

PERSONAL DATA

Andrew Leber/Assistant Professor/Department of Political Science & MENA Studies Program

EDUCATIONAL RECORD

Harvard University Fall 2022

Ph.D. in Government

Dissertation Title: "The Reformer's Dilemma: Authoritarian Policymaking in Saudi Arabia"

Dissertation Committee: Melani Cammett, Torben Iversen, Yuhua Wang, F. Gregory Gause III

Harvard University Spring 2021

MA in Government

Brown University 2012

B.A. in International Relations

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor of Political Science Fall 2022-Present

Tulane University, New Orleans, LA

Non-Resident Fellow Spring 2025-Present

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C.

Instructor, Department of Political Science Fall 2021

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA

PUBLICATIONS & WORKS

Published Peer-Reviewed Articles

"China and the Middle East after the Arab Spring: From Status-Quo Observing to Proactive Engagement," *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* 13, no. 1 (2019): 1-17. (with Ibrahim Fraihat)

"A Storm of Tweets: Social Media Manipulation During the Gulf Crisis," *Review of Middle East Studies* 53, no. 2 (2019), 241-258. (with Alexei Abrahams)

"Saudi Arabia Plans for its Economic Future: Vision 2030, the National Transformation Plan, and Fiscal Reform in Saudi Arabia," *British Journal of Middle East Studies* 47, no. 3 (2020), 381-401. (with Daniel Moshashai and James Savage)

"Seek Fact from Texts: Reading Saudi Media on China amid the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* 14, no. 4 (2020): 538-553.

"Making Moves: Reading Saudi Social Change through Commercial Tabletop Games," *Journal of Arabian Humanities* 14 (2020).

"Framing a murder: Twitter influencers and the Jamal Khashoggi incident," *Mediterranean Politics* 26, no. 2(2021): 247-259. (with Alexei Abrahams)

“Electronic Armies or Cyber Knights? The sources of pro-authoritarian discourse on Middle East Twitter,” *International Journal of Communication* 15 (2021): 1173-1199. (with Alexei Abrahams)

“Defining the ‘Tribal Advantage’ in Kuwaiti Politics,” *Middle East Law & Governance* 14, no. 2 (August 2022): 205-234. (with Courtney Freer)

“When Can Dictators Go It Alone? Personalization and Oversight in Authoritarian Regimes,” *Politics & Society* 51, no. 1 (2023). (with Chris Carothers and Matthew Reichart)

“Whose War is it Anyway? Explaining the Black-White Gap in Support for the Use of Force Abroad,” *Security Studies* 32, no. 4-5 (2023). (with Naima Green-Riley)

“Personalization and Domestic Policy Outcomes: Evidence from Saudi Arabia,” *Democratization*. (2024)

“Saudization in a ‘Saudi First’ Kingdom,” *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 34, no. 1 (2025).

“Framing and Fundamentals in Authoritarian Performance Legitimacy: Evidence from Saudi Arabia.” (with Jonas Draege), online preprint at *Governance* (2026).

Published Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters

“Gulf Security Architecture and the Potential Role of Europe” in *The European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council: The Path Forward*, eds. Adel Abdel Ghafar and Silvia Colombo (Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore, 2021): pp. 207-237. (with Adel Abdel Ghafar)

“Foreign Scholarship Programs in Algeria and Saudi Arabia,” in *The Political Economy of Education in the Arab World*, eds. Hicham Alaoui and Robert Springborg, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2021): 147-182. (with Adel Hamaizia)

“National Transformation Plans: Saudi Arabia and Vision 2030” in *Handbook of Arab Authoritarianism*, ed. Dana El Kurd, forthcoming (2026).

Book Manuscript under Peer Review

The Reformer’s Dilemma: Authoritarian Policymaking in Saudi Arabia.

Peer-Reviewed Articles in Preparation

“Mr. Otaiba Goes to Washington: Direct and Indirect Effects of Foreign Lobbying in the United States,” article manuscript.

“The (Shaky) Moral Foundations of the U.S.-Saudi Relationship,” article manuscript.

“Voice(s) of the Nation: Competing Pro-State Narratives in Saudi Arabia.” (with Bruno Schmidt-F Feuerheerd).

Reviews and Review Essays

“When the oil runs out: Changing rentier politics in the greater Mediterranean region,” *Mediterranean Politics* 24, no. 5 (2019): 665-673.

Review: *Reinventing the Sheikhdome: Clan, Power and Patronage in Mohammed Bin Zayed's UAE* by Matthew Hedges (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2022) in *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 4 (2023): 118-121

Review: *Digital Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Deception, Disinformation and Social Media* Marc Owen Jones (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2022) in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 55, no. 4 (2023): 818-820

Non Peer-Reviewed Policy Publications

“Is the Saudi Purge Really About Corruption?” *Foreign Affairs* Online, 15 November. (2017). (with Christopher Carothers)

“Onwards and Upwards with Women in the Gulf.” *MERIP*, January 11. (2018). (with Charlotte Lysa)

“Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Congress: Cooperation and Opposition Since 9/11,” *Dirasat* 44, King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies. (2019).

“Introduction: Ties That No Longer Bind? Present Dynamics and Future Prospects for the U.S.-Saudi Relationship,” Policy Roundtable, *Texas National Security Review*, February 13. (2020).

“Resisting Rentierism: Labor Market Reforms in Saudi Arabia,” *POMEPS Studies* 33. (2019).

“Is Oil Wealth Good for Private Sector Development?,” *Working Papers* 1299, Economic Research Forum. (2019). (with Melani Cammett and Ishac Diwan)

“China and COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia,” *War on the Rocks*, April 23. (2020).

“Social Media Manipulation in the MENA: Inauthenticity, Inequality, and Insecurity,” *POMEPS Studies* 43. (2021). (with Alexei Abrahams)

“‘If Only the Governor Knew’: Subnational Contestation in Saudi Arabia,” *APSA-MENA Newsletter* 5, no. 1 (2022): 21-26

“America and Saudi Arabia Are Stuck With Each Other,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 1. (2022). (with Yasmine Farouk).

“However Difficult, the United States Should Still Pursue Israeli-Palestinian Peace,” *War on the Rocks*, November 27, 2023 (with Galen Jackson)

“Making sense of a proposed US-Saudi deal,” Commentary, Brookings Institution, July 10, 2024.

“Vision 2030 in the Home Stretch: Clear Achievements yet Limited Accountability,” Paper, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 10, 2025.

“How Saudi Podcasts Navigate Political Constraints,” Article, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2, 2025.

“Imports and Influence: China’s Growing Economic Presence in the Gulf,” Article, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 30, 2025.

“Can the UAE Go It Alone?,” Article, *Foreign Affairs*, June 5, 2026.

General Audience Publications

“Hot Dates in the Saudi Desert,” *Slate*, September 25, 2017

“Differences of Opinion? Saudi Op-eds and Confrontation with Iran,” Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington [blog post], May 23. (2019).

“North by southwest: Outlying Saudi regions face economic change, retain culture,” Al Arabiya, February 17. (2019).

“عنف الفوضى أم عنف الدولة؟” [Violence of Chaos or Violence of the State?].” *Thmanyah*, June 10. (2020).

“Hidden Hands or Inspiring Example? Gulf Perspectives on the ‘American Spring’,” Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington [blog post], June 11. (2020).

“السياسة الخارجية الأميركية: ماذا لو فاز بايدن بالانتخابات؟” [US Foreign Policy: What if Biden Wins?].” *Thmanyah*, June 23. (2020).

“بعد انتخابات كارثية، هل سيبقى المجمع الانتخابي في أميركا؟” [After disastrous elections, will the Electoral College remain as it is in America?].” *Thmanyah*, Nov. 20. (2020).

“حرب الخليج: التكنولوجيا العسكرية وعقدة الانتصار الأميركي” [The Gulf War: Military technology and the American victory Complex].” *Thmanyah*, Feb. 9. (2021).

“What’s Missing in the Recalibration of the U.S.-Saudi Relationship? People.” Commentary, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 4. (2021). (with Yasmine Farouk)

“Saudi Twitter blew up with support for the crown prince. How much of it is genuine?,” *The Washington Post*, March 9, 2021 (with Alexei Abrahams)

“The ‘tribal advantage’ in Kuwaiti politics and the future of the opposition,” Order from Chaos, Brookings Institution, April 19, 2021 (with Courtney Freer)

“هامش الادخار السعودي في مستقبل ما بعد النفط” [The Saudi savings rate in a post-oil future],” *Thmanyah*, June 10 (2021). (with Eman Al Hussein)

“Night Vision,” *The Baffler*, April 18, 2024

“The Gulf Countries Want to Stay Out of the Iran Conflict. Each Is Taking Its Own Path,” Commentary, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 7, 2025.

“The Riyadh Comedy Festival Isn’t Trying to Change Your Opinion of Saudi Arabia,” Commentary, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 3, 2025.

“MBS Wanted Status. Trump Wanted Deals,” Commentary, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 21, 2025.

“Can Trump’s AI diplomacy succeed, or is it doomed to fail?,” *Fast Company*, November 21, 2025

“The Gulf Monarchies Are Caught Between Iran’s Desperation and the U.S.’s Recklessness,” Commentary, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 3, 2026.

“Three Scenarios for the Gulf States After the Iran War,” Commentary, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 16, 2026. (with Sam Worby)

“Guest Column: Iran war repeats mistakes of the past,” *Times-Picayune*, April 17, 2026.

“The Iran War Isn’t the Only Challenge Facing Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030,” Commentary, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 6, 2026.

Translations

- Diaa Jubaili. "The Worker," in *Iraq +100*, ed. Hassan Blasim (Comma Press, 2016)
- Nahla Karam. "The Other Balcony," in *The Book of Cairo*, ed. Raphael Cormack (Comma Press, 2019)
- Anwar Hamed. "The Key," in *Palestine +100*, ed. Basma Ghalayini (Comma Press, 2019)
- Maqbul Al-Alawi. "A Group to Honor the Deceased," in *ArabLit Quarterly: The Road* (Spring 2020)
- Maqbul Al-Alawi. "Phantom of the Sands," in *ArabLit Quarterly: Dreams* (Winter 2020)
- Khaled Hourani. "Surda, Surda! Ramallah, Ramallah!" in *The Book of Ramallah*, ed. Maya Abu Al Hayat (Comma Press, 2021)
- Najlaa Attallah. "Where should we go, then?," AGNI Online, December 13, 2023.
- Mohammad al-Kheir. "The Mistake," in *Cairo +100*, ed. Ahmed Naji (Comma Press, 2024)
- Abdoo Taj. "Borrowing a Head," in *The Book of Sana'a*, ed. Laura Kasinof (Comma Press, 2025)
- Anwar Hamed. "Trapped," in *Palestine -1*, ed. Basma Ghalayini (Comma Press, 2026)

INVITED LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

- "Resisting Rentierism: Evidence from Saudi Arabia", Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) invited workshop, Washington, D.C., September 2019
- "Inauthenticity, Inequality, and Insecurity: Social Media Manipulation in MENA", POMEPS and Stanford University invited workshop, "Digital Activism and Authoritarian Adaptation in the Middle East," online, May 2021
- "The Ends Justify (Studying) the Means: Policymaking & Personalization in Saudi Arabia," German Area Studies Institute (GIGA) invited workshop "The Personalization of Political Power Revisited," Hamburg, Germany, June 2023
- "Shades of Green: Intermediaries of Legitimation in Saudi State Narratives," invited talk, IPOL Curricular Group, Georgetown University-Qatar, November 2025
- "Bad End of the Deal: How Pursuit of "Peace & Prosperity" Led to War in the Middle East," invited talk, Williams College, April 2026

OTHER PRESENTATIONS

- "Decoding the Kefala: The Political Logic of Migrant Labor Policy in the Arab Gulf States," *Middle East Studies Association Annual Conference*, Boston, November 19, 2016.
- "Locked out of the Coalition: Threats to Rulers and Partner Switching in the Arab Gulf," *Middle East Studies Association Annual Conference*, Washington D.C., November 21, 2017.
- "Dictating Terms: Coalition Change in Authoritarian Regimes," invited talk, University of Massachusetts Amherst, March 1, 2019.

- “Dictating Terms: Difficult Reforms and Coalition-building in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain,” *American Political Science Association* Annual Conference, Washington D.C., 31 August 2019.
- “A Changing Saudi Labor Market: Gender, Geography, and Inequality,” with Jonas Draege, Labor Transformation and Regime Transition: Lessons from the Middle East and North Africa (POMEPS/Cornell ILR virtual workshop), April 30, 2021
- “Intervening Variables: Racial Differences in Support for the Use of Force Abroad,” with Naima Green-Riley, *American Political Science Association* Annual Conference, Washington D.C., October 1, 2021.
- “What do we talk about when we talk about Islamists?” with Morten Valbjorn, *Middle East Studies Association of North America* Annual Conference, December 4, 2022.
- “Framing & Fundamentals in Authoritarian Performance Legitimacy: Evidence from Saudi Arabia,” *Western Political Science Association* Annual Conference, April 6, 2023
- “Ideas & Bureaucratic Advocacy in Authoritarian Distribution,” *Midwestern Political Science Association*, Annual Conference, April 15, 2023
- “Framing a Murder: Narratives of Repression in Saudi Arabia,” *Middle East Studies Association of North America* Annual Conference, November 2023
- “Back to the Future(scape): New Saudi Cities of Past and Present” *Gulf Research Meeting*, July 2025
- “Audible Accountability? Podcasting and Saudi Vision 2030” *Nordic Society of Middle East Studies* Annual Conference, September 2025

TEACHING

- Middle East Security
- Middle East Comparative Politics
- Islam and Politics
- Politics of Arab Israeli Conflict

ADVISING

PhD Dissertations

- Committee member, Andrew Devine (ABD)
- Committee member, Milena Petrovic (ABD)
- Committee member, Baris Alan (ABD)
- Prospective committee member, Yipeng Zhang

Undergraduate Theses

2023-24 Academic Year

- Mitra Kubilay
- Grace Harsche (2nd reader)

2024-25 Academic Year

- Sinead O’Conner
- Katharine Gallagher
- *Mika Nijwahan* (2nd reader, Economics)

Other

Student Papers & Presentations, Committee on Undergraduate Middle East Studies, Middle East Studies Association of North America, 2023

- Kyle Campbell
- Laura Brawley

SERVICE: DEPARTMENT & PROGRAM COMMITTEES

Tulane, Department of Political Science

- Graduate Studies Committee (2022-23)
- Hiring Committee, Comparative Politics of Advanced Industrial Democracies search (2023)
- Hiring Committee, Comparative Politics of Authoritarianism search (2024)

Tulane, Middle East & North Africa Studies (MENA) Program

- Executive Committee (2022-present)

SERVICE: ACADEMIC PROGRAMING

Tulane University, General

- Invited faculty speaker, events hosted by *Tulane Journal of Policy and Political Economy*
 - “International Politics,” April 17, 2023
 - “Pathways to Peace: Peacebuilding in Israel and Palestine,” April 17, 2024
- Advisor, Student Conduct Process (2023-present)
- Participant, “New Faces and Methods in Authoritarian Politics,” conference co-organized by Center on Inter-American Policy & Research (CIPR) and Authoritarian Political Systems Group (May 23-24, 2024)
- Discussant, “Democracy and Authoritarianism in Historical Latin America,” conference organized by CIPR (May 31, 2024)
- Advisor, Stacy Mandel Palagye and Keith Palagye Program for Middle East Peace, Washington, DC-based activities (Spring 2024-present)

Department of Political Science

- Co-organizer, seminar lecture, “Corrupt State or Corrupt Society? Strategic Contexts of Corruption and Political Culture Outcomes,” Calvert Jones, Associate Professor, University of Maryland (April 2023)
- Co-organizer & participant, faculty Q&A on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (October 12 & 31, 2023)
- Co-organizer, Murphy Seminar in Political Science (Fall 2023 – Spring 2025)

MENA Studies Program

- Organizer, screening, *Persepolis* (October 2022)
- Organizer, panel discussion, “Labor Rights, Qatar, and the World Cup,” Vani Saraswathi, *Migrant Rights* advocacy organization, and Roula Seghaier, International Domestic Workers Federation (December 2022)
- Co-organizer, reception, Tulane MENA Studies and Association for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies at Middle East Studies Association of North America (November 2023)
- Organizer, public lecture, “Love, Fear, Anger, Sorrow: Diseases of the Soul in "Islamicate" Literature,” Kevin Blankenship, Associate Professor, Brigham Young University (December 2023)
- Co-organizer, musical event, “Moroccan Rhythms, NOLA Beats,” Mahmoud Chouki, local performer, (April 2024)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Professional Memberships

- American Political Science Association (2016-present)
- Middle East Studies Association of North America (2016-present)

Journal Reviewer

- American Political Science Review
- Studies in Comparative International Development
- International Security
- International Studies Quarterly
- Mediterranean Politics
- British Journal of Middle East Studies

RESEARCH SUPPORT

Tulane Sources

- Tulane Committee on Research Fellowship Grant, “The U.S.-Saudi Security Partnership: Values as Interests?,” 2023-24 (\$7,000)
- Tulane Carol Lavin Bernick Faculty Grant, “Personalism & Policymaking in the post-Arab Spring Middle East,” 2024-25 (\$7,500)

Non-Tulane Sources

- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Incentive Pool-Funded Fellowship, 2025-2026 (\$25,000)
- National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship, 2016-2021 (~\$100,000)
- (with Jonas Draege) Harvard Kennedy School Center for International Development, Evidence for Policy Design, “Regional Attitudes and Saudi Labor-Market Policies,” 2019-20 (~\$100,000)
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Incentive Pool Grant, “Gulf-U.S. AI Partnerships: Domestic Hurdles and Global Implications,” 2025 (\$100,000, funded)

OTHER FUNDING SUPPORT

Tulane Sources

- Classroom Enhancement Grant, Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching, POLI 4660 Middle East Security, Fall 2022 (\$400)
- Faculty Book Manuscript Workshop Grant, Provost’s Office, AY 2024-25 (\$6,200)