in cultural management.

The first paper looks at the connection between changing the national narrative, tourism, and transnational capital through the prism of the Diriyah development project. The second paper examines the discourse of “cultural security” and how it mutated over half a century from a post-colonial leftist concept to an Islamized securitization of culture. In the context of the current restructuring, new thought security institutions have, ironically, reconfigured the discourse to combat transnational Islamism. The third paper looks at the state's promotion of legal culture and its connection to the overall transformation efforts. The language of law and legal awareness as a regulator of public and private behavior comes at the expense of once hegemonic Shaira normativity, forming new subjectivities deemed more appropriate for the new vision for society. However, the state-led cultural transformation does not jettison the connection to Islam altogether. The fourth paper explores the Saudi state's commitment to “Moderate Islam,” increasingly emphasized in official rhetoric as a tool to normalize social and cultural changes without the need to advance an elaborate discourse to substantiate the term.

PAPERS:

- Saudi Arabia and “Moderate Islam”: The Changes and Challenges of the Kingdom's New Approach to Religion by Alhusein, Eman
- The Twisted Evolution of Cultural Security Discourse in Saudi Arabia: From Leftist Origins to Contemporary De-Islamization by Alsudairi, Mohammed
- What Does the Law Say? The Making of Legal Culture in Saudi Arabia by Alyamani, Lojain
- Re-Thinking Diriyah: Entertainment and Heritage in the new Saudi Nationalism by Diwan, Kristin Smith

15) [P5975] Innovation and Innovators in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula (Wednesday Oct 14, 11am)

SUMMARY:

A basic understanding of innovation posits that it is something new and different, either as a modification or a novelty, that circulates within or across populations. This might be an idea or a technology that is a native invention or a foreign import. Yet, this relatively simple definition is quite deceptive in what it conceals; that is, that grasping why and how innovations take root and spread, and identifying the conditions that foster or inhibit this, are all elements that must be taken into account. This makes the study of innovation as much about processes as it is about outcomes.



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The purpose of this panel is to take these notions about innovation and examine them in the Gulf and on the Arabian Peninsula. This is significant for several reasons. Principally, using innovation as an analytical point of departure for studying change in the Gulf region is itself a unique and unconventional approach that has largely been overlooked or unapplied. Moreover, the diversity of topics that are explored by the papers for this panel make it clear that innovation as a research agenda for the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula has a broad applicability both with regard to time and in terms of subject matter.

For instance, this panel brings together papers that cover a range of time that spans from the genesis of long distance maritime trade in the Gulf, to the early twentieth century penetration of print culture in Najd, and to a present-day analysis of the social drivers of innovation in the United Arab Emirates. Moreover, while innovation is the thematic link for the panelists, the presenters' work with this theme shows how plastic the concept can be; while technologies are highlighted, so are the human innovators themselves as well as notions about how social motivations can fuel innovation in a high-income welfare state.

Ultimately, this panel's focus on innovation aims to present the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula in a way that promises to open new avenues for discussion. One way that it will do this is by delving into the dynamics of historic center-periphery relations for the region when these interactions carried with them technological diffusions that sparked local innovations. Then, it will evaluate the possibility that contemporary rentierism might actually be able to encourage innovation, thereby re-framing the conventional wisdom that holds that distributional policies tend to act as a disincentive to innovation.

PAPERS:

Discussant: James Redman

- Print Culture Frontiers: The Arabian Gulf Nahda by Al-Sabbagh, Munther
- Human Dimension of Policy Innovations to Integrate Renewables into the UAE Centralized Energy System by Aminjonov, Farkhod
- Prosocial Motivation as a Driver of Social Innovation in the UAE by Jeong, Sophia
- Innovation? The Earliest Developments of the Maritime Technology of the Gulf by Staples, Eric M.

16) [P5841] Politics Beyond the Political in Kuwait
(Thursday Oct 15, 11am)

SUMMARY:



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Throughout its history, Kuwait has been one of the most vibrant societies in the Gulf and the wider Middle East. Over the last three decades, many scholars have produced texts describing the richness of Kuwaiti society, focusing on state-society relations, political institutions, ideology, and political economy (Crystal 1989, Gause 1994, Herb 2014, Yom 2016, Freer 2018), Questions surrounding other sub-national social dynamics, such as LGBTQ rights, class identity, and social norms, have not received substantive scholarly attention. The four papers in this panel focus on politics that are beyond the traditional political sphere, discussing and investigating these parts of Kuwaiti domestic politics.

We expand on these themes by presenting cutting-edge research on these aspects of Kuwaiti society. The first paper explores the sense of belonging between the non-citizen and Kuwaiti nationals by looking at ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and dynamics surrounding authenticity, voice and representation. Another panelist explores how Kuwaiti queer subjects inhabit and negotiate norms through social relations that create a form of spatial recognition. The next paper is an ethnographic study of Al Shaheed Park, the largest urban park in Kuwait, and an adjacent cricket lot. This author unpacks the ways in which the park targets people of a similar socio-economic class while shunning 'others', highlighting the challenges of segregation in public park projects. The last paper looks at the social aspects of cooperative societies, which act as political institutions, but provide a critical social function separate from politics. The panelist traces the development of coops to the pre-oil 1940s, and how townspeople setup cooperatives as an attempt to avoid famine and poverty. This paper also focuses on the influence of Hungarian, Russian, and Egyptian nationalism in the development of the coops, and how that is reflected in the character of Kuwaiti middle class identity at present.

Altogether this panel assists in developing better understandings of the country and continues discussions on how to expand and refine research on Kuwait. The papers also make important methodological contributions by creating ground-breaking new research, unique methodologies, and qualitative fieldwork in semi-authoritarian environments. The breadth and scope of the local knowledge in the panel is its greatest asset, with three Kuwaiti nationals and one resident, a major benefit to the development of local understandings of Kuwaiti society.

PAPERS:

Discussant: Sean Foley

- Critical enquiry into belonging among residents in Kuwait by Al-Khonaini, Abdullah
- Green grass and gray government: Perceptions of government corruption through a comparative analysis of Al-Shaheed Park and other public spaces in Kuwait by Alabdullah, Weam
- The Active Life of Queerness in Kuwait by Almazidi, Nour
- The Context of the Payoff: The Social History of Coop Societies in Kuwait by Martin, Geoff



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17) [P5878] Social Policy in the Gulf Region: Realities, Visions, and Futures
(Thursday Oct 15, 11am)

SUMMARY:

Social transformations are altering the institutional and political configurations of Arab Gulf States. The accelerated rate of modernization and the unprecedented socioeconomic, political, and demographic changes that have occurred since the last three decades have significant implications for social policies in this region. This requires better understanding. However, comparative social policy research has long-neglected the Arab Gulf region apart from a small number of isolated studies examining the redistribution of oil wealth. This paper will provide a space for dialogue and discussion on current knowledge about social policy in the gulf region: origins, ongoing developments, functions, institutions, actors, instruments, challenges and opportunities facing policy-makers there. The panel will invite papers that draw upon original case-based research from diverse disciplines and perspectives, engage existing literature and advance key debates. The key research questions the panel will address are:

- 1. Historical/normative questions: what have been the major political, social and economic drivers of social policy change in the Arab Gulf states since the last three decades?*
- 2. Systems: how are social welfare systems organized and how can they be reformed to meet the changing social needs of Gulf populations?*
- 3. Outcomes/evaluation: How have social welfare systems in this region shaped social and economic outcomes across various the life-course?*
- 4. Theoretical: do Arab Gulf states represent a social welfare mode of their own? How do they compare with the rest of the MENA region and other high income countries around the world?*

PAPERS:

- The Development of Bahrainisation policies post neoliberal economic reforms in Bahrain by Alabbas, Noor
- Beyond State Feminism: Public Opinion about Women in Politics in the Gulf Region by Lari, Noora
- Empowering women through the public sector in Qatar by Naguib, Rabia

18) [R5842] Fluid Frontiers of the Middle East: Connecting Narratives of the Red Sea and Persian Gulf
(Thursday Oct 15, 1.30pm)

SUMMARY:



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Recent turns towards transregional and oceanic history have opened up new possibilities for bridging the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Despite the fact that they both border the Arabian Peninsula, these two Middle Eastern "peripheries" have rarely been in conversation. When approached from land, they appear to be separate worlds with separate historical trajectories. However, from the sea, the foundations of Indian Ocean methods - circulations, networks, and layered sovereignty - can illuminate a number of shared historical phenomena and processes across the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. Presenters will reflect on the role of various technologies like law, infrastructure, transport, and printing in ordering these spaces in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In this roundtable we will discuss how approaching from the Indian Ocean can connect these two oceanic peripheries of the Middle East. We will also discuss the particular challenges faced by taking this approach, such as the disconnect between imperial and local sources, blind spots due to linguistic limitations, and working against the grain of national and imperial archives.

CONTRIBUTORS:

- Beyond the “Jiddah Gap”: Cairo and the Intellectual Trajectories of East African Ulama in the Early... by Scott S. Reese
- There has been a sea change in the scholarship on the Gulf – one that seeks to wrest it from its long-derided... by Fahad Bishara
- The region that we now know as the Middle East, partially owes its “middle-ness” to the carbon storage... by Michael Christopher Low
- For East Africans enslaved in Iran, their enslavement included a Middle Passage that crisscrossed the... by Beeta Baghoolizadeh
- Located on the overlapping frontiers of the Ottoman, Qajar, Mughal, and British Empires, the Red Sea... by Lindsey Stephenson
- One of the contributions of the move towards studying Indian Ocean history has been to denaturalize... by Tania Bhattacharyya

19) [P6191] Foreign and Domestic Politics in the Gulf

(Thursday Oct 15, 1.30pm)

No panel summary

PAPERS:

- Tribal Identity & Gulf Foreign Policies by Al-Etaibi, Abdulla



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- For the Son to Take the Role of His Father? The Future of Iraq and the Marja'iyya After Sistani's Passing by Al-Hilli, Yousif
- Civil Society in Saudi Arabia? The "New NGO-Law" Revisited by Derbal, Nora
- Saudi-Iranian Collaboration and the Formation of a Monarchical Consensus in the Persian Gulf, 1968-1971 by Forsberg, Carl
- The Gulf States New Military Adventurism: Nationalism, Regime Security and Coalitions of Identity by Worrall, James

20) **[R5985] Urbanity in Saudi Arabia: New Frontiers in Research**

(Thursday Oct 15, 1.30pm)

SUMMARY:

This roundtable invites new approaches to the physical and social construction and usage of urban(izing) spaces in Saudi Arabia. It aims at bringing together historians, anthropologists and other social scientists interested in the development in the country. The discussion will aim to bring together work on the physical construction of Saudi cities, old and new, with approaches interested in different types of urban practices in a rapidly changing social and political environment.

Potential participants might be working on urban planning, social and political dimensions of urbanization and /or urban transformation. They might be interested in old and new urban sociabilities, or in analysing social and society-state interactions in Saudi cities, past and present. Scholars working on slavery, immigrant labour or expatriate communities are explicitly invited. Research on new, often liminal spaces which in the past or at present accommodate activities which transcend current social and/or political boundaries, is also very welcome. During the roundtable, special attention will be given to the changing conceptions and norms of appropriate behaviour and activities in public spaces, as well as to overlapping legal systems and uses of urban(izing) space.

The roundtable will also reflect on the possible sources for urban history and discuss methodological and practical challenges encountered when doing research on these topics, thereby hoping to support particularly emergent scholars intending to work on urban issues in Saudi Arabia.

CONTRIBUTORS:

- Electronic music parties open to the public – in Riyadh? What appeared unimaginable in the past has... by Nora Derbal
- In Saudi Arabia, the Vision 2030 national transformation campaign has sought to prepare the kingdom for... by Omer Shah



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- The oil fuelled growth of Saudi Arabian cities and neoliberal urban transformation in the 20th and 21st... by Claudia Ghrawi
- The city of Jeddah provides a paradigmatic case in the history of Saudi cities, in terms of its transformation... by Stefan Maneval
- Sufi Spaces in Jeddah: The Permeable Privacy of Sufi Gatherings in Contemporary Saudi Arabia Besnik... by Besnik Sinani

21) [P5844] The Middle East and the World: Re-examining International History from a Local Perspective

(Friday Oct 16, 11am)

SUMMARY:

International History has too often been the story of how the world interacts with the Middle East. The panel proposes to take a fresh look at international history from the other direction - how the Middle East interacts with the world. Panel papers rely on local sources - in local languages - to examine the decisions and worldviews of Middle Eastern leaders as well as ordinary citizens. In doing so, the panel papers demonstrate the lasting relevance of local events to contemporary international relations in the region, as well as to a collective, global history.

The rise of Iranian power over the past two decades has focused global attention on the importance international political and economic competition in the Persian Gulf, the relationship between conflict and oil, and how shifting international dynamics shape regional politics. Yet, to understand these phenomena, one needs to appreciate broader historical trends connecting relationship between the United States and the Shah with British decolonization policies as well as Iranian perceptions of the American role in the region following the Shah's overthrow. Despite increasing attention on Iran and the American-Iranian relationship, large parts of this history still need to be disentangled, and the first two papers on this panel do just that. The third paper deals with 20th-century maritime history, which has been largely neglected by historians of the Middle East. Yet, it is difficult to imagine a topic that has played a more important role in shaping both global history and the lives of Middle Eastern peoples than the Arabian oil shipping lanes that the paper examines. The final paper looks at the relationship between the 1991 Gulf War and the end of the Cold War. It argues that because the conflict was tied to an American attempt to create a "New World Order," Iraqi actions - and Iraqi suffering - played an outsized and largely unacknowledged role in shaping the post-Cold War international system. Together these papers shed new light on important aspects of 20th century international history which emanate from the Middle East instead of being imposed on it. In doing so they attempt to draw more attention to this comparatively understudied field within Middle Eastern Studies.

PAPERS:

Discussant: Annie Tracy Samuel



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- Nixon, the Shah, and U.S. Oil: An International History by Friedman, Brandon
- Iraqi Suffering at the End of History by Helfont, Samuel
- Shipping the Oil – an International History of Arabian Waterways by Orkaby, Asher
- Dealing with History: Iran, the United States, and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) by Tracy Samuel, Annie

22) [P6147] Labor and Employment as Struggle and Agency

(Friday Oct 16, 11am)

No panel summary

PAPERS:

- Contextualizing agential possibilities in the work space: Young Moroccan's accounts of their everyday realities by Berrada, Nada
- Social Entrepreneurs in Sidi Bouzid and Shaped Values. How social entrepreneurs obtain grant by Dutour, Julien
- Toward a Critical Rereading of Omani Labour History by Ennis, Crystal
- Signals and Role Models: Female Managers, Firms, and Female Employment in Saudi Arabia by Gonzalez, Alessandra
- The Everyday Struggles and Creativity of Iranians amidst International Sanctions by Saeidi, Shirin

23) [R5959] Competing Paradigms for Gulf Security: Pressures, Proposals, and Lessons

(Friday Oct 16, 1.30pm)

SUMMARY:

In September 2019, drones were used to attack the state-owned Saudi Aramco oil processing facilities, raising a risk in disrupting world oil supplies. Days later, at the 74th session of the UN General Assembly, the Secretary-General, when probed about a possible security framework for the Gulf region, remarked upon the lack of conditions for a 'platform of dialogue'. Beyond the ongoing Gulf diplomatic crisis, other forms of intra-regional and extra-regional rivalries continue to exist.

US-Iran hostilities have put Gulf states on their toes, considering the proximity of US military deployments to the Iranian military bases and proxy forces. Saudi Arabia's recent payment of approximately \$500 million to the US for troop deployment may serve as a deterrent, or inversely, heat up the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. This transactional move is, perhaps, pale in comparison to the US' assassination of elite Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in January 2020, which triggered



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fears of an all-out war. It is within such a context of both latent and active conflicts that this roundtable will explore the prospects of a Gulf security architecture.

The roundtable will examine the flurry of competing security paradigms put forward by regional and external powers alike, and their corollary problems. Latest developments include, first, the Middle East Strategic Alliance comprising a collaborative security partnership between the US and its GCC allies (plus Jordan), calling for greater cooperation in missile defense and counterterrorism; second, the Red Sea Alliance launched by Saudi Arabia in an effort to tackle piracy, smuggling above other issues; third, a Russian-proposed (and China-backed) collective security concept that would position Russia as a power broker; fourth, the Hormuz Peace Endeavor introduced by Iran in a bid to diffuse tensions and 'localise' security. Arguably the success of these initiatives will depend on the satisfaction of parties at the table, and the inclusiveness of such a table.

The roundtable seeks to test a Gulf security vision: should Gulf security manifest itself as a supranational arm, or should it have an external/regional leader? Receptive to an extra-regional focus, the roundtable will also draw on the lessons derived from regional initiatives outside of the GCC (for instance, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the OSCE). Finally, the claim by the GCC's Assistant Secretary-General AbdelAziz Hamad Aluwaisheg that member states already have a 'fairly robust' collective security system, on the basis of the Mutual Defense Treaty (2000), deserves to be contested. Is the GCC doing enough?

CONTRIBUTORS:

- Tensions between Iran and the United States have reached unprecedented heights, especially after the... by Mehran Kamrava
- This contribution will examine the Red Sea Initiative as part of a new wave of sub-regional security... by Kristian Coates Ulrichsen
- Since the Gulf War, the United States has sought to develop collective security arrangements among the... by Becca Wasser
- Since its inception in 1981, military cooperation in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has been and... by Clemens Chay
- The systemic changes that took place in the geopolitics of the entire Middle East and North Africa (MENA)... by Bianco Cinzia

24) [P6233] Constituencies and Capital: Political Demands in Oil-Rich Countries
(Friday Oct 16, 1.30pm)

No panel summary

PAPERS:



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- The transformation from Rentier states to Knowledge based Economies: The case of the Arab Gulf countries by Hvidt, Martin
- Oil and Public Attitudes about Democracy by Mazaheri, Nimah
- The IMF and Iraq by Yousif, Bassam

25) **[P5814] Gender and Nation Building in the Arabian Gulf**

(Saturday Oct 17, 11am)

SUMMARY:

Women in the Arabian Gulf today are taking center stage in representing the ongoing process of nation-state building. We mean by this term the construction of institutions, norms, and ideologies that give the state a national identity for its citizens and those outside its borders. With respect to the Arabian Gulf states, state leaders have promoted women's non-traditional activities as symbols of modernization. Women are portrayed as entering into previously unimagined spaces as young leaders, soldiers, educators, sportswomen, artists, and Spartan mothers (of young soldiers of the nation). State elites often view the foregrounding of women as a branding exercise which does not challenge the conservative gender norms of the region. Yet, the symbolic use of women as agents of modernization, can also unleash the public agency of women and destabilize popular understandings of the appropriate gender relations. By dissecting these processes from a comparative perspective, the panel will explore the tensions between government branding and female agency.

Paper #1, "Empowering Women, Shaping Subjectivities," investigates the connection between state-led campaigns promoting women's empowerment and the construction of Gulf citizens who embrace the individualistic discourse of Gulf neo-liberal policies. The paper explores this issue by contrasting state-led campaigns celebrating women's empowerment with findings from two years of ethnographic research. Paper #2, "The Discourse of Women Empowerment in the Gulf News: An Interdisciplinary Analysis" addresses a gap in the research literature by examining how one important local newspaper addresses women's empowerment. The paper argues that print media is actively involved in disseminating a selective brand of 'the ideal Emirati woman'. On the other hand, the paper explores women's agency through an analysis of the voices embedded in these texts. Paper #3, "The Promotion of Motherhood and the Building of the Nation", deconstructs the complex notion of motherhood in the context of the UAE's national service discourse. The paper both examines the official emphasis on the importance of the sacrificing mother and uses in-depth interviews to analyze how mothers cope and respond to this official government project. Paper #4, "Gender, Art and Nation Building in the UAE," investigates the role of women and art in the UAE. The paper documents how women have played important roles as leaders, promoters, and artists. The paper concludes with a consideration of the tensions which often emerge between the actual production of sometimes transgressive art and the symbolic uses of art by government leaders.



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PAPERS:

- Empowering Women, Shaping Subjectivities by Alkorani, Joud
- The discourse of women empowerment in Gulf News: An interdisciplinary analysis by Bataineh, Afaf
- Staging Motherhood in the (Re)Birthing of the UAE Nation-State by Sabban, Rima A.
- Gender, Art and Nation Building in the United Arab Emirates by Willoughby, John; Fay, Mary Ann

26) [R6114] AQAP's resilience and its rivalry with ISIS in Yemen : Transformations and CT implications

(Saturday Oct 17, 1.30pm)

SUMMARY:

This Roundtable aims to engage a discussion on the current state of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and challenges to operations aiming to contain and then defeat the global jihadist terrorist organization. The conversation will begin with three presentations highlighting major points of interest: Fernando Carvajal will address the AQAP's presence and its transformations to secure not only a safe haven but to remain relevant as part of an insurgency against the Government of Yemen and a faction of the resistance to Houthi presence; Joshua Koontz will map Islamic State-Yemen (IS-Y) presence and its rivalry with AQAP to provide specific examples of the various activities engaged by AQAP and locations where elements are found; Thomas Juneau will present a wider view of AQAP and the response by both US administration and members of the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition supporting the government of Yemen.

By describing the manner in which AQAP finds room to operate in Yemen as an insurgency, a faction of the resistance and often as a criminal enterprise, our discussion will aim to address the complex environment for US and Coalition counter-terrorism operations. The relationship between AQAP elements and tribes in al-Baydha, for example, or the resistance in Mareb, Shebwa, and Taiz will add to the discussion. This is then assisted by the mapping provided by Koontz, which situates the group's current presence and most recent activity. While many have presented a general idea of areas where AQAP operate, Koontz will contribute unique analysis from his own research over the past months, where he has geolocated a number of incidents claimed by AQAP or IS-Y operations against AQAP. Juneau's contribution will aim at encouraging an exchange of ideas and opinions on what has been done by the US since the drone strike targeting Qassem al-Raymi in early 2020 in Yemen.

CONTRIBUTORS:



- Address the AQAP's presence and its transformations to secure not only a safe haven but to remain relevant... by Fernando R. Carvajal
- Yemen has been engulfed by a civil war that has not only diminished the authority of the central government... by Thomas Juneau
- Mapping AQAP and IS-Y Over the past nine years, jihadist groups such as AQAP and ISIS have repeatedly... by Joshua Koontz