Chapter 1
Social Change and Transformation in the Gulf Region

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Social change is an integral part of human social behavior and a phenomenon that is continuously happening around us. We constantly challenge existing social structures and institutions and transform them by contesting the cultural norms and values upon which they are founded. While such disruption may seem at the superficial level a negative form of disorder, in reality, it represents the way in which societies develop and evolve over time. Social change involves a cultural transformation often as part of an adaptive response to an ever-changing world around us.

While the Arab Gulf region may seem immune to this natural phenomenon, unchanged and deeply rooted in its ancient tribal customs and traditions, merging both past and present smoothly and with apparent ease. In fact, the region has been subject to countervailing forces resulting in a constant state of flux, social change, and transformation since the oil era of the 1970s. One question that may be asked here however, is whether the phenomenon of social change and transformation in the Arab Gulf region is evolutionary or revolutionary.

The first two decades of the twenty-first century have witnessed an accelerated pace in social change and transformation within the Arab states of the Gulf, impacting nearly every aspect of life in their societies. These social transformations are most obvious in areas of education, economic development and employment patterns, urbanization, and deep demographic shifts within these societies.

Since the early 2000s, there has been a transformative revolution in the education systems to promote greater diversity and growth. One major manifestation of this transformation has been the inclusion of women. Despite the deeply conservative attitudes toward female education, female enrollment in higher education has been increasing steadily and, in some sectors, outnumbering males. Recent trends indicate

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that female education and employment are improving the social status of women within the family and facilitating the redefining of gender relations across the Gulf states. These changes are heralding significant social transformations in the region where women are now considered active members in their communities, gradually breaking the stereotype that Gulf societies are gender-biased.

One way in which the effects of this educational revolution have made themselves felt is in the employment sector. In response to the increase in the number of higher education graduates for instance, employment patterns in the Gulf have evolved and shifted in the last two decades, resulting in both men and women joining public and private sector employment. The economic advantages of gender diversity in the workforce are encouraging women to enter the work force in greater numbers across the region. Formal employment in government and the private sectors replaced more traditional occupations and provides a much higher income for nationals, enabling people to make personal decisions more independently than ever before (Ghabra, 1997). Furthermore, education and experience are now prerequisites for access to these better paid government jobs. As a result, governments and employers focused on and invested in education, to improve the quality of their workforce (both men and women) (Peterson, 2014).

At the same time, social change causes transformations also in demographic trends too: Dentice (2018) notes that over the next decade, population dynamics will play an important role in determining labor and immigration policies, economic growth, market liberalization, the role of women and youth and their inclusion in the workforce.

The Gulf States have witnessed dramatic population growth mainly due to significant expatriate immigration as well as natural increase because of reduced mortality rate brought about by marked improvement and investment in health care and welfare. The growth of the expatriate population has led to wide-ranging social changes in Gulf societies. Migration plays a key role in population size and composition, as well as economic development and growth in these states. In turn, these shifts population dynamics are raising important questions related to labor market sustainability and migration control, permanent residency and citizenship, and culture and identity.

This rapid growth in population, and the stress it places on the current economic system in most Gulf States is clearly manifested when one examines the employment ratio between young people (nationals from these states) and the millions of people who migrated to the region. There is no doubt that these demographic pressures add to the challenges, as increasing numbers of young people (nationals) enter the job market looking for career opportunities that meet their financial aspirations. While this in the past may not have been a significant issue, but in an era of low oil prices, and energy revenues, the effects of this demographic shift have become more problematic. The revenues generated through oil and gas sales are no longer sufficient to sustain the current socioeconomic model at the basis of which is a social contract that expects citizens to support their ruling elites and forgo political participation in return for a generous welfare state that provides economic privileges (Dentice, 2018).

The process of urbanization which has accelerated exponentially since 2000 has also had a major and irreversible impact on Gulf society. The construction of

entire new cities and neighborhoods some of which on newly reclaimed land (from the sea), hosting ultra-modern skyscrapers made of steel and glass both alien and ill-suited to the arid and superhot desert climate, have disturbed traditional social patterns. As more and more families and clans disperse throughout these new cities, clear shifts in traditional family residential patterns are emerging, leading to new forms of relationships. Both men and women now form close relationships with their peers and fellow workers, and other affiliations that are independent of traditional family and tribal kinship networks, or community connections. The impersonal nature of the city is further emphasized by the large numbers of expatriates from a wide range of countries, so that nationals now find themselves in the minority in their own countries in (Peterson, 2014).

Another important aspect of social change in Gulf society has come through technology—as in satellite television and the Internet—both have transformed Gulf societies by dramatically opening them up to the wider world and exposing them to different cultural and political narratives. They provide the capability for communication beyond mere face to face contact and emphasizes the process of time–space compression. Social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, have since emerged as a powerful driver of social transformations in the Gulf too with the number of users rising exponentially since 2010 by several hundred percent. The use of social media is changing the way people discuss, post, and deliver their messages to their communities and communicate with ruling elites. There is a consensus that this new media presents a virtual yet vibrant space for social empowerment in the region.

In the face of this overwhelming evidence for social change in the region, Abdulla (2011) points out that the Gulf States "have experienced more changes in the past fifty years than in their 500 years of recorded history. These states are pregnant with all types of changes, some deep-rooted and structural and some superficial and cosmetic" (p. 114). This change has taken place on a massive scale and unprecedented speed, sweeping away the older traditional conservative way of life and replacing it with one that is modern, urban, and prosperous.

Yet, Peterson, Al Ghabra, Abdulla, and others argue that there are also strong counterforces of continuity with Gulf societies that resist social change and transformation. They have put forward the notion that Gulf States and their societies, while open to economic development have been much more resistant and have shown deep resilience to the inevitable forces of social change and modernization. This resilience or "social continuity" as Peterson calls it, has been maintained, through inherent social conservatism, backed by religious (Islam), tribal and other sociocultural identities, and reinforced by the state. It can be argued as well that tribalism and the enduring emphasis on family and clan is another compelling force for continuity too. This has been held together by the gradual and incremental pace of economic change and, especially, by the traditionalist and patriarchal political order (Peterson, 2014).

In part, this resistance to change or "social continuity" due to an intentional strategy by states and their ruling elites. According to Al-Tarrah (2007) ""Gulf states use their wealth to buy political loyalties through public spending, including a generous subsidy system. This non- economic utilization of resources socialized

youth to believe that work has no inherent value and production is irrelevant because salaries are paid in the bureaucracy without regard to work" (p. 123). As a result, citizens view their income from the state as their right, by way of their share in the oil revenues. This sense of entitlement, is a powerful inhibitor for the majority of people to seek change in the current situation. In fact, were they to attempt to bring pressure on the state to alter the existing status quo, they might jeopardize these benefits altogether.

Furthermore, from this point of view, Gulf societies have been overwhelmed by the large numbers of expatriates and the inescapable and at times pervasive draw of Western, influence. This in turn has produced a backlash and a countermovement towards an authentically purer Gulf Arab social identity rooted in a tribal past. Social interaction between nationals and expatriates are now increasingly discouraged outside the workplace, while restrictions on national dress, economic benefits, and rights of residence have all been enforced on expatriates at various times. Expatriates are now increasingly seen as threats to both the purity ("cultural integrity") and the security of Gulf society as a whole. This is becoming increasingly noticeable in efforts by various states to make the issue of expatriates and pervasive foreign/Western influence a matter national security (Peterson, 2014).

A different approach to interpreting the phenomenon of tribalism and modernizing social change is taken by Miriam Cooke. She views adherence or return to tribal identity not as backlash against Westernization or a "social continuity movement", as part of a resistance to change; rather, as an agent of social change and transformation. Cooke states that the tribal (identity) as manifested in the Arab Gulf today is essential to the modern and a principal element in the Gulf's perceived sense of modernity. Unlike in the middle of the twentieth when it (the tribal) was considered it an impediment to modernization, tribal identity is making a comeback today offering the opportunity for racial privilege, social status, and exclusive entitlement to a share in national profits (Cooke, 2014).

In the twenty-first century, there is the emergence of a national brand that merges both tribal and modern identities and for which Miriam Cooke coined the phrase "Tribal Modern". This goes against the popular stereotype and media hype of a highly stigmatized, region that is usually thought of as either tribal or modern; in other words, it is either backward tribal with a thin, modern veneer or a failed modern because of its tribal residue (Cooke, 2014).

According to Cooke (2014), "to begin to understand the culture of the Gulf and to appreciate what is new and different in it, we must see how the modern and the tribal, the high-rises and the tribal regalia, converge, each reinforcing the other" (p. 11). A new space where the hypermodern, the tribal, and the national meet and coalesce, with ruling the elites comfortably occupying it.

Through the concept of the Tribal Modern brand, the potential for dynamic interaction is unleashed. It allows for the contradictory state of social change and stability, transformation and preservation, Western modernization and, tribal tradition to paradoxically occupy the same space. The brand offers entitlements and advantages to both individuals and nations but also differentiates them. Internally, it distinguishes nationals from the many foreigners sharing their cities. Externally, it allows these

new nation to place their distinctive mark on world politics. The brand effectively addresses/negates the issue of resistance to change forcing "social continuity" as framed by Peterson and others to shape a new way to think of the modern in cultural terms where the tribal becomes a modernizing force.

In conclusion, contrary to popular notions that social change in the Gulf and its acceleration over the course of the Twenty-First Century, is the product of something novel or groundbreaking, it is due to the impact of a natural course of modernization. This radical social transformation is simply a case of Gulf Arabs asserting their wills in a modern world that does neither reject nor forget their rooted, ancient, and tribal identities. This does not somehow make their emergence into a global scene which is transnational, modern, and cosmopolitan paradoxical or hypocritical. It is their own natural course for creating their national identity which blends several aspects of their histories and culture along with the contemporary future of their nation. There is no one correct or natural path to modernization, and to assume so, would be to fall into an essentialist trap that is both inaccurate and limiting. As history has shown, adaptation and progress are processes that constantly navigate the twisting road of the romance of the traditional and the excitement of the new.

1.1 The Study of Social Change in the Arabian Gulf Region

There are several earlier attempts to document the social change in the Middle East region as a whole since the early 1960s (Antoun & Harik, 1972; Belgrave, 1968; Duckworth, 1981; Halpern, 1963; Heard-Bey, 1972; Kergan, 1975; Monroe, 1975; Polk, 1967). For instance, Manfred Halpern's book, "The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa", is probably one of the most comprehensive works of outstanding merit that documented the political and social forces underlying developments in the Middle East before the surge of oil price in early 1970s (Halpern, 1963). Halpern's administrative experience enabled him to emphasize the need for policy-oriented research. From an academic point of view, the book is still relevant and regarded as authoritative masterpiece on the studies of the Middle East and North Africa Studies. We find parallel policy orientated research work in the same decade. For instance, William R. Polk presents a conceptual scheme for the analysis of economic and social change in the Middle East in the late 1960s (Polk, 1967). Polk offers a political analysis of social change in order to improve reporting of the events and to bridge the gap between theory, reporting, and formulation of policy.

Sir Charles Belgrave, a British citizen and an advisor to the rulers of Bahrain from 1926 until 1957, delivered a powerful address at the Royal Central Asian Society on June 28, 1967. In this address, Belgrave discussed the Gulf region—past and present—and summarized the story of the Gulf in three words: pearls, pirates, and petroleum (Belgrave, 1968, p. 28). While the Gulf remained famous for pearls and piracy for many centuries, the exploration of petroleum and oil-price hike in early 1970s changed the region dramatically over time. The Gulf has been able to transform itself at a pace unprecedented in human history. We notice that oil as a driving force

for change is reported prominently in the early works of Frauke Heard-Bey (1972), J. L. Kergan (1975), H. F. Duckworth (1981), and Robert E. Looney (1990).

Since the 1990s, we can observe a more systematic study of the scope and depth of impact of rapid development on various aspects of the societies in Arab Gulf and beyond, for instance, gender and social change (Moghadam, 1993); politics of change (Satloff, 1992), economic change and population and political stability (Gause, 1997), development and change (Touraine, 1998), Social transformations of the twentieth century (Abdelkarim, 1999), War, Institutions and social change (Heydemann, 2000), Gulf in the 20th Century (Heard-Bey, 2002), gender, religion and change (Flaskerud & Okkenhaug, 2005), political change (Tetreault et al., 2011), government and politics (Ismael & Ismael, 2011), Islam and political reform (Alshamsi, 2012), politics, economics and global order (Held & Ulrichsen, 2013), political economy, war and revolution (Ehteshami, 2013), change and development (John & Howard, 2013), higher education (Tuma, 2014), Economic and political change in the Middle East (Badry & Willoughby, 2015), political and socio-economic change (Bahramitash & Esfahani, 2016), new regional order (Bazoobandi, 2019), the 2017 Gulf crisis (Zweiri & Qawasmi, 2021), linguistic identities (Hopkyns & Zoghbor, 2022). This volume has benefited from these earlier works, and, in many ways, our approach and interests are shaped by these volumes as well as many other research publications.

1.2   Structure of the Volume

Considering the scope of the existing literature and the existing void in addressing a topic like social change in a dynamic region like the Gulf society, we have divided this volume thematically into four parts: Part I Social Sphere, Part II Cultural Sphere, Part III Economic Sphere, and finally Part IV Political Sphere. The geographical scope of the book encompasses research on the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and other countries in the region. Thus, this volume attempts to advance the body of knowledge about the factors, directions, and magnitudes of social change in the Gulf society from a multidisciplinary perspective. We offer a brief overview of the four broad divisions by delineating individual chapters and their key arguments and findings in the remainder of this chapter.

Part I includes fourteen chapters that address change in the social sphere. This part covers a wide range of topics such as social media, social identity, social justice, online education, higher education and research, women empowerment, marriage, and family, and finally migration and diaspora. Chapter 2, "Social Media in the GCC Countries—Facilitator or Curse for Generation 'Z'?" by Ciprian Pripoae-Şerbănescu and Ecaterina Maţoi examines the directions of the social change in the GCC, by analyzing how traditional interactions between generations and pattern evolution are shaped by social media. The chapter states that particular generations may be seduced by the illusion and political elites might find it highly challenging in ensuring the stability and stimulating a solid societal identity in an increasingly complex world. In

line with the impact of social media, Chapter 3, "Identity and Globalization: Tribal Identity in the Age of Social Media" by Abdulla Al-Etaibi also deals with the use of social media for political purposes by both governments and individuals since the Arab Spring. The author in this chapter highlights the use and effects of social media on tribes for mobilizing tribal kinship networks.

After social media and identity, our next chapter addresses claim over "Chai Karak", Emirati identity, Tujjar, and sociopolitical influence. Chapter 4, "Chai Karak: The Politics of Tea and the Coloniality of Appropriation in the UAE" by Abdulla Moaswes offers an impressive analysis of the effects of Emirati claims of ownership over chai karak in terms of its political and socioeconomic impact. Moaswes states that the discourse of ownership produced today around chai karak comes close to those produced as a result of colonial legacy. Chapter 5, "Tujjar in the Gulf: Changes in Socio-Political Influence", by Lakshmi Venugopal Menon examines merchant-ruler relations and its transnational dynamism. This research describes the condition and the activities of the merchant classes in the states of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE during the pre-oil, interwar crisis, and post-oil periods. The chapter asserts that the Western-European city concept is devoid of an appreciation of the Arab Gulf's transnational dimension and the region's structural demand for foreigners.

The study of social justice is an evolving area of research in the global South and this volume offers two chapters on social justice in the Gulf. Chapter 6, "Social Justice in the Gulf States: A Case in Qatar", by Muhammad Mustafizur Rahaman looks into social justice and its role in addressing the problems of inequality. Focusing on Qatar's success in ensuring migrants' rights and healthcare provisions, the chapter claims that robust judicial process, consolidation of social development institutions, and client-focused health policy and services have been instrumental in boosting social justice in Qatar. Chapter 7, "Social Justice Under COVID-19: A Comparative Study of Health and Socioeconomic Policy Responses in the Arab Mashreq and the Arab Gulf", by Ahmed Aref deals with the patterns of health and socioeconomic policy responses in the two Arab regions from a social justice perspective. The chapter offers insight into the structural factors that shape different typologies of policy response in both regions.

The next two chapters discuss education, research, and online teaching during the pandemic. Chapter 8, "Graduate Research Experience in the Arab Gulf: The Case in Qatar", by Mary Newsome addresses growth in the higher education sector in the Arab Gulf States with a particular emphasis on graduate education and the graduate research experience in Qatar. Mary identifies and discusses key barriers to a successful graduate research experience and stresses the need to focus more on graduate students thriving rather than just focusing on graduate research output. Chapter 9, "Transition to Online Teaching Under COVID-19: The Case Study of UAE University", by Aizhan Shomotova and Tatiana Karabchuk examines the role of universities and government in supporting the transition to online teaching. The chapter describes the challenges and reflections of academic staff from the University of UAE on this transition to online teaching. The study also finds an improved research efficiency, irrespective of gender during the pandemic.

The status of women and family relations constitute an important area of research for the Gulf region. We offer two chapters on this topic. Chapter 10, "Women's Status in the Process of Socio-Political Development in Iran", by Maliheh Mousanejad addresses women's participation in the sociopolitical development of Iranian society during the last four decades. The study concludes that the status of Iranian women in their society has increased over time. However, their participation at higher organizational levels continues to face social, political, and cultural impediments. Chapter 11, "Reasons for Divorce in Kuwait: An Application of the Likelihood of Divorce Inventory (LDI)", Fahad Alnaser and Hussain M. Al-Fadhli use the likelihood of divorce inventory to examine married university students' assessment of reasons for divorce in Kuwait. The study identifies infidelity, spousal abuse, and drug/alcohol abuse being among the most prominently reported reasons for divorce.

The Gulf States now account for the world's largest flow of South–South migration, and indeed by a large margin. The growth of the non-national population has inevitably brought about wide-ranging social changes in Gulf societies. Migration holds the key to population size and composition, as well as economic growth and the future of the Gulf countries. We dedicate four chapters to the understanding of the dynamics of migration and diaspora. Chapter 12, "The Transformation-Migration Nexus in the United Arab Emirates: A Historical Analysis", by Gennaro Errichiello provides a historical evolution of migration in the UAE. Errichiello argues that migration is neither a cause nor a consequence of social transformation but is part of the transformation processes. The chapter shows that migration in the UAE can be better understood by linking local-level experience of migration with other socio-spatial levels in the increasingly interconnected world. Chapter 13, "From 'Brain Drain' to 'Capital Gain': Indian Skilled Migration to the UAE", by Omar Bortolazzi examines the magnitude of emigration of India's high-skill population to the United Arab Emirates. The chapter assesses the role played by remittances, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and knowledge and technology transfers as key economic resources toward the development of the national economy and the potential reversal of the impact of "brain drain". Chapter 14, "Migrant Network and Credit: Dynamics of Punjabi Migration to the Gulf Countries", by Atinder Pal Kaur and Ruchi Singh examines the role of migrant networks in facilitating Punjabi migration to Gulf countries, and the role of credit and debt to cover the cost of migration. The chapter suggests that migrant networks offer employment opportunities and various types of debt are used to cover migration costs. Finally, Chapter 15, "The Choice for the 'Zendegie': The Ethnography of the Migration of Iranian Young Generation", Gi Yeon Koo examines changes in Iranian diaspora. The chapter revisits the reasons for migration with a focus on Iranian young immigrants. The paper suggests that Iranian youth emigrate overseas for "air to breathe, basic living, and COVID-19 vaccination for survival"—it is their choice for a "normal life".

Part II includes seven chapters that addresses the changes in the cultural domain with a focus on cultural heritage, language and communication, reverse orientalism, artistic movements, vocabulary change, and literary evolution. Chapter 16, "The Threat to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict and Its Dynamic Relationship with Gulf Society" Amr Al-Azm addresses the importance of preserving cultural heritage

by Gulf societies from the growing threat of looting and trafficking. The chapter seeks to address questions pertaining to the evolving relationship of Gulf States and societies to cultural heritage (museums, private collections, etc.), the extent of trafficking that occurs in the region and changing attitudes to this practice. Chapter 17, "Challenges of Communication and Identity in the Gulf: Insights from Qatar and the UAE", by Rizwan Ahmad argues that while the presence of foreign languages does facilitate communication in Qatar and the UAE, it has also heightened a fear of loss of Arabic and Arab identity among the local population. Rizwan demonstrates how the two governments struggle to balance the needs of communication and identity. On the question of identity, geography, and culture, the next chapter investigates the changes with an example of French Muslims' embrace of Salafism and the globalization of beliefs, symbols, and identifies. Chapter 18, "Reverse Orientalism? French Salafis' Fascination with Saudi Arabia", by Mohamed Ali Adraoui demonstrates the influence of some forms of Islam originating in the Gulf within French society that can be interpreted as the result of a desire to identify with a non-French way of being a Muslim. By analyzing the kind of relations between certain French Muslims and a country such as Saudi Arabia, the chapter elaborates on the fascination with Salafism and the rejection of their home country's values. More importantly, the chapter shows that French Salafi Orientalist type represents an original way of looking and understanding "the Islamic East" today.

The next two chapters discuss the changes in relation to art and identity in the contact zone. Chapter 19, "Art in the Contact Zone in the UAE and Qatar: Trans-Regional Cultural Policy and Rise of New Artistic Movements", by Mohammad Raza Moridi argues that Dubai and Doha strive to be known as transcultural places, as what Mary Louise Pratt calls "contact zone". This chapter shows how trans-regional cultural policies have made Dubai and Doha welcome marginal arts, hybrid arts, and multicultural arts. More importantly, Mohammad discusses the role of Iranian and Arab artists in shaping this contact. Chapter 20, "The Gulf as a Global Contact Zone: Chronotopic Identities and Linguistic Landscapes", by Letizia Lombezzi uses the concept of chronotope to analyze the Gulf context and the richness of its repertoires, intended as language, cultures, activities, identities. The chapter elaborates on the phenomenon of superdiversity and discusses the reasons that led to such a reality.

The last two chapters deal with changes in vocabulary in multilingual societies and literary evolution. Chapter 21, "Vocabulary Changes in the Arab, Turk, and Persian Bilingual Societies in Northeastern Iran", by Pooneh Mostafavi, Faryar Akhlaghi, and Hiwa Asadpour, examines the borrowability of basic vocabularies. This includes kinship terms, body parts, natural and weather terms in nine bilingual villages in Northeastern Iran. The results show deep basic lexical changes and speech communities. Chapter 22, "Shellyseer: A Literary Evolution", by Fathieh Hussam Saber uses comparative literature and literary theory and criticism in order to dig deep into how drama evolves in the globalized world. Fathieh traces drama back to its oldest documented sources to show how it evolved throughout history. This chapter offers deeper knowledge of the Middle Eastern drama, the importance and strength of political satire, and how strong the mutual influence of Eastern and Western literature have on each other.

Part III includes ten chapters that deal with change in the economic sphere and covers the topics such as economic diversification, the 2017 Gulf crisis and economic resilience, development models, innovation and endogenous growth, green supply chains, sustainability and environmental challenges, unemployment, and finally foreign power and development in the region. The first four chapters explain the nature and extent of economic diversification and economic development models in the Gulf. For example, Chapter 23, "Working for God (and Country): Religious Education and Economic Diversification in the United Arab Emirates", by Sharif Ibrahim El Shishtawy Hassan and Zeynep Ozgen explores how the Emirati state cultivates certain values among its citizens to support its goal of economic diversification. The chapter states that the UAE has reformed its national education curriculum in an effort to equip Emirati youth with both the requisite skillset for transitioning to a knowledge economy and the mindset necessary to accommodate such a transition. Chapter 24, "Innovation, Technology Transfer and Endogenous Growth in the GCC Countries", by Erhan Akkas and Suleyman Orhun Altiparmak examines the nature of economic diversification in the GCC states by analyzing innovation performance indices, economic freedom indices, and doing business indicators. The chapter stresses the need for developing technology and innovation-based private sectors.

There are several attempts to shift the reliance of Gulf States from an oil-based economy to new economic miracle. For instance, Chapter 25, "The New Arab Gulf: Evaluating the Success of Economic Diversification in the UAE", by Saima Shadab refers to the region as a new Arab Gulf in terms of its economic achievement. Saima argues that some GCC countries have been able to reduce their reliance on oil and diversify their economy at an astonishing pace. Saima takes the UAE as a case study for this chapter. She reports that the UAE serves as a successful model of economic diversification for the rest of the GCC countries. Chapter 26, "Economic Development Models of Doha and Dubai: A Comparative Analysis", by Al Dana Al Thani describes the development of two cities by highlighting the imperatives of the economic, political, and social aspects of development strategies. The chapter states that Doha and Dubai adopted different development strategies and their economic growth resulted from different economic, political, and social considerations.

The next four chapters address various economic challenges that the Arab Gulf countries have encountered and elaborates on the progress the region has made over time. Chapter 27, "The 2017 Gulf Crisis: Changes in Qatar's Economic Landscape", by Sharique Umar and Salem Ghurab investigates the changes that took place in Qatar's economic landscape during and after the 2017 Gulf crisis. The chapter asserts that Qatar has shown remarkable resilience during the crisis and has crafted an economic policy that relies more on domestic production and international trade diversification. Chapter 28, "Green Supply Chains: A Comparative Efficiency Analysis in the Gulf and Beyond", by Alexander Wollenberg, J. G. O. C. Lazarini, J. J. C. Lazarini, L. F. O. Parra, A. S. Kakade addresses the development of sustainable supply in three regions from a comparative perspective. The research shows the high logistics performance but significant divergence in green logistics performance among GCC countries. Chapter 29, "Greening the Dessert: Sustainability

Challenges and Environmental Initiatives in the GCC States", by Meredian Alam and Izni Azrein Noor Azalie explores various sustainability initiatives for environmental conservation in the GCC states. The chapter discusses the national efforts of each of the GCC states to prevent and control hazards and to reduce the effects of environmental challenges. Chapter 30, "Unemployment Challenge and Labor Market Participation of Arab Gulf Youth: A Case Study of the UAE", by Anita Poplavskaya, Tatiana Karabchuk, and Aizhan Shomotova examines the unemployment challenge for Emirati youth and other GCC states from a comparative perspective. The chapter elaborates on the job search experiences of Emirati youth from a gender perspective.

The remaining three chapters demonstrate how engagement of China and Japan in the region has facilitated economic transitions. Chapter 31, "Chinese Investments in the Special Economic Zones in the Gulf Region: New Structural Economics Perspective", by Luyang Zhou explains how Chinese investments in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) play a role in the development of the Gulf region. The chapter presents three cases of development in the SEZs in the Gulf region that received Chinese investments: China-Oman Industrial Park in Duqm, the petrochemical and chemical fiber integrated project in Saudi Arabia's Jazan City for Primary and Downstream Industries, and the China-UAE Industrial Capacity Cooperation Demonstration Zone. Chapter 32, "China in the Middle East: Foreign Direct Investment, Economic Transformation, and Regional Development", by Guanie Lim and Mustafa Yağcı shows the manner in which Chinese investment has taken shape in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the development implications in the region. Finally, Chapter 33, "Japan and the Gulf States: Friendship Prospects Under the FOIP Initiative", by Habib AlBadawi introduces the idea of Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) Strategy, by exploring the future possibilities of cooperation, partnership, and the alliance between Japan and the Arab world. The paper states that the ties between the Arab Gulf States and Japan have been mainly economic including significant two-way investment and trade.

Finally, Part IV casts light on change in the political sphere. This part includes six chapters and covers several issues such as the majlis, mediation, women's political emancipation, the Yemen war, and China's vaccination diplomacy in the region. Chapter 34, "Khaleeji Modernities: Private Spaces, British Imperialism and the Centralization of the Qatari Peninsula", by Javier Guirado Alonso discusses the role of majlis as a key political and social mechanism with reference to Qatar. Chapter 35, "Kuwait's Mediation in the Gulf Crisis: Dynamics of Kuwait's Foreign Policy Approaches", by Huzeyfe Altiok explores Kuwaiti mediation in the 2017 Gulf crisis and provides an overview of the Kuwaiti mediation efforts in the Gulf crisis and deconstructs the role of small states in international relations. Chapter 36, "Political Power and Material Identity: Saudi Women in Real and Virtual Societies", by Reem Ali Al Derham elaborates on the economic and social rights granted to Saudi women in the Saudi Vision 2030, as well as on the Saudi leadership's decisions related to Saudi women. Chapter 37, "Saudi Women Activism Through Media", by Priyanka Mittal explores the role of media platforms for the promotion of rights-based activism of women in Saudi Arabia. The chapter states that the use of social media platforms

by Saudi women has promoted activism for rights, greater social freedom, and more inclusion.

Chapter 38, "Yemen, the Wound That Still Bleeds in the Gulf and Beyond", by Joel Foyth examines the causes of the conflict and reasons for the continuation of the Yemeni civil war. The chapter argues that the absence of real change and the complexity of Yemeni society undermined the process, leading to civil conflict. The study suggests that the war turned eventually into a brutal conflict, which has made it one of the century's worst humanitarian crises. Chapter 39, "China's COVID-19 Vaccine Diplomacy to the Gulf and Beyond: Efforts and Challenges", by Wang Jin shows that the COVID-19 vaccine has become an important diplomatic tool to expand China's influence in the Middle East. The chapter reports efforts and challenges in using vaccine as an international relations tool.

The long-term goal in putting this volume together has been to reflect on the sweeping social change in Gulf societies and to provide an assessment of its social, linguistic and cultural, economic, and political aspects. This volume aims to be comprehensive but is by no means all encompassing. Our goal is to offer the reader a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of social change in the region that cannot be grasped by adopting any one discipline or perspective alone. We hope that this volume will inspire academics in the region and beyond to carry this line of inquiry forward.

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