

GULF STUDIES CENTER NEWSLETTER

Issue 5

JUNE 2024

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A Message from Gulf Studies Center's New Director



Welcome to the Gulf Studies Center at Qatar University's College of Arts and Sciences. Since its inception in 2013, our Center has been a beacon of knowledge and inquiry into the complex and dynamic realm of the Gulf region, encompassing critical areas of political, economic, social, and cultural dynamics through an interdisciplinary approach.

Our commitment to deepening the understanding of the Gulf is rooted in a tradition of excellence, established with the launch of our unique Gulf Studies MA program in 2011, followed by the introduction of the PhD program in 2015.

These programs are designed to foster intimate learning environments, promoting enhanced interaction and engagement between students and instructors.

Our graduates are not just witnesses to history; they are active participants in shaping our understanding of the Gulf's identity through rigorous research and interdisciplinary analysis.

As we look to the future, our vision for the Gulf Studies Center is anchored in three pivotal commitments:

1. Strategic Clarity
2. Resource Mobilization
3. Commitment to Excellence

In fostering these commitments, we will ensure that the Gulf Studies Center not only persists as a premier institution for Gulf research but also thrives as a vibrant community of scholars and practitioners who contribute meaningfully to the understanding of the region globally.

I invite each of you, whether you are a student, a researcher, an administrator, or an enthusiast of Gulf studies, to join us in this exciting journey. Together, we will explore the challenges and opportunities of the Gulf region, and strive to make a significant impact through our scholarly pursuits.



Let us move forward together, with purpose and passion, to achieve the extraordinary.



Dr. Maryam Al-Kuwari
Gulf Studies Center Director

Roundtable Discussion China's Position on the Ongoing Israeli Conflict in Gaza: Prospects for a Political Role in the MENA Region



The Gulf Studies Center at Qatar University organized a roundtable discussion, entitled “China's Position on the Ongoing Israeli Conflict in Gaza: Prospects for a Political Role in the MENA Region,” on Monday 27 May 2024. The roundtable featured Professor Bingbing Wu, State of Qatar Chair in Middle East Studies at Peking University, as well as the Director of Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Peking University (PKU-CMES), Senior Research Fellow of Institute for International and Strategic Studies, Peking University (IISS-PKU), and Director of Department of Arabic Language and Cultures at PKU. This invitation-only meeting was conducted under Chatham House rules.

The roundtable discussion started with introductory remarks by the Director of the Gulf Studies Center, Dr. Maryam Al Kuwari, highlighting the importance of the topic and drawing attention to the potential for academic collaboration between Qatar University and Peking University. Following the presentation by Dr. Wu, a lively discussion and exchange took place with the scholars, moderated by Prof. Saban Kardas, Gulf Studies Program Coordinator.



“ Although economy still remains as the most important component of China’s MENA policy, in which the Gulf is becoming extremely prominent, security dimension is also gaining some prominence for the first time. Nonetheless, China has no intention of replacing the U.S. in the MENA as a security provider, nor do BRICS have intention to offer an alternative to the current Western-led international order.

“ China continues to support the two-state solution, while the conflict in Gaza made China-Israel relations colder.



Roundtable Discussion “The Regional and International Dimensions of the Conflict in Ukraine and the Implications for the Gulf Region”



The Gulf Studies Center organized a roundtable discussion, entitled “The Regional and International Dimensions of the Conflict in Ukraine and the Implications for the Gulf Region,” on Monday 22 April 2024. The roundtable, which was moderated by Dr. Saban Kardas, brought together local scholars and a visiting delegation of experts and academics from Ukrainian Prism, a renowned Ukrainian Think-Tank. The visiting delegation included Hanna Shelest, Director of Security Studies and Global Outreach Programmes at Ukrainian Prism and Editor-in-chief at Ukraine Analytica; Alim Aliiev, Deputy Director of Ukrainian Institute; Roman Nazarenko, Director of the Institute of Religion and Society at Ukrainian Catholic University; Mariia Zolkina, Head of Regional Security Studies at Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation.



“

The Russian invasion of Ukraine opened up a new phase where Ukraine realized that it had to reach out to new regions and partners, chief among them were the GCC countries

”

Research Workshop in Bodrum Emerging Threats: Implications for Gulf Security and the Role of NATO



The Gulf Studies Center at Qatar University, in partnership with the International Studies and Security Research Association – Turkiye (ISSR), is carrying out a project, funded by NATO's Emerging Security Challenges Division - Science for Peace and Security Programme. The project, entitled Emerging Threats: Implications for Gulf Security and the Role of NATO, seeks to study various themes falling under the emerging threats, and how the NATO community and the GCC countries could respond to those challenges. As part of the project, the project coordinators, Professor Saban Kardas and Professor Haldun Yalcinkaya, organized a research workshop in Bodrum, Turkiye on 24-27 April 2024. Among other presenters, Dr. Amr Al- Azm, Associate Professor of Gulf Studies, presented a paper titled “Trafficking and Terrorism Finance in the MENA.” Prof. Saban Kardas, Gulf Studies Program Coordinator, also presented a paper titled “NATO and Gulf Region.” The papers presented at the workshop will be published in an edited book.



Joint Workshop: Gulf Studies Center & Waseda University Higher Education Issues in the Gulf: Employability of Graduates



The second workshop of the series “Higher Education Issues in the Gulf”, jointly organized with Waseda University of Japan on February 29, 2024, focused on Employability of Graduates. Four presenters from different campuses in Qatar and two scholars from Japan discussed different aspects of the situation of the employability rankings of Qatari universities.

The presenters spoke about the quality of the employment achieved after graduating from Qatari universities and the country’s need for graduates to cater to the needs of the diverse productive sectors. Among the topics also discussed was the gender dynamics observed in the Qatar labor market and how the higher education pathways can contribute to reduce that gap. Finally, the higher education-employment gap in Iran was compared with the GCC states. The conclusion of the workshop is that there is still not enough data, neither on a local level or a regional level, to help practitioners elaborate efficiently on higher education policies that could fill the needed identified gaps and shortcomings. Therefore, more coordination in data collection and analysis is required to continue the improvement of such strategic sector for every country in the region.

Joint Workshop: Gulf Studies Center & Middle East Council of Global Affairs Iran, Energy Security, and the War on Gaza

The discussion, that took place on February 11, 2024, conducted under Chatham House rules, explored how the War on Gaza is shaping Iran’s regional standing along with Tehran’s foreign policy. The presenters noted that, after the 7th of October, Iran's anti-U.S. and Israel rhetoric



gained traction in the region, stressing regional disillusionment with Israel and the United States’ gross violations of human rights and international law. They also highlighted significant improvements in perceptions of Iran internationally, following the 7th of October, and presenter also probed the effectiveness of Iran's deterrence strategy arguing that it deflected attention from internal issues. Finally, they underscored the repercussions of ongoing disruptions in the Red Sea on regional economies including Egypt and Iraq, noting the efforts to shift energy supply routes.

Joint Workshop: Gulf Studies Center and Bourse & Bazaar Foundation Moving Towards Regional Economic Integration in the Gulf



The Gulf Studies Center (GSC) at Qatar University partnered with The Bourse & Bazaar Foundation and organised a two-day interdisciplinary workshop in February 2024. This workshop offered a platform for around 20 regional and European analysts, scholars, and policymakers to propose new models for policymaking on regional connectivity, with a focus on the institutional and infrastructural developments necessary to create a more integrated region. The workshop also included keynote presentations by the European Union Special Representative for the Gulf Region and the Director of International Cooperation at Qatar's Ministry of Finance.

A Visit to Qatar Charity



Dr. Pinar Akpinar paid a visit to Qatar Charity with her master and PhD students as part of her 'Conflict Resolution and Mediation in the Gulf' course at the Gulf Studies Program. They explored Qatar's impactful role as a donor country and gained firsthand insights into Qatar Charity's remarkable initiatives. Their visit to Qatar Charity provided practical applications and real-world examples for our Conflict Resolution and Mediation class. By exploring Qatar's role as a donor country and Qatar Charity's initiatives, students were able to better understand how humanitarian organizations operate in conflict zones and contribute to peacebuilding efforts. The visit enhanced students' understanding of the complexities of conflict resolution and mediation in the context of global humanitarian efforts.

International Women's Day event



Sinem Cengiz, Research Assistant at the Gulf Studies Center, was invited as a special guest to attend the International Women's Day event, under the theme 'Inspiring GCC Women', hosted by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), at its headquarters in Riyadh, on March 8, 2024. The event was attended by H.E. Sultan S Al-Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, State of Qatar, H.E. Waleed bin Abdulkarim El-Khereiji, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Jasem M Al-Budaiwi, GCC Secretary General, and several ambassadors. The event in Riyadh was the first to be organised by GCC to commemorate International Women's Day. Dozens of female leaders and officials from across the region took part. Cengiz has also held a meeting with H.E. Al-Budaiwi on the sidelines of the event, at the GCC headquarters to discuss ways of academic cooperation.

Upcoming Events Academic Year 2024/2025



Workshop:
Redefining Gulf Studies



Workshop:
Emerging Threats:
A New Research Agenda for Gulf Security



Annual Gulf Studies Center Conference:
The Gulf in the Emerging Regional
(Dis)Order



Workshop:
Interests of the GCC Economies: Domestic,
Regional and International Dimensions

Conference Participation

Our faculty members have participated in a number of academic conferences this semester, where they showcased their productive research, presented insightful presentations and engaged in panel discussions reflecting the depth and diversity of their expertise. These participation do not only highlights their commitment to academic excellence but also fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing with scholars from around the world.

Dr. Nikolay Kozhanov



Russian relations with the Middle East after Putin's invasion of Ukraine
Roundtable Discussion: From one War to Another: Moscow and the Middle East

Russia's War in Ukraine and the Interests of GCC Hydrocarbon Producer
Implications of Change and Continuity in GCC Leaderships on State-Business Elite Relations: Experiences of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (with Sinem Cengiz)
Gulf Studies Symposium
Washington

Dr. Amr Al-Azm



Russia's War in Ukraine and the Interests of GCC Hydrocarbon Producers in the New Realities of the 4th Energy Transition
Conference: British Association for Slavonic and Eastern European Studies
UK

Role of Cultural Heritage in Promoting Human Security in the Gulf Region
Gulf Studies Symposium
Organized
Washington DC

Ms. Sinem Cengiz



Turkey's Foreign Policy in the Gaza war, and the impact of this policy on Turkish-Gulf relations
Conference: The 2nd Beirut Security Debates (BSD) "The Gaza War and the Regional Turmoil in the Middle East"
Beirut, Lebanon

Implications of Change and Continuity in GCC Leaderships on State-Business Elite Relations: Experiences of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (with Dr. Nikolay Kozhanov)
Gulf Studies Symposium
Washington DC

Prof. Saban Kardas



Revisiting the Saudi Reaction to the "Iranian threat": A Case of Overbalancing?
Gulf Studies Symposium
Washington DC

Iran's Engagement in the Israel-Hamas War: From Proxy Roles to Direct Confrontation



CIPR (Center for International Policy Research) organized a workshop entitled “Iran’s Engagement in the Israel-Hamas War: From Proxy Roles to Direct Confrontation,” on 22 May 2024. The workshop sought to discuss the regional policies in the wake of the Gaza War of 2023, which marked a significant turning point in Palestinian and regional geopolitics. In particular, the workshop focused on Israel’s bombing of an Iranian consulate annex in Damascus, which escalated the conflict dynamics from a proxy warfare to direct confrontation. The workshop brought together many leading Doha-based and regional experts to reflect on the reactions of regional actors and their relationship with Iran, as well as the reactions from major international players, the United States, Russia, and the European Union. The workshop was launched with a keynote address by Dr. Majed Al Ansari, CIPR Director, and Advisor to Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Spokesperson for Foreign Ministry of Qatar. The Gulf Studies faculty members presenting in the workshop included Professor Mahjoob Zweiri, Professor Saban Kardas, Dr. Amr Al Azm and Dr. Nikolay Kozhanov. While Dr. Kozhanov spoke about the role of Russia and the European Union, Dr. Amr addressed the role of the United States. Prof. Zweiri discussed the future scenarios and Prof. Kardas addressed the broader international repercussions of the crisis. The Director of Gulf Studies Center Dr. Maryam Alkuwari attended as one of the discussants.

Japan-Middle East Strategic Dialogue: Japan’s Growing Regional Interests



Prof. Saban Kardas attended the first “Japan-Middle East Strategic Dialogue: Japan’s Growing Regional Interests” organized at the University of Jordan in Amman on May 12-13, 2024. Seeking to foster better relations between the security, policy, and academic communities of Japan and the Middle East, the Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology Open Laboratory for Emergence Strategies (ROLES) at the University of Tokyo and the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan organized the meeting. Dr. Kardas was a speaker on the third panel, entitled “Radicalization, Nonstate Actors, and Stability in the Middle East.”

Students' Conference Participation



Gulf Studies Program students also actively participate in conferences. This involvement significantly enriches their academic experience and professional development. Attending conferences provides our students with opportunities to network with other experts in the field, present their research, and receive feedback. It helps them prepare for successful careers and foster a vibrant academic community that thrives on collaboration and continuous learning.

Name	Conference/ Workshop/ Roundtable Discussion Symposium Title	Presentation Title
Sharique Umar	Gulf Research Meeting Gulf Research Center, Cambridge	Cultural Heritage as a Tool for National Identity Formation: The cases of Oman and Qatar
	10th Global Social Sciences Graduate Student Hybrid Conference-(Re)thinking Futures: Introspection, Retrospection and Prospection. Hong Kong Baptist University.	International Student Mobility in the Gulf Region: Institutional Practices and International Students' Perspective."
Sahar El Sayed	The Academic Network for Development Dialogue's annual Conference Hamad bin Khalifa University	Higher education institutions, a Focal for Cultural Change Towards Sustainable Social Development

The Gulf Studies Center is committed to maintaining an active and productive research agenda, which is a key focus of our work. Our faculty members and students actively contribute to publications. In addition to publishing in esteemed journals and media outlets, the Gulf Studies Center provides a platform for its community and other experts in the field to share their research outcomes through internal publication series. Gulf Insights, Policy Briefs, Working Papers, and Monographs offer wide-ranging avenues for publishing Gulf-focused research papers and commentaries.

During this semester, the Gulf Studies Center has released several internal publications, as listed below. These research papers and articles are authored by experts specializing in various fields of Gulf Studies and are meticulously supervised by our research coordinators. The internal publications are made available on the Gulf Studies Center website and shared through the center's social media accounts. Additionally, our faculty members and students also publish in other academic platforms and media outlets.

Gulf Insights

Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: Consequences on Oil and Gas Exports of the Gulf Countries

By: Iryna Rishniak

Saudi Arabia's Cultural Renaissance: Societal Codes and Embrace

By: Sinem Cengiz

Arab Opinion on Iran: The Gaza War Perspective

By: Nesibe Hicret Battaloglu & Luciano Zaccara

The Art of Gulf Diplomacy: Kuwait's New Emir Embarks on a GCC Tour

By: Sinem Cengiz & Amna Sadiq

Educational Diplomacy at Stake: Closure of a US University Branch in Qatar

By: Sharique Umar

IRAQ Provincial Elections 2023: A Decade in the Making

By: Abdulla Al-Khazraji

Articles

Gulf householding: implications of gulf migration for social reproduction

By: MD Mizanur Rahman, Ali Alshawi and Pranav Raj

In: South Asian Diaspora

Western Universities' Double Standards on Liberal Values, Academic Freedom

By: Mahjoob Zweiri and Farah Al Qawasmi

In: Al-Fanar Media

Chasing Votes in the Gulf: Modi and Erdogan Turn to Campaigning Abroad

By: Pinar Akpınar and Sharique Umar

In: International Policy Digest

Private higher education: a comparative study of Germany and the United Arab Emirates

By: Sanaa Ashour and Bernd Kleimann

In: Research Papers in Education

Book Chapters

Türkiye and the MENA Region

By: Pinar Akpınar and Dalia Ghanem

In "Türkiye's Cards in the World: Raising the Stakes" Edited by Dalia Ghanem

Qatar's LNG Industry in the Age of Hydrocarbon Markets: Instability and Energy Transition

By: Nikolay Kozhanov

In "Energy Transitions in the Middle East" Edited by Karen Young and Katherine Wolf

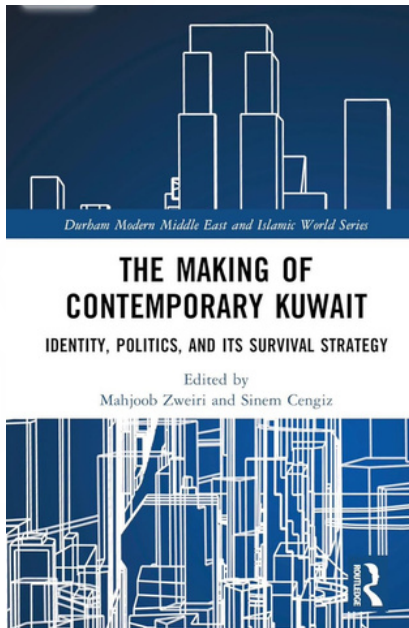
Iran's Soft Power in the Gulf from Islamic Revolution to Post Intra Gulf Crisis

By: Nesibe Hicret Battaloglu

In "Sectarianism, De-Sectarianization and Regional Politics in the Middle East" Edited by Samira Nasirzadeh, Elias Ghazal, Ana Maria Kumarasamy, Eyad Alrefai, and Simon Mabon

Books

The Making of Contemporary Kuwait: Identity, Politics, and its Survival Strategy



The book, edited by Mahjoob Zweiri and Sinem Cengiz and published by Routledge explores the contemporary history, governance, foreign policy, political economy, culture, and society of Kuwait. It highlights the dynamics of the country, putting forward both an overview of each subject covered and new research findings. It begins by providing a historical understanding of state formation and goes on to examine state structure, including the ruling monarchy, state legitimacy, and the creation of the Constitution and the National Assembly. It considers foreign policy, including the tools of diplomacy, the state's regional and international approach, and the factors that have formed and reformed Kuwait's strategic policy in the global arena.

It assesses the economy, including rentierism, the labour market both for locals and for migrants, the class system, and the process of Kuwaitization; and it discusses Kuwaiti society and national identity, as well as investigates issues of women, civil society, youth, and the Bidoon minority. Overall, the book provides a full and detailed analysis of contemporary Kuwait and of the factors which are bringing about new developments.

Members of the Gulf Studies Center who participated in the book

Contemporary Kuwait through the State and Society: An Introduction

By: Mahjoob Zweiri and Sinem Cengiz

Role of Urbanization in Changing Social Norms to Laws: Impact on Status of Kuwaiti Women

By: Muyassar Suleiman

Political Economy of Kuwait through the Prism of Its Hydrocarbon Sector

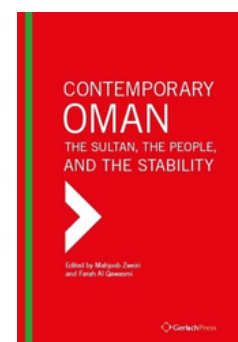
By: Nikolay Kozhanov

Coming Soon:

Contemporary Oman: The Sultan, the People and the Stability

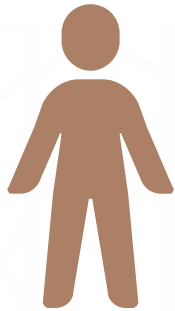
Edited by: Mahjoob Zweiri and Farah Al Qawasmi

Published by: Gerlach Press

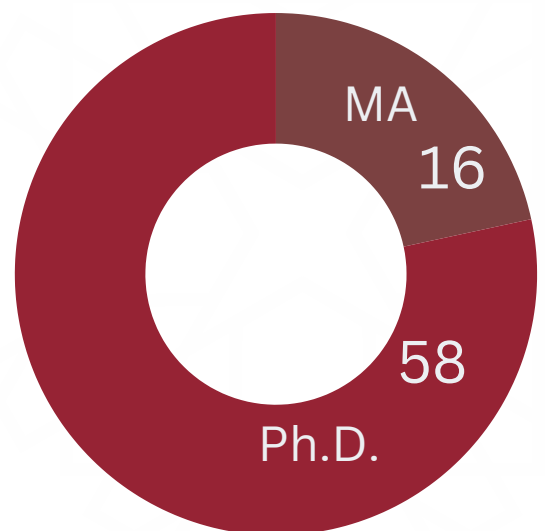
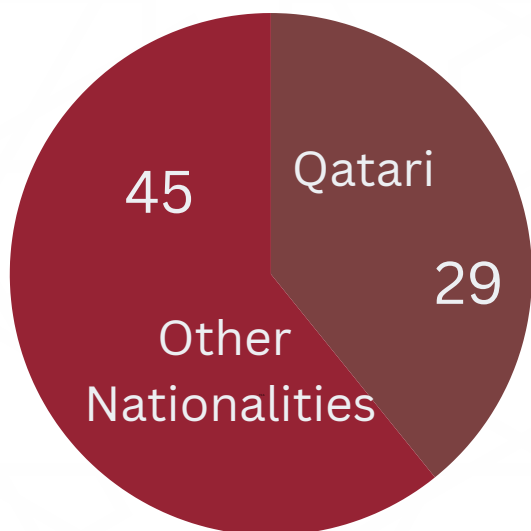
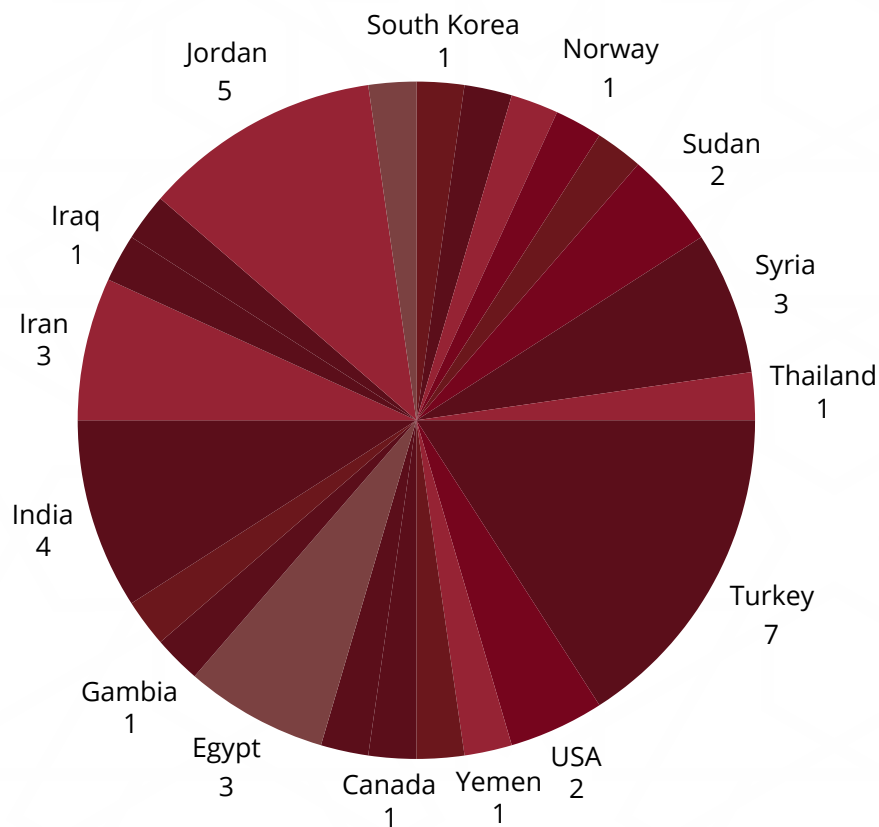
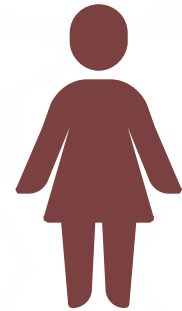


Statistics

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Graduates of Spring 2024



Mehran Haghirian- PhD

DIFFERENTIATING FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGIES
IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA:
THE DECISION-MAKING CALCULUS TOWARDS IRAN



Rula Momani- PhD

THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION ON QATARI
IDENTITY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES AT QATAR UNIVERSITY:
IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE



Kazuto Matsuda, MA

DE-ESSENTIALISING JAPAN-GCC STATES RELATIONS
BEYOND THE HYDROCARBON TRADE:
JAPAN'S COMPLEX INTERDEPENDENCE WITH OMAN

Award Winner of Academic Year 2023/2024

Thesis Award

Kazuto Matsuda
Master of Arts in Gulf Studies
College of Arts and Sciences

Dissertation Award

Buthaina Abdulrahman ALKhelaifi
PhD in Gulf Studies
College of Arts and Sciences

Dissertation Award

1st Place

Lakshmi Venugopal
PhD in Gulf Studies
College of Arts and Sciences

2nd Place

Kazuto Matsuda
Master in Gulf Studies
College of Arts and Sciences

Meet the Team

Dr. Maryam Al Kuwari, Director of the Gulf Studies Center and Assistant Professor of International Affairs

Prof. Şaban Kardaş Gulf Studies Program Coordinator and Research Professor of Social Sciences

Prof. Mahjoob Zweiri Professor of Contemporary Middle East History

Prof. Sana Ashour, Professor of Gulf Studies

Dr. Amr Al- Azm, Associate Professor in Social Sciences/ Anthropology

Dr. Nikolay Kozhanov, Research Associate Professor in Energy and Economy

Dr. Luciano Zaccara, Research Associate Professor in Gulf Politics

Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Research Associate Professor in Social Sciences

Dr. Pinar Akpinar, Assistant Professor of International Affairs

Dr. Amna Sadiq, Assistant Professor of Gulf Studies and Political Economy

Ms. Farah Qawasmi, Research Assistant

Ms. Nesibe Hicret Battaloglu , Research Assistant

Ms. Sinem Cengiz, Research Assistant

Ms. Noora Abdulaziz, Senior Engagement and Communication Specialist

Ms. Thouria Mahmoud, Senior Editor

Ms. Nourhan Bulble, Administrative Coordinator

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