

بين التعددية والتجانس: قراءة تاريخية لإدارة التنوع الديني في شبه الجزيرة العربية

بدر موسى السيف*

الملخص

تحفل منطقة شبه الجزيرة العربية بتنوع بارز في الثقافات وأنماط الحياة والتقاليد الدينية. كانت هذه التعددية السائلة جزءاً متأصلاً في شبه الجزيرة العربية. ومع ذلك، فقد تم إسكانها في بعض المنعطفات التاريخية عند الترويج لبديل ديني متجانس. في هذه الورقة البحثية، أجادل في أن الموقف من الأديان في شبه الجزيرة العربية قد مر بثلاث مراحل تاريخية: الأولى، موقف غير مبالي حيث لم يكن الدين الموضوع الرئيس في الحيز العام. والثانية، مرحلة الارتباط الحديث بين الدول القومية الناشئة المترافق مع تأويل حصري للإسلام؛ والمرحلة الأخيرة، الموقف المعاصر المتذبذب، الذي يمزج بين إرث الماضي الأكثر انفتاحاً مع النظرة الحذرة للعصر الحديث. إن المحاولات المستمرة ذات النزعة الانتقائية لإعادة تقديم المنطقة باعتبارها ذات تعددية دينية في جوهر تكوينها الاجتماعي ونسيجها الثقافي اليوم هو موضع ترحيب، ولكنه محدودة القيمة في ظل غياب التركيز على بناء منهجية مؤسسية للتعددية الدينية في مجالات مهمة مثل التعليم والإعلام والقانون والمجتمع المدني. بناءً على نظريات دراسات التابع ذات الصلة بالإضافة إلى الفكر الماركسي، فإن الاعتماد على مناهج الشطب التاريخي بأنواعها وتفكيك السرديات السائدة يساعد في فهم أشكال البنية الدينية في شبه الجزيرة العربية. ويستند البحث على دراسة حالات مختلفة لإعادة تقييم إدارة التنوع الديني وتاريخه في شبه الجزيرة العربية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: شبه الجزيرة العربية، دول الخليج، الإسلام، إدارة التنوع، التعددية، الأديان، المسكوت عنه في التاريخ.

* أستاذ مساعد، قسم التاريخ والآثار، كلية الآداب، جامعة الكويت. bader.alsaiif@ku.edu.kw

الاستلام: 2022/11/30، التعديل النهائي: 2023/5/11، إجازة النشر: 2023/5/18

<https://doi.org/10.34120/0117-041-164-011>

Between Pluralism and Homogeneity: A History of Religious Diversity Management in the Arabian Peninsula

Bader Mousa Al-Saif*

Abstract

The Arabian Peninsula is characterized by an unequivocal diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and religious traditions. This characteristic has been an inherent part of the Arabian Peninsula; however, it was silenced at certain historical junctures when promoting a homogeneous alternative. I argue that the attitude towards religions in the Arabian Peninsula moved through three historical stages: a past nonchalant attitude, whereby religions did not figure prominently in the public sphere; a modern linkage of emerging nation-states with an exclusive rendition of Islam; and a contemporary vacillating attitude that mixes traces of the more open past with remnants of the modern era's guarded outlook. The select, ongoing attempts at reconstituting the region as religiously pluralistic today is welcome but of little value absent as a systematic cultivation of religious pluralism in critical fields like education, media, law, and civil society. Informed by Subaltern Studies and Marxist thought, pursuing erasure and trivialization methods helps decode Arabian Peninsula silences. By surveying different case studies, this paper reassesses religious diversity management and its history in the Arabian Peninsula.

Keywords: Arabian Peninsula, Gulf States, Islam, Diversity Management, Pluralism, Religions, Historical Silences

* Assistant Professor, Department of History and Archaeology, College of Arts, Kuwait University.
bader.alsaif@ku.edu.kw

Submitted: 30/11/2022, **Revised:** 11/5/2023, **Accepted:** 18/5/2023.

<https://doi.org/10.34120/0117-041-164-011>

Lawrence Potter describes the Arabian Peninsula (AP)⁽¹⁾ as “a creole area, an arena of mixed descent.”⁽²⁾ If you ask an AP resident about the region today, these descriptors will seldom come to mind. Yet various ethnicities, religions, sects, and backgrounds have coexisted in the AP. The paper uncovers this historically silenced diversity with particular attention to religions as its unit of analysis. Attitudes towards religious diversity have evolved over time, passing through three historical stages from the early to mid-nineteenth-century to the present day. First, fluid diversity was of a second nature to the AP in the past – it was present and characterized by a nonchalant spirit. Second, the visibility and recognition of diversity took a back seat when emerging nation-states linked themselves to an exclusive rendition of Islam that silenced or erased other strands within Islam and other religions. That took place along two contrasting modes – it was either done on purpose or unintentionally at other moments for the sake of building a distinct national identity that “citizens” coalesce around. It led to a modern manufactured homogenous identity, one that pits those who do not subscribe or acquiesce to it as the other that needs to be disciplined or symbolically subdued. Third, religious diversity makes a curious comeback at the present time taking it a step further to an attempt at lived pluralism. But it does so through an ambivalent attitude and a set of actions that mixes traces of the more open past with remnants of the guarded attitude of the modern era.⁽³⁾ The select, ongoing attempts at reconstituting the region as religiously pluralistic are welcome but of little value absent a systematic cultivation of religious pluralism in critical fields like education, media, law, and civil society.

I first define the key concepts of the paper, then summarize the selection of scholarly understandings of AP diversity before conceptualizing erasure and the subaltern as two methods that help explain the differential silencing of religious plurality in the AP. I then highlight different facets of the region’s religious diversity in the past before revealing select modern attempts at diluting an otherwise apparent diversity contrasted with a contemporary guarded acceptance. I end up with recommendations for nurturing religious pluralism, which has the potential to be one of the region’s soft powers.

Unpacking Key Concepts

Each concept has its own genealogy and comes with a basket of interpretations. Diversity is the existence of multiple views, backgrounds, and in our case, religions. Difference is the main feature of diversity. The response to such diversity is what produces pluralism or homogeneity. Diversity and pluralism tend to be mixed up, but they are not synonymous. Pluralism takes diversity deeper. It is an active engagement with difference for the sake of understanding one another and discovering constructive ways of living together.⁽⁴⁾ Adopting religious pluralism does not mean dropping one’s religious beliefs or watering them down to accommodate others. It provides an avenue for individuals to better understand their belief systems in relation to other beliefs. That in turn

may help reduce any given society's ignorance of its various components and lead to better social cohesion.

Homogeneity is the opposite of diversity. It takes sameness as a stance and a value that dilutes differences. Globalization may have standardized sameness in various fields, but uniformity cannot be pushed on unique belief systems that believe in their right to exist as they deem fit. Homogeneity may have reflected a lived reality in certain societies at one point, but it was never a Middle Eastern reality where difference is ingrained in the region's composition. It is this difference that various scholars have identified in their works as noted below in the literature review.

Scholars neither deny nor shy away from pointing out the systemic attempts at eradicating plurality for the sake of building a teleological, unitary vision of the model AP resident.⁽⁵⁾ By resident, I adopt a wide ranging unit of analysis that includes everyone who has an integral role to play in AP society, whether it is wo/men, citizens, bidun [stateless persons/without nationality], long-term residents, migrants, or transit inhabitants. Each contributes in her way to the region's rich makeup.

Defining religion is a tricky enterprise. Wilfred Cantwell Smith reminds us that "the concept of religion is a modern Western invention."⁽⁶⁾ Western scholarship has largely tried to compartmentalize believers under rigid frameworks that do not necessarily translate the essence of religions as first conceived and diversely practiced.⁽⁷⁾ Hence, religions are not only divine intervention; they are also negotiated and interpreted by humans who further contribute to religious beliefs, traditions, and practices. Talal Asad also criticizes the concept and its users in the literature, especially those who fall into the trap of equating religion to "symbolic activity" without invoking its discursive tradition angle that (re)shapes religions across time and space.⁽⁸⁾

Literature Review

David Commins centralizes diversity in his survey work on the region. He notes three "deeply ingrained tendencies in the Gulf...migration...a polyglot population...[and] important trading networks."⁽⁹⁾ The mixing of people and cultures throughout the AP's history has resulted in a hybrid society considered cosmopolitan long before the evolution of nation-states or the exploration of oil.⁽¹⁰⁾ Scarce resources coupled with a quest for better living standards have pulled disparate people together and positioned the AP as a space that absorbs outsiders or, to be more accurate, a space that blurs the line between insiders and outsiders. People from different walks of life have become valid constituents of society and contributors to it.⁽¹¹⁾

Fahad Bishara reminds readers how interconnected the region has been to the Indian Ocean, revealing in the process the multiple ties and networks that have enriched

society.⁽¹²⁾ Farah al-Nakib's historical overview of Kuwait captures the easygoingness that came with living in historical Kuwait and how that has changed with modern urban planning, normalizing the separation of people and a more limited understanding of oneself and the other.⁽¹³⁾ Moreover, Nelida Fuccaro traces the rise of homogeneity as various city-states began to modernize with British support.⁽¹⁴⁾

The AP has never been isolated. Its kinship to other regions is well established. The Peninsula witnessed recurring migration cycles resulting in residency patterns from various ethnicities and geographies including Indians, Persians, Turks, Baluchis, Zanzibaris and East Africans.⁽¹⁵⁾ The fluctuating borders and oscillated identities of the pre-nation-state has even led scholars to argue for the cultural unity of the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf on the one hand and the Gulf and Swahili coastlines on the other.⁽¹⁶⁾

In terms of religious diversity, the AP hosts all three Muslim sects (Ibadi, Shiite, Sunni) as well as Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and beyond at present and across its history.⁽¹⁷⁾ Working towards the shared goal of survival and fulfillment of mutual interests resulted in harmonious intercommunal relations and even allowed for "coexistence and inclusion" in the past.⁽¹⁸⁾ The AP's diversity is undisputable; however, the character and path of this diversity should be under scrutiny, as it ranges from affirmation and plurality to silencing, erasure, and homogeneity. How can that be the case? Michel-Rolph Trouillot and the Subaltern School propose some answers.

What is History? The Sound of Silence and the Unmaking of Subalterns

Haitian academic Michel-Rolph Trouillot defines history in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* through a binary: "Meanings A & B."⁽¹⁹⁾ History has a "dual explanation...[it] means both the facts of the matter and a narrative of those facts, both what happened [meaning A] and that which is said to have happened [meaning B]."⁽²⁰⁾ Meaning B tends to encroach on meaning A.⁽²¹⁾ The more powerful the narrator, the more probable her version dominates and becomes part of the history corpus. That is why this discipline thrives on power and creates silences in the process.

Erasure and trivialization are the two main types of silences.⁽²²⁾ Erasure involves "cancel[ing] facts" from the narrative altogether.⁽²³⁾ Choices are made of what history to present when erasing certain facts. Trivialization, as the term indicates, belittles the weight and value of a piece of information. The historian, and any party reassembling history, makes a choice over what evidence to invoke. Different choices, just like asking different questions, lead to divergent histories on the same topic. All historical production is historical in relation to its time and space of production. There is no infallible historical authenticity; it is relational and relative.

Trouillot identifies silences across four moments of historical production. These moments do not necessarily build upon one other. They are fluid two-way streets that may induce silences collectively or through a single moment. The four moments are “sources (fact creation), archives (fact assembly), narratives (fact retrieval), and retrospective significance (making of history in the final instance).”⁽²⁴⁾ Historical production is a complex exercise and its steps may vary based on the historian under examination. These moments, however, help both visualize and disentangle layers of history to detect that which may have been missed, buried, glanced over, misplaced, or overstressed.

Compared to silences, the subaltern concept has evoked more controversy and debate. The subaltern was proposed by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, and it first denoted the economically dispossessed.⁽²⁵⁾ But rereading Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks* expands the range of meaning attributed to the subaltern to include the socially marginalized, oppressed, and powerless who are permanently downgraded to this position by elites for the sake of propping their power.⁽²⁶⁾ To be fair to other contexts, we cannot wholly transpose a Western concept on a non-Western setting. But that does not mean dropping helpful constructs. That is where integrating mental frameworks and ideas with one another bears more fruit. Closer to the Middle East, Indian literary critic Gayatri Spivak provides a useful intervention. Her illuminating essay, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” operates through a postcolonial lens reorienting the subaltern to exclude subdued and oppressed groups or discourses that try to enhance their position from within the system. For example, one could claim that women or religious minorities in the Middle East are not discriminated against because of the presence of a representative or more in positions of power. But that is tokenism. Symbolic representation does not equate to mass empowerment nor does it eliminate a subaltern status.⁽²⁷⁾

The two concepts are most powerful when brought together. A thin line exists between undergoing a silence and becoming a subaltern. While both acts mask complex realities, a subaltern undergoes silencing among other acts of marginalization and dispossession while a silenced person, group, or history is not necessarily a subaltern. Influenced by Spivak’s call for contextualization, I find both silences and erasures in the AP along a wide spectrum. But to be dubbed a subaltern, there needs to be, first, a systematic and sustained form of erasure and, second, resistance from the subaltern against the hegemony in place with the intention of uncovering and overturning it.⁽²⁸⁾ That is where Boaventura de Sousa’s contribution to the concept proves useful. He promoted subaltern cosmopolitanism back in 2002. It recognizes erasure, but conditions its successful removal by giving agency to those stripped of it as they embark on changing their destiny. For instance, AP residents of African or Jewish origins have a rich history that is being recently rediscovered.⁽²⁹⁾ Their history has been silenced, but not necessarily erased. On the contrary, when viewed through the Saudi state lens, Meccan Sufis and the Medina’s Shiites were until recently, and some argue to date,

subalterns who have fought at varying levels against state-imposed positions. Whether viewed by some as unbelievers or of a lower status by official Saudi ideology and historiography of the recent past, undergoing a subaltern status needs to be contextualized against a specific community at a given time to avoid inaccuracies or generalizations.⁽³⁰⁾

Disturbing Religious Diversity: Three Historical Stages and Shifting Attitudes

While varying understandings and practices of Islam dominate the AP today, Islam is not the only player on the peninsula's religious arena.⁽³¹⁾ The AP has long been home to the adherents of other religions, particularly Jews, Christians, and Hindus. Arabia's Jews were mostly based in urban trading centers, such as Oman, Bahrain, al-Ahsa, and Yemen.⁽³²⁾ During the nineteenth century, many escaped Ottoman wrath in the provinces of Basra, Baghdad, Mosul and elsewhere to find new homes and a more welcoming society in the AP where they largely practiced their religion without fear of persecution.⁽³³⁾ As opposed to other religions in the AP, the dwindling number of Jews since the mid-twentieth century is mainly traceable to political, rather than solely religious, reasons with the establishment of the Zionist entity in 1948. The backlash faced by many Jews in the AP as a result led to dwindling numbers remaining in Yemen and Bahrain.⁽³⁴⁾

British presence in both India and the AP coupled with the region's older trading ties with India facilitated the presence of Hindus who easily established temples and learning centers in Yemen, Oman, and Bahrain.⁽³⁵⁾ The United Hindu Society was the umbrella that held these various components together and helped streamline Hindu life in the AP. It could be argued that British protectorate agreements with regional rulers facilitated the presence of Hindus. Without the British, Indian Hindus would not have had a viable presence in the region. However, this line of reasoning is dubious. The British would not have been able to institute an entrenched foreign Hindu presence without the blessing and acceptance of rulers and other elites. In turn, elites would not risk offending the local population if they knew that such presence would be objected to. Hindus contributed to the AP along various fronts, whether as British subjects who enforced security or Indian merchants who supported the local economy. Indians (Hindu or not) are not alien to the AP and continue to play a constructive role.⁽³⁶⁾

Christian missionaries established themselves as early as 1891.⁽³⁷⁾ Under the guise of opening much-needed hospitals, the presence of missionaries was not frowned upon initially.⁽³⁸⁾ Using the provision of medical and educational services as a bait to "save" the souls of AP residents, the missionaries also built churches to propagate the Christian faith. But other than a handful of cases, they failed to convert locals. Missionaries, therefore, reoriented their focus to service the needs of the rising number of Arab Christians who relocated to the AP to contribute to its modernization after the discovery of oil in the 1930s. It is many of these Arab Christians that later became naturalized

citizens after the announcement of independent states.⁽³⁹⁾

An easygoingness or a relaxed attitude characterized the relations of religious communities in this first stage: Jews, Hindus, and Christians living at ease in a Muslim-dominated AP prior to the coming of independent nation-states. This is not a nostalgic idealization of the past. It was not a time without challenges since they were after all religious groups finding their place and managing their space among Muslim-majority societies. Yet their status in the post-independence era, or the second stage, pales in comparison to the past. Local governments erased this past inter-religious presence from their history replacing it with homogeneity and further limits on other religions, magnifying the Arab Sunni strand as the unifying national identity.⁽⁴⁰⁾ This homogeneity is apparent – at varying levels across the region – in school curricula, laws, media depictions, religious programming, and civil society activity to name a few fields.⁽⁴¹⁾ Inculcating national belonging is presumably easier when identifying with one identity element. But such a sense of belonging will always be fragile because it simply negates reality. Putting aside other components or asking other religious groups to form their identity in isolation of the national narrative contradicts the quest for building resilient societies that are able to collectively contribute to their countries' progress and development. Pursuing a national exercise should be just that – national – and that means including all members of society in nation building or any other sought-after national goal. Embracing all strands of Islam and non-Muslim belief systems in the conversation is not a luxury. It is a necessity.

Post-independence governments faced the prospect of citizens becoming a shrinking minority given their restricted self-identification metrics. That is why they regulated migration flows and severely constrained, at times, land grants for new places of worship, burial sites, and educational outlets; and also restricted the ability of others to openly celebrate festivals and organize processions.⁽⁴²⁾ Practices widely varied in the AP, ranging from complete prohibition of public non-Muslim religious practices in Saudi Arabia to guarded acceptance in Oman, Bahrain, and Kuwait. The level of constraints varies from one state to another. Yet it is the existence of restrictions that ties the peninsula together during the post-independence era. The state became the dominant, if not exclusive, arbiter on the deliberation of religions whereas the pre-nation-state era accommodated various voices in religious affairs besides the ruling elites, such as the British, the religious groups themselves, and even traders who either hailed from different backgrounds or benefited from the presence of a critical mass to sustain their businesses.

While the general position toward religions has changed from guarded acceptance and coexistence in the past to suspicion and restrictions in the modern era, a current wavering trend – a third stage – is reasserting itself and increasingly welcoming non-Muslims with open arms. This is to the benefit of the small indigenous Christian community

and the large number of Christian and Hindu residents and other groups.⁽⁴³⁾ However, in contrast to the past, this cautious opening is not wholly organic. A homegrown local drive has played a role no doubt, such as the ordination of a Kuwaiti Christian, Ammanuel Ghareeb, in 1999 – a first for the region – and done without the command or intervention of local political authorities.⁽⁴⁴⁾ However, political reasons, namely branding and international pressures, have played a bigger role in incubating this third stage than did a homegrown local drive.

Signs of welcome overtures are plenty. Inclusivity is the main banner, reflected in decisions related to personnel, policies, and worship spaces. Examples include the appointment of a Bahraini Christian, Hindu, and Jew to parliament in 2002 – another first at the time; the dedication of Qatar's first church in 2008; the inauguration of the region's largest Catholic Church in Bahrain in December 2021; regional expansion of diplomatic ties with the Holy See starting in 1998 with Yemen followed by Bahrain in 2000, Qatar in 2002, the UAE in 2007, and Oman in 2022.⁽⁴⁵⁾ This was enacted decades after Kuwait's establishment of ties with the Vatican in 1968.⁽⁴⁶⁾ In this vein, the AP witnessed the pope's first visit to the region (Abu Dhabi) in 2019.⁽⁴⁷⁾ His visit alongside the rector of al-Azhar resulted in issuing the Human Fraternity Document in 2019 and erecting the Abrahamic Family House in 2023, housing Jewish, Christian, and Muslim places of worship side by side.⁽⁴⁸⁾ This type of engagement continues: the AP received the pope a second time in November 2022 this time in Bahrain less than four years since his first visit. The Bahrain visit reinforced the desire for religious understanding and peaceful coexistence between adherents of religions as much as it demonstrated the AP states' insistence on grounding themselves in this third phase of rising openness towards other religions.⁽⁴⁹⁾

The UAE has particularly invested in this file, expanding churches and endowing Hindu land in 2019 to build the first recognized temple on the heels of promoting tolerance.⁽⁵⁰⁾ The tolerance motif characterized the founding of several organizations and promulgation of related policies in the UAE, including the world's first ministry of tolerance, a national tolerance program, an international institute of tolerance, a tolerance award, a day of tolerance, a tolerance hand sign, a tolerance bridge, and the list continues.⁽⁵¹⁾ Furthermore, the UAE-funded Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies released in 2016 the "Marrakesh Declaration on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Muslim Majority Communities," seeking to reaffirm equal citizenship as an Islamic principle irrespective of one's religious affiliation.⁽⁵²⁾ The UAE has also promulgated an anti-discrimination law in 2015 that "criminalizes any acts that trigger religious hatred."⁽⁵³⁾

Oman has developed its unique theological brand, shunning sect-based mosques and extending its hands to non-Muslims evidenced in the Muscat Manifesto.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Furthermore, Oman's ministry of endowments and religious affairs has been publishing

its flagship journal *Tasamuh* [Tolerance] since 2003 furthering dialogue with religious groups and inviting written pieces from their representatives.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The journal renamed itself to *Tafahom* [Understanding] in 2011, claiming Oman has surpassed tolerance and arrived at the higher state of understanding.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Qatar has also been coming to terms with its different social components founding Bin Jelmood House, the region's first museum dedicated to the legacy of slavery in the peninsula.⁽⁵⁷⁾

There is also an exponential rise of interfaith centers during the last decade. Along the UAE-sponsored Forum, there is *Mominoun bi la Hudud* [Believers without Borders]⁽⁵⁸⁾; in Qatar, the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue;⁽⁵⁹⁾ and in Bahrain, the King Hamad Global Center for Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Even Saudi Arabia joined the club with the late King Abdullah stressing the importance of religious dialogue and calling for an international conference to that end in 2008, eventually leading to the creation of the King Abdullah International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID).⁽⁶¹⁾ Saudi reactions at the time are worth highlighting to underscore the need to engage with plurality bottom up and from within as opposed to sole reliance on establishing centers and government-led initiatives. The late Saudi monarch's call for dialogue was met with stiff resistance from religious scholars and society at large. The king did not hold the conference in Saudi Arabia. It was held in Spain instead, and the label religion conspicuously dropped from the title of the conference.⁽⁶²⁾ No official Saudi clerical representation was in attendance as well. Flexing religious diversity muscles abroad amounted to little at home at the time. This stands in stark contrast to transformations underway in Saudi Arabia whereby the state is redefining its relationship to religion, but short of adopting a pluralistic attitude - until now at least.

The call for religious plurality has its enemies lined up, whether due to misunderstanding the concept and its benefits on society or for ideological reasons. For example, some former Kuwaiti parliamentarians were against the presence of churches and have even beseeched fatwas [religious rulings] that call for a ban on building non-Muslim religious edifices in the AP.⁽⁶³⁾ The region's various constitutions declare religious freedom and equality for all; but practices on the ground coupled with contradictory laws strip these constitutional clauses from meaning.⁽⁶⁴⁾ An open attitude toward religious diversity in the past (Phase I) transfigured into an erasure (Phase II) that is now in a murky, in-between phase: that of a mediated silence across the AP (Phase III). It is a wavering silence that yields a mix of unsustainable gains.⁽⁶⁵⁾

These recent initiatives are elitist and mainly state-led. Deducing from their half-hearted measures or incomplete actions, they are not wholly invested in religious inclusion, even if a minority within the various state apparatuses are pushing in that direction. By association, most of the AP's residents are either disenchanted or follow the state's religious educational dictates that continue to deem one version of Islam supreme

above all without contextualizing such position within Islamic turath [tradition]. Given this contradiction between lived reality and state policies, more work is needed to resolve this mishap and reclaim the AP's right to reflect and positively build on its religious difference.

Reception of the religious other in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a critical moment, but it was not a watershed one that merited a dramatic pause at the time. It simply happened by default because the followers of these other religions and the societies that hosted them were looking for win-win scenarios with mutual benefit. The rise of economically more capable and centralized nation-states facilitated the promotion of an insular identity to consolidate residents, rallying them behind a new national identity.

The prospects of a relaxed religious pluralism moved from being inadvertently embraced in the past to a set of regulated silences and erasures in the modern era to a confused amalgam of both in contemporary times. The AP's current status is reminiscent of Antonio Gramsci's organic crisis idea that talks about old ideas dying out but new ones not fully formed yet. How do we operate in this transitional phase and deal with a mixed attitude toward pluralism? The answer is simple: manage religious diversity in a way that promotes pluralism. But it does not mean doing that through an ironclad-type management. By management, I am referring to a holistic, integrative approach that combines top-bottom and bottom-up initiatives bringing various parties together to freely express themselves and think out loud on what their religions mean to them; how religions are realized in relation to one another; and how that mix can lead to better social relations. Discourses and activities aiming for social cohesion and national unity will remain lacking without profound change from within that advocates practical legal changes enshrining equality for all before the law and incubating valid learning spaces for engaging the other through educational reforms, civil society interactions, proactive media messaging, and balanced cultural exchange. These are the more difficult reforms that require diligent efforts to absorb the AP's diversity and channel it as an asset.

Upholders of religions should not fear such exercise. It could bring the best out of people when they deepen their understanding of religions, leading them to know themselves and one another better. Take Sunni-Shiite relations as an example. Absent identity politics and sporadic tensions, AP Sunnis and Shiites are largely tolerant of one another yet religiously illiterate of each other in the contemporary era. This is mainly due to the absence of an all-inclusive educational system that openly teaches the beliefs, narratives, and practices of both groups as they view themselves coupled with a dearth in open media coverage of variant beliefs and practices. This illiteracy rose to the surface in Kuwait, for instance, after the 2015 terrorist attack on Shiite al-Sadiq Mosque.⁽⁶⁶⁾ There was a national outpouring condemning loss of lives. But is emotion-

al support enough? The aftermath of the attack was a lost opportunity: it could have midwived policies that eradicate religious anemia and feed rising curiosity about Shiite practices leading to profound encounters.

Religious diversity is an AP hallmark. Using it to foster healthier societies only comes when channeling diversity into plurality. The management of this diversity has to be at the heart of the discussions and actions of state and society. This is especially needed to overcome rising xenophobia and the silencing of several ethnicities and religions. Such management would reorient the social lens of difference that indolently and inappropriately falls exclusively on the laps of religion, omitting pronounced bottom line differences in society that tend to be over political, economic, and social acts and positions.

Religious diversity has the potential to incubate healthy social relations and better awareness of oneself and the other. The real challenge is building stronger societies that engage in and celebrate difference. Advocating responsible reforms in education, media, civil society organizations, and the law will go a long way towards addressing this challenge. The Arabian Peninsula is home to more than 50 million residents and 190 nationalities. It cannot afford a superficial, cosmetic embrace of religious diversity.

Endnotes

- (1) By the Arabian Peninsula (AP), I refer to the body of land surrounded by the Persian Gulf, the Arab and Red Seas, and the Nefud Desert. The term AP may refer to either one or both of the peninsula's components, its hinterland and littoral, in deference to Arabic historiography and local sources. The other common term for the region, the Gulf, was mainly popularized by the British given their exposure to coastal towns. Yet the Gulf term does not do justice to the totality of the peninsula. The AP is the more accurate term.
- (2) Lawrence Potter, "Introduction," in *The Persian Gulf in Modern Times: People, Ports, and History*, ed. Lawrence Potter (London: Palgrave, 2014), 11.
- (3) Farah al-Nakib offers a similar theme when comparing Kuwait's past urban design to its modern equivalent. The discovery of oil is her chosen rupture point for inducing this change in urban planning and facilitating a reconfigured landscape while I propose colonial intervention and its corollary modern nation-state setup as the rupture point. Al-Nakib shows how spontaneity and simultaneity characterized Kuwaiti urban space before it was modernized. Farah al-Nakib, "Kuwait Transformed: A History of Oil and Urban Life," (book presentation, The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, Washington, DC, May 19, 2016).
- (4) "From Diversity to Pluralism," The Pluralism Project, Harvard University, accessed November 1, 2021, <https://pluralism.org/from-diversity-to-pluralism>.

- (5) I consciously use resident as opposed to citizen to cast a wider net on those living in the AP. I agree with Neha Vora that one ought to "challenge the idea that the only political or politicized subjects in the Gulf are those who hold formal citizenship." See Neha Vora, "Unpacking Knowledge Production and Consumption," in "Theorizing the Arabian Peninsula," Rosie Bsheer and John Warner, eds., *JadMag* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2013), 22. I use residents to blur the citizen-non-citizen divide. Nelida Fuccaro discusses how the AP states introduced a new theme of homogeneity that did not exist in the past. See Nelida Fuccaro, *Histories of City and State in the Persian Gulf: Manama since 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3. Even with renewed scholarly interest in the presence of diversity in AP history, Madawi al-Rasheed asserts that certain sects are more favored and studied over others: "Wahhabis of central Arabia and the Shia in the oil rich Eastern Province are well-researched. However, with the exception of the German scholar Werner Ende, social scientists have ignored the Shias in Medina, Ismailis in the south, and Sufis in Hijaz, just as historians ignored slavery in the Arabian Peninsula." See Madawi Al-Rasheed, "Knowledge in The Time of Oil," in "Theorizing the Arabian Peninsula," Rosie Bsheer and John Warner, eds., *JadMag* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2013), 12. This reflects the author's view of the literature in 2013, the year the article came out. Some modest progress has been made since to highlight oft-forgotten groups.
- (6) Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), iv, 76, 125, 143-145, 194.
- (7) *The Meaning and End of Religion*, 76, 125, 143-145, 194.
- (8) Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). I define the remaining two key terms, history and management, below.
- (9) David Commins, *The Gulf States: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 10-12, 292. The Gulf label is often used in the literature to describe the totality of the Arabian Peninsula. Yet that is a common misperception derived from a colonial legacy that conflated the Gulf's seaside towns with the rest of the peninsula. The Gulf label more accurately depicts littoral towns only while the AP label is wider in scope and covers the seaside and hinterland of present-day Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.
- (10) Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *Insecure Gulf: The End of Certainty and the Transition to a Post-Oil Era* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 16-17, for the mixing and cosmopolitanism themes; Potter, *The Persian Gulf in Modern Times*, 3 for hybridity; P. J. Rich, *Creating the Arabian Gulf: The British Raj and the Invasions of the Gulf* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 35, for cultural pluralism; Fuccaro, *Histories of City*, 67, 71, 100-06, 110-11 for a discussion of immigrants and religious diversity.
- (11) Madawi al-Rasheed, "Introduction: Localizing the Transnational and Transnationalizing the Local," in *Transnational Connections and the Arab Gulf*, ed. Madawi al-Rasheed (London: Routledge, 2005), 3-4, 9; Frederick Anscombe, "An Anational Society: Eastern Arabia in the Ottoman Period," in *Transnational Connections*, 22.

- (12) Fahad Bishara, *A Sea of Debt: Law and Economic Life in the Western Indian Ocean 1780-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
- (13) Farah Al-Nakib, *Kuwait Transformed: A History of Oil and Urban Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).
- (14) Nelida Fuccaro, *Histories of City and State in the Persian Gulf: Manama Since 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- (15) Lawrence Potter, "Introduction," in *The Persian Gulf in History*, ed. Lawrence Potter (NY: Palgrave, 2009), 1-27. Also, Potter, *The Persian Gulf in Modern Times*, 231-35, 247, 252, 258-61 for Indians in the AP; 289-90 on Baluchis; 299-301, 318-321 on Hawala as a hybrid identity; and 327-29, 343-44 on Africans in the AP. On African presence in KSA, see the work of Helene Thiollet. India resurfaces in the works of many authors like Miriam Cooke, Madawi al-Rasheed, and Kristian Ulrichsen.
- (16) Lawrence Potter, "Introduction," in *The Persian Gulf in History*, ed. Lawrence Potter (NY: Palgrave, 2009), 3. Several scholars discuss this at length in this volume, including M. Redha Bhacker and Abdul Sheriff. See M. Redha Bhacker, "The Cultural Unity of the Gulf and Indian Ocean: A Longue Durée Historical Perspective," in *The Persian Gulf in History*, 163-72, and Abdul Sheriff, "The Persian Gulf and the Swahili Coast: A History of Acculturation over the Longue Durée," in *The Persian Gulf in History*, 173-188.
- (17) Cornelia Zeineddin, "State-Religion Minorities Tensions in the Arab Gulf," in *State-Society Relations in the Arab Gulf States*, eds. Mazhar al-Zoby and Birol Baskan (Berlin: Gerlach, 2014), 143. Other religions are present in the AP besides the ones I mention.
- (18) "State-Religion Minorities Tensions in the Arab Gulf," in *State-Society Relations in the Arab Gulf States*, 143.
- (19) Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 3, 29.
- (20) "State-Religion Minorities Tensions in the Arab Gulf," in *State-Society Relations in the Arab Gulf States*, 2.
- (21) "State-Religion Minorities Tensions in the Arab Gulf," in *State-Society Relations in the Arab Gulf States*, 3-4.
- (22) "State-Religion Minorities Tensions in the Arab Gulf," in *State-Society Relations in the Arab Gulf States*, 95-101.
- (23) "State-Religion Minorities Tensions in the Arab Gulf," in *State-Society Relations in the Arab Gulf States*, 96.
- (24) "State-Religion Minorities Tensions in the Arab Gulf," in *State-Society Relations in the Arab Gulf States*, 26.
- (25) Benjamin Graves, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Postcolonial Web*, accessed November 13, 2021, <http://www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/spivak/spivak2.html>.
- (26) Can the Subaltern Speak.

- (27) Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Rosalind C. Morris, ed., *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 252-256.
- (28) I adopt the term in its latest incarnation by Boaventura de Sousa Santos who adds this form of agency that not only recognizes erasure, but also gives agency to those stripped of it in changing their destiny. I find this a more befitting understanding of the subaltern in today's changing and globalized world. Coining the term in 2002, he calls it subaltern cosmopolitanism. See Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Beyond Neoliberal Governance: The World Social Forum as Subaltern Cosmopolitan Politics and Legality," Boaventura de Sousa Santos, accessed November 3, 2021, <http://www.boaventuradesousasantos.pt/documentos/chapter2.pdf>.
- (29) Matthew Hopper, "The African Presence in East Arabia," in *The Persian Gulf in Modern Times: People, Ports, and History*, ed. Potter, 327-350; Joseph Braude, "Africans in the Arabian Gulf," *Hip Deep*, accessed November 3, 2021, <http://www.afropop.org/9294/feature-africans-in-the-arabian-persian-gulf/>.
- (30) Toby Matthiesen, "Shi'i Historians in Wahhabi State: Identity Entrepreneurs and the Politics of Local Historiography in Saudi Arabia," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (47) 1 (2015): 25-45. Matthiesen looks at the ways Saudi Shiite historians use nationalism tropes employed by the official narrative to exclude them or deem them infidel to their advantage by uncovering silences and erasures through tracing their long residency, culture, and belonging to the land. He calls them identity entrepreneurs who use the identity game to their advantage.
- (31) As opposed to the AP's hinterland that rarely encountered a sustained religious diversity, littoral towns on both sides of the Peninsula met, received, and engaged more frequently with persons from other religions. Hence, discussing other religions in the AP prior to the advent of independent states is a discussion primarily involving AP coastal towns more than its hinterland given the higher frequency of encounter in the former over latter space.
- (32) Abdulrahman Al-Salimi, "Immigrant Religions: A Study of Religious Diversity in the GCC States," *Hemispheres* 23 (2008): 34.
- (33) *Immigrant Religions: A Study of Religious Diversity in the GCC States*. Al-Salimi specifies the year 1828 for Jewish arrival in the AP.
- (34) There are no accurate figures for the number of Jews in the AP prior to 1948. Some estimate it in the thousands (Hejaz and Yemen) or the hundreds (Kuwait, Bahrain, Doha, and surrounding towns). Today, there are a couple of dozen families in Yemen and Bahrain with shrinking numbers in Yemen given Israeli active lobbying for Aliyah [the immigration of Jews from the diaspora to occupied Palestine].
- (35) British presence in India started in the mid-eighteenth century (1757) and became direct rule in the mid-nineteenth century (1858) until 1947. British interest in the AP is traceable to the late eighteenth century, especially through the activities of the East India Company with more direct British involvement since 1820 starting with the so-called Trucial States and expanding to other parts of the AP throughout the nineteenth century until British withdrawal from the re-

gion in 1971. Al-Salimi, 38; J.E. Peterson, "Oman's Diverse Society: Northern Oman," *Middle East Journal* 58(1) 2004: 31-51. Peterson documents the presence of Hindus and various other communities in Oman. No temples are allowed in KSA. UAE-based Hindus practiced in rented apartments until the UAE established its first formal Hindu temple in October 2022. See "UAE's Minister of Tolerance inaugurates Dubai's new Hindu temple," *Business Standard*, October 5, 2022, https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/uae-s-minister-of-tolerance-in-inaugurates-dubai-s-new-hindu-temple-122100500118_1.html; Sultan Al Qassemi, "United Arab Emirates: Building Ties in a Year of Giving," *Special Briefing*, Middle East Institute, email message to author, January 5, 2017; Ramola Talwar Badam, "Hindu temple in Dubai fulfills a decades-long Indian dream," *The National*, October 2, 2022, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/uae/heritage/2022/10/03/how-hindu-temple-in-dubai-fulfils-a-decades-long-indian-dream/>.

- (36) See the next section for more details.
- (37) Al-Salimi, 33-34. American Protestants first set afoot in Bahrain and Oman in 1885, Qatar and the Trucial States in 1889, Arabia in 1893, and Kuwait in 1925. Sean Foley notes a different initial entry date of 1891. See Sean Foley, *The Arab Gulf States: Beyond Oil and Islam* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2010), 26. The late nineteenth century is a time that all scholars agree on for the entry of missionaries. For missionary conversion of a few locals, see, for instance, Hilal al-Hajri, "Through Evangelizing Eyes: American Missionaries to Oman," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 41 (2011): 121-131. The reference to conversion is on page 127. I am not examining here the presence of Christianity in earlier centuries, yet it existed in various pockets in the AP before the coming of Islam. See Abdullah Alhajeri, "Christian Minorities in Kuwait," *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 29 (2020): 255-74.
- (38) Chaitali B. Roy, "Christians Integral Part of Kuwait's Sociocultural Tapestry," *Arab Times*, March 21, 2016, <http://www.arabtimesonline.com/news/christians-integral-part-kuwait-s-sociocultural-tapestry/>.
- (39) The biggest number of Christian citizens in the AP at present is in Bahrain totaling around a 1,000 followed by Kuwait with 264 Christian citizens. See "Christianity in the Arabian Peninsula," *Arab Orthodoxy*, March 24, 2012, <http://araborthodoxy.blogspot.com/2012/03/christianity-in-arabian-peninsula.html>. Some authors who focus on other parts of the Middle East argue that missionaries maintained their conversion aim, but switched tactics from active conversion to providing health and education to show the benevolence of Christians, thereby influencing locals to act and think like their Christian counterparts. See Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008) and Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).
- (40) I tie it to Jocelyne Cesari's hegemonic Islam concept. See Jocelyne Cesari, *The Awakening of Muslim Democracy: Religion, Modernity, and the State* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Oman is the exception to this trend given its adoption of Ibadi Islam as the official religion. Ibadi Islam plays the same role Sunni Islam plays in the other states. Given Ibadism's minority status in the AP, Oman has been more accommodating of other sects when advancing the national uni-

ty theme. For example, its mosques are united with no separate mosques per sect like the other states. But its official religious establishment, for instance, follows the Ibadi sect. For more on Oman, see Hussein Ghubash, *Oman: The Islamic Democratic Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2006). For modern-day Oman and its religious policy, see Abdulrahman al-Salimi, "Immigrant Religions," and Marc Valeri, *Oman: Politics and Society in the Qaboos State* (NY: Hurst & Co Publishers, 2009).

- (41) Examples abound of imposing one variant of religion that tends to be representative of the regime or monarchy in power during the post-independence era (mid-twentieth-century onwards for most of the AP). This is evident in decisions related to the administration of religious spaces, endowment policies, religious education curricula, state broadcasting, and staffing in state affiliated entities. Various works discuss this in detail. See Lawrence Potter, ed., *Sectarian Politics in the Persian Gulf* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2014); Toby Matthiesen, *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the Arab Spring that Wasn't* (CA: Stanford University Press, 2013); Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Mohammed Ayooob and Hasan Kosebalaban, eds., *Religion and Politics in the Saudi State: Wahhabism and the State* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008); Marc Valeri, *Politics and Society in the Qaboos State*; Masooda Bano, ed., *Modern Islamic Authority and Social Change* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018). Egypt was an inspiration for several Gulf states. For standardizing and centralizing religious education in Egypt, see Gregory Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics, and Religious Transformation in Egypt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1998); Robert Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds., *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); and Nathan Brown, "Official Islam in the Arab World: The Contest for Religious Authority" (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2017).
- (42) Fālḥ Šbyb L'ğmy, Šrā' Lḥryāt Wtqnynhā Fy Šbh Lğzyrt L'rbyh Fy L'šr Lḥdyt [The Battle of Freezdoms and its Codification in Modern Arabian Peninsula] (Kuwait: Mrkz Drāsāt Lḥlyğ Wālğzyrt L'rbyh, 2005), 39-102.
- (43) Al-Salimi, "Immigrant Religions," 38-40, looks at Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and Baha'is in the AP.
- (44) The AP's only national pastor is Kuwaiti Ammanuel Ghareeb. He reaffirms the number of naturalized Christians in Bahrain and Kuwait. See Ismaeel Naar, "An Inside Look at the Native Christian Community of Kuwait," *Al-Arabiya*, December 27, 2016, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/features/2016/12/27/An-inside-look-at-a-Gulf-Christian-community.html#.WGJHIdT7NSk.facebook>.
- (45) Teresa Neumann, "A Christian Woman and Jewish Woman Appointed to Bahrain Parliament," *Breaking Christian News*, December 7, 2010, http://www.breakingchristiannews.com/articles/display_art.html?ID=8457. Bahraini Jew Houda Ezra Nonoo was appointed to the high-ranking post of ambassador to the US from 2008-2013. "First Catholic Church in Arab Country to be Dedicated to Mary," *EWTN Global Catholic Network*, March 3, 2008, <http://www.ewtn.com/vl/news/getstory.asp?number=86588>; "The Apostolic Nunciature in Kuwait," *The Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia*, updated October 31, 2013, <http://www.avona.org/nunciature/nunciature>.

- htm. Plans for Oman have been announced in November 2022 but no date has been set yet for the inauguration of embassies. See 'Foreign Minister in phone call with Vatican City,' Foreign Ministry of Oman, November 3, 2022, <https://fm.gov.om/foreign-minister-in-phone-call-with-vatican-city/>.
- (46) 'The Apostolic Nunciature in Kuwait. '
- (47) 'Home,' UAE Papal Visit, accessed November 5, 2022, <https://uaepapalvisit.org>.
- (48) 'Document on 'Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together' signed by His Holiness Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al Azhar Ahmad al-Tayyib,' Holy See Press Office, February 4, 2019, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2019/02/04/190204f.html>; 'Home,' Abrahamic Family House, accessed November 6, 2022, <https://www.forhumanfraternity.org/abrahamic-family-house/>.
- (49) 'Home,' Bahrain Papal Visit, accessed November 6, 2022, <https://bahrainpapalvisit.org/>; Hannah Brockhaus, 'Pope Francis becomes first pope to visit Bahrain,' Catholic News Agency, November 3, 2022, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/252716/pope-francis-becomes-first-pope-to-visit-bahrain>.
- (50) Hindu temples were restricted to private apartments in Dubai since the 1950s. A dedicated, standalone temple opened its doors in 2022. The tolerance motif is construable in different ways. I trace its genealogy in this lecture on 'Religious Social Responsibility,' July 2020.
- (51) 'Tolerance in the UAE,' UAE Tolerance, accessed November 6, 2022, <http://www.tolerance.gov.ae/en/tolerance.aspx>.
- (52) The Marrakesh Declaration of January 27, 2016 is the outcome of the Marrakech Conference held in Marrakech between January 25-27, 2016. It included various religious scholars and was jointly organized by Sheikh Bin Bayyah's UAE-funded Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies and the Government of Morocco's Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs. The Forum laid the stage for the declaration that calls for protecting the rights of religious minorities in Muslim-majority states. Even if this step and other acts are considered symbolic overtures for political maneuvering, they are unprecedented steps for the AP. See 'The Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities: Legal Framework and a Call to Action,' Marrakech Declaration, accessed November 5, 2022, <https://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org>.
- (53) 'Anti-discrimination law,' UAE Government Portal, accessed November 1, 2022, <https://government.ae/en/about-the-uae/culture/tolerance/anti-discriminationanti-hatred-law#>.
- (54) The Muscat Manifesto was an attempt at improving interreligious relations initiated by University of Cambridge Professor of Divinity Emeritus, David Ford, and delivered at Oman's state mosque. David F. Ford, 'Muscat Manifesto,' April 20, 2009, <http://www.islam-in-oman.com/fileadmin/pdfs/OmanFordMuscatManifestocircverapr09.pdf>.
- (55) 'Magazine Issues,' Tafahom, accessed October 30, 2022, <https://tafahom.om/en/>. The journal has ceased publication in 2020 after the change of ministers and the ascension of a new sultan. It is unclear whether this pause is temporary or permanent.

- (56) Abdulrahman al-Salimi, "Min al-Tasamoh ila al-Tafahom [From Tolerance to Understanding], "Tafahom 31 (2011), <https://tafahom.om/en/archives/issue/31>.
- (57) "Bin Jelmood House," Msheireb Museums, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://msheirebmuseums.com/en/about/bin-jelmood-house/>.
- (58) "Homepage," Mominoun bi-la Hudud [Believers without Borders], accessed September 30, 2022, <https://mominoun.com/>. It was founded in May 2013.
- (59) "About Us," Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID), accessed September 30, 2022, <http://www.dicid.org/>. DICID was founded in 2008 while the first interfaith conference in Doha was held in 2003.
- (60) "Bahrain's King Hamad calls for religious tolerance, peaceful coexistence," Al-Arabiya, October 11, 2017, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2017/10/11/Bahrain-king-announces-declaration-on-religious-tolerance->. "Home," The King Hamad Global Center for Peaceful Coexistence, accessed May 5, 2023, <https://kinghamadglobalcentre.com/>. The center was established in 2018, and they are on social media too. See "King Hamad Global Center," Twitter, accessed November 8, 2022, <https://twitter.com/globalhamad>.
- (61) Andrew Hammond, *The Islamic Utopia: The Illusion of Reform in Saudi Arabia* (London: Pluto Books, 2012), 145. KAICIID was based in Vienna, but it relocated to Lisbon in Summer 2022 due to recurring attacks from several political groups in Austria over Saudi Arabia's human rights record.
- (62) Hammond, 145. It was instead titled the International Conference on Dialogue.
- (63) Saudi al-Sheikh's 2012 fatwa on Kuwait was to that effect. See "Christianity in the Arabian Peninsula," Arab Orthodoxy, March 24, 2012, <http://araborthodoxy.blogspot.com/2012/03/christianity-in-arabian-peninsula.html>.
- (64) Al-Ajmi, 103-190; Zeineddin, 153-56.
- (65) Sustainable gains are only possible if this third phase is grounded in well-thought policies.
- (66) "Kuwait Shia mosque blast death toll rises to 27," BBC News, June 26, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33287136>.

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