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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
**GLOBAL  
STUDIES CENTER**  
OF GULF UNIVERSITY  
FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## JIBRIL LATIF BROWNING

**The Newsletter Bitcoin Adoption is Happening: Will Gulf Residents be Winners or Losers?** State-issued fiat currencies, and investments denominated in them, fall into jeopardy as the rise of cryptocurrencies decentralize money worldwide. There are 5 stages of adoption, and Bitcoin, the king of cryptocurrencies, is moving from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage. But will Gulf residents adapt quickly or lag behind?

## MOHAMMED HABIB

**A Global Perspective on the Educational and Academic Culture at GUST.** This article addresses a central concern: GUST has many talented students whose potential is not fully realized. It explores reasons for this and suggests possible remedies in terms of pedagogy and campus initiatives; it also considers how the university’s international profile might be enhanced through promoting a culture of research.

**EDITORIAL  
BOARD**

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein  
Martin Rosenstock

Philipp O. Amour  
Ismail Lala

## HAROLD M. HASTING AND TAI YOUNG-TAFT

**A Note on Economic Drivers of Mitigating Climate Change.** What are the future roles of economic factors in reducing global carbon dioxide emissions? The sharp decrease in the costs of solar photovoltaic power has driven large scale adoption. The world needs both additional technological innovation and financial innovation to facilitate adoption in the developing world.

## RICHARD McDONOUGH

**Hegel, Heidegger, Eurocentrism and Asian Thought.** The two great German philosophers, Hegel in the 19th century and Heidegger in the 20th, can be accused of Eurocentrism. However, whereas Hegel's philosophy is intrinsically Eurocentric, and treats Asian philosophies only as part of the prehistory of genuine philosophy, both Heidegger's early and later philosophies are strongly suggestive of Asian themes.

## JEFFERY GELLER

**The Spirit of Contemporary Socialism: An Explanation of Woke Consciousness.** This article offers a synoptic explanation of the motivation behind the global attack on capitalism. Drawing on Adam Smith, Max Weber and others, it attempts to piece together the historical and theoretical factors that inform wokeness as it has emerged as an international political force.

## MARIAM F. ALKAZEMI AND CLAUDIA E. YOUAKIM

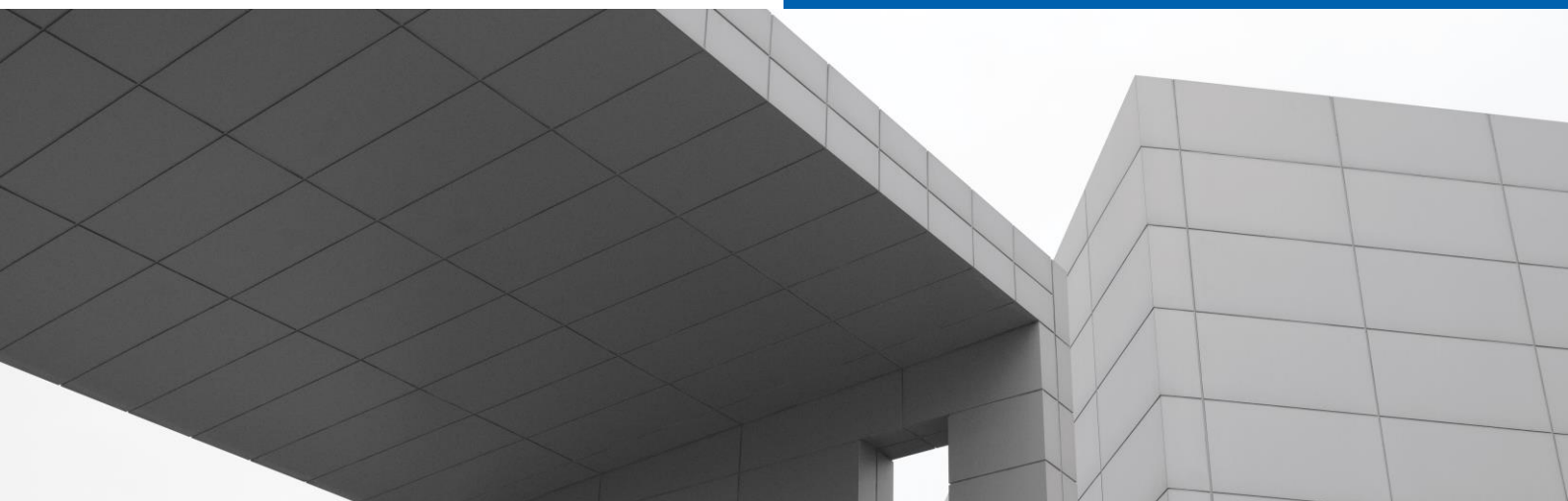
**On Editing an Interdisciplinary Volume on the Arab Diaspora.** *Arab Worlds beyond the Middle East and North Africa* is an edited volume by Mariam Alkazemi and Claudia Youakim that will be published in June 2021. The authors offer insight about how their training in the fields of communication and sociology fueled this interdisciplinary text on Arab emigration patterns.

## KEVIN A. MORRISON

**Decolonizing a Historical Field: Toward a Global Nineteenth Century.** As scholars think about ways to decolonize historical study and address racial disparity, the launch of the Society for Global Nineteenth-Century Studies and its flagship journal represents a significant effort to expand the disciplinary, racial, ethnic and methodological diversity of a chronological field.

## GERY VERJOT

**The French Naval Campaign off Kuwaiti Coasts.** French warships specialized in mine warfare were engaged in the military campaign against the Iraqi army in Kuwait during the first Gulf War. Their deployment began with the demining of the Suez Canal in Egypt to allow the passage of coalition ships.



## OLIVIER PASSOT

### The "Opération Daguet" in Kuwait

**1991.** French armed forces had an active role in the coalition "Desert Storm." After six months of military buildup in the Saudi desert, air and land units contributed to the victory. Then, French engineers were deployed in Kuwait to conduct mine clearing operations, especially along the beaches.

## PHILIPPE LANE

### From Soft Power to Smart Power: French Cultural and Scientific Diplomacy.

With almost 150 cultural embassy services (among them more than 100 *Instituts Français*, some 900 *Alliances Françaises* and almost 500 French lycées) on five continents, France plays an important soft power role. What is its scope? What are its priorities? What means do they have and how do they function?

# ARTICLES

## JIBRIL LATIF BROWNING

### BITCOIN ADOPTION IS HAPPENING: WILL GULF RESIDENTS BE WINNERS OR LOSERS?

The world is changing faster than any other time in history. The impetus is often attributed to the fourth industrial revolution. Amidst all this transience, the way money functions is also being disrupted, and the reactions of states and individuals will produce winners and losers.

The digitization of everything is happening. We know from anthropology that money is a social construct. Giving it communicates value. Accordingly, the way humans communicate and transact is mirroring the trend. This is a major break away from existing U.S. Dollar hegemony. The Dollar has served as a *de facto* global

monetary unit of international settlement since UN conferences held after World War II, known as the Bretton Woods agreement. However, no fiat currencies, not even those backed by mighty armies have ever survived long-term; in fact, historically, the vast majority have failed within six decades. One may be alarmed to discover that about 4 in 10 Dollars have been created since 2020. The joke on the street is that "money printers go BRRR"; and combined with the fact that the multi-decade global debt cycle is nearing its end, the Dollar's survival is in perilous territory, as is every other central bank's fiat currency.

This is scary stuff. Because societies have grown accustomed to living under the aegis of today's contemporary fiat standard for the past many decades, most never stop to question it. But this financial arrangement is historically quite an outlier. One major reason why US Dollar hegemony has been able to endure this long is part of a narrative relevant to Gulf residents. The notorious Petro-Dollar arrangement struck in the 1970s necessitated that Arab petroleum producers denominate all oil sales in the Dollar in exchange for US military protection. This arrangement maintained artificial demand for the currency. To demonstrate, if Japanese want to purchase petroleum products from Arab states they first need to obtain Dollars, which in turn incentivizes their manufacturers to export products like Hondas or Toyotas in Dollars, and so on. While this allowed the US to wield unchecked power, it also incentivized the Federal Reserve to print and print without short term economic repercussions.

Of course, adversaries like the Chinese Communist Party and Russia have been working to bring an end to Dollar hegemony. However, there is little investor interest in replacing the current system, as flawed as it is, with another state-backed currency, especially one issued by a communist or authoritarian state, which is one of many reasons why cryptocurrencies are so compelling. They represent the decentralization of finance ("Defi"), and the decoupling of the issuance of money from the whims of politicians.

At the center of Defi is Bitcoin, invented in 2008 and released as an open-source software in 2009. The name of its enigmatic inventor – Satoshi Nakamoto – is often translated from Japanese to mean *Clearly thinking inside the foundation*. (Linguistically Satoshi corresponds to *wise*, naka (中) corresponds to *middle*, and moto (本) can mean *base, root, origin*, or even *book*). Since its inception, the price of Bitcoin has risen more than 100% on an annual basis, and around 1% every three days, outperforming every asset category on the planet. Another way to look at this price increase, however, is as the devaluation of fiat currencies. Admittedly, Bitcoin is very volatile, and has suffered corrections of up to 90%. Accordingly, Bitcoin has garnered plenty of critics, such as Bill Gates, who argue that it is a speculative bubble like the Dutch tulip mania of 1637. States like India and Nigeria have tried to ban it. But with each attempted ban residents just buy more of it at a premium on the black market because humans predictably seek better stores of value, and Bitcoin does that. Hence, people can take direction from Bill Gates about cryptocurrency or

global health directives at their own peril.

To go macro, a theory about the diffusion of innovations proposed by Everett Rogers in the 1960s divides the adoption of technology into five stages. There are innovators, early adopters, an early majority, a late majority, and laggards. The early adopters of Bitcoin have already been proven prescient, and that phase is now over. When Bitcoin's price surpassed its 2017 all-time high in 2021, institutional adoption comprised the early majority as CEOs like Microstrategy's Michael Saylor and Tesla's Elon Musk converted cash balances into Bitcoin.

So, to conclude, Bitcoin adoption is happening. The question is "who will be its winners?" While Qatar has recently sponsored religious edicts attempting to deem Bitcoin prohibited, Turkey is studying regulatory frameworks, whereas the UAE has established robust regulatory framework and coin exchanges. However, with enduring low oil prices and talks about appropriating sovereign wealth funds, it is time for action, but rather than waiting for the state to act, it would behoove residents to embrace change and beat the early majority.

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## MOHAMMED HABIB

### A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC CULTURE AT GUST

I had the pleasure of moving from America to Kuwait for three years to teach at GUST. Ever since I arrived at GUST in September, 2017, my experience of the university was overwhelmingly positive. This was truly a happy environment in which to work. The faculty were without exception helpful and friendly; my Chair, the Deans, and the secretarial staff were wonderfully supportive. It was always a pleasure to walk into class: the students were friendly, respectful, and polite. However, as with any institution, there were some concerns, which were shared by many faculty and students. My greatest concern was this: GUST has many students who are genuinely intelligent and talented but their potential is not being realized. Why? Because they are obliged to work in an academic culture in which plagiarism abounds, where many students are not interested in learning, and where students are not typically driven by any work ethic. They often see no reason to work hard. Is it possible to change this academic culture? Many people told me that we cannot; that it is too deeply ingrained. But there are

perhaps some steps that could be taken that might move the institution forward, in the broad areas identified below.

#### TEACHING/PEDAGOGY

What exactly is it that we want our students to learn? At any major university, it is acknowledged that – at least in the humanities – our mission is not to make students simply memorize information or simply to repeat what a professor has told them. Rather, it is to help them to improve their skills in reading, writing, critical thinking, problem-solving and research. In this way, we can prepare them not only for their professional lives but also to be ethically responsible and productive citizens who will help to advance their communities and their country. If we agree that these are our main goals, it is imperative that we address some crucial issues. In pedagogical terms, the most fundamental of these is class size: Much research has shown that reading and writing cannot effectively be taught to large classes (of more than 20 students). In large classes, instructors don't have time to give students the individual feedback they need. As a result, the writing skills of students remains frozen at exactly the same level. In the absence of genuine help, students resort to plagiarism and reliance on ghost writers. A related issue is student work load: Again, both research and wide experience shows that, if students are given an amount of reading that is far beyond their capacity, they won't do the reading at all. They will simply read online summaries of the texts (this happens even in America). It would be better to give them a small amount of reading and to go through it carefully with them; this will give them practical guidance through the reading process. Similarly, if students at this level are given a 10-page paper to write, they will not write it themselves. Before they are required to do research papers, they need to be given extended training in basic writing skills – formulating a thesis, producing an outline, writing a coherent paragraph, and assembling an organized paper. Otherwise, they will finish a writing course having produced a long research paper which does not reflect their actual writing ability and without having improved their writing skills. There are a number of other helpful resources that would be very easy to set up. To begin with, an expanded Writing Center, where a greater number of tutors were readily available. There could be an UG writing assistant attached to each class, and each writing assistant would receive 3 credits for the work she does in the center (as part of a training course supervised by the Writing Program Director). This system is already in place at many American universities. There could also be more incentives for students to take pride in their work. For example, over a period of four years, students could be required to produce an electronic portfolio that would showcase their best work at GUST when they apply for jobs or seek admission into graduate schools. Working towards such a portfolio would furnish a great incentive for students to apply themselves, giving them a long-term goal. Students who intend to apply to

graduate school could include a capstone project. The portfolio might include samples of the student's written work, both research papers and shorter writing assignments, presentations, or creative work. Finally, an online electronic journal (for example, for humanities majors) would cost nothing, and could be used to showcase the best work of students in a given department. It could include papers, creative work, visual art, and memoirs, and in general, it could be used to display the uniqueness of GUST and the achievements of its students.

## RESEARCH

If GUST is intent on establishing a reputation as a research university, there are certain arrangements and strategies that might help all ranks of faculty to be more productive in their research. The most obvious of these is a reduced teaching load: if faculty are teaching 4-5 courses per semester, the vast majority of them will not be productive scholars. In America, such a teaching load would define a college as primarily a teaching institution. There is no high-ranking university that would require more than a 2-3 course load per semester. If the aim is to enhance the national and international profile of GUST, this issue must somehow be addressed. In America, the issue is addressed by using adjunct faculty to teach basic courses (writing courses, large lecture courses), and providing grading assistants to faculty with large courses. There could also be a mentoring system for junior faculty: many young faculty could be advised by their senior colleagues on issues such as: managing time between teaching and research; writing a journal article – junior faculty could benefit from feedback on how to structure what they write, how to produce an effective abstract, introduction, and conclusion, and finding an appropriate journal in which to publish; writing an effective book proposal, finding the right publisher, how to approach a publisher, and how to proceed through the stages of writing a lengthy manuscript. Beyond these formal strategies, it is always helpful to cultivate a campus environment of enthusiasm and engagement with culture and ideas. In addition to the usual seminars that many departments hold on research and pedagogy, it might be useful to hold regular faculty-student colloquia to let students see what kinds of work their professors are doing and to encourage them to be part of the intellectual conversations on campus. These could be organized not merely as seminars but social events with refreshments provided – this would make each session enjoyable and allow opportunities for students to get to know their professors beyond a formal classroom setting. At any rate, these are some of the strategies that I have found to be successful in both America and England.

A university's reputation and rank are not enhanced by the luxuriousness of its facilities but by the intellectual standards of its teaching

and research, which in turn depend upon a culture of learning and ambition that is fostered among both faculty and students.

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## HAROLD M. HASTING AND TAI YOUNG-TAFT

### A NOTE ON ECONOMIC DRIVERS OF MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

There is now a general consensus that global warming must be held to a maximum of 1.5°C above the pre-industrial baseline in order to limit severe weather and weather-caused events. [1] As G. Peters *et al.* noted, [2] before reduction of the target temperature increase from 2°C to 1.5°C, “explosive and policy-driven growth in wind and solar has contributed to the global emissions slowdown but has been less important than economic factors and energy efficiency.” These observations are even more true now.

One economic factor has been realized: a large reduction in the cost of utility-scale solar power [3] has driven an ever-growing installed base. [4] Even though generating projected electric power demands requires ~5% of the world's land area, the most desirable land for solar photovoltaic power, such as desert areas, is least desirable for agriculture. Solar photovoltaic power thus avoids the corn for ethanol versus corn for food conflict.

However, there are still obstacles at smaller scales. For example, the large upfront cost of electric cars is now an obstacle for many despite the fact that electric cars offer a lower lifetime cost. In addition, electric cars are only practical if there is a supporting infrastructure, and, importantly for carbon-reduction, only “green” to the extent that low-carbon electricity is available. Although one might expect infrastructure development to follow demand, electrification in the rapidly growing developing world at small scales will likely need low cost, guaranteed, likely government supported financing for electrification, as is illustrated by car prices.

In conclusion, climate change is a global problem whose solution requires multi-scale buy-in and support, including international and national support of critical mitigation efforts in the developing world, both because the developing world has borne much of its impact and because positive externalities of local mitigation will benefit us all.

## Notes

[1] <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/download/>

[2] “Key indicators to track current progress and future ambition of the Paris Agreement.” *Nature Climate Change* 7 (2017): 118-122, <https://www.nature.com/articles/nclimate3202>

[3] See <https://www.irena.org/Statistics>

[4] See charts in <https://www.irena.org/Statistics>

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## RICHARD McDONOUGH

# HEGEL, HEIDEGGER, EUROCENTRISM AND ASIAN THOUGHT

It is illuminating to contrast the views of the great 19<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher G.F.W. Hegel and the 20<sup>th</sup> century existentialist—phenomenologist Martin Heidegger in their attitudes towards Asian philosophy. There is a sense in which both philosophies are Eurocentric, but another deeper sense in which Heidegger’s philosophy is much more respectful towards Asian philosophy and, many argue, incorporates ideas of some of the great Asian philosophies, in particular, Taoism and Zen Buddhism.

Hegel’s philosophy is Eurocentric because Hegel sees world history as the successive greater emergence of freedom and Reason (the two being intrinsically related and conceived against the background of Hegel’s Aristotelian tradition). Philosophy proper is, therefore, the expression in language of the emergence of freedom in world history. Since Hegel sees the emergence of freedom as the driving force of history, it is natural for him to rank different civilizations on a scale of lesser to greater freedom. Since Europe, which, in his *Philosophy of History*, Hegel contrasts with Oriental “despotism,” is the arena in which genuine freedom emerges, Hegel’s philosophy of history begins with the Greeks. The next great stage in the emergence of freedom, for Hegel, takes place with the rise of German idealism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the culmination

of which is Hegel’s own philosophy (Absolute knowledge of man’s freedom). Since, as Hegel sees it, the idea of freedom never took hold in Asia, there is no philosophy proper in Asia. Thus, Indian philosophy is “rich in imagination and genius” but the Indian lives in a “dream” world. In his massive 1500-page three volume *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Chinese philosophy merits a mere five pages and Indian philosophy only twenty-four. In fact, “Oriental” Philosophy is relegated to the Introduction to this work along with remarks on sources and methods, while part 1 proper begins with the Greeks. That is, “Oriental” philosophy is, for Hegel, not even a part of the history of philosophy proper but only a part of its pre-history. Hegel’s system is filled with suggestive powerful insights but his obsessive focus on freedom and Reason (as he conceives these) means that he is blind to other aspects of human existence and, accordingly, develops a narrow conception of philosophy itself.

Heidegger’s philosophy, which can be seen as a reaction against many aspects of Hegelian philosophy, also appears Eurocentric with his view stated in his book *What is Philosophy?* that the only two languages in which it is possible to do philosophy are ancient Greek and German. However, Heidegger’s 20<sup>th</sup> century existential-phenomenology begins, in his first major book, *Being and Time*, with the concept of ‘Being-in-the-world’. Since Heidegger sees cognition and reason as “founded modes”, that is, as derivative from more basic ways of being, he *emphasizes* from the beginning that there are other modes of Being-in-the-world besides reason and cognition. He is, therefore, able to appreciate many more dimensions of human existence (including those dimensions of spirituality and mysticism emphasized in some Asian philosophies), and to understand them differently than Hegel does with his single-minded obsession with the emergence of freedom and Reason.

Although Heidegger’s direct contact with Taoism took place after his publication of *Being and Time* the book does appear to have a definite Taoist tone. This is manifested in Heidegger’s suspicion of Western conceptions of logic, his insistence on undoing the Cartesian subject-object distinction and his desire to place philosophy back into the stream of life rather than seeing it as a detached seeker of objective foundational truth.

Many have argued that Heidegger’s later philosophy invokes Taoist concepts such as “the Way” (*Tao*), *dwelling* with things or *remaining* with them rather than thinking of them only as they are cognitively represented. Graham Parke talks about Taoism’s attitude to technology, which suggests that “humans thrive when they practice *wuwei* [doing nothing].” He argues that this “closely parallels Heidegger’s concerns about the dangerous and distorting effects of technology on human life.” Indeed, William Barrett, in *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings*, states that Heidegger, while reading D.T. Suzuki’s

works on Buddhism, remarked that Suzuki has stated what he himself has tried to say.

Several recent books explore Heidegger's connections with Asian philosophy. Reinhard May's 2005 book, *Heidegger Hidden Sources: East Asian Influences on His Work*, argues that Heidegger borrowed some of the major ideas of his philosophy from German translations of Taoist and Zen Buddhist classics. Lin Ma's 2008 *Heidegger on East-West Dialogue: Anticipating the Event* provides a less sympathetic view of Heidegger's relation to Asian thought. Graham Parkes, in his 2010 anthology, *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, brings together twelve scholars from China, India, Japan, Germany and the United States to discuss the relation of Heidegger's thinking to Asian philosophy. Tim Delaune's 2015 paper "The Tao of Heidegger" provides a *neutral* and informative overview of these themes (free online at <http://www.wpsanet.org/papers/docs/The%20Tao%20of%20Heidegger.pdf>).

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**JEFFERY GELLER**

## **THE SPIRIT OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIALISM: AN EXPLANATION OF WOKE CONSCIOUSNESS**

Following the Cold War and the presumed defeat of socialism, the movement has recently revived, its advocates now mounting a global assault on capitalism. Nations that had once been the stalwarts of free enterprise economics are now on the front lines of the ideological struggle. The push for equity has been infused with a new vigor, bolstered by a growing sense among the youth on a global scale that capitalism is inextricably bound to systemic injustice. The avowedly Marxist BLM movement—sufficiently recognized internationally to warrant consideration for a Nobel Prize—has focused on the allegation that capitalism is systemically racist. Invigorated by a religious fervor, BLM spearheads the effort to “awaken” the general population to the evils of capitalism.

At the heart of the growing conflict is a clash between two core values, one egalitarian, the other libertarian. While the historical narrative preferred by the former highlights the plight of victims, that of the latter highlights the actions freely undertaken by agents. While the former draws attention to institutional oppression, the latter focuses on personal initiative.

These rival narratives have been evident since the first theorizations of capitalism. Adam Smith argued that the actions of independently operating self-interested entrepreneurs ultimately benefit society as a whole. Marx and Engels, by contrast, argued that the vast majority of people are alienated from themselves by economic conditions and are therefore victims of oppression and virtually devoid of individual agency.

Mediating the dispute, at least to some extent, is the work of Max Weber, who theorized that capitalism is ideologically infused with what he called the Protestant ethic. As narratives of victimage go, none has been more extreme than John Calvin's predestinarian account of the relations between God and the created world. Yet even here, Weber argued, libertarian impulses are manifest. Despite the opacity of the divine and the consequent uncertainty of each person with respect to his or her prospects for individual salvation, individuals can get at least a glimpse of their prospects for salvation in the afterlife, according to Weber's account, by observing whether they are favored in this life. Moreover, the favors they enjoy in this life depend at least to some extent on their own effort. Though this thesis is more consistent with the Roman Catholic emphasis on the spiritual significance of good works, the spirit of capitalism is imbued with the idea that the eternal fate of the soul is revealed by the accumulation of earthly wealth, which is affected by one's work. Weber thus observed that even against the backdrop of one of the most comprehensive narratives of victimage ever formulated, people still found a way, despite the strain it produced within their belief system, to justify the exercise of personal agency.

Obviously, those who have been awakened to the evils of capitalism—the “woke,” as they refer to themselves—would be the last people to subscribe to belief in the eternal fate of the individual soul. In fact, the original infusion of the Protestant ethic into the spirit of capitalism has been superseded by countless other influences as capitalism has become increasingly secular and global. The *prima facie* inconsistency between Calvinism and human agency was taken over—perhaps unwittingly—by Marx and Engels, who held that agency rises in proportion to class consciousness and revolutionary spirit. Although their commitment to scientific socialism precludes the admission that their economic theory is fundamentally informed by ethics, let alone religion, their position might nevertheless be called the egalitarian ethic and the spirit of

socialism.

This analogy helps explain the religious zeal of woke consciousness. To be woke is a combination of three principal ingredients: the belief that capitalism is systemically oppressive, the fundamental concern that is definitive of religion, as Emmanuel Levinas has noted, namely, concern for the other, and the belief that one's wokeness imparts the degree of freedom necessary to participate actively in revolutionary politics. From the perspective of the woke, the victimage in question is the victimage of the other. The only hope for deliverance is to awaken the masses. The missionary zeal of Christianity, particularly Protestant Christianity, has been co-opted by BLM with the express intention of bringing capitalism to its knees.

Whereas libertarians emphasize personal initiative and view history as the struggle of heroic individuals to exercise their freedom, egalitarians emphasize class membership and view history as a collective struggle for universal empowerment. Although Marxists are generally uncomfortable embracing the tenets of any religion, the spirit behind contemporary wokeness is decidedly religious. The author who has performed for contemporary wokeness much the same function Weber performed for capitalism is René Girard, who has argued that the defining narrative of Christianity is one of victimage and that this narrative is now alive and well in a secular context.

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**MARIAM F. ALKAZEMI AND CLAUDIA E. YOUAKIM**

## **ON EDITING AN INTERDISCIPLINARY VOLUME ON THE ARAB DIASPORA**

In the academy, we often work in silos, where we focus on a subject area within our discipline – in this edited volume, we break that cycle!

Arab Worlds beyond the Middle East and North Africa includes a wide array of disciplines and goes beyond the academy to

integrate work completed by various contributors (e.g., diplomat, directors, artist, professors, researchers) who also come from interdisciplinary backgrounds (e.g., sociologists, journalists, historians, political scientists, and more). With this purposefully inclusive approach in authorship, our co-edited volume offers an interdisciplinary framework to understanding migration patterns of Arab persons in nation-states that are majority non-Arab from different perspectives.

Each chapter unpacks the diasporic journey as experienced through immigrant communities across the globe and in what sociologists refer to as 'host' societies. Throughout the volume, authors unpack the social, cultural, political, and economic landscape and social networks that unfold for immigrant families and illustrate how Arab communities grapple with and navigate their new 'host' states and turning them into their new 'home' states. Yet, 'home' as we see, continues to remain in question and is largely expressed and determined by the level of integration that a group feels from their nation-state communities (policies, practices, political, economic climate). Additionally, the volume also displays a unique contribution of artwork by a globally renowned artist, Manal Deeb, whose art focuses on Palestinian ethnic identity and living in exile.

By displaying Deeb's artwork on the cover, the book approaches scholarship widely and provides an experiential experience for audiences interested in the Arab diaspora. Beyond the artwork, the book offers a number of examinations of media representations, including the contributions of Arab Americans on the U.S. music industry prior to the Great Depression as well as more contemporary television shows in Germany portraying refugee children. Further, a chapter analyzes news coverage in Argentina of the Syrian conflict as it examines the role of the Arab diaspora in the Argentine intervention. The breadth of these examples helps to crystalize the interactions between diasporic communities around the world and the mass media.

The edited volume unpacks the diasporic experiences of Arabs and illustrates that the trajectories from the region heavily depend on one's nation-state and a number of factors, including but not limited to the time they emigrated and the resources that they possessed during that time (e.g., economic means, social networks in a receiving society, etc.). For instance, if we just focus on the year of immigration, the movement and restrictions that are mandated from one country to another groups of persons travel to one place in one year, but another nation state a different year depending on gatekeepers, too. The complexity of Arab identity is displayed in the various emigration trajectories with Palestinians in Chile, Lebanese in Brazil, Hadhramis in Singapore, Maghrebis in France, Syrians in the United



States, and more.

Our motivations for this edited volume comes from noticing gaps in the literature that do not reflect our understanding of the world as we travel through it. We met as graduate students at the University of Florida, and our effort to co-edit a volume a decade later is intended to fill a gap and introduce a text that many Arabs around the world can feel personally connected to either in their struggle to adapt to a host society or in their effort to connect with their heritage.

We worked hard to ensure that the text is written for a wide audience, and we worked hard to retain the original voice of the authors as we edited various sections of the book. We feel that the current book contributes to various fields including literature on ethnicity, immigration, international relations, media studies and more generally Arab studies. Beyond the academic background of the reader, we feel this book would be an enjoyable read for anyone who is interested about these topics, cultures or travel. It is our hope that any intellectual trying to figure out where they belong are inspired by the many narratives provided on Arab communities, which describes the joys and sorrow of being part of an ethnic community outside the Middle East and North Africa.

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**KEVIN A. MORRISON**

## **DECOLONIZING A HISTORICAL FIELD: TOWARD A GLOBAL NINETEENTH CENTURY**

Although scholars from a wide array of disciplines and subfields work on the nineteenth century, there is no multidisciplinary professional association or journal specifically dedicated to the period. As a result, current societies and journals often end up reproducing nineteenth-century imperial frames in their approaches to

globalization. This article reflects on the possibilities and challenges of globalizing a chronological field.

At a time when many scholars are thinking about ways to decolonize historical study, address racial disparity, and forward work by and about people of color and other marginalized groups, the launch of the Society for Global Nineteenth-Century Studies (SGNCS)—which aims to convene its first world congress in 2023—represents a significant effort to expand the disciplinary, racial, ethnic, and methodological diversity of a chronological field. The society aims to be a meeting point for art historians, literary critics, comparatists, historians, musicologists, religious studies scholars, anthropologists, and geographers, among others, who approach the period between 1780 and 1914 from comparative, connective, global, and related perspectives.

In addition to a biennial congress, the society's flagship publication, *Global Nineteenth-Century Studies*, will serve as a forum for scholars from a wide array of disciplines who share an interest in the world's connectedness between 1780 and 1914. It aims to publish pioneering essays of transnational, comparative, transimperial, and transatlantic significance while also serving as a venue to debate these terms and their corresponding methodologies and epistemologies. Investigating material culture forms, visual and literary texts, ideas, and sentient beings that transcend national boundaries, essays in the journal will be expected to engage critically with mobility and migration, imperialism and colonialism, and production and distribution, as well as travel, technologies, and varieties of exchange.

*Global Nineteenth-Century Studies* will necessarily welcome submissions that examine Britain and the United States in their imperial and international contexts. After all, at the height of its power in the nineteenth century, Britain was the world's most expansive empire. It dominated over a quarter of the globe's population, controlled a fifth of its land surfaces, and ruled the oceans. The United States built a continental empire and acquired significant overseas territories. But the journal will also encourage polycentric approaches and seek to publish work that decenters these nations from the field of inquiry by exploring developments within and among other imperial entities, regions, and nations.

In order to accomplish this goal and attract readers and contributors from diverse disciplines and geographic areas, particular care has been taken to build an editorial board that will help the journal achieve optimal reach and impact through its geographic and disciplinary diversity. Because editorial board members are typically well connected in their fields of expertise, they play a key role in soliciting authors, identifying topics for inclusion, and promoting the journal in their disciplines, fields, and subfields. Lack of disciplinary and geographic diversity has

implications for the range of submissions a scholarly outlet receives and hence for the coverage it offers and the community it builds. The editorial board includes representatives from thirteen countries, six continents, and a number of disciplines and fields.

One challenge with which the society and its journal must wrestle is the impossibility of truly globalizing monolingually. Although the journal will include several standing sections whose editors will curate essays that employ non-euromethodologies in their attempts to recuperate alternative, indigenous, and local ways of knowing, the journal will publish in English. A language that is intertwined with colonialism (Hsu 2015; Viswanathan 1989), English has emerged—in part through the dominance of esteemed journal indexes—as the scholarly lingua franca. This has the potential to severely limit the initiative’s panoramic aims.

The society and journal must also guard against the dominance of any one discipline. Victorian Studies—the field to which I belong—is increasingly seen as a subset of English literary studies. Yet as a nexus for scholars hailing from different disciplines but sharing overlapping temporal interests, Victorian Studies at its inception held out the promise of interdisciplinarity. If true interdisciplinarity means creating a field that, belonging to no single discipline, leads to transformative scholarly practices, Victorian Studies has been less than successful. As Steinbach (2017) has noted the consequence of a longstanding “fight between departments of History and English for ownership of Victorian Studies” is “impoverishing” because it has left out “many disciplines, including archaeology, history of art, and musicology” (95). Thus, in endeavoring to serve as a gathering place for scholars hailing from multiple disciplines, SGNCS will need to take heed of earlier initiatives that, while aiming for inclusivity, have fallen well short of this ideal.

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On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait we publish two historical accounts by G ry Verjot and Colonel Passot.

GERY VERJOT

## THE FRENCH NAVAL CAMPAIGN OFF KUWAITI COASTS IN 1991

WUE Naval force

French warships specialized in mine warfare were engaged in the military campaign against the Iraqi army in Kuwait during the first Gulf War. Their deployment began with the demining of the Suez Canal in Egypt to allow the passage of coalition ships. Then, mine hunters and support ships joined the southern Arabian Gulf and took part in mine clearance operations off the Kuwaiti coasts from 30 January 1991.

The first Western European Union (WEU) naval operation named “Southern Breeze” (following the “Desert Storm” operation), made of French, Belgian and Dutch mine hunters (designed and built up together by the same countries) and under rotating tactical command, cleaned up the Kuwaiti coasts. This naval force was composed of four French mine hunters, three Belgian and three Dutch mine hunters, one mine clearers support ship, and two logistics support ships. Simultaneously, one group of the French commando “Hubert” was taking care of mine clearance of the Kuwaiti coastline ashore. The French mine hunter “Sagittaire” got the best result in demining, neutralizing 145 mines within twenty days of operation.

FNS Loire in Kuwait

One of the French units involved in a multinational Task Force specializing in mines warfare was the Mobile Support warship named Loire (named after the French river). This French warship was deployed to carry out the logistic support of warfare units in the Gulf and was engaged in the military campaign against the Iraqi army in 1991. On board, in addition to several workshops designed to repair and fix technical issues, was hosted a helicopter and a decompression chamber able to treat medical diving incidents. This ship had already been deployed in the area in 1987-1988, removing mines from Iraq-Iran conflict.

FNS Loire called in Kuwait City on 24 February 1991, together with a French navy demining warship for specialized divers named “Pluton.” French army soldiers were already present in the city, and oil wells were set on fire by the Iraqis before they retreated. Even with the sun at its

zenith, it was almost dark!

Most of the buildings were damaged, charred vehicles and debris of all kinds littered the streets. The Iraqis had left behind many home-made explosive devices. Some sites were closed to access by US troops. The Iraqis had also opened the heavy fuel oil slicks and the area around the port was covered with oil slicks.

Types of mines used during the Gulf War

The multinational mine hunting force found several types of mines used by Iraqis at sea: floating mines and bottom mines. These kind of Iraqi mines caused several damages to coalition warships.

Two U.S. warships struck floating mines in the northern Gulf, USS Tripoli; the same happened to a helicopter-carrying amphibious assault ship, and the USS Princeton, a 2-year-old, high-tech missile cruiser.

The mine that holed the Tripoli was a contact mine, and the one that damaged the Princeton was an "influence mine" designed to blow up under the ship and damage its keel.

Most of the mines being found in the gulf were based on a turn-of-the-century Russian model, manufactured by the Iraqis, and let loose to drift in the busy oil waterway.

The two submerged Italian made "manta" mines that hit one of the US Navy ship were lying on the bottom of the sea. This type of mine is not set off by contact but by pressure typical of a caveating propeller or bow wave caused by a ship moving through water. Only US and French experts were able to neutralize these "Manta" mines.

Minefields Neutralized along Kuwaiti Coasts

From the ceasefire on 28 February 1991 onward, demining action became a priority. These French naval forces, along with a coalition of Belgian and Dutch assets, had come together to demonstrate this specialty, which few naval forces actually had. As soon as Kuwait was liberated, the country requested assistance in neutralizing the minefields the Iraqis had installed to protect themselves from an amphibious assault on Kuwait City. Instead of the sketchy shallow anchorages that were expected, the existence of six minefields and four mine lines off the coast, mixing rope mines, and bottom mines were discovered. The multinational force destroyed 530 of the 1,240 neutralized mines, including 213 destroyed by French warships. The operation ended on 16 July, 1991, two months ahead of planned schedule.

Photos can be found on the online Newsletter.

**Géry Verjot** was on board FNS Loire during the demining operation along Kuwaiti coasts. He served on board warships for eighteen years. He is currently General Manager of DCI-SA branch and DCI-SA SPC – KUWAIT.

**OLIVIER PASSOT**

## **THE "OPÉRATION DAGUET" IN KUWAIT 1991**

In 1991, French armed forces took an active role in the huge coalition "Desert Storm." After 6 months of military buildup in the Saudi desert, air and land units contributed to the victory. Then, French troops took part in Kuwait's reconstruction.

Right after the invasion by Iraqi forces, French authorities sent military ships to the Gulf, to enforce an embargo against Iraqi merchant ships, which had been decided by the United Nations. This naval deployment was also meant to show Saddam Hussein Kuwait's allies' determination.

By October, France started sending troops to the Saudi territory. Most of the units and equipment were transported onboard ships from Toulon to Yanbu (Red Sea). Then they had to drive 1700 km across the desert for to reach camps in the North-Eastern part of the country.

This military buildup was a period of waiting and uncertainty. Soldiers were preparing for a possible offensive, without knowing if a real war was going to happen, when and where. During this period, the units went into hard training, specifically for chemical warfare and mine clearing. Fearing chemical attacks from Iraqi forces, coalition units did a lot of drills as protective measures. Whenever Scud missiles were fired at Coalition camps, soldiers had to take cover wearing gas masks and chemical suits at every warning.

The tension was rising as time was running. The United Nations Security Council had given the Iraqis a deadline to withdraw their troops by January 15. According to resolution 678, if the Iraqis would not comply, "all necessary means" were authorized.

No withdrawal had been observed on 15 January. It was the road to war.

A short term campaign

Military operations started on 17 January, by an air campaign, which was planned to last three weeks as a maximum. Finally it lasted almost six weeks. French Air force took part in these operations with 50 aircraft mainly based in Saudi Arabia:

- Jaguar aircraft conducted ground attack missions. Those were old aircraft but very agile and accurate (fitted with laser guided missiles).
- Captain Mahagne was one of the Jaguar pilots. He led an air raid against the al-Jaber air base (under Iraqi control) in Kuwait. He successfully carried out his mission but was wounded by small arms when he flew over the base. He had to fly back to his home base as he was hit in the head.
- Mirage F1 conducted ground attacks and reconnaissance missions. They could not be used on the first day of the campaign because the Iraqi Air Force was also equipped by M F-1. Once all Iraqi Mirage F-1 were destroyed or grounded, the French ones would operate.
- Mirage 2000 provided air cover.

No French aircraft was lost during all the war. Yet 4 Jaguar were damaged by anti-aircraft fire. Very soon, air supremacy was achieved. All aircraft were able to carry out their missions without risk. **Ground operations** started on 24 February.

According to the plan, three weeks were needed to defeat the Iraqi forces and to free Kuwait. So ground operations were launched by the end of February to end by 15 March (the beginning of Ramadan), but the operations went much faster!

West of the Coalition forces, the division Daguet headed North on February 24 in the early morning. Capitalizing on light and mobile assets, the division reached the first objective ahead of schedule: *Rochambeau* (codename given by the Coalition planners), was conquered on February 24 at mid-day. Iraqi soldiers surrendered without really fighting (3000 Iraqi prisoners in one day).

New attack on 25 February was launched at 6 am. This time the objective was As Salman: a strategic area including crossroads, airport, and military garrison (an area of 150 km inside Iraqi territory).

After the area had been conquered, a complete search had to be conducted. There, sadly, several mines and explosives blew up and 23 soldiers were wounded.

Despite this incident, all objectives have been reached. The ground operations were a success.

After the campaign

On 28 February, Iraq accepted all the resolutions set by the UN. A ceasefire was ordered. French units had to destroy all ammunition remaining in Al Salman, to enable civilian population to return to normal life.

Then, while most of the units returned to France, a French military contingent stayed in Kuwait. They reopened the Embassy of France, which had been occupied by the Iraqis.

The French units conducted operations of mine clearing, especially all along the beaches and various areas in Kuwait City. Minefields were set along the seaside because the Iraqis were fearing an amphibious assault.

French contribution to Desert Storm was rather small in numbers (below 20 000 men) but significant in its achievement, at sea, in the air and on the ground. After the liberation, a defense agreement between Kuwait and France was signed (in 1992) and has been implemented until now.

Colonel **Olivier Passot** started his military career in operation units. He also served as staff officer and in the military education. Later, he held positions in the ministry of defence and the joint headquarters and completed various missions abroad. He did not take part in operation Daguet but heard a lot of testimonies from military friends and colleagues who did.

## PHILIPPE LANE

### FROM SOFT POWER TO SMART POWER: FRENCH CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC DIPLOMACY

As a power, France has influence; it is one of the few countries significant in world affairs. This derives from membership of the Security Council; furthermore, the country has economic and military strength, a diplomatic network, avowed universal principles, a willingness to argue beyond the country's own interests, and the language.

Some would argue that France is now in decline, that its influence is weakening abroad. The reality is more complex. France's international influence is not in accord with its economic or demographic weight. Of course, new countries emerge on the international scene, themselves motivated by a justified desire of international recognition that is crucial in the competition that occurs in a divided world. Fully engaged in this competition, France enjoys a unique position, which the international community has always recognized.

This *smart power*, a new evolution of the *soft power* concept, is recognized as a power attribute of growing importance; and the foreign cultural and scientific policies of France are at the heart of its strategies to maintain influence around the

world.

All countries, both established and emerging powers, appreciate the strategic nature of culture, science and education for their development. From an economic perspective, these elements have their attraction: politically, they are means to exert influence.

In a competitive world, France is determined to promote its strengths. There is a readiness to build on French history, on research which is among the most innovative in the world, on the university system, and on French artists. There is a network of influence: cultural, educational, scientific and academic cooperation (*Campus France*) unsurpassed in the world: the legacy of a long tradition of cultural and scientific outreach beyond the borders of France.

The strategy is one of active influence through cooperation and cultural initiatives by embassies and by branches of the *Institut Français* and the *Alliances Françaises*. With the founding of the *Institut Français* (2011), France has gained a new impetus to its foreign cultural policy. This new state organization was given a broader scope: to the dissemination and promotion of artistic exchanges were added the distribution of books, support for media resource centers and the French Film industry, and the promotion of French thought and scientific knowledge, including aid for French teaching and training.

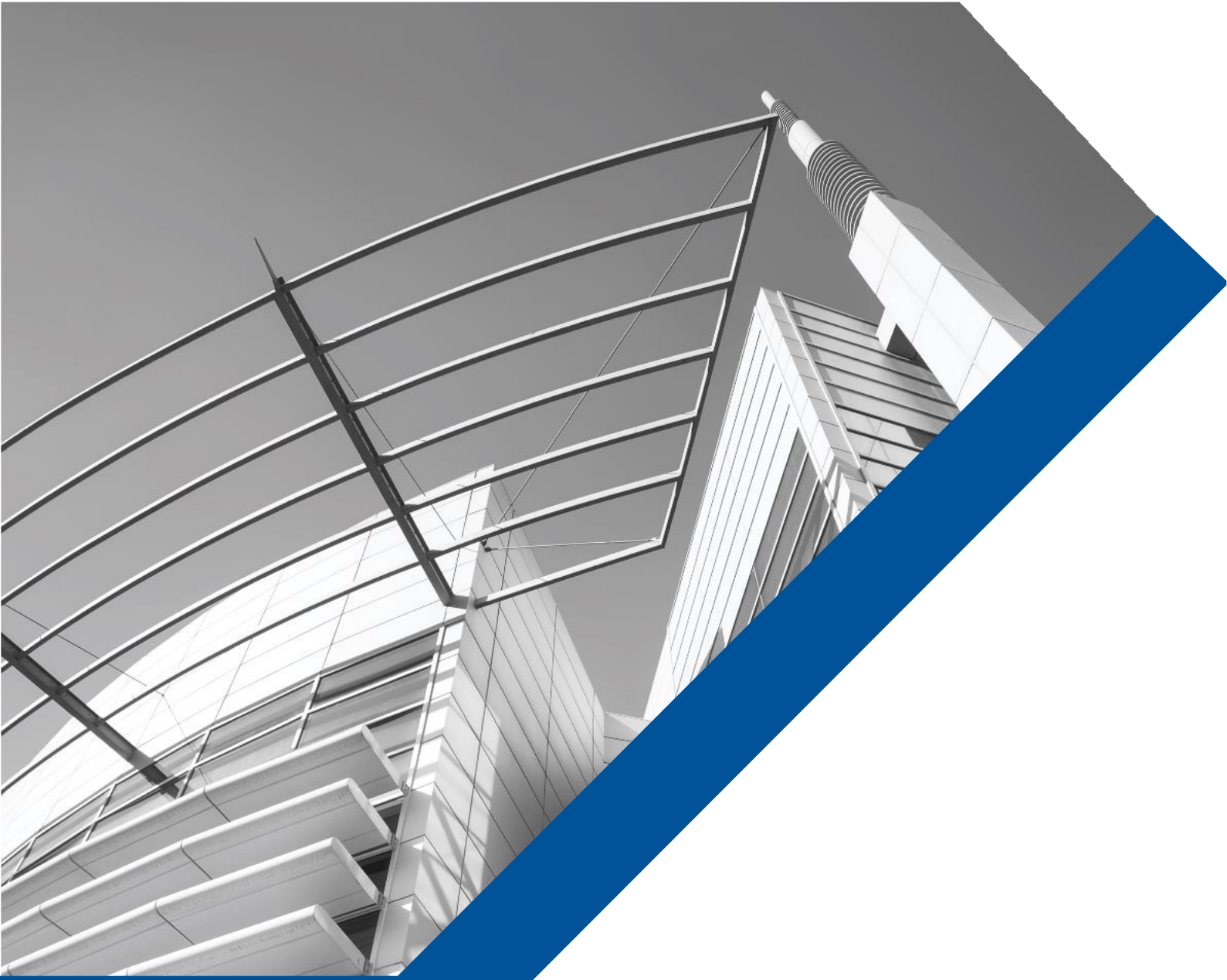
First through an initiative that was shared with French schools abroad and the 900 *Alliances Françaises*, there is the promotion and diffusion of French, the second foreign language taught throughout the world after English – the only two languages used on every continent. France, as home to this language, desires a link between all countries sharing French. The language counts millions of learners, one million of them in the *Institutes* and *Alliances françaises*. The promotion of the French language will go together with the other activities, the main thread being the expansion of a network of teachers and students.

Scientific and cultural cooperation is closely linked to today's global issues. The main objective is to improve the image of France and to develop the communication policies of the various operators and organizations in charge of foreign policy. The great projects of cultural and scientific cooperation will have a real impact only if they are highlighted and evaluated in terms of the influence they may have on the countries or regions where they are implemented. The evaluation and impact of cultural and scientific policies are certainly vital at times of declining levels of public funding and the quest for new partnerships.

The scope of cultural and scientific activity is extremely broad and implies a concerted effort on the part of the various players:

cooperation and cultural activity services, services for science and technology, research centers and *Instituts français*, *Alliances françaises* and French education institutions. The growing specialization of the different functions incites France to return to a more collective way of working so that the country can offer its foreign partners a more concerted and coherent program.

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