



المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات
Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies

ACRPS Winter School Program

Sectarianism, Communitarianism and the State

4 - 14 January 2020

[Timetable](#) | [Participants](#) | [Discussants](#)



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Timetable

Day 1: Saturday, 4 January 2020

8:30 - 9:00	Registration
9:00 - 10:00	<p>Opening Remarks</p> <p>Azmi Bishara: Sectarianism Without Sects</p>
10:00 - 10:15	Coffee Break
10:15 - 11:45	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Chris Cooper-Davies: Between Sectarianism and Unity: Iraqi Shi'i Responses to National Integration in the 1920s and 1930s</p> <hr/> <p>Discussants: Morten Valbjørn & Marc Caball</p>
11:45 - 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 - 13:30	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Victor Achem: Middle East to West Africa: The Shi'i Uprising and the Threat to the Nigerian State</p> <hr/> <p>Discussant: Morten Valbjørn</p>
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch
14:30 - 16:00	<p>Roundtable Discussion</p> <p>Varying Definitions: Sectarianism and Communitarianism Across Regions</p> <p>Marc Caball, Morten Valbjørn, Toby Matthiesen</p>

Day 2: Sunday, 5 January 2020

9:00 - 10:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Morten Valbjørn</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Beyond the Beyond(s): On the (Many) Third Way(s) beyond Primordialism and Instrumentalism in the Study of Sectarianism</p>
10:00 - 10:15	<p style="text-align: center;">Coffee Break</p>
10:15 - 11:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Zubair Ibrahim: Sectarianism, Shi'ism and the Contemporary Conflict with the Nigerian Government</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussant: Abdelwahab El-Affendi</p>
11:45 – 12:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Coffee Break</p>
12:00 - 13:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Serhun Al: Why Does Nationalism Not Unite the Ethnic Brethren? Organizational Rivalry and the Competing Kurdish Nationalisms in Iraq, Syria and Turkey</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussant: Toby Matthiesen</p>
13:30 – 14:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Lunch</p>
14:30 – 16:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rapheal Ojo Joseph: The Porousness of Religious Borders: Dissemination of Religious Ideas and their Implications on the Nigerian State</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussants: Morten Valbjørn & Abdelwahab El-Affendi</p>

Day 3: Monday, 6 January 2020

9:00 - 10:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Marc Caball: Sectarianism in Ireland: Historical Contexts</p>
10:00 - 10:15	Coffee Break
10:15 – 11:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nora Gueliane: Social Diversity in Question in the M'Zab Valley in Algeria</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussant: Simon Mabon</p>
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 - 13:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Marcin Rau: The Use of Cultural Heritage toward Reconciliation of Deeply Divided Societies</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussants: Marc Caball & Nour Munawar</p>
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Roundtable Discussion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sectarianism and the State</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Marc Caball, Morten Valbjørn, Toby Matthiesen</p>

Day 4: Tuesday, 7 January 2020

9:00 - 10:00	Lecture Toby Matthiesen
10:00 - 10:15	Coffee Break
10:15 – 11:45	Presentation Felix Akinboyewa: Politics of Violence and Terrorism in the Nigerian Democracy and Its Implications on National Peace and Security <hr/> Discussant: Abdelwahab El-Affendi
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 - 13:30	Presentation Ali Aljaseem: In the Shadow of the State: The Rise of Kata'ib Al-Baath at Aleppo University after 2011 <hr/> Discussant: Morten Valbjørn
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	Lecture Abdelwahab El-Affendi: The Disappearing Arab State: The Closure and Privatization of the Public Space

Day 5: Wednesday, 8 January 2020

9:00 - 10:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Toby Matthiesen</p>
10:00 - 10:15	Coffee Break
10:15 – 11:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p>PremAnand Mishra: The Geo-politics of Sectarianism and its Impact on Indian Muslims: A Normative Understanding</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussants: Simon Mabon & Luai Ali</p>
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 - 13:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p>Sara MUSAIFER: "Switch on the TV, Do You Hear Us?": The Politics of Sociolinguistics, Belongingness and Schooling in (Post) Colonial Bahrain</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussants: Toby Matthiesen & Simon Mabon</p>
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Roundtable Discussion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">International Relations and Sectarianism</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Simon Mabon & Nader Hashemi</p>

Day 6: Thursday, 9 January 2020

9:00 - 10:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Simon Mabon: Sovereign Power, Space and Sectarian Games</p>
10:00 - 10:15	Coffee Break
10:15 – 11:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sumeyra Yakar: The Usage of Sectarian Religious Interpretations in Iran and Saudi Arabia</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussants: Nader Hashemi & Simon Mabon</p>
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 - 13:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Metin Atmaca: Contesting the Politics of Sectarianism: Naqshbandi-Khalidi Sufis on the Ottoman-Iranian Frontier and Their Relations with Shi'a and Non-Muslims</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussant: Simon Mabon</p>
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nader Hashemi: The Sectarianization Thesis: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East</p>

Day 7: Saturday, 11 January 2020

9:00 - 10:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Marc Caball: Northern Ireland: a Case Study in Sectarianism</p>
10:00 - 10:15	Coffee Break
10:15 – 11:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Olivia Glombitza: Not all that Sectarian: Turkey and Iran's Foreign Policy during the Qatar Crisis</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussant: Luai Ali</p>
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 - 13:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Siwar Youssef: The 'Jasmine' and 'Nile' Revolutions: Religion as a Mobilizer of Communitarianism after the Arab Awakening</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussant: Marc Caball</p>
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Haian Dukhan: The Multi Dynamics of Sectarianism: How the Christian Community of the Syrian Governorate of Al-Hassakeh Responded to Their Security Dilemmas</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussant: Nader Hashemi</p>

Day 8: Sunday, 12 January 2020

9:00 - 10:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Adham Saouli: Factoring Sectarianism in Arab Politics</p>
10:00 - 10:15	Coffee Break
10:15 – 11:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">José Antonio G. G. V. Lima: Iraq as a Turning Point in Saudi Arabia's Perceptions of Iran: Evidence from 'Cablegate'</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussant: Nader Hashemi</p>
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 - 13:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Aleksandre Kvakhadze: Gender and Jihad: Women from the Caucasus in the Syrian Conflict</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussants: Nader Hashemi & Muhanad Seloom</p>
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nathaniel George: The Weapons of Criticism and the Criticism of Weapons: Sectarianism, Anti-Sectarianism, and the Struggle for the Lebanese State</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussants: Adham Saouli & Nader Hashemi</p>

Day 9: Monday, 13 January 2020

9:00 - 10:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Luai Ali: Social and Sectarian Divides in the Arabian Gulf</p>
10:00 - 10:15	Coffee Break
10:15 – 11:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jihan Mohammed: A Micro-Level Analysis of Sectarian Discrimination in Iraq</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussant: Majed Al Ansari</p>
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 - 13:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Laura Sayah: Sectarianism and Economic Behavior: Lebanon as a Case Study</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussants: Adham Saouli & Majed Al Ansari</p>
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ana Kumarasamy: Divided Spaces and Contesting Sovereign Power: Unpacking Mechanisms of Exclusions and Environmental Challenges in Beirut</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussant: Adham Saouli</p>
16:00 – 16:15	Coffee Break
16:15 – 17:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Saad Ahmad: The Sectarian Turn in the Discourse of Salafism: The Case of India</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussant: Nader Hashemi</p>

Day 10: Tuesday, 14 January 2020

9:00 - 10:00	Lecture Yasir Suleiman
10:00 - 10:15	Coffee Break
10:15 – 11:45	Presentation Allison Cuneo: Universal Heritage? International Cultural Diplomacy, Local Sectarianism, and the Restoration of Heritage Sites in Iraq after the Islamic State <hr/> Discussant: Nour Munawar
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 - 13:30	Presentation Anne Kirstine Rønn Sørensen: The Diversity of Civic Mobilizations against Sectarian Politics <hr/> Discussant: Adham Saouli
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	Roundtable Discussion Future Research Agendas

Participants

Abstracts



Aleksandre Kvakhadze

Aleksandre Kvakhadze is a Research Fellow at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. He has held the positions of senior specialist in the Circassian Cultural Center (2011-2014), policy assistant for the Parliament of Georgia (2014-2016) and research assistant at the University of Birmingham (2017). He holds a BA in Turkish Studies (2006-10), an MA in Caucasian Studies from Tbilisi State University (2010-2012), and an MA in International Relations from the University of Birmingham (2016-17).

Gender and Jihad: Women from the Caucasus in the Syrian Conflict

According to media reports, hundreds of women from the North Caucasian republics, Georgia, and Azerbaijan have migrated to jihadi-controlled territories. Although the Syrian conflict has led to a considerable migration wave of women volunteers from other countries, Caucasian female volunteerism to Syria is a relatively new and understudied phenomenon. This paper has a threefold aim: to discuss the motivational features of female volunteers from the Caucasus region, to describe their functional role, and to explain their limited involvement in the hostilities. The first section of this article reviews the literature and presents the theoretical framework and parameters related to women's involvement in insurgent groups. The second section explains the methodology used in data collection. The third part offers an historical overview of women's involvement in North Caucasian militant groups. The next section draws together key findings of my field research on the living conditions of insurgent families in the conflict zone, and the activities of female volunteers, the root-causes of their mobilization, and the degree of their jihadi involvement. In the final section, I analyse the material and describe gender-specific constraints among Russian-speaking militant groups fighting in Syria and Iraq.



Ali Aljasem

Ali Aljasem is a researcher at the Centre for Conflict Studies at Utrecht University focusing on paramilitary groups in Syria. He is also the Syria consultant for the Dialogue Advisory Group and a board member of Damaan Humanitarian Organization. Formerly, he worked for Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières as a security and safety advisor in Aleppo, and a humanitarian affairs officer – ideology analyst in Amsterdam. Ali holds an MA in Conflict Studies and Human Rights from Utrecht University.

In the Shadow of the State: The Rise of Kata'ib Al-Baath at Aleppo University after 2011

This article examines the emergence and transformation of pro-state paramilitarism in Syria in the context of the uprising and civil war after 2011. It looks at how the National Union of Syrian Students (NUSS) was mobilized and armed to become a paramilitary group, with a particular focus on Aleppo. Theoretically, the article aims to contribute to the literature on pro-state civilian militias mobilization by looking beyond the state's brokerage of such formations. It focuses on intra-communal links of individuals in civilian positions and their significant role in mobilizing civilians - and in particular students - to oppress their fellow citizens and students and use violence against them. Empirically, the project looks beyond the classic lens of defining shabiha as belonging to criminal networks or smuggling groups. Rather, they are highly educated people with a consciously informed decision to mobilize. Thus, it examines the NUSS in their deployment and conduct in the current conflict and probes to answer the questions of how and why students voluntarily get involved in repression, and how they experience the conflict.



Allison Cuneo

Allison Cuneo is an archaeologist specializing in critical heritage studies, holding an MA in International Heritage Management and a PhD in Archaeology from Boston University. She is a Co-Founder of Cultural Property Consultants, LLC and is the Program Manager for the Iraq Heritage Stabilization Program. Her past appointments include Postdoctoral Fellow at the MIT Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Project Manager for the American Schools of Oriental Research Cultural Heritage Initiatives, and Program Manager for Mosul University's Archaeology Program.

Universal Heritage? International Cultural Diplomacy, Local Sectarianism, and the Restoration of Heritage Sites in Iraq after the Islamic State

This paper will investigate how cultural preservation of religious heritage sites is being integrated into current civil society and peace building initiatives in northern Iraq to determine if specific cultural and historical narratives are being amplified to the exclusion of others. Numerous organizations have offered financial assistance to rebuild cultural sites attacked by the Islamic State as a means to counter violent extremism. However, the care and management of religious heritage sites and objects, even those that would technically fall under the jurisdiction of Iraqi heritage laws due to age and cultural significance, are by and large controlled by the respective religious endowments with little government oversight or financial support. This patchwork response has resulted in competition among religious minority groups for resources and public awareness. Both domestic and foreign powers are eager to rebuild Iraq, and how these actors allocate legal, financial, and human resources to rehabilitate former ISIS-held territories will have significant ramifications for Iraq's future political stability and cultural diversity. The purpose of this research is to understand the modalities of heritage restoration initiatives by identifying the constraints on protecting cultural expression and diversity during post-conflict recovery, while examining the implications of repairing religious sites impacted by armed conflict.



Ana Kumarasamy

Ana Maria Kumarasamy is a PhD student in Politics at Lancaster University. In her PhD she is exploring environmental insecurities, urban spaces and sovereignty in Lebanon. Her research includes topics such as demographic changes and environmental challenges and she is a PhD fellow at SEPAD, the Sectarianism, Proxies and De-Sectarianisation Project.

Divided Spaces and Contesting Sovereign Power: Unpacking Mechanisms of Exclusions and Environmental Challenges in Beirut

In recent years, the inhabitants of Beirut have been routinely exposed to environmental insecurities and efforts to regulate these challenges, including waste management issues. In the Summer of 2015, protesters took to the street in protest after rubbish had started accumulating along the streets of Beirut. The "You Stink" movement represented not just a waste management problem, but also wider issues connected with dysfunctional, corrupt and sectarian governance. This paper explores what effect contesting sovereign power has on people in urban spaces and the environment. Sovereign power in Beirut consists of a myriad of competing sovereign entities predominantly based on a complex patron-client relationship. Consequently, I argue that political exclusion and environmental insecurities are manifested through formal and informal power structures in Beirut. As such, this paper seeks to create a further understanding of contested sources of sovereign power and its relation to environmental insecurities and life in Beirut.



Anne Kirstine Rønn Sørensen

Anne Kirstine Rønn Sørensen is a PhD fellow at the Department of Political Science at Aarhus University. Her research looks into social movements, which challenge sectarian politics in Lebanon and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The focus of her dissertation lies on how these movements react to the challenges they face; from internal disputes to repression strategies exercised by sectarian agents. Anne Kirstine has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from University of Copenhagen and a Master's degree in International Studies from Aarhus University.

The Diversity of Civic Mobilizations Against Sectarian Politics

Over recent years, Middle East scholars have started to explore and conceptualize contestation of sectarianism. Previous work has discussed how the role of sectarian identities can be reimagined from a theoretical perspective. Meanwhile, less studies have examined systematically how the region's citizens have opposed sectarian politics and elites. This paper studies a sample of popular mobilizations that have challenged sectarianism in Lebanon and presents two main arguments: First, civic contestation of sectarianism should not be considered a one-size-fits-all category. Mobilizations which have targeted the same enemy – the sect-based political elites – have done so in highly different ways. Moreover, groups and individuals organizing these mobilizations have often seen conflicts among themselves. Second, the question of identity is not the only factor that distinguishes different mobilizations against sectarian politics in Lebanon. Challenges of sectarianism in Lebanon also vary greatly in their strategic approach, particularly regarding how to engage with the sectarian system. By presenting these arguments, the paper contributes to nuancing the understanding of popular challenges to sectarianism in divided societies in the Middle East and beyond. Moreover, it helps explain why it can be challenging for citizens to form a collective opposition, despite a shared dissatisfaction with sectarian politics.



Chris Cooper-Davies

Chris Cooper-Davies is a PhD student at the University of Cambridge, researching the political and cultural history of the Shi'i community in Iraq during the early twentieth century. He is also an honorary PhD Scholar at the Woolf Institute for the study of interfaith relations. Before beginning his PhD, he received an MA in Middle Eastern History at SOAS (2016) and a BA (Hons.) in History from Queen Mary, University of London.

Between Sectarianism and Unity: Iraqi Shi'i Responses to National Integration in the 1920s and 1930s

This paper analyses two Shi'i discourses which emerged following the institution of the Iraqi nation state, the rapid expansion of print media in the Middle East, and a new phase in Sunni – Shi'i relations. The first discourse was political and unique to Iraq. It saw Shi'i writers expressing their grievances with the current social, political and economic status-quo, by promoting a populist political programme for a more equitable national future. The second discourse developed in response to the deterioration of inter-sect relations and the new public exposure the Shi'i community was coming under in the modern era. It was less nationally specific, although Iraqi Arab intellectuals and ulama were its leading proponents, and it was overtly anti-sectarian, promoting a unified vision of Islam and an acceptable face of Shi'i tradition. The paper will highlight some of the key themes running through these distinct but overlapping discourses, which at times borrowed heavily from each other. The contradictions between the two were played out in the pages of the leading Shi'i journal of the early twentieth century, *al-Irfan*, and highlight the intellectual and cultural struggle of the community as it grappled with the challenges of modernity.



Felix Akinboyewa

Felix Akinboyewa is the head of the Welfare and Aftercare Department at the Nigerian Correctional Service, in Ibadan, Nigeria. He holds an MSc in Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution and a Postgraduate Diploma in Criminology and Security Studies, from the National Open University of Nigeria. From 2014 to 2016, he worked as a Teaching Assistant at the National Open University of Nigeria, Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution. Felix is an upcoming PhD student in the Conflict Analysis and Management program at Kent State University in Ohio, USA.

Politics of Violence and Terrorism in the Nigerian Democracy and Its Implications on National Peace and Security

Nigeria has been faced with the problem of domestic terrorism in recent years. The spate of political assassination during the fourth republic (1999-Present Day) is representative of what has become a growing trend. In this research, an attempt was made to examine the problems of political assassination within the context of significant categories of domestic-related terrorism in Nigeria. The research findings show that unemployed youths and the members of Nigeria Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) are the major actors in political violence in Nigeria. The research shows that factors responsible for political violence and terrorism in Nigeria include: poor electoral administration; election rigging; a poor security system; religious and ethnic sentiment; poverty and unemployment; and a low level of education. The study concludes that electoral violence affects the function of democracy in Nigeria.



Haian Dukhan

Haian Dukhan is an associate research fellow at the Centre for Syrian Studies at the University of St Andrews. He is the author of *State and Tribes in Syria: Informal Alliances and Conflict Patterns* (Routledge, 2019). He currently teaches Middle Eastern History at the University of Edinburgh.

The Multi Dynamics of Sectarianism: How the Christian Community of the Syrian Governorate of Al-Hassakeh Responded to Their Security Dilemmas

Since the beginning of the militarisation of the Syrian uprising, the Christians in Al-Hassakeh found themselves in a contested region where the regime, Kurdish militias, the rebels and later the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) were vying for control. The lawlessness that resulted from this competition of power in the periphery of Syria made the Christian minority in Al-Hassakeh experience a security dilemma due to uncertainty around the intentions of the opposition. This caused the majority of the Christians to look favourably on the Syrian regime that provided them with safety and protection for many decades. The main question that this paper aims to deal with is what factors influenced the position of the Christians in the governorate of Al-Hassakeh towards the Syrian uprising. In order to understand the position of the Christians towards the Syrian opposition in the early phase of the uprising, this research will use the security dilemma theory introduced by Barry Posen (1993). He argues that when the state loses its control over certain territory, a security vacuum takes place, making many groups - particularly minority groups - face a dilemma regarding potential threats from other groups seeking control of their territories.



Jihan Mohammed

Jihan Mohammed is a PhD student at Michigan State University's Department of Sociology. Her research areas are race and ethnicity, political sociology and social psychology. She is interested in using qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate national and ethno-sectarian identities in the Middle East. She has a BA in letters and philosophy and an MA in education from the University of Foggia, Italy. She also has an MA in sociology from Michigan State University.

A Micro-Level Analysis of Sectarian Discrimination in Iraq

Do Arab Sunnis and Arab Shi'is in Iraq discriminate against one other? If so, to what extent do ethno-sectarian narratives impact these discriminatory attitudes? When trying to determine levels of discrimination between Arab Sunnis and Arab Shi'is, what are the roles of such factors as a person's degree of religiosity, of following political news from partisan and sect-affiliated media, of living in segregated cities, and of living in cities with higher levels of violence? For over a century, Iraq has been caught up in interlocking patterns of ethno-sectarian conflicts, civil wars, and terrorism at high levels. These conflicts, arguably, aggravated relations among various ethnic, religious, and sectarian groups, especially between Iraqi Arab Sunnis and Iraqi Arab Shi'is. To illuminate the questions discussed above, this paper uses the "Arab Barometer, Wave II" dataset—collected in 2011 and a number of semi-structured interviews with Iraqis. This paper offers a micro-level analyses of sectarian discrimination and argues that analyzing the complex matrix of ethno-sectarian dynamics cannot be restricted to just violence or active hatred. Sectarian discrimination can be manifested in subtle ways, potentially even unintentionally and unconsciously in the form of what might be broadly termed "microaggressions."



José Antonio G. G. V. Lima

José Antonio Lima is a journalist with experience in the coverage of Brazilian and international politics, and worked as a reporter in Egypt during the Arab Spring. He holds a master's degree from the Institute of International Relations at the University of São Paulo, where he researched the history of the Muslim Brotherhood. He is a doctoral student at the same institution, where he researches the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran and the regional security of the Middle East.

Iraq as a Turning Point in Saudi Arabia's Perceptions of Iran: Evidence from 'Cablegate'

In the latest version of the Regional Security Complex Theory, the Middle East Regional Security Complex is at a crossroads. Scholars point out that "although the Arab-Israeli conflict is still politically and symbolically central, it is no longer the epicentre of violence in the region." Moreover, although they indicate that there were enough rivalries to maintain the existence of the RSC, they do not debate future perspectives. Under the terms of the RSCT, regime change policy has put the region in an overlay situation and undermined the "triangular rivalry" between Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The purpose of this research is to help fill an omission in the literature regarding the state of the Middle East RSC. Thus I ask: To where has the security axis of the Middle East RSC moved? To this end, it will be examined to what extent, from the Saudi perspective, rivalry with Iran is central. The RSCT will be used in a theoretical framework of "analytical eclecticism," alongside the concept of regime security and Foreign Policy Analysis. The empirical object is the diplomatic cables sent from the US embassy and consulates in Saudi Arabia and made public in the so-called "Cablegate."



Laura Sayah

Laura Sayah is a university lecturer in different universities in Lebanon, including the Lebanese University. She holds a PhD in Economics from Paris-Dauphine University, and a Masters in Strategic Negotiations and Diplomacy from Paris XI University, France. She spent a semester as a visiting scholar at the ACRPS. She is a Fulbright Junior Development Program alumna. Her research interests revolve around political economy of Lebanon, and economics of education.

Sectarianism and Economic Behavior: Lebanon as a Case Study

In Lebanon, religious and sectarian affiliation is deeply present, sects have historically had different economic paths, and diversity leads to conflicts at several levels. Thus, it becomes legitimate to analyze individuals' economic situation based on their religious affiliation. The present work is an attempt to find if there is any particular pattern correlating to selected economic variables such as monthly income, saving behaviors, employment sector, and labor market status to the religious and sectarian affiliations. The paper is based on the Arab Opinion index (AOI) published by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, where the sample uses the latest published data, and compares the changes in income patterns before and after the salary scale adjustment approved by the parliament in 2017. Findings show significant differences in employment patterns especially when it comes to public employment, but also significant differences in salaries between the different sects. Some patterns can be explained by the differences between urban and rural areas, yet they are attached to sectarian affiliations, because of the regional sectarian agglomeration.



Marcin Rau

Marcin Rau holds a doctorate in international law from the University of Lodz, Poland. His research interests focus on the protection of cultural heritage and crimes against cultural property. In 2015 his MA thesis "Art Theft in International Criminal Law" won the 2nd prize in the contest of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs for the best MA thesis.

The Use of Cultural Heritage toward Reconciliation of Deeply Divided Societies

The aim of this paper is to explore new ways of understanding the nature of "heritage" and the influence that this concept has. Whereas the frequently used notion of "cultural property" points out the commercial relevance of cultural assets, "cultural heritage" designates human expressions that constitute the identities of communities. Cultural heritage may be tangible like monuments and paintings or intangible like fashion, movies or sports games. All of these cultural institutions stand at the interface between political and civil society. In divided communities, cultural heritage has been not only an agent of separation, sectarian hatred and violence, but also a highly effective tool for conflict resolution, reconciliation and peace-building. Therefore, I will diagnose the psychological and sociological causes of conflicts in divided societies and explain the similarities between the countries, which I classify as "source nations". Next, I will analyze which strategies of Western societies could be successfully applied in the Arab world. Finally, I will propose possible steps that lawmakers, local communities and individuals in these countries can take to build a cultural identity based on mutual respect, a sense of freedom and human dignity.



Metin Atmaca

Metin Atmaca is an assistant professor at the Social Sciences University of Ankara. He was a visiting scholar at Boğaziçi and Damascus Universities and post-doctoral researcher at Tehran University and EHESS in Paris. He published peer-reviewed articles on the history of the Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Iraq in *Middle Eastern Studies*, *Oxford Bibliographies Online*, *Kurdish Studies*, *Insight Turkey*, and *Journal of World History*. He appears regularly on Aljazeera Arabic and English channels.

Contesting the Politics of Sectarianism: Naqshbandi-Khalidi Sufis on the Ottoman-Iranian Frontier and Their Relations with Shi'a and Non-Muslims

This project focuses on the political and religious transformation of the sheikhs of the Naqshbandi-Khalidi Sufi network from both historical and contemporary perspectives. After the network was initiated by Mawlana Khalid al-Baghdadi (1779- 1827) in Sulaimaniya in present-day Iraq, it rapidly expanded to the other parts of the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Caucasus. Studies on the Khalidi order stress the confrontational attitude of this network towards the West, especially European colonial powers, and the Shi'i world. Meanwhile, historical accounts show that Khalidi sheikhs protected the local Christian population against aggressors and established political ties with Shi'i rulers and accepted them to their network as disciples. As the historiography of the Naqshbandi-Khalidi order presents a conflicting picture, this study hopes to open a new discussion on the subject with a new study based on both Ottoman and Persian documents and manuscripts. With this project I aim to show how politics and religion were interwoven with the sectarian tension between the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran in the nineteenth century. Beyond highlighting such initiatives of local leaders this study aims to show how sectarian tensions were created and mitigated by the state.



Nathaniel George

Nathaniel George obtained his PhD in History at Rice University. His research focuses on the intertwined history of the Arab world and the United States throughout the twentieth century. His dissertation, 'A Third World War: Revolution, Counterrevolution, and Empire in Lebanon, 1967–1977,' understands Lebanon as an important setting in an international civil war over the direction of decolonization and the shape of political representation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Weapons of Criticism and the Criticism of Weapons: Sectarianism, Anti-Sectarianism, and the Struggle for the Lebanese State

It is difficult to imagine a clearer anti-sectarian demand than for the abolition of sectarian political representation in Lebanon. In August 1975, the Lebanese National Movement (LNM), a coalition of political parties and independent figures representing an ideologically diverse, multisectarian constituency, released its "Transitional Program for the Democratic Reform of the Political System in Lebanon." Promulgated during the opening rounds of what became a fifteen-year international civil war, the program was the culmination of at least a decade of polarizing popular struggle. Calling for "a progressive, democratic, Arab nationalist Lebanon," it detailed a suite of comprehensive changes premised upon the abolition of sectarian representation and the declaration of a voluntary civil personal status code. Using Lebanese and American archives and interviews, this paper considers the efforts of the LNM to push its program in the political sphere and on the battlefield, within the context of local, regional, and imperial opposition. Against a historiography that either dismisses the venture as predestined to fail, or only considers the period within the shackles of post-defeat melancholy, this paper reevaluates the history of one of the most explicit emancipatory challenges to the Arab order.



Nora Gueliane

Nora Gueliane is an architect with a PhD in urban studies, and currently affiliated with the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in Paris (EHESS). Her work focuses on the social aspects of architecture and urbanism, solidarity, and participation. Her main field of study remains the M'Zab in Algeria, and she is also interested in comparative studies with other fields in the Maghreb and in the world.

Social Diversity in Question in the M'Zab Valley in Algeria

This study focuses on social diversity in the M'Zab Valley of Algeria. Using field work, analysis and observation, this study notes the absence of social diversity and mixing in the cases studied. The paper presents the hypothesis that there exists a new form of communitarianism in the Ksour, a communitarianism that prevents Mozabites from moving from group solidarity to broader or national forms of solidarity. This research project is important for several reasons: it contributes to the study of urban diversity in Algeria, particularly in M'Zab, which is experiencing dangerous cohabitation problems and inter-community conflicts. The Mozabite case is also valuable in the study of African cities, as an example that could well be generalized.



Olivia Glombitza

Olivia Glombitza is a PhD candidate in International Relations at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Her research deals with relations of power, identity, and ideology in the politics and international relations of Iran. She holds a Master's in Media, Communication and Culture from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, a Master's in Intercultural Competence and Conflict Management from the University of Verona, and collaborates as a research fellow in projects on the Middle East located in Spain and the UK.

Not all that Sectarian: Turkey and Iran's Foreign Policy during the Qatar Crisis

Turkey and Iran constitute two important actors whose politics and foreign relations significantly impact their region. Both are non-Arab Muslim states, but while Turkey exhibits a secular political system and an overall Sunni majority population, Iran builds on an Islamic political system with an overall Shi'a majority. Though not always in agreement, the paper argues that both countries share a constructive and pragmatic approach towards their foreign relations that is not driven by sectarian considerations, but by pragmatism and interest. The paper further contends that Turkey and Iran's policies and approach towards the Arab world are similar, marked by comparable ideological undercurrents creating an overall strategic fit. This study compares Turkey's and Iran's foreign policies towards their Arab neighbours at the height of the Qatar crisis and analyses how national identity is negotiated at the state level, and how both countries' approach contributes to regional peace and stability. The study adopts an instrumentalist-constructivist perspective where identities are simultaneously constructed through discourse and are instruments of power in the pursuit of strategic interests. The paper adds to larger debates on the instrumental use of religious traits in foreign policies as well as sectarianism and desectarianization.



PremAnand Mishra

PremAnand Mishra is currently a doctoral candidate at the Centre for West Asian Studies, in the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He has presented many research papers at national and international seminars. His MPhil was on "Islam in Western Discourses: Perspectives of Edward Said and Bernard Lewis" and he is currently writing his PhD dissertation on "Islamic Cosmopolitanism and Rethinking Modernity: Marxist Perspectives." He is an ex-correspondent for the Business Standard, India and worked with UNICEF as a consultant.

The Geo-politics of Sectarianism and its Impact on Indian Muslims: A Normative Understanding

The rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia has had a disturbing presence in South Asia. Christopher Jaffrelot calls it an 'Arabisation of South Asian Islam.' At the historical level, the strong Sufi culture was more prominent as the face of Islam in the Indian Subcontinent. Since 1979, however, sectarianism has found a geo-political presence in South Asia, which many call: the transformation of 'Indo-Islamic civilisation' to 'Arabisation'. In Pakistan, sectarianism has established a deeper root and is becoming more violent. However, the situation in India has been less discussed. The argument has been that India doesn't have a sectarian problem. The paper aims to challenge that at three levels. First, there is a resonance among Indian Muslims on the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The second level focuses on Kashmir and Kerala, where sectarianism can be seen as an everyday reality. Thirdly, at the height of the ISIS threat, Shi'is offered to visit Iraq to fight the hegemony of 'Sunni internationalism.' The paper will discuss Simon Mabon's work on sectarian rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia based on two approaches: identity incongruence and internal security dilemma.



Rapheal Ojo Joseph

Rapheal Ojo Joseph is currently a Doctoral student and holds a BA in Religious Studies and an MA in Comparative Religious Studies. He serves as lecturer in the Department of Religion and African Culture in Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo State, Nigeria. He has published in national and international journals on his research interests of religion and society.

The Porousness of Religious Borders: Dissemination of Religious Ideas and their Implications on the Nigerian State

Religion is assumed to be the only professional field where those with no certifications or high level of education can operate unchallenged. Its 'free entry and exit' nature in Nigeria often allows for proliferation and dissemination of different but sometimes conflicting ideologies and doctrines that have become a major threat to the Nigerian state and thereby portends danger to human survival if not properly and ultimately addressed. This religious freedom has created splinter groups in the form of sects or denominations with different motives which at times could threaten human security, such as in the case of the Boko Haram insurgency which has been misconstrued as a religious struggle. This work interrogates some of these issues that are connected to religious manipulation and the uncontrolled dissemination of religious beliefs, and their implications on Nigeria. It proffers workable solutions and argues for de-emphasizing of religious exclusivism, deconstruction of the age-long theologies of 'absolute truth claims', and the re-evaluation of the concept of religious pluralism and its possibility and plausibility given the contemporary realities of the proliferation of religious ideas.



Saad Ahmad

Saad Ahmad received his PhD degree from Centre for West Asian Studies, in the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. He is working on his book *Discourses of Salafism in the Arab World*. He is also a part of the "Contending Modernities" project at the University of Notre Dame, and has recently joined as a research assistant at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

The Sectarian Turn in the Discourse of Salafism: The Case of India

One of the essential aspects of Salafism emerges out of its ability to imagine a particular world. In discourses of Salafism, the idea of 'righteousness' defines the 'being' and related mode of existing. However, in the name of reform and delivering the ideal Islam or so-called moderate Islam, a differently idealised, perhaps domestic-able sense of Salafism means to represent pure Islam. Thus, the official version of Salafism captures and tries to homogenise associated practice worldwide. Noticing no resistance against homogenisation of Salafi discourses, the paper intends to discuss the 'sectarian turn' in discourses of Salafism with unique references to India and the Arab world. It highlights how a sort of Salafi discursivity in India is 'shifting from being in the society' to 'being in the text'. It explains Salafi arguments with new kinds of sensibility towards the sectarian consciousness. At the same time, alleged regional contestation of West Asia's theology of sectarianism feeds the South Asian social set up in general, and India in particular. Thus, this paper intends to unpack the related complexities.



Sara Musaifer

Sara Musaifer is a PhD candidate in the University of Minnesota's Comparative and International Development Education Program and a Pre-doctoral Fellow for Excellence through Diversity at the University of Pennsylvania. Drawing on critical education studies, political anthropology, and feminist critique, her dissertation scrutinizes competing pedagogies of belongingness in Bahrain's schools. Using critical ethnography, she uses historical archives, sociopolitical structures, and the lived experiences of girls to demonstrate the malleability of categories of difference contingent to particular times, places, and encounters.

"Switch on the TV, Do You Hear Us?": The Politics of Sociolinguistics, Belongingness and Schooling in (Post) Colonial Bahrain

This paper focuses on the question of sociolinguistics, and its relationship to power differentials, identity-formation, and schooling in (post) colonial Bahrain. Drawing on qualitative data, school-based ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, and archival research over the course of one year, the paper makes four main arguments. First, the rise of the monolingual nation-state in Bahrain finds inspiration in Western colonial epistemologies. Second, languages and dialects become critical sites of exercising power, maintaining differences, challenging authorities and transforming cultures. Third, discourses and practices of linguistic identities are entangled in a web of contestations over religious, ethnic, racial, class and gender identities. And finally, linguistic homogenization efforts unfolding in schools - especially in relation to identity and community - are fraught terrains. Their imposition of a particular interpretation of self and other, belongingness and community, is constantly re-negotiated by students, teachers and administrators, in ways that are subtle, creative, and deeply political, inside and outside of the school.



Serhun Al

Serhun Al is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Izmir University of Economics, Turkey. His research interests include the politics of identity, ethnic conflict, security studies and social movements within the context of Turkish and Kurdish politics. In addition to his peer-reviewed articles, he is the co-editor of *Comparative Kurdish Politics in the Middle East* and the author of *Patterns of Nationhood and Saving the State in Turkey*.

Why Does Nationalism Not Unite the Ethnic Brethren? Organizational Rivalry and the Competing Kurdish Nationalisms in Iraq, Syria and Turkey

Kurds are considered to be one of the largest ethnic groups in the world with a population of around 30 million people, and they do not have their own independent state. Yet, Kurds are not a homogenous group with a collective understanding of self-government. There are intra-Kurdish rivalries related to delivering physical, psychological, and cultural security for the Kurds in a volatile region. For instance, while the Barzani-led Kurdish nationalists in northern Iraq believe that Kurds have been victimized due to the lack of their own independent Kurdish nation-state (and thus only the Kurdish nation-state would permanently secure the Kurds), the Ocalan-led Kurdish nationalists (YPG) in northern Syria tend to believe that the system of nation-state itself is a source of insecurity for not only Kurds but for other ethnic and religious groups in the region as well. My broader research question is: why does Kurdish nationalism fail to unite these different Kurdish actors despite their common victimhood and threat perceptions? Why do these two competing Kurdish nationalist projects have different understandings of security and stability? The data for this research is based on field work in northern Iraq and eastern Turkey.



Siwar Youssef

Siwar Youssef is a second year sociology doctoral student in Corvinus University in Budapest, Hungary. Her main interests are in gender, religion, and entrepreneurship. She is currently a teaching assistant for "Foundations of Organizational Sociology," and a reviewer with the *Corvinus Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*. Siwar holds a bachelor's degree in Logistics Engineering and a master's degree from the University of Sousse in Management and Entrepreneurship.

The 'Jasmine' and 'Nile' Revolutions: Religion as a Mobilizer of Communitarianism after the Arab Awakening

Nine years have passed since the beginning of the protests in the North African and Arab countries, generally known as the "Arab Spring/Awakening". However, the academic/scientific community still does not implement a specific analysis to evaluate the religious "Islamic" communitarianism movement among the anti-authoritarian regime protests. Observers have affirmed that religion played an important role in motivating the collective protests. This pattern was particularly common in some African and Muslim countries where religion played a particularly strong role in encouraging social movements. Religion also influenced political mobilization. Thus we have reason to believe that religion may influence protest behavior through multiple communal channels. The main question of this paper is: Did the Islamist movements promote or discourage communitarian behavior in the revolutionary protests during and after the Arab Spring?



Zubair Ibrahim

Zubair Ibrahim is an Islamic scholar, having received a degree in Islamic Studies from University of Ilorin in 2006, as well as an MA and PhD from the University of Port-Harcourt in 2011 and 2018 respectively. He lectures in the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, University of Port-Harcourt. He has published numerous works and presented papers at different local and international workshops and conferences. His research interests are revivalism, fundamentalism, and Nigerian Islam.

Sectarianism, Shi'ism and the Contemporary Conflict with the Nigerian Government

The problems of sectarianism, minorities and communal violence in Nigeria have attracted much scholarly attention. This is against the backdrop of the violence between the Nigerian government and the Nigerian Shi'a. This article examines the historicity of contestations and the effects of the social disorder of religious violence and sectarianism in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Utilizing the historical approach and the qualitative research method, the work avers that the history of Shiism and the sectarian crisis in Nigeria can be traced to the aftermath of the Iranian revolution. It also discovered that sectarianism and religious violence must be understood in the wider context of Nigerian political economy, which has fostered unemployment, corruption, poverty and youth frustration. The work recommends caution on the part of the Nigerian state and interfaith dialogue to resolve tensions between the Shi'a and the state. There is also the need for provision of education and employment for the youths who participate in violence.



Sumeyra Yakar

Sumeyra Yakar started her higher education at Uludag and Marmara University in Turkey. She obtained her PhD degree at Exeter University, on the relationship between theory and practice in shar'ia legal systems. Her research focuses on the usage of custom in the legal systems of Muslim countries. She is specialized in the legal systems of contemporary Saudi Arabia and Iran. Sumeyra further studies the religious practices, sectarian differences, and influence of religion on the political arena in MENA region.

The Usage of Sectarian Religious Interpretations in Iran and Saudi Arabia

The notion of innovation (bid'a) in religion according to the interpretation of Saudi and Iranian scholars shapes the way of life in these countries. The concept of bid'a as a religious tool is also used to create idiosyncratic nations depending on the interpretation of different scholars, Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia and Shi'is in Iran. The respondents' opinion of the religious concept of bid'a will be analysed with reference to the sectarian interpretations and custom of societies by using the descriptive method throughout the paper. With the intent of perceptibly unfolding the interaction between sectarianism and the concept of bid'a within Islamic legal opinions related to custom, the fatwas issued by scholars will be chosen as exemplary texts. The religious opinions (fatwas) concerning Nowruz celebrations, issued by the Dar al-Iftaa in Saudi Arabia and marji' taqlids (sources of imitation) in Iran are presented and evaluated both in terms of methodological and contextual components. The analysis of religious opinions attempts to introduce and compare the operative purposes behind the rulings, in order to answer the question: which reasons impel the scholars functioning in these two countries towards issuing diametrically opposite views on this controversial issue?



Victor Achem

Victor Achem is a doctoral candidate at the University of Ibadan. He specializes in social research and data deconstruction. His areas of interest include Victimology, Armed Conflict, Forced Migration, and Restorative Justice. For the past two years, Victor has worked to investigate the victimhood experiences of displaced farming communities in Nigeria. His work currently focuses on support systems available to victims and strategies for reintegrating displaced communities affected by herders-farmers conflict, which is ubiquitous in Nigeria.

Middle East to West Africa: The Shi'i Uprising and the Threat to the Nigerian State

Between 1999 and 2019, the Shi'i Islamic Movement of Nigeria, backed by Iran, has engaged in a series of armed clashes with the Nigerian forces, leading to the proscription of the group by the federal government in August 2019. The major discourse explains how the use of force by the Nigerian government could provoke the Shi'i group into embracing a radical approach and how effective conflict management could prevent such radicalization. This paper adopts structural strain theory by Robert K. Merton, and incorporates data from available academic literature on Islamic radicalism, as well as reports from reliable local and international media and human rights organizations. Organizations like Amnesty International and Islamic Human Rights Commission condemned the Nigerian army for killing Shi'i members and conducting secret mass burials. However, this outcry, and the detention of El-Zakzaky since 2015, has sparked a series of protests in Nigeria, Iran and India. Considering the Shi'i and Sunni divide in the Middle East, Nigeria may be caught in-between their cold war.

Discussants



Abdelwahab El-Affendi

Abdelwahab El-Affendi is Professor of Politics, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, and coordinator of the Democracy and Islam Program at the University of Westminster (since 1998). He holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Reading, UK. In 2015, El-Affendi published a book called *Genocidal Nightmares: Narratives of Insecurity and the Structure of Mass Atrocities*, (Bloomsbury Academic). Previously, he worked as a diplomat in the Sudanese Foreign Ministry (1990-1997).



Adham Saouli

Adham Saouli is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and a Senior Lecturer in the School of International Relations at University of St Andrews, UK. He received his PhD from the University of St Andrews in 2009. His research is in the fields of International Relations and Comparative Politics, focusing on the Middle East region. In 2019, he published his second book *Hezbollah: Socialisation and its Tragic Ironies*.



Azmi Bishara

Azmi Bishara is a Palestinian intellectual and political writer. He holds a PhD in philosophy, and he is currently the General Director of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. Bishara received the Ibn Rushd Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2002 and the Global Exchange Human Rights Award in 2003. Bishara is particularly known for his research on civil society, theories of nationalism, religion and secularism, and his analysis of society and the state in Israel. Azmi Bishara also conducted interdisciplinary research into the issue of sectarianism, culminating in the book: *Sect, Sectarianism and Imagined Sects*.



Luai Ali

Luai Ali is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, and a researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. He has a PhD in Comparative Politics, and is an expert in nationalism and comparative political institutions – specifically parliamentary institutions in authoritarian regimes. Ali has written on the politics of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and other countries in the GCC for such outlets as *Omran* and *Al-Thaabet wal-Mutahawel*. His latest project examines the consultative councils in the GCC countries, and the role these councils play in policy-making.



Majed Al Ansari

Majed Al Ansari is Assistant Professor of Political Sociology at Qatar University and the Manager of the Policy Department at the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI). He received his PhD degree in Social Change from the University of Manchester. Al Ansari previously served at the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various civil society institutions. He has contributed extensively as a political analyst to various media outlets. In addition, Al Ansari writes a weekly column for the Qatari daily, *Al Sharq*.



Marc Caball

Marc Caball is an historian and Associate Professor in the School of History, University College Dublin. He was awarded a DPhil from the University of Oxford, UK. Caball is also the lead investigator on the Irish Research Council funded project 'Mapping readers and readership in Dublin, 1826-1926: a new cultural geography'. His research interests center on early modern Ireland and the history of the early modern British Atlantic. His current research projects are focused on the cultures of communication in early modern Ireland and the Tralee fascicle, for the Royal Irish Academy's Irish Historic Towns Atlas.



Morten Valbjørn

Morten Valbjørn is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Aarhus University, Denmark. He holds a PhD in Science from Aarhus University. Valbjørn has published a number of research papers in established international journals and

edited volumes, such as *Studying identity politics in Middle East international relations before and after the Arab uprisings* in Raymond Hinnebusch & Jasmine Gani (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook to the Middle East and North African State and States System* (Routledge, 2020). His research interests are Middle Eastern Islamism before and after 2011 and sectarian politics before, during and after 2011.



Muhanad Seloom

Assistant Professor on the Master's Program in Critical Security Studies at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. He has held a research fellowship with honours for three years (2019-2022) at the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter (UK). He specializes in analyzing government security policies, military and strategic studies, the security of ethnic and sectarian conflicts, and security sector reform processes. He has published many academic and executive-advisory works.



Nader Hashemi

Nader Hashemi is an Associate Professor and the Director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Denver, USA. He obtained his doctorate from the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto. Hashemi's intellectual and research interests are related to debates on religion and democracy, secularism and its discontents, the Middle East, democratic and human rights struggles in non-Western societies and Islam-West relations.



Nour Munawar

Nour Munawar is a PhD researcher at the Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture (AHM) & the Amsterdam Centre for Ancient Studies and Archaeology (ACASA). He is mainly interested in cultural heritage management and conflict archaeology. Prior to his admission at University of Amsterdam, Nour finished a Master in Archaeology from the University of Warsaw-Poland. Nour is currently working on his PhD Project: "The (Re) construction of Syrian and Iraqi Cultural Heritage in Post-Conflict Contexts." The project explores the prospects of (re)constructing and rehabilitating cultural heritage sites affected by armed conflicts in Syria and Iraq.



Simon Mabon

Simon Mabon is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University, UK and the Director of SEPAD, the Sectarianism, Proxies and De-Sectarianization Project, which looks at the way in which the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is shaping sectarianism and politics across the Middle East. This current phase of research will produce two single authored monographs. One of them, *Houses built on sand: Violence, sectarianism and revolution in the Middle East*, will be published by Manchester University Press in early 2020.



Toby Matthiesen

Toby Matthiesen is a Senior Research Fellow in the International Relations of the Middle East at Oxford University, UK. He holds a PhD from SOAS, University of London. His research interests include the modern history of the Gulf States, Sunni-Shia relations, and the legacies of the Cold War in the Middle East. He is the author of *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring That Wasn't* (Stanford University Press), and *The Other Saudis: Shiism, Dissent and Sectarianism* (Cambridge University Press).



Yasir Suleiman

Yasir Suleiman is President and Provost of Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, and an Emeritus Professor of Modern Arabic Studies at Cambridge University. Professor Suleiman is Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE). He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, formerly Head of the Department of Middle Eastern Studies and Founding Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies. His many published works include *Language and Society in the Middle East and North Africa* (2015), *A War of Words: Language and Conflict in the Middle East* (2004).