



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**American Civil Society and Democracy Promotion in the Arab Gulf States after 9\11: Strategies, Organizations, and Multisectoral Impact**

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**ABSTRACT**

As the American government placed a greater emphasis on the objective of advancing democratic values and awareness in the Arab world in the aftermath of 9/11, the private sector also became more focused on this front. Governmental and nongovernmental American organisations collaborated together. In what ways did American civil society and proponents of democracy contribute to the post-9/11 goal for democratic expansion and reform in Arab Gulf states? An attempt to address this question is made in this article. The paper discusses the methods used, the aims and objectives established, and the plans and strategies developed and implemented by American private sector and civic society. The awareness campaign and the research enterprise's role are dealt with. There is also discussion of the actions and endeavours undertaken in the fields of politics, education, and culture. The American nongovernmental sector played a considerable role in advancing women's empowerment, human rights, and media freedom.

**Keywords:** Arab Gulf States, Awareness Campaigns, Democracy Promoting Strategies, Democracy Promotion, Human Rights, Women Empowerment

**Introduction**

Following 9/11, the US government placed a greater focus on advancing democracy in the Arab world, and this in turn focused the attention of the US corporate sector on the objective of advancing democratic values and awareness in the area. Alongside them were U.S. nongovernmental organisations. It is incorrect, however, to say that American nongovernmental organisations were not actively promoting democracy in the Arab East prior to the events of September 11, 2001. The important thing to remember, though, is that both the volume and frequency of initiatives aimed at advancing democracy in the area significantly increased. The private American sector launched a plethora of organisations, institutions, and projects to support democracy in the Middle East.

The events of 9/11 not only sent shockwaves through the American government but also through the population at large. There was a general feeling of unease among Americans, which led to the mobilisation of American enterprises and NGOs to provide long-term, useful contributions to American security. The US government supplied the concrete policy and direction that were necessary for the mobilisation that followed the realisation that something needed to be done.

American civic society used a variety of tools to help the Middle East, especially the Gulf states, introduce democratic reforms. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states are among the Arab Gulf states that have benefited from the introduction of democratic values, norms, and institutions by a range of American organisations, institutions, and businesses. Naturally, NGOs were in the forefront. In addition, think tanks, lobbying organisations, colleges, online communities, corporations, and media outlets all had a part to play. The US government gave financial and non-financial support to a large number of NGOs.

Following 9/11, calls for democratic reforms and expansion in the Arab Gulf states were louder and more insistent. How did American civil society and proponents of democracy respond to these calls? This essay is an effort to answer that query. In the first section of the study, methods used, goals and objectives established, and strategies developed and implemented by American private sector and civil society are discussed. Propaganda and awareness campaigns are then addressed. The research enterprise's role is discussed later. The political, cultural, and educational domains' initiatives and activities are also covered. The study concludes with a discussion of the American nongovernmental sector's contributions to women's empowerment, human rights advancement, and media strength.

### **Literature Review**

Anwar Ibrahim (2006) investigates how western democratic ideals affect attempts to democratise the Muslim world and notes that authoritarian governments are stepping up their attacks against the advancement of democracy. An insight into the region's continuous democratisation process may be found in the annual reports *Civil Society and Democratisation in the Arab World*, which are produced by the Ibn Khaldun Centre for Development Studies (Egypt). The six countries under examination are among the approximately twenty countries covered by the reports. Piano and Puddington (2006) point out that the achievements made in the region in 2005 for freedom and democracy were the biggest since 1972.

A conflict of systems in the Middle East is revealed by Harvery, Sullivan, and Groves, with ramifications for US Middle East strategy. But they have overstated the strength and sway of Islamists in the area (Harvery, Sullivan, and Groves 2005). Former Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Sharansky, along with Dermer, talk about democracy in the Arab world and explain the importance of the international community—especially the United States—in this regard (Sharansky and Dermer 2004). Kamrava and Mora (1998) have conducted a comparative analysis of the democratisation processes in Latin America and the Middle East. Youngs (2005) examines the policies and practices of Western governments, MNCs, and NGOs in order to clarify the global aspects of democratisation. In order to combat the Islamists, Wright (1992) provides two options.

Government policies and programs are frequently altered as a result of NGO activity, and NGOs have the power to hold governments accountable for their pledges (Youngs 2005, 7). A broad swath of the American political elite may support democracy, as Neep noted in 2004. In fact, this dedication was crucial in mobilising support for the US government's vision of America's potential role in the world. According to the author, a national agreement on U.S. foreign policy can be achieved through democracy (Neep 2004). Levitsky and Way elucidate the importance that American educational institutions and civil society connections had in promoting democracy in Latin America. Top government positions are held by U.S.-educated technocrats throughout Latin America, who are frequently closely connected to academic and policy circles in North America (Levitsky and Way 2005, 28). The writers emphasise the consequences of authoritarian governments and societies being connected to the West during the post-Cold War era of democratisation. They conclude that nations with close relations to the West experienced democratisation more frequently (Levitsky and Way 2005, 33).

### **Material and Methods**

Both primary and secondary source materials form the basis of the investigation. Official documents and interviews are included in the primary source materials. In order to assess the condition of democracy in the Gulf States, especially in the wake of 9/11, which significantly altered global politics, the official documents were reviewed. Articles, books, handouts, and online resources pertinent to the subject, such as newspapers, journals, and

periodicals, are examples of secondary sources. The promotion of democratic values and norms in the Gulf region has been studied from various angles.

Because of variations in (a) financial reporting techniques and (b) dollar value estimation procedures, it was not possible to obtain absolute precision about quantities and conversions thereof. As such, the above numbers should only be interpreted as indications.

### **American Civil Society and Democracy Promotion after 9/11**

The following sections analyse the democracy-promoting actions taken by American civil society in the Arab Gulf states following 9/11. They cover plans, strategies, groups, initiatives, and awareness campaigns that helped bring about political, cultural, and educational reform as well as the advancement of media freedom, women's empowerment, and human rights.

#### **Approaches and Strategies**

Private sector organisations adopted different *approaches* than the US government did. Strategies were developed to liberalise and bring about democratic change. In order to instill democratic norms and principles in the local population, American educators and physicians were dispatched to the area. It was thought that keeping an eye on the current circumstances in the area was essential for making appropriate plans. Because a thorough study of the governments and civilisations was necessary, American academics, think tanks, and professional researchers produced a significant amount of research works.

The majority of these groups worked to advance liberal democratic values in an apolitical manner. Maybe this explains why the opponents claim that the NGOs focused on the consequences of autocracy rather than its existence. However, there were exceptions. For instance, Human Rights Watch publicly expressed political opinions. It denounced funders for supporting human rights organisations in developing nations with inadequate independence from governments that were either not democratic or only somewhat so (Youngs 2005, 153, 166).

The goal of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was to unite democratic activists from both autocratic and democratic nations into a democratic society (Carapico 2002, 384). The goal of the Network of Arab American Professionals (NAAP) is to establish professional and social networks among Arab-Americans in the US and abroad. Another area of focus for NAAP was advancing the political objectives of the Arab American community in the US. Establishing a network of experts from each Gulf nation was one of the main tasks of the Gulf/2000 Project.

To increase the effectiveness of their activities, a large number of the organisations formed alliances and worked together. In the Gulf countries, US non-governmental organisations collaborated with both the public and private sectors. The Gulf's think tanks and other private sector associations and organisations collaborated with the Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE). A wide range of *goals and objectives* were pursued by American civil society and nongovernmental organisations, such as raising awareness, reforming educational and religious institutions, liberalising the social, cultural, and economic spheres of society, fostering pluralism and participation in politics, advancing human rights, empowering women, and strengthening ties between politicians in the area.

The American organisations and businesses used a variety of *strategies and tools*, such as producing necessary information and offering fresh viewpoints; establishing blogs and websites; sending out email newsletters; advocacy; exchanges (trips, visits, tours, and business missions); developing networks; assisting democratic reformers; formulating and

presenting policy recommendations; co-education; providing funds; encouraging collaborations; and talk shows.

### **Organizations and Programs**

American nonprofit organisations of two categories played a part in the nongovernmental sector: (i) those that worked on multiple subjects, or those that concentrated on a particular issue, such as human rights, research, etc. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) falls into the first group, whereas Human Rights Watch (HRW) falls into the second. Jeremy lists the International Republican Institute (IRI), NED, and NDI as some of the top American groups promoting democracy in the Middle East (Sharp 2006, 8). However, IRI is not very active in the GCC nations. During the research period, numerous permanent organisations and programs were founded. With very few exceptions, the majority of these organisations are located in Washington, D.C. It would seem appropriate to provide a brief overview of the top private American organisations that promoted democracy in the Gulf region.

A private nonprofit organisation, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is most directly in charge of advancing democratisation (Alexander 2005, 156). Republicans and Democrats worked together to build the bipartisan organisation NED. It is committed to supporting the expansion of democratic institutions overseas, such as independent media, political parties, labour unions, free markets, and business associations, in addition to civic society and the rule of law. It contributes to fortifying the ties that bind American citizens to indigenous democracy movements around the world. It gives nonprofit organisations financial help. The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) seeks to build and fortify democratic institutions by encouraging civic and political organisations and citizen involvement. With funding from NED, NDI works with governments, political parties, parliaments, and civil associations.

The Gulf/2000 Project assists professionals with ties to the Gulf region, such as journalists, businesspeople, and academics. The Open Society Institute's Middle East and North Africa Initiative backs additional efforts to advance accountability, openness, women's liberation, freedom of speech, and the rule of law. For these objectives, the project offers funds and technical assistance. The Open Society Institute also launched the Democracy Coalition Project (DCP) in 2001. Through study and activism, the project seeks to improve democracy and human rights.

The Centre for Strategic and International Studies' (CSIS) Middle East Program focusses on important Middle Eastern nations. The Program also names Saudi Arabia as a crucial state in the area. Studies on Middle Eastern socio-political transformation are carried out. One of the program's goals is to establish collaborations between scholars and policy experts in the US and the Middle East.

In an effort to improve electoral performance and deepen democracy, the American University in Washington, D.C. founded the Centre for Democracy and Election Management (CDEM) in 2002. Election observation missions and training institutes for election management are organised by the centre.

### **Awareness Drive and the Research**

Chances for both established and emerging research-advocacy groups to enter the democracy broking market were being created by grant money from NED, the Ford Foundation, and other sources. The majority of them were nonprofit institutions supported by public funding (Carapico 2002, 383). The Gulf democracy awareness, advocacy, and propaganda effort involved two categories of private American organisations and institutions. The initial category of these groups endeavoured within the United States for

advocating for democratization in the Middle East. The latter group sought to disseminate and promote their views in global forums, as well as in the Middle East and Gulf region.

The Middle East Policy Council (MEPC), the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations (NCUSAR), and Americans for Middle East Understanding (AMEU) are among the organisations that fit into the first group. The goal of AMEU was to foster a greater understanding of Middle Eastern history, culture, and current events in the United States. The goals of MEPC and NCUSAR were to increase American awareness and comprehension of the Middle East and the Arab world. Arab democracy was promoted in the US by the Arab American Institute (AAI) and the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED). POMED worked to change US policy in order to facilitate long-term, real democratic change in the Middle East in a nonviolent manner. Arab Americans were encouraged by AAI to vote in US elections.

The second group of international organisations includes the Saudi-U.S. Forum (SAF) and the U.S.-Saudi Arabian Strategic Dialogue (SUSRIS). These two organisations offer tools and information that help the people of Saudi Arabia and the United States understand one another better. The Democracy Coalition Project (DCP), Project on Middle East Democracy and Development (MEDD), and other organisations of a similar nature also conduct initiatives on a global scale. DCP advocates for an ongoing United Nations Democracy Caucus. The MEDD deepens our understanding of political and economic reform strategies.

To accomplish the aforementioned goals, these institutions and organisations used a variety of techniques and instruments. AAI, POMED, and DCP all had advocacy agendas in addition to other tactics. Roundtables, conversations, and recurring gatherings were arranged by SUSRIS, POMED, and DCP. Apart from their various endeavours, AMEU and NCUSAR introduced educational initiatives. AAI, DCP, and POMED carried out research in addition to other tasks. Bi-monthly *The link* is published by AAI. In order to disseminate information, SAF keeps an informational website and emails its subscribers.

In addition to advocating for improved human rights in Saudi Arabia, CDHR is primarily focused on democratic transformation. It has released guiding ideas for the blueprint of a transnational Saudi Arabian democratic constitution as part of its campaign. The guiding concepts of the rules include limited terms of public office, restricted mandates, universal suffrage, equitable political representation, and free and fair elections.

Reported were high-profile visitors as well. For instance, former US President Jimmy Carter visited Saudi Arabia in 2008 and backed the nation's political reforms. Exchanges of ideas across academic, educational, business, and cultural domains played a crucial role in advancing democratic transformation in the Gulf. The Gulf/2000 Project organised ten international conferences, three of which took place in the Gulf nations. A conference titled "Borders, Battles, and Cultural Bonds: A Historical and Political Perspective on Gulf Societies" was organised by the Gulf/2000 Project and took place at the University of Pennsylvania in 2005. In 2001, a group of twenty graduate students from the University of Maryland College Park and twenty Middle Eastern Fulbright grantees attended an AMIDEAST colloquium on U.S.-Arab relations. The colloquium was held at the University of Maryland University College.

The Rockefeller Foundation hosted a symposium on Saudi-Arab-American ties in 2003. There was a discussion between about twenty Saudis and Americans. An attorney, a state official, and two Shura Council members represented Saudi Arabia at the event. King Saud University produced four Saudi delegates: one from each of the following departments: political science, sociology, education, and social studies. Effat College and King Saud University were represented by female members of the Saudi delegation (Chanin and Gause III 2004). A former ambassador to Saudi Arabia and an attorney were among the American

delegates. Johns Hopkins University of Chicago and other four American universities were represented. Additionally, represented were the Centre for Strategic and International Studies and Yale Law School. This was the first of several conferences. The next took place in 2004. Year 2006 saw participation from about 10 American organisations and institutions at the Sixth International Conference on New or Restored Democracies in Doha, Qatar, including Democracy Coalition Project and International Studies Association.

The Gulf Roundtable Series was started in 2007 by the CSIS Middle East Program as a monthly way to examine political, social, and economic developments in the Gulf. Finding chances for constructive U.S. engagement was the series' main objective. Kuwaiti and Bahraini citizens also took part in the 2004 Congress of Democrats from the Islamic World (CDIW), which was organised by NDI and held in Turkey. The chief editor of *Al-Watan Daily* (Kuwait) outlined the challenges the nation's democratic process is facing. The congress made the decision to form a coalition of Muslim democratic political parties. The Congress brazenly told the politicians and media that "Islam and democracy are compatible" (National Democratic Institute 2004).

In 2007, a paper at the NAAP National Conference on promoting discussion and action in Arab feminism was presented. A panel discussing political reforms in Saudi Arabia was organised in 2003 by *The News Republic*, a weekly magazine published in the United States. In 2008, Tamara Cofman Wittes spoke at a Brookings event sponsored by the Saban Centre for Middle East Policy about the American role in fostering Arab democracy. In conjunction with the release of the speaker's book, *Freedom's Unsteady March* (Wittes 2008), a conversation was planned.

The American organisations took it upon themselves to gather, compile, record, and disseminate information on various facets of the states and society in the Gulf countries in the absence of local organisations. Massive amounts of information were produced by newswires, digests, blogs, and bulletins, which helped draw attention to the political and human rights situations in the area. One of these is the Carnegie Endowment's monthly online magazine, the *Arab Reform Bulletin*. The Transatlantic Democracy Network publishes weekly *Democracy Digest*, which is run by the NED. Transatlantic Democracy Network is a collaborative effort between Freedom House and the Washington, D.C.-based World Movement for Democracy. In addition to running a blog and a Facebook page, CDHR sends out a biweekly email to over 5,000 people worldwide. NCUSAR publishes *Gulf Wire Digest*, and the Council also runs the website [arabialink.com](http://arabialink.com). The American International Health Council (AIHC) assisted doctors and medical students in locating employment and research opportunities in the US.

The American media and think tanks provided the region's reformers with more *research* to assist them map out their plans of action and strategies. Books and papers have been written about the topic. U.S. research institutes have been crucial in assisting activists, implementers, and proponents of democracy in comprehending the reality on the ground. Additionally, new research institutes with an emphasis on the Gulf area were founded. The Saban Centre for Middle East Policy, located in Washington, was established in 2002. Within the Gulf, the Brookings Doha Centre was founded in Qatar in 2008. Both are initiatives of the Brookings, and the Saban Centre houses the Brookings Doha Centre. An American investor gave the initial amount for the Saban Center's establishment and also promised additional funds.

While the Saban Centre studies ways to advance a better knowledge of the policy options that American decision makers in the Middle East face, the Doha Centre studies geopolitical and socioeconomic challenges in the Gulf. The Doha Centre attempts to close the divide between American policy makers and Muslims living in the Gulf region through its research endeavours. It is relevant to give a brief overview of some of the other institutions that have studied this topic and similar ones.

One of the renowned organisations focussing on the Middle East is the Middle East Institute. In addition to teaching students about the history and culture of the Middle East, the Institute produces the *Middle East Journal* and maintains a reputable library with an extensive collection of primary sources. The Centre for Islam and Democracy (CSID), which is based in Washington, is dedicated to studying democracy, Islamic political philosophy, and contemporary Islamic viewpoints on democracy. The Centre for Strategic and International Studies' (CSIS) Middle East Program conducts research, analyses data, and develops policy initiatives while keeping in mind the dynamics of future development. The CSIS Middle East Program carries out studies on how the economies and geopolitics of the Gulf states are evolving. The curriculum fosters awareness of the difficulties the area faces as well as the opportunities that are emerging.

The Middle East Policy Council (MEPC), based in Washington, is dedicated to advancing knowledge of and discourse about U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and associated areas. In addition to addressing challenges facing the Gulf region as a whole, *Middle East Policy* publishes research papers on issues pertaining to specific Gulf nations. Regional issues were covered in studies such as "Democratisation in the Gulf Monarchies," "The Gulf Sovereign Wealth Funds," "Measuring the Democracy Gap," "Arab Women's Development," "Democracy in the Arab Region," "Dilemmas of Democratisation in the Middle East," and "The 2002 Arab Human Development Report: Implications for Democracy." The Middle East Policy featured several articles with a more regional focus, such as "A Vision of Oman," "The Politics of Succession in Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates," and "Oman's Progress towards Participatory Government."

The Middle East Institute's Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre (SQCC), established in 2005, carries out studies on Gulf culture. The centre hosts cultural events that bring together artists from the Gulf and the United States as well as outreach projects. Analysts at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace stress the necessity of Arab political reform. Its Carnegie Middle East Centre, located in Beirut and founded in 2006, specialises in political and economic changes within the Arab world. Its goal is to improve knowledge of the political systems of the Arab world. Studies on Bahrain's political reform experiments, Kuwait's transformation, Oman's political liberalisation, Qatar's growing domestic political participation, Saudi Arabia's potential for political reform, and the United Arab Emirates' continuous liberalisation were carried out by Carnegie experts.

The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs (WRMEA) examines changes in the Middle East and US foreign policy there, focussing on topics including Gulf countries' election processes and educational modernisation (Hanley 2005; 2007). Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) offers translations of news stories and analysis from Middle Eastern Arabic and other media to help with language barriers. The institute also examines regional political, social, and cultural trends. The *Middle East Report* is the primary undertaking of the Washington-based, nonprofit, nongovernmental Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP). The report examines events and trends in the Middle East and provides news and insights on the region.

The Saudi Arabian Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDHR) carries out studies on subjects including women's empowerment, religious tolerance, and human rights. The Centre offers insightful analyses and interpretations of current affairs as well as develops and puts into effect policies for Saudi Arabia. The Arab transformation Initiative is centred on organising the Arab scholarly community to establish a program for democratic transformation in the Arab countries. Through the provision of policy proposals, it seeks to further democratic reform. In addition to producing nation studies and policy papers, the project sponsors task forces, arranges training sessions, and conducts polls. An alliance of research institutes, centres, and programs that study democracy and democratisation is called the Network of Democracy Research Institutes (NDRI) of the NED. The network

includes Gulf Research Centre in Dubai as a member. There are over 80 international institutes total among the members.

Among the periodicals that made significant contributions to the topic following 9/11, *The Journal of Democracy* can be considered the most prominent. Some of its articles provided explanations of Saudi Arabia's democratic uprisings (Herb 2002; Seznec 2002). Saad Eddin Ibrahim (2007) and Vali Nasr (2005) published papers in the journal that emphasised the "Muslim" aspect of democracy. Co-authors Alfred Stepan and Graeme B. Robertson (2003) wrote about the "Arab" and "Muslim" facets of "exceptionalism" and the "electoral gap." Sanford Lakoff (2004) offered another study on Muslim exceptionalism.

Piano and Arch Puddington (Puddington 2007; Piano and Puddington 2006) emphasised the ups and downs of democracy in the Arab Middle East, based on polls carried out by Freedom House in 2005 and 2006. The democratic divide was explained by Adrian Karatnycky (Karatnycky 2002) in relation to the Freedom House Survey conducted in 2001. Mark Tessler attempted to assess Arab perceptions of democracy in cooperation with Jamal and Gao (Jamal and Tessler 2008; Tessler and Gao 2005). A historical perspective was used by Thomas Carothers and others to examine democratic promotion (Carothers et al. 2007).

In the eight years from 2000 to 2008, the *Middle East Journal* published 31 articles on the region (averaging 3.9 items annually), compared to the approximately 52 years from 1947 to 1999, when the newspaper produced 75 items (averaging 1.4 items annually) on the Gulf. Compared to the preceding period, the average increased by approximately three times. The *Middle East Journal* published papers that discussed a range of themes pertaining to democracy in the region. "Arab Intellectuals and the Bush Administration's Campaign for Democracy," "Democracy, "Arab Exceptionalism," and Social Science," "Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World," "The Nature of Succession in the Gulf," and "Princes and Parliaments in the Arab World" are a few examples of papers that addressed the topic at the regional level (Harik 2006; Carapico 2002; Peterson 2001; Herb 2004; Baroudi 2007). "Kuwait's Democratic Experiment in its Broader International Context" and "Between Islamists and Liberals: Saudi Arabia's New "Islam Liberal" Reformists" were two of the articles discussing the topic at the state level (Yetiv 2002; Lacroix 2004).

The Middle East Policy Council's *Journal of Democracy and Society* and *Middle East Policy* have both produced in-depth articles on the democratisation of the Gulf. Research articles on subjects like media portrayals of Arabs and organising Arab-American professionals were published in the *Arab Studies Quarterly (ASQ)* (Jreisat 2007; Salaita 2008). Eastern Michigan University (EMU), located in Michigan, USA, founded *ASQ*. For the purpose of publishing 40 pieces from the region, SFCG received a grant of 63,000 dollars from the NED in 2008.

### **Politics, Culture, and Education**

Activities of several types were carried out for *political* reforms. For example, NDI worked with youth, students, and journalists, but it focused mostly on political societies and municipal councils. Programs were organised by the NDI with the goal of establishing the Gulf Municipal Councils Association. The NDI also worked to institutionalise the yearly conference of the Gulf municipalities. Enabling municipal officials to become better organised and have more influence over the GCC political system was the aim of these endeavours. It was predicated on the idea that regional institutions would have a bigger influence if they pooled their resources, knowledge, and power. At the leaders of the GCC's request, the NDI offered technical support for the establishment of the Gulf Municipal Councils Association. The GCC ministerial committee authorised an annual meeting for Gulf municipalities in 2005. Thus, the NDI's efforts to achieve this goal were successful.



In 2005, the NDI organised a conference to help Saudis modernise their political system. The Nuwab Council of Bahrain approved a suggested alternative law that was draughted with assistance from the NDI in 2005. The NDI arranged for a party of Saudi municipal councillors to travel to Spain in 2007 in order to research that nation's municipal structure. Prior to the 2006 and 2007 elections in Kuwait and Qatar, respectively, the NDI organised training sessions with an emphasis on media message development, election campaigns, and communication tactics. The goal of the 2006 talks between the NDI and the Qatari government and civil society was to explore new avenues for democratic growth. Election monitors and observers received training from the Kuwait Transparency Society (KTS) and the NDI. The NDI also promoted youth voting and made use of social media and the internet to do this. A CDEM team made a thorough tour throughout the Gulf in 2006 to assess the training requirements. Together with the Qatari Permanent Elections Committee (PEC), the NDI initiated a 13-month initiative in 2007 to inform Qataris about their electoral system and to motivate them to cast ballots and participate in elections. During the event, training was also provided for PEC volunteers and staff. The attendees received education on topics such as the role and responsibilities of the Shura Council.

The *cultural sector* was, in actuality, given less attention. Almost no direct government initiatives aimed at changing the indigenous cultures in the Gulf were observed during the investigation. In a similar vein, very few American NGOs were discovered to be engaged in cultural sector operations during the data collection. Nonetheless, the business sector did cooperate and make investments in the cultural sector, albeit to a limited degree. Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, which offers international art exhibitions and educational initiatives, was established in 2006 by the Guggenheim Foundation in New York. The New York Film Academy announced in 2007 that it was opening a branch in Abu Dhabi (NYFA-Abu Dhabi). It was a significant step towards becoming Abu Dhabi the Gulf region's hub for cinema and television. Its faculty comprises professionals from throughout the globe. The courses offered follow the same curriculum as the New York Film Academy's other sites.

In an effort to raise awareness of swimming sports in the Gulf, the American Swimming Coaches Association (ASCA) and the UAE Swimming Association introduced a campaign in 2007. The sport of swimming has not been good in the United Arab Emirates. However, a significant change was anticipated as a result of this campaign. General Secretary of the Dubai Sports Council (DSC), Ahmad Sa'ad Al Sharif, made a statement. Founded by a number of American organisations, including the Ford Foundation and the Open Society Institute, the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) is officially recognised as a Swiss Foundation. Its 2004 inception was intended to support Arab nations' freedom of creative expression. Additionally, the region's economy is liberalised by its policies. Among the Fund's goals are promoting cultural interactions and supporting cultural research.

Teune describes how, in various regions of the world, *educational institutions* serve as catalysts for socio-political change. The involvement of creative institutions in the existing democracies will be necessary to support the worldwide development of democracy. The opportunities are found in a dynamic group of colleges and other educational establishments with an eye towards the global community, connections to regional communities globally, and an open door policy for students from all over the world. These institutions are critical to the near future of global democracy (Teune 2002, 33). The American institutions' campuses and programs in the Gulf contribute to the spread of democracy in the area. Students that travel to the US for schooling also experience the democratic system and culture. Compared to their countrymen, they are more inclined to act democratically once they are returned. For example, all four of the women elected in Kuwait's 2008 parliamentary elections earned their PhDs in the United States.

In the Gulf region, numerous American colleges and universities built campuses or started offering degree and certificate programs in the Arab Gulf states engaging students almost at every level: school, college, and university. At least some of the faculty at these

universities comes from the US, primarily from their major campuses spread throughout several US cities. The main campuses of these universities are located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Carnegie Mellon University, Qatar), Evanston, Illinois (Northwestern University (NU) Qatar), Rochester, New York (Rochester Institute of Technology, Dubai), Old Westbury, New York (New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) Abu Dhabi), Greenwich Village, New York (New York University, Abu Dhabi), and Washington, D.C. (American University of Kuwait). In the American colleges and universities in the Gulf states, the faculty is likewise extremely qualified. For instance, 50 percent of the undergraduate faculty members at American University of Kuwait held doctorates. These schools assert that the curricula and educational standards they provide are the same or exact as those provided by their US head offices.

English is the medium of instruction, and the classes are open to all genders. These American institutions support democracy and liberalism as core principles. For instance, New York University supports academic freedom and invites students to question established information, ideologies, and cultural norms. Like others, the AUK seeks to develop leaders while fostering critical thinking and the freedom to pursue intellectual study. The development of human capital in the Gulf area is the goal of RIT Dubai. Both male and female students can participate in sports at several of the colleges. There are male and female sports facilities at New York University. The goal of Carnegie Mellon University Qatar is to develop students' leadership skills while bridging traditional disciplinary divides.

The Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, Abu Dhabi, was established with assistance from starting in 2006. Masdar Institute, established by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Abu Dhabi in 2006, aims at contributing to sustainable human development. Potential faculty members of the Masdar Institute undergo scholarly review by the MIT. The full-time Masdar Institute faculty members collaborate with the MIT faculty for a year while they are in Cambridge. The Harvard Medical School Dubai Centre seeks to advance the careers of those working in the medical and health sectors. The faculty of Hopkins' Bloomberg School of Public Health, located in Baltimore, Maryland, also provided assistance to the UAE government in the establishment of a doctorate program in public health there.

American-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST), a Washington-based company, operates field offices in the region. In addition to managing academic exchange programs, it offers educational counselling and English language instruction in these nations. It also oversaw the country's Military Language Institute. Officers and staff in the military can receive language training from this institute. AMIDEAST maintains registration offices for its virtual courses in several states in the region.

### **Human Rights, Media, and Women's Empowerment**

The American nongovernmental sector supported visits, workshops, and trainings aimed at bolstering the Gulf's *media* and advancing freedom of expression. One of the top organisations in this area was the NDI. For instance, it facilitated a roundtable conversation for journalists employed by Qatari Arabic-language media. Understanding the lessons from the coverage of the past elections was the aim of the discussion. Search for Common Ground (SFCG), with its headquarters located in Washington, D.C., arranged a five-day training program for Al Jazeera Qatar's producers, news anchors, and directors. A focus on discussing show production was placed. Online writers and journalists from the Gulf participated in another training with American media professionals. The main goal was to investigate how new media platforms affect public discourse. A senior news editor for the online publication *Huffington Post* provided an explanation of the newspaper's function during the US elections of 2008 (Fatany 2009).

In 2008, National Geographic Entertainment committed one hundred million dollars to produce ten to fifteen films in partnership with Imagination Abu Dhabi. This project also involved National Geographic Films and National Geographic Cinema Ventures. Under the NDI's sponsorship program, a group of Saudi journalists travelled to the US. Meetings and conversations were held by the delegation with reporters from prominent American newspapers. During the visit, they received training in media ethics and political reporting. The journalists and US NGOs also talked about the situation of free speech in Saudi Arabia. The CDHR promoted unrestricted information access for Saudi nationals.

The American government did not place as much emphasis on *human rights* and *women's empowerment* in the Gulf region as the nongovernmental sector did. The Gulf and Middle East Association for Civil Society (GMEACS) received an 87,000 USD grant from the NED in 2008 to establish and furnish a London coordination office and to introduce a trilingual website about human rights abuses in the Gulf states. The Bahrain Human Rights Society (BHRS) was awarded 36,000 US dollars by the NED that same year for civil rights and democratic principles seminars and workshops. Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented mistreatment of domestic workers (Human Rights Watch 2007). In a 2007 policy paper titled "The UAE's Draft Labour Law: Comments and Recommendations," the HRW offered recommendations about labour regulations in the United Arab Emirates.

The Carter Center's Human Rights Program offers assistance to those who have been abused in their human rights. The CDHR has consistently brought attention to Saudi Arabia's violations of human rights and offered assessments of the current state of affairs in the target nation. HRW supports democratisation initiatives in the Gulf states. During his 2008 tour to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait, American academic George E. Edwards discussed the legal aspects of human rights with key individuals and government officials. He gave an explanation of American legal education throughout the tour.

Numerous projects for the empowerment of women were implemented in the Gulf countries by civil society organisations in the United States. Month-long study and training initiatives were started in the Gulf states and the United States. Focus group discussions were conducted in order to shed light on and comprehend the dynamics surrounding women's empowerment concerns. The NED provided a \$20,400 grant for the promotion of women rights in Bahrain in 2008. The NDI helped a core group of female journalists in Saudi Arabia create a network. A portion of the NDI's initiatives were aimed at assisting women in navigating the difficulties and seizing growing opportunities presented by Kuwait's introduction of electoral politics. The NDI also organised a thorough voter education effort to inform Kuwaiti women of their right to vote.

In Kuwait, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) provided female campaigners lobbying resources. Following the formal declaration that Kuwaiti women would soon be able to vote and run for government, it held its fourth Partners in Participation Regional Campaign School. Over seventy women activists attended the Campaign School, thirty of whom were from Kuwait. The goal of the trainings was to teach the participants how to launch effective campaigns. Prior to Kuwait's 2006 elections, the NDI arranged a one-month training session specifically for female candidates. A number of one-on-one meetings were held between eighteen of the thirty-two female candidates and elected women from other Arab nations. The female contenders also conferred with members of the press and campaign consultants. The show concentrated on candidate image, media strategy, fundraising, and voter outreach. Additionally, the female candidates received training in crafting speeches and campaign slogans.

Following Kuwait's 2006 elections, the NDI held a number of focus group sessions. Understanding the elements influencing voters' political decisions was the goal. Another objective of the talks was to comprehend Kuwaiti women's role in democratic politics. As part of its civil society programming, the NDI partnered with Kuwait Transparency Society

(KTS) and worked to build the capacity of Gulf-wide civil society organisations so they could contribute significantly to the reforms.

Senior military officials far too frequently sent to their Gulf counterparts strongly worded messages about reform, but at the mid- and junior-level, this focus was undermined or weakened by the necessity of preserving "friendly" working relations (Wehrey 2014, 5–6).

## Conclusion

Regarding the democratisation of the Gulf countries, American voluntary organisations and civil society sought a diverse range of goals and objectives. Raising awareness, reforming religious and educational institutions, liberalising the social, cultural, and economic spheres of society, democratising politics, empowering women, advancing human rights, and strengthening ties between politicians in the area were some of their aims and objectives. American civil society organisations and businesses used a variety of instruments to achieve the above-mentioned goals.

In addition to other methods, the DCP, POMED, and AAI have advocacy objectives. There were roundtables, discussions, and recurring meetings with the SUSRIS, POMED, and DCP. Apart from their various endeavours, AMEU and NCUSAR introduced educational initiatives. AAI, DCP, and POMED carried out research in addition to other tasks. The bimonthly *The Link* is also published by the AAI. In addition to emailing subscribers, the SAF keeps an informational website.

The reformers in the area were able to more effectively map out their plans and courses of action thanks to the many study projects undertaken by American think tanks, authors, and media outlets. Books and papers have been written about the topic. Study missions, conferences, seminars, training sessions, and workshops were all centred around the political sector. In this sector, the NDI and CDEM were more active than other organisations. While the NDI engaged in youth, student, and journalistic activities, it focused primarily on political societies and municipal councils.

The private sector did work with and invest in the cultural sector, albeit to a limited degree. Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, which offers international art exhibitions and educational initiatives, was established in 2006 by the Guggenheim Foundation in New York. The New York Film Academy (NYFA-Abu Dhabi) announced in 2007 that it was opening a branch in Abu Dhabi. It was a significant step towards becoming Abu Dhabi the Gulf region's hub for cinema and television. Its faculty comprises professionals from throughout the globe. The courses offered follow the same curriculum as the New York Film Academy's other sites.

The American institutions' campuses and programs in the Gulf contribute to the spread of democracy in the area. In the Gulf region, numerous American colleges and universities built campuses or started offering degree and certificate programs. At least some of the faculty at these universities comes from the US, primarily from their major campuses spread throughout several US cities. English is the medium of instruction, and the classes are open to both genders. These American institutions support democracy and liberalism as core principles.

The American nongovernmental sector supported visits, workshops, and trainings aimed at bolstering the Gulf's media and advancing freedom of expression. One of the top organisations in this area was the NDI. For instance, it facilitated a roundtable conversation for journalists employed by Qatari Arabic-language media. Understanding the lessons from the coverage of the past elections was the aim of the discussion. Search for Common Ground (SFCG), with its headquarters located in Washington, D.C., arranged a five-day training program for Al Jazeera Qatar's producers, news anchors, and directors.

The American government did not place as much emphasis on women's empowerment and human rights in the Gulf region as the nongovernmental sector did. The Gulf and Middle East Association for Civil Society (GMEACS) received an 87,000 USD grant from the NED in 2008 to establish and furnish a London coordination office, introduce a trilingual website on human rights abuses in Gulf nations, and other related activities. The American groups implemented a range of initiatives aimed at empowering women. Both in the Gulf countries and the United States, study and training programs were initiated. The courses took place over several months. Focus group discussions were conducted in order to comprehend the dynamics surrounding women's empowerment concerns.

### **Recommendations**

The Arab world, especially the Gulf area, needs to see more democratic reforms pushed by the more developed democracies. Linking up with networks that support democracy in the US and other developed democracies can be advantageous for democratic reformers in authoritarian states and transitional democracies like Pakistan. The techniques and resources covered in this study can be put into practice by democracy campaigners, especially those in the states of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, provided they are adjusted to fit their specific social and political contexts.

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