MENA POLITICS NEWSLETTER

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OUR MISSION

The Middle East and North Africa Politics Section of the American Political Science Association (APSA) was established in 2018 to support, develop and publish research on the politics of the MENA region utilizing interdisciplinary methodological, theoretical and empirical tools. It seeks to fully integrate the rigorous study of the politics of the Middle East with the broader discipline of Political Science, to serve as an institutional home for the community of political scientists dedicated to the Middle East. This Newsletter is a forum for discussion of research and issues of interest to the community.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the APSA MENA POLITICS SECTION NEWSLETTER, the official publication of the MENA POLITICS Organized Section. The first volume of the Newsletter was edited and produced by a dedicated team of early career scholars from the region, with support from the APSA MENA Network team (see their note in this issue). With this issue, we relaunch the Newsletter with a new editorial team and a new mandate.

The newly relaunched Newsletter is intended to become a central forum for the community of political scientists working on and in the Middle East and North Africa, available to Section members and to the broader academic public. The Newsletter will publish a wide range of provocative and compelling essays of interest across the field. Essays and special sections will feature original research, provocative reflections on fieldwork and methodology, discussions of emergent research programs, reviews of multiple new publications, and provocations designed to stimulate debate. We invite suggestions, proposals and submissions from all Section members. To guide this exciting new forum, we have recruited a diverse and talented Editorial Board to steer the Newsletter's strategic direction: Holger Albrecht, Nermin Allam, Alexandra Blackman, May Darwich, Kevan Harris, Shimaa Hatab, Lisel Hintz, Lama Mourad, Jillian Schwedler, Nadav Shelef, Stacey Philbrick Yadav, and Sean Yom.

The MENA POLITICS SECTION was approved as an Organized Section by the APSA Council at the 2018 Annual Conference with a mandate to support, develop and publish research on the politics of the MENA region utilizing interdisciplinary methodological, theoretical and empirical tools. It seeks to fully integrate the rigorous study of the politics of the Middle East with the broader discipline of Political Science, to serve as an institutional home for the community of political scientists dedicated to the Middle East, and to fully integrate scholars from the MENA region and diverse scholars from the United States into the global study of Middle East politics. It builds on earlier efforts by the Conference Group on the Middle East inside APSA, and the decade of field building supported by the Project on Middle East Political Science outside of APSA.

The Section is led by Marc Lynch (Chair), Lindsay Benstead (Vice-Chair), Steven Brooke (Treasurer), Bassel Salloukh (At-Large), and Jillian Schwedler (At-Large). The Section quickly acquired nearly 200 members even before most of its official activities have begun. Its active Twitter feed @APSAMENA has more than 500 followers, and its recently created Facebook page has over 100 followers. While some Section activities (such as eligibility for awards) is limited to members, it aspires to reach a broader academic public. Section dues are waived for graduate students and scholars from the region. It has an independent website (https://www.apsamena.org) outside the APSA membership paywall, where those interested in the political science of the region can follow Section news, learn about professional opportunities, and freely download the Section Newsletter.

2019 will be the first Annual Conference of the APSA for the MENA Politics Section, and it will be a busy one. On Wednesday, August 28, the Section will co-sponsor (with the Project on Middle East Political Science and the APSA MENA Network) the MENA Politics Research Development Group short course for

the second year. The RDG workshop is designed to bring together early career scholars from the region for intensive discussion of article length papers and professional development programming. The 2018 RDG featured paper presentations by Sultan Alamer, Aymen Boughanmi, Shimaa Hatab, Dana el-Kurd and Lama Mourad, with discussants including Melani Cammett, F. Gregory Gause, Michael Herb, Ellen Lust, Curtis Ryan, Jillian Schwedler, and Sean Yom. The 2019 RDG will discuss the work of six more early career scholars: Luai Allarakia, Abdeslam Badre, Mona Farag, Rania Abdel Naeem Mahmoud, Safa al-Saeedi, and Basileus Zeno. The Section will also be co-sponsoring a Short Course on teaching about the Middle East, organized and run by Gamze Cavdar and Sultan Tepe.

The APSA allocated the Section three panels at the 2019 Annual Conference. In a highly competitive process, the selection committee formed by Section Vice-Chair Lindsay Benstead chose the following to represent our inaugural set of MENA Politics panels: *Gender and Institutional Change in the Middle East and North Africa* (Marwa Shalaby and Melissa Marschall; Alex Blackman, Julia Clark, and Aytug Sazmaz; Gail Buttorff and Bozena Wellborne; Carolyn Barnett; chair, Mark Tessler; and discussant Lindsay Benstead; *Old and New Actors in the Middle East and North Africa* (Ashley Anderson; Mohamad-Dhia Hammami; Lindsay Benstead and Ellen Lust; Kim Guiler; chair Sharan Grewal; and discussant Aytan Sasmaz); and *Survey Research in the in the Middle East and North Africa* (Matt Buehler, Kristin Fabbe and Kyung Joon Han; Steven Brooke, Michael Hoffman, and Youssef Chahoud; Holger Albrecht, Sharan Grewal, and Kevin Koehler; Dina Bishara, Michelle Jurkovich, and Robert Griffin; chair Amaney Jamal; and discussant Ellen Lust). In addition, the Section selected one poster presentation from Saadet Konak Unal, University of Houston, on "The Role of Gender in the Turkish Parliament."

At the Business Meeting of the 2019 Annual Conference, the Section will present its inaugural awards, chosen by selection committees assembled by Section Vice-Chair Lindsay Benstead. The awards will be given for "Best Dissertation" (defended in AY 2017-18) and "Best APSA Paper" (presented at the 2018 Annual Conference). Finally, on Friday evening the Section will partner with POMEPS to sponsor a reception open to all scholars working on or in the Middle East and North Africa.

I am delighted to share the rich set of essays in our inaugural Newsletter: *Nermin Allam* reflects on the frustrations of fieldwork on Egyptian women during and after the revolution; *Steven Brooke* and *Neil Ketchley* use their recent work on Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood to explore the value of novel historical archival sources for political science research; *Kevan Harris* and *Daniel Tavana* discuss rigorous new public opinion survey research in Iran; *Waleed Hazbun*, *Karim Makdisi* and *Coralie Hindawi* discuss the politics of insecurity from the vantage point of Beirut; *Lisel Hintz* argues for the value of studying popular culture for understanding Turkish politics; *Marc Lynch* investigates Islamist movements in wartime conditions; *Lama Mourad* and *Daniel Masterson* engage with ethical issues surrounding the wave of research on Syrian refugees; *David Patel* points to the surprising neglect of Iraq in the study of Islamist movements; *Kristian Ulrichsen* lays out the growing problems facing academic research in the Gulf; *Morten Valbjørn* proposes multiple ways of theorizing identity politics; and *Stacey Philbrick Yadav* offers a profound reflection on the ethics and pragmatics of research on a Yemen at war.

Sincerely,
Marc Lynch, The George Washington University

RESEARCH REFLECTIONS AND CONTENTIONS

RESEARCHING HOPE AND FAILED EXPECTATIONS

By Nermin Allam, Rutgers University

In *Women and the Egyptian Revolution: Engagement and Activism during the 2011 Arab Uprisings*, I offered an oral history of women's engagement in the January 25th uprising that led to the ousting of former Egyptian president Ḥusnī Mubārak.[1] Thinking now about my book, remembering my fieldwork, and reflecting on the present turn of events in Egypt, I was quickly overwhelmed by feelings of futility. Futility is an all too common feeling, present whenever I think or write about the experiences of women in the 2011 episode of contention. The uprising, a then seemingly decisive juncture in Egypt's political history, ended with the consolidation of authoritarianism and the persecution of activists, including independent feminists.

Scholars and researchers in Middle Eastern studies have explained the ways in which carrying out research in a politically sensitive context and amid an evolving political landscape raise important ethical demands and ongoing moral dilemmas.[2] Building upon my experience conducting research during and following the uprising in Egypt, I highlight how this evolving political landscape had important implications on the research process and knowledge production. The experience of failed expectations and the consolidation of authoritarianism left me asking fundamental questions about not only the nature of uprisings, but also how to research these episodes of contention and convey activists' experiences of hope and failed expectations. These questions are at the heart of my research on women's engagement in political struggles and collective action and have broad relevance across the field.

CHALLENGES OF CONDUCTING FIELDWORK

While conducting my fieldwork in 2014, I observed the revival of the security state, the rise of hyper-nationalism among citizens, and the narrowing—and eventually the closing—of the political landscape. Following the election of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in June 2014, the Egyptian regime actively disseminated a discourse of fear, constantly warning citizens against a conspiracy to bring down Egypt. For some interviewees, "talking politics"[3] had become a painful exercise. Politics, as one of my interviewees astutely described, had been given "a bad name."[4]

The politicization of everyday life in Egypt and the media's treatment of "politics as entertainment"[5] contributed to the loss of momentum and to the spread of political exhaustion. Notwithstanding this aura of fear and disappointment, other interviewees were still willing to participate and share their views. I, however, found myself reluctant to ask politically sensitive questions. In such a context, self-censoring marks not only participants' responses but also the researcher's questions. I found myself steering the discussion away from what might be perceived as a red line. Red lines in a dynamically repressive regime are often blurry, as surveillance and control are carried out by not only state agents but also non-state actors.[6] Beyond presenting a threat to the interviewees and the researchers, control and surveillance effectively limit access to the voices of activists on the ground. These obstacles have implications for the validity of our research and authenticity of our analysis.

Besides self-censoring, this constricted political landscape influences and shapes how the researcher is perceived among participants and interviewees. I often wondered how my identity as

an Egyptian female studying in North America—thus an outsider often perceived as among those benefiting from the emerging "academic tourism"[7] in the region—had an impact on my interviewees' responses.[8] The effect of this insider-outsider identity came to the forefront during my interview with a state official in 2014, following the election of al-Sisi. In my interview with a director at a national institution for women's rights, the director denied that sexual harassment was a problem in Egypt. She insisted that the number of incidents were insignificant and blamed women who dressed liberally, or who were, like me, "young and present in the public space." I am still not sure how to situate her answer, but during the interview I could not but feel that, notwithstanding my Egyptian origin, my status as a researcher studying in the West positioned me as an outsider. Thus, the director might have felt that it was her duty to conceal and deny the phenomenon in the presence of a "perceived outsider" like myself.

REPRESENTING ACTIVISTS' VOICES

During my fieldwork, I also recognized with disappointment the sense of despair growing among intellectuals and activists. When I had carried out my first round of interviews in Egypt in 2012, the atmosphere was marked by cautious optimism, hope, and a belief in a better future. This positive aura, however, was short-lived and soon came to an end with the resurgence of gender inequality, the rise of gender-based violence, and the failure of democratic transition in Egypt. Themes of despair and disappointment became fundamental features of my interviews in 2014 and more intensely in 2017, as female participants reflected on their experiences and their expectations for change following the uprising. However, whenever I asked if that was it, if that was the end of change and reform, they hastily asserted: "Not yet." Activists often

claimed that the experience of collective action has changed them and that "things" cannot return to the "old days."[9] However, in many ways, "things" now seem far worse than the "old days," leaving the question of what really changed unanswered.

> **❝ Themes of despair and disappointment became fundamental features of my interviews in 2014 and more intensely in 2017...However, whenever I asked if that ... they hastily asserted: "Not yet."**

What really changed is an important question to ask and a significant one to answer. It reclaims the voices of activists and contributes to explaining the challenges and opportunities that developed after the uprising. Answering this question, however, presents the researcher with a number of challenges and demands. The political and personal narratives conveyed by activists carry a deep emotional attachment to the euphoria of the January 25th Uprising in Egypt and have an unmistakable emotional weight. Regardless of the subjectivity of some of these narratives, researchers have a responsibility to document these accounts and experiences. Recollection, as Haruki Murakami describes in his novel, *Kafka on the Shore*, is "the only proof that I have lived."[10] Researchers, thus, have a responsibility to not only document the narratives but position the content and tone of these narratives within the broader map of hope and failed expectation. In so doing, we are able to maintain the robustness of our empirical data, the authenticity of our analysis, and the relevancy of our research despite hostile authoritarian settings and disappointing political landscapes.

REVISITING THE ORIGINS OF POLITICAL ISLAM

By Steven Brooke, University of Louisville and Neil Ketchley, King's College London[11]

The study of comparative politics is increasingly concerned with historical questions.[12] From examining the impact of long-run socio-economic developments to understanding the dynamics of revolution and collective violence, we think that this trend holds particular promise for political scientists of the Middle East. In this essay, we describe our current historically-oriented book project on the origins of political Islam in interwar Egypt. In doing so, we illustrate how scholars can reexamine key moments and episodes from the region's history by combining underutilized historical data with newer analytical techniques from quantitative political science.

USING HISTORICAL DATA AND MIXED METHODS TO TEST ESTABLISHED THEORIES

Our approach to studying the origins of political Islam is motivated by the belief that the historical emergence and success of movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood are outcomes that must be systematically explained, rather than taken for granted. Last year we published the first chapter of this project as an article in the *American Political Science Review*.[13] We used a mixed-methods research design to answer the question "under what conditions did the first Islamist groups establish an organizational presence?" We began with a detailed inventory of hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood branches published by the group in 1937 and 1940. Then, with the support of a grant from the Project on Middle East Political Science, we digitized fine-grained socioeconomic data from the 1937 Egyptian census held at the American University in Cairo and the Egyptian National Library. We strengthened the analysis by collecting additional data on other factors that may have led to the rise of the Brotherhood including the sites of missionary activity, the locations of British military bases, and the extent of Egypt's rail infrastructure during the period. By matching the branch locations with this array of historical data, we were able to identify the social contexts associated with Muslim Brotherhood branch formation.

In some aspects, our findings corroborated the existing case literature on Islamist movements.[14] For example, looking across more than 4,000 subdistricts, we found that the Brotherhood was much more likely to establish a presence in areas with higher literacy rates. In others, however, the findings suggested revising how we understand the spread of Islamist movements. In contrast to the prevailing orthodoxy that asserts Islamists initially established a foothold in areas where Muslims were more likely to come into contact with the West, our analysis revealed that the probability of a Muslim Brotherhood branch emerging actually dropped as the local European population increased. Similarly, we find no evidence to suggest that the first Islamist movements established a presence in areas where Christian missionaries were more active.[15] Our analysis also identified new factors patterning the organizational growth of Islamist activism during this period. Drawing in part on a theoretical literature highlighting the importance of economic infrastructure and transport availability to social movement formation and perpetuation, we found that subdistricts hosting a railway station were much more likely to host a Muslim Brotherhood branch compared to subdistricts without a station. We gained additional confidence in this finding through a focused case study of the Brotherhood's use of Egypt's train network to grow the movement, drawing on railway travel itineraries of key Brotherhood personnel published in the movement's newspaper.

GETTING CREATIVE WITH ARCHIVAL AND GEOSPATIAL DATA

Future chapters of the book continue to mine this rich vein of historical material. In one chapter, we use listings of thousands of advertisements for mosque-based lectures delivered by Islamic associations in the 1920s and 30s, including the Muslim Brotherhood, to identify which Cairene mosques were more likely to host early Islamist activism. However, it is not sufficient to simply identify the characteristics of mosques where early Islamist were present: inference requires also identifying those mosques which *did not* host this activism. To capture the universe of mosques during this period, we collaborated with Tarek Masoud to digitize and geo-reference a series of very highly detailed (1: 5,000 scale) maps of Cairo produced by the Egyptian Survey Authority in the 1930s. As these maps identify the location and size of every mosque in Greater Cairo during this critical early period of the Muslim Brotherhood's growth, we can explain why Islamists were more likely to mobilize in some mosques and not others.

In a preliminary analysis, we find that larger mosques located closer to transport networks (in this case, tram lines) were more likely to host Islamic activists affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Mosques serving areas that lacked government health services were also more likely to see Islamist activism, and this activism predicts where the Brotherhood went on to establish their health services in the 1940s. Extending our investigation of the relationship between Christian missionary movements and the Muslim Brotherhood, we find that mosques serving areas where missionaries were active were also much less likely to see Islamist activism, controlling for a range of plausible confounders. Taken together, this finding confirms that the emergence and development of political Islam in Egypt cannot be reduced to a cultural reaction to the West but was instead profoundly intertwined with the development of the modern Egyptian state and economy.

A cursory examination of interwar Egypt also reveals an array of rival organizations and political movements of every ideological persuasion and repertoire, yet only the Muslim Brotherhood endured. To explain these varied trajectories, we analyze a comprehensive list of members of the Young Egypt movement. Because this list includes the precise addresses of these activists, we can use our map series, as well as census data, to compare the contexts that produced activism by Young Egypt with those that produced the Muslim Brotherhood. Another chapter will be based on a completely geo-referenced 500-sheet map series from the period that details a range of political, social, and economic features across the entire country, including the precise location of thousands of mosques and shrines. We will couple these maps with a list of over 700 branches of the Muslim Brotherhood that existed in 1944, which we recently discovered in the archival record.

PROSPECTS FOR REVISITING A RICH—AND UNUSED—HISTORICAL RECORD

This deeply historical project has taken us into archives across Egypt, the U.S., and the UK. Our work is not the first to cover this period of Egyptian history or the Muslim Brotherhood; this is a terrain that has been fairly well trod by both historians and social scientists.[16] Yet during our research we have been struck by the fact that large swathes of source material are completely unexploited. Because the majority of prior research on this period has been qualitative, a variety of quantitative information remains nearly completely unused.

" *...during our research we have been struck by the fact that large swathes of source material are completely unexploited.*

This is no small thing—the intense association between the colonial project and systematic data collection (including mapping) means that multiple aspects of political, social, and economic life during the period were catalogued by colonial agents, often in minute detail.[17] While we should be critical of the motives that lay behind producing these sources, they can nevertheless enable us to tell the story of this period in a way that has not been done before.

Quite obviously, we are not the first to discover that history provides a deep reservoir of evidence that can help us vital questions in comparative politics. Nor do we claim that that quantitative research is superior to other types of frameworks. But two factors suggest that revisiting the rich historical record with an eye towards quantitative and mixed-method research designs is likely to yield significant advances. First, the sheer volume of the available material—including census data, maps, movement publications, government records, and newspaper reports—allows us to arbitrate key claims that underpin our understanding of Middle East politics. Often, we have found this valuable "new" data for our project literally side-by-side in the archives with primary source material that served as the backbone for a number of classic histories of the period. We expect that researchers interested in such topics as state formation, the legacies of contemporary underdevelopment, and historical episodes of political contention will find similar imbalances in the exploitation of source material. As with our project on political Islam, this will likely allow researchers to revise and deepen our understanding of more contemporary phenomena.

Finally, and more practically, we note with concern the increasing difficulty of fieldwork in the region. Researchers, even those studying subjects that have traditionally seemed innocuous, put themselves at significant risk of targeted harassment, arrest and detention, and even physical injury. The danger is often far greater for local informants and interlocutors, who lack the backing of university apparatuses, professional organizations, and foreign passports. As students of Egyptian politics, we have felt this constriction acutely. There are, of course, a variety of ways to accommodate these unfortunate realities, including turning to the internet, gathering freely-available data from Twitter feeds, Facebook polls, or other digital sources such as Google Maps.[18] We would also suggest scholars to return to the historical record with a particular eye towards exploiting quantitative data, which we believe can helpfully speak to significant questions in comparative politics.

POLLING AN ISLAMIC REPUBLIC: THE IRAN SOCIAL SURVEY

Kevan Harris, UCLA and Daniel Tavana, Princeton University

Polls in Iran, when conducted with sound methods, can inform us about a post-revolutionary state with semi-competitive elections and a rapidly changing society. Even government-backed organizations in Iran conduct surveys and relay the findings. The Iranian Student Polling Agency (ISPA), a polling organization founded in 2001 under a state academic supervisory body, the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution, predicted the outcome of the July 2017 presidential election in Iran within two percentage points of the declared vote returns. The same prediction was also made by an independent polling firm in the days prior to the election.[19] Yet many social scientists who study Iran have been unaware of, or reluctant to use, survey methods, partly due to government limitations imposed on

polling organizations in the past. Understandably, many Iranians tend to distrust survey data as well. Or, perhaps more accurately, they tend to distrust survey data unless they see a result which confirms their prior beliefs. Persian-language social media across the political spectrum is peppered with reports of highly-skewed polls, often conducted online with convenience samples, without much discussion of validity or reliability.

For the Iran Social Survey, a phone survey of over 5,000 individuals fielded in November to December 2016 using a nationally-representative probability sample of the population, we aimed to gather a dataset which laid empirical foundations under the abstract concepts often used to explain political and social trends in the Islamic Republic. Both scholarly and popular writings on the country, as with other states in the Middle East and North Africa, deploy terms such as "middle class," "youth," "urban," and "educated" to analytically describe, or even theoretically explain, large-scale outcomes. These concepts do a lot of heavy lifting in social science on Iran and the rest of the MENA region in discussions of electoral behavior and social relations, yet such terms contain assumptions which need to be empirically scrutinized.

While reliance on household phone polls has become increasingly difficult in the United States, with low response rates and higher degrees of sampling error, conditions in Iran today are quite favorable for phone-based surveys. More than 95 percent of Iranian households have a fixed landline phone, and there is a low level of polling saturation among the population. Detailed census data is available for weighting samples as necessary. With a pilot-tested survey instrument, checks on enumerator error, and careful attention to word choice and question order, a survey can produce high response rates and relatively reliable data.

For example, we asked respondents whether they voted in the 2013 Iranian presidential election as well as the 2016 parliamentary election. Reported voter turnout rates in our sample were consistent with official turnout data produced by the Islamic Republic's Ministry of Interior. In fact, the Iran Social Survey is one of the few studies in which official turnout rates reported after an election in Iran have been independently verified.

> **❝ ...we were able to probe long-asserted but rarely tested relationships between electoral behavior and individual characteristics in Iran.**

Combined with respondent variables on demographics, income, education, and residence, we were able to probe long-asserted but rarely tested relationships between electoral behavior and individual characteristics in Iran. Through our data, we found many similarities within political life between Iran and its MENA neighbors. For instance, most Iranians follow political news closely, but few of them personally identify with a national political faction. This helps to explain why, in a country with high levels of voter turnout and widely mobilized electoral campaigns, a substantial degree of vote switching between factions occurs across elections.[20]

Other findings in the Iran Social Survey also align with the secondary literature on Iran. This is especially the case with survey questions which do not easily lend themselves to the possibility of preference falsification to enumerators. For instance, we asked respondents whether their father's or mother's families had previously owned any rural land. If so, we asked whether their parents' families had received any of this land as a result of the pre-revolutionary land reform carried out by the Pahlavi Monarchy, one

of the most sweeping land reforms in the MENA region during the postwar era. Of our survey respondents with one or both parents from rural backgrounds, 61 percent answered that their families had received land from the Shah's redistributive land reform. This figure, albeit one dependent on respondent recollection of a historical process which took place more than four decades ago, before most respondents were born, conforms closely to estimates from the scholarly historiography on land reform in Iran. Given the survey data on family land ownership, we can investigate whether the descendants of families who benefited from pre-revolutionary land reform ended up better-off, the same, or worse-off after the 1979 revolution on a range of social indicators. In countries where rural land reform occurred in tandem with rapid urbanization and mass expansion in public education, the Iranian case can add insight into how families might have converted newly acquired small landholdings into human capital and social status for their offspring, even after moving to urban areas.[21]

As social scientists have increasingly focused on distributive politics across the MENA region, the Iranian case is also informative when unpacking the mechanisms linking political processes to social policy organizations and patronage systems. The Iran Social Survey included questions to test anecdotal claims that electoral behavior in Iran is associated with individual access to state benefits or other forms of social assistance. At least for the 2013 election, we found no evidence that individuals linked to welfare programs associated with conservative politicians or factions were voting differently on average than people linked to welfare programs associated with moderate politicians or factions. Additional data on the scope and breadth of various types of welfare organizations in Iran from the survey call into question existing paradigms which portray the country's electoral trends as systematically dependent on clientelist mechanisms.[22]

As with any survey, the quality of the data is partly determined by the design of the instrument, the method of interview collection, and whether the survey is attuned to the qualitative meanings attached to questions by respondents. If we had not spent a good deal of time inside of Iran, conducting qualitative fieldwork, learning the language, and refining a sense of how everyday Iranians speak about politics and society, the outcome of a large-scale project like the Iran Social Survey would have been worse off. As data scientists like to say: garbage in, garbage out. Instead of simply plugging stock questions from cross-national surveys into ears at the end of Iranian telephone lines, we adapted questions from comparative surveys from the Middle East and other developing regions for the Iranian context while also making sure the data would allow us to compare Iran with cases in and beyond the Middle East. As most survey methodologists know, a well-crafted polling instrument is a document thoroughly informed by qualitative methods. As future surveys are fielded across the MENA region, whether in person, over the phone, or online, the combination of deep regional knowledge and theoretical acuity will produce the most innovative data for use by those who aim to further integrate the region into ongoing debates in social science.

WRITING ABOUT INSECURITY AND GLOBAL POLITICS IN BEIRUT

By Waleed Hazbun,[23] University of Alabama, Karim Makdisi, American University of Beirut, Coralie Pison Hindawi, American University of Beirut

Writing in a 1925 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the African-American scholar and civil rights activist W. E. B. DuBois questions if "our research is not directed to the right geographical spots."[24] Reflecting on his travels and interviews with Africans, DuBois highlights the value of external perspectives formulated from what he refers to as the "ground of disadvantage." We suggest the US-centered field of International Relations (IR) can similarly benefit from contemporary scholarship developed abroad, especially in locations that have been in the shadow of American power, such as Beirut, Lebanon and other locations in the Middle East.

Teaching students from Lebanon and other parts of the Arab world about global politics requires recognition of how others experience insecurity and situate themselves within the emerging multipolar global system. As IR scholars with experience writing from, teaching in, and conducting research in Beirut we agree with our former colleague at the American University of Beirut (AUB) Patrick McGreevy, who writes that the "experience of being so often on the wrong end of the stick of US hard power provides Arabs with a certain perspective on the United States."[25]

These perspectives from the region can help sustain forms of scholarship lacking in most IR journals, books, and syllabi in which local actors are rarely recognized to have agency beyond supporting or opposing the prevailing US vision for regional order. Instead, we seek to foster approaches based on local understandings of insecurity that recognize the destabilizing impact of recent US policy and in which local actors might play a meaning role in shaping practices of global governance.

EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

As the recent APSA President David Lake recognizes, "Our life experiences shape our intuitions, which in turn guide our theoretical suppositions."[26] Exposure to alternative perspectives does not simply provide additional data, but more critically, it also enables pathways for the production of different forms of knowledge. Beyond engagement with diverse non-American students, our experiences in Beirut are defined by our complex relationships to North American political science,[27] our collaborations with scholars based in Europe, and our commitment to build ties across the Global South. Working at an English-language, American-style university in the Arab world leads us to resemble what Edward Said has called "exiles," in that we are familiar with multiple contexts and perspectives, and "this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music, is *contrapuntal*."[28]

As a result, we have sought to cultivate contrapuntal insights across multiple dimensions, including academic disciplines, theoretical approaches, national contexts, and languages. Our work is defined by living between, on the one hand, the close affinity of IR scholarship with American strategic interests; and, on the other hand, our experience of living in a community and region that is often suspicious about, if not actively opposed to, America's role and actions in the region. For many, crossing a range of political perspectives, the U.S. has long been viewed as a major source of regional insecurity and instability.

While IR debates within North America often include "critical" perspectives, these approaches are generally critical in the sense that they offer alternative ways to understand US interests, discourses and policies. In contrast, our research and teaching has sought to closely follow how Arab political elites, scholars, and activists, as well as communities across the broader society, differently understand the sources of insecurity their states and societies face.

Buffered from the expectations of North American academia and policy relevance, our scholarship has been directly shaped by experiences of living in Beirut. Collectively, together with our students, we have felt the regional consequences of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, experienced the impact of the devastating 2006 War between Israel and Lebanon, witnessed the spill-overs from the war in Syria and occupation of Palestine, and closely followed the ongoing conflicts in Libya and Yemen. Our location has obliged us to think and teach about civil war, refugees, transnational jihadism, sectarianism, occupation, and violence not merely as de-contextualized security issues, but as complex social realities with their attendant contradictions and disputes anchored in contested histories.

CONTEXTUALIZING "INSECURITY"

Following postcolonial critiques of IR, we note that the problem of "security" is usually posed as a question of how to promote a Western-dominated order while somehow ignoring what can be palpably felt from locations such as Beirut: the hierarchical power relations and means of violence deployed to sustain such an order.

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Hierarchies and/or violence are present in all aspects of geopolitical relations with external powers and international institutions that seek to build political order in the region. Local actors, when they are recognized to have agency, are viewed in terms of how they sustain such an order—or else represent threats to it. They are rarely understood in terms of their own interests and understandings of insecurity and almost never play a meaningful role in shaping the practices of global governance.[29]

Lacking agreed parameters for a regional security order, and with many states fragmented between political forces with rival security interests, the development of security studies within the Arab region generally lacks common norms and expectations to identify sources of insecurity. The alternative approach we seek to develop follows Pinar Bilgin's call for closely examining the "insecurities experienced by various state and non-state actors in the Arab world, as well as the military, economic, and societal dimensions of insecurity."[30]

A key contribution of such scholarship is its effort to explore how these local and regional conceptions of insecurity are often at odds with those embedded and enforced by the "international community." Much of our research draws on local readings and counter-discourses/narratives to explore the limits of Western-dominated institutions and security regimes such as over arms control,[31] the UN and peacekeeping,[32] or the shifting role of the US in the region following the Arab Uprisings.[33]

A central feature of our contrapuntal approach is to excavate and explore rival understandings of insecurity and the contexts that sustain them. In particular, we have sought to highlight how the

US "global war on terror" after 2001 reconfigured the US-dominated "international community's" view of the requirements for peace and security in countries such as Lebanon.[34] For instance, most of the vast IR and security studies scholarship and policy debates addressing the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war works squarely within the US-Israeli parameters defined by the US "war on terror." This scholarship tends to offer little acknowledgement of the rival understandings of diverse actors in Lebanon and their agency in disrupting, shaping or adapting to larger forces at play around them. In contrast, we suggest that efforts to craft a UN Security Council resolution to bring an end to the 2006 war had to negotiate between rival narratives that, in turn, were shaped by developments on the ground. Such narratives included those within Lebanon and Israel; as well as those of Qatar (that represented the Arab bloc in the Security Council during this period) and regional rivals including Syria and Iran, on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia on the other hand.

Similarly, while much of US-based scholarship about chemical weapons in Syria is focused on President Obama's statement about "red lines" or claims of Syrian violations and impunity, we highlight the competing narratives about the Syrian chemical weapons disarmament process. We explore what the coexistence of such rival understandings, ultimately embodied in the construction of a hybrid international disarmament mechanism, illustrate about perceptions of security and arms control practices in the Middle East.[35]

These efforts to make the study of global politics and security more inclusive and pluralistic reflect the challenging contradictions within the global system. The notion of "human security," developed as a critical approach for rethinking security, and concepts such as the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) have come to enjoy considerable support from scholars and political elites in Western states and are often invoked to justify foreign intervention in the Middle East and elsewhere. In contrast, we seek to explore the significance of such concepts and doctrines for peoples who have, in frequent instances, suffered insecurity from the failures of their own states and from a too narrowly defined "international community" embodied in the United Nations.[36]

The effort to explore and address these rival understandings is not a call for the privileging of a particular geopolitical position or subjectivity. Rather, it offers a challenge to scholars of IR and security studies to broaden the scope of their research and understanding by engaging with both diverse understandings of insecurity as well as scholarship from the region.

PRODUCING SCHOLARSHIP IN BEIRUT

In recent years, Beirut has evolved as a hub for innovative field research, scholarly knowledge production, and institutional development about issues of security in Lebanon and the wider Arab world. As Mohammed Bamyeh observes in his survey of social science knowledge production in the Arab world, Lebanon is at the "forefront" of independent scholarly output in the region.[37]

Beyond our own work, research on security issues in Lebanon has helped to develop concepts and approaches, such as the notion of "hybrid-sovereignty," a focus on the role of non-state actors, and critical approaches to understanding sectarianism and the notion of "weak states."[38] This research is also increasingly relevant to understanding security politics across the Arab world, where external interventions, civil wars and huge civilian population displacements have resulted in highly fragmented polities and the

exacerbation of social tension. Such scholarship, especially when based on extensive local fieldwork and nuanced historical contextualization, contributes to our effort to map the diverse understandings and lived experiences of insecurity in the region.

Colleagues at AUB's Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) and the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) have played prominent roles in exploring everyday insecurities resulting from unregulated urbanization, environmental and water stress, and Palestinian and Syrian refugee flows in Lebanon.[39]

Working in Beirut also provides relatively safe ground, compared to many other locations from the region, in regards to possible surveillance, repression, or punishment for researchers (and their informants) addressing political sensitive topics such as security and sources of insecurity. Yet in Lebanon, as elsewhere in the region, researchers face the dilemma between seeking either international academic acknowledgement by publishing in recognized English language outlets based abroad but with limited concern for regional issues or local relevance and impact by writing for regional or Arabic language newspapers, journals, and policy briefs. Our AUB colleague Sari Hanafi sums up this dilemma with the expression "publish globally and perish locally vs publish locally and perish globally."[40]

Most recently, we have also been part of a transnational collaborative effort to foster scholarship by junior scholars from and based in the region that seeks to begin to bridge divides outlined by Hanafi while fostering new sources for contrapuntal insights. This project was initiated and funded by the Beirut-based Arab Council for

the Social Sciences (ACSS). It published a collectively written manifesto, "Towards a Beirut School of Critical Security Studies,"[41] that maps the project's ongoing efforts to work through critical approaches to the study of security and global politics and reflects on how its collective experiences organizing a bilingual Beirut-based summer school on critical security studies for graduate students and junior scholars living and working in the region have helped shape the project.

Although these efforts may not result in a coherent approach or a distinct theory of security, together they aspire to engage in global debates bringing in new perspectives and voices in the long-overdue project of making IR more "global."

FLIPPING THE SCRIPTS:

POP CULTURE AS ALTERNATIVE SUBJECT AND DATA SOURCE IN MENA STUDIES

By Lisel Hintz, Johns Hopkins University, SAIS

In February 2012, Turkish director Faruk Aksoy's *Fetih 1453* (*The Conquest 1453*) sold 2.2 million tickets in its first week of release. A blockbuster-style film presenting a fictionalized account of Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II's conquest of Constantinople, now Istanbul, *Fetih* would become the most watched film in Turkey's history. Then-Prime Minister (now President) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's reported enjoyment of his advanced screening of the film is unsurprising given his penchant for touting the glories of his homeland's imperial past and for surrounding himself in Ottoman symbols.[42] Some of Erdoğan's supporters lovingly refer to him as "my sultan";[43] his detractors use the same term derisively.

It is no coincidence that a film lauding the victory

of virtuous Ottomans over Christian infidels—one scene inaccurately depicts the mostly celibate Byzantine emperor Constantine XI as a hedonist and another omits his beheading—came out soon after Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) won its third parliamentary majority. At that moment, the AKP's initial enthusiasm for Turkey's EU accession process had been replaced by a foreign policy doctrine of "strategic depth,"[44] intended to correct decades of Western orientation that neglected Turkey's (Muslim) neighbors to its east and south. As a reflection of the rhetoric being used by the AKP to legitimize its role as a great Muslim power in the region, Ottoman themes spilled over into films such as *Fetih*, as well as novels, television shows, music, and even cell phone commercials. The rediscovery of an Ottoman past, effectively erased by Turkey's founders in their efforts to establish a modern and secular republic, was in full swing in politics and pop culture.

The explosion of imagery celebrating imperial glory in entertainment media would have been unthinkable, even embarrassing, in NATO member and EU candidate Turkey prior to the AKP's rise to power. So would any public symbol of what my new book terms the "Ottoman Islamist" understanding of Turkish national identity the AKP seeks to disseminate,[45] in part by producing and policing pop culture content. Far from being just a form of entertainment, or a "circus" provided to distract and placate an otherwise rebellious population, cultural media such as TV, film, novels, and music are familiar and powerfully resonant resources that shape, and can be used to shape, competing understandings of identity.

> " *Forms of pop culture not only reflect prevailing social norms and the regimes that seek to promulgate them as the AKP does, but can also be used to challenge and even mock them.*

In Turkey and elsewhere, pop culture is in need of greater focus by scholars as a platform wielded by government forces, as well as those who protest against them. Forms of pop culture not only reflect prevailing social norms and the regimes that seek to promulgate them as the AKP does, but can also be used to challenge and even mock them. From a barrio's graffiti to *The Truman Show*'s queasily idyllic suburbia, from Pussy Riot's irreverent lyrics to Bassem Youseff's searing satire, pop culture constitutes a site in which beliefs about what key political issues are and how they should be approached are disseminated, shaped, and contested. As much as state-society struggles take place at the polls and in the streets, debates over political and social orders also spill over onto the page, the stage, and the screen. These vernacular platforms of contestation can be of particular utility to scholars studying repressive regimes in which elections and public demonstrations are often ineffective and costly channels for opposition challenge.

Because television serials in Turkey are filmed and broadcast quite rapidly, their content can reflect and respond to ongoing political debates. One week after the March 2014 death of Berkin Elvan, an Alevi teenager who was shot in the head by a tear gas canister while out to buy bread, an episode of "The O.C."-themed "*Medcezir*" ("Tide") subtly but powerfully addressed the controversy. Berkin was injured in the highly disproportionate use of police violence during the 2013 Gezi Protests, and the coma in which he lingered for nine months became the focus of grief and rage, compounded by the government line that the boy's non-Sunni, leftist background proved he was a terrorist. In countering this narrative, the episode included a brief scene in which father-figure protagonist Selim stops his car and gets out to caution a young boy carrying a loaf of bread to move to the side of the road away

from potential dangers.[46] From this perspective heroic behavior means protecting an innocent child, with the loaf of bread serving as a sort of affective heuristic: a symbol that is immediately recognizable, politically salient, and emotionally evocative for the audience. Immediately following the airing of the episode, social media users praised the show's producers for deftly inserting a critique of Gezi's police violence and polarizing narratives into an otherwise ordinary night of television.[47]

READING TURKISH POLITICS THROUGH POP CULTURE

My focus on the politics-pop culture nexus in Turkey began, appropriately, with an Ottoman-themed soap opera and a piece in *Foreign Policy*.[48] Rather than praise the wildly popular *Magnificent Century* (*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*) as he did the blockbuster *Fetih*, Erdoğan publicly criticized its depiction of Ottoman Sultan Süleyman drinking alcohol and carousing with scantily clad women.[49] His public criticism and accusations of misrepresenting history provoked AKP members to call for the show's removal from the airwaves; the national air carrier Turkish Airlines dropped it from its inflight entertainment.

Three elements in this case suggest that the relationship between politics and pop culture is a fruitful entry point for enriching our understandings of state-society struggles over national identity. First, the Turkish leader who surrounds himself in Ottoman imagery took a public stance to police the use of such images, ensuring that the well of legitimacy he draws from in rallying support for Turkey's (then) newly activist foreign policy in former Ottoman territories was not polluted content glorifying womanizing or inebriated (read: un-Islamic) behaviors.

Second, Erdoğan's objections elicited responses from opposition parties that reflected their political positions. The pro-minority rights Kurdish party, for example, objected to limitations on freedom of expression, while the secularist main opposition party deployed its traditional complaints about presidential overreach and creeping Islamic conservatism. The leader of the far-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP)—now the AKP's junior coalition partner but at the time of the incident a vocal critic, specifically of the party's outreaches to Kurds—responded by accusing Erdoğan of trying to divert attention from heated speculation that the government was in talks with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Third, just a few weeks after threats to ban the series circulated, the main female character Hürrem appeared for the first time covering her hair and praying as a Muslim.[50] Hürrem was a Christian concubine and eventual wife of Sultan Süleyman, as well as the focus of the show's displays of cleavage, seductive dances, and scheming palace intrigues. Her character's dramatic shift to display conservative dress and Sunni piety—a transformation enabled by the rapid turnaround in filming and broadcasting noted above—seemed to satisfy the serial's critics. An opposition newspaper, however, railed against the nod to AKP pressure, proclaiming that sharia law had descended upon the series. Indicative both of political influence and public demand, *Magnificent Century* remained on the air for two more seasons but suffered a decline in the ratings after the popular actress playing Hürrem left the series and writers responded by casting a much older woman for the part.

From this brief snapshot of one incident sparked by a soap opera, we can see the importance leaders place on policing pop culture content that

deviates from the understanding of identity they seek to instill in their populations. Pop culture media, like school classrooms, are powerful sites of nation-building. In this case, a leader intent on disseminating a particular, monolithic proposal for Turkishness controls identity messaging through the airwaves as well as through national curricula. We also see that responses to such regime attempts to police pop culture, both from the opposition and from the producers of the content, serve as useful texts for analyzing actors' specific political and economic interests.

FRAMING THE POLITICAL SCIENCE-POP CULTURE NEXUS

As my current book project demonstrates, pop culture provides a platform for regime and opposition actors to promote and police their own understandings of appropriate behavior. While some acquiesce and adjust their content, others push back. Parsing regime and opposition production of and engagement with pop culture into separate discussions allows scholars to identify specific ways these actors wield their content.

This even extends to the foreign policy realm. In January 2010 Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon expressed his country's objections to the violent portrayals of Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Turkish nationalist dramatic series *Valley of the Wolves* (*Kurtlar Vadisi*) by summoning Turkey's ambassador, seating him in a markedly lower chair, and noting in Hebrew to the news cameras that the table between them displayed only an Israeli flag. "Chairgate" marked an increase in tensions between the formerly close allies that erupted with the May 2010 Mavi Marmara flotilla incident, in which an IDF soldiers killed 10 Turkish activists attempting to break the Gaza blockade. At the domestic level, a 2017 executive order banned marriage-themed reality

TV shows on the grounds they threatened the integrity of the family,[51] while talk shows interpreting current events from the perspective of Islamic family morals such as *Gate of Affection* (*Muhabbet Kapısı*) remain on the air. These decisions enable Turkey's ruling AKP to police and promote content in line with its conservative Sunni understanding of Turkishness. On the opposition side, *Mustang* Deniz Gamze Ergüven director's inclusion of an actual radio broadcast of a leading parliamentarian telling women not to laugh out loud for a film scene in which a spirited teenage girl in a conservative household commits suicide challenges the regime's prevailing gender narrative by depicting its potential consequences in such a horrific manner.

In addition to constituting a powerful political resource for state and societal actors, pop culture serves as a valuable empirical window onto state-society debates and a useful yet understudied, data source for scholars. Novel excerpts, song lyrics, and TV dialogue form particularly handy "private transcripts," particularly for research on sensitive topics, in repressive regimes,[52] and by foreign researchers who may be approached with suspicion. Government and societal reactions to pop culture form an additional useful source of data in such contexts; the advent of Twitter makes social media responses particularly productive to mine in this regard. An analytical lens that considers pop culture as a regime tool of social engineering and an opposition platform of subversion reveals under-theorized subjects of study and provides a framework for cross-case comparison of various regime and opposition strategies and outcomes. Adding a third, scholar-level tier to this framework enables us to treat pop culture as a nontraditional data source that offers new perspectives on debates to which we may not otherwise have access, particularly for MENA researchers working on politically and

culturally sensitive issues in constricted fieldwork spaces.

IS THERE AN ISLAMIST ADVANTAGE AT WAR?

By Marc Lynch, George Washington University

A rich academic literature on Islamist political participation has evolved over the last two decades, with sophisticated theoretical and empirical studies across a wide range of political dimensions. This literature has explored the significance of Islamist institutional forms and ideology for outcomes such as organizational survival, service delivery, electoral performance, and political mobilization.[53] The dramatic political turbulence caused by the Arab uprisings of 2011 allowed for fascinating tests of hypotheses such as inclusion promoting ideological moderation, organizational advantages conveying electoral prowess, and moderate organizations serving as a firewall against violent extremists.[54] Most of this research has been carried out in nonviolent contexts, however, and has been largely disconnected from the literature on insurgencies and violent jihadist movements such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

Does the literature on the political performance of nonviolent Islamist movements offer any insights into the behavior or performance of Islamist movements in war zones? Does the "Islamist advantage" observed in studies of elections and social services extend to insurgencies? Are Islamists, for instance, better at attracting external support because of universal ideology, but worse at forming tactical coalitions because of ideological distance? Do Islamists fight or govern captured territory differently than non-Islamists, and, if so, is this different style

more effective? Which of those practices are driven by aspects unique to Islamists (i.e. ideology or organizational structure) or by factors more general to wartime conditions?

To begin to answer these questions, in January 2019 I convened a Project on Middle East Political Science workshop with more than a dozen political scientists from a wide range of specializations and approaches.[55] In this essay, I draw on their short papers, my own framing paper, and a day of intense discussions to propose several lines of inquiry about the significance of Islamism in wartime environments. First, I explore the implications of the difficulty in identifying Islamists and conceptualizing wartime environments. Second, I identify a set of potential mechanisms associated with Islamist political advantages which might—or might not—translate into wartime outcomes.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ISLAMIST?

Determining who counts as Islamist in war zones is more difficult than it might first appear. In contrast to electoral politics or social movements where identity and ideology is clearly expressed, in armed conflicts, the identity and real aspirations of combatants can be far murkier. Islamist landscapes, as Stacey Philbrick Yadav has noted in the Yemeni context, can be highly fragmented and behavior deeply rooted in local context. Identifying the conditions under which Islamist identity might be activated or sublimated, and the reasons why certain groups choose to manifest Islamist identity at particular times, is a critical research question which should be studied comparatively.

Consider the complex tapestry of the highly fragmented Syrian insurgency, which did not begin as Islamist in any meaningful sense but

became increasingly so over time. Can we draw a sharp line at some point along the continuum of more than three hundred armed factions and confidently assess which are "Islamist," particularly since many factions changed their branding and avowed ideology over time? Should analysis of Islamists at war include a local warlord who adopts an Islamist persona, or a local militia aligned with the Free Syrian Army that changes its name to signal Islamic identity in order to attract external support from the Gulf? How should we code an organization such as Ahrar al-Sham which cultivated an avowedly salafist religious image, but emphasized its national commitments and eschewed a formal relationship with al-Qaeda or ISIS? Even the Islamic State, which seems an obviously Islamist actor given its extreme ideology and overt performance of religiosity, raises questions, as some observers emphasize the prevalence of Iraqi Baathists in its upper ranks and others deny that it was ever part of the opposition.

One of the lessons of the research on nonviolent Islamists proves useful in this regard. The literature on Islamism has pushed back against overgeneralizations about Islamist movements by emphasizing finely grained distinctions between different types of Islamist movements which allow for more precise specification of causal mechanisms measurement of outcomes.[56] That research identified specific dimensions along which groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, salafists and al-Qaeda might vary: ideology and ideas, embeddedness in broader society, mass vs. vanguard movements, acceptance of violence, degree of hierarchical decision-making and control. How do different types of Islamist organizations adapt to state failure and conflict? Do Muslim Brotherhood-style organizations respond differently than do less institutionalized Salafi movements or jihadist groups? Has their

ability to control and discipline their members been affected by wartime conditions and state repression? That same approach can fruitfully be applied to Islamist movements in wartime conditions. How important is their avowed ideology to their behavior, whether military tactics or alliance formation or willingness to make tactical concessions? Where is Islamist ideology instrumental and where does it seem more deeply constitutive? Do some types adapt more effectively to war than others? What explains those variations?

It is not only the internal characteristics of movements which matters here, but also the broader context. Muslim Brotherhood political parties will adopt different electoral strategies depending on whether they are the only Islamist contender, monopolizing religious discourse, or competing with other Islamists such as Salafis. So too will Islamist insurgency factions. As Dipali Mukhopadhyay points out based on her research in Afghanistan, "Islamist" is hardly a useful concept in an environment where virtually everyone shares the same Islamic orientation and Islamism is taken as a given.[57] In Afghanistan, she notes, all the insurgent groups would call themselves Islamist but their differences in political strategy, use of violence, and attitudes towards the state are extremely significant. What's interesting is the axes of debate and distinction among them. In another direction, Islamism takes on a very different valence in the context of a religiously divided country such as Iraq (along Sunni-Shi'ite lines) or Nigeria (along Muslim-Christian lines).

WHAT IS A WARTIME ENVIRONMENT?
If identifying Islamists is more difficult than it first appears, so is rigorously defining war zones. The key cases motivating our study seem fairly clear,

at first: Syria and Libya after 2011, Yemen and Iraq after 2014. But there is considerable variation in the intensity and nature of even those paradigmatic conflicts. Libya passed through a period of political contestation after the fall of Qaddafi, until state failure and militia violence brought back war. Yemen's war looks very different in the south and the north, and many Yemenis suffer more from the nonpayment of wages and collapse of the agricultural infrastructure than from direct violence. Even in Syria, citizens in Damascus experienced war very differently from citizens on the frontlines in Aleppo—and Aleppo looked very different in 2015 than in 2012.

The institutional effects of war also vary considerably. While we often think of war as producing state failure, Quinn Mecham points out that war could also produce stronger mobilizational states. War produces personal insecurity and suffering, which may drive individual behavior, whether towards greater religiosity, towards sectarian or other hostile attitudes, towards retreat from politics, or towards hunger for revenge. But it may also have highly ordered, structured patterns within the violence, pushing people towards the informal economy or rent-seeking. The growing literature on rebel governance is particularly relevant in this regard, as Steven Brooke argues, posing questions about whether Islamists enjoy advantages in insurgent service provision comparable to those they enjoy in nonviolent contexts. Participants in the workshop broadly agreed on the importance of studying the lived experience of war and the variation in that experience in order to effectively assess its impact on Islamist movements. War might involve long stretches of normality punctuated by sudden explosions of violence, or it might be frontline conditions of constant conflict and displacement.

Still, wartime environments do seem to differ in some critical way from other institutional contexts. Plausible hypotheses are that under wartime conditions social power shifts to armed groups, more extreme ideological forms drive out more moderate ones, the stakes of competition move towards the existential, and violence reshapes social and political life. The question then becomes whether those environmental drivers systematically advantage Islamists over non-Islamists, or if this happens only under particular conditions. To the extent that wartime environments pose stark choices with existential consequences, they should pose an especially good test of the relative weight of various causal factors.

ARE THERE ISLAMIST ADVANTAGES?

Syrian opposition supporters often complain of how their revolution was hijacked by Islamists. But how and why Islamists were able to capture the revolution, and how the Syrian insurgency became "Islamist" is a critical question rather than a starting point for analysis. Do Islamists wage more effective insurgencies than do non-Islamists? Why? Many of the seemingly exceptional qualities of groups such as the Islamic State—such as its bureaucratic proto-state governance and presentation of local battles in global and transnational terms—are actually quite typical of insurgencies.[58] Are Islamists better at these typical activities, or do they do qualitatively different things?

A robust literature explores the question of whether and how Islamist movements enjoy advantages in electoral politics, in service provision, or in survival under repressive conditions.[59] How do those advantages, if any, translate into wartime environments? Do the same mechanisms apply across such a different

context? If Islamist movements do have advantages over non-religious competitors in civil war environments, is it primarily due to their ideology, organizational structure, degree of commitment and socialization of members, or ability to draw on external sources of material support?

Drawing on his important study of Islamist social service provision in Egypt, Steven Brooke offers a number of reasons that Islamist groups might be better at governing territories and populations than non-Islamist groups. They might be—or might be perceived to be—more efficient or less corrupt. A tighter organizational structure may facilitate coordination and rapid adaptation to unpredictable and violent conditions. Their access to external funds and experience may given them an advantage at relief work among refugee populations. It is quite telling, as Aaron Zelin has argued, that salafi-jihadist groups which traditionally avoided Muslim Brotherhood-style service provision began to move into that realm forcefully in the post-2011 war zones such as Libya and Syria. While they did not enjoy the Brotherhood's long experience, they often proved quite capable of allowing professional service delivery without overt Islamist indoctrination. Extending the study of Islamist social service provision to relief work among refugee populations is a natural move.

Islamist identity might convey other advantages. In fluid, contested environments, Islamist identity could help make connections across space and class.[60] Rigorous organizational structure and indoctrination may allow for some insulation against infiltration and defection. Mosques and religious networks provide focal points and an organizational infrastructure for building movements of broader reach than the village or neighborhood-specific militias created by non-

Islamists. Islamist commitment might produce higher levels of commitment and self-sacrifice among fighters, conveying military advantages at the tactical level which add up to strategic advantages. Sharia courts might provide for an alternative justice system to establish legitimate order within state breakdown.

Another Islamist advantage might be differential access to external sponsors and resources. Syrian armed factions attracted an enormous amount of financial support from the Gulf by emphasizing that they were fighting a jihad in defense of an embattled Sunni population. Iran, Qatar, Turkey and Saudi Arabia each sought to work with local religious proxies in arenas such as Syria and Libya. Sometimes these religious connections were consistent and aligned with clear sectarian or ideological complementarities, such as Iran's support for Shi'ite militias in Iraq. But in other cases, such as Yemen and Libya, those patron-client connections seemed more opportunistic and at times (such as the UAE's collaboration with al-Qaeda aligned groups in Yemen or Salafi groups in Libya) even wildly contradictory. External support created feedback loops across multiple levels. Groups with access to those external resources became more powerful, crowding out competitors who did not have such access. At the same time, those rising groups also took on the ideological characteristics of their sponsors, shifting the overall environment of the insurgency in the direction of Islamism. This sometimes led non-Islamist groups to "grow beards" in order to compete for external funding. Even more directly, Iran helped to create and deploy militias in Syria made up of Shi'ites from Iraq and Afghanistan, while the Islamic State was able to recruit tens of thousands of foreign fighters through its ideological appeals.

WHAT ABOUT ISLAMIST DISADVANTAGES?

Potential disadvantages should not be ignored, however. Openly Islamist identity might reduce access to Western military support available to others, or—as in the case of ISIS—attract direct Western intervention. Generalized antipathy toward Islamism might rule out potential alliance partners, or multiply potential enemies. The more effective fighting style might produce a backlash as others come to fear Islamist dominance over the insurgency or be horrified by their perceived excesses. Attracting foreign fighters could be a disadvantage with regard to local populations if they are viewed as alien occupiers or illegitimate. Research presented at the workshop by Nicholas Lolito suggests that groups that are less reliant on local population tend to use indiscriminate forms of violence and more lethal attacks which can be alienating.

❝ *The transnational and universalist appeal of Islam has been posed as an advantage for its ideological appeal. But the emphasis on ideas and scriptural arguments might also be a source of division within these movements*

The transnational and universalist appeal of Islam has been posed as an advantage for its ideological appeal. But the emphasis on ideas and scriptural arguments might also be a source of division within these movements and distancing from potential allies and recruits. To the extent that Islamist actors take ideas and religion more seriously than other actors, theological or doctrinal disagreements could undermine military strategy or effective governance. The degree of effort put into ideological production by the Islamic State cannot simply be reduced to recruitment propaganda; it represented a very substantial portion of the organization's activities and public face. Intricate doctrinal argument may appeal to the membership, but will appear esoteric and inscrutable to those outside the jihadist milieu.

Within these domains, it remains unclear how much weight should be put on ideas as opposed to organization. Is ISIS a relatively typical insurgency or something radically different? Do their ideas lead them to behave differently from similarly placed insurgencies in comparable situations? Such questions should guide future research and provoke useful discussion across cases, regions, and theoretical approaches.

THE ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF FIELD RESEARCH IN THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS
By Daniel Masterson, Stanford University and Lama Mourad, Harvard Kennedy School's Middle East Initiative and University of Toronto

The Syrian refugee crisis has displaced more people than any conflict since the Second World War and garnered a great deal of attention among researchers from numerous disciplines. In political science, scholars have conducted field research around the crisis on a wide range of topics including the dynamics of activism[61] and protest[62] within[63] and outside[64] of Syria; host community sentiments[65,66] and behavior[67] toward Syrians; the response of host states;[68] Syrian refugees' challenges and responses, including strategies of service access[69] and Syrian community problem-solving;[70] consequences[71] and challenges[72] of the large-scale immigration of Syrians; and Syrians' attitudes,[73] framing,[74] perceptions,[75] and narration[76] of the conflict.

The emerging body of research is driven not only by the topic's pressing importance, but also by the often-unexamined motivator of the accessibility of research participants, which is

largely due to their vulnerability and limited mobility. Researchers' goals are often feasible with Syrian refugees, more so than with alternative participant populations, because many Syrians are geographically concentrated, are registered in humanitarian databases, and have grown acclimated to participation in data collection by humanitarian NGOs. This relative ease of access makes research on Syrians practically easier and also more ethically fraught. In this piece, we would like to take a step back to look at the particular ways research on displaced Syrians presents distinct ethical and research dilemmas to which political scientists must pay closer attention. While this article is by no means an exhaustive review of the concerns and challenges political scientists face in conducting research on Syrian refugees, we seek to discuss the most pressing issues researchers headed to the field should consider and advisors with graduate students conducting fieldwork should be aware of.

WHY DO RESEARCHERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO REFUGEES?

In this article, we build on the work of other political scientists who have focused on ethics of participant safety and confidentiality, and data security, particularly in non-democratic or fragile contexts and with vulnerable communities.[77] Moving beyond the "do no harm" principles that form the foundation of much of institutional ethical commitments, research on refugees and forced migrants must confront what Jacobsen and Landau call the "dual imperative": namely, satisfying the demands and expectations of your academic discipline, while also producing knowledge that improves policy and advances the interests of refugees.[78] The balance that scholars strike between the two imperatives varies but no scholarship on displaced Syrians in political science can disregard either objective.

Two factors make the ethical challenges of field research in refugee crises particularly fraught, both of which are pressing in the contexts within which Syrian refugees find themselves today. First, the challenges of ethical research (doing no harm) are especially daunting because researchers intervene in the lives of people whose fates are being actively negotiated, and often, in ways that cannot be wholly anticipated. As Knott notes, based on her experience conducting field research in Crimea, this is especially true in dynamic and unpredictable contexts where the political sensitivity of particular issues can change rapidly and in ways that make it more challenging to know what is safe to collect and publish.[79]

Second, beyond simply avoiding doing harm, researchers working in refugee crises must confront the unsettling fact that we benefit from others' suffering; even when we have done nothing to cause or exacerbate that hardship, we nonetheless profit from it. Whatever motivations drive us to conduct fieldwork, we take the opportunity that refugee crises provide to benefit professionally, and thereby financially. The link between other people's misfortune and our own welfare puts a responsibility on us to shape our projects in ways that not only contribute to social science, but also directly or indirectly promote refugees' well-being.

We separate the ethical challenges of field research in refugee crises into three categories, based on different stages of the "life cycle" of research projects. For the purposes of the article, we find this simplification of the research process useful, although we recognize that these stages overlap and interact in practice. First, we discuss ethical implications of how scholars formulate research questions. Second, we consider the conduct of research, focusing particularly, but not exclusively, on field methods. Third, we look at

the ethical challenges tied to writing and disseminating findings. Although a wealth of ethics discussions focuses on research conduct, less work has focused on writing and dissemination, and the ethical implications involved in formulating and developing research questions are often ignored altogether.

ETHICS OF FRAMING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Political scientists are well aware that the "cases we choose affect the answers we get,"[80] but have given less consideration to how the questions we choose affect the ethical implications of our work. Questions framed to engage debates within the academic literature may be misleading or even have actively harmful effects in a context such as research on Syrian refugees. This comes to bear in two main ways.

First, scholarship often shapes the politics of the issues it addresses, and uncritical formulation of research questions may perpetuate or reinforce harmful discourses and frames for interpreting and designing policy. In the context of the Syrian refugee crisis, scholars must take seriously how Syrians themselves explain and understand their conflict and ensuing displacement. For instance, if a scholar is interested in whether or how sectarian frames have affected the conflict, it is important to address how even the framing of the project may serve to perpetuate a narrative of the conflict promoted by the Syrian regime itself, and rejected, if not actively resisted, by many civilians and activists.

Second, in defining subjects of inquiry, researchers need to be mindful to not adopt and reproduce policy categories, such as that of refugee, without reflecting on who and what they elide or obscure. An uncritical use of the category of "refugees" in place of more precise language,

such as "Syrians" or even "Syrian refugees," risks perpetuating prejudiced and harmful images of refugees as a homogeneous mass, undifferentiated by diverse experiences and frames for viewing their lives. Emphasizing the "refugee-ness" of Syrians may obscure other axes of identity, such as distinctions of class, urban/rural background, gender, and sexuality, that affect how Syrians experience displacement.

In parallel to how the general term "refugee" can elide the diversity and humanity of people it refers to, the terminology may ignore that Syrian refugees are often hosted within communities that have pre-existing displaced populations— most prominently but not exclusively Palestinian refugees.[81] For example, a study that focuses on a well-defined population of Syrians in Lebanon should acknowledge that it does not address all refugees in Lebanon, because it does not include the Palestinians, Iraqis, or other displaced groups in the country. This is not to say that one cannot study Syrian refugees without also studying these other groups, but it is important to keep in mind that research on one group, hopefully in pursuit of improving those people's situation, may have adverse consequences for other groups if their existence or concerns are supplanted.

ETHICS OF CONDUCTING FIELD RESEARCH

The conduct of field research generally receives the most attention from institutional ethics reviews and guides on research ethics. First and foremost, scholars should only include refugees as research participants if the research questions focus on institutions and conditions specifically affecting refugees or programs and policy intended to improve the health and well-being of refugees. A useful parallel for considering the need to include refugees as research participants can be found in ethical guidelines for research

with prisoners.[82] Many refugees face numerous forms of economic, social, and legal vulnerability that compromise their ability to make informed voluntary decisions to participate in research. When a researcher arrives, even with their best attempts to disclose their intentions and affiliations, they bring with them forms of social and institutional power. For people facing severe hardship, for whom humanitarian aid is a critical source of income, if they believe that there is even a small chance that refusing to participate will adversely affect their aid benefits, they may not be able to offer meaningful consent for a research project. For these reasons, it is critical that the *relative ease of access* to refugees not be taken as *sufficient justification of research* with refugees.

> " *It is critical that the* relative ease *of access to* refugees not be taken as *sufficient justification of research* with refugees.*

In some situations, consent may require repeated conversations to ensure people have sufficient freedom to refuse participation, which is problematic when people with power over potential participants' well-being are present. It is common for researchers' first interactions with Syrians to be mediated through contacts. The first meeting between a researcher and potential participant may occur in the presence of authorities such as staffers from NGOs or international organizations, or a local figure like a camp boss. Any consent given in these initial meetings should be considered provisional, and data collected in these interactions should be minimal and non-sensitive. Meaningful consent should then be obtained in a follow-up meeting or interview, where Syrian participants have a greater ability to refuse without concern for how doing so might affect their relationship with relevant authorities.

None of these concerns implies that refugees' agency in this process should be sidelined. Trusting participants' agency and knowledge about their situation also requires that researchers treat participants as autonomous individuals who understand and can actively engage with discussions around consent. In many cases, Syrians *want* to tell their stories and are aware of what particular sets of questions or interventions they would like to participate in and how. As Malkki notes, it is critical that refugees not be reduced to pure victims unable to tell their own stories—what she terms "speechless emissaries"—who must have their stories told for them, whether by humanitarian actors or supposed refugee experts.[83]

Research in refugee crises also poses intersecting challenges for anonymity and the protection of research subjects, particularly because refugees are often embedded within large humanitarian and security infrastructures. This is undeniably the case with the Syrian refugee crisis, where a wide array of actors, including local authorities, humanitarian organizations, security and intelligence services, and national governments, are involved in the governance and control of displaced Syrian populations. Researchers need to be mindful of how their presence in a particular locality or settlement is likely to be monitored by local authorities, security services, and potentially local informants or undercover intelligence agents. Although it cannot be confirmed, the authors' fieldwork suggested that Syrian agents keep tabs on refugee organizing in Lebanon. Moreover, there is suggestive evidence that Syrian agents seem to work in tandem with some Lebanese authorities. While the history and presence of the Syrian intelligence services is more marked in Lebanon than in Jordan or Turkey, it is likely that similar dynamics are at work in other host contexts.

ETHICS OF DISSEMINATION

Finally, ethical concerns and challenges remain even as a researcher concludes a project's primary fieldwork. As others have noted, the increased use of technology in the modern field site[84] means that scholars must be attentive to the ways in which their data is vulnerable to access and subpoena[85] by state and other authorities even after they have completed data collection. Second, sustained contact with participants over social media or electronic communication platforms can compromise participant anonymity and even confidentiality when the number of participants within a certain area is relatively small.[86]

This is tied to a broader question of how to balance anonymity against the needs for descriptive richness and analytic transparency in empirical work. The researcher must paint a picture of the research site with sufficient detail to be analytically and descriptively compelling by providing, for instance, the locality's size, demographic makeup, main economic activity, dominant social and political actors, and proximity to the capital. Standard anonymization procedures would require omitting or changing the names of the locality and research participants. When using quantitative data, a researcher should post replication data online after publication, with all rows stripped of information that directly identifies respondents, but leaving in place a wealth of information about each respondent necessary for replicating the analysis and assessing its rigor.

In both of these scenarios, readers from outside the context, such as academics in Western institutions, will unlikely be able to deduce the identity of research participants. However, exactly those actors from whom researchers seek to protect participants, such as local intelligence agencies, may often have both the greatest incentive and ability to de-anonymize participants, particularly in the case of qualitative analysis.[87] This leaves open the question of how to balance the protection of respondent anonymity with the requirements of transparency and descriptive analysis. Researchers must acknowledge that whatever they choose to publish cannot be guaranteed to stay anonymous, and therefore take responsibility for considering risks of de-anonymization when choosing what to publish and disseminate.

As junior scholars engaged in the production of knowledge on the Syrian refugee crisis, we face these challenges within our own work and hope that we have been able to strike an appropriate balance between our commitments to Syrians, as our research participants and as a group whose collective narrative we participate in writing, and our desire to contribute to a field of scholarship. In that respect, we hope to engage more political scientists in thinking through these challenges and ensuring that the body of work we are collectively pursuing contributes to social science, minimizes risk and harm caused by research, and contributes to better programming and policy responses to the refugee crisis.

THE MARGINALIZATION OF IRAQI ISLAMISTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

By David Siddhartha Patel, Brandeis University

In 2014—after the overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi in Egypt and the resignation of the Ennahda-led government in Tunisia—a leader of the Moroccan Justice and Development Party told a group of foreign government officials that, "We're the one last Islamist party remaining in government in the region."[88] That leader was wrong. Islamist premiers and parties had governed Iraq for almost a decade at that point, and they remain in power there today. By almost any measure, the most successful elected Islamists in the Arab world over the past 15 years are in Baghdad. Yet political scientists, especially those in comparative politics, have largely ignored Iraq except in studies of terrorism, counterinsurgency, rebel governance, and foreign intervention. Far more attention has been paid to ISIS than to the dozens of more mainstream Islamist movements in Iraq, who are almost completely absent from comparative discussions of Islamist service provision, electioneering, "moderation," and policy-making.

Why have political scientists ignored Iraq's Islamists? I see two main reasons. First, many academics are sectarians (for lack of a better word), hesitant to compare Shi'ite Islamists with Sunnis. Some simply are more familiar with Sunni Islam and more comfortable discussing and analyzing Sunni movements than Shi'ite ones. But far too many others continue to see Shi'ite Islamist movements everywhere as subjects of the Iranian government. Others assume that the history and organization of Shi'ite Islamists are so different than that of Sunnis that any comparative purchase is lost. These people tend to forget that Shi'ite Islamists often have very similar roots to Sunni Islamists. Iraq's new prime minister was a leader of the Iraqi Communist Party in the 1970s before becoming an Islamist, a similar red-to-green trajectory that many Sunnis followed.[89] The founders of the Islamic Da'wa Party were partly inspired by the writing and activism of Muslim Brotherhood forefathers Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb. The second, and perhaps main, reason many political scientists continue to ignore Iraq is because of the "sin" of the 2003 invasion, which I address at the end of this piece.

I argue we have missed a rich set of cases with important variation on both right- and left-hand side variables. For example, Islamists in Iraq now have had more freedom for a longer period of time to govern, campaign, develop patronage networks, and change.

Consider some of the major themes in the study of Islamist movements:

ISLAMISTS IN POWER:
There are dozens of books and articles on what Islamists might do if they ever came to power, but—despite being in many ways an ideal case study—Iraq is almost entirely absent from these discussions. If you are interested in the conditions under which Islamists will seek to change personal status laws or mandate Islamic banking and finance, Iraq since 2005 could inspire theory or provide useful data. Iraq has held five parliamentary elections since 2005, and a wide variety of Islamist parties, movements, and candidates have participated and won seats in each. Four members of Islamist parties have served as Prime Minister during that fourteen-year period, and each transition of leadership has been peaceful (if not always smooth), including the latest in which the Islamic Da'wa Party gave up power. A gaggle of other Islamist parties and movements—e.g., SCIRI/ISCI, Sadrists, Fadhila,

the Iraqi Islamic Party, the Iraqi Accordance Front (Tawafuq)—have provided the majority of Iraq's ministers, deputy prime ministers, deputy presidents, chairs of parliamentary committees, and provincial governors. Yet political scientists pay far more attention to the 2011 to 2013 Ennahda government in Tunisia than the 2005 to 2018 Da'wa governments in Iraq.

IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE:

Several of Iraq's Shi'ite Islamist movements underwent ideological changes that would make for fascinating comparisons with groups elsewhere. For example, the Da'wa Party abandoned their support for *wilayat al-faqih* (guardianship of the jurist) in the 1990s or early 2000s and came to accept participation in an electoral system free from clerical oversight.[90] Adil Abdul-Mahdi, the current prime minister, is a former member of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, previously known as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. That post-2003 transformation—from revolutionary SCIRI to elected ISCI—begs for book-length examinations, but we know more about the transformation in the 1980s of the relatively obscure Shiraziyyin (a transnational group of activists associated with the al-Shirazi family of Karbala) than we do about the Supreme Council's.[91] Some of these transformations are quite recent, and I hope we see a wave of research (in Arabic and in English) on the ideological and doctrinal evolution of Da'wa, SCIRI/ISCI/Badr/Hakims, and especially the Sadr Movement(s). Studies of Iraqi Islamists over time—under Ba'athism, in exile, and after 2003—have the potential to redefine the agenda and terms of debate in the study of if and how participation in pluralist political practices changes Islamists.

SALAFIS:

Salafis also have participated in Iraqi elections, and one was Speaker of the Council of Representatives for more than two years. Compared to cases such as Salafis in Egypt after 2011 or some Salafi movements in the Gulf, Iraqi Salafis have been largely ignored. I want to read a study of how and why some Salafis in Iraq—but not others—decided to participate in an electoral and political system that they knew would be dominated by Shi'ites. Comparing Shi'ite movements with Salafis might help us understand the conditions under and the process by which groups compromise ideological commitments when presented with political opportunities.

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD PARTIES:

Iraq's Muslim Brotherhood has been influential, dynamic, and electorally successful, yet it is usually absent from discussions of Ikhwan and Ikhwan-like movements. Muslim Brotherhood leaders in the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) have served as Iraq's deputy president, deputy prime minister, and speaker of the Council of Representatives. Muslim Brothers have been ministers of Higher Education, Planning, State for Foreign Affairs, and State for Women's Affairs. Thirty years later, some political scientists of the Middle East remain fixated on the six months that the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood spent as a (relatively powerless) part of the Jordanian government in 1990 to 1991. The Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood has been a constant presence (except for a brief hiatus in 2007 to 2008) in the Iraqi government since 2003.

> 66 *The Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood has been a constant presence in the Iraqi government since 2003... Yet they are ignored, even in explicit comparisons of mainstream Sunni Islamist movements.*

Similarly, the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood has weathered splits, electoral defeats, challenges

from Salafis, constitutional debates, and political compromise. Yet they are ignored, even in explicit comparisons of mainstream Sunni Islamist movements. A prominent (and otherwise excellent) recent volume on Islamists in the MENA included case studies of twelve countries, but Iraq was left out.[92] As in many other books, Iraq appears in the index only as "Kuwait occupation by" and "U.S. invasion of."

SOCIAL SERVICES PROVISION:
We have several excellent studies of how Islamist movements in Egypt, Lebanon, and Turkey provide voters with medical care, schooling, and other social services and the conditions under which that translates into political and electoral mobilization. Iraq should be an ideal place to extend and challenge this literature because of its regularity of elections, competition among Islamists, and variation in resources that movements can access. Where are the detailed empirical studies of how Da'wa or the Sadrists use social service provision to achieve electoral success (and the limits of that connection)?

CROSS-IDEOLOGICAL COOPERATION:
For last year's parliamentary election, Moqtada al-Sadr allied with the Iraqi Communist Party; the IIP joined Ayad Allawi's secular Al-Wataniya list; and Ammar al-Hakim left the Supreme Council, which his family founded and he had led, to form the avowedly secular National Wisdom Movement. Finally, Iraq has several cases of Islamist movements with affiliated militias who decided to participate in elections. Since 2003, the divide between SCIRI/ISCI and the Badr Organization widened to a chasm and the Sadrists formed, froze, reconstituted, and disbanded various militias. More recently, a number of militias associated with the Hashd ash-Shaabi entered parliament, and their Fatah Alliance now

dominates one of the two diverse blocs vying for power and influence in Iraq. These examples of cooperation beg for comparison with cases both in and out of the region. Where are the studies of electoral coalition formation and cross-ideological (and cross-"ethnic") cooperation?

WHAT EXPLAINS THIS ACADEMIC LACUNA?
Why have Iraq and its participatory Islamist movements remained pariahs for comparative scholars? Clearly the dangers of field research in Iraq after 2003 deterred many from visiting the country (aside from the Kurdish Region), but the vast majority of Iraq is safer today than it has been for years.[93] One under-recognized but surprisingly accurate indicator of this safety is the dramatic increase in the number of international football matches that Iraq now hosts.[94] Teams from other Arab states are no longer afraid of playing in Iraq; in March 2018, Iraq defeated Saudi Arabia 4-1 in a friendly match in Basra.[95] As other countries in the region became more difficult to work in, we should have expected more students and scholars to look towards Iraq. While studying Islamists in Iraq still entails many sensitivities, it is not significantly more difficult than many other places in the Middle East (Lebanon, for example).

I think an important reason Iraq continues to be ignored is the long shadow cast by the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. The vast majority of political scientists opposed the invasion and consider the occupation a fiasco. For them, Iraq's political system and dynamics are somehow tainted by their 2003 roots; Iraq's democracy is seen as "imposed," a confounding factor in any cross-national studies involving cases from Iraq. But the invasion was 16 years ago, and the occupation ended more than eight years ago. Iraq's far-from-perfect political system perseveres, remains highly competitive, and continues to absorb a

wide variety of actors. About 40 percent of Iraq's population has been born since 2003; a majority of Iraqis do not remember life before this political system.[96] Since the reopening of the Saudi Embassy in Baghdad in December 2016, Iraq has improved its diplomatic connections with Gulf states and, in many ways, reentered "the Arab fold." It is far past time for a similar rapprochement between Iraq and political science.

QATAR AND THE GCC CRISIS AND THE IMPACT ON SCHOLARSHIP ON THE GULF
Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, Rice University

The June 2017 rupture in relations between Qatar and four regional states—Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Egypt—has added yet another layer of uncertainty to what already was a challenging environment for scholars who work in, and on, the Gulf States. It builds upon the April 2015 unification of security "blacklists" by the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a decision taken, ironically, at a meeting of GCC Interior Ministers in the Qatari capital, Doha. Just as it has become harder to maintain access to their region of study, the deep polarization of the Gulf crisis has left scholars and students unsure of how the "red lines" deemed impermissible for research have shifted. A zero-sum mentality that has taken root among regional leaders has further squeezed the spaces for independent research and critical thinking.

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND THE GULF

Over the past decade, there has been an explosion of scholarly interest in the Gulf States, driven partly by infusions of funding from GCC-based donors to centers of Arab and Islamic studies worldwide and partly by the rapid expansion of higher education institutions in the Gulf itself. Funding from the Gulf became important to universities struggling to cope financially in an age of austerity and budget-cutting in Europe and North America and kept the concentration of expertise in area studies alive in some cases. It also enabled a new generation of doctoral students and early-stage researchers and generated superb scholarship that broadened immeasurably the literature on the Gulf States across academic disciplines.

> " *The increasing scholarly interest in Gulf Studies has, however, clashed with a decreasing threshold of tolerance for academic—or any other—criticism*

The increasing scholarly interest in Gulf Studies has, however, clashed with a decreasing threshold of tolerance for academic—or any other—criticism, however well-grounded or rooted in facts and evidence. Moreover, changes to the nature of scholarly engagement and academic analysis in free-to-access online platforms have intersected with the rise of the Gulf States as regional powers invested heavily in shaping the direction and pace of change in the post-Arab Spring Middle East. While this has created opportunities for scholars and students to engage in and contribute to public debate of timely and relevant issues, it also has landed many academics on security lists in individual countries and, since 2015, on the new regionwide list. When the GCC-wide list was announced, it was portrayed as a "unified terrorist blacklist," but observers wondered if the definition would stretch to encompass critical voices. Sure enough, within weeks, reports began to appear of scholars and even students being denied entrance to countries they previously had no problems accessing.[97]

THE QATAR CRISIS

It is against this backdrop that the crisis in

relations between Qatar and three of its GCC neighbors has unfolded since June 2017. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt cut diplomatic ties with Qatar and imposed an air, land, and sea embargo on the movement of people and goods from their quartet of states.

As with nearly everything else in the crisis—which shows no imminent sign of resolution at the time of writing in early-2019—the terminology itself is bitterly contested. Qatari claims of a blockade are countered by quartet insistence that it is a boycott. The failure to agree on basic terms illustrates the chasm between two sets of narratives that appear diametrically opposed on most issues of contention surrounding the blockade/boycott: what caused it, the Gulf States' different responses to the political upheaval of the Arab Spring, and prospects for resolving the standoff.

From the very start, the blockade/boycott has been accompanied by online and media campaigns that have been vituperative at times and cast the dispute in "us and them" terms that has left very little common ground in between. In this polarized environment, academics who have been asked to give their views on developments or who have chosen to provide analysis have been placed into one camp or the other, often against their will, simply by giving their opinion on bitterly-contested events. Many have been subjected to ad hominem attacks on Twitter and other platforms in an attempt to devalue their credibility as "expert" commentators.

The dispute in the Gulf has several immediate and secondary impacts on scholars and scholarship. On a practical level, it has made travel within the region more challenging, although not impossible, at least for international visitors rather than regional residents. Although direct flights between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, and Egypt no longer exist, there are not yet any documented cases of people being denied entry for having the "wrong" stamp in their passport. That said, it is unlikely, in the current atmosphere, that scholars and students based in Qatar would feel secure traveling to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, or Bahrain, or that entry would necessarily be granted, especially for Qatari citizens. The bitterness surrounding the crisis has additionally taken its toll on longstanding relationships among previously close-knit circles of local academics, which may take years to recover, if even possible.

FIELD RESEARCH

Conducting field research in the Gulf is also getting more challenging, in part as it has become harder for academics to avoid being buttonholed as being on one side or the other, especially if they have spent significant time in any of the disputant states or been based at any of the branch campuses of U.S. universities in Qatar or the UAE. Such connections are more likely to attract "red flags" in security files and give rise to misunderstandings—willful or otherwise— like the 2018 arrest of British PhD student Matthew Hedges in the UAE. As policymakers and officials in Gulf States now feel surrounded by threats from within the region as well as beyond, there is a danger that information (and access) will become even more securitized and the range of sensitive "no-go" research areas expanded, even if they do not directly involve or relate to the Qatar rift.

The fact that Hedges was held in solitary confinement for five months before being accused of spying (for British Intelligence) and handed a life sentence sent shockwaves through the academic community of Gulf scholars and prompted an urgent reassessment of the risks of

undertaking field research in the UAE.[98] While not linked directly to the Qatar crisis, the Hedges case, which ended in him being granted a presidential pardon after intense international pressure, became emblematic of how greater securitization of information had shifted the red lines in unpublicized yet consequential ways. The situation for scholars in the UAE—and probably also in Saudi Arabia—could get still more challenging. In in the wake of the Hedges fiasco in early December 2018, the UAE government announced changes to the penal code, which broadened the definition of classified information considered "secrets of the nation's defense" to include:

Military, political, economic, industrial, scientific or social security-related information, or other information, which are unknown except to persons who have such a capacity by virtue of one's position or status, and which the interest of the country's defense requires that it remains undisclosed to others.[99]

Faced with this potentially all-encompassing definition, many scholars may choose to self-censor while they are in-county, as the threat of crossing the state-security threshold and getting oneself banned (and having that ban extended regionwide by the GCC) may act as a potent disincentive to publish anything that could be deemed—still less actually be—critical in any way.

CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGE
The crisis over Qatar has therefore added new layers of complexity to scholarly endeavor in the Gulf. One silver lining has been that the fracturing of the GCC has extended to its regionwide security blacklist. Qatar stopped following the GCC list soon after the blockade began in 2017, but it may yet be reinstated if or when the rift is resolved. Until that point, however, the polarization in Gulf politics has become so great that it may become increasingly difficult to

undertake regionwide field research, carving Gulf Studies into silos that mirror, however unintentionally, the two sides of the regional great schism.

This matters, because the changing political economy and political culture of GCC states is a topic of great academic—and policymaking—relevance, and analytical understanding of the deeper shifts underway in GCC state and societies will be limited if scholars' access to the region continues to be restricted. Existing professional relationships among scholars will mitigate the geopolitical tensions that currently bedevil the field of Gulf Studies, and meetings at academic events beyond the region can keep open most avenues of communication and collegiality. For at least the foreseeable future, it is likely that the most productive forms of research collaboration may occur in "neutral" settings in Europe, Asia, or North America, although the political context in the U.S. under the current administration has added further hurdles that have made it more difficult for many scholars in the region to attend events in the United States.

Participation in multi-author research projects and/or edited volumes is another way that scholars are likely to overcome geopolitical obstacles and continue to engage with perspectives and scholarship that transcend regional divides. Maintaining such ties is critical to ensuring that the crisis over Qatar does not place additional stress on the field of Gulf Studies, leaving open the possibility that conditions improve in the future, however unlikely that may seem at present.

STILL DRIPPING WITH IDENTITY POLITICS? BEYOND CLASSIC IDENTITY POLITICS: THREE WAYS OF DISCUSSING IDENTITY POLITICS IN THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE NEW MIDDLE EAST

By Morten Valbjørn, Aarhus University

Identity politics traditionally has figured prominently in the study of the international relations of the Middle East, a region famously described as "dripping with identity politics."[100] At the same time, it is obvious that the Arab uprisings not only impacted the Middle East, but also scholarship on the region, as reflected in post-2011 debates on whether it is necessary to reject, revise, or revisit past theoretical approaches to and understandings of Middle East politics.[101] Against this background, it is natural to ask whether the classic discussion about identity politics in (the study of) Middle East international relations is still important, and if so, to what extent has the emergence of some kind of "new Middle East" also paved to way for a "new" kind of identity politics and corresponding need to revise our approaches to the topic. In recent years, these questions have been addressed in a number of ways, spanning the role of identity politics "on the ground" in the Middle East as well as among scholars within academia.[102]

> 66 *To what extent has the emergence of some kind of "new Middle East" also paved to way for a "new" kind of identity politics and corresponding need to revise our approaches*

1. (RE)EXAMINING THE COMPOSITION OF SUB/SUPRA/TERRITORIAL STATE IDENTITIES

To examine whether the importance of various kinds of identities has changed, scholars have revisited the classic debate about the composition of different kinds of identities in the Middle East.[103] One common argument about regional identity has long been that the most distinctive feature of the Middle East state system was "the relative incongruity between state and identity,"[104] particularly, the relative importance of an Arab versus territorial state identities. Following the Arab uprisings, a new version of this classic debate has evolved.

Initially, the presence of only *Egyptian* flags at Tahrir Square in early 2011 prompted some to question whether state and national identity in the Middle East at last had prevailed, or if the resonance of the *Arab* uprisings across the "Arab sound chamber" instead showed how Arab politics still carried a distinct Arab dimension.[105] While this discussion to some extent resembled the classic debate about (the myth of) the end of Arabism, which has been going on since 1967, the conversation soon shifted. Eventually, scholars recognized that a weakening of the Arab dimension of Arab politics did not necessarily have to mean a strengthening of territorial state identities. In line with Lynch's statement that "a number of deeper trends have come together in recent years to give frightening new power to *identity politics writ large*,"[106] various kinds of sub- and supra-state identities other than the Arab instead began to receive increasing attention.

Some scholars drew attention to sub-state identities based on tribe or ethnicity, discussing whether this would lead to a remapping of the Middle East.[107] Others suggested that the defining feature of identity politics in a "new Middle East" would be what Abdo coined the "new sectarianism," and others have described as a process of "sectarianization."[108] While Shia/Sunni sectarianism had been debated in the decade before the Arab uprisings, the terms of the debate had changed. Previous skeptics now acknowledged that sectarianism had become "a

real factor in politics,"[109] and instead of discussing whether sectarianism was a "myth or reality,"[110] the debate on sectarian politics now largely revolved around questions about why sectarianism had (re)emerged and how it has impacted various dynamics of regional politics.[111] While sectarianism still holds a prominent position on the agenda, recently it has been supplemented with an emerging interest in whether the Middle East—like other parts of the world—is witnessing the rise of some kind of "new nationalism."[112] This may mark a new stage in the post-2011 debate on the composition of identities in the Middle East.

Compared with the pre-2011 debates on identity politics in Middle East international relations, this first perspective highlights dimensions of both continuity and change. While non-territorial state identities are still studied, supra-state identities other than Arab receive more attention. This is illustrated in the labelling of current regional rivalries not only as a "new Arab cold war," an "Arab cold war redux," or the "third Arab cold war," but also as a sectarian/Shia–Sunni/Iranian–Saudi/Islamic/Middle Eastern regional cold war.[113]

2. GRASPING IDENTITY POLITICS TOGETHER WITH OLD PARTNERS AND NEW FRIENDS

If identity politics is still relevant in the new Middle East but with a different configuration of (supra and sub-state) identities, what are the implications for Middle East international relations? Are our existing analytical and theoretical approaches still useful or do they need to be revised? Since the Arab uprisings, these questions have been examined in debates that involve old partners as well as new allies.

In the decade before the Arab uprisings, the traditional gap between IR theory and Middle East scholarship had already begun to narrow.[114] In recent years, the IR/Middle East nexus has been further revitalized through various conferences, workshops, and publications on how IR theory can contribute to a better understanding of the international dimension of the Arab uprisings and how insights from the Middle East can enrich broader debates in IR.[115]

For instance, some have combined neo-classical realism with Middle East studies' strong attention to supra-state identities and domestic-international linkages to show how sectarianism is used in geopolitical rivalries among regional powers and through proxies in various domestic theaters.[116] Others have drawn on historical sociology to develop a new identity/ideology framework that refines and nuances our understanding of the ideational drivers of the foreign policies of regional powers.[117] Still others have introduced the Copenhagen School's theory about securitization to examine the process by which sectarian identities become security issues and sources of conflict.[118]

The traditional prominence of analytical eclecticism in Middle East scholarship continues to inform analyses today. Hinnebusch, for instance, has introduced a "multivariate synthetic approach" that draws on neoclassic realism, constructivism, English School theory, IPE and historical sociology to account for international relations in a new Middle East marked by "transnational identity wars and competitive interference."[119] Meanwhile, Lynch combines a constructivist emphasis on ideas, a realist focus on states, and theory on proxy war, networks, civil war, and insurgency to make sense of "the new Arab wars."[120]

In addition to this revitalization of the IR/Middle East studies nexus, new issues have emerged that

leverage other kinds of partnership. One critique posited that the recent sectarianism debate has explained sectarianism away by reducing the phenomenon to factors exterior to sectarian identity politics itself.[121] In response, a growing number of Middle East scholars are now exploring whether and how insights from religious and ethnicity studies as well as from the broader IR debate on the role of religion in international relations can be useful analytical tools to study sectarianism in way that avoids the pitfalls of both essentialism and instrumentalism. This relates to another debate partly inspired by Brubaker's distinction between "diacritical" and "normative ordering" dimensions of (religious) identities.[122] Rather than focusing on the classic issue about territorial- versus supra-state identities, there is a growing interest in examining whether different kinds of supra-state identities affect regional politics differently.[123] For instance, does it matter that external actors are emphasizing different *kinds* of (supra/sub-state) identities when trying to mobilize local proxies in Syria or Libya respectively? Likewise, does it make a difference if the current regional rivalry is understood in terms of an Arab, sectarian, Islamic, or Middle Eastern regional cold war?

3. HOW SCHOLARLY IDENTITIES "IN HERE" SHAPE HOW WE UNDERSTAND IDENTITY POLITICS "OUT THERE"

While the two previous perspectives focus on the composition of identities in the region and their implications for analyzing regional politics, it is possible to identify a third and more novel and self-reflexive way of discussing identity politics. While Middle East scholars "have always acknowledged the importance of identities for an understanding of the region,"[7] surprisingly little attention has been directed at whether and how our own political, cultural, and professional identities "in here" might shape scholarship and

influence how identities "out there" are approached, theorized, and discussed. Previously, this issue was mainly confined to the area studies controversy with its distinction between those trained in the disciplines versus area studies.[15] Conversely, questions about geo-cultural epistemologies and the role of the cultural-institutional contexts for knowledge production have received less attention.

These questions however have figured prominently in that part of the broader field of IR theory engaged in the so-called Global/Post-Western IR debate.[124] Following Cox's famous remark about how "theory is always for someone and for some purpose…(there) is no such thing as theory in itself divorced from a standpoint in time and space" combined with Hoffmann's statement about how IR to a large extent has been an "American Social Science" and Wæver's suggestion that "IR might be quite different in different places"[125], this has not only given rise to an inward-looking critique of (mainstream) IR for being blind to its own limited or bounded perspective. It has also led to more outward-looking explorations into whether international relations are imagined and studied in substantially different ways in other parts of the world and how the "non-West" to a larger extent can become a "producer of knowledge" rather than being only an "object of knowledge."[126]

According the TRIP (Teaching, Research, and International Policy) Project survey on theory and practice of IR around the world, the Middle East figures as one of the most studied regions "beyond the West." Nevertheless, Middle East scholars (from the region and elsewhere) have been largely absent in the Global/Post-Western IR debate, where focus has been occupied by discussions concerning Chinese, Indian, Latin American or continental European IR. Questions

about how Middle East international relations have been studied within the region itself or whether, for instance, American and European Middle East scholars differ in how they approach the region have only rarely been addressed. Partly as an outcome of an Arab uprisings triggered soul–searching among Middle East scholars, however, there are signs of an emerging interest in examining this dimension of identity politics in (the study of) Middle East international relations. In addition to studies on the geopolitics of knowledge and postcolonial agency, this trend includes scholars studying the "politics of insecurity" viewed from Beirut or how security in the Arab world and Turkey is "differently different."[127] This new mode of analysis has recently been reflected in the manifesto for a "Beirut School of critical security studies."[128] And various workshops have brought together leading figures from Global/Post–Western IR with Middle East scholars, to compare how IR is studied and taught in American, European, and different Middle Eastern contexts, producing self-reflective autobiographies of how private experiences, institutional contexts, geo-cultural locations, disciplinary training, and the encounter of specific influential persons/books have influenced scholars' intellectual journey.[129]

A NEW CHAPTER IN AN OLD BOOK

In the context of the 9/11 debate, Halliday once remarked that that "there are two predictable, and nearly always mistaken, responses to any great international upheaval: one is to say that everything has changed; the other is to say that nothing has changed."[130] Against this background, he called for simultaneous attention to both continuities and changes. This advice is similarly relevant in the debate on the role of identity politics in the study of Middle East international relations after the Arab uprisings. While the Middle East may still be "dripping with identity

politics," classic themes have reemerged with a twist, and novel issues have been introduced. The exact composition of different kinds of identities in the region and its implications for regional politics continues to be an important but contested topic, but other supra-state identities than the Arab now receive more attention. The IR/Middle East studies nexus still offers important analytical tools, but at the same time, it is possible to detect a growing interest in how the specific nature of different supra/sub–state identities, and religion in particular, can be taken more seriously in non-essentialist ways. Finally, it is possible to detect a new trend in the debate on identity politics, which redirects focus from identities "out there" to those "in here." This is reflected in a novel interest in whether scholars' own identities, shaped not only by their disciplinary training but also their cultural–institutional setting, impact how they study identity politics in the Middle East. In view of these dimensions of both continuity and change, the current post-Arab uprisings debate appears most of all as a new chapter in a long and old book on the role of identity politics in (the study of) Middle East international relations.

YEMEN OFFERS LESSONS AT DIFFERENT SCALES

By Stacey Philbrick Yadav, Hobart and William Smith Colleges

In August 2005, I casually informed a Yemeni official with whom I was friends that I was planning to travel to Aden without papers. After waiting for months in Sana'a for a travel permit that would allow me to leave the capital, I was frustrated and worried I was reaching the limit of what I could learn from the same people at the same *qat* chews. Traveling without a permit meant that I would have to travel by bus—I would not be

able to buy a plane ticket, and a private car would be stopped at every checkpoint. Instead, a fellow graduate student—an American man whose project differed from mine and who had been able to secure an almost (but not entirely) unrestricted permit—could buy two bus tickets and we could gamble that when the bus was stopped, no one would ask him questions about his respectfully *abaya*-clad traveling companion. Acknowledging that the government was not going to issue me permission to talk to members of the opposition outside of Sana'a, my Yemeni official friend nonetheless procured for me a pseudo-legitimate permit just in case. If it were held up next to the real thing, the differences would be clear. Over the course of the day-long bus trip, however, we were stopped a few times, but I was never questioned directly. By the time we arrived in Aden, I had a growing confidence in my ability to circumvent what I saw as politically-motivated restrictions. Until, of course, I tried to use my pseudo papers to check in to a hotel.

This episode shows the kind of mundane ways in which research is structured and shaped by identity, politics, and encounters with and evasion of officialdom, highlighting methodological issues that have shaped and will continue to shape academic research on Yemen. In part because of research conditions themselves, understanding the politics of Yemen is challenging and inevitably partial, in both senses of the term.[131] Political scientists who write about Yemen have also often adopted an ethnographic approach, whether by disposition or by necessity. Most frame their claims in terms of a particular region, subnational group, or issue area, knowing that there will be other parts of the country, or other groups to which their claims cannot extend. Certainly, this was true when there were two Yemens, North and South, but it also characterized the literature on "unified" Yemen, and remains the case today, as

a four-year civil war has fragmented both Yemen and Yemenis' shared sense of political community.

Yet our discipline places overwhelming value on the generalizable, meaning that Yemen scholars' tendency to focus on the particular, the local, and the contingent in a single case has surely contributed to Yemen's peripherality in the literature on Middle East politics and in the discipline as a whole. This should not be the case. The politics of Yemen, and most especially the politics of the current war, raise questions that, if taken seriously, could enrich the practices of political science at four scales: theoretical, methodological, ethical, and political. These challenges are interlinked, but distinct.

THEORY: RETHINKING IDENTITIES AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF FRAMING

Theoretically, engaging with Yemeni politics should push political scientists to think about what we know and what we think we know about the nature of identity and the relationship between groups, individuals, and institutions. Most anyone who talks about Yemeni politics will cite Lisa Wedeen's 2008 *Peripheral Visions*, but fewer seem to have seriously reckoned with her arguments about the way Yemenis articulate identities or how "contemporary claims to group affiliation are beholden to the institutional and discursive legacies that shape possibilities for political action."[132] That her claims are made in a way that can initially seem hyperparticular to Yemen should not lead to the impression that its politics are in some way exceptional or inscrutable. Instead, they should be read as both a substantive part of the argument and a lesson at a theoretical scale. Engaging them seriously could help move scholars from blunt and reductive descriptions of Yemen's war and "identity politics" toward a focus on practices of persuasive story-telling about belonging, in which we ask

"what kinds of stories inspire persons to embrace certain senses of imagined political community, [or] memberships in particular political peoples."[133] While there are many good reasons to view belonging as both particular and contingent, it is particularly helpful in helping us to think about how and why people and groups *change*.

One apt illustration of this approach comes from a subject close to my own research: the politics of Yemen's largest Islamist organization, Islah. I am often at a loss when asked to comment on what Islah has been doing during the war. On the one hand, it is a straightforward question: like most other members of the displaced cabinet of President 'Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, Islah leaders left the country in Yemen in 2015, headed to Riyadh, and have supported the war to restore Hadi to power from afar. Yet other prominent Islahis have been abducted and killed by Houthis, have been detained, tortured, or killed in secret prisons run by Saudi Arabia's coalition partner, the United Arab Emirates, have publicly criticized all sides in the war on humanitarian grounds, or have fled to Qatar, an adversary of the UAE and Saudi Arabia, where they write and speak publicly against the Coalition. This, surely, is an answer about *Islahis,* not Islah. And yet it is only through this mapping of the party's practical dissolution at the leadership level that I can more confidently argue that Islah should not be thought of as a party so much as a networked series of alliances pulling in diverse directions, a network that shows how the war is changing individuals and institutions, and a network that contributes to some of those changes.

Then there are armed groups that the media and some policy analysts describe as "Islahi militias." It is worth noting that political scientists are usually more circumspect in describing them only loosely as "Islah-aligned." Scholars' reticence to describe them as "Islahi militias" reflects the varied bases on which such militias are organized, including tribal and family solidarity, regional identity, the role of powerful individual leaders, and sometimes a religio-political or sectarian ideology. In other words, the relationship between party and militia is neither direct nor clear. Looking jointly at the eroding coherence of the Islah party at the leadership level and the diverse social bases of militias that carry this loose label, we might reasonably ask what it means to "be Islahi" in Yemen today. Surely it does not mean what it did in the late 1990s, when student activists lobbied the administration and wrote editorials calling for the closure of a gender studies center at Sana'a University. Nor is it the same as when Islah joined with the Yemeni Socialist Party in 2006 to mount a joint campaign for the presidency in opposition to former President Saleh's authoritarian encroachment, or when that same alliance jointly boycotted the 2009 election because they could not agree among themselves on the status of women leaders in the party. To "be Islahi" in the current moment is also distinct from what it meant when a woman from Islah led crowds of protesters in Change Square in 2011, or when young members of Islah and the Houthi movement, now on opposite sides of a protracted civil war, participated on the same side in a public debate over the nature of the civil state in 2012. I do not offer these examples to make any claim about Islah itself, but to underscore those of other Yemen scholars that "claims to and experiences of group solidarity can both change over time and come and go quickly," and that "recognizing context and specificity does not require eschewing generalization."[134]

METHODOLOGY: NARROWING OPPORTUNITIES BUT NEW COLLABORATIONS

If political scientists working on Yemen are inclined to offer accounts that stress the

theoretical significance of particularity and contingency, this move itself might be imbricated with the methodological challenge of working *in* Yemen. As the episode above only begins to illustrate, even before the war, researchers faced many restrictions on travel, which had a substantive effect on the types of methods that they could reasonably adopt. Prevailing practices of gender separation also posed a barrier to any kind of comprehensive account. Prior to the 1990s, this meant that the literature on Yemeni politics, produced almost exclusively by male scholars, both reflected and perpetuated Yemeni women's marginalization, largely through the ways in which such research conceived of what counted as "public."[135] This shifted as more (foreign) women began to conduct research that capitalized on their ability to work with men and women alike.[136] But even with the promise of greater representation and broader access, travel restrictions, political surveillance, and a climate of insecurity have meant that most of the political science literature on Yemen in the past 20 years has been disproportionately focused on the politics of Yemen's major urban centers. In a country where more than 70 percent of the population lives outside of those urban centers, this too poses a challenge.

Under the current conditions of war, however, the picture is worse. The vast majority of scholarship on Yemen by political scientists is now conducted outside of Yemen. As the wider politics of the Gulf run through Yemen, some scholars have been able to conduct research on the war from adjacent locations in the MENA region. However, following the high-profile detention of researchers in the Gulf last year, many worry that they and/or their interview subjects will face similar risk.[137] Shifting focus to analysis of satellite and social media is a short-term solution for some kinds of research questions, perhaps, but does little to avoid the

kind of partial and fragmented knowledge that already exists.[138] It also raises associated questions about "the effects of distance, boundaries, and scale on perceptions of events" in the context of political violence[139]

If an increase in foreign women researchers opened up the possibility of a better understanding of the roles of Yemeni women in political life in the 1990s and 2000s, the contributions of a growing number of Yemeni researchers has also improved the quality and reach of scholarship on Yemen. Yet under the conditions of the current war (and, frankly, before as well), Yemeni scholars have been subject to harassment, suppression, and in some cases, even death. Today, the war has closed many Yemeni scholars off—both figuratively and literally— though social media has allowed for the continued dissemination of research, such as that conducted by the Yemen Polling Center.[140] A privately-run survey firm based in Sana'a, the YPC distributes its high-quality survey data related to many relevant features of the war in Yemen and produces essential data that will support sustainable post-war reconstruction. Transparent in its methodological practices and working to overcome the aforementioned limitations of Yemen's research environment by deploying mixed-gender teams in the communities where they already live, the YPC provides geographic range, gender representation, and social trust in an environment under significant strain. A recent Facebook post promoting a YPC working paper highlighted these commitments:

One of our female interviewers is conducting an interview with a resident in Amran in this picture. Our interviewers are all from the areas they work in to make sure they speak the same dialect as the interviewees and to build trust. This also gives them the necessary connections to negotiate with local authorities, if it becomes necessary. Half of our enumerators are women! This enables us to interview both genders equally.

[#yemen](#) [#amran](#) [#ypc](#) [#polling](#) [#research](#) [#interview](#) [#middleeast](#) [#reform](#)[#advocacy](#) [#peace](#) [#salam](#) [#pollinginwartime](#)

Yemeni scholars are also contributing to innovative forms of collaborative research. The Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient, a research center based in Bonn, promotes and funds research by teams of Yemeni and foreign scholars working jointly on the requisites of peacebuilding.[141] This initiative is designed to "bridge the increasing academic isolation of Yemeni academics and the inaccessibility of Yemen to international researchers in light of the ongoing war in Yemen by bringing both sides together in joint research and publication efforts."[142]

ETHICS AND POLITICS: WHAT SPEAKING ABOUT YEMEN DOES

If collaboration has made it possible to address some of the methodological challenges of research on Yemen's war, it has not resolved all of the ethical questions the war raises about representation and overrepresentation. It is a gross understatement to say that Yemenis living under a partial blockade for four years, or who are categorically banned from entering the United States struggle for self-representation to audiences outside of Yemen.

" *When foreign scholars decide which voices to amplify, which sources to cite, which Yemeni scholars to partner with, we have to be mindful of the potential effects of these choices on the people in question, on those whom we do not (and often cannot) amplify, and on the work itself.*

When foreign scholars decide—as we inevitably must—which voices to amplify, which sources to cite, which Yemeni scholars to partner with, we have to be mindful of the potential effects of these choices on the people in question, on those whom we do not (and often cannot) amplify, and on the work itself. These questions are made acute by particular features of the war in Yemen like the Saudi-led blockade, but the ways scholars respond to this challenge can both draw from and contribute to broader conversations about ethics in the field of political science.

Each of these three scales—the theoretical ways in which scholars conceive of identity, belonging, and institutional change; the methodological ways in which we study these questions in a fragmented landscape and outside of it; and the ethical

implications of those ways of knowing—intersect with what is a fundamentally political question. To what extent does (or should) scholarship on Yemeni politics also constitute an intervention in the politics of Yemen? The war in Yemen is one with local, regional, and international antagonists and the way the war is described by scholars (as a "proxy war," for example, or as a "sectarian conflict") has implications for the modes of

conflict resolution that are pursued by policymakers who read our analyses. In this way, political scientists who study Yemen are in a bind: present too much complexity and Yemen will seem inscrutable; present too little and participate in a reductionism that cannot be intellectually supported. At this scale, the challenge feels most intractable.

Allam notes:

[1] Nermin Allam, *Women and the Egyptian Revolution: Engagement and Activism during the 2011 Arab Uprisings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[2] For a discussion of the challenges of carrying research in the Middle East and North Africa, see Lihi Ben Shitrit, "Intersectionality Theory and Working with 'Both Sides,'" in *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa: Methodological and Ethical Challenges*, ed. Janine A. Clark and Francesco Cavatorta (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 254–63; Sarah E. Parkinson, "Seeing Beyond the Spectacle: Research on and Adjacent to Violence," in *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa: Methodological and Ethical Challenges*, ed. Janine A. Clark and Francesco Cavatorta (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 73–82; Jillian Schwedler and Janine A. Clark, "Encountering the Mukhabarat State," in *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa: Methodological and Ethical Challenges*, ed. Janine A. Clark and Francesco Cavatorta (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 23–34; Atef Said, "Doing Research during Times of Revolution and Counter-Revolution," in *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa: Methodological and Ethical Challenges*, ed. Janine A. Clark and Francesco Cavatorta (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 83–93; Irene Weipert-Fenner, "Blurred Lines of Inclusion and Exclusion: Research Ethics for Sympathizers," in *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa: Methodological and Ethical Challenges*, ed. Janine A. Clark and Francesco Cavatorta (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 233–41.

[3] Interviewee 108. Author's interview, Cairo, Egypt, March 2017.

[4] Interviewee 108. Author's interview, Cairo, Egypt, March 2017.

[5] Interviewee 115. Author's interview, Cairo, Egypt, March 2017.

[6] For a discussion on the impact of surveillance and control on the research process, see Schwedler and Clark, "Encountering the Mukhabarat State"; Stefan Malthaner, "Field Work in the Context of Violent Conflict and Authoritarian Regimes," in *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*, ed. Donatella Della Porta, First edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 173–94.

[7] Academic tourism is a concept that emerged during a discussion at the workshop "The Ethics of Political Science Research and Teaching in MENA," held on June 9 - 11, 2015, at King Mohammed V University in Rabat. Among the key themes that emerged during the discussion were the ways in which some locally based scholars and state officials view many researchers from outside the region as academic tourists because they produce knowledge for Western rather than local audience and have better access and funding opportunities than locally based scholars.

[8] See also Said, "Doing Research during Times of Revolution and Counter-Revolution," for a discussion of the insider-outsider status of the researcher and its impact on the research process.

[9] Interview with female activist 95, author's interview, Cairo: Egypt, November 2015.

[10] Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore*, Reprint edition (New York: Vintage, [2002] 2006).

Brooke and Ketchley notes:

[11] Authors listed alphabetically.

[12] See for example: Blaydes, Lisa, and Eric Chaney. "The Feudal Revolution and Europe's Rise: Political Divergence of the Christian West and the Muslim World before 1500 C.E." American Political Science Review Vol. 107, No. 1 (2013): 16–34; Braun, Robert. "Religious Minorities and Resistance to Genocide: The Collective Rescue of Jews in the Netherlands during the Holocaust." American Political Science Review Vol. 110, No.1 (2016): 127–47; Jha,

Saumitra, and Steven Wilkinson. "Does Combat Experience Foster Organizational Skill? Evidence from Ethnic Cleansing During the Partition of South Asia." American Political Science Review Vol. 106, No. 4 (2012): 883–907.

[13] Brooke, Steven and Ketchley, Neil. "Social and Institutional Origins of Political Islam." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 112 No. 2 (2019): 376-394.

[14] Masoud, Tarek. *Counting Islam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

[15] Baron, Beth. *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood.* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014.

[16] Mitchell, Richard P. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers.* Oxford: Oxford University Press; Lia, Brynjar. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928- 1942.* (Ithaca: Ithaca Press). Munson, Ziad. "Islamic Mobilization: A Social Movement Theory Approach." *The Sociological Quarterly* Vol. 42 No. 4 (2001): 487- 510.

[17] Mitchell, Timothy. *Colonising Egypt.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 1991; Mitchell, Timothy. *Rule of Experts.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 2002; Edney, Matthew H. *Mapping an Empire.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997. Tellingly, one area where this approach is particularly advanced is colonial India. See Banerjee, Abhijit and Lakshmi Iyer. "History, Institutions, and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India." *American Economic Review* Vol. 95, No. 4 (September 2005): 1190-1213; Donaldson, Dave. "Railroads of the Raj: Estimating the Impact of Transportation Infrastructure." *American Economic Review* Vol. 108, No. 4-5 (April 2018): 899-934.

[18] Brooke, Steven. "Evolving Methods in the Study of Islamism." *POMEPS Studies* No. 17 (2016): 27-29. Available online at https://pomeps.org/2016/03/05/evolving-methodologies-in-the-study-of-islamism/

Harris and Tavana notes:

[19] Ebrahim Mohseni, Nancy Gallagher, and Clay Ramsay, "The Ramifications of Rouhani's Re-election: A Public Opinion Study." (College Park, MD: Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland, July 2017).

[20] Kevan Harris and Daniel Tavana, *Voter Behavior and Political Mobilization in Iran: Findings from the Iran Social Survey* (Lund, Sweden: European Middle East Research Group, January 2018), https://doi.org/10.26369/RE.2018.001

[21] Kevan Harris and Zep Kalb, "Pen to the Tiller: Land Reform and Social Mobility across the 1979 Iranian Revolution," forthcoming in the *Journal of Agrarian Change.*

[22] Kevan Harris, "Unpacking the Welfare-Politics Nexus in the Islamic Republic of Iran." *Project on Middle East Political Science*, Briefing 28 (2017): 26-30. For the politics of Iran's welfare system, see Kevan Harris, *A Social Revolution: Politics and the Welfare State in Iran* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017).

Hazbun, Makdisi, and Hindawi notes:

[23] Names listed in alphabetical order.

[24] W. E. B. DuBois, "Worlds of Color," *Foreign Affairs* 3, no. 3 (April 1925): 423.

[25] Patrick McGreevy, "The American Question," in *Practicing Transnationalism: American Studies in The Middle East*, eds. Eileen T. Lundy and Edward J. Lundy (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016), 25.

[26] David A. Lake, "White Man's IR: An Intellectual Confession," *Perspectives on Politics* 14, no. 4 (December 2016): 1115.

[27] Two of us hold PhDs from US institutions and one recently relocated to the US after teaching at the American University of Beirut for 8 years.

[28] Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 186 (emphasis in original).

[29] Waleed Hazbun, "The Politics of Insecurity in the Arab World: A View from Beirut," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 3 (July 2017): 656-9; Karim Makdisi and Vijay Prashad eds. *Land of Blue Helmets: The United Nations and the Arab World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016).

[30] Pinar Bilgin, "Inquiring into Others' Conceptions of the International and Security," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 3 (2017): 654.

[31] Coralie Pison Hindawi, "Iraq: Twenty years in the shadow of Chapter VII," in *Land of Blue Helmets: The United Nations and the Arab World,* eds. Karim Makdisi and Vijay Prashad (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 194-211; Karim Makdisi and Coralie Pison Hindawi, "The Syrian chemical weapons disarmament process in context: Narratives of coercion, consent, and everything in between," *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 8 (2017): 1691-1709.

[32] Karim Makdisi and Vijay Prashad, eds. *Land of the Blue Helmets: The United Nations in the Arab World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016).

[33] Waleed Hazbun, "Beyond the American Era in the Middle East: An Evolving Landscape of Turbulence," in *New Conflict Dynamics*, eds. Rasmus Alenius Boserup, Waleed Hazbun, Karim Makdisi and Helle Malmvig (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2017), pp. 31-41; http://pure.diis.dk/ws/files/830699/2017_DIIS_New_Conflict_Dynamics_in_the_Middle_East_and_North_Africa_web.pdf.

[34] Karim Makdisi, "Constructing Security Council Resolution 1701 for Lebanon in the Shadow of the 'War on Terror,'" *International Peacekeeping* 18, no. 1 (2011): 4–20.

[35] Makdisi and Pison Hindawi, "The Syrian chemical weapons disarmament process in context."

[36] Coralie Pison Hindawi, "What If R2P Was—Truly—Everyone's Business? Exploring the Individual Responsibility to Protect," *Alternatives* 41, no. 1 (February 2016): 29–48.

[37] Mohammed Bamyeh, *Social Sciences in the Arab World: Forms of Presence* (Beirut: Arab Council for the Social Sciences, 2015), 129; http://www.theacss.org/uploads/English-ASSR-2016.pdf.

[38] See, for example, Najib B. Hourani, "Lebanon: Hybrid Sovereignties and U.S. Foreign Policy," *Middle East Policy* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 39-55; Bassel F. Salloukh, "Overlapping Contests and Middle East International Relations: The Return of the Weak Arab State," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 3 (2017): 660–63.

[39] See, for example, Rabih Shibli, "Reconfiguring Relief Mechanisms: The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon," Research Report, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, American University of Beirut (February 2014), http://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Documents/20140224ifi_pc_unrwa.pdf.

[40] Sari Hanafi, "University systems in the Arab East: Publish globally and perish locally vs publish locally and perish globally," *Current Sociology* 59, no. 3 (2011): 291-309.

[41] Samer Abboud, Omar Dahi, Waleed Hazbun, Nicole Sunday Grove, Jamil Mouawad, Coralie Pison Hindawi and Sami Hermez, "Towards a Beirut School of Critical Security Studies," *Critical Studies in Security* 6, no. 3 (2018): 273-295.

Hintz notes:

[42] "Başbakan Beğendi," *Hürriyet Gazetesi*, 17 February 2012: http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kelebek/basbakan-begendi-19932306.

[43] For a video of the song "My Sultan" (*Sultanım*) shared on YouTube, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMzl59THDYc.

[44] Former foreign minister and prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu introduced the concept in a book of the same name. Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

[45] Lisel Hintz, *Identity Politics Inside Out: National Identity Contestation and Foreign Policy in Turkey* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[46] "Berkin Elvan Unutulmuyor," *Yarın Haber*, 15 March 2014: http://www.yarinhaber.net/guncel/12469/berkin-elvan-unutulmuyor.

[47] "Medcezir'de Berkin Elvan Göndermesi," *Türkiye Gazetesi*, 16 March 2014: http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/gundem/141397.aspx.

[48] Lisel Hintz, "Reading Turkish Politics from a Soap Opera," *Foreign Policy*, 7 December 2012: https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/12/07/reading-turkish-politics-from-a-soap-opera/.

[49] "Turkish PM Talks Ottoman Empire, Slams Turkish TV Show," *Hürriyet Daily News*, 25 November 2012: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pm-talks-ottoman-empire-slams-turkish-tv-show---35405.

[50] "Muhteşem Yüzyıl'da bir İlk: Hürrem Sultan Namaz Kıldı," *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 20 December 2012: http://www.milliyet.com.tr/muhtesem-yuzyil-da-bir-ilk----hurrem-sultan-namaz-kildi-magazin-1644345/.

[51] "Evlilik Programları Yeni KHK ile Yasaklandı," *Hürriyet Gazetesi*, 20 April 2017: http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/evlilik-programi-khk-ile-yasak-40442535.

[52] Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 35. Hopf adapts James Scott's use of the term "hidden transcripts" to literature. *James Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990).

Lynch notes:

[53] For a sample of this vast literature, see Nathan Brown, *When Victory is Not an Option: Islamist Movements in Arab Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012) ; Steven Brooke, *Winning Hearts and Votes: Social Services*

and the Islamist Political Advantage, (Cornell University Press, 2019); Tarek Masoud, *Counting Islam: Religion, Class, and Elections in Egypt* (Cambridge University Press, 2014). Khalil al-Anani, *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood* (Oxford 2017); Carrie Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Quinn Mecham, *Institutional Origins of Islamist Political Mobilization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[54] For recent surveys of this evolving literature on post-2011 Islamist movements, see Marc Lynch, *In Uncharted Waters: Islamist Movements Beyond Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood* (Carnegie Middle East Center, 2016) "Adaptation Strategies of Islamist Movements," *POMEPS Studies* 26 (2017) and "Evolving Methodologies in the Study of Islamist Movements," *POMEPS Studies* 17 (2016)

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NOTE FROM APSA

Hello and greetings from APSA!

Congratulations to the new MENA Politics Organized Section on the publication of this issue of the newsletter. We are delighted that the community of MENA Politics research continues to grow within the association, as we continue to seek new opportunities for engagement and collaboration between scholars based in and outside the United States. Over the past couple of months, the APSA MENA Program has extended our support to early career scholars attending quantitative and qualitative methods training; collaborated with political science departments in the region on projects benefiting graduate students and faculty; and recruited fellows for the 2019 APSA MENA Workshop.

At the start of the year, we held the second week of the MENA workshop on "The Evolving Role of Political Institutions in the Arab World," which was held from January 28 to February 1, 2019 in Tunisia. Across the five days of the workshop, fellows presented and received feedback on their own research and attended a variety of professional development sessions on publishing and job market strategies, among other useful skills. Following this workshop, alumni received 3 years membership to APSA and the MENA Politics Organized Section. We are now selecting fellows for the 2019 Workshop on "Women and Politics: MENA Experiences." This year's workshop is led by Naima Benlarabi (Ibn Tofail University, Morocco), Rachel Brulé (New York University-Abu Dhabi, UAE), Hanane Darhour (Polydisciplinary Faculty of Ouarzazate, Morocco), Liv Tønnessen (Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway), and Aili Mari Tripp (University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA), and will take place in Abu Dhabi, UAE from June 9-13, and in Rabat, Morocco from October 14-18.

Aside from the MENA Workshops, we are expanding our support to Arab scholars interested in undertaking rigorous training in quantitative and qualitative methods. In collaboration with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) APSA is sponsoring 5 Arab scholars to participate in ICPSR's summer institute at the University of Michigan from June 24 to July 19. Similarly, APSA is sponsoring 3 MENA-based scholars to attend the Institute of Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR) at Syracuse University, NY from June 17-28.

The departmental collaboration initiative continues to seek proposals from departments of political science in the region. APSA is supporting a week-long workshop in April on the use of machine text analysis software for PhD students and junior faculty at Cairo University. APSA also extended a 2-year grant to the American University in Cairo to organize research methods workshop for MA students in the Spring semester and a teaching workshop for junior faculty in the Fall semester.

APSA is also lending support to the Arab Political Science Network (APSN), a non-political scholarly initiative led by a group of APSA MENA alumni that seeks to support and increase Arab scholars' research and teaching outputs in the study of political science, and its sub and related fields. APSN, with support from the Ford Foundation and the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at the American University in Beirut (AUB), is holding its first research feedback workshop in Beirut on April 11.

Following the success of last year's MENA Research Development Group (RDG) at the APSA Annual Meeting, APSA will provide travel grants to 6 early-career Arab scholars taking part in the 2019 MENA RDG. The RDG is an annual event organized by the MENA Politics organized section, featuring a full day of research feedback and professional development discussions that take place the day before the APSA annual meeting. We invite all members of the MENA Politics section to take part in APSA's MENA Program.

Please contact us directly for more information or to discuss ways of getting involved. Best to all in the coming months and stay well!

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