

PDGP | **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY &
GLOBAL POLICYMAKING
IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

The 2012 Qatar Colloquium:

Findings from the
Student-led Public Diplomacy Program

James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy
Rice University

in partnership with the
Qatar Foundation



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The 2012 Qatar Colloquium: Findings from the Student-led Public Diplomacy Program

A Special Report by the Public Diplomacy and Global Policymaking in the
21st Century Program

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Contents

Executive Summary, 7

Introduction, 9

Monica Matsumoto

The Role of Cultural Conceptions and Media in Social Life and Gender Roles, 15

Nathan Lo and Sevita Rama

Religion, Secularism, and Interfaith Dialogue, 23

Iman Kassir and Joe Pullano

International Collaboration through Science Diplomacy, 31

Kareem Ayoub and Rohini Sigireddi

Knowledge-based Economies in a Globalizing World, 37

Andrew Amis and Neeraj Salhotra

Democracy: Spread, Evolution, and Comparative Study, 43

David Liou and Tara Slough

Colloquium Conclusions, 49

PDGP Delegation, 53

Acknowledgments, 57

Executive Summary

The 2012 Public Diplomacy and Global Policymaking (PDGP) colloquium was the third undergraduate exchange of the PDGP initiative. The PDGP program was established by a group of Rice University undergraduates in 2010 to promote student engagement on a global level, especially between students in the United States and Middle East. More specifically, the PDGP program seeks to provide university students with an opportunity to engage in international policy debates as a way of promoting mutual understanding and gaining personal experience in cross-cultural communication and collaboration.

The 2012 PDGP colloquium took place in Education City in Doha, Qatar, the product of collaboration between Rice University's Baker Institute and the Qatar Foundation. The four-day event included six, one-and-a-half-hour discussions led by Rice and Qatari student delegations, on topics from the role of social media in the Arab Awakening to the realization of science diplomacy. Outside of these formal discussions, the Rice students were able to spend time with the Qatari students, visit cultural sites in Doha such as the Museum of Islamic Art, and tour Education City and Al Jazeera headquarters.

This report is a synthesis of preliminary research conducted by the students, through a Baker Institute course titled "Public Diplomacy in Qatar," as well as discussions from the colloquium, with insights from both formal and informal settings of the conference. The paper includes summaries of the colloquium discussions, as well as broad policy suggestions and goals agreed upon by both groups. Significant variations in opinions were present both within and between the student groups, creating a forum conducive for lively and interesting debate. With that in mind, the views expressed in this report may not reflect the opinions of all of the colloquium participants, the Baker Institute, or the Qatar Foundation.

Overall, members of the Rice delegation have found that the opportunity to engage in public diplomacy international debates on a diversity of subjects, provided by the 2012 PDGP colloquium, was unparalleled in their undergraduate education, and extremely fruitful both personally and educationally. This report aims to communicate what was learned through the conference and demonstrate the potential for citizen diplomacy, even at the student level. Some salient conclusions gathered from these discussions were the importance of communication between people of different nations, the critical role of education, and the unique abilities of nongovernmental organizations. The PDGP program hopes to continue to promote this effort to engage internationally to promote mutual understanding and prepare students for future leadership.

Introduction

by Monica Matsumoto

Middle Eastern and Northern African nations have caught the world's attention for the past year and a half—not for reports of violence or war, but for uprisings against tyranny and the struggle for more democratic governance. The change within the region originated among the nation's people, not from foreign intervention. According to The Honorable Edward P. Djerejian, former U.S. ambassador to Syria and to Israel and founding director of Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, even countries that have not experienced these revolutions are “watching a tectonic shift in the region's political landscape” (Djerejian 2012). These changes emphasize the importance of public diplomacy and ongoing dialogue with Arab nations when shaping U.S. foreign policy.

Public Diplomacy is Critical for Improved Foreign Relations

The Arab Awakening, which refers to the series of popular, antigovernmental uprisings in the Middle East starting with Tunisia in December 2010, continues to develop in ways that are impossible to predict, simultaneously making it difficult for other countries to act and necessitating the bolstering of international relationships. With distrust and low favorability of the U.S. government reaching shocking levels in the Arab world, public diplomacy is becoming an increasingly more effective way for reaching out to individuals and populations in the region during a time when the opinions of Arab populations can no longer be ignored.

Public diplomacy, as understood by Djerejian, is a form of cross-cultural interaction that manifests when the United States begins to “listen and understand, and then inform, engage, and influence” its foreign counterparts to promote mutual understanding and respect, whether it be in a spontaneous or deliberate manner (Djerejian 2012). In other words, public diplomacy requires that in order for the United States “to engage the world effectively, we must understand it” (Lord 2008). Thus, we must gain a better grasp of the cultures, core values, methods of communication, and other societal traditions of people around the world. An emerging facet of public diplomacy is “overnight public diplomacy,” which has been shaped by the rise of social media and instantaneous access to information globally, is quickly becoming more crucial, and allows individual citizens to help shape foreign policy (Djerejian 2012). Thus, public diplomacy must become intertwined with formal diplomacy to become the basis for establishing foreign relationships to solve shared problems.

Thus, there is clearly a need for public diplomacy in the formation of foreign policy. This notion was one of the original inspirations for the inaugural Public Diplomacy and Global Policymaking (PDGP) colloquium in Cairo and resonated in President Barack Obama's speech, "A New Beginning," at Cairo University in June 2009. Obama encapsulated the idea of public diplomacy perfectly with the assertion that "there must be a sustained effort to listen to each other; to learn from each other; to respect one another; and to seek common ground" (Obama 2009).

Public Diplomacy and Global Policymaking in the 21st Century

In his speech at Cairo University, Obama referred to a "new beginning" in the United States' approach to foreign relations. To imagine that this beginning could be a single moment in time at which all countries suddenly agree and collaborate would be highly impractical. Rather, we must approach this beginning through a process in which countries begin to understand one another and begin to work together to address global issues. This is a process that is critical for the improvement of the relationship between the United States and Arab world, two regions that are often at odds due to cultural misunderstandings. Through the PDGP program, we are seeking to promote this new start from an apolitical standpoint, as citizen diplomats.

The mission of the PDGP program is to mentor today's students to become tomorrow's leaders by promoting mutual understanding with students of different nationalities and ethnicities and inspiring a commitment to effect constructive change. In essence, this program provides the opportunity for students to act as citizen diplomats and gain firsthand experience in developing dialogue with our counterparts about politically and socially relevant topics. The PDGP program also encourages local cultural engagement and exchange with the hope that participants will use what they have learned abroad to engage their own communities. Student exchanges such as the PDGP program can be mutually beneficial because they allow both delegations to see and understand the similarities and differences, instead of merely regarding each other as "the other" (Brookings 2008).

Why the Middle East?

In addition to inspiration drawn from Obama's inspirational speech in Cairo and our close work with Djerejian, who has tremendous experience with the region, the impetus for engaging with the Middle East came from its location outside the normal radar of student exchange programs. The percentage of U.S. university students studying abroad in the Middle East has declined over the past 30 years. In contrast to most other destinations worldwide, in 2007-08, only 1 percent of students chose the Middle East as their destination, compared to 5 percent in 1987-88 (Aud et al. 2010, 118). These findings are troubling, as many Middle Eastern cities, such as Cairo—and more recently, Doha—have institutions that are capable of supporting study abroad programs, such as the PDGP program.

The Middle East was also chosen as the location for the PDGP colloquium as improved relations with the region are key to successful U.S. foreign policy and global policymaking initiatives. The Middle East is becoming more important to the United States strategically as we increasingly rely on the region for fossil fuels. As the events of the Arab Awakening have corroborated, the relationship cannot remain solely economically or militarily based. A 2011 Zogby International poll conducted across six countries in the region showed that a majority (59 percent) of Arabs has an unfavorable view of the United States, mostly based on the political decisions of our government (Telhami 2011). Such a negative view is inhibiting the success of U.S. foreign policy and other global initiatives.

PDGP at Rice University

Rice University undergraduates founded the PDGP program in 2010 with support from the Baker Institute, with the goal of bridging the communication gap with their undergraduate student counterparts in the Middle East. The first PDGP exchange took place in June 2010, with a three-day colloquium held at The American University in Cairo (AUC). This colloquium included participants from Rice and the AUC and resulted in the publication *Report from the Cairo Colloquium: Lessons Learned from a Student-led Diplomacy Program and Recommendations for the Future* (PDGP 2010). The following year, Rice hosted the AUC delegation in an exchange that included an Egyptian film festival at the Baker Institute, guest lectures, and roundtable discussions.

In 2012, the program continued with a four-day student colloquium (February 27–March 1) at Education City in Doha, Qatar. Qatar was chosen due to its remarkably quick rise to international prominence, both politically and economically. Qatar, through its National Vision 2030, has outlined its ambitious developmental goals to become a global center for innovation and ideas over the next couple of decades. The vision also outlines the commitment to the “intensification of cultural exchange ... and sponsorship and support of dialogue among civilizations” (Qatar National Vision 2030 2008). These dramatic changes and bold plans made Qatar an attractive destination for the PDGP program. Additionally, Qatar offers vast potential for a long-term engagement with students in Qatari universities, as the country continues to grow in size and prominence. Furthermore, after the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak and the ongoing political uncertainty in Egypt made Cairo a more challenging destination for a student colloquium, Qatar was an ideal location for continuation of the PDGP program because of its political and economic stability.

A relationship with Qatari officials was established through a preexisting Qatari connection within the Baker Institute International Stem Cell Policy Program, which is generously endowed by the Amir and the State of Qatar. The PDGP colloquium was contemporaneous with the 2012 International Conference on Stem Cell Science and Research, which was organized jointly by the Qatar Foundation and the Baker Institute Science and Technology Policy Program. Although the conference focused specifically on stem cells, many of its objectives were in line with the ideals of public diplomacy, and included sentiments such as the call for people to begin “contributing to the exchange of scientific knowledge to

enhance the promotion of a scientific culture in the region and globally.” Students were thus able to attend a few panel discussions to see another example of public diplomacy in action (Qatar Foundation 2012).

Qatar: From Migratory Tribes to an International Leader

Qatar has rapidly risen from a collection of small farming villages to an economic powerhouse and, as described by Djerejian, a “dynamo of Arab foreign policy activism” (Djerejian 2012). This small country on the Arabian Peninsula, consisting of about 350,000 citizens, only gained independence in 1971 from the United Kingdom (CIA World Factbook 2012). Despite the country’s humble beginnings and small population, the leadership of the Al-Thani family, combined with the country’s extensive natural energy resources, have propelled the constitutional monarchy to the forefront of the Middle East. Qatar won the bid to host the football World Cup in 2022 and was a candidate for the 2020 Summer Olympics. This reflects the broader national goals to develop into an advanced, sustainable, and prosperous society.

The Al-Thani family began its rule in the late 19th century when Qatar began to assert its independence from Bahrain, and the family currently holds most of the top governmental positions (Zahlan 1998; Blanchard 2011). The Amir appoints a cabinet and the Council of Ministers, which now includes Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, and Minister of Education Abdullah bin Khalifa Al-Thani (Amiri Diwan 2012). The position of the Amir has been inherited by sons of the Al-Thani family, but not without controversy, including several abdications and a 1995 bloodless coup that established the current Amir, His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, as ruler. Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Amir’s fourth son, has already been named the heir apparent.

Qatar’s Permanent Constitution came into effect in June 2005, ensuring equal rights for all Qatari citizens. The constitution stipulates an advisory council with legislative powers (Majlis al-Shura) in order to build a modern state. Elections are scheduled to take place in 2013 (Amiri Diwan 2012). All citizens over age 18, including women, are allowed to vote, but this represents approximately only 20 percent of the 1.9 million people residing in Qatar. The other 80 percent of the population are expatriates, primarily from South Asia. These foreigners work in a variety of positions, such as corporate leadership, construction projects, oil and gas facilities, or domestic labor.

Qatar’s wealth comes predominately from its natural gas reserves, the third largest in the world, the exports of which account for Qatar’s ranking as the second highest GDP per capita, over \$102,000 (FY 2011), and highest real GDP growth rate, at 18.7 percent (CIA World Factbook 2012). Revenues from oil and gas have propelled Qatar’s extremely high migration and population growth rates, as well as economic growth. This dramatic change in fortune is also followed by social challenges and transformations, such as a sudden access to the most expensive commodities in the world. However, as a result of initiatives

from its leaders, Qatar is directing much of this wealth into infrastructure and national development, focusing especially on education to create a knowledge-based economy.

Qatar's activist foreign policy strategy has furthered its international economic and political influence. With regard to the Arab uprisings that began in Tunisia in December 2010 and continue today, Qatar has taken bold political stances, most of which seem to support the side of the protestors and political change. Qatar has also recently served as a mediator in conflicts affecting the region, such as the May 2011 Fatah-Hamas agreement.

Additionally, through the use of modern media, Qatar has proven to be a hub of social power. The renowned Doha-based satellite television channel Al Jazeera has played a pivotal role in its coverage of the revolutions. This station has been criticized for being government-owned and therefore biased, but its extensive coverage of the uprisings has undeniably helped to raise global awareness of the struggles of the Arab people. The strength of Qatar's "soft power" through Al Jazeera cannot be underestimated, as it remains the most-watched international news source among Arabs (Telhami 2011).

Ambitions of Qatar Foundation and Education City

One of the leading forces of change is the Qatar Foundation (QF). QF is a nonprofit organization founded in 1995 and led by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser, wife of the Amir. QF will play a critical role in realizing the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030, especially through its motto of "unlocking human potential" by promoting a knowledge-based economy (Qatar Foundation 2011). Part of the National Vision is also the program of "Qatarization," which is designed to increase the number of Qatari nationals in leadership positions in government, corporate, and other professional institutions.

The impressive QF-sponsored projects in Doha include the construction of Education City, the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP), Sidra Medical and Research Center, and the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC). Education City is the brainchild of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah, and is part of an effort to bring world-class education to Qatar. This 2,500-acre campus includes five branch campuses from U.S. institutions—Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts; Weill Cornell Medical College; Texas A&M University for engineering degrees; Carnegie Mellon University for business and computer science degrees; the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service; and Northwestern University for journalism and communication degrees—as well as HEC Paris and University College London. Education City is the first large-scale academic project of its kind in the Arab world and one that can be used as a platform of public diplomacy and democratic change in the region (Eastwood 2007).

In order to retain these highly educated graduates and attract additional foreign researchers, Qatar has created world-class facilities and thus exciting opportunities for development and innovation (Shetty 2011). In 2004, QSTP opened its state-of-the-art facilities for the development of research, innovation, and collaboration. This research park currently

houses branches of technology-based companies, including ExxonMobil, Shell, GE, and Microsoft. Sidra received a multibillion-dollar endowment from QF to create a first-class medical and research center. Designed to include up to 550 beds, Sidra is scheduled to open at the end of 2012, offering specialty care for women and children. QNCC, which borders Education City, is a world-class facility that opened in 2011 and was host to both the PDGP colloquium and the International Stem Cell Conference. These visionary projects are indicative of Qatar's larger goals to truly prepare for the future by investing its current resources in sustainable endeavors.

Diversity and Collaboration in the 2012 Colloquium

The American undergraduate participants in the 2012 colloquium were carefully selected from a pool of Rice University applicants. The delegation comprised 12 students from a diverse array of majors, including individuals from the schools of engineering, natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, and music, as well as all four undergraduate classes. For the 2012 program, the companion course "UNIV 312: Public Diplomacy and Global Policymaking in Qatar" was developed to prepare for the colloquium.

Students from Rice University and Qatar Foundation negotiated colloquium areas and eventually found five topics of interest that were relevant to current issues and the purpose of the program. The topics selected were: cultural conceptions and gender roles (including the use of social media in the Arab Spring); religion, secularism, and interfaith dialogue; international collaboration through science diplomacy; knowledge-based economies in a globalizing world; and the spread, evolution and comparative study of democracies. The delegations met during the four-day conference and participated in a series of discussions. For each colloquium discussion, a scholar whose academic expertise matched the colloquium topic to be discussed was chosen to moderate. Furthermore, none of the sessions were electronically recorded in an effort to promote open dialogue. At the end of each discussion, the students gathered policy ideas and goals specific to the topic, as part of a process to actually effect change, rather than merely use rhetoric.

For the PDGP class, two students were assigned to each discussion area to research the topic and help prepare the other students. In this report, each pair of students will review the discussions and proposed policy goals from the sessions they led. They will highlight common views as well as differences between the delegations and within the group itself. At the end, the report will describe general conclusions from the experience and ideas for the future of this student-led experience.

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The Role of Cultural Conceptions and Media in Social Life and Gender Roles

by Nathan Lo and Sevita Rama

On December 17, 2010, the self-immolation of 26-year-old Tunisian fruit vendor Mohamed Bouazizi shook the foundation of Middle Eastern society (Abouzeid 2011). This fatal act of desperation stemmed from years of financial disparity and frustration with a corrupt government, and culminated with public humiliation from a female municipal officer. Bouazizi's suicide was tragic and profound not because it was an act of sacrifice, but rather an act of despair: the last, hopeless gesture executed by a man who wanted only the simplest of human rights—freedom of economic opportunity and the assurance of basic human dignity. The result was a widespread social movement and protests held against the Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who ultimately resigned his post within 10 days (Abouzeid 2011).

The resulting movement, referred to as the Arab Spring or Arab Awakening, has since spread throughout the Middle East with protests and desire for reform in Egypt, Bahrain, Syria, and many other countries. The trigger of an entire social movement by the death of one man represents the novelty of the Arab Awakening in the ability for an individual voice to impact a country through expressing frustration with the political and social inadequacies created by corrupt regimes. The role of social media and progressive rights for women are two integral topics for understanding the Arab Awakening and its spread.

Social media provides both an outlet for individual thoughts and a venue for widespread dissemination of ideas. It also provides women with increased opportunity for expression and is a natural path for reform. In a globalizing world where people are continually recognizing “intersectionality”—the idea that we must take into account multiple and simultaneous factors of discrimination in the establishment of overlapping institutions of oppression—as important in tackling social issues, social media becomes efficient in connecting and rallying various, previously separated groups.

During the 2012 PDGP colloquium, students from both delegations focused particular attention on the issue of women's rights in the Middle East, its relation to movements in the United States, and how social media has played a role in dispelling or promoting ideas enforced in traditional media. Social media provides an undeniable venue for exacting social change and promoting equality globally. The discussion of women's rights does not pertain to a secularist agenda, but actually provides a venue to furthering equality for all. As Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned of Qatar made clear in her address to the Baker Institute in 2007, “We should not frame this debate as a battle between secularism

and radicalism. Rather, we need to deframe the debate. We must put it in context where the discussion focuses on how we can guarantee human rights across the board” (Al Missned Sheikha Mozah 2007).

The Role of Social Media in the Arab Awakening

Amid the social and political changes in the Arab Awakening, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube emerged as global icons. While people may question the weight of tweets and wall posts, these social tools have proven effective for rapid and widespread broadcasting of information (Kirkpatrick and Sanger 2012). In fact, social media has often been credited with assisting substantive protests and movements from like-minded individuals such as the Arab Awakening and the more benign Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States (Kirkpatrick and Sanger 2012).

While the role of social media within the Arab Awakening movement is highly contentious, colloquium members found that social media functioned as a catalyst for the social and political reform. Change of this nature was possible because social media is a tool that allows for rapid and widespread dissemination of information, individual thought, and communication across countries and cultures. This consensus is supported by the 20-fold increase in active Twitter accounts and two-fold increase in Facebook accounts in the Middle East in the last year alone (Atkinson 2011). Further evidence for social media’s importance in reform is that some Middle Eastern and Northern African governments have taken measures to disrupt social media usage in an attempt to counteract its effects. In Syria, the government intermittently cut 3G networks and electricity, in hopes of thwarting mobilization of protestors and appeals to other countries for assistance (Preston 2011). Similarly, in Egypt in early 2011, the government blocked social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter (Arthur 2011). Social media has also been used to support the status quo, as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has formed the Syrian Electronic Army to harness social media to put down any social or political uprisings (Preston 2011).

The catalytic effect of social media by definition indicates that the Arab Awakening was a natural process that was simply sustained and encouraged through use of this social tool. Throughout the discussion, members of all delegations supported this thesis, arguing that tensions and increased political and economic oppression were more relevant. According to the *Arab Social Media Report* published by the Dubai School of Government, countries involved in the Arab Awakening movement, such as Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria, represent the entire spectrum of Facebook penetration rates (Salem and Mourtada 2011). Overall in the region, only 6.8 percent of the population actually uses social media. Not surprisingly, the majority of those partaking in social media in the Middle East (75 percent of the region’s Facebook users) are in the 15 to 29 age group (Salem and Mourtada 2011). This group of the region’s youth comprises one-third of its total population, a fraction of the population staggeringly larger in the Middle Eastern region than in other developed countries, including the United States. Historically, however, social movements, such as the infamous events at Tiananmen Square in 1989, could not rely upon means similar

in nature to modern social media. Rather, they began with dire economic and political conditions and were spread by personal communication. Ultimately, social media alone is insufficient to incite revolution. The Arab Awakening required a particular formula of external factors in addition to the help of media to foster awareness to create the movement seen today.

Despite social media's limited role in eliciting change during the Arab Awakening, the colloquium's discussion delved into the significance of social media as an innovative tool for individual voice, controversial thought, and free expression internationally. This avenue for thought also introduces a problem with the reliability and quality of information due to the limited accountability in social media.

The conversation also centered on the Arab Awakening characterization as a novel, "faceless" movement, where the push for change is not initiated, led, or sustained by one or a few prominent figures. Historically, large social movements have been paired with recognizable figures. The civil rights movement in America is associated with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks; the struggle against apartheid in South Africa is linked to Nelson Mandela; and fascism is associated with Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. The ability of collective thought to have such a deep societal penetration highlights the ability of individual ideas to reach a larger population. Perhaps more surprising, the semi-anonymous nature of social media allows for a previously unseen rapidity in the rate of development of ideas. This tool also provides a domain to discuss universally felt societal problems that would otherwise be against social convention to discuss.

Ultimately, social media provides a medium for individual voices, but only represents the small segment of the population that has the opportunity to utilize this powerful tool. For this reason, future discussion can be expanded to explore the potential of social media and the Internet as an agency for political involvement that can amplify the voice of the global population and the role that government should (or should not) have in the regulation of individual speech on the Internet. Another path for discussion would be integration of the PDGP's democracy topic to explore the use of social media toward democratization by expansion of previously marginalized voices.

Media and Dynamic Gender Roles

Before examining the effect of social media and cultural differences on gender roles, it is valuable to examine the effect traditional media has had on instilling socially normative gender ideals. Opening discussions in the session first focused on Western media's inaccurate depiction of day-to-day society both in the Arab world and domestically. Societal biases play a large role in U.S. media in terms of what is reported and the how events are depicted. This poses a large problem for understanding gender inequity between and within the two cultures. Qatari traditional media is unique in its promotion of a news network like Al Jazeera, which is able to show controversial content without fear of how its stories will be received by the general public because it is funded by the Qatari government

and does not rely on commercial revenue alone. As one member of the Qatari delegation mentioned, seeing Sheikha Mozah on public television was an inspiration to many women in Qatar, as she was the first female in the royal family to make a public appearance. Being able to see powerful women in the media is an excellent way to promote the idea of international role models for youth in the Middle East as well as the United States.

An examination of the 2011 Global Gender Gap Index shows that in rankings of the political empowerment of women, Qatar is tied with Saudi Arabia, Brunei Darussalam, and Belize among the countries with the least political empowerment for women, whereas the United States is at number 39 out of 132 (Hausmann et al. 2011, 16). The statistics are based on an examination of ratios of women to men in areas of federal government such as minister-level positions, parliamentary positions, and executive office positions in the past 50 years. Promoting images of women like Sheikha Mozah and others who are involved in politics can inspire young women to become politically involved in Qatar and help close the gender gap. Despite the rise in social media, traditional media still plays a significant role in reinforcing socially ingrained ideas that extend across borders of culture and religion.

Social media has recently encouraged progression of women's rights in both Qatar and the United States. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook are being used to give women and other marginalized groups a greater voice. In a prime example of the power of social media, Manal Al Sharif caused a significant controversy last year by defiantly uploading a video to YouTube of herself driving a car in Saudi Arabia. She was detained by the Saudi authorities due to her blatant defiance of the law prohibiting women from driving. Her plight was taken up by the Women2Drive campaign, and a Facebook page calling for Saudi women to be allowed to drive and own a license ran a banner stating, "We are all Manal Sharif" (Shane 2012). As a result, Sharif was named one of the 100 most powerful Arab women of 2012 by Arabian Business (Shane 2012). The attention her story received internationally was due largely to the role of social media in spreading the word so quickly about her experience and arrest. The New York Times was quick to jump on the story and helped ensure her release after only nine days (Tomlin 2012). The international relevance gained by harnessing social media is especially significant in similar movements that are concurrent with the Arab Awakening. Social media is quickly becoming the medium of revolutionary social change due to its ability to disseminate information quickly and on a mass international, public scale.

However, social media is a double-edged sword due to its lack of accountability. Misinformation that can quickly contribute to toxic ideas like Islamophobia is an issue for a Western public that is already frequently subjected to misperceptions by traditional media. As in the example of Manal, the women following her example would often tweet about their experience driving, which led to a swift backlash by the House of Saud, resulting in their arrests. The vulnerability associated with being able to post anything to the Internet with unclear regulation as to how information can be used against oneself is what makes social media a risky way of encouraging social reform.

The discussion of the purpose of social media in different regions introduces the notion of “colonial feminism.” Colonial feminism can be defined as any effort—often Western—to separate women from their religion or culture as a means of giving them liberty (Al Missned 2007). It is important to take into account the differences between a secular approach to feminism and an approach that would allow Muslim women to keep Islamic values as they desire. A popular comic circulating around various social networking sites (including Facebook and blogging communities like Tumblr and the Google-run Blogger) was brought up in our colloquium. It depicts an American woman dressed provocatively in a bikini and an Arab woman completely covered in a *niqab*. They are passing each other and both thinking that the other lives in a cruel, male-dominated culture. This is an excellent depiction of not only diverse values in different societies, but also distinctive gender ideals promoted by Western and Middle Eastern media.

Conclusion

The colloquium consensus held that even among younger generations, perpetuating social change through media is difficult and risky, but can yield great reform nonetheless. Breaking social norms and defying traditional political rule from the perspective of an individual voice is the innovative nature of social media that combines a high rate of dissemination with a widespread collaboration. In order to best harness the potential of this communication tool for cross-cultural dialogue and understanding as well as to solidify the right of individual thought, we have developed three major policy recommendations.

First, the colloquium participants encouraged an international consensus on an individual’s right to personal thoughts that extends to the use of social media and the Internet overall. To accomplish this, international agencies such as the United Nations should pass judgment on inappropriate governmental retaliation against an individual for expression of one’s ideas, especially those expressed through social media platforms. Consequences for infractions could include economic penalties, such as trade embargoes, which would hopefully promote governmental support of an individual’s right to the use of social media.

Social media is also a medium of creating cultural awareness and understanding. To help foster a more tolerant and worldly future generation, it is necessary to increase global education. In the United States, state-mandated cultural education would be beneficial in nurturing students who will be able to compete and learn on a global scale. For example, a state might implement basic education regarding different religions and cultures as a part of a global studies curriculum in middle school, further continued with a mandated course in high school along the lines of the conventional world history course. Social media could give the opportunity for students to actually communicate with peers on the other side of the world in order to have a native perspective on a country. It is also necessary to respect the social context and educational content valued in foreign nations when nations form international partnerships in higher education. Specifically, the Texas A&M University School of Engineering in Education City, Doha, still maintains a policy of teaching Texas history, as the main campus is based in College Station, Texas, despite the fact that the

students in Doha would have little benefit from this topic. In branches of universities in foreign countries, it may be more pertinent to teach modern U.S. history and culture to dispel misinformation about the country, while still respecting and teaching Qatari culture and history.

Finally, through the expansion of the user base of social media throughout underrepresented demographics, there can be an increased and holistic representation of the population. By reaching an increasingly representative population, the strengths of social media extend a greater political voice to the individual. Government-sponsored initiatives could help spread information about these social tools and collaborations between the government, and private corporations like Facebook and Google could create a validation between social profile and individual identity to facilitate more accurate public opinions.

While this social tool has encouraged positive reform in women's rights and played a role in revolution against oppressive regimes, the extent to which social media integrates itself into society and the sustainability of the effects are still to be seen. For this reason, the suggested policy recommendations are imperative to harness the potential of social media to encourage individual rights and expression of thought while retaining freedom and safety from negative repercussions.

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Religion, Secularism, and Interfaith Dialogue

by Iman Kassir and Joe Pullano

Islam is a diverse faith with more than 1.5 billion adherents throughout the world. The dominant religious sect in Qatar is the conservative Wahhabi branch of Sunni Islam. Sunni Muslims compose the majority (87–90 percent) of adherents to the Islamic faith worldwide. A minority of Islamic persons (10–13 percent) are Shia Muslims (Pew Research Center 2009). Shia Muslims are historically followers of the prophet Mohammed’s son-in-law Ali; this faction broke from the rest of Islam when Ali was killed in battle in the year 661 (Shuster 2007). Each sect has different theological outlooks, rituals, and institutions but share central beliefs like the importance of the Qur’an and Sharia law. The Wahhabi interpretation prevalent throughout Qatar plays a major role in determining national power structures. Among residents of Qatar, 77.5 percent are Muslim, 8.5 percent are Christian, and 14 percent are of other faiths. Of the Muslim majority, 95 percent are Sunni and 5 percent are Shia (Pew Research Center 2009). While specific tenets of belief were never mentioned during colloquium sessions, the Qatari students all identified themselves as Muslim and took their religion very seriously, which set the stage for an enlightening discussion.

The U.S. student delegation contained individuals from a variety of faith backgrounds, although the group represented a nation that is predominately Christian. In 2007, 75 percent of Americans identified as Christian (51 percent Protestant, 24 percent Catholic), 1.7 percent Jewish, 0.7 percent Buddhist, 0.6 percent Muslim, 0.4 percent Hindu, and 16 percent unaffiliated (Pew Research Center 2007). The weekly church attendance in the United States is significantly higher than that in other Western nations: in 2001, Gallup reported that 41 percent of Americans attend church weekly, compared to only 10 percent in Britain (One-Minute World News 2007). While the United States adheres to Thomas Jefferson’s ideal of a “wall of separation” between church and state, religion often influences U.S. politics—consistently half of U.S. citizens have supported greater expression of political views by churches in recent history (Pew Research Center 2012). The nation’s politics remain deeply influenced by religious ideas and interest groups, albeit differently than Qatar.

Yet in each of these distinct cultures, globalized secularism is on the rise. What does this mean for the future of religion, and can it coexist with secularism? To tackle this question, our discussion focused on three central areas. The first, religion, is “conduct indicating belief in, obedience to, and reverence for a god ... [and] the performance of religious rites or observances” (Oxford English Dictionary 2012c). The second, secularism, is “the doctrine that morality should be based solely on regard to the well-being of mankind in the present

life, to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in god.” This term is distinct from atheism, which is “denial of the existence of a god” (Oxford English Dictionary 2012a). The third central area of discussion was interfaith dialogue. Interfaith means “involving persons of different religious faiths,” and dialogue means “a conversation carried on between two or more persons” (Oxford English Dictionary 2012b). This session created an opportunity for students of different faiths to openly discuss perceptions and misinterpretations, as a means to discover areas of mutual understanding about the role of religion and secularism in larger global society.

The Clash Between Secularism and Faith in the Middle East

The colloquium session was prefaced with a reminder that the interpretations of secularism vary. It can be seen as a negative force, in which religion and secularism are antagonistic. It can be seen as neutral, as in the United States where there is a theoretical separation between church and state. Or it can be seen as a positive force, where secularism works to advance a new strengthened place for religion in the modern world.

Our Qatari counterparts quickly registered their concerns about the rise of secularism. The most vocal members of their delegation believed that secularism is synonymous with atheism, and that the Middle East will never embrace secularist concerns into society because such ideas harm religion. Qatar does not accept the U.S. model of separation: the state religion is Islam and Qatar was not founded by oppressed people seeking religious freedom, as the United States was (U.S. Department of State 1999). The central argument advanced by the Qatari delegation was that the Middle East is far more spiritual than the United States. While U.S. citizens accept the idea of a “Muslim-American” identity, the Qatari delegates found such assimilation unacceptable and believed that religious identifications should remain primary.

Yet by definition, secularism is not synonymous with atheism, and the United States manages to strike a balance between the ideas of secularism and religion. Secularism describes concerns unrelated to religious ideas, but it is indicative of the Qatari focus on religion that the students immediately viewed secularism as a danger to the religious foundations of their nation. In the United States, the text of the Constitution’s First Amendment has been interpreted to advance “a non-established secular political order, one that’s equally respectful of religionists and non-religionists alike” (Pew Forum Faith Angle Conference 2007). However, this does not mean that individuals in the United States are not concerned about the perceived rise in influence of secularism. Former presidential candidate Newt Gingrich has straightforwardly stated his concern about the possibility of America becoming a “secular atheist country” (Brody 2011). But in the United States, no singular religious interpretation has dominance; the country is a religious plurality where many different sects are accepted. Forty-four percent of U.S. adults have switched religions over the course of their lives, making the religious landscape of the United States far more fluid than that of Qatar (Pew Research Center 2007). The government tries to balance different religious interests by stepping back from religion, remaining as neutral as

possible, and refraining from endorsing any one viewpoint. Politicians and citizens do have religious beliefs that are significant factors in everyday life, yet the United States tolerates secularism in a way that Qatar does not.

A member of the French student delegation proposed a third perspective that bridges the gap: the notion that a Muslim nation can be ruled by a secular government. Turkey is ruled by a secular government with a population that is 98 percent Muslim (CIA World Factbook 2012). Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the current prime minister of Turkey, has gone on record stating, “Turkey defines secularism as the principle that the state is equidistant from all religions. Secularism is definitely not atheism” (Cetin 2011). The French delegate’s example shows that in a Muslim majority nation, the government can successfully utilize a secular ideal of governance without ignoring or renouncing any religion. This system is very reflective of the U.S. separation between church and state, even though Turkey does not deal with the same pluralistic Christian sect distribution as seen in the United States. Turkey proves that Muslim-dominant nations also can embrace and successfully implement such a system, and with that nation’s current economic growth, the Turkish model might prove to be the most effective strategy in the future (Watts 2011).

Regardless of any group’s perception on secularism, it is undeniable that the political situation of the Middle East cannot be dissociated from the tension between religion and secularism. Religion is often used as a political instrument, as it interplays with “carefully planned political alliances and monopolistic control of societies today” (Middle East Online 2007), especially in the modern Middle East. Concerns about secularist governments supported by the West seemed to lie at the center of Qatari anxiety about larger Western influence. Our discussions proved just how different the Western and Middle Eastern perceptions of secularism are (J.B. Moore Society of International Law Symposium 2006). While the Qatari delegation held strongly to the premise that secularism is dangerous and that religion will remain dominant across the Middle East, as the world continues to globalize, the religious monarchies must find ways to adapt to an increasingly secular world, or risk irrelevancy. Our discussions provided no concrete conclusions as to whether secularist reforms will occur across the Middle East after the Arab Awakening, but as states like Turkey continue to indicate the viability of a secular Muslim state, nations like Egypt that are developing new governments face increasing pressure to adopt secular ideals (Aziz 2011).

Interfaith Dialogue to Decrease Religious Misunderstandings

As the conversation progressed, the student delegates focused more on the presence of religious misunderstandings between the United States and the Middle East, which everyone agreed presented continuous diplomatic challenges. Both regions have mutually negative perceptions of each another. According to surveys conducted among persons in the United States, 48 percent of Americans view Islam unfavorably, and 29 percent of Americans believe that mainstream Islam encourages violence against non-Muslims, figures that have doubled since 2002 (Cordesman 2009). Our discussions concluded that this viewpoint stems from cultural misunderstandings regarding the Arab culture. Few

Americans had interest in or knowledge of Islam prior to September 11, 2001, students from the Rice delegation said, and the terrorist attacks on that day were a devastatingly negative first exposure of many Americans to that religion. After that day, U.S. citizens scrutinized Muslims quite critically and began questioning their religion, culture, and personal lives (Perkins 2011). Yet it is important to realize that not all Americans stereotype Muslims as terrorists; the U.S. students in the PDGP delegation and many Americans understand that the terrorist attacks were propagated by extremists who by no means represent Islam as a whole.

Traditional media impacts popular perception in both the United States and Qatar, contributing to negative American perspectives on Islam while simultaneously fostering negative Middle Eastern views of America's role in the world. When most of the Middle East coverage on U.S. television is of extremist Arabs plotting to kill Americans in the name of Islam, it is little wonder why Americans tend to think of Arabs as "fanatical and violent" (Jackson 2011). On the other hand, when the Arab media continuously focuses on U.S. political and financial support of Israel, it makes sense that citizens of the Middle East blame the oppression of the Palestinian people on America. This point was continuously brought up in private discussions with the Qatari counterparts as they viewed America's support of Israel as intolerable. The Qatari delegates reflected the sentiment of the larger Middle East, as seen in a 2006 poll, which shows that of five countries surveyed—Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and Lebanon—anywhere between 51 percent and 93 percent of the population indicated that U.S. policy on Palestine had a huge impact on their perception of the United States (Zogby International 2006). This fosters Middle Eastern stereotypes that Americans are "selfish, violent, and greedy" (Jackson 2011).

A key source of this religious misunderstanding is the lack of significant interfaith dialogue between the United States and Middle Eastern states like Qatar. In a recent poll, 53 percent of Americans admitted to not knowing a Muslim personally (Cordesman 2009). Traditional forms of social media fill in knowledge gaps and further perpetuate negative Christian perceptions of Islam and vice versa. Furthermore, the extremists that garner so much media attention use specific verses from the Qur'an to justify their violent actions; thus, what little exposure Americans get to the Islamic faith leads them to believe that Islam is indeed a violent religion that justifies and encourages the killings of non-Muslim people. As with all ancient religious texts, it is believed that the Qur'an has multiple interpretations, and because the Arabic language is constructed in such a way that there is much ambiguity around words themselves, individuals can draw equally peaceful or violent meanings from the same passages (Aslan 2011). When this point was brought up in the colloquium, the Qatari delegation disagreed that different interpretations of the Qur'an could exist, and instead asserted that not a single letter or word of the Qur'an has been changed or altered since it was scribed. This type of religious fundamentalism, when observed in the context of traditional media and concerns about extremism, underscores the pressing need for thorough interfaith dialogue between the United States and Qatar.

Islam, like many religions, has violent factions. Mainstream Muslims must emphasize the fact that terrorist actions in the name of Islam are done by extremists and are not condoned by the Qur'an. Simultaneously, Western media should recognize and correct its tendency toward providing much more dramatic coverage of Muslim terrorist acts while downplaying violent Christian or Jewish actions. If religious understanding is to be achieved, media coverage must equally represent religiously motivated acts of violence.

Conclusions

Students from all delegations agreed on broad goals that must be reached if global religious tolerance is ever to be realized. Interfaith dialogue of the type in this discussion must look for commonalities between cultures. Those who participate in interfaith communications should promote an ongoing culture of dialogue outside of traditional media channels and instead focus on social media. All people should attempt to look past ideologies to ensure that all voices are heard, all opinions are respected, and all religions are allowed to practice in peace.

While these broad goals are more easily stated than attained, the governments of both the United States and Qatar can take concrete actions to promote interfaith understanding. Each nation should encourage cultures of religious literacy by establishing standardized requirements for classes in world religions in early education. Students in the 2010 Cairo colloquium suggested a similar type of program, and we reiterate the importance of implementing this idea (PDGP 2010). Secondly, students in universities must take the lead in promoting interfaith dialogue by engaging in conversations online and utilizing social media to discuss interfaith connectedness. In the aggregate such conversations can begin to slowly enhance religious understanding across the world. Finally, all universities should require an international component to undergraduate education, because firsthand experience with people from other cultures is the best way to create understanding. Pen pals were the preferred 20th century method of international interaction between students of different faiths and societies, and such interconnectedness is even more salient in our increasingly globalized world. Twenty-first century university student pen pals should connect over social media and collaborate on academic projects focusing on interfaith collaboration and international dialogue. Such a requirement would expose all university students to the beliefs of others and fully educate them in an international context. As future world leaders, students must understand the influences of different religions around the globe.

This session on religion, secularism, and interfaith dialogue allowed for great productivity, though it was punctuated by some tense moments. There was contention regarding the possibility of different interpretations of the Qur'an, but the talk remained cordial. Mutual agreement, especially in areas dealing with the sources of misunderstandings between the Middle East and the United States, was common. In the future, it would be interesting to examine the impact of American involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan on the Muslim perception of America, and how government systems contribute to the development of

religious extremist groups. Ultimately it would be more helpful to look at both regions with an equally critical eye. This session tended to center on the flaws of the United States, without equally focusing on the Middle East, and more fruitful conclusions could come from more equal critiques.

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International Collaboration through Science Diplomacy

by Kareem Ayoub and Rohini Sigireddi

“Many of the challenges we face today are international and—whether it’s tackling climate change or fighting disease—these global problems require global solutions ... That is why it is important that we create a new role for science in international policymaking and diplomacy ... to place science at the heart of the progressive international agenda.”

—Gordon Brown, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, 2009

The issues facing today’s world range from finding the cure for cancer to rising sea levels, rampant poverty, and fears of impending food shortages. Government officials employ traditional diplomacy as a means of uniting nations and addressing these issues through economic agreements, multilateral efforts, and political gestures. However, in a world full of unresolved conflict, gridlocked governments, and differing policy agendas, it is clear that traditional diplomacy must be enhanced to solve these problems. Governments are now looking “to create a new role for science in international policymaking and diplomacy” to create a new method to unify nations (Brown 2009). In light of this need, the 2012 Public Diplomacy and Global Policymaking colloquium explored science diplomacy as a means of addressing global concerns and facilitating public diplomacy.

Science Diplomacy

Science diplomacy is an ever-evolving term that exists in three dimensions: 1) *science in diplomacy*: using science to inform foreign policy discussions; 2) *science for diplomacy*: using science as a means to foster collaboration and build diplomatic ties between nations; and 3) *diplomacy for science*: using diplomacy to help establish science as an international discipline through increased science collaboration. The three manifestations of science diplomacy stem from science’s universal values of objectivity and reason that transcend traditional cultural, religious, and linguistic barriers. Hence, science is an essential means of fostering communication between nations. Additionally, the widespread applicability and understanding of science give science diplomacy the ability to address sensitive topics, including nuclear nonproliferation or human rights violations, by opening an avenue for dialogue between nations.

Science diplomacy complements traditional diplomacy. At times foreign policy, through traditional means of diplomatic connection, may be self-interested and fail to result in mutually beneficial relationships between countries. For example, at times, U.S. foreign

policy has catalyzed anti-American sentiment among foreign nations in the Middle East (Butler 2002). Resentment of this nature may result from simple misunderstandings between nations regarding different cultures, religions, and customs. Traditional diplomacy is more effective when we, as a society, seek to listen and understand “the other” (Djerejian 2012). Science diplomacy has the capability to promote communication between nations, as science is a universal concept that is understood by all and a powerful, unbiased tool (Butler 2002, Witze 2009).

Science diplomacy is not a new idea, but one of continued and increasing importance. In 1957, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forged one of the world’s first formal international science programs to promote international collaboration among member nations (Stone 2002). This program is partially credited with paving the path for key dialogue between the United States and Russia during the Cold War (Josephson 1990). Science diplomacy must also be pursued in modern times as our world moves into author Thomas Friedman’s “Globalization 3.0,” an era defined by electronic communication, social media, and interconnectedness (Friedman 2007). The call for a more cohesive society is thus stronger than ever.

Science diplomacy has the ability to better relationships between the United States and the Middle East. The U.S. National Academies and the British Royal Society have stated that the most important science partnerships to be formed are those with nations in the Middle East. The United States and nations in the Middle East currently have tenuous relations at best. However, Middle Eastern nations are willing to open their borders to international science. For example, Lebanon wishes to partner with the United States to improve environmental technology research and Qatar wishes to expand key research programs such as the field of stem cell biology (Sarkadi and Schatten 2012; Breithaupt 2002; Witze 2009). With these considerations in mind, the 2012 PDGP colloquium began its discussion of science diplomacy.

The Modern Day Understanding of Science

When faced with the question, “What is science?” the U.S. and Qatari students responded with their perceived views of science. The scientific method, which students attributed to mankind’s fundamental understanding of the world, outlines a linear, progressive, and highly structured methodology to be applied when examining natural phenomena. Controlled experimentation is used to develop science further and establish scientific theories. This led a Qatari student to note that science was “a systematic enterprise that forms knowledge into different sects,” alluding to the disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics.

Students found that natural science is based on a rationalization of observations of the world, whereas social science rests upon inductive and deductive reasoning, to explain and predict human behavior. Furthermore, natural science can be verified through peer-

reviewed publications and experiments that are quantitative, normative, and repeatable, leading to widespread acceptance of scientific principles.

Students believed that science aims to identify a problem in nature, examine that problem through an accepted methodology of observation and experimentation, apply scientific theories to model the problem, and then solve the problem using newly found scientific tools. It was also believed that the examination of scientific quandaries was conducted with the intention of improving the lives of humans and enhancing human development.

Certain features of science make it an especially useful tool for public diplomacy. The fundamentals of science, such as the calculus that explains physics, the reactivity of elements that allows for chemistry, and the understanding of the cell that provides a foundation for biology, are widely agreed upon on a global level and will likely never change. However, the amount of scientific information possessed by humans can and will grow to be more specialized and address new areas of inquiry and concern. Science has already seen tremendous progress, from the Newtonian era of classical mechanics to modern theories based upon Einstein's theory of quantum mechanics. Additionally, students noticed historical parallels in scientific progress, citing the Arabian invention of the astrolabe and later the Chinese invention of the compass—an indication that scientific innovation builds upon ancient, universal principles.

The universality of science was questioned, as science was characterized as a language of the elite. A Rice University student likened the technicality of natural sciences to the finesse of classical music and fine arts, suggesting that science was only understood by those well-versed in scientific jargon and not by people with alternative or lesser educational backgrounds.

Ultimately, natural science was believed to be universal and essential to human development, but students found that scientists often question the veracity and varying interpretations of scientific findings. Students believed that the principles behind science were indisputable, yet the methods taken to solve scientific problems, and theories designed to explain scientific phenomena and their interpretation, were disputable. In other words, science is a universal language, in its core essence as a field, but science is practiced differently in various cultures, religions, and nations. This diversity can be seen as a strength because different approaches can be used to solve global problems. The large number of scientists around the world illustrates the importance of realizing an international role for science, which can address problems through varied scientific perspectives on problems (like climate change and stem cell research) that may not have one solution.

However, the nature of science was questioned, as many delegates saw science as a possible tool for violence. Many feared that science could be used adversely in resistance movements and in modern warfare such as bioterrorism. These concerns were fueled by historical examples such as the Chinese chemical invention of gunpowder and the American creation of the atomic bomb, both of which have caused widespread violence and death. This leads

one to question how malicious applications of science can be regulated. Students concluded that these regulations must be made with extreme caution so as to neither limit scientific innovation nor stifle scientific creativity.

Students ultimately decided that science was not inherently good or bad, but that it must be used to better the lives of humans everywhere. For example, science could be used to bridge the gap between the developing and developed worlds by introducing science laboratories in the developing world. Additionally, science can be used to address disparities between socioeconomic classes by introducing better science curricula in underserved areas. While science may be a tool capable of great progress, participants noted, why has science not helped solve the problems of global warming, another area of concern? Many students believed that science diplomacy has been constrained by the lack of a scientific relationship between countries, as well as by relationships between countries that were strained by past economic and political conflicts.

Despite these past and ongoing difficulties, there is much hope for mutual benefits from international science collaboration. Students suggested that collaboration may be either economic, with laboratories containing the best equipment running experiments in the most efficient manner, or academic, with the best scientific minds harnessed to address all aspects of a common area of scientific interest. Additionally, many noted that scientific development often moves to the private industry, whereby collaborations with local businesses translate scientific innovation into improved consumer products. Thus science also holds prospects for economic partnerships and collaborations, domestically and internationally, and hence is a source of new jobs and knowledge.

The collaborative nature of science is key to its success, just as traditional diplomacy must be collaborative and involve multiple, diverse actors when addressing an international concern. Additionally, through diplomatic efforts, science has the capacity to serve national interests. However, the challenge for politicians now is to devise ways to use science to promote public diplomacy on a global level, rather than as a tool used within national borders. The discussion concluded with the sentiment that “countries are the laboratories of the modern world”; with science diplomacy, large groups of people can work together to solve global problems as large as climate change and malnourishment.

The Promotion of Science Diplomacy

This colloquium discussion sought to further our understanding of science diplomacy and the use of science to connect nations in the realm of public policy to advance national interests and for improved, collaborative science research. To aid in the realization of science diplomacy, students found that it was first important to emphasize the understanding of science at all levels of education, work, and government. Furthermore, scientists needed to explain science in lay terms to allow for a universal understanding of scientific topics and the promise of science. This different form of communication will allow for an increase in scientific knowledge and a more informed populace. This is essential for scientific progress

since citizens elect the officials who allocate government funding to projects. Additionally, an increase in scientific knowledge through educational programs will increase the effectiveness of scientific communication by lay people to scientists and vice versa. Finally, scientists must also communicate in a manner that best reflects their scientific perspectives and is unaffected by preconceived notions regarding ethnicity, religion, gender, or culture.

Students suggested that scientists facilitate societal understanding of the impact that modern scientific experiments will have on their everyday lives. Students also identified a need to increase transparency in scientific research. This could be accomplished by making scientific journals more accessible and by lowering subscription costs, perhaps through government subsidies. Additionally, publications that were online and open-access (i.e., free), such as PLoS ONE, were noted as beneficial. There was also a call for outreach programs designed to give underserved students access to a high-quality science education. Finally, students advocated for training programs to educate scientists in areas such as economics, history, and political science to enhance their ability to contribute to and make effective public policy and science policy.

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Knowledge-based Economies in a Globalizing World

by Andrew Amis and Neeraj Salhotra

Knowledge-based economies (KBEs) are transforming modern nations, and the Middle East lies at the epicenter of this global trend, which has created knowledge-intensive, rather than resource-bound, ways of life. Doha, Qatar, is home to Education City, 14 square kilometers of land saturated with the towering sophistication and grand aesthetics of the world's leading educational institutions. Human-sized letters fill the central lawn with the Arabic words for "Discover" and "Inspire," and roadside signs ricochet the messages "Learn" and "Grow" as a reminder of the collective hopes and dreams of a nation. However, the country also possesses one of the world's largest natural gas fields. Qatar is prime testing ground for the transition from a hydrocarbon economy to a knowledge economy in the Middle East.

Driven by technological upheavals, increased knowledge access, and globalization, the KBE draws upon Peter Drucker, social ecologist and management theory expert, and human capital theory to see knowledge as "the heart and mind of the global economy" (Kefela 2010). It is marked by core competencies, particularly technical abilities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, along with innovation, leadership, and entrepreneurship. The KBE has led to the age of smart products customizable to consumer preferences, research and development (R&D) building from the atomic level, and engineering to solve grand challenges of development and well-being (Davis and Botkin 1994). It represents a shift from physical capital to technological advances due to the importation of scholars from around the world. This introduction of academic knowledge in Qatar is the key to economic growth and advancement of civilization in the KBE, which is defined by innovative and intellectual leadership (Mohamed, O'Sullivan, and Ribiere 2008, 109-115).

In many nations, including Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Kuwait, the principal hindrance to the development of a KBE is a reliance on a primarily natural-resource economy. This dependence not only slows the transition to a KBE but also often precipitates negative consequences, as has been seen in Sudan, Angola, and Venezuela (Sachs and Warner 1995). This "resource curse" has numerous negative effects, but the three most important are: Dutch Disease, a rentier state, and finite supply.

Dutch Disease is the result of increasing reliance on natural resources at the expense of the manufacturing or service sectors ("The Dutch Disease" 1977, 82-83). The export of the natural resource leads to an overvalued exchange rate that renders other exports relatively expensive and uncompetitive. Underinvestment in other sectors of the economy

and the corresponding lack of diversification exacerbate this predicament and negatively affect economic growth. Nigeria and Angola faced these problems from 1960–1990 as an overvalued exchanged rate, stemming from oil exports, made it difficult to compete in other industries (Rudd 1996).

Secondly, dependency on a natural resource often creates a rentier state, which is a state that derives much of its wealth from the natural resource and therefore does not tax its people. Examples of rentier states include Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Nigeria (Beblawi 1987). This practice destroys a valuable political relationship in which citizens would normally demand an efficient and transparent management of their tax revenues. A rentier state, since it does not face such citizen pressures, is often plagued by an inefficient and corrupt government (Moore 2007). The most notable example of this was Nigeria, where bureaucrats siphoned much of the oil rents from the Nigerian government into their Swiss bank accounts (Brock and Cocks 2012).

Finally, natural resources have a finite supply; thus, at some point the commodity will become either economically or physically depleted and, without proper preparation, the nation's economic growth will suffer dramatically. Indonesia faced this predicament, as it was initially a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), but it squandered its resources and soon had to leave the organization. After losing its only revenue source, the nation faced years of economic malaise (“Indonesia Becomes Net Oil Importer” 2005).

Because of such risks, countries should search for alternative means of sustainable growth. In the coming post-carbon, post-industrial, globalized world, resource-dependent countries will fall behind nations with better technology and more innovative business models. As economist Ghirmani Kefala notes, “Wealth creation through the application of human knowledge and creativity is steadily outpacing wealth creation through extraction and processing of natural resources” (Kefala 2010). The mobilization of knowledge as an abundant commodity provides “more efficient ways of producing goods and services and delivers them at lower costs to a greater number of people” (Kefala 2010). The KBE provides a diversified and flexible workforce capable of sustaining economic growth, and there was strong agreement among all the students that resource-dependent nations would do well to shift to a KBE.

Focusing the KBE on Specific Knowledge Areas

One of the major points of this discussion was how best to create a KBE. In other words, should Qatar and other oil-producing nations in general develop a KBE within the fossil fuel space or expand beyond depletable resources? The discussion featured internal disagreement within the Qatari delegation. For example, some Qatari students adamantly wanted Qatar to pursue a KBE “based on the genuine need of this very society,” a system based within the oil and gas sector since “this is what we [Qataris] know best.” The focus on the oil and gas sector seemed almost a matter of national pride. For instance, Qatari

companies should be able to analyze their own oil samples, they argued, rather than need to send them off to Europe. Other Qatari students, however, vehemently disagreed and believed that Qatar needed to diversify its economy. If Qatar simply focused on forming a KBE around oil and gas, they argued, the economy would still risk falling victim to the resource curse and the consequences of finite supply.

The American students supported the second line of reasoning; one student even argued that the entire goal of the KBE was to diversify away from oil and gas. In other words, the KBE should be an antidote against the Dutch Disease, not a catalyst for it. Historically, simply investing more in oil and gas only exacerbates the resource curse (e.g., Nigeria, Angola, and Venezuela). Despite the differing opinions on how best to develop the KBE, everyone clearly supported the creation of a KBE. Put differently, both the Qatari and American students supported steps that could help countries specialize in higher value-added production and innovation.

The Role of the Government in Developing a KBE

Another important question that pervaded the discussion was the role of government in fostering a KBE. Again there was significant disagreement among students of both delegations. Some delegates favored a *laissez-faire* approach, which simply focuses on “getting prices right.” In other words, the government should liberalize the economy and then allow the private sector to pave the way for economic growth. These students argued that, by removing government regulations, a country could unleash the private sector as a force for innovation.

In sharp contrast, numerous other delegates advocated for a more state-led model of capitalism (like Taiwan or China), with the government as the platform-builder for appropriate infrastructure. These delegates believed that the government has an important role in advancing education. They pointed to Qatar’s reforms of K-12 education and investments in higher education as models for other nations trying to establish a KBE. One student mentioned government investment in basic research, again pointing to the Qatar Foundation as an example. Students referred to other nations (e.g., China and the United States) that had leveraged their successful university systems to become research powerhouses and argued that Qatar and other Middle Eastern nations should endeavor to follow that path.

Finally, other students argued that governments should play a role in reducing the income inequality that will likely result from a KBE. This point resonated with Americans and Qataris as both nations face significant challenges with widening gaps in wealth. The specific steps governments should take to reduce income inequality were not clarified, but it was clear that governments will need to tackle this issue.

In short, there were divergent opinions about the role of government in facilitating a KBE. Some students supported a *laissez-faire* government where the private sector is the primary

force for innovation and job creation, while others advocated a more activist government (like South Korea or Singapore) that not only invested in education and research but also worked to reduce income inequality. Although there was no consensus, it is clear that policymakers must think critically about the role of government in supporting a KBE.

A Brain Drain May Stymie the KBE

Toward the end of the session, one Qatari student posited that simply focusing on education is not enough. Investments in education must be accompanied by opportunities for gainful employment because if nations focus solely on education and research, they may experience a “brain drain.” In other words, if the job market for professionals not in the oil and gas sector is weak within Qatar, many of them may emigrate for work (e.g., India from 1945 to 2000).

Other Qatari students countered by suggesting that there is no risk of brain drain since “people are content here, and they enjoy living with their families.” In other words, people’s desire to remain close to their community will trump the allure of high-paying, creative, and/or technical jobs overseas. While some American students agreed that familial ties might keep Qataris at home, many argued that people must have an opportunity to use their talents. They explained that this is even more important in a globalized world where people with technical skills can easily move from country to country for work.

It is therefore imperative for any nation—including the United States—striving to create and maintain a KBE to have significant opportunities for those pursuing STEM fields. If these nations do not make the necessary investments in facilitating employment for scientists and engineers, they will likely experience the brain drain phenomena and its consequences. This will lead to significant reduction in potential for economic growth and stifle the country’s overall advancement.

Implementing a KBE

The final part of discussion focused on verdicts and goals for implementing a knowledge-based economy in the greater Middle East and developing countries worldwide. An overall theme was the role of government as a platform-builder that invested in appropriate infrastructure and competed globally without traditional command-and-control leadership. There seemed to be unanimous agreement that governments must invest in education and research, rather than arms and tools of war, as a way to foster both regional peace and a vibrant populace. Students pointed to Saudi Arabia as a negative example and Qatar as a positive example of this observation.

Students also suggested that the government should liberalize the financial sector by removing stringent financial regulations. This would include removing obstacles to the free flow of original ideas and eliminating barriers to creating innovative businesses and technologies. Strong government institutions that respect intellectual property rights, are

transparent, and support a sound legal system, as well as policies that increase individual participation in government decision-making, generally foster the entrepreneurship that is necessary for a KBE. Some students pointed to the vibrant private sector in the United States as evidence of the success of such policies. A prime example of financial sector liberalization is India, which, until 1991, had the “license raj” that created licenses and bureaucratic hurdles (Ravimohan 2005). During this period, economic growth stagnated at about 3.5 percent; however, after 1991 when the license raj was lifted, India has experienced meteoric growth at 6-8 percent (“Redefining the Hindu Rate of Growth” 2004). Finally, governments should reduce excessive social services and welfare to further a more independent and self-determining society where individuals seek entrepreneurial opportunities and the best idea wins.

Collaboration is also key, and the Qatari delegation recommended knowledge-sharing between international sister cities as well as regional integration within the half-dozen Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Students also agreed that prosperous nations have an obligation to invest in education and collaborate with developing nations around the world.

While the government can take substantial action to build the necessary infrastructure, a KBE cannot be complete without the intellectual transformation of its citizens. A KBE—based on creativity, ingenuity, innovation, and originality—demands an intellectual and social environment that reflects these values. No amount of money or architectural sophistication, and no quantity of high-dollar research centers will alone generate innovation. At the end of the day, individuals must develop the capacity to create original ideas and novel technologies that can transform nations and push the world toward a brighter future.

Conclusions

Natural resources can be a blessing and a burden. They provide valuable capital for the government to invest in human talent but can also trigger the resource curse. During this session, we focused on how countries can leverage their natural resources to invest in building a KBE that derives strength from innovation, R&D, and STEM education. Throughout the discussion, both Qatari and American students articulated the problems with relying solely on natural resources, the benefits of shifting to a KBE, and the steps necessary in making such a transition. While the session certainly featured disagreement and spirited debate, in the end, participants outlined a set of policy goals for governments to pursue: investing in human capital, removing barriers for the private sector, and slowly dismantling the enormous welfare state that acts as a disincentive for innovation and entrepreneurship. Ultimately, our shared vision is one where Qatari and American students grow as budding leaders who will create the ideas and invent the technologies to power our common future.

Education is key to the progress of any society. During his 2009 speech in Cairo, President Barack Obama stated that “all of us must recognize that education and innovation will be the currency of the 21st century” (Obama 2009). If governments around the world work together to take these key steps, resource-rich nations will find that natural resources can be effectively leveraged to create a knowledge-based economy that will forge the society and economy of the future.

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Democracy: Spread, Evolution, and Comparative Study

by David Liou and Tara Slough

The term “democracy” refers to a form of government in which all citizens participate in decision-making and governance by voting in free and fair elections. Derived from the Greek word *dēmokratía* meaning “rule by the people,” the initial conception of democracy developed in the fifth century BCE, as the ruling form of governance of the city-state of Athens. However, despite its storied origin in ancient Greece, democracy as it is known today did not emerge until modern times.

Political scientists offer varying definitions of democracy but, in general, three conditions must be met for a system of governance to qualify as a democracy. First, top decision-makers must be elected in periodic, free, fair, and contested elections and must hold ultimate decision-making power. Perhaps more importantly, these leaders must also willingly leave power after their term has expired and new leaders have been elected. Second, the freedoms of individuals must be clearly defined and rigorously protected. These freedoms include, but are not limited to, equality before the law; the right to vote and contest elections; and the freedoms of press, expression, faith, assembly, demonstration, and association. Finally, mechanisms to limit the power of these freely elected governments must exist. These limitations vary from country to country, but typically include parliamentary approval and/or judicial review carried out by independent courts that determine the validity of government actions with regard to a nation’s constitution.

Democracy, as defined by these conditions, has been a development of the past two centuries. Renowned political scientist Thomas Huntington posited that the spread of democracy occurred in a series of waves that began in 1828, when the United States achieved suffrage of a majority of its (male) population. This first wave lasted until 1922 and witnessed the rise of 29 unique electoral democracies encompassing 45.3 percent of the world’s nations at the time, all within North America and Europe. However, during the interwar period between 1922 and 1942, two-thirds of these democracies succumbed to authoritarianism. The second wave took hold after the conclusion of World War II in 1945, and in the 10 years following the war, systems based on democratic governance grew to encompass 36 nations. This growth would also prove unsustainable and eventually reverse itself during the peak of the Cold War between 1958 and 1973, as the proportion of democratic states fell from 32.4 percent to 24.6 percent. The third and final wave of democratization began with the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in 1974, and was spurred by the collapse of the former Soviet Union. By 1998, there were more than 120 electoral democracies across the world, extending throughout Latin America, Eastern Europe,

Africa, and East Asia. However, the rapid expansion of democracy once again slowed as the millennium drew to a close (Huntington 1991, 26).

Notably, despite the rapid growth of democracy in virtually all other regions of the world, the nations in the Middle East did not partake in any of the three waves of democratization. It was not until the Arab Awakening in late 2010 and early 2011 that scholars and commentators alike began to consider the emergence of democracy in the developing world as a potential continuation of Huntington's model. Indeed, while the struggles of the Arab Awakening have not definitively manifested themselves in a system of democratic governance, the movement toward popular establishment of stable democratic regimes in the region has been interpreted by many political theorists as a possible continuation of the third wave of democratization, or perhaps even the beginning of a new fourth wave (Grand 2011).

Democracy and Its Discontents

The Public Diplomacy and Global Policymaking colloquium session began its discussion of democracy with a rousing debate of the democratic process compared to its outcomes. In particular, the rhetoric associated with the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq was raised several times to illustrate the potential divide between a democratically governed nation and its willingness to uphold democratic ideals globally. In March 2003, when the United States and a coalition of 35 other nations invaded Iraq with the stated aim of disarming Saddam Hussein's regime of its weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), President George W. Bush remarked: "The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values because stable and free nations do not breed ideologies of murder. They encourage the peaceful pursuit of a better life" (Bush 2003). The inherent contradiction between promoting the ideals of democracy and forcefully installing a system of governance through external military action has fostered strong resentment in the Arab world toward both the United States and its idealized vision of democracy, agreed PDGP participants from both delegations. Whereas the Arab Awakening represents a more-or-less organic movement toward greater political participation within respective populations, the previous installation of a so-called democracy in Iraq at gunpoint did little to cement popular participation or promote the legitimacy of this government. Freedom House, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that monitors freedom and democracy worldwide, measured little change in political rights and civil liberties in Iraq between 2003 and 2012, despite the establishment of a "democracy." Indeed, nine years after the United States toppled Saddam's dictatorship and established a Western-style "democracy," the country continues to earn a "not free" rating (Freedom House 2012). The Qatari delegation repeatedly raised this point, demonstrating the continuing cynicism toward U.S.-initiated efforts to promote democracy in the Arab world.

The shortcomings of U.S. foreign policy in Iraq led Qatari delegates to question the morality of democracy, given the results of past efforts to promote democracy. Many wondered how Americans could possibly espouse democracy as the ideal form of government in light of

the poor, often immoral, decisions of democratically elected governments. Members of the American delegation countered that the value of democracy cannot be solely derived from the efficacy or morality of its outcomes. Moreover, all forms of government produce positive and negative outcomes. As such, no system of government is inherently moral; rather, moral decisions are made by government leaders. Many colloquium participants also noted the need to separate the institutions of government from its outcomes, indicating that poor decisions do not condemn the value of the system. Absent normative judgments of good versus bad policymaking, the participants in the session came to an agreement that the goals fostered by democracy—public participation, civil liberties, and restraints on government—are noble aspirations for any form of government.

Qatar: Governing Legitimacy Without Democracy?

While the benefits of democracy in terms of the protection of freedoms are relatively clear-cut, the protection of civil liberties varies greatly between undemocratic societies. Democratic regimes rely upon the provision of civil liberties, freedoms, and universal suffrage to maintain their legitimacy. Historically, this reliance on popular legitimacy has created a vested interest among the leaders of democratic governments in protecting these rights. Democratic regimes today, with few exceptions, continue to demonstrate a strong ability to protect and promote freedoms, civil liberties, and even economic growth. One PDGP participant noted the divergence in economic growth and development between India and Pakistan since the 1947 partition as evidence of the benefits of democracy. The former developed under democratic governance and the latter under authoritarian regimes. In response, a number of Qatari students pointed to both Singapore and Qatar as counterexamples. These nations, they argued, have achieved strong economic and social development in the absence of democracy, illustrating successful legitimate alternatives to the democratic forms of governance. However, many members of the U.S. and Qatari delegation acknowledged that Singapore and Qatar serve as exceptions to the outcome of autocratic governance, rather than as the rule. Indeed, it is important to recognize that unlike many of its neighbors in the Middle East, Qatar has not experienced protests regarding the issues brought up in the Arab Awakening. In comparison to its peers, Qatar has the lowest level of unrest among the entire Arab League (*The Economist* 2011).

An examination of the recent history of Qatar reveals that much of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani's popular support is attributable to the development of a strong social and economic infrastructure capable of responding to its citizens. Since Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani's rise to power in 1995, the nation's GDP has increased over 20-fold from just over \$8 billion to over \$181 billion, and GDP per capita is now second in the world at approximately \$109,000 (World Bank 2012; CIA World Factbook 2012). This tremendous increase in wealth, fueled by the development and growth of the oil and natural gas industry, has led to rapid development and advancement in the standard of living of Qatari citizens and general support for the Amir's policies. The Amir's tremendous popularity in Qatar is unparalleled in the Middle East; he is perhaps the only current example of a benevolent monarch in the region who is welcomed by his people—a feat unheard of by most

autocrats. Moreover, the Amir's government is responsive to requests of Qatari citizens. One Qatari student anecdotally discussed his involvement in a social media campaign among university students that yielded a direct meeting with a high-ranking minister. The Amir's performance as a monarch, however, is not the norm among autocrats, and ready access to a head of state is rare even among democracies. Ultimately, the uniqueness of the current government of Qatar must be seen as a singularly progressive autocratic regime, not representative of governance in most authoritarian nations.

The Fourth Wave: Democracy in the Arab World

With a tacit agreement among colloquium members about the enhanced ability of democracy to promote freedoms, discussion turned to the value of promoting democracy in undemocratic societies. While many of members of the Qatari delegation agreed that promoting democratic ideals may be the best reform in currently oppressive autocratic states, there was considerable debate on how these reforms should come about. This discussion revealed several misconceptions about democratic institutions. Notably, U.S. rhetoric about democracy promotion in the Middle East has been perceived as a concerted effort to implement U.S.-style democracy in the region. However, the U.S. model represents just one of many efficacious realizations of democratic governance. Many texts, such as Arend Lijphart's *Patterns of Democracy* (1999), document the significant variation between these realizations. Both delegations agreed upon the importance of a movement *within* populations for greater political participation and more civil liberties as the most effective impetus for a democratic revolution.

Cultural considerations often underscore the structure and function of democratic institutions. While certain societal traits like a strong civil society have proved to be universally important in the promotion of democracy, many other features—such as electoral systems and institutional design—are shaped by culture. With regard to the development of Arab democracies, *shur'ocracy* may be a culturally specific interpretation of democracy. Deriving from the Arabic *shur'a*, or Islamic law, *shur'ocracy* would provide for the involvement of people in decision-making in accordance with the Qur'an. Ultimately, there must be a broader recognition of the role that culture plays in shaping institutions and governance, and the acknowledgement that democracies are inevitably intertwined with the culture of the people it governs.

Conclusions

The spirited colloquium discussion on democracy offered a unique glimpse into perceptions of democracy in the Arab world. First and foremost, it is vital to recognize that there is a general consensus that the idea of democracy is a noble aspiration for nations and societies. Moreover, the provision and protection of human rights and civil liberties seem to be almost universally supported. Second, access to the decision-making process is necessary to provide individuals with the right to express their views. In the long run, the open expression of these opinions is essential in shaping policy to reflect the interests of the

people. Qatar's current government is unique among autocracies in this regard—the access of Qatari citizens to high-ranking government officials denotes a degree of responsiveness to individuals' concerns that is often unheard of in similarly autocratic regimes. Democracy offers further freedom in this regard, providing citizens the right to elect their leaders and, hypothetically, the ability to influence their actions through written communication, petitions, protests, and campaigns. Finally, there was overall agreement on both sides that using military force to spread democracy, as epitomized by the U.S. invasion of Iraq, is neither an effective nor legitimate means of upholding democratic ideals. Similarly, there was general agreement that the Arab Awakening, following a path laid by activists in South America and East Europe, offers stronger and more legitimate prospects of an Arab democracy than foreign military involvement.

In response to these conclusions, the delegates collectively put forth a series of four policy goals. First, education must provide youth with an understanding of the importance of freedoms, rights, and liberties. Civic education is a critical component of the promotion—and the maintenance—of democratic governance, and thus civic education, both in the United States and abroad, must be promoted in all schools. Notions of justice and rights must not be reserved for university students and academics. Individuals must be aware of their rights in order to exercise them, and if access to knowledge about these ideas is restricted to a small population, democracy cannot flourish.

Second, civil society must be fostered in order to effectively promote democracy. Individuals who are engaged in their communities provide a base of active citizens. In particular, associations that crosscut religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic divisions promote greater awareness of issues and greater investment in the democratic process. Additionally, civil society is critical in engaging the general population and encouraging citizens to actively participate in addressing social issues, a critical aspect of democratic governance.

Third, respect for the diversity of populations is critical to the maintenance of civil liberties, freedoms, and political participation. This type of respect is promoted through education and won through social movements. True democracy cannot survive in areas where populations are consistently marginalized and deprived of basic rights and freedoms. Alongside the aforementioned civic education, protection of—as well as greater universal awareness and respect for—individuals who exercise collective dissent through nonviolent means must be promoted.

Finally, the militarization of democracy promotion is neither an effective nor a legitimate means of spreading of democratic ideals. In the aftermath of the recent Iraq War, it is clear that U.S. objectives of democratizing Iraq and Afghanistan have not yet been achieved. PDGP participants concluded that the fallout both within the United States and around the world has illustrated the folly and hypocrisy of spreading the democratic ideals of freedom by imposing them at gunpoint. True governance for the people and by the people can only be derived from the will of the people themselves.

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Colloquium Conclusions

The Public Diplomacy and Global Policymaking (PDGP) delegation from Rice University embarked on this project with the goal of forging a cultural understanding with its counterparts from Education City in Doha, Qatar. The students in each delegation represented a wide range of nationalities and areas of study. The U.S. student delegation came from five academic schools at Rice: social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, engineering and music. The Qatari delegation included students from Qatar, Nigeria, Iran, Azerbaijan and France, as well as undergraduate and graduate students studying business, politics, economics, engineering, computer science, and communications. Despite the diverse backgrounds of participants, the discussions were open and frank, sometimes heated, but always respectful.

The goal of the PDGP colloquium was to improve, even in a modest way, student-level U.S. relations with the Middle East and the world through cross-cultural dialogue and the promotion of public diplomacy. The effects of cultural misunderstandings, prejudice, and ill will have led to broken relationships between nations and an unfortunate barrier between Americans and Muslims. Despite pressing global issues that require multinational efforts—such as the current economic downturn, the environment, and the worldwide struggle for freedom and equality among all persons—it is difficult for people of the world to together work toward solutions, especially at the university level. We hope that this program can be a model to help bring young people together to talk about world issues openly and honestly in order to move toward change.

Overarching Lessons from the Colloquium

The colloquium focused on five topics predetermined by the students from both delegations: social media and gender, religion, science diplomacy, knowledge-based economies, and democracy. During the conference several recurring themes emerged, including the need for effective communication between nations, the importance of education, and the crucial role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in public diplomacy.

The Need for Communication

In contrast to traditional diplomacy, which engages one government with another, public diplomacy seeks to engage the public around the globe through the media, cultural

exchanges, social media, and so forth. The need for genuine communication between the people of other nations was an omnipresent theme throughout the PDGP colloquium.

The Arab Awakening has showcased the true power and effectiveness of social media. Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have allowed activists to quickly organize movements and spread information and ideas, spurring the type of change that has been impossible for centuries in the Middle East and North Africa. Although social media gave a voice to those who have long been silent, PDGP delegates found that it also spread the opinions of those who have long spoken out but have not been widely heard. Social media is an effective platform that holds promise for much more change, ranging from the equalizing of gender roles through the empowerment of women to promoting cultural understanding between people of different nationalities through regular communication.

Communication was seen also as key to improving relations between the United States and foreign nations. PDGP delegates acknowledged the many political alliances and economic as well as political diplomacy efforts, but believed that they did not lead to true dialogue. For effective public diplomacy, in order to communicate with people of different backgrounds, we must first begin by trying to understand their perspective. However, this approach is not often taken in the modern world. Many Qatari delegates, for instance, perceived a lack of understanding of Islam in the American government.

The Importance of Education

The importance of an education, from early childhood on, that allows for the exploration of a wide range of subjects was also stressed in all colloquium sessions. Delegates believed that a high quality education allows for social, political, and economic gains worldwide.

American and Qatari delegates unanimously found cultural education to be the key to successful dialogue and public diplomacy. Misconceptions and stereotypes plague the world today and are significant barriers to successful global policymaking, improved foreign relations, and an overall understanding of people of different cultures, races, and religions. The colloquium sessions also found that traditional media often manipulated the uninformed public's perception of foreign peoples, leading to unwarranted prejudice, hatred and fear.

Additionally, delegates found that increased science literacy among the general population could lead to the successful integration of science into politics, the realization of science diplomacy, and the formation of successful international scientific collaborations. These unconventional applications of diplomacy can only be realized through improvements in education around the world. Finally, the delegates noted the importance of education in Qatar, which has spent considerable time and effort building a successful education system that includes Education City, Qatar University, and community colleges. These endeavors follow Qatar's desire to create a knowledge-based economy, one that is driven by intellect and academia, in an effort to lessen its reliance on natural resources.

The Increased Role of Nongovernmental Organizations

Participants from both delegations also agreed that governments were not always the best option for promoting public diplomacy. Several students argued that state institutions were often archaic, representing purely national interests rather than the promotion of goals beneficial to people across political borders. Additionally, change instituted through the state or military is sometimes against the wishes of the general public, thus is an ineffective way to enact social change. Students instead saw promise in the expanding roles of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as actors with the ability to enact institutional change in the international policymaking sphere.

NGOs hold potential to become more international. Social media can help build NGOs that promote understanding, facilitate dialogue, and devise solutions to a wide range of global problems. It can also bring groups of citizens together despite what would have been previously limiting factors (time and distance) to attempt to solve problems. NGOs hold the promise of promoting educational goals, developing civil society in fledgling democracies, protecting the freedom of expression, and furthering the development of knowledge-based economies.

The applicability and sustainability of social media as an institution for political change was questioned during the colloquium discussions, but when combined with the entrepreneurial spirit of NGOs, many students agreed that social media can play significant role by connecting people around the globe. NGOs represent an accessible alternative for social action. The rise of NGOs effectively puts the “public” in “public diplomacy.”

Future Plans for the PDGP

The goal of the 2012 PDGP colloquium was to promote cross-cultural dialogue and exchange through public diplomacy. Overall, the participants from both delegations were pleased with the colloquium discussion and felt they were successful in achieving these goals. Moreover, the Rice participants found the experience—both the trip and the associated course—unique and unparalleled. It is something they will remember long after leaving campus. Several students even began research projects based on their experiences; they plan to publish articles in peer-reviewed journals and encourage the adoption of the PDGP model by other U.S. universities.

In addition, the program has led to a lasting partnership between American and Qatari students eager to address global policy issues. The PDGP program will continue, with the conference location alternating between Houston and Doha each year. The Baker Institute and Qatar Foundation are already working on the next student colloquium, which will be held in spring 2013 at Rice University’s Baker Institute in Houston, Texas.

As with the two previous conferences, students from Rice and the Qatari institutions will together agree upon the discussion topics for the 2013 colloquium—a system that itself is

a form of diplomacy. Rice students are eager to reengage in topics from the 2012 session, such as the roles of science diplomacy and religion in international relations. Participants spent most of their time defining the idea of “science diplomacy” during the last session in Qatar. In the future, it would be interesting to discuss whether this is a valid option or if a good scientific relationship between the U.S. and Qatar should be left alone. In addition, animated discussions about religion raised questions about how a nation could be secular and have strong religious support. Other topics that were not addressed in 2012 but are of interest to the U.S. participants include global health issues, renewable energy, and the Arab–Israeli conflict.

Furthermore, students from both delegations are interested in finding ways to expand the program to include partnerships with other universities in the Middle East, or expanding the size of the American delegation, which stood at 12 students in 2012, to possibly 18 students.

Overall, the PDGP 2012 conference in Qatar was a life-changing experience for everyone involved, from the students to the program advisers. We are gratified that the program will continue in 2013. Our hope is that in the future, many more students will have the opportunity to meet their counterparts from other countries and learn about cultures that are so different—and yet, at times, so very similar—to our own.

PDGP Delegation



Front row (from left): Rohini Sigireddi, Andrew Amis, Sevita Rama, Monica Matsumoto, Tara Slough, Iman Kassir, Christene Kimmel, Kirstin Matthews. Back row (from left): Maher Awad, Graham West, Neeraj Salhotra, Kareem Ayoub, Nathan Lo, Joe Pullano, David Liou.

Rice Student Leaders

Graham F. West '12, the Rice student director, studied political science, history, and Asian studies with a focus on the Middle East. He was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas. After graduation, West traveled to Tunisia for the U.S. State Department's Critical Language Scholarship as well as to Lebanon on a grant from the Rice Department of History. He ultimately aspires to be a Foreign Service Officer. West became the student director of the PDGP program after having travelled to Cairo, Egypt, in June 2010 for the inaugural PDGP colloquium.

Monica Matsumoto '14, the Rice student deputy director, is studying biochemistry and Asian Studies with a concentration in the Middle East. She spent a year in Cairo after high school before entering college and will study abroad in Morocco and Jordan in 2012. She

has studied Arabic for more than two and a half years and has been an intern in the Science and Technology Policy Program at the Baker Institute since June 2011. She loves traveling, music, languages, and sports, and is on the club soccer and ultimate Frisbee teams at Rice University. She would like to spend further time in the Middle East after graduating and before entering medical school.

Rice Student Delegates

Andrew Amis '14 is studying chemical engineering and history. He currently serves as design lead of the low-earth orbit Microsatellite Launch Team comprised of Rice undergraduates, and spent his summer serving in a Tanzanian village school as a chemistry and physics instructor. Amis has a passion for energy policy and is authoring an engineering design manual for developing countries. He is also conducting energy futures research with Rice engineering professors Kevin Kelly and Rafael Verduzco through the Baker Institute.

Kareem Ayoub '12 studied bioengineering. Ayoub's research on developing advanced neuroimaging techniques to understand neurological disorders will lead to further studies in neuroscience and biomedical engineering at the University of Oxford, as a Marshall Scholar, followed by a combined M.D./Ph.D. program at Washington University in St. Louis. Ultimately, Ayoub seeks to pursue a career as an academic physician, using international experiences to advance science and medicine through clinical practice, research, and policy. A Palestinian-American, Kareem was born in Wisconsin and has lived in the Middle East and the United States for much of his life.

Iman Kassir '15 is a freshman at Rice University studying kinesiology and policy studies with a focus on health care management. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career in health care policy, working in hospitals or through the government to improve the current health care system. Iman was born and raised in Houston, Texas, and spent two years in Lebanon during her childhood. She volunteers with the Rice Young Democrats Society as the precinct chair and is involved in the Muslim Student Association and the Rice Academ Society.

David Liou '12 of Albuquerque, New Mexico, studied biochemistry and policy studies at Rice University with an emphasis on the ethics, politics, and the economics of scientific development. Liou has interned in the Science and Technology Policy Program at the Baker Institute and at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, working on the application of biotechnology to cancer. Eventually he hopes to combine his interests by working as a scientific entrepreneur developing U.S. policy on the emerging biotechnology industry. In his spare time, Liou enjoys running, snowboarding, playing chess, and expanding his knowledge of foreign affairs.

Nathan Lo '13 is a native Houstonian and junior at Rice University studying bioengineering with a minor in global health technologies. After graduation, he plans to attend medical school with the goal of ultimately working with Doctors without Borders and conducting

research in infectious diseases. In addition to his background in science policy, Lo also does research with the Department of Bioengineering at Rice and is leading a trip this summer to Ecuador to do work in public health.

Joe Pullano '12 studied political science and English at Rice University, and is particularly interested in the interaction between legal systems and policy frameworks in both the United States and internationally. His postgraduate plans include working as an assistant in a legal organization in preparation for studies in law school and an eventual career in law. Pullano has lived in seven different locations in the United States, including Massachusetts, California, and Texas. He currently co-directs a student leadership research program through Rice University's School of Social Sciences.

Sevita Rama '15 is a freshman at Rice University majoring in cognitive sciences with a focus in neuroscience, as well as the study of women, gender, and sexuality. She hopes to pursue her feminist interests and integrate ideas of equality into her postgraduate plans of medical school, with the final goal of becoming a pediatric neurologist. She has been involved in neuroscience research since high school and will be continuing with an internship with a neurosurgery clinic in her hometown of Troy, Michigan, this summer.

Neeraj "Raj" Salhotra '13 is a junior at Rice University studying economics, classical studies, and policy studies, with a concentration on energy policy. After graduation he plans to work for a few years before attending a combined law and public policy program. Ultimately, he would like to become a policymaker at the national level, focusing on economic, education, and energy policy. Outside of the classroom, Salhotra co-teaches a public policy class on economic, domestic, and foreign policy issues. He was born in San Francisco but has spent most of his life in Houston.

Rohini R. Sigireddi '14 is a sophomore at Rice University studying chemistry and policy studies. After graduation, she plans to pursue a graduate degree in nanoscience or public health before seeking a medical doctorate. Sigireddi conducts nanotechnology research with the Laboratory for Nanophotonics at Rice University. She is also in the process of developing an educational outreach program, NanoForAll, which will introduce the world of nanotechnology to children in primary and secondary school. Rohini is a third-generation Indian-American and was born and raised in Houston, Texas.

Tara Slough '12 of Portage, Michigan, pursued dual undergraduate degrees at Rice University in violin performance and political science. Passionate about music outreach, Slough taught music to kindergarteners in Costa Rica as a Loewenstern Fellow and founded the Rice Outreach for Music Education. As a Parish Fellow, she conducted independent research in Caracas, Venezuela, on social development through music education. Slough has interned for the U.S. State Department, the Baker Institute, the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, and the Global Initiative for Cultural Diplomacy. She intends to pursue graduate studies in international relations or development.

Rice Faculty Advisers

Kirstin R.W. Matthews, Ph.D., Baker Institute Fellow in Science and Technology Policy, Lecturer in the Department of Natural Sciences, and Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Rice University

Christene Kimmel, Director of Development, Baker Institute

Qatari Student Delegates

Semsia Al Ali, Junior, International Affairs

Muhammad Anas, Junior, Chemical Engineering

Mohammed Al Haddad, Senior, Information Systems

Mohamed Al Hashiemi, Senior, International Affairs

Afiga Heydarova, M.A., Public Policy in Islam

AlMas Imtyaz, Senior, International Affairs

Ammar Al Ismail, Junior, International Affairs

Hamad Al Kahn, Senior, Law

Lolowa Al Khater, M.A., Public Policy in Islam

Masoud Movahed, Senior, International Affairs

Lolowa Al Nasser, Freshman, Petroleum Engineering

Ismail Yahaya, M.A., Islamic Finance

French Student Delegates

Guittaume Chamant, Junior, Business

Aline Fierobe, Junior, Business

Kapu Furkan, Junior, Business

Thibuft Lager, Junior, Business

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We are honored to have the support of His Excellency Sheikh Abdulla bin Ali Al-Thani, vice president of education at Qatar Foundation, who delivered introductory remarks for the colloquium. Many people at the Qatar Foundation also helped to coordinate the logistics of the conference, especially Ayman Bassil, Aisha Al Ghanim, Abdul Rahman bin Ibrahim, and Zeldine Gonsalves. We would also like to acknowledge the professors from Education City and Qatar University who moderated our panel discussions.

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In addition, we would like to thank the fellows and staff of Rice University's Baker Institute for facilitating this program and allowing it to be primarily student-run—especially founding director Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian. We appreciate his support as a guest lecturer in the class and his opening remarks at the colloquium. We would also like to acknowledge guest lecturers Reza Aslan, Joe Barnes, and Chris Bronk, as well as Whitney Smith, who provided logistical support for the trip. Ambassador Charles Untermeyer and his wife, Diane, shared with us their experiences and insight on Qatar.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge former student directors Sean Graham '10 and Thomas Campbell '11 for their work in establishing the PDGP program.