Ole Wæver, Professor of International Relations at the University of Copenhagen, and Director of the Center for Resolution of International Conflicts, delivered a CIRS Focused Discussion on October 27, 2014, on the topic “Global Security in a Post-Western World.” Introducing the lecture, Wæver noted that when world events change so quickly and so radically, it is always important to understand the basics of international relations theories, no matter how old-fashioned an idea that may seem. In international relations, it is tradition to want to comprehend the “big picture,” in terms of how one country relates to another and under what kinds of power relations within the international system.

Giving some historical background to the topic, Wæver explained that the idea of the singular “superpower” is one that has its roots in Eurocentric history, and goes back to a time where Europe was central to world events, especially during the colonial period and up to the Cold War. However, since the end of the Cold War, the question of what kind of international political system has replaced the older, more traditional bipolar global engagement of superpowers is still being debated in the discipline. There have been a great many shifts in global engagement, and nations have since attempted to adapt to the new transition and to the decline of powerful global ideologies as they reconstruct their security allegiances within power vacuums. Wæver argued that we are currently in a radically different system to that of the past bipolar world where giant powers faced off against each other. So, how did we get to this stage of finding ourselves in a post-Cold War period and, what he called, a post-West period? The answer is in what comes after bipolarity: is it unipolarity or multipolarity? Or, is it neither?

The post-Cold War period saw the rise of an ideologically-victorious United States, with power and influence all over the world. However, Wæver argued, it is evident from events of the recent past that the United States can no longer claim power based solely on market or military might. Around 2005, there was a turning point where the centric approach began showing signs of weakness. The Iraq and Afghanistan wars proved to be a poor strategy, and one in which the United States failed...
Greetings from Doha.

CIRS has been busy over the past semester initiating as well as completing a number of research projects, publishing several books as well as English and Arabic-language in-house publications, and engaging with the Qatar community through a new series of public affairs programming, monthly lectures, and working group discussions on a variety of topics related to the Gulf and Middle East region.

This month, CIRS published two new books entitled, *Beyond the Arab Spring: The Evolving Ruling Bargain in the Middle East* (Mehran Kamrava, ed., Oxford University Press 2014) and *Food Security in the Middle East* (Zahra Babar and Suzi Mirgani, eds., Oxford University Press 2014). Both books are the results of multi-year research efforts into original and timely topics. Additionally, CIRS published a new Summary Report that details the research initiative on “Weak States in the Greater Middle East,” which critically examines some of the most important topics related to weak states and the condition of fragile politics in the Middle East and North Africa region, and beyond in a broader definition of the greater Middle East. In-house CIRS publications can be downloaded for free from the CIRS website. For more information on the most recent CIRS publications, please refer to page 3 of this newsletter.

Over the past few months, CIRS has been actively working on a number of research and scholarship initiatives, and engaged in several ongoing and overlapping studies, including “The State and Innovation in the Gulf,” “Transitional Justice in the Middle East,” “World Regions: The Middle Eastern Pivot,” “Social Currents in the Maghreb,” and “The Digital Middle East.” These initiatives are designed to explore such topics through empirically-grounded, theoretically informed research where the goal is to fill in existing gaps in the literature and to contribute original knowledge to the field. This newsletter contains detailed information about each CIRS activity and research initiative conducted over the past few months, as well as articles highlighting recent lectures, events, and faculty research.

We warmly welcome feedback from our readership, whether it is through Facebook, Twitter, or by e-mail. I, and the rest of the CIRS team, look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at our upcoming lectures. Finally, we invite our readers to follow CIRS news and activities by logging on to the CIRS website at: http://cirs.georgetown.edu.

Sincerely,

Mehran Kamrava
Professor
Director of the Center for International and Regional Studies
School of Foreign Service in Qatar
Georgetown University
The Arab uprisings occurred within the context of the unravelling of the dominant “ruling bargains” that emerged across the Middle East in the 1950s. These are currently being replaced by new and inchoate systems that redefine sources of authority and legitimacy through various devices (such as constitutions), experiences, and processes (mass protests, civil wars, and elections), by reassessing the roles, functions, and at times the structures of institutions (political parties and organizations, the armed forces, the executive); and by the initiative of key personalities and actors (agency). The contributors to this book examine the nature and evolution of ruling bargains, the political systems to which they gave rise, the steady unravelling of the old systems, and the structural consequences thereof.

This volume comprises original, empirically-grounded chapters that collectively offer the most comprehensive study available to date on food security in the Middle East. The book starts with a theoretical framing of the phenomena of food security and food sovereignty and presents empirical case studies of Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Yemen, the Persian Gulf states, and Iran. Some of the major themes examined include the ascent and decline of various food regimes, urban agriculture, overseas agricultural land purchases, national food self-sufficiency strategies, distribution networks and food consumption patterns, and nutrition transitions and healthcare. Collectively, the chapters represent highly original contributions to the disciplines of political science, economics, agricultural studies, and healthcare policy.

This latest CIRS Occasional Paper is authored by Laurent A. Lambert, Research Director at Oxford Consilium, Oxford University. The study examines Kuwait and Abu Dhabi’s remarkable capacity to provide water to their inhabitants despite the regional aridity. Lambert argues that this cannot be explained by apolitical factors such as the availability of desalination technologies and massive energy resources alone. This paper demonstrates that the historical evolutions and achievements of the water sectors in Abu Dhabi and Kuwait city over the twentieth century are first and foremost the product of local and regional politics, and of reformist leaders’ agency at various times. Major changes in water governance can also be seen as a tool for, and as a signifier of, broader state reforms and changing politics.
CIRS held the second working group meeting under the “State and Innovation in the Gulf” research initiative on June 3-4, 2014. Participants reconvened in Doha to discuss their paper submissions that collectively analyze efforts of GCC states to diversify their oil-based economies into knowledge-based economies (KBEs), the manifestation of these efforts on the ground, and the structural realities that facilitate or hinder this transition.

Significant dependence on the oil and gas industry has led to the development of national visions and strategies that actively seek to diversify GCC economies. These diversification efforts are not merely related to the diffusion of risk by decreasing dependence on the volatile oil and gas sector, but are rather increasingly intertwined with elements associated with KBEs—namely, job creation and the development of sectors with high knowledge content. Global rankings such as the World Bank’s Knowledge Assessment Methodology (KAM) database provide a comparative indication of the status of knowledge economies around the world. While GCC countries rank below European and North American countries in the World Bank’s KAM database, they also score significantly higher than other states in the MENA region.

Despite this relative indication of GCC rankings, participants questioned the applicability of these assessments to the region due to the Gulf’s peculiar economic transition over the past decades. Developed countries around the world—those that tend to score higher on these global rankings—have gone through a developmental evolution from agrarian to industrial economies, then transitioned to information societies, which led to the present knowledge economies.

Gulf states are attempting to leapfrog from pearling and trading economies to robust KBEs. The core cause of this rapid transition in the region—in comparison to other resource-based economies—is attributable to the concurrent discovery of hydrocarbons and establishment of nationhood, leading several Gulf rulers to focus on strengthening their rule by building physical infrastructure, providing basic services, and essentially suspending the diversification process. Production oriented structures and practices have thus been sidelined by robust oil earnings, leading several participants to ask: can countries which have not been through the industrial revolution enter the knowledge economy phase of development?

One of the ways in which Gulf states are attempting to build the foundations of their respective KBEs is by heavily investing in human capital and intangible assets through the establishment of vast educational and research facilities. By replicating and adopting models of education from abroad, this form of investment enables Gulf states to leapfrog the lengthy and costly process of indigenous growth and maturity, indicating a strong motivation to catch-up with the developed world and compete in the global race for innovation.

While borrowing and replicating models may have its advantages in reducing the time and cost of establishing native educational systems, the process of borrowing, adoption, and implementation is complex and costly. Cultural transmission is one of the core components of education, and, as such, having a standard model that is imported from abroad omits the required cultural and contextual fit for education systems to be locally effective.

"The State and Innovation in the Gulf" Working Group II

Continued on page 13
“ATTITUDES TO CYBERSAFETY AND ONLINE PRIVACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST”

Damian Radcliffe, leader of the Rassed research program at Qatar’s Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ictQATAR), delivered the inaugural CIRS Monthly Dialogue of the 2014-2015 academic year on September 16, 2014. Emphasizing the importance of the topic, he noted that, despite their varying characteristics, most countries around the world share similar concerns regarding issues of cyber safety, online privacy, and data security. This has become a global conversation, and one that is no less relevant to the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. “There are very consistent values and attitudes that can often be found amongst internet users even though they might be from incredibly different countries and cultures,” he explained.

To test whether this hypothesis was applicable to the countries of the Middle East, Radcliffe conducted research into Arab attitudes towards cyber safety, online privacy, and data security. Collaborating with researchers from a previous World Economic Forum study, Radcliffe’s team surveyed just under 3,000 internet users from 14 countries across the Middle East. When combined with the previous study, the global sample surveyed was over 11,000 internet users covering nearly 60 countries. “One of the reasons we were really keen to take this project was the fact that it also gave us the opportunity to benchmark the experience of internet users in the Middle East with other people around the world,” Radcliffe explained. The research questions covered five areas of study including, usage of ICT and other technologies available in the household; attitudes towards the internet; concerns of internet users, trust in different online actors and online players; and behaviors of internet users.

“If you look at the GCC, there is much higher access to advanced forms of technology than there are in many other parts of the world.”

This comparative dataset gave the research a broad range of results as well as ones that could be broken down geographically as emanating from the GCC region, North Africa, or a combined MENA figure which included some additional respondents from the Levant. The resulting data gave the researchers the opportunity to make differentiations between the regions of the Arab World. One of research findings highlighted that differences between internet behaviors in the GCC and North Africa can be attributed to socio-economic factors. “People in the GCC are much more likely to access the internet on the move given smartphone penetration in the region... over 70 percent in Saudi and Qatar, whereas it is something like 2 percent in Egypt,” Radcliffe reported.

While there were important differences between internet users worldwide, the overall findings proved Radcliffe’s hypothesis which stated that Middle East internet users are not so dissimilar from others around the globe. “Equivalency in terms of technological access as a regional figure compared to the rest of the world was pretty good. In fact, if you look at the GCC, there is much higher access to advanced forms of technology than there are in many other parts of the world,” he noted. The research team found that internet users in the Middle East, especially younger users, were very active online and were positive about the impact of the internet on their lives.

In comparison to the global average in terms of attitudes towards the internet, one main distinction of Middle East internet users was their tendency to place little trust in organizations that only existed online, which explains why “e-commerce here is much less prevalent than it is in other markets. In fact, within the region, people are much less likely to engage in e-commerce than they are in any of the other regions that we surveyed. They are also among the least likely to bank online. Traditional methods of shopping and banking still remain popular,” Radcliffe explained. Another key difference was Middle East internet users’ tendency to be more trusting of traditional forms of authority, whether government or financial institutions. The results indicated that regional internet users were in favor of having governing authorities regulate internet content, and were not too concerned about the safety of their personal information online. This is in stark contrast to those surveyed in Western countries who tended to be more wary of government and financial institutions—a symptom of the recent economic crisis in those countries.

Radcliffe ended the lecture by highlighting some thoughts for the future of digital technologies, arguing that with increased availability of personal surveillance technologies, issues of trust will most likely intensify in future. The more digital devices in the world, the greater the risk of security breaches, but simultaneously the greater the possibility of doing this differently and more constructively. “New technologies will bring new challenges, but also new opportunities,” he concluded.

Damian Radcliffe is an award-winning content creator, journalist, and researcher who has led diverse teams at the intersection of journalism, media innovation, and civic engagement. He leads the Rassed research program at Qatar’s Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ictQATAR)—an initiative which explores the impact of ICT on society and the potential afforded by emerging technologies. His team has published over 80 studies, presentations, articles and infographics since mid-2012—in both English and Arabic—and their work as featured across a broad range of regional and international media.
to dominate. Further, the 2008 global financial crisis completely damaged US legitimacy as a global market leader. “The US is really not dominant enough to be able to impose order,” he said.

Perhaps then the idea of multipolarity could be considered a more appropriate definition in its acknowledgement of fluid and shifting alliances, but, Wæver argued, it is still a concept that is unsatisfactory to describe current international system structures. The idea of multipolarity is problematic since within any group of nations, some are more powerful than others. Thus, these concepts are unstable, and we need a new definition of what is taking place in the global balance of power.

“*The US is really not dominant enough to be able to impose order.*”

Currently, the world is increasingly made up of many great powers with fewer superpowers existing in neither a unipolar nor a multipolar world. “No one is really thinking of themselves as global players, they are all anchored and rooted in specific regions, mostly interested in their own areas of influence, somewhat interested in neighboring regions, and occasionally concerned about global questions,” he explained. Thus, if there is no longer an ongoing struggle for prime position within the global order, we need a different type of definition, and a new type of understanding for the current global configuration.

In conclusion, Wæver said that, ultimately, many of these issues come down to basic assumptions and ways of thinking. In this sense, the current configuration of world politics is “post-Western” in three very distinct ways: in power politics that is no longer Western-centric; in the value order that is no longer based on a singular framework of interpretation; and, finally, in the understanding of international relations theory and concepts of polarity and global security, where we now see a greater role for theories that emanate out of different geographic and cultural contexts—ones that are not dominated by Western modes of thinking.

Ole Wæver is renowned mostly for coining the concept of “securitization” and participating in developing what is known as the Copenhagen School in security studies. He has published and broadcast extensively in international relations and adjacent fields. Among his main books are *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (with Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde, Lynne Rienner 1988, Chinese 2002, Czech 2006); *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (with Barry Buzan, Cambridge University Press 2003; Chinese and Persian translations 2009); *International Relations Scholarship Around the World* (ed with Arlene B. Tickner, Routledge 2009); *Climate change: Global Risks, Challenges & Decisions* (with Katherine Richardson et al Cambridge University Press 2011).
CIRS held the concluding “Social Currents in the Maghreb” research initiative working group on June 22–23, 2014, in Washington D.C. Participants gathered for the second time to discuss their research findings and to solicit feedback from a multi-disciplinary cohort of working group members. The topics and themes discussed ranged from the mobilization of social movements in the Maghreb to language as politics and dissent in cultural production.

Following the Arab uprisings, the rise of Islamist parties has led to renewed interest in Islamist politics and a proliferation of debates surrounding the role of Islamist parties and movements in North African politics and society. Despite increased scholarly attention to Islamist politics, the literature remains predominantly narrow in its scope, neglecting ideological and political innovations within Islamist parties, and the diversity and divisions that exist within the Islamist sphere as a whole. One of the ways in which Islamist parties in North Africa have exhibited ideological innovation is by adopting new ideological references based on a national framework, rather than the commonly adopted “eastern” interpretations of the relationship between Islam and politics. By primarily referencing Algerian Malek Bennabi’s work, and Ghannouchi’s earlier writings, al-Nahda is “nationalizing an essentially internationalist project.” This is indicative of a change in the flow of ideas in the Maghreb, and the shaping of Islamism based on local experiences. While ideological innovation is taking place in the formal political sphere, younger generations of Maghrebi are increasingly distancing themselves from institutional politics by finding alternative ways of performing “every-day Islamism” through associations that are more focused on the betterment of society, rather than the hierarchical mechanisms of institutional politics. Decreased trust in the formal political sphere as an agent of change has led to this diffusion of what it means to be “Islamist” and a growing perception of the distance from “politicicking” as a source of success for these associations.

On the other hand, for young people who believe that religion should play a more central role in politics, Salafism has become a significant outlet to achieve political objectives. Participants discussed Salafism in relation to its three broad categories of scriptural, Jihadi, and political Salafism. Of particular salience is the adoption of Jihadi Salafism by young Islamists who are unsatisfied with the Islamist parties in power and who lament the absence of radical change. The rise of Jihadi Salafism in the Maghreb—even before the Arab Uprisings—has led to the co-optation of Sufism by the state to counter the rising threat of Jihadi Salafism; this has led to what some participants claimed was a “revival” of Sufism in the political sphere. Despite seeming state co-optation, participants problematized “Sufism” as a term and discussed how it entails much more than mere reflective esoteric practices but rather, has institutional politics embedded within—complicating what is generally perceived as a “quietist” movement.

Working group members also discussed the Polisario movement and the question of Western Sahara. While the Polisario is predominantly thought of as an “Algeria-backed movement,” it has increasingly diversified its support-base since the 1990s to include non-state actors such as activist NGOs, the Sahrawi diaspora, and international aid agencies. This flexibility and adaptability has contributed to the movement’s resilience and, accordingly, this transformation has largely blurred the movement’s boundaries between being an armed and un-armed movement.

Questioning dominant, narrow conceptions of North Africa, participants further problematized terms such as the “Arab” uprisings, which fail to recognize the linguistic and cultural heterogeneity of the region. Decades of Amazigh activism throughout the Maghreb has challenged the Arab nationalist ideologies of Maghrebi states. By utilizing a discourse of democracy, pluralism, and diversity throughout the decades, and particularly in the “Berber Spring” of the 1980s, their movement largely dovetails with demonstrations of the “Arab Spring” that call for social justice and rule of law. Similarly in Mauritania, the
Implementation of transitional justice mechanisms in the Middle East is a relatively recent phenomenon, and, as such, regional scholarly analysis and debates are in their nascent stages. Looking at the experiences of transitional justice in other regions of the globe can potentially provide some lessons to those interested in, and working on, processes that help societies cope with past atrocities. A significant amount of literature on transitional justice has focused on other parts of the world such as Latin America and Eastern Europe. However, due to the complexities of transitions and variations between different national and political contexts, there are no universal transitional justice mechanisms or tools that can be unilaterally applied. One size does not fit all in transitional justice, but a comparative examination of global experiences allows us to gain a nuanced understanding of the questions that need to be asked in relation to transitional justice processes and goals.

Collective memory and memorialization are key aspects of transitional justice for societies dealing with past atrocities. In Egypt, transitional justice practitioners have focused on measures of accountability and implementing institutional reforms, whilst relatively neglecting the memorialization of past injustices. Without a focus on memorialization, participants noted that Egyptians risk exclusionary narratives of the past. For their North African neighbors Tunisia and Algeria, martyrdom has played a dominant role in the formation of collective memories. While martyrdom has been recast for the purposes of “historical justice” in Tunisia, in Algeria it has been used by political elites to stymie efforts towards genuine transition.

Recasting narratives of the past is linked to visions of the future, highlighting the potential manipulation of transitional justice mechanisms by transitional elites. In post-Qadhafi Libya, political exclusion has been avidly pursued by Islamist militias as a way to wage a proxy battle against their political opponents. The politics of exclusion has further fragmented Libya’s social fabric rather than promoting post-conflict reconciliation.

In Egypt, addressing accountability has primarily been carried out in the form of criminal trials. Participants noted that while revolutionaries desired going through judicial structures to address past human rights violations, the acquittal of Mubarak on charges of human rights violations and the mass sentencing of pro-Morsi supporters combined with a trend of speedy trials and relative disregard for due-process, has tarnished the image of the judiciary as an independent branch. Thus, while those in office may have changed, participants noted that there may in fact not be any real transition in Egypt due to the functioning of key state institutions of transitional justice—namely the judiciary and the security sector—in an authoritarian manner.

While Egypt may be an example of a shallow transition, other countries of the Middle East have introduced transitional justice mechanisms without any political transition. The monarchies of Bahrain and Morocco have introduced truth commissions. The Equity and Reconciliation Commission in Morocco and Bahrain’s Independent Commission of Inquiry have both by and large identified human rights violations committed by agents of the security sector. This implicit admission of government responsibility has enhanced the monarchs’ credibility in both domestic and international circles. While the provision of forthright narratives may indicate a shift from the usual trend of “denial and deflection,” these truth commissions have not led to substantial accountability for the past crimes of identified perpetrators. Linking the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms with human rights performance is not a straightforward feat. As participants noted, the comprehensive implementation of transitional justice mechanisms—of both truth commissions and prosecutions—coupled with a hospitable political environment, may have a positive impact on human rights performance.

However, it remains that transitional justice is a public policy tool, and, as such, its mere existence does not indicate an improvement in the performance of human rights. On the same note, however, participants iterated that conceiving of an end point to transitional justice may be problematic. Much of the literature has a teleological approach to transitional justice, conceiving of democratization as the desired end point. This common presumption is perhaps due to the fact that much of the literature on the topic arose out of Latin America. In the context of the Middle East, and in an attempt to broaden the contextual scope of transitional justice, the underlying question remains: what are we transitioning to in transitional justice?
Amira El-Zein is the CIRS SFS-Q Faculty Fellow for the 2014-2015 academic year, and Associate Professor at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar. She is author of *Islam, Arabs, and the Intelligent World of the Jinn* (2009), and co-editor of *Culture, Creativity and Exile* (2003). El-Zein is also a published poet in Arabic, French, and English. Among her published poetry are *The Bedouins of Hell* (2002) and *The Jinn and Other Poems* (2006). She is currently working on a book project on Gulf literature dealing especially with gender issues and globalization. El-Zein is a translator in Arabic, French, and English. Among her numerous translations: *Les Tarahumaras of Antonin Artaud* (from French into Arabic), *Malraux par lui-même* by Gaeton Picon (from French into Arabic), and a co-translation of the poetry of Mahmud Darwish in *Unfortunately it Was Paradise* (2006).

During her fellowship, El-Zein is working on a project titled, "Contemporary Saudi Literature: The Grueling Adaption to Modernity." The research argues that contemporary Saudi literature conveys the dilemma of Saudi society torn between fascination with everything Western and obligations to unbending traditions. The question of tradition in its extremely arduous adaptation to rapid changes has led to a profound malaise, loss of identity, and confusion, which are characteristic of neocolonialism. The research will interpret several novels and poems that mirror the ordeals Saudi people experience when they challenge the harsh rules of the establishment. Comparisons will be made between Saudi literature and that written by other authors in the Gulf.

Ahmad Alown is the 2014-2015 CIRS Qatar University Fellow. Alown is a Qatari researcher who earned his Ph.D. in Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (Fiqh and Usul Alfiqh) from the International Islamic University in Malaysia. Among Alown's publications are “The Sharia Ruling on Currencies Commerce According to Margin System” in *The Jordan Journal of Islamic Studies*, and “Sharia Principles for the Electronic Commerce in the International Currencies.” He participates in conferences regarding Islamic finance and economy in Jordan, Malaysia, the United States, and Qatar.

During his fellowship at CIRS, Alown is working on a research project titled, “Effect of Religious Education on the Development of Ethics in Contemporary Society: An Applied Study on the Curricula of Religious Education Qatar.” The research problem is embodied in the weakness of the measures and methods of instilling ethics in the minds of the young generations, especially in the area of financial transactions. The weakness is discovered to be the outcome of the weaknesses of the curriculum that fails to connect a Muslim to daily realities. Another problem is the domestic education that fails to develop religious morals as regards the restriction of engaging in forbidden acts and prohibitions in the matters of transactions and other matters of daily activities. As part of the study, Alown will search for mechanisms that can be used for the development of ethics and its inculcation into the minds of the emerging generations through religious education, by focusing on Qatar's religious education system.

SESRI conducts nationally-representative, scientific household surveys of the different social groups residing in Qatar, including the local national population, professional expatriates, and labor migrants. Giving some background to the state of survey research in Qatar, Gengler noted that the in-depth, nation-wide study of public opinion in the Gulf region is still in its infancy. In this context, it is important to think about “what we mean by public opinion or studying public opinion in the Gulf region—especially in a place where people don’t always associate mass attitudes as being part of the decision-making process,” he explained.

“‘There is a newfound appreciation in the Gulf region in particular—including at the elite level—for survey research.’”

Giving specific examples of how responses can change according to context and over time, Gengler argued that there are three general levels of dealing with collected data. A primary level of data analysis is “descriptive” in reporting basic distributions of survey responses to a particular question. A secondary level of data analysis offers a basis for temporal or cross-societal comparison and so offers enhanced analytical value. A tertiary level of data analysis delves more deeply into survey results not only by situating the data in context, but by moving beyond the question of “what” to explain “why” of survey responses.

In order to demonstrate how and why responses can vary, Gengler displayed results to the survey question “Which country poses the greatest challenge to Qatar?” In the summer of 2010, approximately 19 percent of Qatari national respondents identified Israel as the greatest challenge. This result in and of itself carries little meaning unless it is compared to those from other years as well as to events occurring during the relevant time period. “After the events of 2011 and the ramping up of sectarian rhetoric and sectarian feeling in the Gulf, you see that threat perceptions change in a very predictable or a very systematic way, which is that Iran emerges as a much greater threat in the public imagination.” As such, Qatari responses to the same question in 2011 were very different, with the proportion of nationals identifying Iran as the greatest challenge more than doubling over the previous year. In relation to “data situated within temporal or societal context, the thing of interest is not responses to a specific question, but relationships between responses and other variables,” he said.

A final level of analysis when examining data is to look at the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent. This is especially important for the data gathered in Qatar and elsewhere in the Gulf region, because “for social and economic reasons, there are very few nationals employed as field interviewers. We might think this is a problem because we are asking citizens about their opinions on sometimes sensitive topics, so it is a question whether or not the answers we receive are reliable,” he argued. In order to assess the reliability of responses and the impact of Qatari nationality on survey results, Gengler divided two teams of Qatari and non-Qatari students to conduct a field experiment surveying 1,200 Qatari nationals. Contrary to expectations, there were no great variations in answers given to Qatari interviewers versus answers given to non-Qatari interviewers regarding sensitive political questions. Rather, the differences lay in “social questions that touch on the issue of the expatriate-national divides … as well as the relaxation of naturalization laws,” he noted.

Concluding the talk, Gengler’s gave a positive outlook for the future of survey research in the Gulf. He argued that “there is a newfound appreciation in the Gulf region in particular—including at the elite level—for survey research, because it is objective rather than partisan or coming from a simply ideological standpoint; it is based on empirics; and also because states see the value in staying ahead of public opinion.”

Justin J. Gengler is the research program manager at the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute of Qatar University. In 2009 he completed the first-ever mass survey of political attitudes in Bahrain as part of his doctoral dissertation for the University of Michigan, titled “Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf.” This project forms the basis of a forthcoming monograph on group conflict in the rentier state, to be published in early 2015 in the Indiana University Press Series in Arab and Islamic Studies. He is a contributor to the volume Sectarian Politics in the Persian Gulf, published by Hurst/Oxford University Press. His work has also appeared recently in Middle East Policy (2012), Journal of Arabian Studies (2013), and Middle East Law and Governance (2013), in addition to numerous policy-oriented publications.
CIRS and the Stony Brook Institute for Global Studies (SBIGS) held the first working group under the collaborative research initiative “World Regions: The Middle Eastern Pivot.” Scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds gathered for the Doha meeting on June 8, 2014, to discuss topics related to the concept of “regions,” the construction of regional identities, and world regions and civilizations.

Participants began the meeting with a discussion of a Pangean approach to world regions. The new-old approach to world regions categorized regions using physical and meta-geographical distinctions. Physically, the distinction is the seven continents that resulted as a fragmentation of the old super-continent Pangea. Other meta-geographical distinctions are: nation-states, which arise out of political categories; North-South and core, periphery, and semi-periphery economic categorizations; and cultural distinctions such as the Occident and the Orient. However, this traditional way of studying regions lacks the incorporation of the human impact on the geobody, which is largely affected by techno-scientific means. While the new-old approach fragments the earth based on a predominantly socio-cultural perspective, the new-new approach—or the Pangea II project—seeks to integrate the techno-scientific lens with the cultural studies lens. Our socio-natural impact gives rise to a global techno-scientific culture requiring new imagery and a re-mapping of the world—as Pangea II. Participants also discussed the importance of language when constructing and re-mapping regions. The notion of “world” regions emphasizes the diversity and divisions between various regions, whereas the concept of “global” regions may focus more on the interconnections and overlaps, accounting for the ongoing change that is occurring to earth as a whole and providing a binocular view that incorporates socio-cultural and socio-natural constituents.

While addressing the Arab World and the Middle East as overlapping world regions, the “Middle East” as a defined region was problematized by the working group members. Characterized as one of the most relative terms, scholars have long debated what geographical, cultural, political, and historical patterns give coherence to this label. Despite these disputes in the nomenclature of the Middle East, participants nonetheless engaged with the region. Paralleling an earlier discussion of shifts in regional centers and the reversal of center and periphery, participants questioned whether there is a shift in the regional centers of gravity in the Middle East moving away from the previous centers of power and economic activity of Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus, to that of the Persian Gulf states. In order to understand whether the center of gravity is shifting, scholars of the region need to have a better read of the intellectual landscape of the Middle East. Much of what we know about the production of knowledge in the region is related to that of political activists, but not much is known about political thinkers in Middle Eastern society. Whether or not places such as Dubai, for instance, signify authentic cultural centers of knowledge production in the region could help us understand whether such regional shifts are in fact occurring. Some participants, however, questioned whether there remain any centers of gravity, or perhaps just a series of networks that interlace throughout the region.

Bridging regional studies and social science disciplines, participants delved into the topic of “The Middle East and International Relations Theory.” Each of the four schools of IR thought (i.e. the power, interdependence, Marxist, and constructivist schools) has particular relevance to the region. For instance, the power school emphasizes realism and attributes the shape of the region to the actions of great powers. This is fitting to the Middle East because the shape and definition of the region is in fact a product of great powers. When interpreting the modern world, however, another type of realism emerges: realism of power that is defined by the ability to produce and develop techno-scientific knowledge, emphasizing the modern need for civilizations to be progressive as compared to traditional civilizations that did not emphasize the growth process. Though the power school remains salient, it does not account for the power of regional actors nor take into consideration non-state actors. The school of constructivism on the other hand—which is a latecomer in IR theory—brings forth the importance of ideas, thereby bringing IR theory closer to social thinking and allowing for deeper analysis and engagement with the internal dynamics of the region. Neo-constructivism—perhaps the most effective of all—integrates the material dimensions of the latter three IR theories (power, economy, class) and that of ideas.

Last on the agenda, working group members tackled the topic of “Central Eurasia as a World Region.” Central Eurasia encompasses multiple ethnic groups and languages making it difficult to define this region as a region. The various aspects of language, culture, geography, diasporas, and the ways in which international organizations engage with the region, reveal multiple layers of regional identity that may be mobilized by people. Thus, while the region may be a construct of western academic discourse, there are moments when people evoke regional unity for certain purposes. Ascertaining when these moments occur and for what purposes contributes to the understanding of the ways in which people themselves evoke regional coherence. ■
Haratin have played a dominant role in shaping the way human rights issues are debated in Mauritanian society and in the political quest for democracy.

Different states of the Maghreb, such as Algeria and Morocco, have appropriated cultural diversity and co-opted various Amazigh activists, bringing forth the fragmentation and internal divides that exist within the Amazigh movement itself, particularly with regards to generation and class. In addition to the heterogeneity that exists within the Amazigh movement and the Maghrebi states, the Amazigh movement is a transnational one that expands the cultural-geographic space of Barbary, essentially raising questions about the boundaries of those nation states and how territorial boundedness relates to the lived experience. In the Mauritanian context, while the Haratin are characterized as those of “slave descent,” they do not constitute a homogenous group, but rather identify as Arab, Berber, African, and Mauritanian. Participants noted that in shifting social and political landscapes, the politics of self-racialization come in to play where, at different moments, the Haratins are racialized as “black Africans.”

With the neo-liberalization of culture, “Berberness” does not merely represent an object of struggle, but is also an aestheticized iconography of the visual urban field. Paralleling the commodification of Berber heritage is Jewish heritage tourism and cultural conservation in Morocco. While Moroccan Jewish history is a valued economic asset that has become central to national tourism revenues, local support and discourses continue to be overshadowed by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, largely overlying Moroccan Jewish history. Due to this low level of national multicultural consciousness, there are a number of Moroccan Amazigh and Muslim activists that focus their activities on incorporating the local history of Jews in school and university curricula in order to broaden and deepen the understanding of Jews within Morocco’s historical cultural diversity.

While official promotion of multiculturalism has largely led to celebratory interpretations that presume it as a precursor to social justice and democratization, its intersection with elements of neo-liberalism masks deeper negative socio-economic repercussions. In Morocco, for instance, official rhetoric that promotes multilingualism has further stratified society by placing a heavy burden on students and young Moroccans to manage multiple languages. Due to language requirements in the education system, structural inequalities and limitations exist that discriminate against those who cannot afford private schooling, essentially excluding them from national and international economic arenas. While the poorer populations of the Maghreb continue to be excluded from global mobility due to these structural limitations, other populations—particularly those of the sport elite—have widened their scope of migration destinations. In the context of sport migrant communities, participants discussed the states of the GCC as increasingly becoming part of the Maghrebi social imaginary, and in some ways replacing Europe as the prime target for migration.

Preceding, and during, the Arab uprisings, labor movements have mobilized to address socio-economic woes in the Maghreb. In Morocco, labor unions pressed for material demands, and partially achieved them through a series of strikes, sit-ins, and protests during the uprisings of 2011. What is important to highlight is that labor was always able to mobilize and connect with the struggle of other groups. Perhaps in recognition of this, the Moroccan government has become particularly capable and effective in its “divide and conquer” tactics to avert the creation of a broad alliance that seeks to connect actors in the political sphere. As such, participants highlighted the importance of not only investigating the negotiations that take place between labor movements and the government, but between labor and the myriad social movements that exist in the Maghreb, as it may affect the labor movement’s strategies in broadening its concrete demands beyond the economic sphere.

The case-study of labor movements highlights that socio-economic woes have always been present in Maghrebi society, and more importantly so, that groups mobilized to address their demands prior to the Arab uprisings. Beyond formal mobilization, cultural production in the Maghreb also indicates that other forms of dissent were also prevalent within society. In looking at post-colonial film and dissent in Tunisia, participants discussed the works of Moufida Ttali, Nouri Bouzid, Ferid Boughedir, Mahamd Zran, and Moncef Dhouib. These films challenge the sociocultural status quo by contesting taboos, expanding social boundaries, and forming the critical basis for challenging the governmental and political state apparatus itself. How these films are received by the Tunisian public and whether or not they inspired political action is much more obscure. What is evident, however, is that dissent was prevalent in the consciousness and works of many Maghrebi artists.
Second, excessive reliance on foreign models and external providers retards the growth of local capacity building in the Gulf—essentially hindering the ability to foster knowledge and expertise produced locally. Despite this tendency to replicate and borrow, Gulf states have exhibited forms of innovation in developing their own education systems.

Education City—the flagship of Qatar Foundation in Doha—is a model of clustered international branch campuses (IBCs), where a number of foreign universities operate under the umbrella of Education City. This clustered model of IBCs creates opportunities for integrating the educational experiences of the different universities, allowing students to cross-register for classes and providing a platform for joint-degree programs and research collaborations to take place. Due to the benefits of this model of clustered international branch campuses—or the Education City model—other regions of the globe are attempting to adopt it. While the benefits are clear, it is a costly endeavor and its global level of diffusion will largely be dictated by the ability of states with fewer resources than Qatar to effectively replicate the model.

Large investments in higher education are tailored towards developing the skills of the national workforce and producing the “knowledge worker” that is required by KBEs.

Despite this investment in human capital, however, Gulf nationals are continuously drawn to employment in the public sector—where they accrue large benefits from the state—as opposed to seeking employment in the private sector. While foreigners comprise the bulk of GCC populations and as such dominate the private sector, they have a temporary presence in the labor market due migration policies that shape and limit their duration of stay. This has adverse effects on developing KBEs due to hindering local knowledge retention and transfer of imported foreign knowledge. In developed countries, the private sector is traditionally conceived of as the bearer and fosterer of innovation; however, with minimal presence of nationals in the private sector and the temporarily limited presence of expatriates, there exists a large disjuncture between investment in human capital and labor market outcomes that reap the benefits of these investments.

In an attempt to fill this gap, GCC states are promoting entrepreneurship by developing institutions that support local entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with the aim of building a robust private sector that promotes innovation. In the recent years, the SME ecosystem has witnessed a mushrooming of institutions and organizations mandated to cater their services towards the support of private business. While the strategies and infrastructure for SME promotion may be set in place, the pervasive rentier arrangement in the Gulf provides a thick security blanket of social benefits that continues to deter nationals from fostering an entrepreneurial spirit—a spirit that is largely based on uncertainty and risk-taking.

Increasingly so, it is apparent that what is lacking in the GCC is not necessarily the infrastructure or the investment in pillars of a knowledge based economy, but in creating an environment and a national system that is conducive to knowledge production and innovation. When it comes to university-industry-government collaborations, it appears that the role of the government in incentivizing both universities and industries to collaborate in knowledge exchange and management is weak in some GCC. As such, many industries continue to operate in silos, curtailing the diffusion of knowledge throughout the economy of the GCC.

Lastly, it becomes evident that while state rhetoric is supportive of creating KBEs that foster innovation, the structural realities of Gulf states—namely, the rentier arrangements and the demographic imbalance—actively mitigate against the translation of these national visions and strategies into concrete realities, hindering the realization of KBEs and keeping innovation at shallow levels.
Spotlight on the Faculty: Anatol Lieven

Apart from the searing reminiscences of older relatives on my father’s side concerning the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and Nazi rule in Germany, my chief intellectual influences have been study at Cambridge as a historian and my experience as a journalist in various parts of the world. The combination of these two influences has produced a central concern with Contempory History, or what in German is called Zeitgeschichte.

At Cambridge, I studied political philosophy, European history, the Western imperial impact on other parts of the world, and the responses of other states and societies to that impact. As a British journalist for The Times (London) and other publications, I worked in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union and its successor states, with occasional missions elsewhere. Thereafter, I worked at think tanks in Washington DC, before joining the War Studies Department of King’s College London in 2007.

My resulting intellectual interest include the deep roots of the present in the past, and the extent to which contemporary societies are influenced by historical legacies of which they themselves may be unconscious; the consequent “contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous”, or the natural co-existence in the present of social and cultural forms and institutions deriving from the distant past with the embryos of future ones yet to be born; the importance of collective ethnic and religious identities; different forms of armed conflict; and the older and contemporary history of state construction.

My seven books have been written in the light of these interests. Thus my first book, The Baltic Revolutions: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence (1993) was a portrayal of the collapse of Soviet rule in the Baltic States (from where my Lieven ancestors originate) based on the evidence of my own time there as a journalist from 1990-1992.

However, it also set the Baltic nationalist movements in the context of the history of European ethno-religious nationalismos over the past two hundred years. It warned of the problems that were likely to arise from the interactions of such nationalismes with large Russian minorities left behind in several new states of the former Soviet Union. I repeated these warnings in a later book on the Ukrainian-Russian relationship titled, Ukraine and Russia: A Fraternal Rivalry (1999).

My second book, Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power? (1998) should really have been two books, if my time to write had not been cut short by the need to earn a living as a journalist. One part was a narrative history of the first Chechen War (1994-96), both sides of which I covered on the ground as a correspondent for The Times. This book includes an analysis of the immediate causes of the war, a historical portrait of the Chechen people and the history of Russian-Chechen contact and conflict, and the first anthropological account in English of traditional Chechen society and its transformation under Russian and Soviet rule.

The second part of this book analyzed the near-collapse of Russia’s state and society in the 1990s, which manifested itself in Russia’s defeat in Chechnya. It set this in the context of the history of liberal capitalist revolutions in a range of partially closed societies with weak institutions and high levels of social distrust.

As I was warned in advance would be the case, my next major book, America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism (2004) attracted bitter hostility in certain quarters. It was written during my time in Washington DC from 2000-2007, and was an attempt to place the reaction of the Bush administration, and US society more generally to 9/11 in the context of the history of different strands of American nationalism. These in turn I analyzed in the comparative context of the global history of nationalism.

My last book, Pakistan: A Hard Country (2011), was based on my work there as a journalist in the late 1980s, frequent travel since, and historical, cultural, and sociological research. Its central theme is an analysis of the way in which Pakistani state and social institutions, classes, and traditions both maintain the survival of the country and contribute to its stagnation. It analyzes the weakness of Pakistani nationalism in society at large, and attributes the strength of the Pakistani army in part to the fact that it is the only place where (for better and worse) nationalism is systematically cultivated. Like the book written when I was a journalist, this book also contains personal reportage, and expresses a wry affection for an often-maligned country.

My next book will extend my study both of Muslim southwest Asia and of nationalism to the case of the Pashtun ethnicity in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It will try to explain why a people with an exceptionally strong ethnic identity have never been able to turn this into an effective state-building nationalism. In so doing, it will seek to make an original and useful contribution to the wider intellectual debate between “primordialist” and “constructivist” theories of nationalism.

If nothing else, this rather varied (or chaotic) career has provided me with a large store of anecdotes, with which—having exhausted the patience of my family—I can now torment my students.
CIRS held the first working group meeting on “The Digital Middle East” research initiative on September 27-28, 2014. Academics from various disciplinary backgrounds gathered to discuss their research findings and papers on the digital world in the Middle East. Participants focused on how the socio-political landscape of the Arab world has been changing due to the spread of the Internet. In places such as Egypt and Iran, youth have taken to technology to express their discontent towards political regimes, trying economic conditions, and social injustices. The decentralized nature of the media model has led to mass social movements arising in several Arab states, helping to facilitate the fall of several regimes and severely weakening others. In the Gulf states, digital anonymity in places such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait has provided an outlet for the youth to articulate themselves online without fear of reprisal. People’s instantaneous connections on social media have encouraged academic focus on civil engagement frameworks and on the creation of online civil societies that are both inclusive and transnational. In Egypt, online activism has radically affected the nature of mediated experiences since 2011. Prior to the establishment of online video sharing and communication platforms, coverage of political events was heavily reliant on television and print journalism. During the uprisings, however, social media allowed for more reliable coverage of events due to the impact of censorship on traditional media forms in some states. Cyber communities were made possible by the work of individuals who spent a substantial amount of time online, collating and contributing crucial information through various digital platforms without monetary compensation.

The events of the Arab uprisings have also instigated changes in patterns of political behavior within various social groups, especially among women. Engaging in the digital landscape of the Middle East has proven to be a liberating experience, allowing many to forge alternative collectivities defined by a common, greater cause and uninhibited by definitions of gender, class, or race. However, while social movements may initially emerge online, a physical space is still necessary for civic action to occur, and many women took to the streets alongside their male counterparts during the uprisings. However, sexual harassment and various other grave violations still took place in great numbers during the protests, outlining the disparity in behaviors that still exist in the offline world.

On the topic of widespread intellectual property infringement in the Middle East, participants discussed the lack of a unified copyright law, creating a myriad of issues surrounding this topic. Considering that the globalization of media culture has not been accompanied with equivalent access to media, people in the Middle East infringe on copyright out of convenience and comfort.

Participants also discussed the changing role of state actors in the digital world by choosing to develop offline activities such as commerce and governance into electronic format. Naturally, the growth of political activity and online activism has also caused states to rethink their methods of authoritarianism, leading to acts of state censorship targeting social media sites, such as in the cases of Iran and Turkey. This has led to much debate about the role technology plays within existing power structures in state and society. The innovative technological behavior in the Middle East is indicative of growth in access and usage of the Internet, yet limited statistical analysis is available to fully understand this phenomenon.

Commerce has always played an integral role in strengthening and sustaining Middle Eastern societies, both historically and at present. With the advance of technology, commerce has taken a different form in the shape of online shopping. In 2013, approximately a third of GCC residents accessed the internet only to shop, a 7 percent increase from the year before. The e-commerce experience in the Gulf has also made use of various digital platforms—initially created for communication purposes—to sell products online. The change in cultures of consumption has been aided by the development of digital technology, yet evident gaps in the e-commerce model, such as efficiency and growth, still need to be addressed and accounted for.

In terms of e-governance in the Gulf, attempts have been made in recent years to use technology as a way to improve information and service delivery to citizens. This has proven to be harder to implement practically as issues of transparency conflict with Gulf governments’ initial commitment to e-governance. Discussants problematized the centralist nature of Gulf states as being an obstacle for e-governance, especially since citizens are often suspicious of various state initiatives and often are too fearful to fully engage with the state and its agencies online.
Call for Papers
CIRS publishes original research in a broad range of issues related to the Gulf region in the areas of international relations, political science, economics, and Islamic studies. All submissions are subject to a double-blind review process. Inquiries about publications or other related questions may be directed to cirsresearch@georgetown.edu, or Suzi Mirgani, Manager and Editor for CIRS Publications at sm623@georgetown.edu.

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