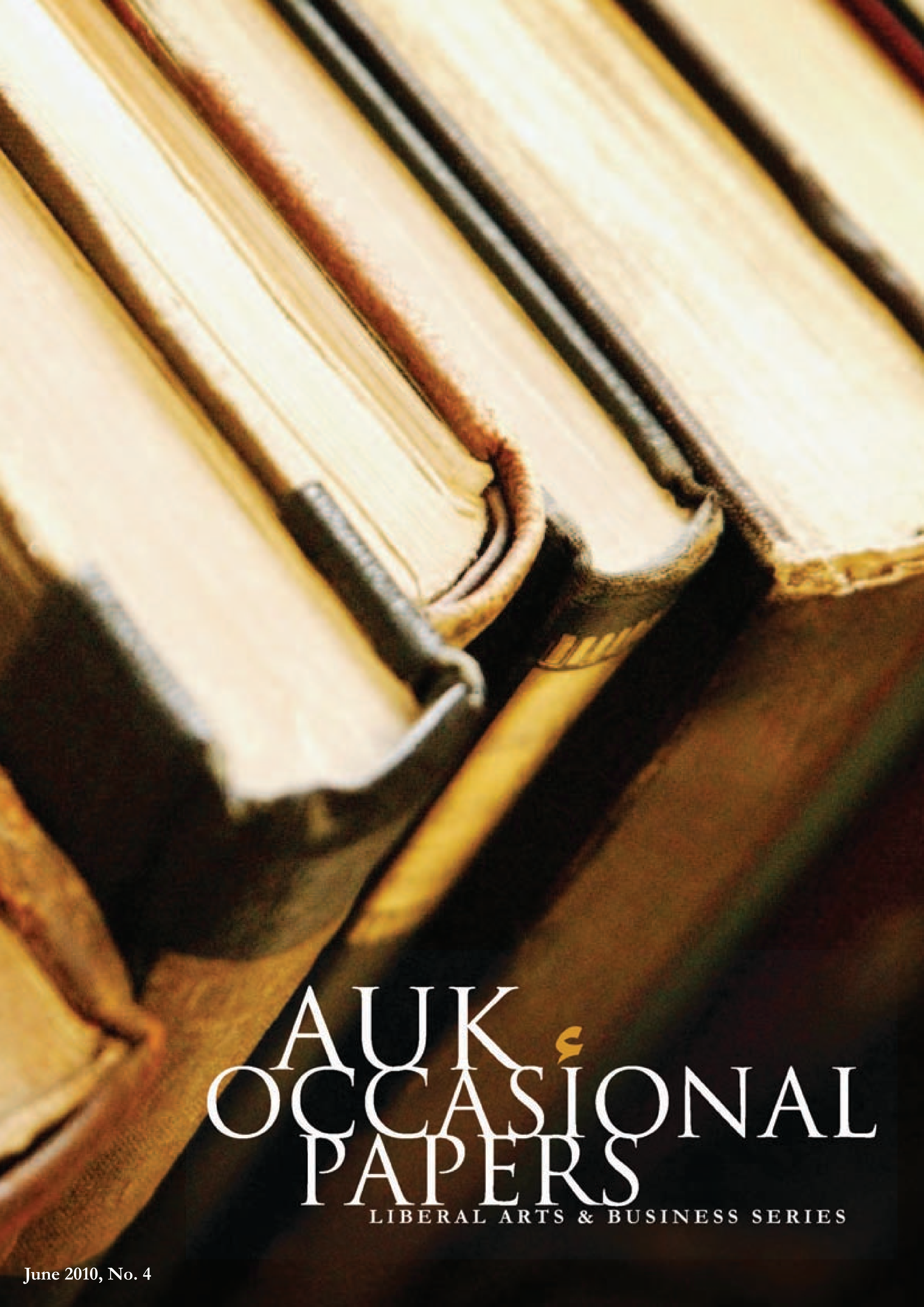

AUK OCCASIONAL PAPERS

LIBERAL ARTS & BUSINESS SERIES

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AUK OCCASIONAL PAPERS
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND CAREER SUCCESS IN THE GCC: DOES GENDER MATTER?

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ABSTRACT

Extensive literature on labor markets has supported the proposition that gender is one of the most common attributes that explains disparity in wages, benefits, promotion, and other organizational achievement indicators. According to several scholars, work organizations can be treated as arenas on which social conflicts between different groups of employees take place. Many acknowledge that women in the GCC area have made great strides in achieving near-equality when it comes to educational attainment. In fact, recent studies by the World Bank and other regional and international agencies have shown that women in a number of GCC countries now constitute a significant percentage of university graduates. The increase in the number of private universities in the Gulf has further allowed women to claim a larger share of the region's labor market. However, such successes may not have extended from the educational to the labor domain.

Much of the existing literature exploring barriers and facilitators to women's career advancement has focused on identifying the personal qualities and characteristics that are associated with career success. In this paper, we focus on educational attainment as the main predictor of career success. We argue that in the case of the GCC region, little research has looked at the different impacts of educational attainment on career advancement for men and women. This is especially disconcerting considering the monumental changes in the role of women as participants in educational and labor spheres in the region. We employ survey methodology to collect data on educational and career attainments in the GCC countries for both men and women, and discuss the implications of our analysis and results for higher education professionals and policy makers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women in the Arab world face many cultural traditions that stand in their way to have an equal stake in modern society. The reproduction of these cultural traditions from one generation to the next has deterred women from seeking non-traditional education and professional careers. Despite recent political changes which give woman more rights as voters or political leaders such as; laws that allow women to run for parliament for example in Kuwait, only four women have succeeded Furthermore, many religious groups use women to encourage voters not to elect women candidates. Progress for women needs to be understood within the political and security concerns that continue to hinder human development across the Arab world.

In history it has been common that families are patriarchal in nature, where the male is the main economic provider for the family, while the female is the emotional provider. In male dominated societies such as the Gulf, the man has been seen as the sole provider for his family, while the woman mainly stays at home to raise her children and perform tasks around the house such as cooking and cleaning. After the Industrial Revolution, the patriarchal nature of the family began to fade away and cultures started accepting that women work outside their homes (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2009). This has become especially true after the two World Wars.

The changing role that women took on began in the first half of the 1900's as the first and second World Wars started. A lot of young men in their productive age were lost in war, and there was a vacancy in the work world waiting to be filled by none other than western women. After World War II women progressed greatly in terms of working outside the home, and they began taking up more technical war jobs, such as flying airplanes and handling guns (Goldstein, 2001). After that, the percentage of western women that worked outside their homes increased greatly, but soon this sharp increase in involvement of women in the workplace shrank (Goldstein, 2001). However, this fluctuation in the percentage of working women greatly impacted human gender roles and introduced western women to the work place.

By the mid 1900's, women started gaining more and more rights in the workforce. In England, for instance, in 1970 the Equal Pay Acts made it illegal to discriminate in the wages of men and women. Women now earned as much as men did and thus their percentage in the workforce increased till it reached 46% by the beginning of the second millennium (Women's Bureau, 2007). However, women still experience sexism in the workplace. Research shows that women earn lower wages than men with an average of 80% of a man's wage (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007). This information may give rise to several questions. Did this situation form the idea that males are the sole providers of family? Are these statistics true because women, especially married women, still see their income as the "second income" in the house? Are women ready to bear their muscles and prove their strength in the workplace?

According to Susan Trentham and Laurie Larwood, it is suggested that discrimination in the work field happens due to the Rational Bias Theory. To further explain the concept behind this theory, a manager would discriminate between employees not because he/she wants to, but because this discriminative behavior is approved of or favored by other people in authority. In fact this theory proved to be true with managers or employers that may be completely against sexism in the workplace or any form of discrimination. This article concludes that the Rational Bias Theory is applicable in our daily lives. The authors conducted a research where the subjects were asked questions based on some hypotheses of the Rational Bias Theory. These questions showed that managers preferred their customers' opinions over theirs, and they expected women to be discriminated against more than men. On the other hand, when asked, the subjects clarified that they expected managers with higher status to be less biased towards men, and to show less conformity to the customers' beliefs. In summary, the results of the research showed that men and women both "accept that a norm of discrimination continues within the business world." (Trentham & Larwood, 1998).

This theory may especially apply to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA region) where people were found to be already biased towards men and have conservative views on gender roles (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003). This attitude would encourage egalitarian employers to shy away from the idea of employing, giving a raise to, or depending on a working woman. It would also give an excuse for the "financially comfortable" women in the oil rich countries to lose motivation and stay home instead of working towards the benefit of their society and country's economy (O'Donnell, 2009).

It has been claimed that in order for women to succeed they are expected to be better than men in the field pursued (Trentham & Larwood, 1998). This could also be a major cause for women's lack of participation in the field of work, which results in the low progress witnessed in the economical status of the MENA region, even after a major education reform (The World Bank, 2003). This is especially true in married women's cases. In a collectivist society like the MENA region, trying to excel in a job could prove to be a tough challenge for a married woman especially due to the region's traditional view on gender roles where the man is considered the main provider of the family and working women are restricted to "socially acceptable" jobs, such as teaching and medicine (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003).

Another opinion on why women in the MENA region accept inferior treatment is that women have been so used to staying at home, most of them are now unable to leave their countries to search for a more advanced higher education degrees, even when they have the chance to do so, and thus, they are more willing to accept to be paid lower wages and hold less prestigious jobs than men (Reuters, 2008). The article where this opinion is stated speaks of Libyan women in particular; however, it is possible to apply it to most MENA and GCC countries due to the similarities in the Arab culture.

Research shows that education in the MENA region has come a long way since the mid 1900's regarding the accessibility to education, and the success in narrowing down the gender gap that was once present in their education systems. According to the World Bank, all the countries in the MENA region have succeeded in achieving full primary school enrollment, doubling the enrolment for secondary schools, and increasing enrolment in higher education by five times. However, these countries have witnessed a much lower progress than the results expected from the education reform. This, the author claims, may be due to the fact that "MENA schools may be producing the wrong mix of competencies." Middle Eastern and Gulf women are still not using their educations to earn their places in the work force and that causes an overall low progress in these countries' economical development (The World Bank, 2003).

However, the progress in female education has not yet reached the higher levels of education. Research in Saudi Arabia shows that numbers of single women are increasing dramatically due to an increase in the number of years women spend in higher education. Men in the Gulf region still prefer that women do not have a Master's or Doctoral degrees, as they prefer to have superior education to their wives. This may put Arab females at risk of not getting married because the higher educated she is, the harder it is for her to find an appropriate suitor (Hamdan, 2005) (Al-Sari, 2003).

An article titled "Sexism 'Costs Arabs Economies Dear'" shows that the economies of the GCC countries are losing greatly due to the lack of participation of women in the working world. Mustapha Nabli, the World Bank's Chief Economist for the region, says that the MENA region is not "reaping the returns of this investment in educating women." This article also says that "men still fear losing their jobs if women join the workforce in greater numbers."

The low percentage of women involvement in the GCC workforce could be due to the area's capital intensive methods of production, which use a few number of workers and offer high salaries to highly professional men thus limiting the number of women needed in the market (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003).

In Kuwait, the issue of sexism is at a similar stage, where a woman is expected to gain the approval of her father or husband in order to be able to work, travel, or continue further with Master's or Doctorate's degree, and the priority in the university education is usually given to the male in the family (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003). In addition to that, women who do work are expected to perform the jobs of a full-time housewife as well as a full- or part-time employee. This results in extra stress on the woman to choose between her family and career. Statistics from the World Bank Group, Gender Statistics show that women make up only 25% of Kuwait's, 16% of Oman's, 15% of Saudi Arabia's, 14% of Qatar's, and 13% UAE's workforce, while the percentage of women in the American work world is 46% according to the Women's Bureau, 2007.

Kuwaiti law no. 30 of 1964 dictates that women are not allowed to work before 7 am and after 8 pm. A recent amendment made to the law states that the only exceptions to this law are women working in the medical field and the two female ministers at that time, Ministers of Social Affairs and Work (Al-Fuzai, 2007; Kazak, 2007). This enforces the idea that most men in the Gulf region believe that their "duty" is to take care of women and their well-being; and that according to the traditional gender roles and society norm, women are unable to protect and care for themselves.

In the area of Arab women involvement in the political arena, we have not yet seen high percentages of women in politics in the GCC countries. The percentages of women in the parliaments in Bahrain, Kuwait, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar are 10.9%, 1.5%, 0.7%, 0.0%, and 0.0% respectively. However, we have witnessed a great change in some of the GCC countries, even if the percentage of Arab women participants in politics in 2006 is still 8.6% according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) website (IPU, 2006).

Kuwaiti women recently gained the right to vote and stand for elections, in May 2006. This had been a major jump in the political involvement of women. Not very long ago, before the 2006 Parliament elections, women had never taken part in any aspect of the parliament elections. When women gained their rights to vote and to run for elections, Islamists and conservative parties argued that this action was "anti-Islamic and against the traditions of Kuwaiti society" (BBC News, 2006) Many Islamists even tried to persuade female voters out of voting by making other women "encourage voters not to elect women" (Al Khalifa, 2007). As a result, and at the time of writing this paper, females headed only two ministries, Ministry of Housing and Ministry of Education and were nor represented in the parliament. This interesting fact makes one wonder whether the women that fought for the right to election are the same ones that took part in the voting process? If so, then why aren't there a higher percentage of females represented in the parliament?

An attempt to clarify these aspects is explored in the article by Akande which, states that women themselves shy away from the presence of other women in political positions. This could be due to the fact that Arab women have not yet established a strong foundation in the work market, and thus have not yet proven their credibility and ability to take part in something as sensitive and important as politics. A second opinion says that women are still seen as inferior to men, especially in a fieldlike politics, due to gender roles (Akande, 2007).

In summary, the literature strongly supports an uneven access to resources and power, and unequal opportunities for success for men and women in the GCC area despite significant socioeconomic progress. Our goal in this paper is to focus on a specific aspect of disparity in the GCC area by investigating how educational attainment may not lead to the same career advancement opportunities for the two genders. In the next section, we explain our methodology for testing our main proposition that educational attainment creates more significant career opportunities for males than it does for females in the GCC area.

METHODOLOGY

To test our proposition that academic achievement for females my not create value in organization as much as it does for males, we employ a survey methodology and collect data on educational attainment and career attainment for males and females in Kuwait. While we acknowledge that significant differences exist in education, work, and other factors between GCC countries, collecting data from the entire GCC region was beyond the scope of this study. Furthermore, based on recent studies and reports, Kuwait is a country that has made a significant stride in bridging the gender gap in education and in the workplace (MENA Report, 2007). We limit our survey to working adults by eliminating respondents who indicated no work experience. Our descriptive statistics are summarized in Table 1.

Our survey includes questions pertaining to educational level by asking about the number of post high-school education years. This is in line with major studies that have used this method to assess educational attainment (e.g. U.S. Census Bureau studies). We look at various indicators of tenure and experience and collect data on the following variables: number of years in current job position, tenure in the organization, and number of years of overall work experience. Our survey also includes variables related to performance and job satisfaction. We look separately at two indicators associated with satisfaction with promotion and with financial rewards received.

As shown in Table 1, we collect data from 210 working adults including 104 males and 106 females. The average age of respondents is 32.32 years with about 9 years of overall work experience. The average number of years of work for current organization is 4.23 years, and the tenure in current position is 5.27 years.

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	ALL	MALES	FEMALES
Sample	210	104	106
Age	32.32	32.08	32.55
Years in current position	4.23	3.37	5.06
Tenure in current organization	5.27	4.23	6.28
Years of work experience	9.12	8.95	9.29
Organizational level	2.10	2.15	2.06
Educational level	4.32	4.60	4.04
Performance	5.37	5.27	5.47
Satisfaction	5.09	5.01	5.17
Financial reward (pay)	4.80	4.66	4.94
Satisfaction with promotion	5.19	5.06	5.32

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We use a t-test for equal sample sizes to test for differences in the means between the male and female respondents. The correlation table is included as Appendix 1, and values that are significant or nearing significance are shown in bold. The results show that the Gender variable is correlated with Performance in the organization, Years in current position, Tenure in the organization, and Educational attainment. The two-sample t-test we perform sheds more lights on these differences. With respect to performance, the means were 5.47 for females and 5.27 for males with a p-value of 0.09. While only nearing significance at 95% confidence intervals, it appears that females tended to report more competence and expertise with job-related tasks. Females also tended to stay longer in the same job position (p=0.01), and had longer tenures in the organization (p=0.01). The results above show a greater tendency of job stability for females and job mobility for males whether within or between organizations. This is reinforced by the fact that there were no significant differences between males and females with regards to overall number of years of work experience (p=0.76) or age (p=0.69).

While at first the idea that promotional opportunities or financial rewards may be higher for males than females may not be supported, we undertake additional tests to further delve into the nature of interactions between gender, education, and workplace outcomes. We proceed to look in more details at the variable Level in Organization. Level in Organization refers to job rank and is categorized as follows: Entry-level, Middle-level, Top-level, and other. The descriptive statistics in this case are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2. SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR JOB LEVEL IN ORGANIZATIONS *

	ENTRY-LEVEL	MIDDLE-LEVEL	TOP-LEVEL	OTHER
Males (n=104)	22	55	15	11
Females (n=106)	48	37	8	10

* *Because of missing data, sum of respondents by level may not equal total sample size.*

One key observation from Table 2 is that 21.15% of male respondents stated that they held entry-level positions; the number for females was 45.28%, more than twice as high. On the other end of the spectrum, 14.42% of males reported holding top-level positions in their organizations, while only 7.54% (about half) of the females reported holding such high-level positions in their organizations. About half the male respondents reported occupying middle-level positions while only a third of the females occupied such positions.

The results of the analysis along the occupational levels are intriguing. From the descriptive statistics in Table 1, it is clear that females spend longer time in their current job positions, had longer tenure in their organizations, and had slightly longer work experience. In addition, females had significantly higher educational attainment than males. However, this did not translate into more positions of power and prestige in organizations for females; the absolute majority of whom still held entry-level positions.

An important variable that may play a role in explaining some of the results of the workplace outcomes could be expectations (Rand Monograph Report, 1994). We believe that due to the region's long tradition of male-dominated work environment, females may exhibit lower expectations for career attainment, and may consequently be more accepting of less than equal opportunity for pay and career advancement. While anecdotal evidence supporting this postulation abound, we believe that only objective organizational records that pertain to biographical and work variables could shed more light on this issues.

Another possible variable that may affect our analysis and results is the fact that many of the women surveyed worked to complement the income that was secured by the male who is the main income earner (husband, father, brother, father in-law, etc.). Consequently, while income generated by these working females was important for sustaining the family and for securing a better living for themselves and their families, the pressures for success, promotion, and higher pay may not be as high for females as it is for males (Villota, 2005).

Finally, we conduct our analysis under the basic assumption that higher organizational rewards are desired by all. In other words, more pay, higher job levels and power are equally sought after by both males and females. However, previous research has shown that males and females may place different value on instrumental and affective rewards in organizations (Mottaz, 1986). In general, the literature on gender and work-related preferences has shown that women tend to value stability, satisfaction, and relationships, while men tend to value promotion, power, and material rewards (Murray & Atkinson, 1981).

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Our study's aim was to investigate whether educational attainment created value differently for males and females in the GCC countries. While some of the results were interesting, this study has a number of limitations. First, our sample size was too small to detect some of the finer differences among the two groups. But most importantly, we did not cover more countries as this was beyond the scope of this study. Future research should include samples from other countries in the GCC area that have maximally different attainment records as far as gender equity is concerned (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Oman). Another limitation of this study is based on the self-reported nature of the survey methodology. We ask respondents questions pertaining to their perceived performance levels, satisfaction, and other work-related variables. We use previously-validated scales; however, response bias remains an issue in such studies. It would be of great value to complement survey data with archival data sources that may provide other objective measures of educational attainment and work-related instrumental and behavioral outcomes in organizations. We do realize though that this may be easier said than done in an area where archival data may not be available, reliable, or simply unlikely to be shared with researchers.

Finally, we conclude by arguing that the issue of gender equity in the educational and workplace setting is of critical importance for the development of the GCC area and the Arab World. Many of the studies and reports by various international organizations have pointed to the serious gender gap in the region. We call for more active and sustained research in this area by scholars in the region, and for the establishment of strong mechanisms whereby research is more fully integrated with policy-making in the region.

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APPENDIX 1. CORRELATION TABLE

C3 (Gender), C4 (Pay), C5 (Performance), C6 (Promotion), C7 (Satisfaction), C8 (Age), C9 (Years in current position), C10 (Tenure), C11 (Years of experience), C12 (Job Level), C13 (Education).

	Gender	Pay	Perf	Promo	Sat	Age	YR1	TEN	YR3LVL1	
C4	0.093									
	0.182									
C5	**0.115**	**0.676**								
	0.096	0.000								
C6	0.102	**0.310**	**0.490**							
	0.139	0.000	0.000							
C7	0.086	**0.591**	**0.685**	**0.718**						
	0.215	0.000	0.000	0.000						
C8	0.028	**0.194**	**0.185**	-0.055	0.098					
	0.691	0.005	0.007	0.433	0.159					
C9	**0.178**	**0.134**	**0.116**	-0.064	0.001	**0.657**				
	0.010	0.055	0.095	0.357	0.983	0.000				
C10	**0.186**	**0.197**	**0.199**	-0.030	0.038	**0.700**	**0.766**			
	0.007	0.004	0.004	0.661	0.588	0.000	0.000			
C11	0.021	**0.183**	0.207	-0.003	0.088	**0.887**	**0.715**	**0.737**		
	0.757	0.008	0.003	0.960	0.204	0.000	0.000	0.000		
C12	-0.044	0.007	0.066	0.031	0.053	**0.324**	**0.327**	**0.263**	**0.395**	
	0.533	0.924	0.351	0.655	0.448	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
C13	**-0.140**	-0.112	0.034	-0.002	0.075	**0.274**	-0.009	0.005	**0.188**	**0.148**
	0.045	0.113	0.627	0.975	0.283	0.000	0.902	0.948	0.007	0.037

DEMANDS FOR EMERGING EDUCATION

STRONGER RESEARCH CAPACITY

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Abstract: *The countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are experiencing a higher demand than ever for research capacity and innovation. "the 2006 World Bank Knowledge Economy Index showed all GCC countries rated below the world average for the Innovation sub-index and the Education sub-index world rankings improved for the UAE and Bahrain only" (McGlennon, n.d.).*

These findings indicate that the articulation, reconfiguration, and cross-appropriation spheres of education in this region need to incorporate a research component. Given the need to improve the GCC nations' capacity for research and the availability of the Gulf Research Center for that purpose, this paper proposes that the emerging educational paradigm be grounded in the "innovative economies and strong R&D communities and other 'emerging innovators' cited by Furman and Hayes (2004)" and that this conference might be used in part to develop the groundwork for a stronger research orientation in today's educational institutions in the region (McGlennon, n.d.). The paper will investigate these "innovative economies" and "strong R&D communities" to determine how best to create a culture of innovation in the GCC educational arena, bolstering the existing capacity for research and innovation by making a place for it in the educational framework and creating pathways and mechanisms for ongoing development in this area. It will also explore how innovation and research must become an integral part of the educational community's focus as well as a priority within corporations in addition to being funded by government grant monies in order to gain a place of ascendancy within GCC nation society, thus elevating the GCC nations' capacity for developing creative new solutions. Finally, it will address the observations of Spinosa, Flores, and Dreyfus regarding the reconfiguration, cross-appropriation, and articulation necessary to institute research and innovation as part of the academic world in the GCC nations as they point out in their book Disclosing New Worlds: Entrepreneurship, Democratic Action, and the Cultivation of Solidarity.

The objective of the paper is to elucidate the problem of inadequate research in the Middle East and to promote brainstorming that can result in the identification of solutions for the problem. In addition the methodology involves selecting individuals that will brainstorm and generate ideas for how the problem can be solved. Each offered solution was weighed against three criteria—the workableness of the solution, effectiveness, and ability to address and remedy the problem. Each of the participants provided at least one solution, and usually more, for solving the Middle East's research insufficiency. These results were assessed in accordance with the three criteria, and of the potential solutions that passed these criteria, some of the most notable included acquainting people with the costs of not doing research, holding a conference where the issue could be debated, and creating an online Middle Eastern research community.

This study's literature review elucidated the need for change in terms of the Middle East's research capacity, and the ideas offered by the research subjects for addressing the issue provided a good basis for responding to it in a constructive manner. These suggestions can be followed up on and researched individually to lay out a process by which they can be implemented, and then periodic evaluations can be conducted following implementation to ascertain the degree of improvement found.

I. INTRODUCTION

The vast amount of knowledge available today via the Internet brings the world to the doorstep of every computer owner. Nevertheless, knowing how to research effectively and find the particular information that is needed, not to mention how to verify and validate the information and use it to create new knowledge, is a rare skill. Particularly in the Middle East, the need for such research is increasingly urgent, yet the availability of knowledge workers whom are expert at research is severely limited. Dr. Hanif Al Qassimi, Vice-President of Zayed University, states that "Research at the university level plays a crucial role in new knowledge creation and is an important part of the growth and development of a nation." (Staff Reporter, 2008) The need to develop research expertise in the countries of the GCC and to "align research priorities with the needs of industry and government" (Staff Reporter, 2008) is critical if the GCC is to keep pace with the West. The highest-ever demand for research capacity and innovation in the GCC is evidenced by the World Economic Forum's 2006 Global Competitiveness Index, which ranked these capacities among 125 countries, with the GCC countries falling between 49-117 in scientific research institutions (McGlennon, n.d.).

According to the 2006 World Bank Knowledge Economy Index, "all GCC countries rated below the world average for the Innovation sub-index and the Education sub-index world rankings" except for the UAE and Bahrain (McGlennon, n.d.). Moreover, on its website, the United Nations Development Programme states that "Turning knowledge assets into knowledge capital requires the production of new knowledge in all areas" but points out that the number of qualified knowledge workers in the region is only 371 per million citizens (United Nations Development Programme). Even more startling, the report states that "It is now commonplace that the knowledge gap, rather than the income gap, determines the prospects of countries in today's world economy" (United Nations Development Programme).

On its website the United Nations Development Programme quantifies the kind and extent of the research deficit in the Arab nations. Scientific research, in particular, is characterized by "thin production" and "weak basic research," as well as by "the almost total absence of advanced research in fields such as information technology and molecular biology" (United Nations Development Programme). The "miserly R&D expenditure" no more than 0.2% of GNP just covers salaries and only is compounded by "poor institutional support and a political and social context inimical to the development and promotion of science" (United Nations Development Programme). Moreover, qualified knowledge workers are in short supply in the region, with 608 per million fewer scientists and engineers in Arab countries than globally (United Nations Development Programme). While this state of affairs could be remedied with an increase in the number of students enrolling in scientific disciplines, such state has not been the case, as this number of students enrolling in science in all Arab countries has generally been low, and in comparison with countries such as Korea where the number of students enrolling in science is high, only Jordan and Algeria have achieved distinguishing excellence in this field (United Nations Development Programme).

It is clear that the GCC nations must improve their capacity for research, and this paper proposes a new educational paradigm pointed in that direction. The "innovative economies and strong R&D communities," as well as other "emerging innovators" cited by Furman and Hayes (2004) can become part of a culture of innovation in the GCC that will bolster existing research capacity by expanding the current educational framework to accommodate it and by creating new pathways and mechanisms to support its ongoing development in the GCC.

This paper will explore the need for a culture of innovation in the GCC's academic community that is powered by a stronger research capacity. It will examine how the GCC can best improve its research capacity and prepare itself to become a culture of innovation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the Middle East, as everywhere else in the modern world, research is essential. Yet, as Ruscoe, points out, "The region's social, economic and political terrain is littered with half-formulated or unimplemented ideas, in stark contrast with the reality of often small populations, remarkably abundant natural resources, inactive labor markets, traditional antipathies and newer enmities, set against the global backdrop of geopolitical tensions originating in the Middle East and now shaping our world" (Ruscoe, 2004). Ruscoe posits that education is not just linked to business and society but the three are "contiguous, interactive, self-forming and nowhere is this more apparent than in the research arena" is a point well taken (Ruscoe, 2004). Research whether academic or business-driven R&D "is now a prime determinant of society," and "in the end, it is education's gift to society" (Ruscoe, 2004).

A) THE STATE OF RESEARCH IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The strength of the GCC's academic community and its research provides a telling picture of the research deficit and lagging innovation capacity of the Gulf countries compared with others around the world. McGlennon cites the Arab Human Development Reports of 2002 and 2003 as listing key indicators that reveal "evidence of weak progress towards the development of knowledge economies in Arab States (McGlennon, n.d.). These include:

1) The expenditure on education per capita declined from 1985 to 1995

2) R&D expenditure averaged 0.4% GDP in 1995, compared to an average of 1.9% in the EU and more than 2.5% in the most advanced R&D countries

3) Average output of scientific papers per unit population was 2% that of an industrialized country

4) Number of scientists and engineers working in R&D was 50% of the world average

5) The proportion of Masters- and PhD-qualified researchers in the workforce was only 3% to 10% the rate in developed countries

6) R&D was funded 89% by the government and only 3% by the private sector, in comparison with more than 50% private sector funding in OECD countries (McGlennon, n.d.).

McGlennon points out that with their high national incomes, one would expect the oil-producing GCC nations to perform better than the Arab States having lower incomes, yet with the exception of macroeconomic development, Internet penetration, and PCs per unit of population, this has not been the case (McGlennon, n.d.). In fact, in terms of their number of scientists and engineers engaged in R&D and their number of research publications, the GCC nations lag behind (McGlennon, n.d.). The country rankings from the Global Competitive Index 2006/07 produced by the World Economic Forum showed that the GCC's overall rank was 41, with Bahrain ranking 49, Kuwait ranking 44, and the UAE ranking 32; the average from other MENA nations was 58 from among 130 countries (McGlennon, n.d.). Other significant indicators were the quality of scientific research institutions, in which Bahrain ranked 117th and Kuwait ranked 57th; university/industry research collaboration, in which Bahrain ranked 121st and Kuwait ranked 85th; the quality of the educational system, in which Bahrain ranked 79th and Kuwait ranked 62nd; and the quality of math and science education, in which Bahrain ranked 86th and Kuwait ranked 61st (McGlennon, n.d.).

The 2008/09 Global Competitive Index showed Kuwait ranked 35th in terms of economy, with Tunisia 36th, Bahrain 37th, and Oman 38th, and other countries in the area ranked lower than that (Sala-I-Martin et al. 2008). In terms of "efficiency enhancers," Kuwait ranked 52nd overall, with ranks of 76th in higher education and training, 81st and 106th for the quantity of higher and primary education, and 83rd for the quality of education provided (Sala-I-Martin et al. 2008). The report states that "business leaders perceive the educational system to be out of sync with the needs of a competitive economy, with math and science education highlighted in particular as needing improvement" (Sala-I-Martin et al. 2008). Although strong in institutional environment, Oman has "shortcomings in the educational system that will need to be addressed if the country wishes to advance its competitiveness". Bahrain may have "the most sophisticated financial market in the region, but needs to further improve the efficiency of its labor market and upgrade its innovative capacity" (Sala-I-Martin et al. 2008).

B) CAUSES OF THE MIDDLE EAST'S LAG IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

John Zogby, of Zogby International, references a United Nations Development Programme report written by Arabs "who admitted that the Middle East will have difficulty overcoming its current 'backwardness' in science and technology" (Eastwood, 2007). This "blistering report cited the region's lack of intellectual development and its deficiencies in modern research infrastructure, even decrying the lack of books in the Islamic world (Eastwood, 2007). But why is the Islamic world "backward" in science and technology in particular? Segal explains this bizarre phenomenon in his article for the Middle East Quarterly, "Why Does the Muslim World Lag in Science?" Segal notes that 41 predominantly Muslim countries boasting approximately 20% of the world's total population produce less than 5% of its science, and this disparity can be traced back to such factors as foreign invasions, political instability, and the rise of religious intolerance, as well as to the role of Islam in Middle Eastern history (Segal 1996). According to Segal, "the great theologian Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (1059-1111) used the tools of the philosophers to undermine philosophical and scientific inquiry" (Segal 1996). As Bernard Lewis puts it, "The Renaissance, Reformation, even the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, passed unnoticed in the Muslim World," with Muslims relying on religious minorities such as Armenians, Greeks, and Jews to fill key posts such as that of court physician or translators (Segal 1996). Segal also asserts that the decline in science is due to the fact that the "Islamization of science" has occurred only in Pakistan. However, where fundamentalists have "attempted to impose a version of Islamic science" initiated when Zia-ul-Haq's government in 1987 introduced fundamentalist doctrines into science curricula and funded research on such topics as "the temperature of hell and the chemical nature of jinns (Segal 1996). Instead, Segal attributes the "brain-drain" in the Sudan to the mass exodus of 500,000 Sudanese technicians and professionals that have emigrated to Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf, and elsewhere since 1960 (Segal 1996). Although the military-fundamentalist junta that came to power in 1989 attempted to slow down this exodus of talent, the loss of scientists, engineers, and physicians left the Sudan deprived of such scientific talent (Segal 1996).

Still, the effects of Islam on the Muslim World's science gap cannot be denied. Pervez Hoodbhoy, a Pakistani physicist and science policy writer, explains that there are three primary Muslim responses to modern science: rejection, reconciliation, and denial (Segal 1996). The rejecting faction of fundamentalist Muslims see science as "immoral and materialist," as evidenced by the statement of a Muslim Brethren leader in Egypt who declared that epidemics are "a form of divine punishment" that can be explained by saying that "God developed the microbe and kept it away from those He wished to spare (Segal 1996). The reconciling faction, a larger group, would like to find new interpretations of the Qur'an that reconcile "revealed truth and physical reality" (Segal 1996). The group in denial, which Segal estimates is "perhaps predominant," sees religion and faith as simply unrelated to modern science and "sustains the vague belief that Islam and science are not in conflict, without ever closely examining the specifics" (Segal 1996). An understanding of this history and background of the Muslim World explains how it became an under producer of science. Now the issue is to correct that situation.

C) CURRENT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RESEARCH IN THE AREA

The Director of the Cultural Department in the GCC General Secretariat, Mezyed Al-Mezyed, heralded a three-day 2008 seminar on "GCC Cultural Development Plan" with the admonition that "GCC Ministers responsible for culture in the Gulf countries should set cultural policy plans, develop mechanism[s] and tools, which would facilitate the success of the plan" and called for regulations and legislation that would facilitate cultural cooperation among GCC nations (KUNA, 2008). The referenced plan includes a variety of suggestions, including joint work in electronic publishing and joint publications such as indexes and researches (KUNA, 2008).

Key in the plan for revitalizing research and innovation in the GCC countries is the Gulf Research Council, or GRC. The Gulf Research Center, "a non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to independent research on the Gulf region," is located in Dubai and has as one of its objectives the aim to "enrich and foster academic and intellectual understanding of the political, economic, security, social, educational and environmental issues relevant to the Gulf region through objective research" (GRC, 2000). Mr. Abdulaziz Sager, a Saudi businessman, founded the GRC in July 2000, realizing that the rapid change in the political, social, and economic fronts that faces the GCC countries demands the pursuit of "politically neutral and academically sound research" about the GCC countries and the wide dissemination of that research; Mr. Sager is saying that because the GCC countries are facing rapid change on several fronts, they need research that is politically neutral and sound, and that research needs to be disseminated widely so that all of the GCC countries will benefit from it.(GRC, 2000). With a vision of "Knowledge for all," the GRC seeks to conduct objective and scholarly research bearing on political, economic, social and security issues, as they relate to the GCC States in particular and the Gulf region in general (GRC, 2000). The GRC is dedicated to improving the research capabilities of the GCC through promoting research, communication, and cooperation among GCC citizens, as well as through the publishing and dissemination of information about the GCC States (GRC, 2000). Even more importantly, the GRC assays to maintain a connection with and interact with both GCC national and expatriate individuals and organizations in the academic, corporate, and press communities, as well as decision makers (GRC, 2000). The GRC employs scholars and researchers as well as certified experts and academic consultants and then enlists the assistance of up and coming researchers that become involved in the GCC's programmes and activities, gaining the opportunity to meet and work with the more experienced researchers (GRC, 2000). By reinvesting its income back into its research programmes and activities, the GRC maintains both its independence and the continuity of its efforts (GRC, 2000).

A number of other initiatives intended to improve research capabilities in the Middle East are also under way. In 2007, the RAND-Qatar Policy Institute opened, with the objective to "harness the research and analytic skills of hundreds of

RAND experts in the United States and Europe to study some of the most important issues facing the Middle East" (Rand Corporations). The Qatar Foundation has launched several other education and research initiatives, and this one will be a part of the Education City n Doha to serve as "a regional center of excellence in learning, research and technology development," forging ties with other education programmes opening in Doha in the fields of medicine, science, and engineering, and providing training to the region's policy analysts in research methods striving to help leaders "make informed policy decisions" (Rand Corporations). The RAND-Qatar Policy Institute is expected to grow significantly and bring in staff from other RAND locations, as well as hire Middle Eastern analysts and consultants from the Qatar Foundation's Education City and other regional universities (Rand Corporations).

The RAND-Qatar Policy Institute is just one of many organizations in Education City, which is a 2,500-acre campus built at a cost of billions of dollars that harbors Ivy League schools such as Texas A&M, Carnegie Mellon, and Georgetown Universities (Hanley, 2007). The Qatar Foundation was founded by the royal family after Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani became the ruler of Qatar, and his wife, Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, is an active chairperson who is personally guiding Education City, the flagship project, to completion (Hanley, 2007). In its 2006-2007 school year, Education City boasted 2,000 students, which included 760 at its branch campuses; less than 50% are Qatari nationals, and the rest come from 45 other countries (Hanley, 2007). The studies involve not just classroom work but also work on relief projects such as Habitat for Humanity and Reach Out to Asia Relief Aid Effort; some students went to Pakistan to provide assistance following the 2005 Kashmiri earthquake (Hanley, 2007). The goal of Education City, according to Al-Thani, is "to produce a pool of well-trained graduates...and to become a hub for researchers using Education City's world-class facilities" (Hanley, 2007). The Qatar Foundation's Communications Adviser, Robert Baxter, states, "Education City wants to reverse the brain drain to become a brain magnet," and the graduates are being recruited by local businesses even before they graduate, so it is likely that many will stay in the area (Hanley, 2007). Moreover, students are offered interest-free loans that are based on a family financial assessment, and students staying on to work in Qatar after graduation receive a 10% adjustment for each year they stay; "if he or she stays and works long enough, there is no loan left to repay" (Hanley, 2007). Interestingly, the predominantly Muslim Qatar chose Georgetown University, a Jesuit school, as its flagship campus, a choice the dean explains as a move to develop "cross-cultural understanding" and to fulfill "its mission of educating citizen leaders" (Hanley, 2007).

D) WHAT IS STILL LACKING

Education City holds much promise for beginning the process of developing better educational facilities and a cadre of budding researchers in the area. However, these are strictly academic researchers. Research capabilities are needed in every area of life in the GCC. Samira Mohyuddin, Senior Manager-Research at Aldar Properties, is a recent transplant to Abu Dhabi from the U.K. and has found the region's standard of research to be "lacking" (Cityscape Intelligence. 2001) Mohyuddin stated, "It seemed to me that sometimes researchers were able to get away with carrying out research knowing that other people were not going to read it. It also became apparent that the lack of data in the region is a real issue and the quality of the data that does exist is lacking, especially in real estate" (Cityscape Intelligence. 2001). This issue is compounded by the fact that the research that does exist is not targeted to the Middle Eastern culture or business environment. Research in the corporate world being as equally abysmal as that in the scientific realm. As AlJanahi point out in their empirical analysis of GCC companies in the Islamic Banking System, "Models of emerging markets often ignore corporate crises and business failure and are based on research in western economic situations, assuming western institutional patterns and attitudes" (AlJanahi et al. 2001). They report that research in the area of corporate turnaround in the Middle East as "weak" and the findings as "inconclusive" as a result of the "unanswered questions about what characteristics set turnaround firms apart from firms which continue to decline and eventually fail," and note that "Many publications in this field of research lack an empirical base for prescription, and much of the advice offered suffers from a restrictive cultural specificity" (AlJanahi et al. 2001). Roztocki asserted that "very little research is reported about the impact of IT investments on business value in organizations," since such investments "are often initiated and led by investors from North America and Western Europe, which also impacts their economies" (Roztocki et al. 2004). Virtually no matter what topic is examined or from what domain scientific, corporate, academic, or other the Middle Eastern world lacks adequate research on it that is both substantive and consistent with the Middle Eastern culture.

E) WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

The research advantages provided by such projects as Education City are substantial. Education City brings quality, Ivy League education to the Middle East where the process of educating students from the GCC nations to a higher level can begin, and Middle Easterners can begin to learn how to conduct research that is commensurate with that at the great research institutions and universities around the world. However, this is just a beginning process. Between now and the culmination of efforts many years from now to raise research quality in the Middle East, there still exists a dramatic gap, not only in the ability to do high-level research but also in the availability of such research that targets the Middle Eastern culture and issues. The Middle East needs to find a way to address this gap in the interim while research capabilities are being strengthened. Moreover, Education City only answers one part of the entire issue. The Middle East needs more than just education. If it is to become a region of innovation, it needs to develop a culture that supports innovation, and it needs to develop it quickly in order to become and remain competitive in a 21st Century landscape where innovators rise to the top quickly and everyone else falls by the wayside just as quickly. The Middle East needs to redefine itself through policy changes that promote greater R&D, greater academic participation in R&D, and the development of an innovative culture in the corporate and academic worlds. Moreover, the region needs to align itself with high-tech, high-growth small firms (SMEs) that are vital for a modern economy (Ruscoe, 2004). SMEs can help increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the public sector, particularly if policy is developed to support small-business R&D and the "diffusion of best practice, training and access to information" (Ruscoe, 2004). Both high-tech and traditional SMEs, the ability to connect with "outside centers of excellence academic and business" can help to develop the research and knowledge capabilities of the region (Ruscoe, 2004). Partnerships with other firms that already have strong R&D, and even mergers and acquisitions with such firms can do much to enhance the Middle East's knowledge base and research skills, as well.

In addition to these efforts, research should be conducted to obtain further ideas for suggesting stopgaps to the brain drain in the region, building up the capacity for research and innovation, and forming a bridge between the cultural environment that is antithetical to research and one that is more open to it. Segal advises promoting "shop-floor learning and informal research, especially in locally owned enterprises," as well as allowing professional societies to exert an influence on science education and communications (Segal 1996). He also recommends developing a consensus on research priorities in the Muslim world, such as "solar energy, desalination, and lands agriculture, irrigation, animal sciences, and petrochemicals" (Segal 1996). Regional and sub-regional cooperation and collaboration can help to fill in the void in scientific knowledge and research more quickly, as well (Segal 1996). However, "these incremental and pragmatic measures must still confront a hostile environment," and "for science again to flourish in Muslim countries requires recognition that it requires long-term continuities, the lessening of authoritarianism and a serious effort to reconcile faith and reason" (Segal 1996).

This study acknowledges that the need to enhance and improve research in the Middle Eastern countries requires more than just an infusion of money, universities, or research facilities. The greatest obstacle to effective research is a cultural one that none of these interventions can fully address. That may be another problem, but it is not the issue being addressed in this paper, and the research I have done does not indicate that it is the major obstacle; I am examining the antipathy to research. The problem of amending an inherent antipathy to science and scientific research, however, while leaving religion undisturbed is problematic. The inhibitions and prohibitions against research are largely religiously derived, yet Middle Easterners of every religion must deal with the disadvantages on a daily basis whether they subscribe to the particular teachings that precipitated them or not.

III. METHODOLOGY

A) RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem to be addressed is how to promote research in the Middle Eastern culture when religiously derived cultural norms mitigate against it. The lack of interest in research in the Middle East is the issue this paper is about. There are religiously derived cultural norms that have mitigated against research in the Middle Eastern culture as the sources cited document. This is a serious problem that needs to be remedied, or the Middle East will continue to operate too far below what it is really capable of. The problem explores the fact that a people can have all of the intelligence, money, and other resources needed to progress scientifically, but if they do not believe in the need for and validity of scientific research, they will not pursue it, even though pursuing it would be advantageous for them monetarily.

B) RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The research objective is to invite brainstorming and creative ideas that will produce new approaches to address the issue.

C) METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The methodological framework is qualitative, as the solution being sought is not one that can be derived statistically but one that must be creatively devised. Through brainstorming and creative thought processes, the study will attempt to find an answer to the problem of cultural and religious inhibitions against research in the Middle East.

Research Question

The research question being explored in this study is "How can research in the Middle East be promoted successfully despite the religious and cultural inhibitions against it. This question assays to find solutions to the dilemma of resistance to research.

Proposition

The proposition of this research is that despite a long history of resisting scientific and other forms of research due to its cultural and religious norms, the Middle East can develop new approaches that enable it to engage in such research without undermining its religious heritage.

Target Population and Sampling Methods

The target population includes 10 randomly selected individuals in Kuwait who have the time to participate. And it was randomly because no special skills are needed to do this, and individuals in Kuwait are familiar with the religious culture against scientific research. Since a quantitative approach is not being used, the size of the sample is not as significant as the individuals' creativity and ability to "think outside the box." The sampling method consists of choosing individuals at random and explaining the research to them, then asking if they would like to participate in brainstorming and providing creative ideas for solving the problem.

D) RESEARCH DESIGN

The research is structured by the available time for the project, which was limited. It is therefore a relatively simple project with just one variable being researched, that of the participants' opinions on how the problem of the Middle East's lagging research can be addressed. The method of data collection to be used is face-to-face interviews after participants have had at least 24 hours to think about the problem and develop some ideas in response to it. The reason that this method was selected is to promote more creative thinking and innovative solutions than the standard method of using questionnaires or surveys. In addition, uniformity was not sought or necessarily desirable in this case, because the necessity for validated results was not there. We just wanted creative ideas that could possibly be implemented to help solve the problem. Therefore, during the face-to-face interviews, the interviewer encouraged the respondents as they offered ideas and suggestions and asked them to elaborate further if they had ideas that sounded particularly viable. Some ideas were not viable or not actionable, and this is to be expected when asking people to brainstorm. The idea is to allow people to generate as many ideas as possible and then to go back and extract only the ideas that hold promise of being both doable and effective.

E) DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

The data, being qualitative, was evaluated in terms of workableness, effectiveness, and ability to address and remedy the problem. Other considerations such as cost and time, unless extreme, were set aside to focus on whether the idea would be likely to work. Each idea had to pass all three tests; workableness, effectiveness, and ability to address and remedy the problem in order to be included in the list of solutions being considered for implementation.

IV. FINDINGS/DISCUSSION

The findings included a number of ideas that were innovative and that could be implemented in the Middle East to solve the problem. The following chart includes all of the ideas offered, some of which will be discussed here as bearing further examination, and it is hoped, adopted by Middle Eastern nations to resolve the problem of lagging research due to cultural and religious inhibitions against it.

TABLE 1. INNOVATIVE IDEAS

Partic. No.	Idea/Concept/Thought/Suggestion/Solution Offered
1	Acquaint people with the costs of not doing research
1	Provide free seminars on the benefits of doing research
2	Have the Mosque/Church address the issue
2	Disseminate information on the economic health of researching nations
2	Explain why research is necessary for competitiveness
3	Include benefits of doing research in school textbooks and curriculum
3	Make a separation between religion and science at Mosque/Church level
4	Make research available for those whose religious beliefs do not conflict
4	Start with research into professional groups and proceed from there
5	Set up enclaves of research throughout the community
5	"Borrow" researchers to demonstrate the benefits of research to Kuwaitis
5	Pass legislation legitimizing research and providing funding for it
6	Create an online Middle Eastern research community
6	Create a network of researchers that gives talks to the community
7	Have a meeting between interested parties and researchers
7	Start a research group from within the community
8	Have a conference where religious views and scientific views are debated
8	Have research and the religion efforts parallel each other separate but equal
8	"Seed" research advocates into the community, transform and gain agreement from within
9	Ignore the Mosque/Church and proceed with research
10	Multiply research capacity by having researchers teach at every school level
10	Create research societies that bring in talent from EU and US

All of these ideas bore further study, and many of them were found to meet the three criteria: workableness, effectiveness, and ability to address and remedy the problem. A simple model (Fig. 1) illustrates the process of evaluating each idea for inclusion in the set of ideas that would remain in the evaluation for the next iteration of assessment. The three criteria were assessed subjectively using the author's reasoning. Workability was judged to be achieved if the idea could possibly be implemented ethically and legally and would not require permission, materials, or manpower that are impossible to obtain. Effectiveness was judged to be achieved if the idea could logically accomplish its intended end. Ability to address and/or remedy the problem was judged to be achieved if the idea could, if successful, relieve the problem in part or in whole.

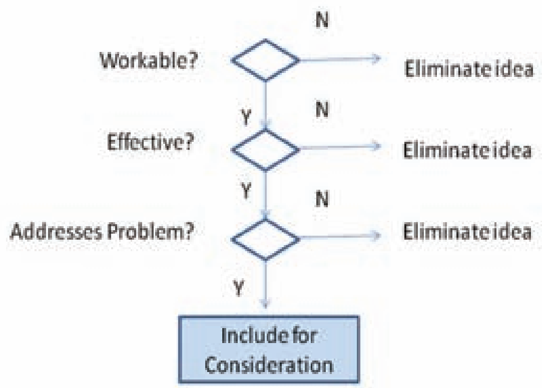

Figure 1. Is the idea workable, effective, and does it address the problem?

The ideas retained for further consideration then had to be aggregated where necessary. The best ideas were actionable with little or no adaptation, right "out of the box," but many addressed only one aspect of the problem and would need to be paired with other solutions to provide a complete answer to the problem. For example, Participant #1's idea to acquaint people with the costs of not doing research is workable through public service spots and is effective in the sense that it would demonstrate clearly why it is in the interests of the community to foster research. It is also, able to address and remedy the problem by correcting the prevalent thinking that research is not important. However, by itself, this approach would probably have only limited success, because it does not address the religious aspect of the issue. Thus, it would have to be part of an approach that includes one or more of the other suggestions, such as Participant #2's idea to have the Mosque/Church address the issue or Participant #8's idea to seed researchers into the community to transform them from within. The suggestions can in this way be paired up in a vast number of ways to produce complementary approaches. Figure 2 depicts the model with this step added.

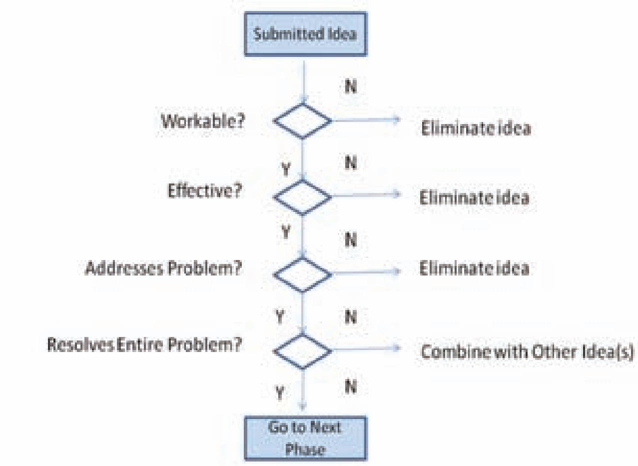

Figure 2. Does idea need to be combined with other ideas?

Once a series of acceptable combinations of suggestions is settled on, then the next phase is to consider issues of time and cost. For example, the combination discussed above might have excellent utility for addressing the problem, but the time it takes to transform the society from within might run into years, if not decades. Likewise, some suggestions, such as Participant #5's idea to set up enclaves of research throughout the community, could be prohibitively expensive. The combined ideas arrived at in the step above are funneled back into the assessment to be evaluated in terms of whether they fit into the current time and cost parameters. Since the combined ideas have been assessed to be workable, effective, and to address the problem, they are not eliminated at this point if they do not meet current time and cost criteria, because those criteria can change, and the ideas may meet those criteria at a future time. Therefore, they are merely held for future consideration as shown in Figure 3, while ideas that do meet time and cost criteria are finalized as viable solutions. Once a set of acceptable combinations is settled on, they can be ranked according to their time/cost-intensiveness. This will result in the least expensive and fastest of the acceptable combinations ranking highest and being given first consideration.

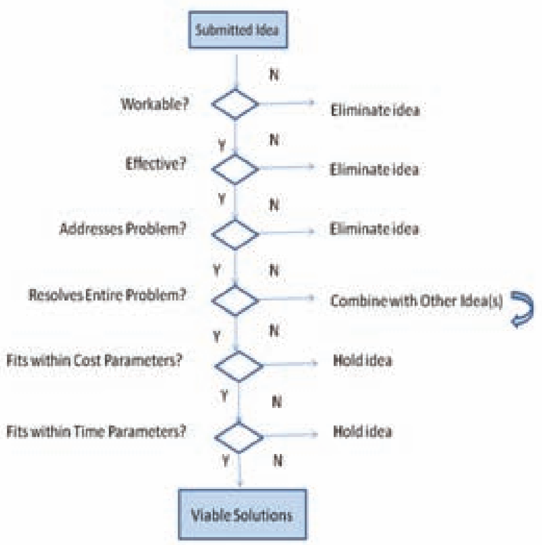

Figure 3. Time and Cost Evaluation Added to Previous Factors

V. CONCLUSION/IMPLICATIONS

This was a small sample of only 10 participants, yet the number of combinations that could result from their suggestions is potentially very large. While initially it was assumed that computer-based analysis of the data would not be necessary or feasible, particularly since the data is qualitative, in actuality, it is now clear that a computer-based analysis would be quite helpful. This would enable the researchers to rank each of the suggestions on each of the three criteria as well as on two additional criteria, time and cost. Furthermore, as the suggestions are combined, the analysis process becomes more complex, and computer-based analysis would simplify the process of ranking the combinations and printing them out with various criteria ranked uppermost, and this can be a further research for this study that the researcher will obtain in the next step of the study.

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FACILITATION OF STUDENT SELF-LEARNING -CAN IT BE IMPLEMENTED SUCCESSFULLY IN THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COUNTRIES?

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ABSTRACT

A major criterion for graduates of the College for Women (CFW), Kuwait University, is to be self-learners. The leadership competency domain is a component of the academic program at CFW, which includes a course entitled: Career Perspectives. The author taught this course several times with emphasis on facilitation of self-learning by students. The students were provided with handouts and course materials via e-mail. Students are instructed to form one set of groups that will summarize a chapter in the assigned textbook for the course and another set of groups that will be making visits to work places. Each group would prepare a write up about its visit or summary of an assigned chapter and will make an oral presentation on each of these assignments. Each group is also instructed to have enough copies of the write ups for each student in class and for the course instructor and assignments are carried out with minimal guidance from the instructor. Each student in class completes a series of specifically-designed assignments that involve career matters, such as: self-assessment, career vision, searching for job announcements, job application, resume writing and aspects of job interviews. Students are given a take-home midterm examination, a new experience for most of the students. A simple questionnaire was constructed and administered to learn about students' opinion of the way this course was taught. Most students (68.3%, n = 251 - 262) favored this teaching approach and, thus, students seem to have accepted the way this course was conducted, in which self-learning by students is facilitated. Most students who finished the course commented to the course instructor that the amount of work done was of a large magnitude, but most felt that the benefits of the course for now and the future are tremendous. It is believed that this method of promoting student self-learning can be implemented at institutions of higher learning in the Gulf Cooperation Countries.

INTRODUCTION

The education system in most governmental schools, up to the high school level, in many parts of the world may not support the idea of self-learning. This seems to be the norm in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries. Such a traditional system would most likely depend on memorization of taught subjects and the way students are assessed seems to enhance the memory-recall pattern. Even at the university level, most students continue this memorization-type of education as a carryover effect from previous years. University students would be expected to be self-learners and should be encouraged to be such.

While traditional methods of teaching are sound and being practiced, there is a need to develop new approaches. Educators strive to achieve the set student learning objectives for the courses they teach and are also expected to play a significant role in the development process of their students. Institutions of higher learning should have a sizable share in enhancing students to become self-learners. However, prevalent circumstances at any given institution vary and educators may take appropriate initiatives in developing new teaching approaches to fulfill the overall learning objectives.

One of the main objectives of the College for Women (CFW), Kuwait University, Kuwait, is to graduate female students who are self-learners and would be independent thinkers to meet their challenges in the future. The educational programs offered at CFW follow outcome-based learning and are meant to support the enhancement of student self-learning. This article conveys the experience of instructing a non-science course, career perspectives, in ways where promotion of self-learning are emphasized. The implemented means for facilitation of self-learning by students are described. Student acceptance of the fashion by which such a course was taught and students' view of its benefits, based on a survey, are reported.

DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING APPROACH FOR SELF-LEARNING

The idea of teaching for self-learning was developed when circumstances lead the author of this paper, a physiologist, to volunteer to instruct a course on career perspectives. This course involves many theoretical and practical aspects of work and the work place. The author has taught this course solely every semester since the Fall semester of 2006 and its method of teaching was created while being taught for the first time. The hypothesis relative to this work, relevant academic program, the course involved and the way it was conducted are briefly described herein.

HYPOTHESIS

Knowing that the governmental education system in Kuwait does not enhance students to be self-learners, it was hypothesized that students enrolled in this career perspectives course would not easily accept the method it was taught – i.e., would prefer the traditional way of instruction.

COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT AND ACADEMIC PROGRAM

A description of the College for Women (CFW), Kuwait University, State of Kuwait, has been recently reported by El-Sabban (2008). Currently, five academic departments offer undergraduate education leading to the B.Sc. degree. The curricula being offered at CFW follow outcome-based learning system, which will be instrumental in approval/accreditation of these academic programs by noted educational and/or professional entities. The language of instruction at CFW is English.

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY DOMAIN

Students at CFW have several domains to choose from to fulfill the requirements of their academic achievements (The College Academic Program, 2008). One of such domains is known as the Leadership Competency Domain, for which students need to complete a total of six credit hours. Such credits are attained by taking three different courses. Among the list of courses under the leadership domain is the course entitled "Career Perspectives", given the designation of CFW 260. This is a three-credit course and meets three times a week, 50 min per class.

CAREER PERSPECTIVES COURSE

Learning objectives of CFW 260 are many and involve aspects of work and the work place. Among those are that students recognize career development theories, realize their potentials as future members of the labor force, be familiar with relevant terminology, search for job announcements, prepare a resume, write effective job-related letters, realize and practice aspects of job interviews. A textbook entitled "Taking Charge of Your Career Direction: Career Planning Guide" by Lock (2005) was chosen for this course. This book contains 10 chapters that cover many topics relevant to the content of the course. An additional chapter from another textbook was assigned for the purpose of giving students an overview of such contents.

STUDENTS AND COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Enrollment for this course is open to all students, those who have already chosen a major subject for their specialization and those who have not. The only prerequisite for CFW 260 is for students to pass a specified English Language course. Until the time of writing this article, a total number of students of 262 have taken this course since September 2006. The course was taught solely by the author, a career physiologist and educator, since that time. Circumstances at CFW, then, lead the author to volunteer to teach this course – which was not based on claimed expertise in careers as a subject taught at the university, but was more based on his own career experience.

IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING FOR SELF-LEARNING

The main idea of this approach is to stimulate and motivate students to become self-learners. There are many ways by which this was implemented, either with individual students or groups of students. It must be reported that throughout the different components described below, the course instructor was available for help in any possible way to foster student self-learning.

COMMUNICATION VIA E-MAIL

For the course instructor to have constant communication with students, an e-mail account is established specifically for this course with an easy password that all enrolled students can remember. The main purpose of this e-mail account is for the instructor to disseminate all relevant information, announcements and document files containing handouts. Students are informed of this e-mail and its main purpose as they begin the semester and are clearly advised not to use this e-mail for communicating with the course instructor. For a student who wishes to communicate with the course instructor, the advice is to use her own personal e-mail account. This is by design, so that the course e-mail account would not be cluttered with many messages and directions by students – however students are permitted only to forward any of the messages in the inbox compartment to their respective e-mail accounts. Even though the course instructor advises students to check the course e-mail, he alerted students to messages of significant information.

STUDENT GROUP WORK

Enrolled students, 30 - 40 per class, are informed to form groups of 3-4 students per group. The course instructor provides students with skeletons of 2 tables, each of which has slots for 10 groups – i.e., a total of 20 groups are formed by the same students in class. The skeleton of each table contains a filled column describing each group's task (visits to work places in Kuwait and summarizing of a book chapter) and the date of each group's oral presentation. The only column that would be filled in each table is that which has the names of students of each group. This process is carried out by pure choice of students belonging to each group and it is completed by the 2nd week of the course at the latest. Students are then provided with the two completely filled-out tables and are given 2-3 days for any possible final changes of their groups. Once the finalized tables are sent to students, everyone is committed.

Student groups are requested to perform two task types, one of which is to make a visit to a work place and another to summarize a chapter among the chapters of the assigned textbook and the additional chapter of another book. Visits to work places were designed to be an equal mix of five public and five private sector entities – however, each group was free to choose the place to visit. Students are told to arrange for their visit on their own and the instructor may provide a letter for the visited site to facilitate this task if needed. Each group would explore the work place and report on their visit in its own style – however, in a fashion that would be revolving around the objectives of the course. Student groups are to prepare a hard copy of a handout about their oral presentations, usually a PowerPoint type. Enough handouts are prepared for each student in class and for the course instructor.

The other task type is to summarize a chapter from a possible total of 10. The course instructor presents chapter 1 of the textbook, as an example of highlighting the main points of a chapter. Students are requested to prepare 2 sets of handouts. One set of handouts involves the summary of the chapter involved, with a brief section on terminology and a number of questions that the group devises and the model answers for such questions. The other set of handouts involves a PowerPoint presentation. As with the task of visiting work places, each group makes sure that all students would be provided with handouts prior to the start of the oral presentation concerned.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT WORK

Assignments:
Students are given five assignments over the span of the course. These assignments are carefully selected and are designed for each student to make a self-evaluation, dreams and future plans, test readiness when applying for job, search for job announcements, prepare a resume and write a letter of application. Most assignments are sent via e-mail and with full instructions and deadlines. Students are also provided with a format for a cover page, identifying the course, semester, name of instructor, assignment number, title of assignment, student name, and university I.D. number that each student would use when handing in each assignment. The same cover page, with appropriate changes in items entered, is used for any materials that students prepare and hand in to the course instructor. Students are also informed on how their assignments will be assessed, that includes content, appearance, use of English, and adherence to the set deadline. Assignments are marked by the course instructor and are returned to students with appropriate feedback.

Take Home Midterm Examination:
Up until the time that students take this course, very few of them have had an experience with a take home examination type. This examination is given to students about three weeks prior to its deadline. Usually, there are five examination questions for which the student would search for answers. These questions are chosen to expand the student's knowledge and awareness of certain issues about jobs and aspects of work in society, such as the components of the labor force, unemployment, and women at the work place among many others. Students are informed that they have all possible means to seek such answers. The front page of the examination paper includes an honor code whereby students acknowledge whether help by others was obtained or not. Students are instructed to observe the proper use of English, neat appearance, organization and to provide references for the sources of information contained in their prepared examination package.

Bonus Assignments:
Students are allowed a number of opportunities for bonus assignments, for each there is an extra mark towards the course final grade. Students are informed of such assignments, with the understanding that such are optional. Topics for these assignments are not structured as part of the course, but are given as certain points of interest arise, such as public job and recruitment fairs, social and economic news in the mass media that affect jobs and careers. All applicable rules for preparing and handing in of assignments are also observed.

Quizzes:
Two quizzes are conducted for this course. The first quiz is given around the first 3rd of the semester and the second would be about four weeks before the end of the semester.

OTHER COURSE ACTIVITIES

Invited Speakers:
Two selected prominent local professionals are invited to the classroom to relate their career journey. Such individuals are most likely having a family and successful in their profession, both as an inspiration for career success and to demonstrate that a balance between family and work aspects can be achieved with proper time management. In a hospitable classroom environment, students are free to ask any questions and make comments as they please.

Debates:
Students have the opportunity to debate issues about jobs and the work world. Such issues can be global, like the current economic crisis and its effect on jobs. Issues are also local, such as socio-economic factors: the woman in the labor force, stress on the job, discrimination in society, unemployment…etc.

GRADING OF STUDENT WORK

The final course grade includes two main components: course work (all individual assignments, group tasks, quizzes and midterm examination – which account for 60% of the final grade and the final examination weighs the remainder 40%. Marks for bonus assignments are added at the end to the total attained marks for the course.

Assessment of oral presentations by groups is done by all students and the course instructor, according to an approved rubric (CFW website, Oral Presentation Evaluation Form). Individual scores were averaged and the resultant score was given to each student member of the presenting group. Other types of individual student assignments, quizzes and the midterm examination were graded by the course instructor.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE SELF-LEARNING APPROACH

A simple survey was used to assess the level of acceptance of this self-learning approach by students. Thus, a questionnaire containing 15 statements was devised, as shown in Table 1. The survey was administered retroactively for students who were enrolled in the course from September 2006 until June 2008. Fresh data were collected at the end of each subsequent semester until January 2010. Only 12 students out of 40 of the first students to be instructed (Fall 2006) were located and responded to the questionnaire. Most of these students are presumed to have graduated and were not available. Students of this first group were not assigned to visit a work place as part of their grade. In fact, it was this group that suggested this idea, which was implemented immediately with the group that followed and on. Out of a total number of 235 students, responses were collected from 206 (88%). The main purpose of this survey was to test the hypothesis that students will not accept this no-traditional fashion of teaching.

Results of this survey were analyzed and are presented in Table 1. The overall assessment by students showed a favorable percentage for statements 1-14 rating of 83.91+6.0, with 10.4+3.5 undecided and 5.7+3.9 disagreeing. Percent ratings of statement 15, relating to preference for teaching this course were 68.3 disagreeing to traditional teaching, 13.4 undecided and 18.3 agreeing. Thus, it can be concluded that the majority of students have accepted the way this course was taught, which nullifies the set hypothesis.

At the end of the questionnaire sheet, students were invited to write their comments. A total of 31 comments were obtained, representing 11.8% of total responses. Most of the comments were compound, i.e., involved more than one point. The following conveys the sentiments of such comments:

1) A variety of words of thanks to the course instructor: 9 comments. Some direct quotes about the instructor were:

- I like your way of teaching.
- Thank you for respecting us.

2) Comments expressing that the course was good, great, enjoyable, useful, helpful, beneficial and interesting totaled 14. Some of the direct quotes about the course were:

- I really would like to take it again.
- It was unique.
- I like the way it was taught.
- It was fun and I liked learning together.
- We felt like one family in class.
- I learned a lot without memorizing.
- This course boosted my self-confidence.
- Best course with a great outcome.
- I learned so much and I will work on improving myself.
- This course served as a guide to a successful career.

3) Representative direct quotes on assignments and course activities:

- I enjoyed the take home midterm examination.
- Make the final examination a take home type also.
- Number of visits needs to be reduced.
- Assignments were beneficial to me.
- The work load was a bit big.
- Student presentations did not attract my attention, but handouts were useful.
- Student summarization of chapters not useful.
- Teacher should teach most of the course, but it is nice to have students to make presentations.

4) Other direct quotes were:

- I faced difficulties while working with my group.
- I am still feeling shy.

ADVANTAGES OF THE SELF-LEARNING TEACHING APPROACH

The originator of this combined teaching approach and the course instructor for the CFW 260 course is the author of this article. The expressed views about advantages of the implemented method are those as perceived by the course instructor and as supported by the student assessment and comments made. Advantages are both educational (knowledge gained) and developmental (including commitment), both of which are significant aspects of higher education. These perceived advantages of each component can be summarized as follows:

COMMUNICATION VIA E-MAIL

- Flexibility in time of opening the e-mail for any time access.
- Receive information on own outside the classroom.
- Information remains permanent for future and frequent accessing.
- Read messages and be aware of important announcements.
- Print messages and handouts as appropriate.
- Communicate by e-mail with the course instructor about any sent information or materials.
- Enhancement of the use of nowadays technology.

STUDENT GROUP WORK

Visits to Work Places:

- Connect with other students to form a group.
- Learn how to work in a group to achieve a certain task.
- Communicate with personnel at the work place and know what questions to ask?
- Explore the structural organization and work conditions at work sites.
- Prepare a PowerPoint presentation.
- Develop the ability and skills of speaking before an audience.
- Summarization of Book Chapters
- Connect with other students to form a group.
- Learn how to work in a group to achieve a certain task.
- Actually read and digest the content of the assigned chapter.
- Learn how to divide labor among group members.
- Prepare a PowerPoint presentation.
- Develop the ability and skills of speaking before an audience.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT WORK

Assignments:

- Commitment to finish up the assignment.
- Adherence to the use of a format (cover) page.
- Improvement of the use of English (it being a second language to all students).
- Preparation of neat documents/packages.
- Adherence to set deadlines.
- Learning from the instructor's feedback on assignments.

Take Home Midterm Examination:

- Adherence to set rules of producing a complete document/package.
- Knowledge gained from searching for information.
- An exercise in honesty when declaring whether received help from others or not.
- Having a new experience with this type of examination.

Bonus Assignments:

- Newly gained knowledge.
- Further adherence to formats and rule for preparation of documents/packages.
- The feel of personal responsibility and carrying out an extra effort.
- Earning an extra credit for each bonus assignment.

OTHER COURSE ACTIVITIES

Invited Speakers:

- Exposure to successful career persons as real life examples.
- Inspiring and motivating students to succeed professionally.
- Recognizing the need for balance between work and other aspects of life.

Debates:

- Allow students to express their points of view and feelings about issues.
- Realization of the socioeconomic factors affecting the job market.
- Contributing to personality development.
- Acquiring good debate habits and development of respect for different opinions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Circumstances may lead educators to teach courses that are out of the main stream of their major areas of specialization; however, they must improvise and make all possible effort to achieve the set learning objectives. The opportunity of teaching this course on career perspective by a career physiologist was both unique and rewarding. The combination of components in teaching this course proved to be effective and satisfactory to most students. A great deal of thinking was expended to settle on this functional combination. The author felt that his experience needs to be shared, as the fashion by which this course was taught could be of a general benefit and in many parts of the world.

The majority of students (69.4%) liked the overall way by which this course was taught. While this is not an overwhelming majority, it is not surprising – as some students may be still under the influence of the conditions of their education system prior to their university years. However, the overall response to this teaching approach by its recipients was very encouraging. It is very pleasing that this experience has nullified the hypothesis that students whose education system did not support their self-learning would not be accepting this implemented approach. It is more pleasing to relate that students who have finished this course kept the instructor abreast of their progress and satisfaction with their achievements, particularly in the areas of resume writing and having successful job interviews. Such feedback and praise for the course and the way it was taught continued even after students have graduated from college.

It must be emphasized that it was not only putting together the components of this teaching approach that produced this satisfactory result, but also there is a number of essential considerations that the course instructor ought to follow when implementing this approach. Such considerations are related as follows:

- The instructor should make the environment warm, friendly and related so that it would be favorable for learning.
- The instructor should make him/herself available for any students' inquiries and for guidance.
- Mentioning that all students and the instructor are learning together as a group is of a special value.
- Explanation of the purpose and objectives of assignments and other course components should be an ongoing process throughout the course.
- Mention of the course map, or journey, needs to be done very early in the course and at different stages to enhance student comprehension of progress made.
- The instructor should keep students engaged in course activities and tries his/her best to make students aware of relevant aspects and news in society. Such is of value, as students can relate what they are learning with real life situations.
- The instructor should make all possible effort to expand the horizon of knowledge and awareness and exhibit utmost willingness to accept student suggestions and criticism.
- The instructor would serve as a role model: exhibiting understanding of situations, exercise flexibility, encourage debates, respect all opinions expressed and should always be a motivator.

Based on personal experience, the author feels that this experience was most pleasant and rewarding. Students can be responsive to teaching approaches that enhance their knowledge and personal development. While the response of the students who have taken this course was encouraging, it is hoped that the education system during the years prior to university education would have an element of student self-learning. Such would be of great value from an education standpoint and for the overall quality of graduates. Additionally, such would enhance one's ability to learn independently, lead and meet future challenges.

As for the GCC Countries, the author feels that the components of student self-learning can be implemented at institutions of higher education. While the method reported here can be considered successful, the author would urge instructors to experiment with different approaches and settle on whatever produces the desirable outcome. Additionally, it is extremely important that such educational approaches and experiences be shared, for the overall benefit.

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Table 1: Results of administered questionnaire about the way the course was taught and student perceived benefits of their self-learning

STATEMENT	n	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE
1- The visits made me discover many workplaces in Kuwait	251 *	93.6	5.2	1.2
2- I had to study the intended workplaces before my visit	251 *	80.5	13.1	6.4
3- I felt more confident about jobs after my visit	250 *	80.8	15.2	4.0
4- I learned greatly from summarizing my assigned chapter	262	79.0	14.5	6.5
5- Extracting most important points of the chapter was a beneficial experience to me	262	84.4	9.9	5.7
6- I felt that assignments enhanced my level of comprehension of the job/career aspects	262	88.9	6.9	4.2
7- I gained self-confidence by making presentations in class	262	86.6	11.1	2.3
8- I learned much from my fellow student presentations	262	77.5	13.0	9.5
9- I liked the idea of the "take home" exam for this course	261	78.5	7.3	14.2
10- I benefited greatly from the "take home" exam	261	75.5	12.6	11.9
11- The course enhanced my understanding of jobs/careers	262	94.7	4.2	1.1
12- This course encouraged me to be a self-learner	262	88.2	8.7	3.1
13- Now, I feel confident about applying for jobs	262	87.0	10.3	2.7
14- I like the "overall" way that this course was taught	262	79.8	13.3	6.9
Average and SD for statements 1-14		**83.9 $\pm$ 6.0**	**10.4 $\pm$ 3.5**	**5.7 $\pm$ 3.9**
15- I prefer a traditional (conventional) way for teaching this course	262	18.3	13.4	68.3

* Only 12 students from the first group of students were located and responded. This first group did not have the assignment on visits to work place, thus "n" is less for statements 1-3.

PRIVATIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST: THE CASE OF IRAN AND KUWAIT[1]

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ABSTRACT

Many of the developing societies in Asia and Africa are currently experiencing the trauma of change and modernization. Armed with the desire for progress and the will to be modern, these societies often mobilize men and resources in order to accomplish what the west has been experiencing for several centuries. Since the process of modernization has its origins in the west, it has come to be identified with westernization, and has been occasionally stigmatized as westoxication or westphobia.[2] *Therefore, the question of being modern is largely understood in simplistic terms. It is seen almost literally as the imitation of the west. While the physical and material comforts brought about by mechanization, automation and industrialization are accepted as symbols of progress; the world picture from which the modern spirit emerges is hardly understood, including the concepts of liberal arts education which was a central achievement in advancing universal education and democracy in the western world.*

One of the major problems encountering students of the Liberal Arts, particularly in the Islamic world today, is their lack of comprehensive understanding of western education and societies. While the west, over nearly 500 years, has managed to emerge, develop and change from its medieval past; the east, including the Gulf States, have remained relatively dormant and heavily bound in tradition. Even countries with a longer experience of independence and change in the Middle East, such as Turkey, Iran and Egypt, which have wrangled with concepts of modernity and change for nearly a century, have had relatively little success. While the desire for progress and the will to be modern has prevailed, the much needed criteria required in order to better grasp the west with all of its complexities and its cultural and political dichotomies has never been fully achieved. Thus the divide between the east and the west has ever grown and with it a lack of understanding or appreciation for the "other."

This paper seeks to explore the many hurdles that prevent the traditional Middle East from genuinely appreciating the very concepts that were instrumental in the emergence of the west. It will discuss some central and essential concepts imported from the west that have often been misunderstood and therefore misrepresented as part of the western tradition. The end result has been even less appreciation or understanding for the west and western liberal arts education and tradition.

INTRODUCTION

During the past two decades, the world has witnessed the end of the cold war, the birth of the internet, and global economic and political integration. The world has also experienced an increasing trend towards privatization of education on an unprecedented scale. The growing concept of global citizenship has been a subject of immense interest at U.S. colleges and universities where university curriculums have been adjusted accordingly to better fulfill the needs of students. Already there is a growing focus on new and innovative classroom techniques, using new technologies, study abroad, service and "experiential" learning are in place with the general hope that new methods and techniques will help students see the need to connect their own immediate lives with the broader scope of global citizenship of which they are a small yet significant partner.[3] However, the move from government sponsorship of higher education towards private entrepreneurships of higher learning is a relatively new phenomenon in the Middle East, worthy of greater assessment. With globalization, the appeal for western and in particular American education has dramatically changed.[4] Privatization of education has been able to challenge and to some measure overhaul the old traditional style of government sponsored education. However, in most instances the high cost of such education has also been a deterrent and has therefore limited globalized western education to those who could financially afford the high fees and consequently has increased the educational divide between the affluent and the less affluent members of society. It has also radically divided the youth, particularly those who appreciate the western education and those who are increasingly marginalized and find themselves threatened by the encroachment of not just western education but a radically new western lifestyle and culture that tends to undermine their own values and traditions.

This paper aims to compare private education in the Islamic Republic of Iran with that of Kuwait. It will attempt to show that while private education has increased significantly in both Iran and Kuwait, the underlying reasons and assumptions differ and consequently the net outcomes are substantially different.

THE CASE FOR IRAN

Iran ranks among the few countries having the "world's youngest population."[5] It is also among the few developing countries that places a significant emphasis on higher education. Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, attempts were made to reform the educational system in order to make it more compatible with the aims of the Islamic Revolution and to prepare the students for the employment market. However, little of the goals have been achieved. Eight years of war with Iraq and years of sanctions have exhausted the country's resources, and today the youth in Iran are less inclined towards the goals of the revolution than their parents and the system has not been able to fulfill its promises and provide employment opportunities for the young and the unemployed.[6]

The government also rightly boasts of being one of the few developing countries having achieved great success educating young women.[7] This latter claim may very well be true for presently Iran has more female students at the higher levels of the educational system than males.[8] One recent study has characterized the present trend in Iran as the "feminization" of the Iranian higher education.[9]

According to the report submitted by the head of the Iranian Research and Educational Planning, the presence of female students during the past 30 years has also increased by 27 fold. The number of female students has increased from 54,248 in 1979 to 1,482,237 in 2006, which reflects an annual increase of 12.5%.[10] So has the number of women faculty members teaching at academic institutions increased, from 1,894 in 1979 to 10,098 in 2006. This shows an annual increase of 6.2%.[11]

The Islamic Republic of Iran licensed private colleges and universities as early as 1984, long before the concept became popular in the Middle East. Following a three year closure of Iranian colleges and universities (1980-83), the newly established Higher Council for the Cultural Revolution appointed by Ayatollah Khomeini approved a bill authorizing the establishment of private colleges and universities in Iran which were to be strictly controlled and directed by the Revolutionary Council and were to follow every aspect of a "revolutionary" curricula drafted by the Ministry of Higher Education and closely supervised by the Higher Council for the Cultural Revolution. The three year closure of the universities and an ongoing war with Iraq made the Iranian government recognize the need to accommodate far more students at Iranian universities than public institutions of higher learning could facilitate. In the meantime an attempt was made to de-emphasize, if not dismantle the western Liberal Arts education which was promoted under the Shah.[12] This was replaced by an altogether new model incorporating a healthy dose of Islamic nativism and Islamic education. A new charter for the creation of private colleges and universities was drafted and soon thereafter the license for the establishment of the Islamic Azad University was approved, two of whose board members were among the distinguished clerical community, Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and the present Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamanei, who was then the President of the Islamic Republic. Today, the Islamic Azad University has branched out into 376 units[13] and caters to more than a million students in the remotest part of the country, and has more students registered than at public universities. The Islamic Azad University maintained its monopoly over private universities for well over a decade. However, since the mid-1990s other applications for private universities were approved. These new institutions came to be referred to as "non-governmental and Non-Profit institutions" and as a result there are a significant number of private universities operating in Iran today, and the number continues to increase.

On the Occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Islamic Republic, the head of the Iranian Research and Educational Planning, Dr. Azizullah Memariani, recently boasted that since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, while the population of the country has little more than doubled (from 34 to 73 million), the student population of Iran has increased by twenty fold, and the number of faculty members have increased by five fold. The figures he provided were an approximate increase from 175,600 students in 1979 to 2,146,895 students in 2004 and approximately 3,400,000 students in 2007.[14] He further asserted that the number of faculty members teaching at both governmental and private institutions have increased to a total of 53,635 faculty members.[15] In terms of numbers, the Islamic Republic has significantly outnumbered all of its neighbors in the region.

IRAN & KUWAIT: EDUCATION, TRADITION & MODERNITY

In both Kuwait and Iran private education is on the rise, but the *raison d'être* for each is totally different.[16] While the process of globalization has played a significant role in convincing the GCC States to open up to international education and to invite reputable universities to serve or lend a hand as partners in the region, in Iran the reasons are otherwise. Private education became a necessity in Iran as early as the mid 1980s, for the rising demand for higher education could not be met with limited governmental resources. Eight years of war with Iraq from 1980-88 had exhausted Iran financially and had simultaneously increased the demand for higher education. On the pretext of a Cultural Revolution the universities were forced to shut down for three years. When they reopened in 1983, there was a large backlog of students seeking admission to the universities. Added to these were an increasing number of war veterans who now expected to be granted an opportunity for a higher education in return for their loyalty and service to the Islamic Republic.

Today more than 3.4 million young Iranians are on the receiving end of a higher education which is about 4.72% of the entire population.[17] However, while Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE seem to strive for quality education by inviting reputable universities into partnerships, Iran simply aims to provide sufficient seats for all applicants, regardless of academic standing. The past few years, particularly since the Presidency of Mr. Ahmadinejad, important measures were taken that have further exasperated the system of higher education in Iran. One was to create as many governmentally supervised private universities in order to stunt the growth of the Islamic Azad Universities (also private, but not under the direct control of the government) and to provide sufficient seats for all applicants so that the entrance exam, the Iranian national board exam, could be eliminated. Thus in just three years (2004-2007) there has been a growth of about 37% among university students in Iran (from 2,146,895 to 3,400,000 students). The prospect of having the centralized national board exam circumvented has been a source of great concern since the selection process of students based simply on their high school record and performance could create confusion and prove inadequate, for the system of assessment and grading is neither consistent nor reliable throughout the country. Another major difference is the language of instruction. While English is emphasized at private universities in Kuwait, it is neither a consideration nor a priority in Iran, for the country remains inward looking and detached from the global change, particularly under President Ahmadinejad. The curriculum in Iran also remains highly centralized and uniform while in Kuwait it is more flexible. New and innovative courses can be designed, developed and offered at private universities in Kuwait whereas such a practice embodies a long bureaucratic chain in Iran that is very difficult to circumvent.[18]

With respect to how well the concept of Liberal Arts Education has grounded itself in the Middle East is a question that needs an entirely new study of its own. Since the process of modernization has its origins in the West, it has come to be identified with Westernization. Therefore, the question of being modern is largely understood in simplistic terms. It is seen almost literally as the imitation of the West. Thus one finds that the developing societies in the Gulf region are building newer and larger cities, buying the latest commodities and pursuing steps for the transfer of technology before determining their rationale in the indigenous context. New forms of social organization, legal, political and economic structures are established, along with the highly rationalized processes of production and consumption. These forms are introduced without counting their overall human cost. New patterns are introduced, often in order to meet the artificially contrived needs rather than genuinely human necessities. The physical and material comforts brought about by mechanization, automation and industrialization are accepted as symbols of progress, the trump cards of modern achievements. The world picture from which the modern spirit emerges is hardly considered. As a result, the modernizing process itself, which is seen as the only possible orientation to reality in the present age, faces inner contradictions. It leads to confusion of priorities, and to increasing rather than lessening human suffering. Much of the planning for progress remains piecemeal. The progress which could be achieved is often misdirected by limitations of the existing bureaucracy.

The source of the malady goes much deeper. With the exception of the Islamic Republic that has turned its back to modernization, the Gulf States, including Kuwait, despite their enthusiasm for modernization, have not yet come to terms with their own traditions. They have not identified the status of their traditional cultures in relation to the process of modernization. In the first place, the historical context for the introduction of modernity to the developing societies was not always wholesome. The initiative for the process largely came from western powers with their commercial interests. The first native supporters of modernization were almost invariably those who had acquired a western form of liberal education. In Iran they were the intellectuals of the newly instituted Dar ul-Funun of the 1850s who were mostly educated in France or Switzerland.[19]

The pace at which the programs of modernization have been introduced has been too rapid. The manner in which they sought to alter the traditional forms of social organization, and institutions has been too radical. Thus, the transition from the traditional to the modern could not be smooth for a variety of reasons:

Foremost, people have hardly overcome their resentments against western imperialism and their commercialism. Therefore at this point, wholesale attempts at the transfer of western civilization appear as an imposition.

Secondly, it seemed to make serious incursions into what these cultures have believed to be sacred and inviolable. Resistance to modernization has been most vocal when the new styles of life and the development programs appeared to interfere with traditional values, especially those related to religious beliefs. Opposition to modernization often stems from the fear that the secure world of tradition and belief will be destroyed. It creates a crisis in the traditional world picture.

Thirdly, the actual process of modernization itself was expressed in largely mechanical, technical and materialistic terms. Traditional societies found it convenient therefore to characterize modern societies of the West as materialistic in contrast to a spiritualistic East. This extreme characterization has no basis in reality.

The central problem affecting developing societies is thus not a technical but a spiritual one. It is namely the tension between tradition and modernity. What is at stake is one's sense of values, one's understanding of the self and the world. Also at stake is the world picture on the basis of which one determines one's place in the world, chooses one's goals and style of life, and participates in the world meaningfully.

Many individuals believe that the educational goal of both Iranian and Kuwaiti students today is simply a certified degree. In the past, a paper degree from a university constitutes a "passport" to a secure job, a better social status and better salaries. Unfortunately universities are looked upon as a place that will train students in certain skills.[20] Thus the orientation is not a better understanding of the world but rather finding a job and acquiring the comforts of life.

THE QUALITATIVE ASPECTS OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

The case presented in this paper is that the essence of understanding and/or appreciating western liberal arts education requires not only competence in learning a language but rather in understanding the history and culture of the language involved; what I would like to define as the "historico-cultural" aspects of liberal education. Only then will appreciation of liberal education have meaningful results. The paper will discuss some central and essential concepts imported from the western tradition that have often been misunderstood and therefore misrepresented as part of the western culture.

Much has been said earlier about the fact that the whole concept of *modernity* as understood in the East is at best superficial and trite and does not include the wholesome process of change and growth that came with the industrial revolution of the mid-eighteenth century Europe. In Europe, modernity has its roots in the Renaissance, whereby the outlook towards man and his position changed dramatically. The concept of the separation of the worldly needs and desires of mankind from the metaphysical was an essential first step. The fact that human worth and dignity was not simply based upon his social status and his religious faith but rather on his performance on earth and most importantly the separation of the church from the state and the distinction of man's worldly vis-à-vis his metaphysical needs became obvious.

Concepts essential for understanding liberal education are not clearly understood among students both in Iran and in Kuwait. For example, in Iran, modernity came to be synonymous with a blind imitation of the west and many came to regard it as trivial, promiscuous and worldliness. Another concept, that of *liberalism*, which is usually seen as the dominant ideology of Western democracies, with its roots deeply entrenched in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. In the Islamic world liberalism is the concept most feared and is often viewed as the modus operandi of "cultural imperialism." Liberalism is regarded as the foremost source of irresponsibility, misdirection, corruption and faithlessness. Charles Kurzman has identified three modes of liberal Islam.[21] His entire discourse centers on how much flexibility is allowed an individual and how much of this flexibility does the *Shari'a* permit a Muslim. The third mode which Kurzman discusses is perhaps the one more commonly debated today and is essentially an attempt to differentiate between revelation and interpretation in Islam.[22] The latter concept of interpretation allows Muslims to interpret Islamic doctrine in ways that are more compatible with the 21st century while at the same time it does not abandon Islamic principles, or as Amr Sabet recounts, it does not expand "the non-religious space while limiting that of the religious."[23]

However, when we study liberalism in its historical terms and as it evolved and emerged in the west, it becomes obvious that liberalism has played a critical role in opposing absolutism in all its shapes and forms. It is from the liberal philosophy of the 18th century Enlightenment that ideas of freedom of speech, freedom of thought and freedom of choice emerged and it was the French Revolution of the late 18th century that crystallized and shaped this concept from which eventually evolved the declaration of Human Rights. In the west, liberalism brought with it a separation of the public sphere from the private sphere. When we look at Iran's modern history of the past 200 years, seldom do we see a demarcation between the private and the public spheres. Consequently, this has led the Iranians to encourage duplicity and often falsification of their sentiments and feelings, in order to protect themselves from the public domain of government control.

A third concept imported from modern western and industrial societies is *secularism* which is the process by which religious beliefs, practices, and institutions lose social significance and are conferred to the private sphere of life. Western societies have gone through a process of secularization whereby religious attitude and commitments have declined and have been confined to the individual and private sector of society. It seems that secularization is an inevitable feature of the rise of industrial societies and the modernization of cultures. It is argued that modern science has made traditional beliefs less plausible. Pluralism has broken the monopoly of religious influence on society. Urbanization has created a world which is individualistic and anomic. Secularism has made religious institutions less relevant and politically less influential, and technology has given people greater control over their lives and their environment. Max Weber has referred to this process as the rationalization of society. Thus we can refer to the process of secularization in the west as the process of rationalization in the sense that individuals accept the belief that they have more choice in terms of directing their individual lives.

Other concepts which need be taken into account that are entirely misunderstood outside the academic circles are that of *existentialism* and *positivism*. While existentialism developed in the west as a means to better investigate the nature of human existence with particular attention and emphasis on such human experiences as death, loneliness, war, suffering and moral responsibility, in Iran it came to be interpreted as a plague imported from the west, very much within the context of Al-e Ahmad's views as expressed in *gharbzadeghi* or "westoxication."[24] Under such distorted and superficial understanding of existentialism, works by outstanding authors as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, **Heidegger** and Sartre were never fully appreciated outside the academic circles. Existentialism is regarded as an empty and meaningless or even cancerous term that leads a healthy, in this case a Muslim society, towards a loss of religious faith and social misconceptions. Thus, it is of no small surprise to find writings of such noted Iranian authors such as Sadeq Hedayat's *Buf-e Kur (The Blind Owl)* often censored or banned and the justification provided is that Hedayat's writings are demoralizing and that they import western decadence and encourage the youth to lose their faith in life and the community and drives them to embrace suicide and death.

Positivism is another curse word among the lay. The positivist school, founded by the French philosopher and social scientist Auguste Comte (1798-1857) is based on systematic observation, experimentation and empiricism. Through Comte's empirical and positivistic approach, irresolvable disputes on metaphysical questions such as the Divine Rights of kings or the church gave way to a positive science of society. Well-grounded knowledge formed the basis of consensus, and could also be applied to remove the causes of disorder, just as natural-scientific knowledge had been applied in the taming of nature. Today positivism signifies adherence to an empiricist view of the nature of science, and the project of a scientific approach to the study of social life on the empiricist mode. In the case of the social sciences, this is most commonly taken to mean a modeling of the methods of social science on those of natural science; the attempt to discover social laws analogous to the natural laws. There is an absolute insistence on the separation of values and value judgments.

In Iran, as in most Muslim countries in the region, positivistic research methods in which the researcher is required to separate the practical and the functional from prevailing cultural and religious norms and values, the empirical from the metaphysical is nearly impossible. The tradition of a liberal, objective scholarship has never acquired roots in the social sciences and the humanities and scholarship has continued to remain grounded in "polemics" and rhetoric. In such circumstances, humanities and the social sciences cannot be expected to perform well in Iran or Kuwait, or in the traditional Middle East, where a deep affinity with the culture under scrutiny is essential.

Thus while many concepts central to the understanding of Liberal Arts Education remain alien to the students and cultures of the Middle East, it is not to be expected that the values associated with these concepts would find its proper place among native students and cultures in the immediate future.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, both Iran and Kuwait have embraced privatization of higher education, but for entirely different reasons. For Kuwait, privatization of higher education has meant opening up Kuwait to the world, inviting domestic investment and foreign expertise to work together and provide a first class American style Liberal Arts Education.[25] In Iran, privatization of education was forced upon the government because of budgetary restrictions and its lack of resources. However, a revolutionary Iran was not about ready to open up its doors to the west. The Iranian revolution regarded itself as self-sufficient and self contained. Having revolted against the west, particularly the U.S., Iran foremost sought to reject western style education as decadent. Before the Islamic Revolution and as early as 1968, the Shah of Iran had experimented with American education by inviting the University of Pennsylvania to serve as partners to Pahlavi University in Shiraz. Pahlavi University was a fully fledged American style institution of higher learning, where the medium of education was English until the Islamic Revolution of 1979 which made the University revert its name to Shiraz University.

Ever since the initial days of the Revolution Iran sought to reform its curriculum and this it did by experimenting with three years of university closure (1980-83) and a rewriting of the entire university curricula. Thus while privatization of education for Kuwaitis is a means of reaching and increasing their academic contact with the world community, for Iran the educational system continues to remain closed, inward looking and archaic, with a great mistrust of the west, and little encouragement towards the use of English or the English language sources or modern technologies, such as the Information Technology (IT).[26] Private education in Kuwait is regularly assessed by the Private Universities Council and universities have a free hand in designing their courses within the framework agreed upon by PUC. However, the private sector in Iran has had to closely follow the curricula presented to them by the Ministry of Higher Education. The nature of the Iranian Revolution has only isolated Iran. Contact with the outside world is frowned upon and exchange of professors and students seldom take place. Following the June 12th 2010 Presidential Elections and the civil unrest that followed due to the widespread ballot fixing, the doors of academic freedoms in Iran closed even further. A list of 60 internationally recognized universities and research institutions were black listed by the Iranian government, including Yale University, where all Iranian academics were banned from having any form of direct or indirect contact. These institutions were regarded as the "den of spies" and serious agents of imperialism seeking to overthrow the Iranian regime through what the Islamic Republic calls as "soft revolution." In addition, the use of the internet has been reduced to its bare minimum, the government boasts of having blocked over ten million sites. E-mail contacts have also become unreliable, not to mention the fact that the Revolutionary Guards, who now have the communications network under control openly profess that they are able to check all in and out going e-mails, particularly those pertaining to the opposition, "Green Movement." Thus one can conclude that the process of globalization in Iran and freedom of access to the internet has been placed on hold for the next four years, at least so long as Mr. Ahmadinejad remains in power.

Iran continues to remain ahead of Kuwait perhaps in one single area, namely segregation. The problem of segregation was solved by Ayatollah Khomeini in the early years of the Islamic Revolution when he rejected segregation at the universities but enforced the *hejab* as part of the national policy. Since then, the issue of segregated universities has been resolved permanently.

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1 I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague, Mr. Koroush Kamali Sarvestani, the CEO and one of the founders of the Hafez College of Higher Education, for providing me with the statistical data on private education in Iran.

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4 See for example the article by Hal Irvin and Robert Thompson, "Making It as an International University," *Business Officer*, July/August 2008, pp. 19-29.

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9 Mitra K. Shavarini, "The Feminisation of Iranian Higher Education," *International Review of Education*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Jul. 2005), pp. 329-347.

10 Ibid.

11 Nizam-e Jame' Etella' Resani-ye Eshtegal, **http://www.jobportal.ir/printable/Psrint.aspx?RID=3&Info=1109**. Retrieved 2009/04/15.

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13 Nizam-e Jame' Etella' Resani-ye Eshtegal, **http://www.jobportal.ir/printable/Psrint.aspx?RID=3&Info=1109**. Retrieved 2009/04/15.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid. The number of full time faculty members teaching at governmental institutions have increased from a total of 10,416 in 1979 to 20,937 in 2007.

16 See Appendix I for a listing of Licensed Private Institutions in Kuwait.

17 Nizam-e Jame' Etella' Resani-ye Eshtegal, **http://www.jobportal.ir/printable/Psrint.aspx?RID=3&Info=1109**. Retrieved 2009/04/15.

18 Gholamali Montazer, "Mutale'at-e Rahbordi Towse'yeh Etella'ati Nezam Amuzesh Ali dar Iran," (Strategic Studies of Inforational Development in Higher Education System in Iran), *Faslnameyeh Pajuhesh va Barnamerizi dar Amuzesh 'Ali*, No. 43, 1386 (2007), pp.14 18.

19 Hafez Farman Farmayan, "The Forces of Modernization in Nineteenth Century Iran: A Historical Survey," In William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers, *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 126-127.

20 Even at the American University of Kuwait where most students are from a particular socio-economic background, by far the majority of the students seek a degree in the Business School. The prime reason is because of the job opportunities and job security that lies ahead.

21 Charles Kurzman (ed.) Liberal Islam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 270-283.

22 Recently, the Iranian Muslim philosopher, Abdulkarem Soroush also came out supporting such a doctrine thus presenting a radical and a new interpretation regarding "revelations" itself. He raised the question that since the Prophet of Islam was a mortal human being he too had to interpret the revelations as he came to understand them. This view was in accordance with his earlier work entitled *Gabz or bast-e Shariat* (The Expansion and Contraction of the Shari'ah). Here he presented the view that the Islamic Shari'ah has the capability to adapt itself to different times and circumstances and thus it could adapt itself to change.

23 Amr Sabet, *Liberalism and the Constitution of Islamic Sovereignty*, The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2003, p. 28.

24 Gholam Vatandoust, Review of *Jalal Al-I Ahmad's Occidentosis: A Plague from the West in MESA Bulletin*, 19, 1985, pp. 236-238.

25 The Tables deployed in Appendix II are information on Private Education in Kuwait. The information is downloaded from the Ministry of Higher Education, Private Universities Council site, and represent the incoming students at Private Universities from 2005-2009. The Figures representing each Table (Figures 1-4) were prepared by my former student Ms. Nouf Al-Rashidi to whom I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation.

26 Gholamali Montazer, "Mutale'at-e Rahbordi Towse'yeh Etella'ati Nezam Amuzesh Ali dar Iran," (Strategic Studies of Inforational Development in Higher Education System in Iran), *Faslnameyeh Pajuhesh va Barnamerizi dar Amuzesh 'Ali*, No. 43, 1386 (2007), p. 20.

APPENDIX I

Licensed Private Academic Institutions in Kuwait
(December 2008)

1	Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST)
2	Australian College of Kuwait (ACK)
3	American University of Kuwait (AUK)
4	Kuwait Maastricht Business School (KMBS)
5	American College of Middle East (ACM)
6	Arab Open University (AOU)
7	Box Hill College Kuwait (BHCK)
8	Kuwait Technical College (KTC)
9	American University of the Middle East (AUM)
10	College Aviation Technology (CAT)
11	Kuwait Institute for Science and Technology (KIST)
12	Kuwait International Law College (KILC)

Source: Licensed Private Institutions in Kuwait. Retrieved 29th December 2008, **http://www.puc.edu.kw**

APPENDIX II

MAJOR PRIVATE ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS IN KUWAIT (2005-2009)

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS AT PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KUWAIT - FALL 2005-06

University/College	Kuwaiti Students	% Kuwaiti Students	Non-Kuwaiti Students	% Non-Kuwaiti Students	TOTAL
Arab Open University (AOU) – Kuwait Branch	2721	43%	3573	57%	6294
Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST)	1119	84%	218	16%	1337
Kuwait Maastricht Business School (KMBS)	254	75%	83	25%	337
American University of Kuwait (AUK)	530	69%	237	31%	767
Australian College of Kuwait (ACK)	370	73%	139	27%	509
TOTAL	**4994**	**54%**	**4250**	**46%**	**9244**

Source: Ministry of Higher Education. Private Universities Council. Retrieved 30th December 2008, http://www.puc.edu.kw/en/index.php?TP=eFALL0560

FIGURE 1
GRAPHIC DISPLAY OF TABLE 1

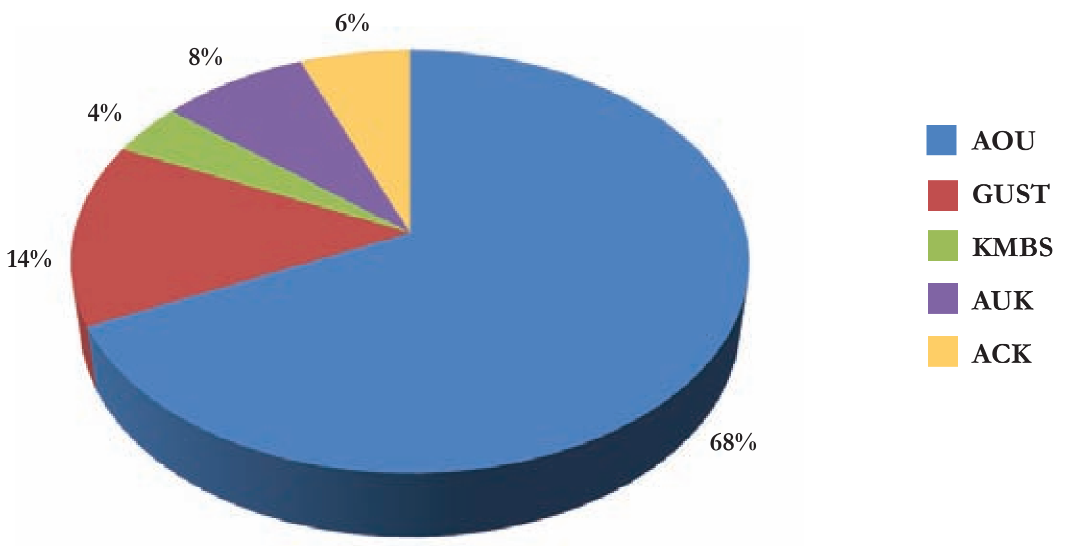


TABLE 2
NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS AT PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KUWAIT - FALL 2006-07

University/College	Kuwaiti Students	% Kuwaiti Students	Non-Kuwaiti Students	% Non-Kuwaiti Students	TOTAL
Arab Open University (AOU) – Kuwait Branch	2771	44%	3522	56%	6293
Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST)	1417	86%	241	14%	1663
Kuwait Maastricht Business School (KMBS)	257	77%	75	23%	332
American University of Kuwait (AUK)	833	72%	329	28%	1662
Australian College of Kuwait (ACK)	877	81%	207	19%	1084
TOTAL	**6160**	**58%**	**4374**	**42%**	**10534**

__Source__: Ministry of Higher Education. Private Universities Council. Retrieved 30th December 2008, http://www.puc.edu.kw/en/index.php?TP=eFALL0607

FIGURE 2
GRAPHIC DISPLAY OF TABLE 2

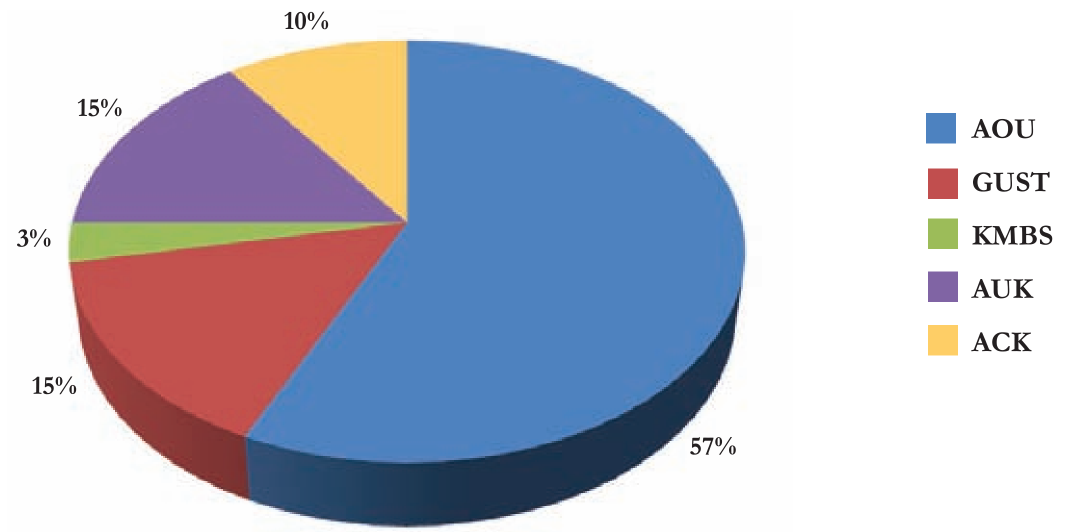


TABLE 3
NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS AT PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KUWAIT - FALL 2007-08

University/College	Kuwaiti Students	% Kuwaiti Students	Non-Kuwaiti Students	% Non-Kuwaiti Students	TOTAL
Arab Open University (AOU) – Kuwait Branch	2614	42%	3573	56%	6187
Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST)	1680	86%	276	14%	1956
Kuwait Maastricht Business School (KMBS)	359	75%	120	23%	479
American University of Kuwait (AUK)	1176	73%	773	28%	1619
Australian College of Kuwait (ACK)	1561	83%	314	19%	1875
Box Hill College Kuwait (BHCK)	30	85%	7	15%	46
TOTAL	**7420**	**61%**	**4733**	**39%**	**12162**

Source: Ministry of Higher Education. Private Universities Council. Retrieved 30th December 2008, http://www.puc.edu.kw/en/index.php?TP=eFALL0708

FIGURE 3
GRAPHIC DISPLAY OF TABLE 3

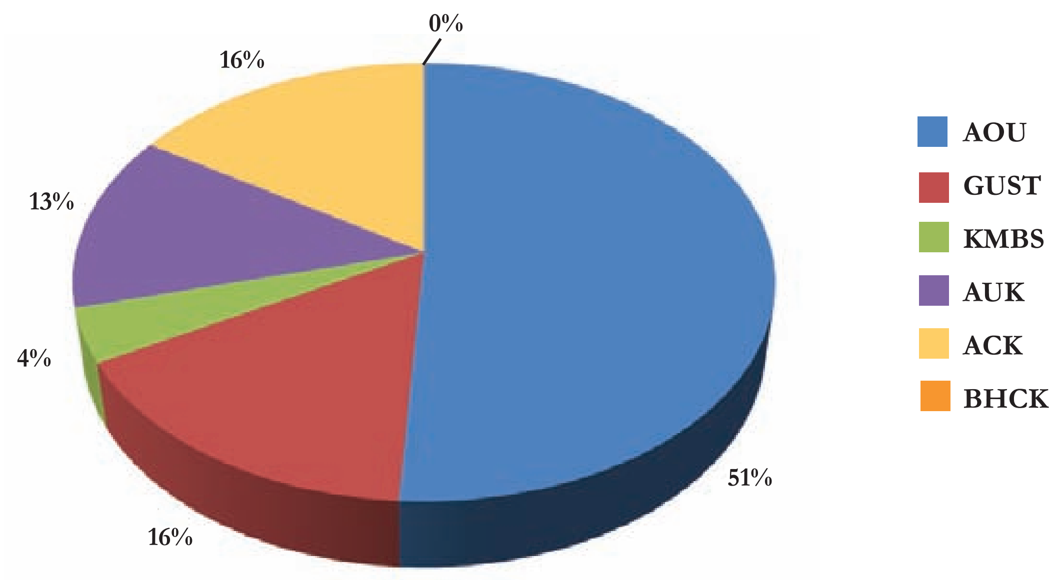
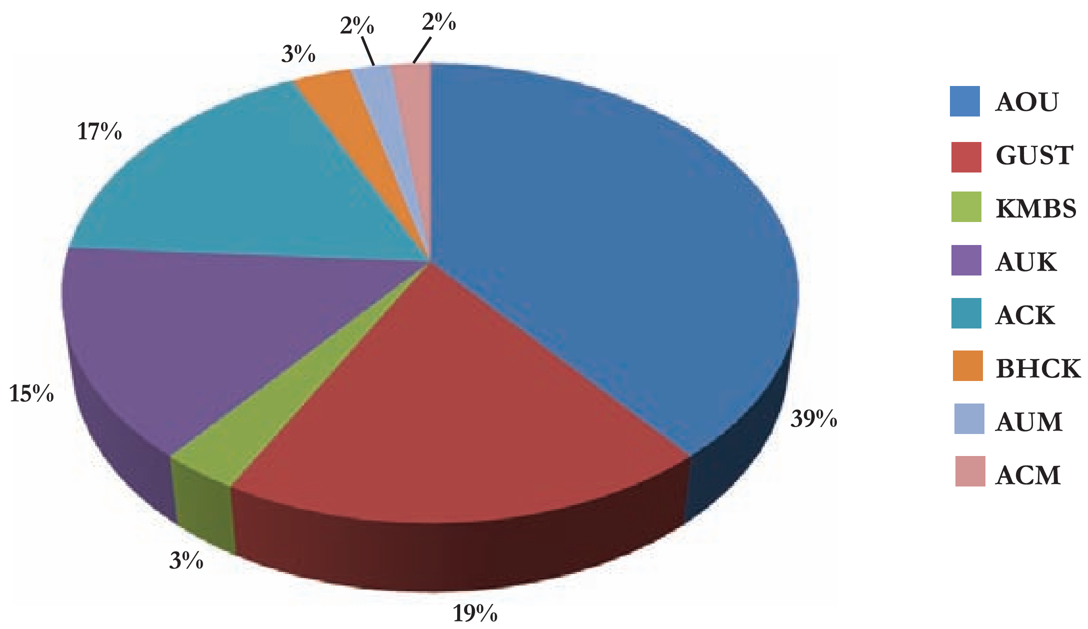


TABLE 4
NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS AT PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KUWAIT - FALL 2008-09

University/College	Kuwaiti Students	% Kuwaiti Students	Non-Kuwaiti Students	% Non-Kuwaiti Students	TOTAL
Arab Open University (AOU) – Kuwait Branch	2005	40%	2970	60%	4975
Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST)	2109	85%	366	15%	2475
Kuwait Maastricht Business School (KMBS)	211	68%	99	32%	310
American University of Kuwait (AUK)	1431	73%	518	27%	1949
Australian College of Kuwait (ACK)	1742	81%	404	19%	2146
Box Hill College Kuwait (BHCK)	314	90%	35	10%	349
American University of Middle East (AUM)	257	87%	37	13%	294
American College of Middle East (ACM)	250	95%	12	5%	264
TOTAL	**8319**	**65%**	**4441**	**35%**	**12762**

Source: Ministry of Higher Education. Private Universities Council. Retrieved 30th December 2008, http://www.puc.edu.kw/en/index.php?TP=eFALL0809

FIGURE 4
GRAPHIC DISPLAY OF TABLE 4



LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION IN THE GCC AND THE MENA REGION

CROSS-APPROPRIATION - MYTHS AND REALITY - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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The American University in Cairo [1]

ABSTRACT

For more than a decade the GCC and the MENA Regions have witnessed an accelerated proliferation of private institutions of higher education – many purporting to be "American-style", "Liberal Arts" colleges or universities. Is the wider region experiencing and engaging in emulation, standardization or cross-appropriation?

The many new universities are required to engage in a balancing act: one of instilling in all stake holders a quest for quality and one of crafting and delivering programs that meet the highest local and international standards. How do these new entities meet the needs of multiple stakeholders – local students, their parents, sponsors/donors and benefactors, prospective employers and political contingencies – all the while adhering to local laws and respecting local mores? How do those institutions who profess to Liberal Arts values balance their commitment to these values with deflecting criticism arising along the spectrum of the political arena – ranging from conservative observers who resent "westernizing influences" to "reformist" groups who feel that an opening of the educational scene cannot come soon enough? How can the new institutions assert authority in a climate accustomed to state-driven and state-enforced systems and regulations?

The time honored US system of voluntary, peer review among institutions of higher learning has long presented a preferred method of advancing academe and ensuring some measure of accountability - witness the quest by non-US institutions for earning the coveted accreditation from one of the US Regional accrediting bodies. Yet this very model has itself come under attack and scrutiny - from a US state apparatus no less – namely by the US Department of Education.

Europe – long accustomed to systems of higher education dominated by state supervision, review and sanctioning by individual (state) ministries of education - is nurturing a new middle ground with the Bologna process and the Lisbon Accord – one of some para-statal coordination, which, albeit voluntary, have created interest and participation by an impressive number of states – while leaving the "enforcement aspect" somewhat vague.

While the GCC may have engaged in dialogue and may have achieved certain progress in coordination of curricular standards at the level of primary education, any coordination at the post secondary level – if desirable – remains elusive.

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Over time, might we expect to see the countries of the GCC aim to emulate the US model of coordinated peer evaluation – whether within countries or at a para-statal/ regional level– or will the region default to its long standing penchant for individual state driven evaluation?

In either mode, will the Liberal Arts model and values for colleges and universities be encouraged and respected? How might a convergence model differ from the conventional model of higher education in each individual state?

How might such a model be integrated with the conventional models of the individual locales? What is the role of the general society – or community - in supporting Liberal Arts values and practices? Are such well understood, demanded and sustained?

What role does international/US accreditation play in nurturing a Liberal Arts model?

There are indications that the Gulf – as well as the MENA region, in general - is inclined towards an appropriation model when it comes to higher education. Yet all universities – particularly American universities – whether by establishing branch campuses of US institutions, or by the fact that local institutions emulate the American ethos and model – bear a responsibility in inspiring history making when it comes to the advancement of higher education in the GCC area. Different ownership structures and control of funding for individual institutions add a layer of complexity when disentangling influence and responsibility in shaping the future of higher education and the adherence to stated missions, visions and standards.
How can one adhere to and achieve the highest international standards, while respecting and flourishing within local values and mores?

Is it a matter of "Taking the best of the West while leaving the rest".[2] How much can the new institutions adapt/ adopt without watering down and compromising the very values they aim to emulate.

The case of the American University in Cairo – a venerated institution with a long established commitment to the Liberal Arts model of higher education, incorporated in the US (Delaware), and long accredited in the United States by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education – might hold some lessons that could serve as inspiration to the many new institutions - in the MENA region and in the GCC. AUC provides a good "more similar" case to study by virtue of being an American university IN and OF the Arab world - one that demonstrates the value it attaches to adhering to the process of voluntary peer-reviewed accreditation, a system which is itself developing and evolving, while simultaneously remaining accountable to Egyptian laws, regulations and protocols.

It will be argued that exogenous factors and stimuli such as accreditation bodies and processes can act as a catalyst for installing, entrenching and safeguarding Liberal Arts values, but only insofar as those very values are clearly expounded, constantly reinforced and adhered to at the macro and micro levels throughout an institution.

It also illustrates experiences of navigating the troubled waters of "cultural specificity" when it comes to areas of "academic freedom", "Liberal Arts:" (with a small l) and "critical thinking" in a traditionally conservative and "state-supervised" setting, which increasingly responding to the pressures of globalization and market demands. The experience of Egypt and of AUC is relevant to the GCC – even more so as Egypt is instating its own system of national quality assurance and accreditation.

The paper speaks not with the voice of "pundits from the West" but is reflective of active issue-area participation and is written against the backdrop of longstanding engagement from European, North African, GCC and North American perspectives.

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2 Paraphrasing Danica Purg who states: One of my main ideas is to make people in the region more ambitious, to help themselves. If they want to cooperate with the West, they should do so with the best the west has to offer. That is why I cooked up the slogan "Take the best from the West and leave the rest" Dr. Danica Purg, Director IEDC, Bled Slovenia (1999)

INTRODUCTION

The past decade has witnessed the spread of so-called, self-professed, "American" or "Western style", Liberal Arts education throughout the world, and the past five years, in particular, have seen an acceleration of this phenomenon in the MENA Region and Gulf Cooperation Council countries, in particular. Often ascribed to "Globalization", this development is happening in parallel with attempts to implement thoroughgoing reforms of national higher educational systems and, in some countries, a renewed focus on quality assurance.

Labels such as "American-style/model" and "Liberal Arts" are widely employed, but are often vaguely defined or inconsistently adhered to. One may wonder whether the labels alone are proliferating, while the core values of such education are underemphasized or even ignored. What is proliferating? Labels or values? What is demanded by various stake holders? In other words: what is it "people" want and how might we attempt to ask and answer these questions?

What is expected and allowed by local regulatory agencies and by social norms? Who concerns themselves with quality assurance, outcomes assessment or individual and societal "return on investment? Who should be the guardians of quality? What are the challenges and opportunities for Liberal Arts education in today's world and what is the likelihood of Liberal Arts institutions living up to explicitly stated or implied goals and missions.

While the paper addresses select facets of this topic within the context of new universities in the GCC, the experience from the American University in Cairo, Egypt and observations from work related to institutional and programmatic accreditation in the US, Kuwait and Egypt, some common challenges and opportunities are apparent, and some myths and preconceived notions are exposed. The paper also draws on primary research, firsthand experience, conversations with students, faculty, administrators, and on various surveys. While the paper highlights some of the challenges to implementing values of a Liberal Arts education in the GCC, it also suggests ways in which universities can strike a balance without compromising core values, and indicates that, indeed conferences such as the AUK Liberal Arts Conference, along with ongoing collegial debates and exchanges and the "due diligence" work adherent to accreditation efforts, forces all participants – from around the Globe - to continuously rethink old paradigms, or at minimum adapt standards, to make them more robust across time and space.

This paper, which is part of a larger attempt at studying and documenting challenges and opportunities related to the spread of private higher education in the MENA region and beyond, also suggests areas in need of further study, and raises the question of applying similar research questions to new educational endeavors in other settings.

DEFINING THE TERMS AND DELIMITING THE FOCUS OF THE PAPER

Globalization is praised or blamed for much, including the spread of Liberal Arts education. I use "globalization" in the conventional sense of a complex series of economic, social, cultural, technological and political interaction between groups and individuals across state boundaries. The term is usually credited to Theodore Levitt as used in his 1983 HBR article "Globalization of Markets".[3] However, the phenomenon itself is not new. In fact the area of education might be a preeminent example of early globalization, which ushered in an early acceptance of a "foreign education" among disparate regions, namely the spread of Jesuit education in the 16th century. This type of education became valued around the globe because of its content and rigor, and the humanistic values it embraces. It persists in being so regardless of its religious underpinning or any affiliation with particular "colonial" powers of old. This is relevant to a discussion of the spread of "American style" and Liberal Arts education insofar as it presents a good example of the feasibility of spreading a certain type of education – regardless of local mores, religion, etc. Jesuit education is seen as a quality product and a valued alternative to public education and is often referred to as "the marine corps of education".[4] Likewise **American style,**

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[3] Theodore Levitt, Globalization of Markets, Harvard Business Review, 1983.

[4] The Jesuits have come to be known in the public mind for their educational work and have acquired the reputation of being among the world's best educators and educationists. The number of Jesuit colleges and universities in the world has now reached 114. 28 Universities in the United States. Many of these universities have traditions dating back many years. In Europe, the Gregorian University (Rome, Italy; founded 1551) is the most famous Jesuit university. (source: webpage of Sophia University, Japan). Perhaps the best-known education in India is imparted by Jesuits. They conduct no less than 31 universities/ colleges, 5 Institutes of Business Administration and 155 high schools spread throughout the country, almost all of them among its most reputed. In them, more than 300,000 students belonging to every religious, linguistic and socio-economic group, receive their education (source: **http://www.goethals.org/edujes.htm** as retrieved on 3 Oct 2006)

Liberal Arts education appears early in the MENA region, within venerated, time honored institution such as the American University of Beirut and the American University in Cairo, established in 1866 and 1919 respectively.[5]

What seems new is that enhanced globalization has more acutely exposed the shortcomings and vulnerability of local/national educational institutions and their ability to cope with increased demand. This pressure has, in turn, accelerated the demand for alternatives, among them institutions offering American style education. The **acceleration** in the establishment of "American style/Western style" institutions is an indication both of a new urgency on the part of local states – or their governments and ministries of education - in providing additional quality education, and a willingness of local investors to enter into the educational arena as well as a willingness, even eagerness, on the part of outside institutions to engage in cooperative ventures in the Gulf and elsewhere. One might talk of a "velocity" in terms of exchanges. That is, we are witnessing not merely the **proliferation** of the American style institutions themselves in terms of actual numbers, but also of the linkages, interaction and exchanges that appear between many of them in the form of joint ventures, collaborative efforts, student and faculty exchange programs and other initiatives, as well as the mobility/turnover rate among the faculty, administrators and students who move among these institutions.

While this paper, and the AUK Liberal Arts conference, focus on the GCC and on Kuwait, parenthetic reference is made to other settings, and specific examples cited from the MENA region, particularly from Egypt.

The GCC and the MENA region: for the purposes of this paper, references are made to the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), or countries in the general area "the Gulf" - namely, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, with special emphasis on the State of Kuwait. The MENA region is used to refer to the area from Morocco in the West to Iran in the East from Turkey in the North to the Arabian Peninsula in the South. Most examples draw on recent experience from Egypt and from work with accrediting bodies engaged in Egypt and in certain Gulf States. While acknowledging that some American branch campuses did exist in pre-revolutionary Iran, such are now defunct, and this paper excludes Iran, and seeks to focus on education while avoiding any polemics about "Persian" versus "Arabian Gulf".

Liberal Arts Education: while not necessarily coterminous with "liberal education", I will consider the terms as interchangeable for the purpose of this paper, as both terms seem to be employed by many colleagues and discussants. I use the term in the conventional sense of an education which enables a student to gain a broad perspective and trains him or her to judge, evaluate and carry out action in light of such perspective. I take it to be an education one seeks because one wants to, rather than out of necessity, in order to achieve a specific career goal. I follow the enumeration of several other scholars on education, who cite "formal thinking, empirical investigation, hypothesis and appreciation" as main tools to be acquired during such an education.[6] I see it as a process which requires critical thinking, allows for freedom of academic exploration, inquiry and expression and which starts before and continues after formal college education, and one which includes formal in-class as well as outside extra and co-curricular activities. Finally, I embrace Jorge Domínguez' statement that " Liberal Arts Education is what remains after you have forgotten the facts that were first learned while becoming educated".[7]

Aside from the reference to Artes Liberales (of the free man) as opposed to Artes Serviles (that of the servile man) which implies an education one seeks because one wants to rather than because one has to, and a term which reminds us of the "oldness" of the concept, I understand Liberal Arts education to be an ongoing process, an outlook and an approach to learning in life, which is merely initiated or enhanced during college/university years, but which does not end once the student leaves the institution as a graduate. In fact commencement is probably best conceived of as the point at which the graduate should engage in "applied Liberal Arts".

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5 These fine examples from the Levant and North Africa should bode well for new experiments in the Gulf, in that they demonstrate the staying power of quality American style, Liberal Arts education in an Arab/ sometimes Muslim/non-Christian setting (demonstrating that when executed properly, such education is appreciated in areas other than "the West" where the vast majority of Liberal Arts institutions which are embedded in societies based predominantly in Judeo-Christian values (whether they are secular or religiously affiliated, private or public). In fact AUB and AUC present "hard cases" of institutions which persevere through environments and periods of war, nationalization efforts and occasional hostility to "the West/things American".

6 C.J.Ducasse "Liberal Education and the College Curriculum, Journal of higher Education, Vol XV, no. 1, January, 1944 pp 1-10

7 Jorge Domínguez "Liberal Education at Harvard in This New Century", 2004

THE MUSHROOMING OF AMERICAN-STYLE LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION ACROSS THE GLOBE

In parallel with attempts to implement thoroughgoing reforms of their national higher educational systems, states in the Gulf region – and in the MENA region generally - have granted licenses for private universities to operate and to grant degrees. Many such new ventures follow an American model, some operate as branch campuses of American universities, some have achieved – or are in the process of seeking – accreditation from one of the major United States regional accrediting agencies, (there are even entire state operated universities in the GCC that seek to recast themselves in an "American vein" and seek institutional and/or program accreditation from the US). Yet other local universities have varying degrees of affiliation or cooperation with universities in the United States. Indeed the Ministry of Education and the Private Universities Council in Kuwait require that new private universities have a "tie-in", however loosely defined, to an established, accredited institution overseas. In North Africa, Egypt particularly, new private universities are mushrooming, many presenting themselves as "foreign", whether German, British, American-style or "international". Some fashion themselves as "future colleges and universities". Burgeoning demand, overcrowding in state institutions, disillusionment with existing (especially state provided) educational options lead parents and students to look to private enterprise in remedying what the state leaves wanting - quantitatively and qualitatively.

The question we must ask is the following: Is American-style/ Liberal Arts education really taking hold? Should we – or the "prospective stake-holders" - take the two concepts to be coterminous? Or are some of the new universities merely adopting a label of convenience to convey or imply a certain approach or quality without necessarily adhering to the underlying core values of a genuine and good Liberal Arts education? What are the obstacles, or - at best - the challenges, to implanting Liberal Arts values in certain settings? Who oversees the quality of curricular design, course delivery, coherence in education and development of student life and activities that are considered but a few of the requisites to a good American-style education? What do local governmental agencies demand and allow? Why the demand for the "American model" at the very time when some warn of a clash of civilizations and suspicion of, or even disdain for, things American or Western seem on the increase?

This paper contends that "Liberal Arts" education, while widely used as a label, is not widely understood - and perhaps not even accepted by students (or their parents/sponsors) seeking an "American style education", nor by many purveyors of education, nor by the agencies who are tasked with overseeing the quality of education provided by the new private universities. This lack of understanding manifests itself in various ways: lax attitudes towards class participation, study, completion of assignments; hesitancy or timidity in engaging in true critical thinking and debate; lack of appreciation for the need to explore many different subject areas outside one's preferred major; opposition or hesitance to explore topics that are considered "taboo" or uncomfortable in a certain social setting; hesitance in questioning authoritative answers (the text book, the instructor, conventional wisdom); gaps in expectations between and among students and faculty; disconnect between faculty preparation and stated belief in Liberal Arts values and actual application in class room learning and assignments; lack of understanding and appreciation of these values on the part of many administrators; a certain unease on the part of colleagues or an institution if students, fellow colleagues, or certain practices are "called out" in the press or by local politicians or even the authorities. In other words, "people" claim or believe they want a certain product – yet they may object when they encounter its actual content and the application of the values and methods which render that very model its strength. The upshot of such objections is that one risks producing a watered down educational product with little resemblance to what the universities claimed they set out to achieve.

Concerns about the risk of diluting a good Liberal Arts education are not new. As early as 1944, C.J. Ducasse, writing in the context of Liberal Arts education and the college curriculum in the United States, emphasized the need for students to "really master the modest intellectual skills which they are supposed to acquire" he worried about "allowing students to graduate with impressionistic knowledge and half skills" the following words bear studying by anyone aspiring to establish or seek admission to quality universities, anywhere in the world: *"to make a college easy to get in, easy to stay in, and easy to graduate from not only debases the educational currency, but is both morally and psychologically obtuse – morally, because it tacitly assumes that it is important that a college should keep going even if the education it gives is not worth getting; and psychologically because the love of the strenuous, the difficult, the risky is in man, especially when young and vigorous, as a spring of actions natural and effective as the love of pleasure"* [8]

[8] Ducasse, C.J., Liberal Education and the College Curriculum, The Journal of Higher Education, Volume. XV, No. 1, January, 1944: pp1-10

In his ruminations, Ducasse spoke mainly to what we might term "lack of rigor", but the concern applies equally to lack of faithful adherence to core values - to the ethos of the academic freedom inherent in a Liberal Arts education and to the responsibility that goes along with the right to engage in honest inquiry - including accountability, sound scholarship and transparency – at the individual and institutional levels . While written in a different time and place, the dangers and opportunities alluded to apply to the GCC States, including the Kuwaiti and generally to the MENA region's higher education of today. Universities must take their mission seriously, not merely limp along, and they ought to ignite in the students a passion for learning and for action, not merely making it relatively comfortable and easy to obtain a degree. They need to challenge all participants to make the endeavor worthwhile. Otherwise, their addition presents no augmentation to the currently available alternatives.

The solution seems to lie in communicating adequately the core values and the expectations of students, faculty and administrators before they "buy into" institutions that claim to be "American" and claim to value good Liberal Arts practices. There is a need to define clearly and emphasize the focus on Liberal Arts to prospective students and to emphasize this aspect and all its adherent features in an institution's publications, in orientation programs for prospective and incoming students and parents, as well as to faculty. It is equally important to remind governmental agencies, the ministries of education, the private universities councils of these core values, and to seek their help as partners in implementing these values

In this connection, I believe the role of what I term the "outside mentoring institutions" (mentors/advisors) to be paramount. Those universities who assist the local Kuwaiti institutions, whether as cooperative partners, or advisors operating within a memorandum of understanding, as well as the commissions engaged in peer review in connection with accreditation processes, can play a crucial role in holding the new universities to their claims – to ensure that the labels and references "American" , "Liberal Arts" , "critical thinking" are not taken in vain as mere marketing tools, but that the underlying values truly adhered to. Indeed, international institutional accreditation ought not be achievable if the local institution wants to buy "half a loaf" – the one convenient to them. By insisting on adherence to stated values, to "truth in advertising", all parties can contribute to propelling true intellectual inquiry, high standards, ethics and best practices forward.

The local institutions, while obliged to exercise caution and show sensitivity to local societal norms and values, must insist on a minimum of academic freedom, and open intellectual inquiry. Absent these basic requirements, a true Liberal Arts education cannot take hold. Together, the partners in crafting education in these new universities must insist on safeguarding basic academic freedoms, high standards in performance, transparency in operation, good academic integrity, ethics and standards, encourage (rather than hamper) critical thinking – and they must engage in periodic, frequent quality assurance checks and inculcate practices of self-studies and assessments within the universities that address these important values.

This requires a focus in three main areas:

1) ensuring that students (prospective students and their families) fully understand what they should expect and demand of a Liberal Arts education, and in turn, what is expected of them – the educative process

2) supporting an environment of academic freedom and "operational freedom" in which instructors need not be apprehensive about covering standard curricular information and executing class exercises and projects – here the "sticks" of the mentoring and accrediting bodies may serve as a "back up" and as an enforcement function

3) Ensuring that the governing structure and the societal connections, which might create openings for certain individuals to exercise undue influence, (even those individuals not directly involved in the standard operation of the university business) not exert undue pressure on administrators and faculty, thereby corrupting academic integrity. The mentoring institution and accrediting bodies might serve an oversight/enforcement role, and the possibility of withdrawal of privileges might serve as a deterrent, or as a punitive element.

EXPLAINING LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION.

Once we narrow down a better and more commonly agreed upon definition, it seems evident that we need to better explain – on a continuous basis - to ourselves and others how we understand Liberal Arts education today, and reiterate to ourselves what ingredients of a Liberal Arts education are most valuable to us across time – what elements are most worthy of putting up a fight for, what elements might be more malleable or in need of adjustment or reevaluation.

What exactly is it about Liberal Arts education that "we" value (we – meaning proponents and purveyors of this type of education) - how do we convey and convince various audiences that this approach holds promise and not threat. Is our utility optimization congruent with that of "the market" - of prospective students and their employers of the future? Do our assumptions, interpretations and perhaps our values need fine tuning or accommodation?

Is it the breadth of the curriculum that most appeals to us? Is it the supposed academic freedom that can be exercised by students, by professors/researchers? Is it the expected, constant brain-stretching, critical thinking that we demand students and colleagues to exert, and which we believe are essential exercises to move our fields forward? Is it the plethora of collateral activities usually found in a good Liberal Arts institution?

CONVEYING THE MESSAGE – EXPLAINING THE CONTENT OF LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION TO ALL PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS.

We have to explain Liberal Arts education better, we have to practice it better – and we should demand it in greater quantity. First of all we have to explain to prospective students what we expect them to get themselves into when they accept the premise of a Liberal Arts education (as defined above).

How often do we see a college view book or a "marketing pamphlet" from an institution which proudly refers to "Liberal Arts" without any explication of what that holds? Too often! When the American University in Cairo went through its most recent – and successful decennial re-accreditation evaluation, the chair of the visiting team mentioned specifically "can you explain better what you mean by Liberal Arts education". Fortunately, we could, as could most students and educators thanks to several rounds of orientations and pamphlets elaborating on the concept. But in truth, we cannot make it explicit enough. We assume that people have absorbed what it entails, when in fact many seek admission to AUC based on other attractions – be it reputation, tradition, family pressure.

STRENGTHENING THE UNDERSTANDING OF LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION – AUC'S APPROACH

AUC takes its commitment to a Liberal Arts education (sometimes referred to as liberal education) very seriously. From 1995 to 1998 the "Provost's Commission on Liberal Education," had three work groups focused on the following: 1) raising awareness, 2) re-examining the AUC curriculum to help strengthen the liberal education philosophy, and 3) reaching out more effectively to the students on this issue, for example through a "Freshman Year Experience" (FYE). The FYE, a mandatory 3-4 day introduction to AUC and to Liberal Arts education has become institutionalized, well received and is constantly being adapted to cover what the university considers the core ingredients: critical thinking, academic freedom, academic integrity (a thorough session on academic honesty and anti-plagiarism measures which is co-led by students, staff and by faculty and staff culminate in the signing of the code of academic integrity – which, incidentally, is also signed faculty and staff). Students are introduced to the many, meaningful co and extracurricular activities that nourish the overall Liberal Arts educational experience.

The "Commission" also held an all-faculty retreat in November of 1996, and a booklet was published by the Provost's Office - "A Guide for Freshman Students," The booklet sought to describe in succinct fashion to students and parents what liberal education is all about. For several years, one professor presented the following paragraphs during "New Student Orientation" in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.[9] His outline bears repeating in full:

> AUC and Liberal Education:
>
> What makes The American University in Cairo unique in Egypt is an approach that can be summed up in two words: liberal education. Properly understood and pursued, this approach to education can make a world of difference to your personal and intellectual development while a student at the University, and to the practical contributions you can make--as an employee, and as a citizen--after graduation.

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[9] Professor Robert Switzer has led the new student orientation for several years, and also served on the task force on Mission during AUC's recent MSCHE reaccreditation self study.

What is Liberal Education?

The meaning of the word "liberal" in liberal education--and so also its goal--is freedom: the freedom to think your own thoughts and develop your own point of view. This involves the ability to analyze opinions and assumptions--your own as well as those of others. It means becoming more aware of your rootedness in the past, while also being open to new ways of thinking.

With liberal education, the stress is not on rote learning or mere memorization of facts, but on critical thinking and a creative approach to problem-solving. The knowledge and techniques we learn today are often outdated tomorrow. Whatever your field of study, many of the problems you will face after graduation cannot even be imagined now. The skills you acquire at AUC will enable you to evaluate and develop new ideas, to find the information you need in this rapidly changing world, to see connections and to understand the broader picture behind events. Our goal is to teach you how to learn, so that you will be prepared to tackle the challenges ahead.

What are the Benefits of a Liberal Education?

The most important goal of liberal education is developing a well-rounded and intellectually alive individual. Your AUC education should provide you with the breadth and depth of knowledge to understand the larger contexts surrounding the challenges we face today and into the next century--issues such as development, resource management and environmental protection. This sort of understanding involves a sensitivity to values, history, and the power of language, just as much as it does an understanding of the facts and technical issues involved. Liberal education involves working to develop these sensitivities, as well as the ability to express ideas clearly and convincingly, through an inter-disciplinary approach to knowledge. Its goal is nothing less than to build better human beings, and better citizens. The practical benefits of liberal education are just as significant. Employers today don't want just narrow specialists; they are looking for intelligent young people with the ability to communicate, interpret, and think effectively. It is their liberal education backgrounds, their language skills, and their exposure to a variety of cultural traditions which give AUC students their competitive advantage with employers such as multinational corporations. In short, a good liberal education, such as you should receive from AUC, will help you to find a satisfying and rewarding job after graduation, and will also help you to excel and adapt successfully as your career progresses through the changing times ahead.

Where Do I Find It?

The heart of liberal education is to be found in traditional Liberal Arts courses, such as those in literature and philosophy, mathematics and the sciences. At AUC, every student is assured of a basic liberal education through the general education requirements built into the core curriculum. But this hardly exhausts liberal education; rather, this is an educational approach which should be found in all programs of study and all classes taught at the University. What this means in practice is that you should expect to participate in discussions and actively question your instructors, rather than sit passively listening to lectures. It also means that, as much as possible, all classes should emphasize reading, writing and critical thinking skills.

Commitment

Attending AUC involves a serious commitment of time and resources on the part of you and your parents. To get the most out of your time at AUC, few things will be more valuable to you than understanding and getting involved in the liberal education approach. But there should be room in your university years for more than just practical concerns and benefits. With all the years of real-world worries that lie ahead, the time you spend at university should be a chance to dream and explore, as well as to train for a future career. Real success takes more than just hard work; you should aim to develop genuine interest and enthusiasm. The liberal education approach at AUC is designed to allow you to combine these goals in your program of study. It is up to you to be open as well as dedicated, and to find within yourself the love of thinking and the commitment to free debate that have made universities such unique and powerful forces in society. The opportunities are here--it is up to you to make the most of them.

While most aficionados of Liberal Arts education will nod in agreement with the outline above, we must also acknowledge that the noble goals and eloquent explication rarely permeates to all our students, and certainly not in advance of admission. Perhaps a required part of the admissions process should be an essay question, such as: "What does Liberal Arts education mean to you?" – or "What would you contribute to a Liberal Arts educational environment if admitted to our university?"

KUWAITI STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS AND KNOWLEDGE OF LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

What are the perceptions of the students who seek an American style, Liberal Arts education in Kuwait and what is their basis for answering questions about the meaning of a Liberal Arts education?

From 2004 to 2006 I had the privilege of teaching several course sections to students at Gulf University for Science and Technology, and wanted to know: Do the students fully understand "the intended product" or the approach and do they fully appreciate what makes "American style", "Liberal Arts" education strong and robust through time"? Based on conversations, polls and small surveys of enrolled students, their peers, parents, siblings, prospective students, the answer seemed to be "no". Very few could provide even a modest explanation of what "Liberal Arts" entails. Although the concept is alluded to, or even explained, in course catalogues, view books, and sometimes mentioned briefly at a welcome session, it was obvious that the university had not done nearly enough to convey the "core competency" which it claims to provide. What then induces prospective students to apply to these new universities, if not the core values? Or, if they seek American style education, why stay in Kuwait rather than enroll in universities abroad?

IDENTITY, PERCEPTIONS AND MOTIVATION FOR SEEKING "AMERICAN EDUCATION" AND LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION.

Most survey respondents could not define "Liberal Arts Education". Few were able to get at the most basic interpretation – that any four year college education – even those focused on business, computer science and other technical studies are anchored in a well rounded "Liberal Arts" or general education curriculum.

Several small surveys were conducted to get an impression of how students and prospective students view American education and what they expect in terms of the learning experience, learning outcomes and how such an education would enhance their lives and their professional opportunities.

As part of a class exercise, thirty three students interviewed peers, parents, prospective employers and siblings and conducted a basic survey – involving a questionnaire to be given to five individuals not currently at the same institution. Survey targets were defined as students at other institutions, prospective students applying to college within the next two years, parents of prospective students, and prospective employers seeking to employ college graduates. Thirty one students returned the surveys along with their own analysis of the results. This in turn formed the basis for a class discussion on survey methodology, its pitfalls and the preliminary finding. One hundred and fifty five surveys were returned. It should be noted that no claim is made that the data are statistically significant at any level. Rather this was an exercise which yielded a first cut impression of how university students think about labels, values and their own education. The survey was also part of an exercise in "research methodology" which was an integral part to the political science courses. In other words, it reflected a learning experience for the students, as well as their opinions, their knowledge and those impressions found from their survey respondents. Nevertheless, some clear trends emerged.

When asked the question "what is Liberal Arts Education" only three respondents were close in terms of citing such ingredients as "academic freedom", "a good exchange between students and professors", "a wide range of subjects that must be taken".

Most others interpreted Liberal as an "anything goes" approach to class discussion, or a "very flexible curriculum", and "open minded atmosphere".

When asked why one would select an institution with a good Liberal Arts focus – the audience was at a loss to define what it entails, let alone what benefits it might provide for the future. Even conversations with some instructors revealed that few had given much thought to the virtues of a Liberal Arts education or the implementation of its values in the Gulf.

Follow up conversations with the groups of students conducting the survey, revealed that they themselves had given little thought to, and knew even less about the merits of a Liberal Arts curriculum. Most of them had read up on the subject and done the ever-popular internet searches, and now felt that they understood the concept. Most argued that this type of education was valuable, gave enough flexibility for future career options, provided a good broad base of knowledge and encouraged creative analysis and lifelong learning skills. Others felt that Liberal Arts education was a waste of time if a student was already set on a career as accountant, lawyer, MIS expert, etc. The majority of students, however, did claim to appreciate the emphasis on academic dialogue and critical thinking.

The term "critical thinking" holds its own tensions. Students who have been schooled exclusively in a Kuwaiti educational setting (government school) typically have not been invited to engage in analytical thinking or "critical analysis". The very term "critical" is almost considered inappropriate. Students raised in an educational system which values memorization and rote learning, respect for authority (whether teacher, parent, religious leaders, the state) are not used to questioning the topics at hand. When such students are asked to "question the answer, not simply answer the question" or are asked by an instructor "please attack my argument, let me know if you disagree with me", they often feel very uncomfortable and will refrain from participating. The students who have attended the private (often English-medium) schools are more familiar with these types of exchanges, and tend to dominate the class discussions. One might ask: "why do the other students seek an "American style" education, if it makes them uncomfortable"?

BOLSTERING THE COMMITMENT TO CRITICAL THINKING IS AN ONGOING JOURNEY

Explaining the Liberal Arts concept to prospective students, parents, and even faculty members and staff once is a start, but is not enough. A recent polemic from AUC serves as an illustration: Every year AUC admits two excellent students from each of Egypt's governorates into its Leadership for Education and Development Program (LEAD). The LEAD program is a joint program of AUC, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Egyptian Ministry of International Cooperation. Scholarships offered to the two students each year, one male and one female, from each Egyptian governorate is the opportunity of a life time to those students. The students, who exhibit academic excellence and potential for leadership and initiative, receive a full scholarship that covers tuition, books and living expenses. Most students are delighted and grateful for the opportunity, but some find it difficult to integrate into the cosmopolitan atmosphere of AUC. Recently, one LEAD student has taken it upon himself to exercise the call to prayer from one of the roof tops of AUC's new campus- thereby creating a bit of consternation not only from non-Muslim, or non religious students, but from those who feel that display of religiosity (of any sort) should be kept at bay at AUC. Others do not mind the self-appointed Muezzin and his Adhaan and some even find it quaint (a sentiment typical of open-minded study abroad students). However, the story brought out a more disturbing aspect – a statement in the student-run paper "the Caravan" made by the young man himself. After explaining that his prayer call was "a good way to please God in a place where an Islamic life is considerably lacking", he went on to say that "he has problems accepting diversity, dislikes the way boys and girls mingle", but acknowledges that he has come to accept this. The more shocking statement (for those of us who value Liberal Arts education) was this: he disagreed with lessons taught at AUC, including classes such as "Arab Society" and stated –(quote): "Philosophy, I don't accept it", "I already know it, and I don't think it should be obligatory". He saw his role as self-appointed Muezzin as his way of exercising the extolled virtues of leadership skills which we emphasize at AUC, and one can applaud him for that gumption. Yet, he should be disabused of the notion that he does not need to take a philosophy class – which is a requirement of all students. No student can run with half a loaf. This provides a good illustration of lack of communicating clearly the purpose of a broad based, Liberal Arts education. The onus is on the university to consistently reiterate our commitment to broad based learning and critical inquiry.

Stating, as this young man does, that one does not need philosophy flies in the face of the very objective and generosity of the American taxpayer – via the USAID – of seeking to make a good AUC education available to a qualified student – regardless of financial and regional background. Affording this opportunity to a student of any region and religion, allowing him or her to partake of an American style, Liberal Arts education includes "submitting to" a philosophy course – as part of engaging in critical thinking. Yet, the fault lies with the institution. It is incumbent on us to **explain** – and to explain well - to all stakeholders what we aim to purvey. This must be done before a student is admitted, and it must be sustained and emphasized regularly in and outside classrooms.

Likewise, we need to educate the prospective "consumer" (student /employer/ parent) to express their demands, and we, in turn, must clearly disclose what we offer and what we demand of students to ensure a proper match that benefits all. American Liberal Arts education must be understood and valued before it is entered into. Even if, or particularly when, achieved through scholarship competitions, this type of education can never be taken lightly, nor should it be seen as a free ticket – or a halfway house to a master's degree or a Ph.D. elsewhere. A student and his/her family must "buy into" the global idea of a Liberal Arts education.

HOW TO PROPAGATE AND PURVEY THAT WHICH WE BELIEVE IN?

First, an institution must lead by example, show the community that it values, expects and rewards diversity, critical thinking and vigorous debate. Funding must be sought for courses that are perhaps not traditionally seen as yielding an immediate return, and institutions can engage with other fine institutions in activities that promote Liberal Arts education and activities. Cooperation can go a long way in heightening the image of Liberal Arts values and the institutions that are proponents thereof. Just as we are reminded that many battles are won, or initial incursions made, with money, arms and ideas – so it is with establishment of institutions and practices of higher learning: funds, technology/ infrastructure and methodology – not necessarily in equal portion will make the inroads. But we should be mindful that if one ingredient by itself does not suffice to make for a good education – the lure of one or more of them may suffice to attract stakeholders – students benefiting from funding, a conducive learning environment – an appealing method of learning. And we should not assume that Liberal Arts education is – or will remain – the preferred ingredient, however much we wish it so. Hence, an ever greater task for us lies in propagating this time honored tradition that we believe in.

CHALLENGES TO IMPLANTING AND CONTINUOUSLY NURTURING LIBERAL ARTS

The challenges faced by all professors and students can be summed up in a few, perhaps cliché like apprehensions: Fear of speaking up and speaking out; fear of questioning authority; timidity in exploring something new, innovative or "edgy"; worries about negative repercussions when disagreeing with a professor's (perceived) stand-point, or the views presented in the instructional material; fear of peer retribution; worries about being perceived as "rude", even when an instructor invites students to "attack their arguments". Add to this a valid fear in some societies that viewpoints and statements might be "reported" and land the student or his and her family in some unpleasant situation.

Aside from fears, old habits die a slow death. We intone against rote memorization, but find ourselves at odds with an educational culture where students are used to obeying the authority figures rather than questioning a teacher, a parent, a community leader. Add to this that the GCC and the MENA region have a long standing tradition that values, respects and admirers a person's ability to recite sacred texts and poetry, and one can understand how uncomfortable the student must sometimes feel, when asked to shift the focus of learning and methods of remembering and absorbing material.

POTENTIAL SOLUTION – REACHING OUT – ACKNOWLEDGING THE POINTS OF "THE OTHER"

Liberal Arts values and the ethos of critical thinking invite us – indeed, demand of us - a readiness always to try to discern the view point of "the other". At what point does our eagerness to understand and accommodate differences between view-points - cultures, governance systems, schematics, modes of instruction - become counter-productive? A sell-out to "the other"? At what point does our own perception of having the correct method stand in the way of commencing a true dialogue that bridges different cultural perspectives and time bound conditioning in learning patterns?

The question may seem trivial at first, yet most of us have encountered the mutual consternation and defensive posturing students and professors can display when debating core values in the class room: family structure; ruling structures; regime forms; authority; obedience; order; chaos; *fitna*; modesty; "critical". What do these words mean – and to whom? What dangers do they hold – and to whom? The individual student? The leader of the Republic or the kingdom? The family? History? Abstract thinking?

Can we say, for example, that democracy, critical thinking, ethics, values – have always stood the individual and a given society in good stead – across time and space?
Probably not. The Maddox debacle – no less absurd than the Albanian pyramid scandals, the Enron tailspin – no less dishonorable that the waste blamed on government corruption in certain countries - the list is long, if one tabulates "things gone wrong" in societies that are open and where business leaders and government officials have had plenty of exposure to critical thinking combined with the ability to exercise human agency. The mishaps are no less dishonorable or absurd than those found in societies that are perceived as "more strict", "closed-minded", "repressive".

Who are "we" to say that a Liberal Arts education will benefit the individual and his/ her society in the long run. Yet those of us who remain committed to the ideals "just know that it feels right". Nevertheless, we have some constant explaining to do. We cannot expect all other settings to see the merit, or the utility optimization as flowing logically from our argument. We expect our students to feel privileged to have earned admission – to partake of learning for the sake of learning. Pragmatically, many students educate themselves with a view toward a job – or towards enhancing employment and advancement opportunities. But this should not be the sole focus. Yet, we need convincing arguments and examples, as tools to convince those who seek rational explanations for the virtue of Liberal Arts education.

They might find a convincing argument in a statement by former president of AUC, Dr. Thomas Bartlett who points out that AUC has been so successful because it prepares the student not merely for a first job – but for the last job. If we can demonstrate that graduates of a sound Liberal Arts education are sought after precisely because the knowledge gained – including the business of " learning how to learn" - transcends an immediate job attainment, then we have a cogent and persuasive point. If we can convince students that the skills learned will last a life time and that alumni later acknowledge that the very subjects that might have seemed esoteric or even "useless, unnecessary suffering" at the time of study often prove to be the most valuable assets later in life, we may have won part of the battle of persuasion. Some universities are better at alerting students to such dynamics early on. Those that do not, risk losing or alienating their students along the way. Another honest tactic might be a dose of healthy introspection which might lead to the recognition that there is room for rote memorization, discipline, rigor and respect for ones "elders", whether the instructor is older or more seasoned. Admitting that there are flaws in 'Western settings", and that good critical thinking can only be applied to a sound basis of cognitive skills, might raise our credibility across other locales. We have to admit that, at times, too much "winging it" goes on in "Western class rooms" whether this is due to students or instructors coming un- or under-prepared, or whether some settings allow participants to be intellectually lazy. We have to emphasize that we value the best of both approaches: rigor, discipline and high expectation in cognitive knowledge and grasp of factual material as well as the willingness to and aptitude for engaging in critical thinking.

Interminable repetition and incessant rote memorization is what "we" propagate against (and I believe in the value of true critical thinking) – yet, are we perhaps indoctrinating just as much by intoning against memorization and emphasizing only our own values? Liberal Arts does not mean a free for all. The critical thinking needs to be supplemented or complemented and indeed anchored in good cognitive skills. The praxis does not mean "winging it". Brainstorming is great but it must be based in substance. Substantive knowledge is essential but needs to be exposed to critical thinking. The two approaches should be mutually reinforcing, otherwise both lose credibility. After all, there is no harm in reciting the times table or historical facts – but perhaps conferences such as the present one and ongoing exchanges can produce a give and take, a healthy dose of mutual finger pointing and reciprocal praise.

PROMOTING, PURVEYING AND DEFENDING LIBERAL ARTS PRACTICES HORS D' CLASS ROOM

Just as a country's policies and responsibilities do not stop at the water's edge, so too, educational institutions have a responsibility to reach beyond the class room, reach out to and engage with the community. At minimum, a good institution of higher learning is – these days, if not before – expected to and called upon to provide for their students meaningful experiences and exercises that are integral parts to their learning and formation as citizens of the world. Likewise, universities are expected to benefit the communities in which they are embedded, and at times the broader world, by interacting, sharing knowledge and rendering services, facilities and enriching events. Opportunities abound, some of which are closely or loosely tied to the curriculum: internships; community based learning; volunteering; tutoring; civic engagement in a general sense, surveys and studies of a given population or community, awareness drives, film- renaissance- cultural festivals, study trips within a country or abroad; exchange programs and extra mural competitions and much more. In "the West" students, professors and administrators have come to expect such activities, and relatively well developed systems exist channeling such activities, whether through regulations guiding studies on animal and human subjects, behavioral codes during various activities and delimiting of legal responsibilities, as well as thorough preparation for professors and students in advance of such activities. Many students will acknowledge that they learn as much from such enriching activities as they do from formal in-class learning.

We should not take for granted that such activities are equally welcomed in other settings, nor that systems are in place to help guide and regulate their unfolding, or addressing problems that may arise. A few examples from the Egyptian setting suffice to illustrate the point: While Egypt has a rather stringent process that researchers must go through in order to obtain permission – not only for research on human and animal subjects – but for mere administration of surveys - such regulations are not well communicated to incoming instructors, and are perhaps even treated in a cavalier fashion by those who ought to know the severity of short-circuiting the protocol and approval process. Exercises that are seemingly innocent in some cultures – even at primary and high school levels – might cause problems, and can be seen as offensive, even inciting *fitna*, and might land the unwitting/innocent student, the instructor and the institution in trouble. Issues regarding good survey methodology aside, (in Egypt and elsewhere there are class experiments, and studies requiring outside surveying that would not pass muster in the US), there are some surveys, that would be conceived of as perfectly appropriate and innocent, yet can be construed as potentially offensive and troublesome in Egypt (and the MENA region in general). A few examples will illustrate the dilemmas: an economics class requires students to conduct a study on salary differentials between men and women. An instructor cannot simply encourage students to go to the local supermarket and interview male and female cashiers and stock workers. Advance approval may be required, the motivation behind the study will be questioned. A sociology course involving an excursion to a disadvantaged neighborhood, where students interview the residents, take video and pictures or even take notes, can be seen as unsavory information gathering designed to tarnish Egypt's image (it does not help that the sponsoring institution is the American University in Cairo – misperceptions abound about the identity and role of the institution – reference to anecdotes elsewhere). Students covering elections as part of an assignment for a journalism class, nearly were injured or landed themselves in prison. Their mere presence at the event was enough to occasion danger for them and embarrassment for the university.

Why are these few anecdotes of any importance? It is incumbent on a university that values and promotes Liberal Arts and critical thinking to adequately prepare students for the perils that may lie in surroundings not accustomed to the same vein of free thinking. Yet it begs the question: at what point does the university's responsibility end and individual responsibility and common sense begin? Does a university not have a duty to "stand up for" all its flock – students, instructors, administrators". The answer seems to be yes, insofar as their experiences are directly related to their work at the university. Yet a university should not be used as a shield for dangerous, self-aggrandizing, rebel-rousing that the individual well knows will land everyone in trouble. Instructors have a specific responsibility not to occasion students to be placed in harm's way – even if such caution is at odds with what would happen as normal course of business at a Liberal Arts institution in the US.

Universities must be cognizant of the fine line between defending the principles and helping a trouble maker exert propaganda and causing trouble. The issue of academic freedom is often invoked as a convenient fig leaf, and while students and others should count on "inter-mural" protection - the very principle of academic freedom - this prerogative does not equate to a right to incite violence, demonstrations, attempts to change the government, much less the right to gratuitous insults of a host country ruling system or individuals therein. With the large degree of freedom comes a responsibility to respect local mores – or to make it clear when a professor, students, administrator is speaking in the course of business as opposed to presenting views as a private citizen. We want our students to engage in critical thinking, in changing their societies for the better, but we expect our educators to be responsible in the way they "fuel" the minds of their students. Academic freedom is a shield, not a spear.

SOCIETAL PERCEPTION - POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE - DIE HARD

Even an established university such as AUC has to contend with societal misperceptions and old habits and rumors that die hard. The university is the object of admiration as well as petty jealousy and envy which in turn propels criticism. Nationalistic pride and a certain élan for the golden era of learning when the Arab world commanded the heights of intellectual endeavors will often call forth comments against "foreign" universities. It is also understandable that the educational have-nots, who are unable to afford the AUC tuition, will turn their bitterness into denigration and attacks.

RESEARCH APPROACHES, ALLIANCES AND LIBERAL ARTS VALUES – EXCUSES TO CALL OUT "THE WEST"

AUC is a perennial victim and target of accusations. The university has been accused of being the henchmen of the CIA, the Pentagon and the West in general. Recently, AUC has been subjected to unfounded accusation from outside and from within its own midst of being "a beachhead for Zionism", (subsequent to invitations to a conference which would welcome Israeli scholars), accused of selling its campus to Israel for use as its embassy (completely unfounded), and most recently the university has been featured in Al Masry al-Youm as "spying for the Pentagon". What occasioned this latest attack was the university's contract with the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit in Egypt NAMRU-3. AUC has a longstanding cooperation with the US – including being a recipient of NAMRU grants to conduct research on bacteriology – specifically relating avian flu. The accusations calls to the fore the perennial societal misperception/suspicion of the very endeavor of inquiry and research – the name American in AUC does little to assuage fears and suspicion. There was consternation that AUC reports its research findings to the US, and the AUC Counselor had to appear on TV to explain that it is normal that a grant recipient reports research findings to grant givers. Smear campaigns abound in many settings, but the public needs to be disabused of the idea that AUC (or any of the American University of ….) are operating branches of the US government engaged in sinister activities.

ADDRESSING MISPERCEPTIONS AND PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY

What are some of the ways in which a university can mitigate negative impressions, attitudes and unfortunate incidents and currents? As with any issue, communication and transparency will serve as the best defense – and offense. Since most Liberal Arts institutions also state a commitment to service to the community and strive to render service to the country and the region, the negativity might be circumvented, or somewhat mitigated, by inviting in "the masses" to be part of our educational ethos – through outreach activities. AUC has done a commendable job at inviting the public in. The Tahrir square campus is embedded in the hearts of most Egyptians. Since the university's founding in 1919, AUC has been known as a place where theater performances and other cultural events were open to the public, where Umm Kulthum performed and many other important events took place.

As for the accusations relating to research collaboration, ongoing reassurances through transparency would seem to be the best remedy. However, even with constant communication and reassurances, one should expect to encounter suspicion. Nor is such suspicion peculiarly Egyptian or "Middle Eastern". Many will recall the polemics surrounding the NSEP grants in the US in the early 1990s and the adherent suspicions voiced about "old, recycled CIA money which might come with strings attached". Another example of how we might recall and recount our own experiences and share these types of apprehension with our local interlocutor, to showcase that we are more similar than different, but that the misunderstandings are best cleared through open debate.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES – EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES - SOLO PERFORMANCE – SOLO RESPONSIBILITY?

A recent incident involving an AUC student – Philip Rizk – called attention in the media worldwide when after a peaceful march to protest Egyptian policies in connection with the recent turmoil in Gaza, Mr. Rizk was abducted by Egyptian security forces and held for five days. His ordeal coincided with AUC's grand inauguration of its new campus attended by local foreign dignitaries, our own board members and by several members of the First Family of Egypt – Mrs. Mubarak was the honored key note speaker. Because of vigorous protests by several AUC professors and intervention by top administrators of AUC, Philip Rizk was released, unharmed, after about five days. Others were not so lucky. The incident calls up the question: does a university that encourages students to become active citizens who speak up and involve themselves in their community, taking a stance in politics, bear a certain responsibility in coming to their assistance when things go awry? AUC felt that this must be so. This might be seen as an example of Liberal Arts values coming to the rescue of one individual – a Christian, Egyptian/German sociologist who happened to be an AUC student. Who would have advocated for the many others who are detained without trial. The same rationale ought to apply, ought it not?

Encouraging civic engagement is a balancing act. We want our students to be active citizens, who engage, take action, preparing themselves for leadership roles in society. Yet, we do not wish to place them in harm's way at our encouragement. The dilemma lies in not instigating excessive incidents that will call negative attention to the institution and place students in danger, nor stifling activities and damping the very enthusiasm we seek to instill in our students. This would apply to institutions everywhere. As has been pointed out by many – there are prisoners not so fortunate as to have spokes-persons advocating for them – occasioning accusations of a privileged status enjoyed by the 'spoiled AUCians', who benefit from a special relationship with the powers that be. Old perceptions die hard. By the same token, when university professors have been charged with crimes or offenses against the Egyptian State or its officials, the university has not always found it appropriate or fortuitous to speak up and come to the defense of a certain instructor after he or she has expressed certain views that caused displeasure with power-holders.

Hence it is not only in the class room or in the curricula of a purported (American style) Liberal Arts institution that dangers sometimes lurk while opportunities for learning abound. The approach brings with it openings and responsibilities for the student, professors, the administration and for society at large.

CRAFTING EDUCATIONAL IDENTITIES – OR EDU-IMPERIALISM?

Some might accuse us of attempting to recast identities in our own image. We are passionate about Liberal Arts education, but are we at risk of becoming dogmatic in our propagation of these values. Should we expect wholehearted acceptance of our ideals, methods of teaching and learning, approaches to content and interpersonal relationships between students, instructorsand administrators?

Can we learn something from the societies and the students more accustomed to "authority consciousness and rote learning"? As alluded to above, I believe the answer is yes. In addition to acknowledging value in other systems, we should be careful not to portray "ourselves" and our sometimes Utopian Western, educational landscape as a harmonious, monolithic society of Liberal Arts lovers. Even in the US – today's bastion of Liberal Arts education – this would be an illusion.

In the recent past it has been fashionable to talk about – and to question the validity and durability of supposedly constructed identity and imagined communities. When it comes to the issue area of Education, do we have the right to expect wholehearted adoption/even adaptation and absorption of our Liberal Arts values, and have we even defined them well enough for ourselves in a multifaceted society such as the United States. In that very setting we witness debate almost on a daily basis about science based curriculum versus creationist teachings; the degree to which schools can or should provide sexual education; encourage and accept alternative lifestyles, allow and encourage school prayers and many other debates. We might question how open minded and how liberal we are, particularly at the primary school levels, before we lament the fact that students in other settings come with different preparations that may make them less ready to "jump into" a Liberal Arts educational setting. The issue is contextual, geographically and time- bound, even in a "Western" setting. An entering student raised in the "Bible Belt" likely experiences more surprises at a Liberal Arts college such as Sarah Lawrence or Amherst, than does a student coming from New York City or Chicago. American society, a multi-ethnic, secular society, yet one in which religion (of various denomination) is a prominent factor, present a cultural challenge for a student coming from Europe, no matter how much such a student has embraced the notion of Liberal Arts education. Europe, on the other hand, without using the label Liberal Arts, has traditionally engaged in a spirit of welcoming other cultures , some even see an "over-accommodation" of "the other" with an ever-growing immigrant society segment. Its educational system has already been influenced by a seemingly boundless willingness to respect the cultural norms of immigrants, thereby altering behavioral patterns by students from pre-K through university. It would seem that the world is, and must be, ready to constantly reevaluate its approaches to co-existence, in society in general, and in educational spaces, in particular. This may occasion a narrowing, a widening or simply a re-fashioning of the way we engage in joint intellectual inquiry. We may be renegotiating what is encouraged, what is allowed and what is desirable. We must be open to the possibility that the Liberal Arts approach that we know today may look different a short while from now. The GCC and the MENA region will likely not be the only realms in which some Liberal Arts approaches are met with skepticism or just lack of understanding. The way in which we learn together remains a new territory and there is plenty of opportunity for creating new mediated spaces, none of which are likely to remain constant over time. Are we likely to see a convergence of many standards, or more of a universal application of predominantly "western" standards and approaches. Only time will tell.

ACADEMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY AND CRITICAL THINKING

Liberal Arts, critical thinking, academic integrity, ethics – are these occidental values?
We might wish to think so. Whichever value sets they are – or from whence they come "geographically" – they have to be understood, embraced, valued and desired in any given locale – whether a company, family, university, country - if they are to be - or become – universal values. If these are already universal values – how did/do they evolve – or how are they constructed?

We may have no scientific underpinning for the argument that integrity and honesty ought to be universally acceptable, applicable and indeed required – no evidence for why ethical behavior is "right". It "just feels right". We can all agree that individuals and empires alike have sometimes done better by tyranny and by scamming each other – temporarily! Yet in today's world, and today's tumultuous economy, more than ever, it seems evident that students, instructors and institutions need to redouble their efforts in emphasizing honesty and integrity. This is also one of the hallmarks of a good Liberal Arts education. Along with the freedom of inquiry goes the responsibility of decent scholarship that is original, transparent, replicable and accurate in its citation and credit of sources.

Convincing all to adhere to good principles of academic integrity remains a challenge in certain parts of the world, including the GCC and the MENA region. Good Liberal Arts institutions must be unyielding in their demands in insisting on the highest levels of integrity. Yet, because of different preparation of the students – and in some cases of instructors as well – an educative process must precede a corrective and punitive aspect. Technology makes plagiarism detection easy, but there is no substitute for inculcating good moral values through class room debate and meaningful exercises. Institutional integrity encompasses many aspects, but one element is unwavering support of instructors who strive to instill the right values and professional and ethical behavior on the part of all students, in and outside the class room. If an institution is not consistently enforcing a no-tolerance policy, any accreditation body is sure to insist on such vigilance, lest the institution risk its accreditation status. It is worth noting the ongoing, large n- study on academic integrity by McCabe, Feghali and Abdallah 'Academic Dishonesty in the Middle East: Individual and Contextual Factors'. While never apologists for dishonesty, the authors conclude that rational choice induce different behaviors and coping mechanism in certain societies (e.g. crisis ridden Lebanon) and that solutions to the problem might warrant a different approach. The article serves as a reminder that anyone set on instilling good Liberal Arts values can heed the advice that propagation of values whose merits are taken for granted sometimes require correctives, and alternative approaches in order to succeed.

LIBERAL ARTS - ACADEMIC FREEDOM - ELASTICITY OF THE CONCEPTS?

Economists talk of long-run and short run elasticity of demand or supply. Speculations and postulates, sometimes borne out by empirical evidence show that the elasticity varies according to the type of "good" and may co-vary with fluctuations in other variables, e.g. income, perceptions of future developments in markets, personal/institutional financial matters (e.g. the short term elasticity of demand for oil is greater than that of bread). Is there a long run elasticity of acceptance of liberal thinking – and if so - what might this mean. Perhaps the tolerance level as applied to different issue areas – varies, and perhaps it co-varies with perceptions of stability in the markets, the political climate, increasing or declining personal status within a locale – citizenship, degree of (perceived) influence, wealth, position, age in a given society? If applied to medicine, physics, economics – the tolerance of utterances by a professor or a student may differ from those found in a class discussion concerned with political science, comparative religion, literature, PVA or law.

Just as the short term and long-term elasticity of demand for oil is different than that for bread (more room for fluctuation for the former than the latter) – it may be that there are issue areas in which critical thinking can be stretched more than in others. If so, which are those, and does anyone set the outside boundaries?

Is it plausible that in Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt among others, the idea of questioning the existence of God would be less tolerable that the critical thinking applied to any aspects of Ohm's law or the Pythagorean Theorem? Is it reasonable to expect that those issue areas would be more or less amenable to critical inquiry in say the years 1509, 1774 or in 2008? Is it also plausible (but is it admissible?) that ruminations by a foreign – or foreign born – academic working, perhaps temporarily, in the Gulf, or the MENA region, or anywhere in the world, would be considered and absorbed differently than those posited by an indigenous professor or student who is a "resident" of a given locale?

MEDIAN, MEDIUM OR MODICUM?

So what do we settle for? The calls for papers asked about "mediated spaces". Can we arrive at a negotiated middle ground? Can we agree on a modicum of respect for Liberal Arts values, and who defines what constitutes a minimum, modicum or a happy median?

It can be argued that we can, and should, engage in good natured finger pointing and paying tribute to the accomplishments of "the other", celebrate what others do well. There is a place for memorization and for rote learning to form a sound cognitive base on which to exercise critical thinking.

For example rather than denigrating the extreme rigor and discipline exercised in Japanese and Chinese schools (and which to sensitive western minds may seem to border on abuse and leading youngsters to phobia, disorders and suicide) - we might stretch out a hand and acknowledge that certain things must be learned and memorized "the hard way" before you can apply critical thinking to basic facts. If we do so, perhaps we would be met with a give and take where "the other" acknowledges that after the factual material has been absorbed, it is appropriate to engage in questioning, and that it might be fine to question the teacher, the educational material and that such questioning moves the field forward rather than constituting an incidence of disrespect.

I believe Professor Eickelman's point is right on when he states that - quote -"conferences such as ours may be looked at as a process of articulation happening" - end quote "that we strive to arrive at a synergistic place rather than as pundits "pontificating" (my words not his) from "the West". I would caution that while this conference focuses on the GCC – we need to be cognizant of the many different approaches and paradigms worldwide, and that we might have much to learn from Asia, Latin America, Africa – and that all of these locales are "moving targets" as none of the formulae have crystallized, but are somewhat malleable across time and space. I believe that herein lies the hope and the challenge, making stakeholders in different locales understand and acknowledge that approaches can and should change. Again, Professor Eickelman points to this when asking "are the education models short-term or long-term? Perhaps getting away from the "we have always done it this way" constitutes a first step in amalgamating the best ingredients from several systems, time periods, institutional governing forms and quality appraisals. Short and long-term demands for the emerging education may differ from one locale to the next and may change over time.

The recent establishment of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) is an example of embracing, and attracting the best of the rest of the world – not only the West. The experiment is audacious and is being eyed with a mix of suspicion, incredulity and admiration within the Kingdom. The message from the King emphasizes excellence fostered on the basis of merit, collaboration and cooperation and it acknowledges the need for an atmosphere of exploration and initiative, nurturing and protecting freedom of research, through discourse related to scholarly work. The implementation and practical exercise of these values – reflecting the dream of King Abdullah – will be followed closely. This is not a university that pretends to be either "American style" or "Liberal Arts", yet it holds several of the ingredients we recognize from our own list of "musts" for a good Liberal Arts education. The fact that this university will deal only with sciences and technology and only with graduate students, may make it more palatable to those in the Kingdom who are suspicious of innovation in education. However, the fact that the university city that is KAUST is a co-educational environment, is in itself enough to call some attention to the endeavor. This is but one example in the region that is innovative, but does not fit the mold of anything we have seen or experimented with before. So the answer to the question of whether short or longterm conditions and demands will create different models, seems to be a resounding yes.

Education City in Qatar presents another model of taking the best of the west and implanting it in the GCC region. The verdict is still out as to whether the volume of students can sustain the planned expansion, and whether learning in Georgetown Qatar is truly the same as the experience in Washington D.C. – and whether it has to be?

In other settings, some universities clearly found that they could not continue to back a local enterprise with their own label, and recent events saw George Mason withdraw from the UAE. New York University renders its own name and assistance only after insisting that the environment ensures a threshold of academic freedom, equal opportunity and passes other litmus tests before a full campus constituting a replica of NYU can open in Abu Dhabi. Sponsoring institutions' insistence on integrity and accrediting bodies' oversight of adherence to "main campus" missions, vision and standards will go a long way in propelling good values, including those central to Liberal Arts education.

ACCREDITATION AND ITS ROLE IN UPHOLDING LIBERAL ARTS VALUES. ENFORCEMENT OR STABILIZING FORCES?

The analogy of shield versus spear used about academic freedom applies equally to the role accreditation can play in bolstering the good work of a fine educational institution of any sort. The enhanced vigilance on quality outcomes assessment and over time perhaps quality assurance that can – and should – arise out of outside due diligence investigation and fact finding should serve to help institutions help themselves. Yet the endeavor must be perceived by all stakeholders in a university as a process driven by and for the institution rather than an episodic exercise completed in a mechanistic fashion to satisfy an outside oversight body.

If the state of Liberal Arts education is contextual, time bound, exposed to variance across institutional types and unequally enforced and elusive in terms of assessment, what mechanism would a prospective student, faculty or staff member, researcher, employer, donor, sponsor grant giver have to estimate whether an institution is, in fact, a Liberal Arts institution. Here the exogenous "peer pressure" of continuous institutional accreditation evaluation serves as a gate-keeper, a fact finder and an early alert if things should change and an institution's activities, behavior and direction is no longer congruent with its stated mission. Again, the accreditation efforts serve as a shield, not a sword. When operating properly, the voluntary US accreditation system keeps institutions honest, holding them to their own mission and standards, and those "industrial standards" they pledge to adhere to. It is not a matter of a US agency imposing its methods on educational institutions, but rather one of holding institutions to their own promises. It much resembles the due diligence exercised by tax auditors or bankers: the main interest lies in validating the claims and the findings from a self study. As long as facts on the ground match the claims of the report, an accrediting agency can vouch for the honesty of an institution, accreditation or reaccreditation can be granted. Hence the impressive range of institutions covered by US regional accrediting bodies. The aim is not to cast a mold that will fit everyone in terms of quality, but to allow like-minded institutions to tie themselves to quality standards, goals and promises within a "fine club", and then making their performance and assessment thereof transparent to fellow members of this circle, and primarily to the main stakeholders.

In this case, "Western type" institutional accreditation, e.g. US regional accreditation may provide one type of assessment - and perhaps a corrective – to keep an institution to its stated mission.

US regional accrediting agencies are perhaps not superbly equipped to assess non-US institutions, but some of the regional accrediting agencies do have experience in this area. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and the North Eastern Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) for example, have long accredited institutions outside the US – including AUB, AUC and AUS. They are not lenient in their assessment.

While such accrediting bodies cannot "enforce" anything, they can grant, extend or revoke accreditation in their attempt to hold institutions to their own standards. This bodes well for the continued safeguarding of Liberal Arts values and practices. Standard 1 of the MSCHE, for example, concerned with an institution's mission – would be one area in which an accrediting body would ask the stake-holders – and those engaged in a self-study to scrutinize adherence to stated Liberal Arts principles. The visiting team members, in their due diligence, on-site investigation will be able to either validate the findings or question and reproach an institution considered in non-compliance. Other standards, including those concerned with governance, budget, institutional renewal, academic and institutional integrity – in fact most of the standards – will be able to expose "phony claims" if the accreditors are vigilant in their task.

The US accreditation system has been under continued pressure since the approval by Congress of the 1992 amendments to the Higher Education Act, which called up proposals for and attempts at establishing a national accreditation board with the power to enforce uniform, national institutional eligibility requirements. The initiative went nowhere. The reinvigorated – and I would argue appropriate - focus on outcomes assessment accentuated by the Spellings Commission served to put accrediting bodies on their toes, and to exercise more vigilance and stringency in accreditation evaluation. What was resisted – successfully - was the handing over to a federal authority the oversight of what the "industry" feels has been well discharged in the current voluntary, peer-driven process. What was also resisted was any attempt at standardization of scores and rankings and metrics that would treat all institutions along the same comparability indices, thereby losing the very richness in evaluation, and potentially altering behavior and thereby diminish the diversity that makes the US educational landscape strong and appealing. It should be noted that the term "voluntary" accreditation should be viewed with circumspection. Those who opt out of, or fail to attain and retain accreditation, lose more than the marquis value of collegial seals of approval: funding, transferability of credit, ease of exchanges and much more are at stake when an institution's accreditation status is in peril.

In Europe, the Bologna process has – over the past decade and more – focused on making curricula more transparent, in order to promote mobility and ease of evaluation, both for prospective employers, students, as well as among institutions concerned with admission and transfer credits. Yet the Union is far from unified in regularization of standards or enforcement of claims. In fact, this is partially resisted. In Europe we see a push and pull in terms of standard setting. Normative strands of the literature examining the CRE's quality audits (European Association of Universities) talks about preserving the incredible diversity that exists across European national educational systems, and which is seen as an asset. There is a tendency to resist the strong driving forces of centralized bureaucracy in Brussels. The resistance tends towards extensive use of the principle of subsidiarity. It is hoped that diversity can be protected and that quality assessment will continue to lie with each of the member states, and that the exchange of ideas and experiences will not ensue in a nucleus of yet another centralized "eurocratic" stronghold which will become yet another ossified bureaucracy. What is needed and welcome is a move towards common terminology; improving transparency and public access to information; facilitating funding decisions; gradual acceptance of compatibility of national educational standards and attainment and a demand-driven convergence of some education outputs.

At this stage an impressive number of countries have "signed on" to the ideals and numerous conferences and fact finding missions have taken place. What seems lacking is some enforcement aspect and genuine oversight that would satisfy a prospective student or employer that course outcomes for a certain topic covered in Poland and Slovenia is in fact equivalent to that which is covered in Germany or Norway. The participants acknowledge that this is a work in progress and that the incredible diversity which is to be protected, also presents challenges in evaluation. Imagining a coordination between the US voluntary peer-driven evaluation system and a nascent coordinated parastatal European system with authority relegated to individual states, and one can easily see how daunting a task it would be to ask, and ascertain "so which of your institutions are truly Liberal Arts colleges or universities?" Yet, one can hope that continuous dialogue and conferences such as ours will at least begin to illuminate the field.

While we started by noting the spread of American style Liberal Arts educational institutions in the GCC and the MENA region and while several seek the coveted US regional accreditation, it is not a foregone conclusion that these regions – or the rest of the world – will continue to look to the US for a seal of approval. These regions might find that future accreditation efforts could be coordinated through European endeavors, or that regional mechanisms arise emulating either Europe, the US or other regions, or a blend of several approaches.

The question seems to be: will we increasingly witness the universal application of predominantly American accreditation standards or are we more likely to see a harmonization or homogenization of many regional standards. We know so very little about attempts at monitoring standards and measuring outcomes in education in Asia, Latin America, or Africa – or at least we pay scant attention to systems which might be in place.
There seems to be a paucity of theorizing and data collection regarding quality assurance and adherence to stated missions (such data would get at the number of purported Liberal Arts institutions worldwide as well as preliminary "score cards" as to how they fare, and according to which measures and whose standards). Perhaps we (collectively) suffer from an extreme lack of curiosity about all regions of the world and about how other regions attempt to evaluate their educational offerings. We are afraid to make even tentative hypotheses because the field is moving so fast. Yet we should try. Even at a descriptive level we are meager in trying to understand other regions, feeling more comfortable analyzing US and more recently European attempts at oversight and transparency – perhaps with an occasional reference to Canada or Australia. International exchanges and conferences on the topics of how we define and measure quality and how we delineate various types of institutions and educational modes would make a great contribution in gauging the advances of Liberal Arts education at a truly global level, and would afford us opportunities to craft precisely the mediated outcomes and the give-and take that will have to happen as the world shrinks due to infrastructural and technological advances and the 'consumers and purveyors of excellence in education' all become more astute in evaluating the educational offerings that will best propel them and their societies towards a better, richer, future.

CONCLUSION

Liberal Arts education and values are worth fighting for - or so we believe, or else we would not be here at AUK's Annual Liberal Arts Conference. Many new institutions seem to take the term in vain, and it is debatable what is proliferating - labels or method, packages or an ethos. We should better understand what Liberal Arts mean to different audiences.

The primary problem seems to be that the purveyors of the "good" do not explain it well, to themselves and to others. The terminology is less than clear and Liberal Arts education is not necessarily coterminous with American education. Most aficionados agree on certain ingredients: academic freedom to engage in critical thinking and express ideas freely, test hypotheses and arguments in an atmosphere free of fear of retribution. Expectations that students and faculty continue to push themselves to ever higher levels of academic excellence through critical thinking, collegial exchanges, bold inquiry and by engaging in a breadth of fields and an evolving curriculum, while anchoring debate in sound cognitive frameworks and factual knowledge accumulation. Most also expect students and faculty to be active and responsible citizens who reach out to the world around them, the immediate community and the broader region and the world.

If we understand what we mean by Liberal Arts education it is incumbent on us to constantly double check our assumptions and to communicate our beliefs and our passions to ensure that prospective "consumers" – students, employers, parents, politicians – understand and appreciate the promise this approach holds for the individual, the community and for society at large. The concept bears constant clarification, its application needs adjustment, adaptation and propagation.

Nurturing Liberal Arts education is hard work. Similar to a valued friendship or a marriage, it requires passion, commitment, loyalty, constant attention, it is to be maintained, nourished, reassured, cherished, never taken for granted, and celebrated and shared with the world, in good times and in bad. Only then can society, together, carry the effort forward to the benefit of the primary participants while creating positive externalities for society at large.

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MAHARAAT MUDARAA' (مهـارات مـدراء)
HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE GCC: THE EMERGING MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The emerging Higher Education demand in the GCC is complex. Quality control by GCC educational authorities is well regulated and tough with an emphasis on properly qualified teaching staff, high levels of curriculum, and a complete fully accredited in country presence to replace unregulated and too often unaccredited "fly-in faculty" at so-called training and education establishments. Research indicates that lessons learned emphasized the need for expert, up-front planning and analysis, particularly of curricula appropriate to the GCC market.

As with the globalization of industry, so with global education, national, cultural, and traditional barriers are giving way to new models of learning. The impact of the Internet and the expansion of learning across frontiers have to a great extent homogenized the basic undergraduate curriculum.

GCC States are seen to offer strong potential for these niche markets as GCC parents recognize opportunities for their children to travel and experience global issues in key markets. Changing demographics also provide for additional domestic capacity for private sector employment and recognizes that this will be determined by the skills and abilities of students who are being educated in a very competitive world. Already, research money is being made available for academic research and academic research networking. Real rather than token partnerships are in place.

The trend in higher education in the Gulf is clearly developing and a model is emerging which commits to a broader and deeper educational participation to promote the sharing of knowledge and preparation for life-long learning. Inevitably such sharing and preparing means that education becomes a WMD, a weapon for mass diplomacy, enabling the 21st Century GCC student to critically assess other cultures, to take the time to understand other cultures, and above all to recognize the need for tolerance for knowledge and learning that may initially be perceived as meaningless or insignificant.

The key elements of the emerging model are:

- *Tertiary (undergraduate) Capacity Development - the important prospect for paying students is in place and growing.*
- *There is a demand for liberal arts skills to boost international competitiveness.*
- *GCC States are hoping to reduce brain drain.*
- *Recognition of needs for pre-university training to establish minimum levels of English, now not only the world language of business, but rapidly becoming the world language of education.*
- *GCC States seek prestigious tertiary educational establishments.*
- *Transformation of traditional rote memory training to modern constructivist learning, employing case studies and providing tools and environments that help learners interpret the multiple perspectives of today's world.*
- *Recognition that global education reflects inwardly on the learner who needs to learn how to explore individual talent.*
- *A rise in educational spend is inevitable, but GCC States are experimenting (e.g. Qatar and Dubai) and seeking ways to blend private and government resources.*
- *Preference is for formal in country institutions, so called "fly-in faculty" institutions are low priority and unlikely to be sustainable.*

The paper discusses the emerging trend.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE GCC: THE EMERGING MODEL

The term Liberales Artes is good Latin. Cicero used the term in De Oratore and De Legibus. (Parker: 1892) Other writers referred to the epithet Liberales to denote what subjects were considered proper for the education of freemen, as opposed to the education of slaves. (Varro: 40BC, Seneca: 1470) The word Artes identified an essential feature of theoretical and applied skills to be taught for the benefit of young persons. Liberal Arts education was private. The government provided no funds for the education of the children of free people. Thus for the Roman Empire, a liberal arts education was reserved for the children of gentlemen. The liberal arts were, as they still are, the skills best acquired for the future generation of leaders. Thus in Arabic the best contemporary interpretation of the term "liberal arts" is مهارات مدراء. (Maharaat mudaraa' - Farrin, 2009)

Having largely achieved the once-distant goal of providing free access to primary and secondary education for all nationals, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates —now face a much thornier challenge: raising the quality of that education. (Barber, Mourshed, & Whelan, 2007)

In the Middle East, as elsewhere in the world of globalization, an unfortunate consequence of rapid expansion and heightened competition has been a short-term focus on career education. This response can be seen in the long menu of degree and on-line programs in the professions, in engineering, in law, in education and in nursing and allied health sector specialties. The focus on career has led to a shortage of "educated" graduates. Too many of our global college graduates leave college equipped with little more than a limited arsenal of short-term technical applications.

In practical terms we understand that decision-making is largely determined by the impact of career experience. (Iandoli, Landström, & Raffa, 2007) Where experience is limited to purely technical training at university, the graduate is not yet educated. That is why career experience is a pre-requisite for acceptance at the best recognized MBA programs. By contrast "educated," that is liberal arts, graduates extend their limited arsenal of short-term technical applications with:

- Broad understanding of multi-disciplinary theories and the knowledge and the reasoning which ensures they are equipped to analyze problems they encounter after graduation and therefore to provide rational solutions to problems across academic disciplines. More simply such skills for encountering and understanding problems after graduation are described as "critical-thinking skills."

- Recognition of the inevitability, the constancy, of change and therefore how essential a program of life-long learning is in the 21st Century. Recognition that the center of management of people is no longer focused "on the productivity of the manual worker" but increasingly "on the productivity of the knowledge worker." The productivity of the knowledge worker the "knowledge society." (Drucker: 1999 p 21) This requires significantly different assumptions about the need for education and particularly the need for continuing education to keep pace with the technological and socio-economic changes in the world of business.

- Excellent communication skills and recognition in a global world that, as St Ambrose wrote, "*quando hic sum, non ieiuno sabbato; quando Romae sum, ieiuno sabbato*," {St Augustine, letters] colloquially translated as "when in Rome do as the Romans do," and yet, in the original, more precisely "to observe local culture and respect diversity." This is particularly difficult when so little background of modern economics is traced to the medieval public-sector economics so that too often reference is made to Western financial institutions without the extraordinary influence of the Arab scholars being included in the curriculum of Arabian Gulf educational establishments. Just one example, in the context of the present world financial crisis, must be the evolution of the *hisbah*. The institution was headed by a *muhtasib* whose comprehensive functions have been summarized as ombudsman like activity to cover "truthfulness, repayment of deposits… socially harmful activities such as dishonesty, insufficient weight and measures, fraud in industries, trades and religious matters, etc." (Ibn Taimiyah, circa 1300 Ad)

- The skills to teach, lead, and serve others via highly developed insight, understanding, and tolerance. This is not made easy in the 21st Century when the instant and enormous ignorance of many talking heads gains some measure of credibility simply on the basis of 24/7 media presentation and hype, and regardless of their inaccuracy. We know that "expert predictions" turn out to be no more reliable than "monkeys throwing darts." (Tetlock, 2006) So the 21st Century managers' task is no longer to "manage" people, the task is now to lead people and leadership we know "rests on core competencies" (Drucker, 2001 p 105). Of these competencies the most important is innovation (Drucker, 2001, p 106) and innovation is developed by leaders who manage personnel so that their company can recognize and bring in "creative thinkers." (Crockett, 2009) And certainly, to attract and keep innovative personnel, requires a good knowledge of مهارات مدراء "maharaat mudaraa".

In the Middle East the trend is to the Liberal Arts because leaders recognize that the value of a barrel of oil increases dramatically as the oil is processed from its natural state into products for the global market for downstream petroproducts. Management in the 21st Century requires increasingly "not manual workers – skilled or unskilled – but knowledge workers." (Drucker: 1973) The maximum exploitation by a nation of natural resources means that the nation's "obligation to *the knowledge worker* never ceases." (Deming: 1982) The management of knowledge and the recognition of initiative, creativity and critical thinking provide significant opportunity to increase wealth and employment. The lone acquisition of one or more technical subjects is not enough. The modern graduate needs to be equipped with the skills of freemen in order to manage competitively. And "management is what tradition used to call a liberal art – "liberal" because it deals with the fundamentals of knowledge, self-knowledge, wisdom, and leadership; "art" because it is also concerned with practice and application." (Drucker: 2001, p 217)

The Liberal Arts approach to education was seen by my students recently when we undertook a study abroad trip to Germany and France. We visited the most modern plants in the manufacturing world and saw how the downstream process of oil can lead to refined byproducts of oil departing Kuwait to be further processed abroad and turned into products eventually returning to Kuwait as consumer products. We saw polystyrene building applications being manufactured at Dow Chemical for export to the construction market in Kuwait. We saw petro byproducts being processed at Merck into lipstick for supply to cosmetic companies and eventual presence on the consumer products market in Kuwait. We saw the fundamentals of the downstream process of oil and learned about the practical applications of these byproducts and, for the future, began to have a vision of what parts of the process might become domestic in Kuwait.

Thus the emerging Higher Education demand in the GCC is complex. There is not yet "a single world-class university or scientific research center in the entire Arab world or Iran today." (Friedman: 2008 & Shanghai 2007). There has been a significant rise in the number of institutions which "has unfortunately not been accompanied by an equivalent rise in the quality of the education they dispense –reflect(ing) a serious crisis in the higher education systems in the Arab world." (Prince El Hassan bin Talal: 2009) To a large extent this is because the initial emphasis, state sector monopoly, saw "an authoritarian and bureaucratic model of governance" that did not encourage "creative innovations." (Willoughby: 2008) This in turn led to national (with generous state funding) and expatriate families (with private funds) sending their children to Western universities in search of "better" education. This trend today faces significant competition. "What is keeping students in the region rather than traveling to the United States for education is sharper competition from new, local American-style universities (Ghabra and Arnold, 2007).

Whilst extra-territorial options remain important, the growing demand for in-Gulf alternatives to the state sector higher education has been seen to derive from 4 principal sources:

- An extra premium being placed on "going global" and learning good English creating an intensified demand for the Intensive English courses required to gain entry to private undergraduate institutions in the Gulf. Creating pressure for English entry standards on TOEFL and equivalent international tests to be set at USA and Western European university entrance standards. As In Europe, so in the rest of the world the English language is going global. (Tagliabue, 2002). Indeed all the current evidence in Europe "points to the imminent collapse of the European Union's official language policy, known as "mother tongue plus two", in which citizens are encouraged to learn two foreign languages as well as their own" (Charlemagne, 2009) and implementation of the English language simply because the majority of the young and educated nationals in Europe now learn English as the principal language for use in their future. MENA, Africa, and Asia, will inevitably follow.

- An increasing number of formally educated female nationals who quite naturally prefer to continue their undergraduate studies at home rather than abroad. This couples with the realization that female education is the key to society's development. (El Sanabary, 1993, p 43) The importance of female education can be easily illustrated by correlating the percentage of female parliamentary representative with positions on the United Nations Human Development Index. The nations who combine the highest life expectancy, literacy, educational attainment, and GDP per capita inevitably have benefited from formal female education and particularly education in مهارات مدراء "maharaat mudaraa'.

- Available public and private local scholarships for private undergraduate education combined with expatriate children of the global world who no longer feel strong national connections with their parents' national homes and who also prefer to continue studies at their Gulf home rather than abroad.

- Recently governments in the Gulf States have set aside significant funds to provide scholarship for national students to attend the growing population of private universities in the Gulf region.

- A growing appreciation of the risk (post 9/11) and the economics (post 9/11; recently post 9/2008) and the increasing logistical complexity (Biometric Visas) of study abroad make for a simpler and safer learning environment at home which can be complimented by institutional study abroad programs. (Willoughby, 2008)

A significant development in higher education in the Gulf region is the ever tightening quality control by GCC educational authorities, such as the Private Universities Council of the Ministry of Higher Education in Kuwait. The accreditation process is now well regulated and tough. The emphasis is on properly qualified full-time teaching staff 85% of whom must have Doctoral qualifications from recognized universities. High levels of curriculum content are required and to this end Memoranda of Understanding are required from private universities who must twin their operation with a recognized foreign national university.

Gulf education authorities increasingly seek institutions with a complete fully accredited in country presence. The trend is to try and replace unregulated and too often unaccredited "fly-in faculty" at so-called training and education establishments. There is also a push for private universities to seek program and foreign regional accreditation to ensure that undergraduate curricula are not "easy" versions of recognized Western curricula.

Research indicates that continuing lessons learned by the Gulf authorities emphasize the need for documented, expert, up-front planning and market analysis before institutional licenses are being granted.

Legislation is also under consideration to regulate non-university private training establishments. To some extent the non-university private training establishments compete with and even undermine university education. Many of these so called training establishments promote dubious credentialing when certificates, which represent little more than attendance (and sometimes not even attendance), are offered at salubrious sometimes five star hotel facilities and at market leading prices, but which lack any real form of assessment or learning outcome measurement.

In this way some Trainers, Facilitators and other Experts and service providers exploit the market for tertiary and further education purely in the interests of profit. In the absence of regulation these establishments take advantage of the best intentions of Gulf commercial enterprises. The problem lies in coming up with a quality control mechanism which properly regulates such institutions.

As with the globalization of industry, so with global education, national, cultural, and traditional barriers are giving way to new models of learning. New technology includes the ability to take degrees from established international online undergraduate and graduate sources. Gulf accreditation authorities are faced with evaluating these credentials. The impact of the Internet and the expansion of learning across frontiers have, to a great extent, homogenized the basic undergraduate curriculum. The relatively poor bandwidth available to Gulf students is also a significant handicap to education which needs to be overcome.

GCC States are seen to offer strong potential for these niche markets as GCC parents recognize opportunities for their children to travel and experience global issues in key markets. Changing demographics also provide for additional domestic capacity for private sector employment and recognizes that this will be determined by the skills and abilities of students who are being educated in a very competitive world. Already, research money is being made available for academic research and academic research networking. Real, rather than token, partnerships are in place.

The trend in higher education in the Gulf is clearly developing and a model is emerging which commits to a broader and deeper educational participation to promote the sharing of knowledge and preparation for life-long learning.

Inevitably such sharing and preparing means that education becomes a WMD, a weapon for mass diplomacy, enabling the 21stCentury GCC student to assess critically other cultures, to take the time to understand other cultures, and above all to recognize the need for tolerance for knowledge and learning that may initially be perceived as meaningless or insignificant.

The key elements of the emerging higher education model in the Arabian Gulf are:

- Tertiary (undergraduate) Capacity development - the important prospect for paying students is in place and growing.

  The impact of changes in demographics which have meant an extraordinary need for additional capacity at all levels of education in the six GCC countries. The demographics of Gulf countries "characterized by more than 3% growth and a young age profile" (30% of the population is under 30 years of age) lead inevitably to growth in healthcare and education services. (AMAL, 2008)

- GCC States are hoping to reduce brain drain.

  There is a growing awareness of the lack of the experience necessary to exploit the talent of GCC youth at home.

  At a recent meeting of the Arab ministers of Emigration they noted that out of a total of 300,000 Arab university graduates, some 70,000 (or more than 23%) immigrate annually to positions overseas. The study estimated the loss to the Arab economies at more than $1.5 billion annually. (Raphaeli, 2008)

  The emigration of scientists threatens the future technological and scientific development of industry and jobs. Cairo's Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies noted that such emigration meant the loss of up to half of their newly-qualified medical doctors, 23 percent of engineers and 15 percent of scientists each year, most moving to the United Kingdom, United States and Canada. This emigration also threatens programs to reduce Arab States' reliance on expatriate workers. (Sawahel, 2004)

- Recognition of needs for pre-university training to establish minimum levels of English, now not only the world language of business, but rapidly becoming the world language of education.

  Noted above is the need for improved education in the English language as the global business language. This need also focuses on the need for fully accredited programs teaching English and the move towards standards for university education in the Gulf nearer to the standards required for entry to universities in the West. This, in turn, recognizes the need for properly trained teachers of English.

- GCC States seek prestigious tertiary educational establishments.

  The Gulf States have been seen to establish prestige educational establishment abroad. One example is the Said Business School at Oxford and significant support has been given to Western universities to support Middle Eastern Studies and Middle Eastern students. Indeed baseless claims have been made that Arab donations to US universities may even "improperly influence professors and students of Middle Eastern studies." (Maslen, 2008) No there is an opportunity to build up prestige in the Gulf and make sure that at least one university is ranked in the World 5oo within a decade.

- Transformation of traditional rote memory training to modern constructivist learning, employing case studies and providing tools and environments that help learners interpret the multiple perspectives of today's world.

  Extensive research confirms the importance of reading and discussion of experiences and there is a clear correlation showing that those who read more know more. (Schneider and Pressley, 1997) Rote memory is "akin to analog recording" (like a VHS tape) while in contrast constructivist memory is "akin to digital recording" (like a CD). Students who rely on rote memory "take in and store information," but do not transform or categorize information in a way that makes it easy to recall. Constructivists tag, sort, organize, and therefore make future access to the knowledge they have gained easier. (Pohlman, 2007)

- Recognition that global education reflects inwardly on the learner who needs to learn how to explore individual talent.

  Part of this exercise is accepting the discipline necessary to learning the theoretical foundations of subjects. Equally important for productive success is accepting the discipline necessary to learn how theoretical concepts are applied in practice. Such knowledge is not gained at university but earned with real work experience. A recent study of 500 global employers based in the United Kingdom noted that they "were looking for relevant work experience, a good work ethic and a degree subject relevant to the job." (Smith, 2006) Absent these qualities and the likely results from employment of those with degree but little or no experience is a lack of productivity and the dysfunctional bureaucracy found in organizations managed by the very well qualified but those who lack experience.

The Nobel Prize winning author Albert Camus noted, "You cannot create experience, you must undergo it." Too often in the Gulf a returning graduate returns from success and graduation and succeeds to management without undergoing a period of experience. The vocational and apprenticeship programs in Denmark and Germany where students become "praktikant" under careful supervision and the US co-operative educational programs emphasize the importance of "experience" before the full benefits of theoretical education can be gained. The expectations of experience for entry to the best graduate MBA programs is further evidence of the value of practical experience. In the US and Europe the first hurdle in getting a full-time position is often demonstration of a minimum period of practical experience.

- A rise in educational spend is inevitable, but GCC States are experimenting (e.g. Qatar and Dubai) and seeking ways to blend private and government resources.

The initial thrust has been to encourage private philanthropic investment in higher education with accreditation being undertaken by the appropriate department within Ministries of Higher Education. This accreditation is developing and usually requires a twinning process between the university that opens in a Gulf State with an appropriate national university in the home country of the undergraduate program (e.g. British, American, Arab, Australian, European, Indian, etc.) to ensure academic program consistency.

Private philanthropic investment in education is clearly the preferred method since it provides an important cultural governor on university freedom and provides insurance of respect and sensitivity to local custom.

Instances of academic institutional support by governments are being experimented with particularly in Qatar and Dubai, but the long-term prospects for these institutions likely depends on attracting local sponsorship and investment within the shorter-term. Otherwise institutions from overseas without sponsorship are likely to be short lived.

- Preference is for formal in country institutions, so called "fly-in faculty" institutions are low priority and unlikely to be sustainable.

The problems associated with "fly-in faculty" have been outlined precisely. Fly-in faculty are employed in both accredited educational programs and in unregulated credentialing exercises.

Where the "Fly-in faculty" hold doctoral or professional degrees in the subject matter and publish academic articles and have extensive practical management experience they provide the potential for increased diversity, they contribute to a broader program for students, and they contribute to research and academic core activities. A problem arises if there is no adequate quality control.

Where the "Fly-in faculty" avoid quality control and provide short-term presentations which are not associated with a recognized academic or professional program they offer programs beyond the assessment of most Human Resource departments in the MENA area. Resources which might be otherwise devoted to real educational development are wasted.

Lastly and perhaps most important,

- The demand for liberal arts skills for مهرات مدراء "maharaat mudaraa' to boost international competitiveness.

Just as the Arab scholars were known for both their financial, commercial, and engineering skills, there is ready recognition that the liberal arts provide an essential broad base upon which both their technical skills and lifelong learning skills were founded. We learn from the Arab scholars that "knowledge is either a perception of the essence of things – a primitive kind of perception not accompanied by (the exercise of) judgment – or it is apperception; that is, the judgment that a thing is so." (Ibn Khaldun, 1375, p 383) Humans have the ability to think in either the right way or the wrong way. Selection of the way to be followed requires discernment, writes Ibn Khaldun; that is managerial skill.

The World Economic Forum has commissioned studies of Gulf State Economies and potential "scenarios" looking forward to 2025. Three possible scenarios for the region over the next twenty years have been developed. Of these the most likely would appear to the author to be the 'The Fertile Gulf' scenario.

The Fertile Gulf scenario describes the rise of the GCC countries as innovation hubs in a global environment characterized by robust demand for energy and increasing globalization. Regional stability gives the GCC countries the opportunity to focus on enhancing their human capital at all levels, investing heavily in education while proceeding carefully with political and institutional reforms to support their growing economies and societies.

In this paper the emerging model for higher education has been described. This is the model that will continue to be the focus of Gulf countries as they enhance their human capital.

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IDENTITY, VARIETY AND DESTINY IN ACCOUNTING EDUCATION FOR LIBERAL ARTS INSTITUTIONS IN THE GULF

Ralph Palliam

ABSTRACT

Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts. This is precisely what most professors at liberal arts institutions face particularly when it comes to assessing and evaluating students' performance and their achievements. The globalization of businesses, the increasing complexities of business transactions, and advances in information technology that are facilitating electronic commerce and communication are challenging the relevance and usefulness of traditional accounting education. This further exacerbates the role of accounting professors belonging to a professional organization and at the same time committed to the vision of a liberal arts institution. From a content point of view not all that is accounted accounts, and not all the accounts is accounted. Finance and accounting professors at liberal arts institutions are frequently criticized by professional organizations and associations for the specific theoretical tools they teach and for the way they teach students to think about the world and approach problems in business. Moreover, finance and accounting degrees from liberal arts institutions scare parents and students too, who worry about whether their investment in a college education will ever pay off. In part, they are responding to a wave of cultural interest in matters of business and technology, globalization and innovation. In what possible way can the study of philosophy, history, anthropology together with limited accounting and finance courses prepare young professional accounting and finance undergraduates for a rapid-fire, information-glutted, globally interconnected world? A graduate from a liberal arts institution may be worth more than what his or her academic balance sheet shows. A liberal arts education teaches one how to think, how to analyze, how to read, how to write and how to develop a persuasive argument. These skills are used every day in the accounting and finance profession. A liberal arts education, even vaguely defined becomes an intellectual antidote to the overwhelming flood of information and technological change. A liberal arts education that works teaches students to read and to reason; to learn something about the range of human expression and experience; to consider the great literature and ideas of world civilizations; to recognize and construct arguments; and to have sensitivity towards others' thinking. It also makes possible a genuine kind of citizenship without which democracy and markets crumble. If these are the manifestation of a liberal arts education, one needs to consider how these issues are embodied in each of the subjects taught in business. This study will focus on emerging trends in accounting as a growing discipline in liberal arts institutions.

1. AN ARGUMENT FOR ACCOUNTING IN THE LIBERAL ARTS TRADITION

If education entails human advancement and human achievements that society morally approves of, then one can say that accounting ought to be a qualitative and quantitative measurement and assessment of that human advancement and achievements. As long as lions cannot count, the history of counting in the jungle is always going to favor the hunter. From a liberal arts perspective, reading, writing and arithmetic may not be as important as the ability to critically think out survival strategies in a jungle. This is consistent with what Annisette (2006:399) in her seminal work - *People and periods untouched by accounting history: an ancient Yoruba practice* - suggests that "by taking accounting history research beyond the familiar settings of Europe and the West we create the potential for profound growth in our discipline". As a result of a modern capitalistic system, accounting and accountability have become terms with almost common meaning. Accounting is to tell and an accounting system ought to be designed to truthfully and accurately tell the story of a corporation's financial result and position. The term, accountability refers to important elements of considering and judging the quality of the story told by the accounting practices, policies and procedures of the corporation.

Pacioli, widely considered the father of modern accounting, acquired an amazing knowledge of diverse technical subjects – religion, business, military science, mathematics, medicine, art, music, law and language. He accepted the popular belief in the inter-relatedness of these widely varying disciplines and in the special importance of those, such as mathematics and accounting, which exhibit harmony and balance. As cited by Hall (2009:2), the Institute of Accountants in Glasgow petitioned Queen Victoria for the grant of a Royal Charter in 1854. The Petition, which was signed by forty-nine accountants in the City of Glasgow, set forth:

> *"That the profession of an Accountant has long existed in Scotland as a distinct profession of great respectability; that originally the number of those practicing it was few but that, for many years back, the number has been rapidly increasing, and the profession in Glasgow now embraces a numerous as well as highly respectable body of persons; that the business of an Accountant requires, for the proper prosecution of it, considerable and varied attainments; that it is not confined to the department of the Actuary, which forms indeed only a branch of it, but that, while it comprehends all matters connected with arithmetical calculation, or involving investigation into figures, it also ranges over a much wider field, in which a considerable acquaintance with the general principles of law, and a knowledge in particular of the Law of Scotland, is quite indispensable; that Accountants are frequently employed by Courts of Law . . . to aid those Courts in their investigation of matters of Accounting, which involve, to a greater or less extent, points of law of more or less difficulty; that they act under such remits very much as the Masters in Chancery are understood to act in England."*

Albrecht and Sack (2000), cite the 1986 findings of Bedford Committee of the American Accounting Association (AAA), which considered the future structure, content, and scope of accounting education in preparing for the expanding profession. However, in recent years again, accounting and finance professors have issued impassioned calls for fundamental change in accounting education, with increased emphasis on developing communication, interpersonal and intellectual skills, and on broadening the knowledge base. According to Palliam (2003), these calls have not been answered by the academic community with significant efforts to reinvent pedagogical techniques and restructure the curriculum to address the perceived deficiencies in accounting graduates. Should Albert Einstein or Sir Alexander Fleming come back from their graves, they would be amazed at the advancement and achievements that have been made in their respective fields. Moreover, should the forefathers of accounting education come back from their graves, they would be devastated at the extent to which the accounting profession and the vast curriculum have been diminished and poorly refined. Accounting has not as yet fulfilled the wide expectations of the leaders of the profession. Perhaps it has fulfilled the narrow expectations of today's leaders whose sole intention is narrow definitions of prosperity, massive debt accumulation over toxic assets and the creation of a false sense of achievement. The unfortunate consequence is that accounting students have become ever-more narrowly-educated. Graduates have become increasingly technically proficient, but less well-rounded in the tradition of a liberal arts education. Communication, interpersonal, critical-thinking, and professional skills, as well as general knowledge of cultures, history, and the arts and sciences, have noticeably been removed from an accounting curriculum. Moreover, the quantity of technical material covered has grown so voluminous that the depth of understanding regarding the issues and theories underlying memorized accounting rules has become very shallow. Why did the accounting profession fail to adequately respond to these calls for change for more than a century? A comprehensive strategy designed to attack the devastation on all fronts is required. Hopefully, together with the works of researchers like Annisette (2006), *identity, variety and destiny in accounting education for liberal arts institutions in the Gulf* will be seen as a foundation, so that one does not face any crisis resulting from poor accounting policies and what needs to be considered are the prospects for meaningful changes in accounting education throughout the world. It is obvious that to the due performance of the accounting profession, a liberal education is essential. The proliferation of statements of financial accounting standards has had the insidious effect of pushing the accounting curriculum in an ever more technical and ever less business-oriented direction. The curriculum has become devoted to teaching students the technical rules, conventions of conformance and concentration on formal accounting rules, with correspondingly less focus on essential business and social issues.

2. A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ACCOUNTING

According to accounting historians Giroux (2007), Brown (1905) and Annisette (2006) accounting is as old as civilization. Accounting is a function of human commerce and trade. Elaborate and extensive trading activities require elaborate rules and procedure for proper recording purposes. The development of accounting may have driven the evolution of commerce, since it may have been through the use of more precise accounting methods that modern business was able to grow, flourish and respond to the needs of its owners and the public. The history of accounting throws light on economic and business history generally, and may help one better predict what is on the horizon as the pace of global business evolution escalates. Like most other professions, the accounting profession has a rich history which is usually discussed in terms of one seminal event, the invention and dissemination of the double-entry bookkeeping processes. According to Annisette (2006), such a narrow view overlooks a long evolution of accounting systems. A detailed historical survey helps one to identify the phenomenal thought processes that are associated with the history of accounting which is indeed an entertaining one.

Moreover, the original writing and the use of numbers and counting in accounting makes accounting history something fascinating to read.

2.1 THE FIRST ACCOUNTING IDENTITY – FROM CLAY TO PAPER

An extensive survey by accounting historians, Chatfield and Vangermeersch (1996), Previtts and Merino (1979) and Giroux (2007) reveals that the early civilization in Assyria, Chaldaea-Babylonia and Sumeria were flourishing in the Mesopotamian Valley where some of the oldest known records in commerce were produced. They contend that the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, within the borders of Iraq, was a valley that was a rich area for agriculture as a result of frequent flooding. As farmers prospered, service businesses and small industries developed in the communities in and around the Mesopotamian Valley. The cities of Babylon and Ninevah became the centers for regional commerce, and Babylonian became the language of business and politics throughout the Near East. Banking firms in Mesopotamia employed standard measures of gold and silver, and extended credit to some transactions. Alexander (2002) equates The Mesopotamian scribes to the accountants of today. Their duties were similar, but even more extensive. In addition to writing up the transaction, the scribes ensured that the agreements complied with the detailed code requirements for commercial transactions. Temples, palaces and private firms employed hundreds of scribes, and it was considered a prestigious profession. In a typical transaction of the time, the parties might seek out the scribes at the gates to the city. They would describe their agreement to the scribe, who would take from his supply a small quantity of specially prepared clay on which to record the transaction. Papyrus was scarce and expensive.

Moreover, Previtts and Merino (1979) found that during this era which lasted until around five hundred years before the Birth of Christ, Sumeria was a theocracy whose rulers held most land and animals in trust for their gods, and this ought to give impetus to their record-keeping efforts. Furthermore the legal codes that evolved penalized the failure to honor transactions. Consistent with this Alexander (2002) indicates that the renowned Code of Hammurabi, handed down during the first dynasty of Babylonia during the period 2285 - 2242 B.C., required that an agent selling goods for a merchant give the merchant a price quotation under seal or face invalidation of a questioned agreement which was recorded on clay. The moistened clay was molded into a size and shape adequate to contain the terms of the agreement. The scribes recorded the names of the contracting parties, the goods and money exchanged and any other promises made. The parties then "signed" their names to the tablet by impressing their respective seals. A manifestation of mass illiteracy required men to carry their signatures around their necks in the form of stone amulets engraved with the wearer's mark and upon death they were buried with them. Often the seals included the owner's name and religious symbols, such as the picture and name of the gods worshipped by the owner.

After transactions were recorded, the scribe would dry the tablet in the sun or in an oven for important transactions which needed a more permanent record. Sometimes a clay layer about as thick as a pie crust was fashioned and wrapped around the tablet like an envelope. For extra security, the whole transaction would be rewritten on this outer crust, in effect making a carbon copy of the original. Attempted alterations of the envelope could be detected by comparing it with its contents, and the original could not be altered without cracking off and destroying the outer shell.

Governmental accounting in Ancient Egypt also developed in a fashion similar to those associated with the Mesopotamians. The use of papyrus rather than clay tablets allowed more detailed records to be made more easily. Extensive records were kept, particularly for the network of royal storehouses within which the tax payments were kept. Egyptian bookkeepers associated with each storehouse kept meticulous records, which were checked by an elaborate internal verification system. These early accountants had good reason to be honest and accurate, because irregularities disclosed by royal audits were punishable by fine, mutilation or death. Although such records were important, Ancient Egyptian accounting never progressed beyond simple list-making in its thousands of years of existence. Perhaps more than any other factors, illiteracy and the lack of coined money appear to have hindered the development of accounting. Moreover, the paper driven Arab World can be attributed to the works of the Egyptians.

While the Egyptians tracked movements of commodities, they treated gold and silver not as units of fungible value, but rather as mere articles of exchange. The inability to describe all goods in terms of a single valuation measure made accumulation and summation difficult and the development of a cohesive accounting system all but impossible. Pre-Christian China used accounting chiefly as a means of evaluating the efficiency of governmental programs and the civil servants who administered them. A level of sophistication was achieved during the Chao Dynasty 1122 -256

B.C., which was not surpassed in China until after the introduction of double entry processes in the 19th Century. In the 5th Century B.C., Greece used public accountants to allow its citizenry to maintain real authority and control over their government's finances. Members of the Athens Popular Assembly legislated on financial matters and controlled receipt and expenditure of public monies through the oversight of 10 state accountants, chosen by lot. One of the most important Greek contributions to accountancy was its introduction of coined money about 600 B.C. Widespread use of coinage took time, as did its impact on the evolution of accounting. Banking in Ancient Greece appeared to have been more developed than in prior societies. Bankers kept account books, changed and loaned money, and even arranged for cash transfers for citizens through affiliate banks in distant cities.

Government and banking accounts in Ancient Rome evolved from records traditionally kept by the heads of families, wherein daily entry of household receipts and payments were kept in an *adversaria* or daybook, and monthly postings were made to a cashbook known as a *codex accepti et expensi*. These household expenses were important in Rome because citizens were required to submit regular statements of assets and liabilities, used as a basis for taxation and even determination of civil rights. Elaborate systems of checks and balances were maintained in Rome for governmental receipts and disbursements by the quaestors, who managed the treasury, paid the army and supervised governmental books. *Quaestors* in Ancient Rome were magistrates who were responsible chiefly for financial administration. Public accounts were regularly examined by an audit staff, and *quaestors* were required to account to their successors and the Roman senate upon leaving office. The transition from republic to empire was, at least in part, to control Roman fiscal operations and to raise more revenues for the ongoing wars of conquest. While the facade of republicanism was maintained, the empire concentrated real fiscal and political power in the emperor. Julius Caesar personally supervised the Roman treasury, and Augustus completely overhauled treasury operations during his reign. Amongst Roman accounting innovations was the use of annual budgets, which attempted to coordinate the Empire's diverse financial enterprises, limited expenditures to the amount of estimated revenues and levied taxes in a manner which took into consideration its citizens' ability to pay. The thousand years between the fall of the Roman Empire and the publication of Luca Pacioli's Treatise widely viewed as a period of accounting stagnation, and medieval practices outside Italy are often ignored in historical summaries. Accounting historian Chatfield and Vangermeersch (1996) observed, medieval agency accounting, laid the foundations for the doctrines of stewardship and conservatism, and the medieval era created the conditions for the rapid advance in accounting technology that occurred during the Renaissance.

2.2 THE SECOND ACCOUNTING IDENTITY - RECORDING FOR GOVERNMENT - DOMESDAY

Giroux (2007) in tracing the historical evolution of accounting, notes that accounting under the Roman Empire was prescribed by the centralized legal codes of the time. Medieval bookkeeping was localized and centered on the specialized institutions of the feudal manor. The systems of exchequer and manor necessitated numerous delegations of authority over property from the owners to actual possessors and users. The central task of accounting during this era was to allow the government or property owners to monitor those in the lower portions of the socio-economic pyramid.

It is widely reported that when William the Conqueror invaded England, he took possession of all property in the name of the king. In 1086 a survey was conducted of all real estate and the taxes due on them, known as the Domesday Book. The oldest surviving accounting record in the English language is the Pipe Roll, or the Great Roll of the Exchequer, which provides an annual description of rents, fines and taxes due to the then King of England. Compiled from valuations in the Domesday Book and from statements of sheriffs and others collecting for the royal treasury, the Pipe Roll was the final record whereupon various county sheriffs were called before the Exchequer at Westminster to pay about half of the total annual assessments his county owed.

Much of the current bureaucracy in recording transactions associated with government accounting can be attributed to this period. Lest one forgets debit comes from the Italian "debito" which comes from the Latin "debita" and "debeo" which means: Owed to the proprietor or an asset of the proprietor and credit comes from the Italian "credito" which comes from the Latin "credo" which means: Trust or belief (in the proprietor) or owed by the proprietor.

2.3 THE THIRD ACCOUNTING IDENTITY: ACCOUNTING RENAISSANCE

A literature review suggest that the Italians of the Renaissance (14th - 16th Century) are widely acknowledged to be the fathers of modern accounting and they elevated trade and commerce to new levels, and actively sought better methods of determining their profits. Although Arabic numerals were introduced long before, it was during this period that the Italians became the first to use them regularly in tracking business accounts – an improvement over Roman numerals the importance of which cannot be overstated. They kept extensive business records, as the use of capital and credit on a large scale developed. The evolutionary trend toward double entry bookkeeping was underway. Luca Pacioli was considered a true Renaissance man, with knowledge of literature, art, mathematics, business and the sciences, at a time when few could even read. Leonardo da Vinci helped prepare the drawings for Pacioli's 1497 work, *Divina Proportione*; In turn, Pacioli is reputed to have calculated for da Vinci the quantity of bronze needed for the artist's huge statue of Duke Lidovico Sforza of Milan. Pacioli's *De Computis* begins with some basic instruction for commerce. The successful merchant, declares Pacioli, needs three things: sufficient cash or credit, good bookkeepers and an accounting system which allows him to view his finances at a glance. Before commencing business, one should prepare an inventory listing all business and personal assets and debts. This inventory must be completed within one day, and property should be appraised at current market values and arranged according to mobility and value, with cash and other valuables listed first since they are most easily lost. The memorandum, or memorial, was Pacioli's equivalent of a daybook, for the recording, in chronological order, of business transactions as they occurred. The transaction could be entered in any of the various monetary units then in use in the Italian city-states of the time, with conversion to a common currency for double entry left for later. The journal was the merchant's private account book. Entries consisted of a narrative debit, credit and explanation in one continuous paragraph. The journal had only one column, which was not totaled. There were no compound entries. The first 16 chapters of *De Computis* describe this basic system of books and accounts, while the remaining 20 are devoted to specialized accounting issues of merchants. These include bank deposits and withdrawals, brokered purchases, drafts, barter transactions, joint venture trading, expense disbursements and closing and balancing books.

The trial balance (summa summarium) is the end of Pacioli's accounting cycle. Debit amounts from the old ledger are listed on the left side of the balance sheet and credits on the right. If the two totals are equal, the ledger is considered balanced. If not, says Pacioli according to Giroux (2007), that would indicate a mistake in one's ledger, which mistake one will have to look for diligently with the industry and intelligence. It is most surprising how little bookkeeping methods have changed since Pacioli. Both the sequence of events in the accounting cycle and the special procedures he described in *De Computis* are familiar to modern accountants. In fact, the primary differences between current bookkeeping practices and the Method of Venice are additions and refinements brought about by the needs of a larger scale of business operations. The small proprietorships of 15th Century Italy had no need for specialized journals, subsidiary ledgers, controlling accounts, formal audit systems, cost accounting or budgeting. Some omissions, such as the failure to touch on accruals and deferrals, probably occurred because Pacioli felt they were too advanced for a beginner's treatise. But numerous tiny details of bookkeeping techniques set forth by Pacioli were followed in texts and the profession for at least the next four centuries according to Hatfield (1916).

In summary while Pacioli is often called the "Father of Accounting," he did not invent the system. Instead, he simply described a method used by merchants in Venice during the Italian Renaissance period. His system included most of the accounting cycle as it is known today. He described the use of journals and ledgers, and he warned that a person should not go to sleep at night until the debits equaled the credits. His ledger included assets (including receivables and inventories), liabilities, capital, income, and expense accounts. He demonstrated year-end closing entries and proposed that a trial balance be used to prove a balanced ledger. Also, his treatise alludes to a wide range of topics from accounting ethics to cost accounting

2.4 THE FOURTH IDENTITY: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ACCOUNTING PROFESSION – JOINED FOR COMMON PURPOSE

It is not unfitting that when one considers the modern accounting profession Scotland should occupy the place of priority. It is there that the Chartered Accountant originated, and in Scotland one finds the oldest existing societies of public accountants, according to Willmott (1986), who traces the growth of the profession in the United Kingdom. In Edinburgh, accounting was for long associated with the profession of law, so that one frequently finds the designation of *writer* applied in one place to the same individual who is in another designated as an *accountant*. There are several instances of members of the Society of Writers to the Signet, the leading Solicitors' Society in Scotland, practicing as accountants. Moreover, until comparatively recent times, much accountant's work was done in solicitor's offices. Again, to a certain extent in Edinburgh, but to a greater extent in the more commercial city of Glasgow, the designation of accountant was, in early times, confused with that of merchant, a term of much wider significance then than now.

Directly after its formation the Edinburgh Society deliberated upon a distinctive title for its members, and resolved to adopt the name of chartered accountant, indicated by the letters "C.A." The same course was followed by the Glasgow Institute as well as by the Aberdeen Society when they were incorporated later. It naturally took some time before the new name became familiar to the public and in 1880 the same designation was adopted by the English Institute and it soon became a recognized term in former English colonies. By the middle of the 19th Century, England was in the midst of prosperous times brought on by the Industrial Revolution. It was the leading producer of coal, iron and cotton textiles, and was the financial center of the world. With this financial surge came a demand for accountants, both for the healthy concerns and those companies declaring bankruptcy in the midst of the competition. In the late 1800s, large amounts of British capital were flowing to the rapidly growing industries in the United States. Scottish and British accountants traveled to the U.S. to audit these investments, and a number of them stayed on and set up practice in America. Several existing American accounting firms trace their origins to one or more of these visiting Scottish or British chartered accountants.

2.5 THE FIFTH IDENTITY: ACCOUNTING PRACTICE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND

History reveals that the start of the 20th Century saw enormous economic growth as industry began to overtake agriculture in financial importance. This period of growth also saw its share of financial scandals. Over-capitalization and stock speculation caused financial panics during the latter part of the 19th Century. Labor unions developed in response to corporate exploitation of workers. In the early century Theodore Roosevelt supported the use of government power to control the growing industrial monopolies and the price increases at that time. The Roosevelt administration helped persuade Congress to establish the Department of Commerce and Labor to gather the facts needed to establish a uniform system of accounting - the first instance of accounting used as an instrument of federal regulation. Unlike the British, who used the balance sheet in an effort to monitor management's use of stockholders' monies, American corporations of the early 20thCentury had no comparable history of losses from stock speculation. Rather, American balance sheets were drafted mainly with bankers in mind, and bankers of the era emphasized and considered a company's liquidity than earning power.

Beginning in 1920, business practices began changing drastically as the U.S. went through an inventory depression in which wholesale prices fell 40 percent. Cash flow slowed, loans defaulted and credit became less available to corporations. In response, businesses sought financing from sources less tied to their current cash flow. The offering of corporate stock issues became a leading method of financing expansion. As stockholders, rather than bankers, became the primary users of financial statements, the income statement began to take center stage over the balance sheet. Other factors, such as the rise of income taxation and cost accounting, also shifted the focus to revenues and expenses.

At the turn of the century, there were at least four types of funds statements in use -those that summarized changes in cash, in current assets, in working capital and overall financial activities. After securing acceptance for accounting curricula in universities, early accountants began to advocate an expansion of university education to realize the goals of broader, more conceptual programs. Most practitioners considered mastery of the technical procedures of auditing and accounting to be most effectively learned through practical experience; the role of education was to develop analytical ability. Accounting, they believed, required a wide range of knowledge and minds trained to think analytically and constructively. They supported a broad program emphasizing theory and philosophy and were disappointed when the evidence accumulated that accounting educators tended to emphasize the narrow, technical training. It was the university accounting educators who moved from the theoretical approach and turned to the procedural orientation. The accountants believed in the concept of a broad, general and liberal education. The accounting educators were influenced by John Dewey and his followers, who stressed practicality and relevance. Unfortunately, progressive education became interpreted to mean a kind of vocation with little sympathy or use for so-called liberal arts. Practitioners were deeply disappointed with the trends in the university business schools they had done so much to foster. Despite practitioners' concerns, the trend away from a liberal education toward technical training continued throughout the latter part of the 20th Century. As time passed, the magnitude and complexity of the required common body of knowledge expanded at an exponential rate. Income tax legislation was passed and the SEC was created. Regulation of the profession proliferated FASB promulgated ever-more technical and voluminous accounting rules. This knowledge explosion compounded a classic three-way educational dilemma: breadth of education vs. depth of learning vs. technical coverage.

Education programs are designed to cover an ever-increasing body of accounting rules rather than developing a full understanding of underlying accounting principles, on which intelligent rule-making ultimately depend. Thus, at the end of an education in accounting, the student has an exposure to a wide array of seemingly isolated rules but lacks an overview of the purpose and the economically universal domain of accounting. Without this overview, a sound analysis of off-standard transactions is next to impossible.

As the common body of accounting knowledge expanded, educators responded by adding specialized accounting courses (Previts and Merino 1979). Unfortunately, this further reduced the liberal education component in accounting programs, which practitioners had felt was too sparse from the beginning. Thus, the breadth of education was further narrowed. Depth was sacrificed, as well.

3. VARIETY IN ACCOUNTING EDUCATION – ALL PROFITS ARE NOT MADE EQUALLY

Revenues are the bottom line of profits. An often-debated contention is that, within GAAP, agents have the power, to a certain degree, to manipulate revenues and reported company income. The manipulation is not always in the direction of higher income. Agents prefer to report earnings that follow a smooth, regular, upward path and dislike reporting declines, and at the same time prefer to avoid increases that vary wildly from year to year. The extent to which earnings are manipulated has long been of interest to analysts, researchers and investment professionals. Levitt (1998:12) widely publicized accounting problems at a number of companies who were in danger of undermining U.S. capital markets. One of the processes Levitt alluded to was earnings management - an effort among the issuers of financial reports (managements and boards of directors, who have the authority to specify the contents of the reports) "to satisfy consensus earnings estimates and project a smooth earnings path". Concerns were recently expressed suggesting that agents' expectations to satisfy earnings expectations may be the overriding common sense business practices. There is gradual and noticeable erosion in the quality of financial reporting.

It therefore becomes difficult to hold the line on good practices when agents operate in the gray area between legitimacy and outright fraud. A gray area is where (GAAP) is perverted; where managers cut corners; and, where earnings reports reflect the desires of management rather than the underlying financial performance of the company.
Palliam (2003) considers an eloquent definition of earnings management which basically occurs when agents use judgment in financial reporting and in structuring transactions to alter financial reports to either mislead some stakeholders about the underlying economic performance of the company or to influence contractual outcomes that depend on reported accounting numbers. Several aspects of this definition merit discussion.

Firstly, what are the many judgmental ways that agents can exercise in financial reporting consistent with GAAP? Judgment is required to estimate numerous future economic events such as expected lives and salvage values of long-term assets, obligations for pension benefits and other post-employment benefits, deferred taxes, and losses from bad debts and asset impairments. Agents must also choose among acceptable accounting methods for reporting the same economic transactions, such as the straight-line or accelerated depreciation methods or the LIFO, FIFO, or weighted-average inventory valuation methods. In addition, agents must exercise judgment in working capital management (such as inventory levels, the timing of inventory shipments or purchases, and receivable policies), which affects cost allocations and net revenues. Agents must also choose to make or defer expenditures, such as research and development (R&D), advertising, or maintenance. Finally, they must decide how to structure corporate transactions. For example, business combinations can be structured to qualify for pooling or purchase accounting, lease contracts can be structured so that lease obligations are on-or-off balance sheet, and equity investments can be structured to avoid or require consolidation.

A second point to note is that the definition frames the objective of earnings management as being to mislead principals or stakeholders about the underlying economic performance of the company. This can arise if agents believe that (at least some) stakeholders do not undo earnings management. It can also occur if agents have access to information that is not available to outside stakeholders so that earnings management is unlikely to be transparent to outsiders. Stakeholders are then likely to anticipate (and tolerate) a certain amount of earnings management and manipulation.

Thirdly, agents can also use accounting judgment to make financial reports more informative for users. This can arise if certain accounting choices or estimates are perceived to be credible signals of a firm's financial performance. For example, if auditing is effective, managers' estimates of net receivables will be viewed as a credible forecast of cash collections. In addition, managers can use reporting judgment to make financial reports more informative by overcoming limitations to current accounting standards. Until recently some successful R&D firms created R&D limited partnerships, which permitted them to effectively capitalize R&D outlays that otherwise would have been expensed. The decision to use accounting judgment to make financial reports more informative for users also falls within the definition of earnings management.

Finally, the use of judgment in financial reporting has enormous costs which include the potential misallocation of resources that arise from earnings management. It undermines the capital market and ultimately the cost of capital. Benefits could include potential improvements in agents' credible communication of private information to external stakeholders, improving in resource allocation decisions. Agents have no such reservations about trying to achieve stability of income reporting (also known as *smoothing*). This is a fundamental goal of traditional financial reporting. Their wish for stability of income reporting far exceeds their desire for higher reported income. An example is the way companies have accepted income tax allocation, which both lowers and stabilizes reported income.

Accounting standard setters start their discussion from needs of users or objectives of financial statements. Cultural, social, economic, and political factors have considerable effects on the information different financial statements provide. However, these factors are not similar. Socio-cultural principles are suggestive of a variety of implications for governance and accounting. Reflecting upon cultural aspects one needs to engage into the notion of accounting for the social environment. In western countries with regard to basic principles of economy the most important users of financial statements are investors and creditors. Thus, other groups such as government, social authorities, and people are secondary. The theoretical concepts of accounting in the Anglo-American model are self-evident statements or axioms that represent the nature of accounting entities operating in free economy characterized by private ownership of property. The concept of basic principles of economy in accounting standard setting has been mostly ignored in spite of its potential to provide a more systematic appreciation of the standard setting process. In the west there is a tendency to amass wealth as an economic activity.

Having identified that the history of accounting finds its roots in and around modern Iraq, and drawing from the historical development of accounting in Iraq and Egypt, it would be ideal to discuss key principles of relevance and delineate what is necessary for accounting in different settings. It would be necessary to view the variety of accounting in the Islamic and Western world. Before one explains the basic principles of Islamic economy, the basic principles of economics from an Islamic view need to be considered. Then some of the salient features of basic principles of Islamic economy and their effect on accounting standards setting should be considered. According to Sadr (1994, 51-55), the Islamic economy is composed of three basic components, according to which its theoretical content is defined. Thus it is distinguished from other economic theories in terms of the broad lines of these components, which are: The principle of multi-faceted ownership; the principle of economic freedom within a defined limit; and the principle of social justice.

Islam differs essentially from capitalism and socialism in the nature of the principle of ownership, which it acknowledges. Capitalist society believes in the private individual form of ownership, namely private ownership. It allows individuals private ownership of different kinds of wealth in the country according to their activities and circumstances. It only recognizes public ownership when required by social necessity and when experience demonstrated the need for nationalization of this or that utility. Socialism society is completely contrary to that. Common ownership is the general principal which is applied to every kind of wealth. Appendix 1 presents the differences.

4. DESTINY: THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH AND COMMON GOOD ACCOUNTING

The recent financial crisis has made it clear that the future of accounting is up for grabs. In exploring the causes for the current economic decline and their implications for modes of regulating advanced capitalist economies, the death knell for laissez-faire accounting is being signaled. As different countries and regions attempt to manage the transition to newer forms of economic systems, one needs to ascertain what accounting models work best to weather the current economic upheaval. Going back to the basics of building the infrastructure of trust and industry as practiced by historical forefathers of accounting may provide a more meaningful solution. "*You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.*" False accomplishments and achievements among leadership create what one calls narcissistic value. Stakeholders' attitude wavers erratically between three different images of business leadership. The first is based on dependence and a recognition that stakeholders as a whole rely on leadership for financial security and a lifestyle that agents and principals have grown used to. The second is grounded in hope and focuses on the energy and creativity that a group of motivated leaders with resources at their disposal can bring to bear on a problem. The third is dominated by a sense of fear, vulnerability and suspicion particularly in uncertain times. The term "common good", is a notion that originated over two thousand years ago in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. Contemporarily it is defined as certain general conditions that are equally to everyone's advantage. The Catholic Church, which has a long history of struggling to define and promote the common good, defines it as "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment". Therefore the common good consists primarily of having the social systems, institutions, and environments on which people depend to work in a manner that benefits all people. An example of particular common good or parts of the common good should include an accessible flourishing accounting system which has a powerful impact on the well-being of members of all of society. Virtually every social problem in one way or another is linked to how well an economic system and the financial institutions within this system are functioning. Common good accounting does not just happen. The common denominator of establishing and maintaining the common good accounting requires trust and industry. Gandhi in his first ever public speech in South Africa to Indian merchants alluded to observing truthfulness in business. He awakened the merchants to a sense of duty. The need for and the responsibility of being truthful was greater in a foreign land because the conduct of a few was the measure of that of the millions of their fellow countrymen. Likewise, bringing any form of disrespect to self respecting people constitutes a sense of shamefulness collectively shared by people.

Students perceive accountants work with numbers, not people, and there is one right answer to every accounting question. This perception is consistent with the type of examinations that fail to test writing and interpersonal skills. Accounting professors have rarely required students to apply such skills in accounting courses. Term papers disappeared in favor of more lectures and problems, while multiple-choice examinations gradually displaced essays. The student should come to understand man himself, his history, the philosophies by which he lives, the language by which he communicates and the arts and sciences which enrich his existence.

It is certainly not wrong for cynics to rate accounting rather than entrepreneurship as the key driver of wealth generation and that accounting has become more a key and fundamental pillar of an economic system in any free and democratic society. There has always been a call for market forces to be embedded into a globally enhanced and more coordinated regulatory framework. At least two decades have been devoted by academics and practitioners criticizing accounting education as being too narrow and too technical to properly prepare entrants for the rapidly changing and expanding profession. There were urgent calls for a broader, more liberal accounting education. Early academics believed accounting required a wide range of knowledge and minds trained to think analytically and critically. However, accounting programs through the years have largely emphasized technical training at the expense of the broad, liberal education that was intended by the founding practitioners who sponsored the first university schools of business. Forward-looking accountants cum academics have for many years been deeply disappointed with the narrow focus of accounting programs and with the rules-based, procedural approach of accounting courses. These criticisms of accounting education sound remarkably similar to recent concerns. The intensity and urgency of current mandates for change may be a result of years of frustration.

CONCLUSION

Individuals entering the accounting profession require a broad cultural background which should give them an appreciation of their responsibilities to society and the state. This study notes that students from the Gulf are fully endowed with rich cultural background and sensitivities. On that cultural dimension there must be a knowledge foundation of the broad field of business and economics, and superimposed on that must be the technical training in their chosen field. This plan of education must be tied together and vitalized by a recognition of its interrelations, an appreciation that it is a coordinated whole. Moreover, one who expects to enter a profession, should have a sufficiently broad knowledge of the so-called arts and sciences to give one a proper appreciation of present-day civilization. One should know the major scientific facts about the world one lives in and should have an appreciation of the richer fruits of civilization, usually known as the fine or liberal arts. This viewpoint has been consistently expressed by leading practitioners and academicians throughout the years. The students should come to appreciate the humanities, including art and literature, and to understand the major concepts of mathematics, physical and biological sciences, and the social sciences. Such study should contribute to the development of cultured people, stimulated by broad interests in wide areas of human knowledge and activity. The accountant of the future must be a man of broad educational background like the predecessors of the renaissance period. In their numerous and divergent efforts to change accounting education, accounting professors might do well to consider the original intent of a university degree and how far one has strayed from that objective. Calls for a major shift away from technical training towards a more well-rounded, traditional education that develops higher thinking and communication skills should be consistently expressed. It may be important to consider in conclusion what are the factors that impede changes? Firstly, students, practitioners and accounting professors as a group favoring technical education may fail to truly recognize the value of a liberal education. To correct the deficiencies, the entire educational process must be reengineered.

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APPENDIX 1

COMPARISON OF ACCOUNTING ELEMENTS BETWEEN THE BRITISH-AMERICAN MODEL WITH AN ISLAMIC ACCOUNTING MODEL

ELEMENTS	ANGLO-AMERICAN MODEL	AN ISLAMIC MODEL
Economic Approach	Micro	Macro
Primary Users	Investors and Creditors	State, Management, People
Accounting Policy	Goal Oriented	Value Oriented
Asset Valuation	Historical Cost Price	Current Exit Price
Income Determination	Revenue-Expense Approach	Asset-Liability Approach
Time Value Money	Yes	No
Time Period	Yes	Yes
Primary Focus	Income Statement	Balance Sheet
Theoretical Concept	Entity Theory	Proprietary Theory
Going Concern Postulate	Based on Income	Based on Islamic Law
Fixed Interest	Yes	No
Legalistic Orientation	Common Law	Religious Law
Accounting Rules	Technical	Ethical
Accounting Ethics	Professional Ethics	Religious Ethics
Stock Exchange Market	Yes	Yes
Bonds	Yes	Yes with request condition
Accounting Approach	Value Approach	Event Approach
Dichotomy of Business and Private Morality	Yes	No

Adapted from Taheri (2000).

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