المجلس العربي
للعلوم الاجتماعية

Arab Council
for the Social Sciences
Conseil Arabe
pour les Sciences Sociales

ANNUAL REPORT

2019

Contents

I. GENERAL INFORMATION 4
II. PROJECT ENVIRONMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY 6
A. The Context in Lebanon 6
B. The 5-Year Strategy 9
C. Results Based Management (RBM) 18
III. ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN 2019 19
A. Institutional Development 19
Board of Trustees and General Assembly 19
Administrative and Financial Systems and Processes 20
Database and Information Systems 21
Internal Management and Control Audit 21
Staffing 21
Staff Professional Development (PD) 23
Focal Points 23
Membership 25
Funding 25
Ford BUILD Grant for institutional strengthening 26
B. Convening 29
Biennial Conference, April 12-14, 2019, Beirut 29
The ACSS Annual Lecture Series 30
Donors' Forum 32
Other convening 32
C. Gender Studies: New Directions 33
D. Grants and Fellowships Programs 37
Research Grants Program (RGP) 38
Early Career Fellows Program (ECFP) 42
Small Grants Program (SGP) 43
ACSS-FMSH Short-term Postdoctoral Mobility Program in the Social Sciences and Humanities 44
AFAC-ACSS Research on Arts (RAP) 45
New Paradigms Factory cycle 3 on "Gendered Resistance" 46
Bassem Chit Fellowship for the Study of Activism 47

Reimagining the Sahel: a new joint research program with CODESRIA 48
Towards a new generation of social scientists in the Arab region (2030): A new program (NewGen) 49
Moving Forward on the Grants and Fellowships Programs: Future Steps 52
E. Working Groups 53
Critical Security Studies Working Group (CSS) 54
New Regionalisms Working Group 59
Ethnography as Knowledge Working Group 60
Critiques of Power Working Group 61
Preparations for the ACSS Academy July 1-16, 2020, Beirut 65
F. Humanities Forum and Report 66
G. Training 67
Data Sharing for the Public Good training series 67
Training to Engaged Research on Gender Violence (TERG) 68
H. The Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM) 68
ASSM Governance and Staffing 69
Second Arab Social Science Report (ASSR2) 69
Third Arab Social Science Report 71
Palestine report: Study of higher education and research in Palestine 72
Iraq project: The social sciences experience in Iraqi universities 73
ASSM Databases 74
Arab Public Data Initiative 75
Looking back and looking forward: Lessons learned 77
I. Research Ethics Initiative 78
New program on research ethics: Research Ethics Discourses, Practices and Leadership in the Arab Region: Addressing Intersectionality and Fragility 79
Lessons Learnt 80
J. Regional, South-South and Global Collaborations 81
ACSS/CODESRIA collaborative project 82
CLACSO 82
InterAsia 83
Striking from the Margins Project 83
School on Theorizing from the South 84

IV. OUTPUTS, DISSEMINATION AND ELECTRONIC PLATFORM 84
A. Online Activities 84
ACSS Online Directory 85
ACSS Website 85
Social Media 86
ACSS Newsletter 86
B. Print Activities 87
Working Paper Series 87
Occasional Publication from the Third ACSS Conference 87
Occasional Publication to Close the Hanna Batatu Lecture Series 87
NPF Publication 88
Fatema Mernissi first lecture booklet 89
Review Volume "Qira'at" 89
Editorial Review Board 90
V. FINAL REMARKS AND LOOKING FORWARD 91
Lessons learned 93

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Organization Name: Arab Council for the Social Sciences
- Date of report: February 29, 2020
- Reporting Period: January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
- Name, email address, and phone number of primary contact:

  Seteney Shami, Director General

  Email: shami@theacss.org

  +961 1 370214

- Some acronyms used in the report:
  - ACSS: Arab Council for the Social Sciences (http://www.theacss.org)
  - A&F: BoT Administration and Finance Sub-committee
  - ASSM: Arab Social Science Monitor (http://www.theacss.org/pages/assm)
  - ASSR: Arab Social Science Report (http://www.theacss.org/uploads/English-ASSR-2016.pdf)
  - BoT: Board of Trustees
  - BCF: Bassem Chit Fellowship for the Study of Activism
  - CCNY: Carnegie Corporation of New York
  - CSS: Critical Security Studies
  - ECFP: Early Career Fellows Program (http://www.theacss.org/pages/bassem-chit-fellowship-for-the-study-of-activism)
  - F&A: Finance and Administration
  - FPOS: Foundation to Promote Open Society (a member of Open Society Foundations – OSF)
  - IDRC: International Development Research Centre
  - LS: Lebanon Support
  - MoU: Memorandum of Understanding
  - NPF: New Paradigms Factory (http://www.theacss.org/pages/npf)
  - OSF: Open Society Foundations
  - RBM: Results Based Management
  - RGP : Research Grants Program (http://www.theacss.org/pages/rgp)

- RAP: Research on the Arts Program (http://www.theacss.org/pages/afac-acss-research-on-the-arts-program)
- RLS: Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung
- Sida: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- SGP: Small Grants Program (http://www.theacss.org/pages/sgp)
- BSCSS: Beirut School for Critical Security Studies
- ToC: Table of Contents
- ToR: Terms of Reference

II. PROJECT ENVIRONMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Entering its eighth year of operations, the ACSS is steadily growing in scope and reach, developing new projects and initiatives and going from strength to strength. Fall 2019, however, saw a deterioration in the Lebanese context that has created new challenges. The popular uprising which began all over Lebanon in October 2019 (mirroring similar ones that erupted over the same year in Algeria, Sudan and Iraq), and the recalcitrant response of the state, has created new risks and conditions for the work of the ACSS. However, the new challenges have not deterred ACSS staff from continuing to focus on their mission of offering programs and serving grantees and the social science community in the region, which becomes all the more important at this new critical juncture in the region. In this report we present an overview of the programmatic and institutional successes of the past year, which we believe should not be overshadowed by the new contextual challenges. New conditions in Lebanon affecting the ACSS work are addressed in the next sub-section – updated till February 2020 so as to cover all developments.

A. The Context in Lebanon

The year 2019 ended with an escalating political and financial crisis in Lebanon and the region. We had been alerted to the looming banking crisis in the country since May 2019 and were already trying to establish a bank account outside Lebanon, which entailed long negotiations with banks in Lebanon and in Jordan. However, before we were able to succeed in these endeavors, there was the explosion of unrest starting October 17 and the swift announcement of banking controls over foreign currency. This meant that ACSS, as all entities in Lebanon, is unable to access its funds in foreign currency and transfers outside Lebanon also became limited and slow.

The ACSS was among the first organizations in Lebanon to issue a statement in support of the Lebanese uprising and other protests in the region, in their pursuit of social justice and meaningful structural change. We kept our office open amidst the events and continued to organize activities to the best of our abilities without jeopardizing the safety of participants and staff. We allowed staff to participate in the uprisings if they wished and provided them with secure transport to and back from their homes. When organizing a meeting in Beirut was not possible, we shifted to Amman or postponed the event. We also organized brainstorming meetings with grantees in Lebanon to discuss their role in the uprisings as academics and activists, and try to understand how the ACSS can best

help them make their voices heard. While different ideas were presented at these meetings, the clear mandate for the ACSS was to be the locus of rigorous analysis, especially of a comparative regional and global scope. In addition, the ACSS was encouraged to be a thought-partner to new initiatives organizing for social and economic rights that are struggling to define their agendas and structures. These ideas were brought forward to the BoT and will inform activities and plans for 2020, including the Fifth ACSS Conference.

The ACSS position is to continue to support grantees and affiliates as they seek alternatives for a better future for their countries. Amid all the uncertainty, staff professionalism, resilience and versatility was key to the unfailing and continued support the ACSS has given to the social science community in the region. To the best of their abilities, staff sought to maintain a state of normalcy under difficult conditions. The repercussions of the current situation in Lebanon that have had a negative impact on the work of the ACSS has more to do with the setback in the financial and banking situation. Those are now affecting our financial commitments to others especially grantees and staff. Thus, the banking crisis is the priority as we enter 2020.

Beginning in November 2019, transfers to grantees began to take a long time to process – sometimes more than a month – or they were not made at all. This is a problem because many of the grantees depend on the payments made by the ACSS for living expenses (e.g. ECFP) and others rely on the funds to undertake their field work and ongoing projects. As an immediate action, we have prioritized payments to grantees depending on several factors including the amount (small is easier), how badly the delay in payment affects their project and how far back in the programs they are (for example we give priority to RGP5 rather than RGP6). We are also considering delaying the announcement of upcoming cycles of programs until the financial situation is more settled. As for staff salaries, depending on staff preference, transfers are made to their banks or they are given checks. However, because of capital controls at banks, the latter have limits on the USD amounts they can give to clients (the range is between $200 and $500 every week) which means that staff cannot cash their salaries in full.

Our attempts to open new bank accounts were not successful. We tried in a) a Lebanese bank that has branches outside Lebanon b) a non-Lebanese bank that has branches in and outside Lebanon and c) a new bank account in a Jordanian bank.

In the meantime, we were consulting with lawyers in Lebanon and outside (Belgium, Cyprus, Portugal) and sister organizations registered outside Lebanon. Options were presented to the Board of Trustees meeting on January 17-18, 2020 who approved proceeding with the following steps:

Lebanon:

Pursuing an option newly made available by Lebanese banks of opening a new "mirror account" where "fresh money" is deposited, 85% of which can be withdrawn or transferred without restrictions. It was agreed that donors, from whom transfers are due, would be asked to make their transfers in smaller amounts, so that as soon as the funds are received, they are transferred out within a week. Staff salaries will be withdrawn in cash and disbursed to staff in USD. February 2020 will be the first month in which this system is tested, recognizing that this is an emergency measure and not a long-term solution, as there is no guarantee that the banks will not reverse this policy at any time.

Jordan:

Establishing a branch office (requires 3-4 weeks and security checks on founding members - current BoT). This will require rental of space. There should be no problem in opening a bank account once the office is established. However, this is also a partial solution since receiving any foreign funds requires approval by the relevant ministry and by the Prime Minister's office. We received assurances (verbal) from the Prime Minister's office that this would entail presenting an annual plan with details of funding to be received and once this is approved, fund transfers within that year would be automatically approved. Discussions are ongoing with a law firm in Amman.

Dubai – DIFC:

Setting up a nonprofit international organization (NPIO) in Dubai free zone requires 3 founding members who are have residences in the UAE, a director (not necessarily full time resident) a lawyer and rental space (address). We have identified a law firm and are assured that this is a fairly straightforward process. Once the NPIO is established, then there will be a legal document regulating the relationship between this new NPIO and the ACSS. Discussions are ongoing with a Dubai-based law firm.

Cyprus:

A non-profit limited by guarantee company where ACSS is the sole shareholder. This will take a few weeks to set up. Once established, we can apply to the Cypriot Council of Ministers for the company to acquire NGO and tax-exempt status. Since it will be a subsidiary of the ACSS, there will be no need for other legal agreements governing the relationship between this entity and ACSS. Discussions are ongoing with Cypriot lawyers.

Belgium:

We are waiting to hear if opening a bank account as ACSS will be approved. We have approached a bank through lawyers referred to us by a sister organization registered in Belgium.

B. The 5-Year Strategy

In 2019, the ACSS concluded the third year, and started the fourth year of its 5-year Strategy, which laid out an ambitious program of institutional and programmatic growth (Appendix 1-ACSS 2020). Progress on the strategy is reported in this section. We also report in a section below on the activities and processes undertaken in 2019 under the BUILD grant from the Ford Foundation for institutional strengthening. These documents as well as the RBM logframe (see Results-based Management section below) guides the institutional and programmatic development of the ACSS and is reviewed and revised at periodic staff meetings and BoT meetings.

The targets outlined in the 5-year Strategy were the following: Governance, Financial Sustainability, Regional Reach, Institutional Support, Publications and Research Uptake. The below section summarizes progress within each of these targets, with some activities being further detailed in the relevant sections of the report as indicated.

Target 1: Governance **Fully revised & functional charter, by-laws, & internal processes**	
Timeline: 2016-2017	**Objective** 3

Aims: Strengthening institutional capacities; smooth BoT elections, leadership transitions, & conflict resolution; effective Board-Director-Staff relations			
Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Revisions of the text of Charter and By-laws	May 2016	January 2017	BoT, Director, F&A Manager, & Lawyer
Revision of chart of authority & addition of some internal policies	May 2016	January 2017	BoT, Director, & F&A Manager
Ratification of revised Charter & By-laws by members & associated legal procedures	March 2017	September 2017	BoT, Director, F&A Manager, & Lawyer
Staffing	September 2016	Ongoing	Director & F&A Manager

a) All governance activities were implemented on schedule in 2016 and 2017. In addition, in 2019, based on a decision by the BoT, the active members of the ACSS voted on changing the by-laws that restricted the number of the tenure terms of the Director General. The original stipulation was: "The Director General shall be appointed by the decision of the Board of Trustees for four (4) years that are renewable once". Through the vote, this was changed to "The Director General is appointed by the decision of the Board of Trustees for a period of four (4) years, renewable." The change in by-laws has been ratified by the Ministry of Interior and is thus official.

b) Adequate staffing has long been a challenge for the institution and a continual work in progress. A major milestone was achieved through the successful recruitment of an Associate Director after a search that lasted 2 years. Dr. Moushira Elgeziri started work as Associate Director at the ACSS in April 2019 and this has greatly strengthened and enhanced the leadership and management capacities of the institution (Appendix 2 - Moushira Elgeziri's CV). In 2018 and

2019 the ACSS lost two valued members of its communication team, however, and recruitment is still underway for appropriate replacements. In addition, it has been decided to split the tasks of the Finance and Administration Manager since the burden has become unsustainable for one person. Recruitment is underway for an administrative officer who will take up all issues related to general administration, human resources, membership affairs and BoT preparation and follow up.

Target 2 **Financial Sustainability**			
Timeline: 2016-2020		**Objective 3**	
Aims: Adequate core funding; Long-term co-funding partnerships; Endowment			
Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Discussions with donors concerning core funds	June 2016	Ongoing	Director
Financial consultant for endowment	November 2016	April 2017	BoT A&F sub-committee, Director, & F&A Manager
Endowment fundraising	January 2017	Ongoing	BoT, Director, & F&A Manager
Developing 3-4 strategic co-funding partnerships	January 2018	Ongoing	Director & F&A Manager

(a) Core funding has been successfully obtained through the grants from Sida and Ford Foundation. Other current donors are highly unlikely to commit core funds and thus the search for new core fund donors remains a priority.

(b) As detailed in the previous report, there was a delay and a change in plans concerning the recruitment of a financial consultant and endowment fundraising consultant. Given the recruitment of the associate director, the director general has been relieved of some major programmatic duties (especially as related to the

Grants and Fellowships programs) and can give more time for endowment fundraising. This was scheduled to start in the second half of 2019, however the unexpected events unfolding since October in Lebanon have created new urgencies as will be discussed at the end of this section.

(c) Co-funding partnerships on a number of grants and training programs have been put in place with: the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'homme (FMSH) in Paris, The Arab Fund for Culture and Arts, the Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung, Lebanon Support and the Odum Institute of the University of North Carolina. (For details see relevant section under "Fellowships and Grants" and "ASSM" below).

Target 3: Regional Reach **Functioning focal points & regionally representative membership pool**			
Timeline: 2016-2018		**Objective 2**	
Aims: Diversity of regional participation in governance & activities			
Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Algeria Focal Point established	June 2016	December 2016	Director & F&A Manager
Targeted membership drive	March 2017	Ongoing	BoT Membership sub-Committee, Director, & PA
Development of two more focal points	January 2018	December 2018	Director & F&A Manager

(a) The Algeria Focal Point has proceeded more slowly than planned due to both bureaucratic and political factors. An agreement was reached in 2017 with Dr. Nacer Djabi (a former member of the Board of Trustees) to act as senior advisor and to oversee the work of the focal point. In the following year, 2018, a voluntary steering committee was formed and an annual plan developed for 2018-2019. The political unrest in Algeria delayed the start of the activities, however, the Focal Point did organize a roundtable at the ACSS fourth conference on the development of the social sciences in Algeria which attracted

a high number of attendees and considerable interest. In addition, two ACSS staff visited Algeria on July 1-7, 2019 and presented on the ACSS generally and on the Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM) specifically in several institutions in Algiers and Oran (see section on "ASSM" for more details). Since then, the Research Center in Applied Economics for Development (CREAD) – one of the two institutions they visited – applied for ACSS institutional membership and letters have been exchanged between the ACSS and the Algerian ministry of higher education for the organization of joint activities and collaborations. We hope that 2020 will see an increase in activities, especially that the political situation has somewhat stabilized.

(b) Applications for individual membership are on the rise and the total number of members as of January 2020 is 72 active (voting) members; 485 associate (non-voting) members, and 97 students (non-voting) members and 7 institutional members. The BoT membership sub-committee has developed a strategy for membership, with a focus on incentivizing institutional membership and increasing diversity of disciplines and nationalities among individual members. We are planning for the new administrative officer, once hired, to focus on the membership strategy and drive in 2020.

(c) As discussed in the previous report, the BoT during their retreat of September 2018, stated that it would be premature to decide on a 3rd focal point before 2020. This decision was based on the experience in both Palestine and Algeria and the time it took to put an effective structure in place and ensure good communication and coordination with the Beirut office. It has also been noted that the Associate Director – an Egyptian - would act as an informal focal point in Egypt, where networking and support for researchers is vital given the difficulties they are facing.

Target 4: Institutional Support **Complement the focus on individuals with support & networking for universities & research organizations**	
Timeline: 2017-2019	**Objective 2**

Aims: Effective programs & activities designed & implemented in order to achieve the desired balance			
Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Develop a plan for institutional collaborations & networking	January 2017	June 2017	BoT, Director, & Staff
Develop one new program for institutional support	January 2018	December 2018	Director & BoT
Develop one new program for institutional support	January 2019	December 2019	Director & BoT
Activities for networking institutions at ACSS biennial conference	January 2019	December 2019	Director & BoT

(a) Planning for supporting institutional collaborations and networking proceeded on schedule, and includes three aspects: (a) As mentioned above, work has begun on a strategy of incentives to encourage institutional ACSS membership, (b) Co-funding programs with sister organizations (mentioned above and detailed in the relevant sections of the report), and (c) planning for an "ACSS Fellows" program for the creation of a pipeline/new generation of social scientists in the Arab region. This is an integrated research and training program based at Arab universities that would support, mentor and network students in their undergraduate and graduate years till the post-PhD phase (See "New Generation" project below). In January 2019, the ACSS was successful in receiving a 3-year grant from Open Society Foundations (OSF) to pilot this program.

(c) As scheduled and mentioned in earlier reports, a new institutional support grants program was developed in 2018 and is ongoing in partnership with the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC). In addition, grants for institutions have been introduced into the Research Grants Program cycle 7 (RGP7)

starting June 2019. (For details see "RGP 7" section under "Fellowships and Grants" below). Finally, the New Generation project also provides institutional support for a select group of universities in the region.

(d) Through partnerships and institutional grants (AFAC-ACSS; RGP7, the New Generation program's partner universities and partners in the Research Ethics new grant (see relevant sections under "Fellowships and Grants" below), the ACSS has developed a network of partner institutions. This configuration was not yet in place in time for specific networking activities at the 2019 conference. In 2020, we will look into how to bring these institutions into closer conversations with one another and hope to highlight these at the Fifth Conference in 2021.

Target 5: Publications **Publications support & development of new dissemination outlets & formats**			
Timeline: 2017-2020		**Objective 1**	
Aims: ACSS becomes a major source of publishing & disseminating new social science knowledge about the region			
Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Fully launch Working Papers, Field Reports & Directory, quarterly e-newsletter	January 2017	December 2017	Publications sub-committee, Editorial Review Board, & Communications staff
Develop 1-2 new web outlets for dissemination	January 2018	December 2018	Publications sub-committee & Staff
Planning the New Social Sciences Journal	January 2019	December 2019	Publications sub-committee, Editorial Review Board, & Communications staff

Launch *Journal of Social Sciences in the Arab Region*	January 2020	December 2020	Publications sub-committee, Editorial Review Board, Director & Staff

(a) The Working Papers and quarterly e-newsletter are well underway and issued regularly and successfully. The Directory is moving ahead rather slowly, delayed significantly by issues related to database and information systems problem (see below for more details under "Database and Information Systems). As mentioned in the previous report (2018), the Publications sub-committee decided to not introduce Field Reports as they were regarded as not feasible.

(b) One new web outlet was launched as planned in 2018 – this is the "Beirut Forum" which is the website of the Critical Security Studies Working Group project (See section on Working Groups below). Another outlet has been planned but is proceeding more slowly – this is a site for training and discussions on the topic of Research Ethics in the Social Sciences.

(c) After extensive discussions by the BoT, it was decided that rather than launch a social science journal, the ACSS would launch an annual "Reviews" (*Qira'at* in Arabic) publication that will publish reviews of the literature and state of the art articles. During 2019, the content of the first volume was commissioned, assembled, translated and compiled and the first issue will come out in 2020.

Target 6: Research Uptake **Supporting collaboration between academic & non-academic researchers & institutions for policy & public impact**	
Timeline: 2018-2020	**Objective 1**
Aims: Effective programs & activities designed & implemented to enhance policy impact & broader societal engagement	

Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Develop a new program for university & civil society collaboration	January 2018	June 2018	Director & BoT
Develop a new program for research & private sector collaboration	January 2019	June 2019	Director & BoT
Develop a new program for research & public sector collaboration	January 2020	June 2020	Director & BoT

(a) The Bassem Chit Early Scholar Career Fellowship was launched in 2018 in collaboration with Lebanon Support (LS) (a research NGO) and with co-funding from the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation (RLS). This fellowship is dedicated for strengthening linkages between academic research and civil society activism (for more details see "Bassem Chit Fellowship on Activism" under "Fellowships and Grants" program below).

(b) The idea of activities promoting collaboration with public and private sectors has been the object of discussion and planning during 2019 and will take shape in 2020. Rather than two separate programs (one focusing on the public sector and the other on the private), we are now considering one program that brings together different sectors into one conversation. The on-boarding of the Associate Director was an important prerequisite for these new programmatic initiatives as she will play a major role in planning and directing them.

C. Results Based Management (RBM)

Since 2013, the ACSS has been implementing a Results Based Management (RBM) approach and has developed a Logframe (Appendix 3 – RBM Logframe) to monitor and measure projects and activities in terms of how they meet the overall and four specific objectives of the institution.

The Overall Objective is:

To identify the needs of social scientists and social science communities, increase knowledge production of high-quality social sciences and humanities research addressing the priority development challenges of the Arab region and enhance engagement with such research.

The Specific Objectives are:

1. To improve and expand production and use of social science research to address regional issues;
2. To achieve a new and larger generation of social scientists integrated into regional networks;
3. To achieve institutionalization of ACSS as a credible recognized network of researchers
4. To promote and implement good governance within the ACSS (this was added in 2016 based on the external evaluators' recommendations).

In addition to internally documenting and monitoring activities, as of 2015, the ACSS has been conducting an annual survey of grantees (sent out every January/February) that requests updates on outputs and publications and solicits their opinions on their experience with the ACSS Appendix 4-Grantees Survey). The annual survey has been developed for gathering data for the Logframe and is considered an important input for planning and monitoring institutional growth and programmatic activities. In 2017 we adopted a new questionnaire which focuses particularly on the impact and the uptake of the research produced through ACSS grants. The 2019 survey was sent out on December 23, 2019 and elicited a 31% response. Overall, the results displayed in the Logframe were satisfactory and show a steady improvement in performance indicators across all four objectives.

The Logframe reflects the following results, all compared to 2018:

- A 57% increase in the number of joint projects and initiatives;
- A slight increase (5%) for regional and international social science networks diversity;

- An increase in the number of researchers using the research ethics tool (125%);
- In grants and fellowships there has been an improvement in the representation of women researchers and fellows (40% females vs. 60% males).
- Among ACSS members women represented 35% of the total number of members in 2019 versus 31% in 2018.;
- Accepted publications by grantees and others increased by 60%;
- Other positive indicators: international presentations (increased by 160% - high percentage mainly due to fourth biennial conference), social media outreach increased by 25%; and ACSS membership by 40%.

III. ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN 2019

A. Institutional Development

Funding for developing institutional capacities is spread across all ACSS grants through both direct and indirect support budget lines. Core funding from Sida and Ford is essential for this component.

Board of Trustees and General Assembly

Elections were held in March 2019 for six new members of the Board of Trustees. The following members rotated off the Board (Drs. Rami Daher, Ruba Salih, Lucine Taminian, Lisa Taraki, Mohammad Bamyeh, and Manzoul Assal). An election monitoring committee made up of active ACSS members was nominated by the Board and was composed of (Drs. Hania Sholkamy- Egypt; Sami Ofeish – Lebanon and Sari Hanafi - Lebanon). The call for nominations went out on February 8, 2019 and 16 names were nominated for the election. 2 members of the Board re-nominated themselves for a second term. The elections were held electronically on 9 and 10 March, 2019 and the following were elected: Drs. Mohamad Bamyeh, Suad Joseph, Fadma Ait Mous, Abaher Elsakka, Driss Maghraoui, and Manzoul Assal.

A short first meeting of the new BoT was held on April 10, 2019, on the eve of the Fourth Conference in order to select the chair, to discuss the General Assembly meeting and to agree on a motion to be put to the membership to change the by-laws as regarding the terms of service for the Director General. Dr. Mohammed Bamyeh was unanimously selected as chair and thus presided over the General Assembly meeting that was held on April 13, 2019 (Appendix 5- agenda). During the meeting,

which was attended by 24 members, administrative and financial reports were presented by the DG and the F&A Manager. A good discussion on the terms of service for the DG was conducted, upon which the floor agreed that the motion should be put to the membership for voting.

A full meeting of the new Board was held on September 19-21, 2019. It has now become the practice to organize the September meeting as a retreat-like discussion where Board members are able to go over the institutional and programmatic directions of the Council and to discuss the mission and strategy of the organization as a whole. The January meeting of the BoT focuses on financial and administrative decisions such as budgeting, RBM and so forth. As the attached agenda shows (Appendix 6 - Meeting Agenda - September 2019), discussions in the September 2019 meeting were organized under the broad rubric of "Outreach" and strategies for membership, publication, geographical distribution of activities and regional, south-south and global collaborations. In addition, the membership and chairs of the various sub-committees were selected and the committees had their first meetings where they were briefed by the relevant staff on the scope of work of the committees and the pending action items.

Administrative and Financial Systems and Processes

Following the Board of Trustees (BoT) election of March 2019, the Administration & Finance (A&F) sub-committee of the BoT is now comprised of four members and meets twice every year or as needed, either physically or virtually, to oversee, review and recommend further action in the area of administration and finance. Their main role is to review and recommend to the BoT approval of annual financial statement and budgets, work plans, cost of living adjustments, policies and procedures as prepared by the Secretariat.

The Microsoft Navision Dynamics accounting system which the ACSS purchased in 2018 was put into use in 2019. During Q1 2020, results of experimenting with the new accounting system in 2019 will be compared with the software ACSS has been using for the past 6 years to ensure accuracy of outputs.

After having worked with Sidani & Co. as external auditors since 2014, and upon the request of some donors, the BoT decided to change the audit firm. Based on bids, reviewed by the A&F committee,

an agreement was signed with RSM as external auditors for the period 2019-2024. They will conduct their first audit for the year 2019 in early 2020 (Appendix 7 - 2019 Audit Report).

During their September 2019 meeting, the BoT approved renting additional office space in the same current location of the ACSS. The new rent will commence on February 1, 2020. This additional space will cater primarily for training, workshops, meetings and incubation projects. It will also provide workspace for the additional staff that ACSS will be recruiting.

Database and Information Systems

One of the major IT needs at ACSS is to harmonize three main components: Website, grants management system (GMS), and the ASSM Survey. For this to happen, a central database and customer relations management (CRM) system is required. In addition, a new website needs to be built with a user-friendly and advanced content management system (CMS) that will help us upload contents to the new website, create dynamic applications for the GMS, and build ASSM survey apps. In 2019 the IT officer contacted four web solution providers (TedMob, Ucheed, Born Interactive and Koein) and invited them to send proposals for the task. He has since received bids and we are now in the decision-making process. We are also in the process of building a new platform for the Research Ethics initiative (see below). Finally, we are also considering a package upgrade to solve the internet connection problems of the office which has been a serious issue lately.

Internal Management and Control Audit

Upon the request of Sida, an Internal Management and Control Audit was conducted by PKF Littlejohn LLP during December 2019. The draft report and our responses/actions are attached to this report (Appendix 7 – Audit Report).

Staffing:

With the exception of the resignation of Ms. Joelle Hatem from her position as senior communications officer in August 2019, staff stability has been maintained and new members have joined the ACSS team:

- Mr. Wassim Alam started on February 25, 2019 as IT Officer.
- Ms. Rebecca Daher joined in March 2019 as Program Assistant.
- Dr. Moushira Elgeziri joined in April 2019 as Associate Director.

The position of communications manager is still unfilled. A hire approved in October 2019 and commenced in November 2019 was terminated by mutual consent a few weeks later and the search continues to fill this position. In addition, we have initiated the process to recruit staff for the following positions:

- A full-time program coordinator for the "New Generation of Social Scientists" funded by the Open Society Foundation (OSF).
- A full-time program/executive assistant to work with the director general on the programs that she manages as well as the expected focus on fundraising for an endowment in the coming phase.
- Moreover, a decision was made in 2019 to split the function of administration from finance. This also appeared in the recommendations of the PKF audit report. As such, the ACSS announced the vacancy for an administration and human resource officer reporting to the director general. The new recruit would overlook administrative, human resource, and legal and membership requirements. Interviewing and recruitment will take place during Q1 2020.

By the end of 2019, the office included 17 employees as follows: 13 Lebanese, 1 Egyptian, 1 Jordanian, 1 Palestinian, and 1 Bangladeshi, out of whom 11 are females and 6 are males. In addition to the Beirut-based staff, the ACSS focal points in Palestine and Algeria who work on a part-time basis, include 2 senior consultants and 2 administrative/program coordinators (2 Palestinians and 2 Algerians), making the total gender balance 13 females and 8 males.

The ACSS continued to rely on consultants for programmatic work in the absence of appropriate full-time staff. For 2019, these included:

Dr. Jamil Mouawad – part time consultant as of April 28, 2016 on Critical Security Studies Working Group and the Research Ethics initiative.

Dr. Deema Kaedbey – part time consultant since February 1, 2018 and continuing through 2020, coordinating the "Critiques of Power" working group.

Ms. May Wazzan – part time consultant for the "New Generation of Social Scientists" project funded by the Open Society Foundation as of July 10, 2019 and continuing through 2020.

Dr. Lucine Taminian as lead researcher for the Iraq Project funded by Carnegie Corporation New York (CCNY) from September 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021.

Ms. Muneira Hoballah – part-time consultant for work on the humanities, including the World Humanities Report from July 2018 through January 31, 2019.

Dr. Hoda Elsadda as lead researcher for the Arab Oral History Archive: Gender, Alternative Histories, and the Production of Knowledge, (Gender Oral History Archive – GOHA) from July 1, 2019 to November 17, 2021).

Staff Professional Development (PD)

The ACSS is invested in the professional development of its staff and encourages them to use the generous available funding for staff development towards further education and enhancement of their career opportunities. Funding is not restricted to programs and trainings related to the ACSS work requirements or mission, but is in fact open to the preferences of the staff member. Staff who make use of the PD opportunities are allowed to take 20 days off during the year to pursue their studies.

In 2019 several staff members enrolled in educational and training programs as follows:

- Najwa Tohme, Financial and Administrative Manager, is enrolled in an MA in Psychology (Clinical/Counseling) program starting August 2019 for a duration of 2.5 years.
- Elie Rahma, Accountant, enrolled at the American University of Culture & Education (AUCE) to obtain a BA in accounting. He started his studies in July, 2019 and is expected to finish in February, 2021.
- Hiba Hammoud, Events Coordinator, registered for an office management diploma at AUB. She also attended a workshop on "the art of negotiation" and received a diploma from Formatech /ILM (The Institute of Leadership & Management).
- Farah Alsouri, Grants Coordinator, had started an MA program in Public Policy and International Affairs in 2018, and during that academic year the ACSS funded her two courses. In 2019, Farah was able to secure a scholarship and therefore the ACSS no longer pays her tuition but only contributes to her registration fees and provides her with PD days.

Focal Points

To ensure more robust regional outreach and networking, the ACSS decided to establish focal points in different countries. The structure of the focal point comprises:

- An agreement with a local NGO for administrative and financial support;
- A consultancy agreement with a senior researcher to oversee functions of the focal point on a part time basis;
- A small advisory committee of 4-5 prominent researchers serving on a voluntary basis.

The basic role of the focal point is to disseminate funding opportunities and assist potential applicants in applying to them; receiving financial reports and receipts from grantees and disbursing payments (when and if required especially where there are banking restrictions in place) to local ACSS grantees; the planning of training and networking events; providing feedback to ACSS secretariat and Board of Trustees on local/national thematic and programmatic priorities. At the moment, the ACSS has two focal points in Palestine and Algeria.

Palestine Focal Point

Work continues in Palestine in line with the consultant's annual plan that was approved by the BoT despite the challenges faced in Palestine including closures, sieges and arrests. In addition to the basic administrative functions mentioned in the table above, in 2019 the Palestine focal point organized a round table, comprising four papers, at the ACSS biennial conference entitled "Producing knowledge under occupation: the colony and border". The number of papers was originally larger but several of the presenters were not able to obtain a visa for Lebanon and were therefore unable to attend. In addition, the focal point organized a training program for developing writing skills which spanned over five sessions between May and June 2019. Fourteen trainees – mostly MA graduates coming from different social science disciplines - participated in the workshop. In addition, on May 25, the focal point organized a seminar on 'higher education in Palestine" to present and discuss the results of the study on 'higher education and research in Palestine" undertaken by ARIJ with support from Sida (see below in the section on ASSM). Furthermore, the focal point undertook research and wrote up a report on social sciences and humanities as perceived by school students and principals of Palestinian schools. Findings of the report will come out in a special publication shortly. Finally, the focal point developed a draft of a project on "the social engineering of the colony" – a writing exercise targeting junior researchers. Seventy young researchers were invited to participate in the project.

Algeria Focal Point

(a) Although the Algeria Focal Point was established in 2017, work progress has been slow as a result of the uprising in Algeria and some bureaucratic issues, related to obtaining approvals

from the Ministry of Higher Education and Directors of Universities and major research centers. However, in June 2019 the ACSS and the Focal Point organized three dissemination events of the Arab Social Science Report entitled "Social Sciences in the Arab Region: An Approach to Arabic Language Outputs (2000-2016)" at two reputable social science institutions in Algeria: The Research Center in Applied Economics for Development (CREAD), Algiers and the Center for Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology (CRASC) in Oran. More details on these events under "The Arab Social Science Report" below. As mentioned above, the Focal Point also organized a well-attended roundtable at the Fourth Conference on the development and status of social sciences in Algeria. The presence of the Algeria Focal Point committee was an opportunity for discussions between them and the secretariat to further clarify the role of the Focal Point and discuss potential activities. Also, as mentioned above and detailed under "ASSM" below, the Focal Point in Algeria helped organize a visit for two ACSS staff members to Algeria to present the work and activities of the ASSM.

Membership

Applications for individual membership have been steadily increasing and as outlined in the strategy, the ACSS has been encouraging institutional membership. In 2019 ACSS received 105 membership applications for various categories of which 73 were accepted. By December 2019 the ACSS members represented the following categories: 67 active (voting) members; 437 associate (non-voting) members, 82 students (non-voting members) and 2 institutional members. During their January 2019 meeting, the BoT ratified the Code of Ethics and Conduct that pertains particularly to members but generally to all participants in ACSS structures and activities. A membership strategy is currently under review by the Membership Committee in preparation for the upcoming 2021-2025 strategic plan.

Funding

The ACSS has been able to secure more funding in 2019 for current and future projects. New grant funds were received from:

- Carnegie Corporation NY: US$ 407,000 for "Social science education at Iraqi universities" in Iraq
- IDRC for "Status and research priorities on gender studies in MENA" for CAD70,000

- IDRC for "Research ethics discourses, practices and leadership in the Arab region: Addressing intersectionality and fragility" for CAD 400,000
- OSF for "Towards a new generation of social scientists in the Arab region (2030): An ACSS research, training and mentorship program" for US$500,000
- OSF for "The advancement of gender research in the MENA region" for US$230,000
- Andrew Mellon Foundation for "Strengthening the arts and humanities in the MENA region" for US$1,000,000
- A subaward grant from AUB for "The Arab oral history archive: Gender, alternative histories, and the production of knowledge" for US$330,550.

Ford BUILD Grant for institutional strengthening

The ACSS had received a generous BUILD grant from the Ford Foundation (from June 1st, 2017 to May 31st 2022) mainly for the purpose of institutional building and strengthening but some of the grant funds could also be used for programmatic innovations. The ACSS divided activities under the BUILD grants into two broad sets. The first is developing systems and practices, and the second sustaining and expanding programs.

Under developing systems and practices, the ACSS listed a number of planned activities such as introducing annual staff and BoT retreats in order to ensure solid understanding of the mission of the ACSS and to reinforce codes of conducts and professional development, as well as to socialize new board members about the values and principles guiding the work of the ACSS; training staff on equity and inclusion; initiating annual reports that include comprehensive information about the ACSS activities as well as analysis of data on grantees and programs; establishing an 'ACSS Friends' of donor and partner organizations; creating and populating data bases; reviewing e-outlets for publication and dissemination; succession planning and the creation of a second tier of leadership.

Under sustaining and expanding programs, the ACSS included the review of core and signature activities; establishing new programs through partnerships with institutions in the region; developing

new programs for individual and institutional support; concluding MOUs with policy research partners and organizing regular policy dialogues and workshops with them and issuing policy briefs.

In the second and third years of BUILD implementation progress was made on several fronts in the above two broad areas of work.

Under systems and practices:

- An HR consultant was retained in late January 2019 and reviewed the staff structure, the recruitment process and organizational needs and provided recommendations by February 2019 (Appendix 8- HR Consultant Report) which the ACSS will introduce into the Employee Handbook and its HR policies and procedures as well as its organizational structure.
- The ACSS started the practice of drafting comprehensive annual reports that are shared with donors. The responsibility of drafting the report is now with the associate director and we have started to post the reports online starting with the 2018 annual report.
- The ACSS had started to organize annual staff retreats in 2016. A retreat was scheduled to take place in the fall of 2019 but was cancelled due to the unstable political situation in Lebanon. It will be rescheduled for 2020.
- On the training of members of the BoT on roles, decision making, documentation, GA/BoT/secretariat relations, the ACSS developed guidelines in accordance with the by-laws and charter as well as the anti -corruption policy which was ratified by the BoT during their January 2019 meeting. A BoT annual retreat also took place in September 2019.
- A communications manager was recruited in 2019 but left the job during the probation period and work is now underway to recruit a replacement who would review print and e-outlets for publication and dissemination. A new BoT sub-committee for publications that was founded and met in January 2020 is now discussing a strategy for the ACSS print and e-publications.
- A custom-built database was tested during 2018 but then ran into technical difficulties. An IT officer was hired in March 2019 and his main task is to review and replace the systems that are currently in place based on needs and experiences thus far. This is expected to be a major infrastructural project in year 3 of BUILD
- Successful recruitment of the AD as of April 2019 has been a significant step towards the creation of a second tier of leadership at the ACSS. In addition, in 2019 based on a motion by

the BoT, the active members of the ACSS voted on changing the by-laws that restricted the number of tenure terms of the DG to make it four years renewable instead of four years renewable once

- A donors' forum was held the day before the 4th Biennial ACSS Conference attended by 19 representatives of donor and regranting organizations in addition to 7 ACSS Board members. A taskforce was created to turn this into an annual forum.
- For training staff on principles of equity and inclusion, a needs assessment plan will be drawn up prior to the training which would take place in year 3 of the BUILD grant.

<u>On the programmatic side, 2019 witnessed the following:</u>

- The consolidation of the Fellowships and Grants unit under the leadership of the new Associate Director and including a Grants Coordinator (who has been in this position for three years) and a newly hired Program Assistant. This team is now reviewing all grants and fellowships processes and activities and is also taking charge of the Research Forum.
- We have also started new partnerships with academic institutions. Generous funding from the OSF has enabled the ACSS to initiate a new program for the training of a new generation of social scientists. Partnerships with the universities and academic institutions hosting the students are one of the main pillars of the program.
- We launched a call for proposals with the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) for the Research on the Arts program as well as launching a new program on Health and Livelihoods in the Arab region. Both these programs accept applications from institutions and collectives in addition to individuals and teams. Both programs have now successfully funded institutions.
- We signed agreements and MOUs and LoAs with several partners' organizations such as AFAC, FMSH. We are also in the process of signing MoUs with the Economic Research Forum (ERF) and several universities in the Arab region within the New Generation Project.
- The ACSS continues to engage policy makers and higher education specialists with the findings of the Arab Social Science Monitor. We also established the Bassem Chit Fellowship program with Lebanon Support – a Lebanese NGO – to encourage young researchers and fellows to

write on activism and social movements. The ACSS will continue to pursue opportunities of collaboration with civil society organizations in the Arab region.

B. Convening

Funding for these activities are drawn from the Sida grant, with grantees' participation expenses covered by their respective programs, including Sida, IDRC and Carnegie Corporation

The ACSS organizes a biennial Conference and a biennial Research Forum on alternate years in addition to other public events. Below is a description of the major convening events that took place in 2019.

Biennial Conference, April 12-14, 2019, Beirut

The Arab Council for the Social Sciences held its Fourth Conference titled "Power, Borders and Ecologies in Arab Societies: Practices and Imaginaries" on April 12-14, 2019 in Beirut, Lebanon. In addition to being a forum for discussions, the ACSS Conference is always an opportunity for researchers from different parts of the world to meet and learn more about each other's work.

The Conference's theme reflected "the continued desire of the ACSS to promote new approaches and paradigms emerging across the disciplines of the social sciences and humanities and to better understand the constraints and potentials that shape the Arab region," said ACSS Director General, Seteney Shami, in her opening speech.

The Conference sought to examine new emergent ecologies (political, economic, urban, geographical, social and cultural) both in terms of the practices of multiple actors on the ground as well as through the imaginaries that represent, legitimize and contest them. It also aimed to better understand social science and humanities knowledge production itself.

Dr. Jala Makhzoumi, a distinguished landscape architect and expert in environmental planning, launched the 3 day event with a thought-provoking keynote titled "Strengthening Spatial and Cultural Continuities: An Ecological Landscape Framework." In her keynote, Dr. Makhzoumi shared her extensive experience in several countries of the Arab region, as well as globally, in how the concepts of "landscape" and "ecology" enable us to better understand the relationships between

human, cultural, economic and natural resources.

The Conference featured 38 panels, including 10 panels for ACSS grantees, 2 panels for the ACSS Working Group on Critical Security Studies, 3 "meet the author" sessions featuring new publications, and 6 roundtables presenting new ACSS projects and concerns. Over 300 participants from all corners of the world either presented their work or attended the 3-day event.
The Conference closing session was a tribute to the late political scientist and historian Hanna Batatu, which also served as the final event in the Annual Hanna Batatu Lecture Series.

The welcome speech was given by ACSS Director General, Seteney Shami, followed by talks by Dr. Salim Tamari (via video), Dr. Dina Rizk Khoury, Dr. Thabet Abdallah and 2 testimonials by Dr. Haider Saeed and Dr. Bassam Haddad. A video tribute, created by the ACSS about Batatu was shown. For access to the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eiRe6jwQj8 . The event concluded with a distribution of the Hanna Batatu closing series book.

Side activities included a book exhibition, a comics exhibition on displacement and seeking refuge in collaboration with the Mu'taz and Rada Sawwaf Arabic Comics Initiative at the American University of Beirut (AUB), and screenings of short films from the region in collaboration with Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC).

The ACSS Annual Lecture Series

In 2015 the ACSS inaugurated its Annual Lecture event. Each series of four lectures is named after a prominent Arab social scientist. The Annual Lecture celebrates prominent social scientists from the Arab region and encourages research along the paradigms and perspectives that they developed. The first series was named after the Palestinian political scientist and historian, Dr. Hanna Batatu. The second series celebrates the Moroccan sociologist and activist, Fatema Mernissi.

In November 2019, the ACSS launched a new lecture series named after the late Moroccan writer and sociologist Fatema Mernissi, best known for her writings on women, feminism and Islamic thought. The inaugural lecture of the Fatema Mernissi series took place on 28 November 2019 in Beirut, Lebanon, coinciding with the anniversary of the passing of the stellar feminist sociologist from

Morocco. The lecture was attended by scholars and journalists from the Arab region as well as fans of the late sociologist. The event received wide regional coverage (Appendix 9- Media Coverage).

The welcome speech was given by Dr. Seteney Shami, director general of ACSS who stated: "These lectures aim to provide continuity to Mernissi's legacy, thought and approach and build upon her work. ACSS will organize a lecture to honor Mernissi in a different Arab country every year for four years, thus expanding the geographical reach of her ideas in order to reduce distances between researchers, and open new spaces of dialogue about women, heritage, and rights".

Mr. Driss Ksikes, founder and coordinator of the Fatema Mernissi Chair at the Mohammed V University and Institut des Hautes Etudes de Management (HEM) in Rabat, presented the opening remarks and painted a lively picture of Mernissi's unique personality and approach and elaborated on the functions and aims of the Chair named in her honor.

The main lecture was presented by Dr. Asmae Benadada, professor of sociology at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah, Fez. In her lecture, titled 'Fatema Mernissi's Work: Historical Approach and Field Research' she discussed the main features of Mernissi's work and approach, highlighting the audacity and critical thinking that characterized this pioneer feminist and sociologist, who challenged the secrecy and silence surrounding taboo issues in Arab-Islamic culture and helped deconstruct patriarchy in Arab-Islamic culture.

In her intervention Deema Kaedbey, coordinator of the ACSS Critiques of Power working group explained that: the "working group at ACSS is reading Fatima Mernissi, looking at how her unique interdisciplinary approach reinterpreted historical narratives and current practices through a focus on sexuality and marriage". Kaedbey also emphasized that Mernissi's approach is a reminder of the importance of feminist re-readings of archives. Please see the video of the first lecture at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7f0YF_xAkjE. A short movie produced by the ACSS was showcased during the first lecture briefly narrating Mernissi's life and can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQ19dq4TQHA. A booklet issued by the ACSS that includes abstracts of the two lectures and the biography of Mernissi was also distributed at the event and can be accessed at: https://bit.ly/2v4dy6J.

Donors' Forum

Since 2015 the ACSS has been convening various donors and partners in meetings to discuss regional needs, patterns and priorities in research. In 2019, a major step was taken in this direction, with ACSS facilitating a meeting on April 11, 2019, convened by a number of donors (Appendix 10 - letter of invitation and list of participants). The meeting stressed the importance of discovering and developing synergies between international donors working together to support and improve conditions of knowledge production, social research, development and well-being in the Arab Region/MENA.

The meeting included 19 representatives of donor and regranting institutions and 7 ACSS BoT members. Participants discussed the challenges facing this world region as well as the current fragmentation of philanthropic efforts which requires a concerted effort to increase collaboration and communication between like-minded institutions based within and outside the region. The participants agreed to create an informal forum and network of philanthropic organizations that can meet annually to assess regional needs, discuss thematic and programmatic priorities and find synergies between the different organizations to optimize our efforts and resources. The ACSS was asked to continue facilitating this forum with annual meetings.

Other convening

ACSS panel at BRISMES Annual Conference 2019: Interdisciplinarity in Middle East Studies" June 24-26 2019, UK

With support from the ACSS, Ruba Salih, former member of the ACSS BoT and lecturer at SOAS organized a panel at the British Society of Middle East Studies (BRISMES) annual conference that was held in Leeds, UK on June 24-26, 2019. The panel addressed freedom of expression and academic freedom in the Arab region. In addition to Salih, panelists included Khaled Fahmy and Maha Abdelrahman from Cambridge University and Rafeef Ziadeh from School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Ruba's comments focused on her own experience with freedom of speech as a female scholar originally from Palestine. She argued that under the guise of freedom of speech, Western scholarship – in this case British – has paved the way for racialized and gendered forms of political control and censorship targeting particularly Middle Eastern academics or scholars writing on the Middle East. She raised for discussion the question of what spaces are left for maintaining ethical stances towards the communities at risk that scholars work with in contemporary academia.

On the other hand, Fahmy was concerned with the isolation of Middle East studies as a discipline from the people that it studies and the fact that Middle East studies has feeble connections with fellow academics and non-academic audience in the region. He shared his thoughts on the structural reasons within Western academia that might have led to this situation.

Ziadeh's paper focused on the growing censorship faced by scholars of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), including forms of 'self-censorship' used to gain access to specific locations or individuals. It more broadly asked if there were modes of collaboration between regionally-based scholars and those residing outside the region that would benefit critical knowledge production, while at the same time working towards collectively challenging the increasing suppression of academic freedom.
At the end, Maha Abdulrahman pulled together the major themes that emerged for further reflection during her discussion and in the Q/A session, panelists addressed the challenges faced by researchers (e.g. ACSS grantees) as they conduct research in the region.

The panel was well attended and the conference itself witnessed a historical moment when a motion in support of Boycott, Divest and Sanction (BDS) was proposed and won with an overwhelming majority.

C. *Gender Studies: New Directions*

Workshop on Status of Gender Studies in the Middle East and North Africa, October 6-7, 2019, Amman

Gender studies are integral to the social sciences and an important priority for the ACSS. While we already encourage all applicants to our programs and activities to pay special attention to gender considerations in their proposals and papers, we have also been exploring new gender-specific programs that we might launch in the near future. With that in mind, the ACSS welcomed the invitation extended to the ACSS by both the OSF regional office in Amman and IDRC, Ottawa, to organize a workshop on the "Status of Gender Studies in the Middle East and North Africa" in order to take stock of recent developments in gender studies in the MENA region, as well as discern new directions and research priorities. During the two-day workshop held on October 6-7 in Amman, Jordan, 43 academics and activists from MENA residing in Iran, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Canada, USA, Egypt, Palestine and Sudan met to discuss gender studies and how they evolved. The discussion was timely given that the region has witnessed increased mobilization and grassroots action

around gender and women's rights in the last few decades, which appeared forcefully in the 2019 uprisings, especially in Sudan, Iraq and Lebanon (Appendix 11 Agenda and list of participants).

On the first day, moderated panels focused on broad themes and topics including the historical evolution of gender studies in academic universities and NGOs, as well as the experience of different institutions as they introduced gender studies in their curricula. On the second day, the focus was on emerging themes and new directions. Presentations by participants covered the effect of rising populism on gender studies, and new social movements; gender and security studies, women's participation in the labor force; gender-centered planning and urban activism; women's health and sexuality; gender in the context of forced migration and the displacement of refugees as well as gender training activities in universities and NGOs. In the final session, regional donors had the opportunity to present their priorities in the area of gender. An open discussion followed on the way forward and the future of gender studies in MENA.

The event succeeded in initiating a much-needed dialogue among participants from different countries bringing out similarities and differences between contexts and across times. It enabled a lively exchange of experience and debate between academics and members of civil society as well as opportunities for networking between participants.

In 2020 the ACSS will invite some of the participants in the workshop to develop more elaborate and full-fledged papers on specific themes to be determined in discussion with donors. The ACSS will also commission other papers on issues that were not adequately covered during the workshop, including for example, a paper on women, security and conflict.

New Project: Gender Oral History Archive

As part of its increasing engagement in Gender Research, the ACSS and American University of Beirut held a series of meetings and developed a proposal entitled "The Arab Oral History Archive: Gender, Alternative Histories, and the Production of Knowledge" or "Gender Archive" for short. AUB successfully presented this proposal to the Mellon Foundation and obtained a 3-year great starting January 2019. A subcontract was made to the ACSS by AUB to carry out the activities agreed upon in the division of labor between the two institutions.

Overall the project aims to create new collections of oral histories in order to support and develop situated feminist studies and a feminist multidisciplinary critique of knowledge production practices and research methodologies in, from and about the region. In addition to a series of training and consultation workshops, a seminar series and a conference, data collection would focus on two areas: *The Arab Women from Generation X: Women of the 70s* and *Gendering an Archive of Resistance: Dar el-fata al-Arabi Publishing House*. The role of ACSS focuses on the first of these two areas. Central to these conversations was Dr. Hoda Elsadda, a prominent Egyptian Professor of Literature and Cultural Studies, who formulated the research project and was hired as a consultant by ACSS to lead the work. Activities undertaken included a workshop organized by the ACSS on oral history methodologies from a gender-sensitive perspective and took place in 17-19 June 2019. The aim of the workshop was twofold: to train young Arab researchers in oral history methodologies from a gender lens; to create a network of researchers using gender approaches to documentation and archiving projects. The call for the workshop was announced in first week of May and the deadline was 27th May.

The interest in the workshop was striking. We received over 250 applications. After a first review by the lead researcher they were cut to 70. A selection committee was formed and included Reem Saad, Professor of Anthropology at AUC, Hanan Sabea, Professor of Anthropology at AUC and Hoda Elsadda, lead researcher of the Gender Archive and Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Cairo University. The committee agreed on the following selection criteria: an MA in the humanities and or social sciences; work experience or training in a gender related field; work experience or research in documentation and/or archiving; researchers residing in Arab countries and fluent in Arabic. The committee agreed on a list of 20 applicants, 15 plus 5 on a waiting list. The workshop was attended by 14 participants: 5 from Lebanon (four Lebanese and one Palestinian residing in Lebanon); 4 from Egypt; 2 from Syria; one from Iraq; one from Jordan; one from Tunisia. Applicants residing in Palestine were not able to attend due to visa issues and a male applicant from Tunisia was not allowed to travel last minute again due to a visa issue.

The workshop covered the following topics:

1- An introduction to oral history: issues and key concepts.
2- An introduction to feminist research: key concepts.
3- Gender Archives
4- Ethics and approaches to qualitative research

5- Qualitative data management
6- Oral history contexts: a practical session
7- Presentations by participants
8- Interpreting oral narratives
9- Sharing practical experiences in documentation and archiving
10- Presentation of the Gender Archive project.
11- Concluding remarks.

The evaluations of the workshop were very positive. Participants commended the trainers who led the sessions, found the reading materials very useful, were enthusiastic about the sessions and the discussions, learnt new things. Some participants were very pleased that the reading materials were in Arabic and that the entire workshop was conducted in Arabic. The main comments/suggestions put forward by participants were: another follow up workshop; a longer workshop to have more time to read and discuss; more practical sessions. There is definitely a demand on this type of workshop and ACSS will take this into consideration.

Also, in 2019, the research team for "The Women of the 70s generation" project was formed. The core research team consists of Hoda Elsadda and six researchers located in the countries included in the study. In addition, scholars of oral history will be invited to participate in workshops and research groups to discuss and contribute to the conceptualization of the Gender Archive. The Women of the 70s project aims to collect, record, preserve, organize and provide access to around 120 interviews (approx. 20 interviews from each country) with women who belong to the generation of the 70s from the Arab world, with a focus on the following countries: Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Jordan.

Within this project activity, the following has been achieved:

1- A team of 6 researchers from 6 Arab countries have been selected and invited to participate.
2- A preliminary reading list of key background material essential for the understanding of the historical contexts of the generation of the 70s has been prepared.
3- A first planning/coordination meeting of the team was held in 9-10 October 2019 in Beirut. The team discussed and agreed on: common values and practices in gender sensitive interviews; background reading and preparations before the interview; criteria for the selection

of interviewees; decision on a preliminary list of interviewees; interview questions/guidelines; work plan and time frame; metadata; responsibilities and expectations.

4- A final list of names of interviewees for four countries (Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Palestine) has been shared and finalized.
5- The actual research was slotted to begin in 2020. Challenges arose from the recent uprisings and upheavals in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria and plans and methodologies are being adjusted as needed.

D. Grants and Fellowships Programs

Funding for the ACSS grants and fellowships program are from Sida (RGP and NPF); IDRC and Carnegie (ECFP); Mellon Foundation (RAP), and Ford Foundation (SGP and BCF)

2019 was another successful and productive year for the grants and fellowships programs. We continued to offer grants and fellowships on a regular basis as planned (with the exception of the Bassem Chit fellowship - see below) and our program offerings increased both in number and scope. In 2019 we had seven active programs and began discussions with CODSRIA in Dakar to launch an 8th joint research program focusing on promoting collaborative research on the Sahel region. In terms of structure, as mentioned earlier, Moushira Elgeziri joined the ACSS in April as associate director with major responsibility for the Fellowships and Grants program which now operates as a full-fledged unit within the ACSS with three staff members comprising Rebecca Daher, program assistant, Farah Al Souri program coordinator in addition to Moushira Elgeziri, associate director at the helm of the unit.

In 2019 our programs provided a variety of capacity building, networking and research opportunities: research funds for fieldwork on environmentalism, impoverishment and social movements as well as research on the arts; open agenda support for postdoctoral fellows to focus on publishing and data collection; writing and mentorship fellowships for junior academic/activists on the topic of gendered resistance, and seed funding for pilot studies, workshops, travel grants, internships and dissemination activities on youth and spatial inequalities.

Following is a review of the progress made in the core grants offered by the Grants and Fellowships Unit in 2019:

Research Grants Program (RGP)

RGP is based on open call for proposals for research under a broad theme selected usually in consultation with the Board of Trustees. It provides funding and support for up to 18 months and targets regional and diaspora researchers, senior and junior researchers post the PhD.
RGP program is now in its 7th cycle. Themes are determined for three cycles in consultation with the BoT after which they are changed. The theme for the first three cycles was "inequality, mobility and development"; the following three cycles carried the title "environmentalism, impoverishment and social justice movements: Interdisciplinary perspectives" and the third three cycles, which were launched in 2019 now address the theme of "health and livelihoods in the Arab region: wellbeing and vulnerability in conflict" (see below).

RGP Cycle 6:

The first two cycles (5 and 6) under the title of Environmentalism, Impoverishment and Social Justice Movements: Interdisciplinary Perspectives" sought to fund research that examines the relationships between changing environmental conditions and processes of impoverishment in different contexts. A particular focus of interest was the study of political responses to such conditions and the emergence of socio-ecological movements in the Arab Region. Research priorities included such regional challenges as water scarcity, the impact of population displacement, de-development due to conflict and war, ecojustice policies, protection of cultural heritage and the role of expressive culture and art initiatives.

In 2019 the ACSS organized the last cycle (cycle 6) on the theme of "Environmentalism". On January 25-26 a five-member committee selected 8 projects out of 73 applications. The grantees were invited to a two-day workshop on April 10-11, 2019 (Appendix 12 - workshop agenda) where they presented their projects to the selection committee members and peers from the same cycle. The ACSS organized a special session on Research Ethics as part of the workshop and grantees also benefited from an hour-long one-on-one session with an assigned member of the selection committee where they were able to discuss the comments and recommendations on their projects. Contracts were signed directly after the workshop enabling the grantees to start with their research projects. The 8 grantees also participated in the ACSS Fourth Conference that was held between April 12-14, 2019 in Beirut,

Lebanon. Grantees from cycle 6 will attend and present at the ACSS Fourth Research Forum that is scheduled to take place on April 1-4, 2020 in Tunis, Tunisia.

RGP Cycle 7:

In July 2019 the ACSS started preparations for cycle 7 under the new theme of "Health and Livelihoods in the Arab Region: Wellbeing, Vulnerability and Conflict". In 2018 the ACSS had commissioned a consultant and organized a consultation meeting to map the research scene and understand the landscape of main actors in this area. This was followed by a roundtable on the topic at the 2019 ACSS Fourth conference to announce the program and collect more reactions on it. Finally, we designed a call for proposals that went out in July 2019. In this section we will go over and discuss the main milestones in organizing the new theme on "Health and Livelihoods in the Arab Region: Wellbeing, Vulnerability and Conflict".

Consultation Meeting February 7-8, 2019:

The first step was to hire a consultant in Fall 2018 to help us research the literature and map the main actors working in this field in the region. Dr. Lamia Moghnieh (consultant) produced a concept document (Appendix 13 Concept Note) and helped us organize a consultation meeting on February 7-8, 2019. The goal of the meeting as introduced by ACSS Director General, was to have an informal and open discussion about the topic and the contents of the concept note. The meeting was attended by several social scientists and public health specialists from Lebanon, Palestine, Morocco and Egypt.

The consultation was instrumental in defining main concepts and operationalizing the program. Participants spent a good part of the meeting precising concepts such as health and livelihood, and explaining the difference between, for example, fragility, vulnerability and precarity, as well as problematizing key notions such as "stable" and "unstable" societies. They also discussed how to address health from a social non-biomedical perspective, focusing on health politics and infrastructures; health as agency; the role of doctors and their relationship with patients and public perception of health and ill-health. A good part of the discussion focused on program outreach to social scientists and/or public health specialists who write on health from a social science perspective and using its methods while encouraging at the same time, interdisciplinary team formations. Participants also paid special attention to ethical considerations while doing research on vulnerable communities and in fragile contexts. Their focused discussion on the purpose of the program,

especially its scope and the audience targeted as well as the language the ACSS should use to communicate with different disciplines and the kind of multidisciplinary research teams best suited to participate in the program was critical in guiding the drafting of the call for proposals.

Roundtable at ACSS Conference – April 2019:

At the ACSS conference in April 2019, we organized a roundtable to introduce the topic to the regional audience and elicit their comments and feedback. Unfortunately, Lamia Moghnieh the consultant could not join the event, but Moushira Elgeziri, Qamar Mahmoud Senior Program Officer at IDRC (donor organization supporting the program) and Abla Amawi, head of the Jordanian National Population Council who participated in the consultation meeting presented the topic and its various dimensions.

The audience at the roundtable was small but the discussion was good and added to the ideas already discussed in the consultation meeting. The fact that the topic did not draw a large crowd was in itself an important lesson, showing that we needed to disseminate the call strategically to attract the kinds of researchers and research proposals we are seeking, which would be interdisciplinary but also well-grounded in the social sciences.

Call for Proposals:

On July 17th, the Fellowships and Grants team posted the call for proposals (Appendix 12 – Call for Proposals) on the ACSS website, as well as the ACSS Facebook page and twitter account. It was also sent to all the ACSS contacts on the mailing list which is constantly being updated to include new contacts. Questions related to the application process as well as inquiries on particular cases of eligibility were responded to by the Fellowships and Grants team in a timely manner.

In terms of content, the call was largely informed by the discussions that took place in the consultations meeting, the consultant's concept-note as well as the ACSS RGP rules that have been applied previously and now adjusted to fit the requisites of the Health and Livelihood program. An important innovation has been the invitation that the ACSS extended not only to individual researchers and research teams but also to institutions and collectives to apply to the research competition. The decision was based on the ACSS strategy to go beyond individuals and reach out to institutions and groups in order to encourage them to develop and pursue research agendas on specific

and timely topics and to also accommodate the increasing number of informal research groups who have been getting together systematically to conduct research on specific issues. In the call for proposals, we were also keen on emphasizing the centrality of the ethical considerations in doing research on health and in situations of conflict. This is not only important because of the need to protect respondents and researchers in those situations, but also because the ACSS is taking the lead in advancing research ethics as a central but overlooked component in our region's research in humanities and social sciences. In the Call for Proposals, not only did we ask applicants to specifically address how they would deal with ethical issues in research, but we have also suggested ethics and bioethics as areas of potential topics and research themselves.

Program Governance: Introducing an Advisory Committee

For the governance of the program, we introduced the concept of an Advisory Committee that would govern the entire program from start to end. This multidisciplinary group would ideally have broad topical interests so it can review applications and pass their notes and comments to the selection committee (three members to be chosen from among the advisory group for each cycle) for them to make final selection decisions. After selection, the advisory group would decide on how best to guide the program based on what they saw while reviewing the proposals in terms of gaps, strengths and weaknesses. Members of the group would recommend the organization of workshops, help with grantee publications and provide general mentorship. While we continue to locate regional experts on the subject of health who can become members of the Advisory Committee, we have already invited the following seven scholars:

- Soha Bayoumi, Allston Burr Resident Dean of Kirkland House and Assistant Dean of Harvard College
- Omar Dewachi, Associate Professor, Medical Anthropology, Rutgers University
- Suhad Daher-Nachef, Assistant Professor of Behavioral Sciences, College of Medicine of Qatar
- Jocelyn Dejong, Professor and Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs at the Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut
- Hania Sholkamy, Associate Professor, Anthropology, American University in Cairo
- Michelle Obeid, Lecturer in Social Anthropology, University of Manchester

- Livia Wick, Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Sociology, Anthropology and Media Studies Department at the American University of Beirut

Call for applications:

The call for cycle 7 of the RGP was announced on July 17 and closed on November 24, 2019. For this cycle, the ACSS received 71 applications (35 individuals, 27 team projects, 1 collective and 8 institutions) from 16 countries. The ACSS secretariat screened out 32 applications from the pool because they were either incomplete or did not address the theme of the call. The Selection Committee meeting is scheduled to take place on January 30-31, 2020.

Early Career Fellows Program (ECFP)

The Postdoctoral Fellowship Program was launched in 2015 to enable young researchers, up to three years out of the PhD, to pursue their research and publishing plans, become part of Arab research networks, plan a research career in the Arab region and expand their opportunities in finding tenure in academic institutions in the region. In order to respond to existing needs and talents in the region, the program is open by theme as well as to all disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Starting with cycle 5, the program was renamed the Early Career Fellows Program (ECFP) and the term of the fellowship was extended from 9 to 12 months.

Cycle 6 2019:

Cycle 6 was launched on March 1, 2019. Three members of the selection committee rotated off and were replaced by three new scholars while two members continued to serve on the committee. Thirty four applications were received from 12 countries. The selection committee met on July 26-27, 2020 in Cairo, Egypt and selected 6 fellows. One of the 6 selected fellows declined the fellowship after receiving another fellowship in the United Kingdom. Selected fellows represented different disciplinary backgrounds in social sciences and humanities including history, sociology, and literature. They covered topics ranging from revolutionary social movements, history of crafts and souvenir business, cultural history of the left, institutionalizing violence and an epistemological reading of Al Ghazali. Fellows selected in this cycle will have a chance to present their work in the upcoming ACSS Fourth Research Forum that will be held in Tunisia between April 1-4, 2020. (Appendix 14 - Call for Applications).

Small Grants Program (SGP)

The Small Grants Program (SGP) was initiated in November 2016. The two themes of the program are "Youth" and "Urban Spatial Inequalities" (based on the request of the Ford Foundation) and the main purpose of the program is to provide junior researchers in the region with access to flexible funding with a short turnover period. The program accepts three rounds of applications spread throughout the year. The SGP supports five types of activities: travel grants to conferences, organizing workshops, internships, dissemination events, and funding for pilot studies. The program is funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation and with supplementary funds from the SIDA and IDRC grants to the ACSS.

Thus far the program has elicited applications that addressed important topics, both separately and at the intersection of these two themes. Grantees that focused on youth centered heavily on themes of economic empowerment, citizenship, and educational outcomes, while grantees who focused on spatial inequalities were interested in the changing space in the Arab region, the expansion of the public space, and understanding the relationship between residents and their space. A number of applications explored the intersection of the two themes, critically thinking about how urban politics have excluded youth from access to opportunities, healthcare, quality education, and employment, youth leadership and empowerment, sexual harassment in universities, youth democratic political participation, public space utilization, experiences of youth voters, youth activism, and poverty in marginalized neighborhoods.

In 2019 the SGP program received 329 applications from 16 different countries and awarded 59 grants over the three rounds. The highest number of grants were given to pilot studies and travel grants categories. While we received a fair number of applications for internships, none of the applications met the eligibility criteria. For this program we require all activities (except travel grants) to be implemented in the Arab region. (See the list of grantees awarded in 2019). (See appendix 15 for the full details of the program).

With the end of 2019, after having implemented the program for 3 years, funding from Ford Foundation has neared its end. This is an opportune moment for the ACSS to pause and take stock of the program's thematic directions and components in light of 1) the change in strategy of the Ford

Foundation, the main donor behind the program which no longer priorities youth or spatial inequality and 2) our sense that the topics of urban inequality and youth have been saturated and we have not been receiving many novel or creative proposals. Discussions with Ford Foundation are underway about the future of the program.

ACSS-FMSH Short-term Postdoctoral Mobility Program in the Social Sciences and Humanities

This short-term fellowship program is organized in partnership with the Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme (FMSH) in Paris, and is managed by both the ACSS and FMSH. The fellowship is short-term (2-3 months) and targets individual researchers who are residents and nationals of the Arab region. The recipients of this fellowship should have received their PhD degree within the past 6 years, and plan to conduct research in France (including field research, library and archival work, as well as other types of data collection). In addition to a monthly stipend of 1,600 €, the FMSH helps applicants in finding a host institution in France for their intended period of stay.

The second call for the ACSS-FMSH applications was announced on September 18th 2018 and closed on December 7, 2018. For the second round the ACSS and FMSH received 17 applications from 5 different countries (Algeria, Comoros, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt). A selection committee comprised of two Arab and one French researchers, read and evaluated the proposals and met in person in Beirut on March 1, 2019. The selection committee meeting was chaired by both Seteney Shami (ACSS Director General) and Marta Craveri (Director of the International Programs at FMSH). The committee selected 6 fellows to work on their projects in France for a period of 3 months, in institutions such as Centre de Recherches Moyen-Orient Méditerranéen, IREMAM Institut de Recherches et d'Etudes sur les Mondes Arabes et Musulmans, Université de Lorraine, Université François Rabelais, and Laboratoire HISOMA-Histoire et Sources des Mondes Antiques. (Appendix 16 - call for applications and list of awarded fellows).

This program is funded mainly by the FMSH. The ACSS contributes some expenses for meetings as well as covering the travel costs of selected fellows. Exceptionally in 2019, the ACSS contributed to the fellowship monies by funding two months of fellowships to selected fellows after receiving high recommendation from the selection committee. This program has been offered for three consecutive

cycles from 2017 to 2019. The third cycle was announced in September 2019 and the selection committee meeting will take place in Beirut on February 21, 2020.

AFAC-ACSS Research on Arts (RAP)

In 2017, the ACSS and the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) agreed to partner on a collaborative research grants program for funding research on the arts. The program offers up to 18 months of funding to individuals, teams, collectives and institutions and encourages both academics and art practitioners to apply to the program.

The second call for RAP applications was announced on May 17 and closed on August 10, 2019. This program extends support to collectives and institutions in addition to individuals and teams. Forty-seven applications were received from 8 Arab countries, with women representing 40% of the applicants. The applicants comprised 60% individual researchers, 28% research teams, 6% collectives, and 6% institutions.

Following an evaluation session that the AFAC and ACSS teams undertook last year with the program selection committee of the first RAP cycle around the process and the potentials of making the program more inclusive in relation to the academic/professional background of applicants, the 2019 call amended eligibility requirements to include art practitioners with more than 10 years of experience, regardless of their academic qualifications. As a result, 34% of applicants were art practitioners in the second cycle. On the other hand, a Ph.D. degree became a requirement for applicants with academic backgrounds. This enhanced the quality and diversity of the proposals received for this cycle in comparison with the previous cycle.

The selection committee convened in a two-day meeting on October 14-15, 2019 to evaluate the research proposals and select the winning projects. The selection committee awarded 6 projects- 1 individual, 1 collective, 3 teams and 1 institution – from Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon and Sudan. At the end of the meeting, the committee issued a statement highlighting the main trends and gaps in the research on the art (Appendix 17 Statement by selection committee). Three of these scholarly projects cover music, in addition to one research project on the performing arts, one multidisciplinary project, and one project focused on cultural policy. (Appendix 17 call for applications, and list of grantees and their topics).

New Paradigms Factory cycle 3 on "Gendered Resistance"

One of the earliest programs established at ACSS, this fellowship aims at supporting writings by Arab junior scholars and activists to turn their research into publications for a larger audience. This takes place through a 9-month mentorship program at the end of which a publication including essays of grantees is published. The program targets holders of the MA degree in the Arab region.

On July 10, 2018, ACSS launched the third cycle of the New Paradigms Factory (NPF) writing fellowship, on the theme "Gendered Resistance." Eight fellows were selected from Egypt, Morocco, Palestine and Lebanon and the first workshop was held on November 5-8, 2018. The workshop included sessions on research ethics, research and law practices, activism and research, and a discussion of key theoretical concepts and frameworks relevant to the field of gender studies and to the theme of gendered resistance. Fellows also had a chance to present their projects and to benefit from individual consultations with their mentors.

The second workshop was held on January 31 - February 2, 2019 and included sessions on bibliography, presentation at the ACSS Fourth Conference, publications plans, in addition to one-on-one long meetings to revise and edit the fellows' essays. Following the meeting, the mentors met and decided on which papers to be included in the ACSS Special Issue on Gendered Resistance. The mentors selected 7 papers and mentors and fellows met again on March 31 to practice their presentations and rehearse for the two panels on Gendered Resistance that took place at the Conference. The ACSS launched a social media campaign (Appendix 18 - media campaign) to invite NGOs, scholars, and activists in the field of gender to attend the panels. The invitation was well received by the public and each panel was attended by around 40 persons.

In May 2019, mentors gathered to write the introduction to the special issue, whereby they laid out the foundations of the new paradigms, discussed challenges in existing literature and new questions to address topics under gendered resistance. The ACSS was keen form the start of the program to produce the special issue in Arabic, in order to promote knowledge production in Arabic on this highly important topic. Four out of 7 essays were translated from English to Arabic. In August 2019, the ACSS announced its new special issue on "Gendered Resistance" that collected 7 essays and case

studies from Lebanon, Palestine, Morocco and Egypt. More information about the publication under "Print Publications" below).

Given the program's success and donors' interest in the theme, the ACSS decided to continue with the same theme in the following cycle. On December 12, we announced cycle 4 of the program. Joining the team of mentors in the new cycle will be Dr. Hoda Elsadda (English and Comparative Literature, Cairo University), Dr. Lamia Moghnieh (Anthropology, EUME fellow), Dr. Islah Jad (Gender and Politics, Women's Studies Institute and Cultural Studies Department at Birzeit University), and Dr. Asmaa Benadada (Political Sociology, University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah).

Bassem Chit Fellowship for the Study of Activism

The Bassem Chit fellowship for the study of activism is a one-year post-doctoral fellowship based in Beirut, Lebanon, launched in memory of Bassem Chit. Before his untimely death, Bassem Chit was a founding member of Lebanon Support and was its Executive Director between 2008 and 2014. The fellowship is a joint initiative of Arab Council for the Social Sciences, Lebanon Support, the Orient-Institute Beirut, and Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Beirut Office. It aims to give early career scholars (0-3 years out of the PhD) in the social sciences the opportunity to conduct research on activism in the Arab world. The partners agreed that the fellowship be hosted at Lebanon Support offices and mentored by their executive director Marie Noelle Abi Yaghi who has a PhD in political science. The ACSS and RLS are sharing the expenses of the fellowship, however the program is managed and administered by the ACSS.

The first call for applications was announced on June 20, 2018 and 7 applications were received. The ECFP selection committee read and evaluated the proposals and recommended one application. The recommendation of the committee was communicated to RLS and LS who together made a decision to accept the fellow, Dr. Cynthia Azzam. (Appendix 19 - full details of the program).

The second call for applications was announced on March 29, 2019 and closed on May 27. Ten applications were received from 5 Arab countries. The ECFP selection committee did not recommend any application to be funded as none of the applications addressed the theme of "activism" properly. The absence of good applications in addition to some disagreements on the terms of the partnership

(e.g. LS asked ACSS and RL to support costs of mentorship), resulted in the termination of the MoU and eventually the program.

Reimagining the Sahel: a new joint research program with CODESRIA

South-south, cross-regional and global collaborations have always been integral to the mission and envisioned identity of the ACSS. In addition to encouraging networks of researchers within and across the Arab region, the ACSS has sought since its inception to engage researchers in dialogues, research projects and social science convenings on the global level as well as with other regions.

In 2019 the ACSS took the first major step towards a robust cross regional collaboration by designing a joint research program with CODESRIA entitled "Re-Imagining the Sahel through the Humanities: Researching Evolving Spaces and Actors". The focus on the Sahel is crucial because it is a region that has been suffering colonial and statist legacies as well as - in recent times - increasing securitization and militarization eclipsing our ability to understand the deeper histories of the Sahel in their ruptures and continuities, livelihoods of people, their resilience and agency. In this joint project, the two organizations seek to encourage researchers to deploy a diversity of tools – in the disciplines of humanities and the social sciences – to imagine and reinstate the agency of the communities of the Sahel region and how they engage with their complex social and political milieu (Appendix 20 Joint research proposal and timeline).

The process of drafting the joint research proposal for submission to Sida for funding, was preceded by intensive discussions with CODESRIA leadership and staff over two visits to Beirut in July and December 2019. During the first visit, Executive director of CODESRIA Godwin Murunga accompanied by two of his colleagues, Ibrahim Oanda and Bouchra Sidi Hidi, spent two days in Beirut to flesh out the project ideas and agree on the general principles and procedures. Over the two days, members of the two teams educated each other about their own programmatic practices and reached a general understanding on the activities of the program as well as its administration and governance and drawing up, finally, an initial three-year budget. In the following visit by Dr. Murunga to Beirut in December 2019 we spent the time zooming in on the thematic parameters of the program, the timelines as well as suggested names for the program advisory and selection committees.

A two-day visit has now been scheduled for the ACSS team (the director and the fellowships and grants team) to visit Dakar in April 2020. The plan is to organize on the first day the first advisory committee meeting comprising scholars from different sub-regions and countries of Africa. We will devote the second day to detail the program and finalize the first call for proposals.

Towards a new generation of social scientists in the Arab region (2030): A new program (NewGen)

In 2019 the ACSS began preparations for a new and ambitious program entitled "Towards a new generation of social scientists in the Arab region (2030) (New Gen)). During the pilot phase which spans 30 months, the ACSS will offer a rich multi component program – including training, research and networking opportunities - for students at the BA, MA and Ph.D. levels - in select Arab universities. The aim of the program is to help create a "pipeline" of students starting with the BA and continuing on to the Ph.D. who would form a new cohort of social scientists committed to critical scholarship. It also seeks to engage Arab academic institutions and campuses to form a network of universities that support students nationally and regionally.

Consultation meeting, March 8, Beirut

To kick off the program the ACSS organized a consultation meeting on March 8, 2019 in order to brainstorm on the launch and operationalization of the project. The meeting was attended by a group of scholars from the Arab region representing public and private universities and other key institutions from Qatar, Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine and Jordan. The participants also represented a variety of disciplines (e.g. political science, anthropology, history). (Appendix 21- Agenda and List of Participants).

There was a general agreement among participants on the choice of the following countries/locations for the pilot implementation of the program: Lebanon (where ACSS is based; strong social science community; a model of private provision of education), Egypt (most populous Arab country; equal number of private and public universities), Palestine/Jordan (in Palestine there is a small but active social science community; model of higher education under occupation. In Jordan a well-resourced higher education sector; a location that facilitates the inclusion of Palestinians); Tunisia (active higher education scene before and after the Tunisian uprisings; active in the Bologna higher education process) and a Gulf country - Oman or Kuwait: Oman a middle-income country with a youthful social

science community; Kuwait longer history of social sciences and more established presence of various disciplines).

Work modality:

The consultation group's selection of universities showed a preference to avoid a one-size-fits-all arrangements for implementation in each country. Instead they decided to apply different work modalities in each setting depending on the needs of the country and its higher education landscape. In 2019 the ACSS recruited a consultant, Ms. May Wazzan (Appendix 22 – CV) to conduct several virtual meetings and visit 5 universities in Lebanon, Egypt and Tunisia. As a result of her explorations, she identified two main work modalities for project implementation: 1) implementation in one main campus (Tunisia); 2) implementation in one main campus which would involve other universities to participate in project activities (Egypt, Palestine and Lebanon). Memorandums of understanding were signed (or are in the process of being signed) with main and participating universities. Because of some delay in communications with University of Sultan Qaboos in Oman, we have decided to postpone Oman to a second round of new program cohorts when we could also add more Tunisian and Palestinian universities.

Program coordinators (who will be responsible for in country project activities) and focal points (in each of the participating campuses) have been identified to undertake the project activities and an orientation/onboarding meeting will be organized for them in late January 2020 to go over project activities and their role.

Fellows' eligibility criteria

In 2019 the ACSS put in place eligibility and selection criteria for the fellows (expected to total 150 in the first year). The call for application is expected to go out early 2020. (Appendix 23 – A detailed overview of the application and the selection criteria and methodology).

Expectations from fellows:

In addition to participating in all campus activities to be organized by coordinator, and demonstrating commitments to the program, below is a summary of the plan for each category of fellows:

- Undergraduate Fellows (will be recruited from all disciplines across campus hoping to strengthen their knowledge of the social sciences and to interest them in pursuing social science graduate studies):
    - Complete two online courses[1]
    - Participate in an exchange program between students of participating universities.

- Masters Fellows (will be recruited from designated disciplines in the social sciences and humanities as well as designated interdisciplinary fields e.g. development studies, gender studies, urban studies):
    - Complete the 10-week methodology online course
    - Complete one training workshop
    - Complete one 1-2-month research internship OR a second training workshop

- PhD Fellows (will be recruited from designated disciplines in the social sciences and humanities):
    - Complete two training workshops
    - Attend and successfully complete one Summer Academy2

NewGen: Some reflections and next steps:

The NewGen program has the potential to represent a qualitative leap and model for Arab higher education in terms of new pedagogies and interdisciplinary training. While we have fleshed out the main programmatic components and structures for the first phase, we will continue to tweak and

[1] When conceptualizing the online courses that ACSS would develop and offer to BA and MA students as part of the fellowship, we decided to pursue a flexible approach whereby fellows could select from a short menu of options based on interest and current knowledge level rather than a one size fits all approach. The menu includes courses on methodology (e.g quantitative, qualitative, data sharing and archiving) and one on a theme (gender, Arab cities, citizenship) and short training courses (e.g. research ethics, the future of work, overview of the SDGs

2 The ACSS Academy (see below) will be open to the "NewGen" fellows who are at the PhD level. They will join roughly 40-50 peers chosen from across the region through an open call for applications (Appendix 24- ACSS Academy). Briefly, the Academy will take place over 16 days (July 1-16, 2019) and will comprise 10 kinds of sessions: keynote speeches, specialized lectures, working sessions on particular themes, mentoring sessions (groups and one-on-one, and peer learning), training sessions on methods and skills, professionalization workshops on writing and publishing, mini-conference, fieldtrips, leisure and icebreaking sessions, and debriefing sessions.

refine the program based on the lessons we learn from each step of the way. In the coming years, we will focus on fundraising both to supplement the activities that are covered by the FPOS grant as well as to extend the program beyond the pilot phase. When collaborating with well-resourced campuses, we will be leveraging financial and in-kind support. However, most campuses in the Arab region are not able to cost-share and indeed would need more support than is currently available to fully benefit from participation in the program.

On the very short run - within a few months - we have decided to create a second round of university partnerships and recruit a second cohort of students by end of 2020. We had started discussions with the Universities of Tunis and Mannouba but yet to confirm a formal partnership with one or both of them. Also, as mentioned above, we are also yet to enter into formal communication and discussion with Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. In addition, we hope to expand the participating campuses in both Egypt and Palestine.

Moving Forward on the Grants and Fellowships Programs: Future Steps

In 2019 the ACSS consolidated some of its programs, launched new ones and made an important decision to discontinue one of its programs. Our collaborative endeavors were quite successful in 2019. Our joint program with FMSH has successfully placed young Ph.D. graduates in French academic institutions enabling them to collect data and finalize research projects. In 2020, after we complete three cycles of the ACSS/FMSH collaboration, we will jointly evaluate the program and decide whether it should be renewed. Our other collaborative program with AFAC has opened the horizons for intellectually stimulating discussions on a new area of work in our region, raising questions about what it means to be doing research on the arts in this part of the world: should we research art in itself or art as it relates to political, social and economic causes and issues. The third collaborative effort in 2019 which we are laying the ground work for is the research program on the Sahel with CODESRIA. This is a promising area of work which would inform and correct many misunderstandings about this important but complex region in addition to helping create new networks of researchers from across the African continent.

On the other hand, even though we have decided to discontinue the Bassem Chit fellowship program and the collaboration with LS, the partner institution, we still believe that it is important for the ACSS to pursue the theme of research on activism. The model itself was a successful one for strengthening

the links between research, activism and civil society. It is our plan to explore potential country or regional collaborations in this area in 2020.

The ACSS has broken into new exciting grounds by launching a program on Health and Livelihoods: Wellbeing and Vulnerability in Conflict Situations in the Arab Region. We are encouraging individual social scientists to write about health and interdisciplinary teams to form that would bring social scientists in conversations with public health specialists to address health from a broad perspective. We have also made a key decision to include institutions and collectives as potential applicants and are open to learning from these new experiments and explorations. The 2018 cycle of the NPF which resulted in a stellar publication – Gendered Resistance - has encouraged continued funding from our donors – OSF and IDRC – and we are organizing a new round on the same topic in 2020. While the SGP funding has come to an end, the ACSS is taking stock of the strengths and weaknesses of the program which has accumulated many research findings in the areas of spatial inequalities and youth but on the other hand, showed clear gaps in training on solid proposal writing.

Finally, moving forward, we are hopeful that the clarity of tasks that resulted from the recent division of labor between staff of the fellowships and grants unit and between them and other units, would allow us to dedicate our efforts towards broadening and deepening our interactions with the ACSS grantees and give visibility to their products and outputs.

E. Working Groups

Funding is provided by IDRC and the Carnegie Corporation and the Sida Supplementary grant for ***Critical Security Studies*** *(CSS) and* ***New Regionalisms****; and by the Mellon Foundation for* ***Critiques of Power*** *(CoP) and for* ***Ethnography as Knowledge*** *(EK).*

Working Groups aim at bringing scholars from across the Arab region, and globally, who are at different stages in their academic careers, to work collectively on a research theme or project. This collaborative work not only allows networking, mentorship and the sharing of academic knowledge, skills and experience, but it also encourages interdisciplinary research within the social sciences and the design of innovative and diverse outputs targeting different audiences within the region and beyond. Currently the ACSS has four ongoing working groups: Critical Security Studies (CSS), New Regionalisms, Ethnography as Knowledge and Critiques of Power (CoP).

Critical Security Studies Working Group (CSS)

Launched in 2016, this interdisciplinary network of scholars is pursuing research that challenges the dominant understanding of the Arab region as a threat to global security and is also providing training and professional mentorship to junior scholars based in the Arab region. The working group operates through holding regular meetings and workshops, publishing an online forum, and organizing regular summer institutes, all of which aim to encourage students and researchers from the region to conduct research on issues of (in)security.

Restructuring of the working group

With the establishment phase of the CSS coming to an end in December 2019, the working group has collectively achieved considerable progress. In the inception phase, the CSS working group laid out its structure and defined its main outputs and signature activities. The CSS Summer Institutes (3 held so far) and the mentoring efforts have been the most important components of the project.

The first phase included the following core members: Samer Abboud, Omar Dahi, Waleed Hazbun, Coralie Hindawi, Nicole Grove, Jamil Mouawad and Sami Hermez. They carried out the following tasks:

- o Organizing a number of planning meetings and monthly Skype meetings.
- o Co-authoring the manifesto that presented the philosophy behind the "Beirut School for Critical Security Studies" and successfully published it in the academic peer reviewed journal, *Critical Studies on Security*.
- o Designing and launching the Beirut Forum (website), which serves as the main platform for members of the working group and its network to funnel their research ideas and articles.
- o Organizing three summer institutes that included training and mentoring of doctoral students, early career scholars, and other researchers.
- o Setting up five thematic subgroups each of which is overseen by a core member of the working group
- o Giving research grants to members of the working group based on proposals (see grantees below).
- o Giving research grants to junior scholars in the region through a call for research proposals (selected by a committee of core members).

o Introducing the Beirut School in a number of public events and roundtables by presenting the manifesto, discussing the need for critical security studies in the Arab region and mapping out the work of the collective/school.

In the inception phase, 5 affiliate members carried out a variety of other tasks, including:

- Publicizing the work of the Collective in their networks.
- Recommending applicants for the summer institutes and small grants programs.
- Conducting research on topics related the WG themes
- Hosting events co-sponsored by the WG

In the second phase – the development phase - Bashir Saade and Zaynab El Bernoussi became core members alongside Jamil Mouawad, Nicole Grove, Sami Hermez, Omar Dahi and Samer Abboud. Waleed Hazbun and Coralie Hindawi, both ex- core members of the WG have decided to continue as affiliate members joining Noura Erakat, Guilia al-Dardiry and Karim Makdisi. Continuing core members will have the primary responsibility for sustained intellectual leadership and promotion of the project and are expected to be active contributors to signature activities, while affiliate members will continue to contribute to the project but with less programmatic and implementation responsibilities than core members.

List of Activities in 2019

- New-Med Conference: The Middle East: Thinking About and Beyond Security and Stability February 7-8, 2019 at the American University of Beirut

Coralie Hindawi, Jamil Mouawad and Waleed Hazbun participated in the conference which was organized by Istituto Affari Internazionali, an Italian research center, in collaboration with Dr. Karim Makdisi (AUB), an affiliate member of the working group. Their contributions focused on notions of production of (in)security at regional and local level

- International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Convention in Toronto, Canada, March 27-30, 2019

Samer Abboud, CSS working group co-coordinator and core member, organized a panel, based on a call for papers and workshop that were funded by ACSS. The panel was titled, "International Interventions and Local (In)Security: Critical Perspectives on State-Building in the Arab Region". On the panel were Drs. Karim Makdisi, Bahgat Korany and Waleed Hazbun, affiliate and core members of the working group and the panel was entitled "Understanding Insecurity in the Middle East and North Africa: Scholarship and Theory from/for the Global South".

Zaynab El Bernoussi participated as a chair of a panel entitled, "Innovating the Teaching and Study of Critical International Studies at the Periphery: Cases from North Africa and the Middle East", presenting on "Joint Venture Universities in the Arab World: Teaching Freedom and Living Authoritarianism", alongside panelists that included CSS working group co-coordinator and core member, Samer Abboud, in addition to taking part in a roundtable titled, "International Relations of the Middle East and North Africa: Disciplinary Potential, and the Way Forward".

- Genealogy of Security in the Arab Region: Workshops (April 2019 in Beirut and October 2019 in Ifrane-Morocco)

The first workshop was organized by Dr. Bashir Saade (University of Stirling) as part of his funded individual project supported by ACSS. It was held on April 9-10 in Beirut. The overall project assesses the possibility of presenting new concepts and theoretical approaches to study politics in the Arab region by tapping into more local understanding of terms such as security. The workshop gathered six researchers who are currently working on the topic. A second follow up workshop was held in Ifrane, Morocco at Al-Akhawayn University on October 19-20, 2019 and hosted 11 regional researchers who were selected as a result of a call for papers. The planned outputs of this workshop are an academic article per participant that would feed into a special journal issue or an edited book. Each researcher will also develop a think piece to be published on the CSS working group's website, The Beirut Forum.

- Beirut School Critical Security Studies Collective Consultation Meeting with local and regional researchers on April 11, 2019

The core group members of the CSS working group organized a consultation meeting on April 11, 2019 with regional and local researchers from within ACSS network and beyond. The aim of this workshop was to discuss strategies of enhancing the working group's regional presence and expanding

its network with regional scholars. The meeting ended with a concrete list of action items that were set and discussed by workshop participants.

- CSS Panels at the Fourth ACSS Conference (April 2019)
    1. Panel 1: Rethinking "Security Studies" in the Arab region: Security beyond formal institutions chaired by Dr. Jamil Mouawad
    2. Panel 2: Rethinking "Security Studies" in the Arab region: (In)Security and Everyday life chaired by Omar Dahi

These panels introduced the work of the Beirut Critical Security Studies Collective's network comprised of researchers who have previously participated in the collective's Second Summer Institute on Critical Security Studies in the Arab Region and five grantees who received small research grants and mentorship from members of the Collective in 2018. Presenters discussed individual original papers that reflect the kind of work that the Collective seeks to produce by exploring cases from Morocco, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and Yemen. In their papers, authors went beyond the notion of the state as the purveyor of security to consider the multiple and complicated ways in which security and insecurity are produced in the Arab region. The panelists explored concepts of "slow violence", insecure cities, the challenges faced by knowledge producers in security states, post-war and war-torn countries, performance of stateness by security checkpoints and economic coping strategies of protest movements

- Third Summer Institute in Broummana, Lebanon (June 2019)

The Summer Institute aims to bring together doctoral students, early career scholars, and other researchers for training and mentoring with a team of established scholars who provide sessions on a range of methodological, theoretical, and professional issues that will equip the participants with the theoretical tools and practical skills necessary for conducting critical research on security issues in the Arab region. The 2019 edition of the Summer Institute brought 20 junior researchers together with 7 faculty members who included Maya Mikdashi and Paul Amar both of whom gave sessions on sex and security. Recurring faculty members for the second time included Jamil Mouawad, Omar Dahi, Nicole Grove, Bashir Saade and Sami Hermez.

List of Grantees

- Noura Erakat, an affiliate member of the WG, received an individual research grant to conduct her research project titled, "Surveillance and Settler-Colonial Governance: Resisting Removal in Hizma". Dr. Erakat conducted her fieldwork in Palestine in August 2019 and aimed to write an article that examines how planning in Hizma, a Palestinian town, is emblematic of settler-colonial planning, what she tentatively called "planning for removal."
- Nicole Grove "Security, Leisure and Policing in the Gulf": Dr. Grove conducted archival work at Oxford University Middle East Centre Archive at St. Antony's College. The purpose of this archival work was to research the formation of the first police forces in the UAE as part of a larger study on the politics of policing in the Gulf. This study will be incorporated into a second book project (in progress) on how economies of leisure and entertainment are shaping the politics of security and surveillance in the Gulf states. The second project that Dr. Grove worked on revolves around the application of big data analytics around humanitarian initiatives with regard to the policing of refugee communities.
- Noha Fikry received a travel grant from within the CSS Research Grants Program to attend the American Anthropological Association's Annual Meeting in San Jose, California (November 2018). The Middle East Section (MES) of the AAA chose Noha Fikry as its annual Student Paper Award winner, for her MA thesis chapter titled "Spaces of Life: States of Death" exploring the intertwining forces of life and death as unfolding on Cairo's lively rooftop housing a variety of species. Noha Fikry was one of the participants of the 2019 Third Summer Institute on Critical Security Studies.
- Omar Sirri (University of Toronto), who was one of the five recipients of the CSS small research grants in 2018, is now an affiliate scholar at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University of Beirut.

The following outputs were published in 2019 on the CSS group's website, the Beirut Forum:

- Coralie Hindawi (American University of Beirut):
  Rethinking Critically the Responsibility to Protect on the Beirut Forum
  http://www.thebeirutforum.com/roundtables
- What is the Sharia" by Zaynab Bernoussi

http://www.thebeirutforum.com/what-is-the-sharia-book-review

- "كلن يعني كلن": بداية كسر هيمنة نظام الطائف؟" (All means all: the beginning of breaking the domination of the Ta'if accords) written by Jamil Mouawad
  http://www.thebeirutforum.com/articles

Successes and Noteworthy Achievements

In the Horizon Scan: Critical Security Studies for the Next 50 years for Security Dialogue's 50th anniversary, the Beirut Critical Security Studies Collective manifesto was cited three times and was pointed as the way forward for the field of security studies.

New Regionalisms Working Group

The New Regionalisms working group is coordinated by Dr. Adam Hanieh (Reader in Development Studies at SOAS-University of London) and addresses the continually emergent, inter-connected, inter-penetrated and overlapping nature of regions, with a focus on the Middle East and North Africa region. With this working group, the ACSS hopes to challenge conventional ways of thinking about the Middle East and North Africa as representing a state of exceptionalism and to explore the region as part and parcel of the global system.

Following the call for papers that was announced in March 2019, 14 papers in Arabic and English were selected from a pool of 41 applications. Selected papers were authored by researchers from India, Iran, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Algeria, Spain, Lebanon and Syria. Topics ranged from scarcity of food regimes, financial integration, regional security dynamics, new balance of power in the region with the rise of China, regionalizing religion, European union and democratic conditionality, and geo-economics of the petro-dollars.

The workshop was originally planned for December 2019, but due to the situation in Lebanon, it was postponed. On February 8 and 9, 2020 the researchers and Dr. Adam Hanieh will gather in Beirut at the ACSS headquarters to present and discuss their research. After the workshop, the researchers will work on their papers based on the feedback received with a deadline of May 2020 to submit final drafts of research papers. The intended outputs for this project are an Arabic language book and a special issue in a peer-reviewed English language journal. In addition, some papers may be considered for publication as ACSS working papers – a peer reviewed pre-publication outlet. The final publication

plan will depend on the quality of the final papers and the outcomes of the review processes by the journal, publication house and working paper series.

Ethnography as Knowledge Working Group

The Ethnography as Knowledge Working Group, which was launched in 2019, is engaged in a collaborative exploration of the critical knowledge that can be generated from attention to embodied, emotional and cognitive aspects of the ethnographic endeavor and from the methodological adaptations that the ethnography makes as a result. The group is interested in understanding how ethnography can counter dominant regimes of knowledge about the Arab countries and produce a more nuanced ethnographic understanding of the Arab region today. In a special journal issue entitled "Ethnography as Knowledge in the Arab Region" (*Contemporary Levant* vol. 2, no. 1), the collective proposed that particular modes of attention are vital for ethnographic research, including attention to fear, sound, memory, lies, movement, dreams, and the immersive quality of violence.

The objectives of this working group are:

a. Charting the potential for ethnographic research to inform knowledge about the region, including the production of academic and non-academic outputs, with theoretical as well as practical implications.
b. Engaging with researchers across the region to extend the collective and to develop networks of exchange. The group intends to discuss experiences and identify salient topics and professional domains where ethnography plays a role or can come to do so.
c. Collaborating between working group members, other scholars, scholarly networks, and institutions according to the thematic interests of the individual members, with a particular interest in South-to-South collaborations.
d. Excavating, from a genealogical perspective, potential "ancestors" of ethnographic knowledge in the region.

To address the following epistemic question: "what kinds of critical knowledge surface as a result of personal and intimate as well as collective methodological modalities and adjustments of the ethnographic endeavor?", the group is proposing the following initiatives and outputs:

a. Produce a podcast of interviews with scholars from across the region documenting their experiences, inspirations and reflections of ethnography as knowledge.

b. Organize internal workshops for working group members in order to work on a mandate for the group and to identify several working themes and positions.
c. Organize region-wide roundtables that gather working group members with researchers in various locations in the Arab region. The objective of the roundtables/meetings are to further discuss the kinds of critical knowledge emerging from ethnography.
d. Publish a series of co-authored concept papers in Arabic and English on the following potential themes:
    i. Positionality
    ii. Counter knowledge claims through ethnography
    iii. Genealogies of ethnographic theories and practice

List of activities held in 2019

- In September 2019, a team retreat was held in Amchit Lebanon to finalize the group's collectively authored reflection paper on positionality and reflexivity.
- In October 2019, a training was organized for members of the group on the structure and form of podcasts.

Critiques of Power Working Group

The "Arab Theory: Critiques of Power" (CoP) working group was formed in 2017 as part of the ACSS strategy to strengthen projects in the Humanities. Bringing together scholars from different fields and institutions, the aim of the working group is to revisit and expand the archive of critical Arab theorizing, while also paying attention to forms of organizing and theorizing taking place through different mediums inside and outside academic institutions. Through closed seminars, as well as engagement with the public, the CoP aims at reconstructing an alternative understanding of the intellectual legacies of Arab thought in ways that can be useful for scholars, activists, archivists and cultural producers today.

Despite the political and economic crisis that hit Lebanon that led to popular uprisings in October 2019, the working group was able to carry on most of its activities. However, its planned workshop "Arab Critical Theories and Horizons of Emancipation" was postponed until March 2020.

In 2019, the working group consolidated its internal structure and engaged with the public. Internally, the working group implemented its restructuring plan, as it branched into two subgroups in 2019: one working on Arab Marxist thought and the other on Arab Feminist thought (Appendix 25 - CoP Membership Based on Subgroups). The subgroups read canonical texts as well as lesser known memoirs, including works by Samir Amin, Mehdi Amel, Arwa Saleh and Dalal Bizri. In addition to the readings and discussions within the subgroup, which were held online over Skype, the two subgroups also came together in June 2019 to present their readings to each other in a closed seminar. The CoP held discussions across subgroups and texts around issues related to colonialism, economic systems, gender, organizing, community, as well as around textual genres (Appendix 26 Agenda of June 2019 Meeting).

The June 2019 meeting of the CoP was also an important step to clarify and refine the contribution of the working group in the first ACSS Academy. The CoP had stated its interest in pedagogy from its beginnings, and particularly in using its readings and collective discussions towards a critical curriculum of Arab theorizing of power. Therefore, a part of the bibliography of the working group will become the reading material for the CoP seminars and sessions at the ACSS Academy (July 2020). In the classes, the CoP will also address alternative archives and expanding the notion of what constitutes both archives and critical theory (Appendix 27 CoP Draft Program for the ACSS Academy).

The CoP working group also followed up on the Forum on Alternative Archival Practices that it organized in 2018. The success of the Forum encouraged the CoP to consult with the participating groups about how they would benefit from building up on the event. Many groups responded that they wanted to maintain and strengthen the informal exchange networks that they formed during the Forum. The CoP further discussed the conversations that took place at the Forum during the Fourth ACSS conference. The CoP collaborated with Hoda Elsadda from Women and Memory Forum-- who had participated in the Forum on Alternative Archives, and with anthropologist Lamia Moghnie, who has co-organized workshops on archival work in Berlin and Beirut, on the roundtable "Archiving as Resistance: Practices and Insights" (Appendix 28 Abstract of Roundtable at 4th ACSS conference). The well-attended round table further affirmed the growing interest in archives and the need to continue to build on the projects and the conversations that archives are engendering. Not only did it present some of the main discussions at the Alternative Archives Forum, but it also opened a space

to talk about tensions between traditional and alternative archives, and between academic and activist approaches to archiving and was an opportunity to discuss ways that these tensions are being bridged by some groups.

Another major engagement with the public for the working group came during its participation in the first lecture of the ACSS Fatima Mernissi lecture series held on November 28, 2019. CoP coordinator Deema Kaedbey concluded the keynote presentations by a short paper that outlined the primary themes and critical questions in the CoP's engagement with Mernissi. These questions revolved around issues of gender and power, interdisciplinary methodologies and re-interpretations of historical narratives (See Fatima Mernissi Lecture Series below).

Nevertheless, the political crisis of 2019 impacted the activity of the working group. The CoP had been planning a closed workshop under the title "Arab Critical Theories and Horizons of Emancipation." The purpose of the workshop was to bring together scholars doing work similar to the mission of the CoP: re-reading the archive of critical thought in novel ways. The working group also planned a public keynote panel on critical translation to accompany the closed workshop (Appendix 29- Call for Abstracts). Given the political and economic situation in Lebanon, the working group came to the decision to postpone the workshop till Spring 2020, yet it still held the panel as its own activity. The panel, under the title "Translating Critical Theories to Arabic: Practices and Transformations," addressed translation during times of crisis and revolutions, as well as topics such as collective translation and alternative spaces of knowledge production, translation and imperialism, and changes to the Arabic translation of concepts such as "gender" through time and political/social contexts (Appendix 30 Invitation to Translating Critical Theories Panel (translated)). This panel, since its conception as a keynote roundtable and later as its own event, was deliberately chosen by the working group to initiate conversations with multiple groups and individuals who work on critical translation, as a way of preparing for the second Critical Practices Forum, on the same topic. This latter Forum, to be held in 2020-2021, will follow much of the same format as the Forum on Alternative Archival Practices, and will build on the lessons learned from it.

Public Engagement:

Whereas in 2017-2018, the main focus of the CoP was on holding closed seminars and inter-group discussions, by the end of 2019 the CoP shifted its scope of work towards more public engagement.

Through this engagement, the working group is able to address multiple points of tension and debate, whether it is generational, regional, conceptual, or positional. In having membership from different disciplinary backgrounds, generations, from across the region and locations in various institutions around the world, many of these debates emerge or are highlighted within the working group but are also reflected and addressed during public discussions, such as the tension between alternative and traditional archives, between activists and academics, and between different generations of Marxist and Feminist theorists. These different approaches also emerge in regional reception of specific thinkers and writers-- the varying reception of Fatima Mernissi between Morocco and Lebanon being a case in point. Because Lebanon has not witnessed a Muslim feminist movement, and strong connections have not been built with the Moroccan feminist movement (as compared to the stronger influences and connections between Lebanese and Egyptian feminists, for example); but also perhaps because of generational schisms between feminists in Lebanon, Mernissi has not enjoyed a wide and deep engagement with her work by the Lebanese scholarly community. The younger feminists in Lebanon have similarly not tackled her intellectual and political legacy. In Morocco, Mernissi's home country and where her activism had been centered, Mernissi has created more networks and a wider readership. Additionally, more academic attention has been given to her work posthumously in Moroccan universities. The CoP is interested in addressing some of these tensions and debates as well in the next Critical Practices Forum on translation, where important regional, generational and conceptual differences emerge during translation processes.

As it moves forward towards more public projects in 2020, the working group is also keen on continuing to work towards a reader and lexicon projects, as well applying its pedagogical element. At the ACSS Academy, the CoP will be offering classes, and will mentor junior scholars on their projects towards publication. The CoP will also explore different ways of working with these scholars. The preparation for the ACSS Academy is itself an interesting process, with all ACSS groups working together for the first time. All working groups are benefitting from this collaboration, and the CoP is learning from the experiences and activities of the other working groups, from the structure of each subgroup to the topics and fields that they focus on. Furthermore, during this collaboration process, the CoP found its interest in a lexicon project similarly shared by the other groups, and there are discussions being held to include a lexicon activity in the ACSS Academy, towards a collaborative endeavor to create a unified lexicon.

Additionally, the CoP had long been considering working on publishing a reader of critical Arab thought. With the "Arab Critical Theories and Horizons of Emancipation" workshop in March 2020, there will be discussions with participants on compiling the papers in a reader. The CoP is generally interested in more writing and publishing, including reflection papers on its major past and future activities, such as the Forum on Alternative Archives.

The CoP continues to observe how its work initiates and participates in discussions that are timely, putting power and resistance at the core of these conversations. The uprising in Lebanon only affirmed the belief of the working group in the importance of such collectives that offer conceptual frameworks and historically-grounded analysis that are relevant and useful to ongoing popular movements for social and political change.

Preparations for the ACSS Academy July 1-16, 2020, Beirut

Similar to the Research Forum providing a platform for ACSS grantees to network and showcase their research work among peers, the ACSS academy serves to bring together junior researchers for training and mentoring with a team of established faculty members working on the themes of the ACSS three main working groups: Critiques of Power, Critical Security Studies and Ethnography as Knowledge. The ACSS Academy will be a biennial event which provides an opportunity for junior researchers in the Arab region to engage with critical theory and analysis, advanced writing, professionalization skills and networking. The first ACSS Academy will be held between July 1-16, 2020 in Lebanon.

The call for applications was announced on December 16, 2019. A total of 112 applications were submitted from Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Jordan, Yemen, Tunisia, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The Academy will host around 60 participants and around 15-20 faculty and lecturers, distributed among the three working groups of the ACSS. The program of the ACSS Academy will include:

1- Thematic sessions: This will involve lectures by core faculty and guest lecturers to introduce participants to the above-mentioned themes and the ways in which critical research within these themes can be conducted. Faculty members will also present their contribution to these themes and their ongoing work.

2- Mentoring sessions: The purpose of these sessions is for participants to present their research within smaller groups and to receive written and verbal feedback from faculty members as well as their peers.
3- Writing sessions: Participants will work on further conceptualizing their research topics based on the thematic and mentoring sessions
4- Trainings: These will involve particular research and writing skills taught in small groups and dividing participants according to their skill levels
5- Fieldtrips: This includes site visits, walking tours and/or public events. These activities serve as case studies for the issues to be explored during the Academy and will be conducted in collaboration with Lebanese researchers, practitioners, and activists.
6- Professionalization sessions: Participants and faculty members will come together to discuss issues around publishing, fieldwork, teaching, and other professional concerns.
7- Panels/Mini-Conference: In the final two days of the Academy, participants will present their research projects to the full audience of participants and faculty members.

F. Humanities Forum and Report

Since 2017, the ACSS has been growing its programming and activities in the Humanities and the Arts. This can be seen in the various sections of the report such as the expanding coverage of humanities fields in the ASSM, the joint program of Research on the Arts (RAP), the working group on Critiques of Power and publication plans for a number of papers from the Regional Consultation meeting in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional office in Beirut that was organized in 2017 as well as the panel organized at the World Humanities Conference (WHC) held in August 2017 in Liege, Belgium.

As detailed in previous reports, the ACSS has been growing its collaboration with the UNESCO Regional office and with the CISH-UNESCO Byblos - International Center for Human Sciences, located in Jbeil, Lebanon. In 2019, the three organizations planned to collaborate on convening a Regional Forum on the Humanities to continue the work of the 2017 conferences to further network research institutions dedicated to the humanities and to also inform scientific and higher education policy making in this regard. The Forum was planned for mid-November 2019 and invitations had gone out to participants. However, the unstable situation in Lebanon at the time and UNESCO

security policies meant that the Forum has to be postponed. The Forum is now planned for September 2020 in Lebanon, with a back-up plan of a second country if necessary.

At the same time, ACSS was approached by the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) based in Madison, Wisconsin, which is leading the effort to produce a World Humanities Report in 2020 in collaboration with International Council of Philosophy and the Human Sciences (CIPSH). ACSS agreed to contribute the Arab Region component of the report (due in June 2020) and began its work by convening a consultation meeting on December 16, 2019 through which a detailed plan was developed including commissioned papers, case-studies, interviews and excerpts from published works. A second meeting will be held in March 2020 to begin compiling the content of the Report.

G. Training

ACSS started developing its training programs in 2015 many of which have been co-funded with other organizations thus fulfilling one of the targets of the ACSS 5-year Strategy, namely developing a number of long-term co-funded programs and partnerships. In 2018, ACSS redesigned its training offerings to further emphasize interdisciplinarity and field building as well as the promotion of academic networks that create opportunities for cross-national research as well as foster regional collaborations for local knowledge production.

Data Sharing for the Public Good training series

To help address challenges of data management and archiving in the Arab region, the ACSS organizes a series of trainings titled "Data Sharing for the Public Good". This training is a result of a 2-year project that the ACSS is jointly implementing with the Odum Institute of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill under the title of Arab Public Data Initiative (see below). One of the activities under the Initiative is capacity building for researchers, administrators, librarians and archivists in the region on tools of data sharing and archiving for social science and public policy, and learning from global best practices in data archiving. Through open calls for applications two such regional trainings were conducted in 2019 and were attended by trainees from diverse sectors (public, private, academia, NGOs, UN, …).

- 1st training: April 9-11, 2019, Beirut: 18 participants (out 33 applicants) from 8 Arab countries http://www.theacss.org/pages/fora-and-debates/843/call-for-applications_workshop-on-data-sharing-for-the-public-good, (See appendix 31 for workshops agendas and list of participants)
- 2nd training: October 1-4, 2019, Amman: 16 participants (out of 65 applicants) from 8 Arab countries

Training to Engaged Research on Gender Violence (TERG)

The ACSS continues its partnership with Suad Joseph (University of California, Davis). Together they organized a two-year, four-seminar training program focused on engaged research on the topic of gender violence. The first two seminars were held in February and September 2018, and the final two seminars were held in May and October, 2019. Seventeen female participants and 8 male participants represented the following countries in the MENA region: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine.

During the first year of the program participants attended workshops on writing research proposals and the theoretical foundations of doing research on gender violence. Over the course of the seven months between the two seminars, all participants received seed grants amounting to US$5,000 for undertaking the research projects that they developed. The workshops in 2019 focused on providing conceptual and methodological feedback and guidance on the research projects, with a focus on analytical and writing skills. Princeton University complemented the OSF (which provided the TERG grant) with an additional US$10,000 which was needed to cover part of the October 2019 seminar.

H. The Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM)

Funding for the ASSM is provided by the Carnegie Corporation. In 2019, the Palestine Survey is funded by Sida and the Dataverse project is funded by a sub-grant from the University of North Carolina.

The Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM) is an observatory of the landscape of the social sciences and higher education in the Arab region. It documents the infrastructure of knowledge production in terms of institutions and resources and accounts for the evolving capacities and characteristics of the social science community across the region. The ASSM makes data and knowledge produced available for the public through two main mechanisms: (1) online databases and (2) publications.

ASSM Governance and Staffing

An Advisory Committee guides the technical and programmatic aspects of the ASSM (Appendix 32 ASSM advisory committee). The committee meets once a year and in 2019 it was scheduled to meet on November 23 in Beirut but the meeting was unfortunately postponed due to the unstable security situation in Lebanon. In addition to the annual meeting of the committee, the advice and guidance of individual members of the committee is sought on specific issues when needed.

In terms of staffing, the ASSM team consists of Nada Chaya, Project Leader of the ASSM, and Rami Ofeich, Data Analyst. In addition, some ASSM activities have required the hiring of consultants. Given the increase in the number and complexity of ASSM activities, the ASSM needs to be expanded to include more part-time or full-time staff.

Work on the production and dissemination of the second Arab Social Science Reports (ASSR) and the research and writing of the third ASSR was underway in 2019. In addition, 2019 saw the further development of public data resources (ASSM Database, Arab Public Data Initiative), the finalization of a report on research and higher education in Iraq and the re-launching the Iraq project.

Second Arab Social Science Report (ASSR2)

The Arab Social Science Report (ASSR) is one of the key publications of the ASSM with each version focusing on one aspect of the state of social science research in the Arab region. The ASSR2 titled "Social Sciences in the Arab Region: An Approach to Arabic Language Outputs (2000-2016)" 2000-**(**2016 – whose lead author is Professor Abdellah Hammoudi – was finalized, copy edited, produced and printed in 2018. A summary of the ASSR2 was written in 2019 and will be translated to English and French and produced and printed in 2020. The ASSR2 was aided by 8 background papers that conducted a critical review of select social science disciplines in the Arab region to gauge the content of social science products in the Arab region. In 2019 five of the background papers that were prepared for the 2nd ASSR will be part of an ACSS Review Volume that will be produced in partnership with UNESCO. (For more details see Review Volume *Qira'at* below).

Dissemination of the ASSR2

Several dissemination activities of the ASSR2 took place in 2019 as follows:

Interview of ASSR2 lead author in a video posted on the ACSS YouTube channel

The lead author of ASSR2, Dr. Abdellah Hammoudi, was interviewed on camera by Dr. Bassam Haddad (ACSS Board of Trustees member) in 2018 and a 9-minute video was produced by a young filmmaker (Deborah Ephrem) with whom the ACSS worked closely in finalizing the video. In 2019 Arabic, English and French subtitles were added to the video which can be accessed on the ACSS YouTube channel on these links:

Arabic sub-titles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAlpdU_JJI4&feature=youtu.be

English sub-titles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knYsHEFXQ90

French sub-titles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8OWfX8BAfE

Online campaign: February 8-21, 2019

An online campaign (Facebook, Twitter and email alerts) was conducted from February 8 to 21, 2019 highlighting the main findings of the ASSR2 (Appendix 33 ASSR2 online campaign). An average of 2 alerts went out every day during the campaign period.

Dissemination in Algeria: July 1-7, 2019

ASSR2 was disseminated at three well-attended events in three top social sciences institutions in Algeria: Centre de Recherche en Anthropologie Sociale et Culturelle (CRASC) (July 2, 2019), Mohamed Ben Ahmed University of Oran 2 (July 3, 2019), Research Center in Applied Economics for Development (CREAD) in Algiers (July 6, 2019). During these events, ACSS staff Elias Kattar (communications unit) and Nada Chaya gave an overview of the ACSS and the ASSM, respectively. A press release on this tour can be found on this link http://www.theacss.org/pages/fora-and-debates/919/.

The event at CRASC, which was scheduled to coincide with the meeting of the scientific council of CRASC, was very well attended by over 100 faculty members, students, researchers and members of CRASC scientific council. The Director of CRASC, Dr. Djilali Elmistari, opened the event which was moderated by Dr. Abdel Karim AlAydi (University of Oran 2). Dr. Mabrouk Boutagouga (University of Batna) presented his review of the report.

At University of Oran 2, the ACSS team met with the university president Dr. Abdel Elah Abdel Kader, the Dean of the faculty of social sciences Dr. Fadeel Abdel Kareem and the vice president for external affairs Dr. Hind Belkhayr in addition to a number of faculty members, researchers and students.

The last stop was at CREAD where the ACSS team met with the Director of CREAD Dr. Yaseen Belarbi and a number of researchers at the center. An open and lively discussion took place about the ACSS, the ASSM and means of cooperation.

Review by Sari Hanafi in Al-Araby Al-Jadeed: August 20, 2019

Dr. Sari Hanafi (American University of Beirut and former members of the ACSS BoT) wrote a review of ASSR2 in Al-Araby Al-Jadeed (a pan-Arab online media outlet headquartered in London) https://www.alaraby.co.uk/diffah/civilisation/2019/8/20/تطور-إيجابي-للمنتج-المعرفي-الاجتماعي-في-العالم-العربي

Review by Mohammad Turki Al-Rabiou in Al-Quds Al-Araby: September 27, 2019

Another review was written by Dr. Mohammad Turki Al-Rabiou (writer from Syria) in Al-Quds Al-Araby (a pan-Arab daily newspaper published in London) https://www.alquds.co.uk/أنثربولوجيا-بلا-مدن-الأنثربولوجيون-ا/?fbclid=IwAR1-_xdH7fh2xDT-JIYh1-3wDvs9lyyHlCNhuWQJZ4rXZyjAg4hZQquuOUU

Third Arab Social Science Report

The ASSR3 focuses on the characteristics and career trajectories of Arab social scientists and humanists and is based on a quantitative survey and qualitative research. Its working title is "The universe of Arab social scientists: Career trajectories and networks" and its lead author is Dr. Ahmad Dallal, Dean, Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q). The lead author developed the table of contents of the report and presented his vision for the report at a roundtable during the ACSS biennial conference on April 12, 2019 (Appendix 34 ASSR3 roundtable agenda). The lead author was scheduled to present a draft of the report during the meeting of ASSM advisory committee of November 23, 2019 which was postponed due to events in Lebanon.

Online Survey: May 27 to June 30, 2019

A long questionnaire was developed in 2018. It was revised, shortened and re-launched in 2019 (Appendix 35 ASSR3 survey questionnaire). Data collection took place from May 27 to June 30, 2019 through an online questionnaire sent to about 15,000 social scientists in universities, research centers, and professional societies. We received over 2,600 responses (18% response rate), 1,900 of which were complete responses.

6 Background papers

- Qualitative research complemented the quantitative survey through the following 6 background papers that the ACSS commissioned:
- Social sciences in NGOS, Research Centers and International Organizations in the Arab region (Cynthia Kreichati)
- Transnational Academic Mobility: Experience of Arab Social Scientists (Lea Bou Khater)
- Memoirs of Arab intellectuals: An archive of intellectual practices (Fadi Bardawil)
- National Research Strategies and University Strategic Plans (Diane Nauffal & Kamal Abou Chedid)
- Promotion and Recruitment Policies in Universities in the Arab region (Diane Nauffal & Kamal Abou Chedid)
- Editorial boards in the Arab region (Cynthia Kreichati)

Palestine report: Study of higher education and research in Palestine

With funding from and in collaboration with Sida, the ACSS facilitated the commissioning, through an open call for proposals, of a research team to conduct a study of higher education and research in Palestine. The purpose of the study was to (1) obtain an overview of the current state of higher education and research systems and structures, and (2) survey the social sciences and humanities research infrastructure. The report's recommendations will constitute a basis for strategic discussions and decision-making on possible future support by Sida to research capacity strengthening in Palestine. It will help inform Sida's programs and interventions and opportunities for research collaboration in Palestine.

The Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ) was selected in February 2018 and wrote the report titled "Study of Higher Education and Research in Palestine." ARIJ submitted several drafts of the

report between December 2018 and August 2019 to address reviews received from 3 external reviewers in addition to the reviews of the ACSS, Sida and the Swedish Consulate-General in Jerusalem.

A consultation was organized in Ramallah, Palestine, by the ACSS Focal Point on May 25, 2019 (Appendix 36 Ramallah consultation agenda and photo). The consultation brought together the report authors and around 30 participants from various institutions in Gaza and Ramallah to have a local discussion of and input on a draft of the report, with focus on the recommendation section and the way forward. ARIJ finalized the study report on August 31, 2019, taking into account the feedback from the consultation.

On November 11, 2019, the lead author of the Palestine report, Dr. Jad Isaac, received an official request from the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Palestine to share the "Study of Higher Education and Research in Palestine" with the Ministry. At the time of the request the Ministry was working on a national strategy for scientific research and wanted to use the report as a resource for that. Around the same time Sida extended an invitation to Dr. Isaac to present the study findings at its headquarters in Stockholm in January 2020.

Iraq project: The social sciences experience in Iraqi universities

Through an earlier sub-grant from The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TARII) and as reported last year, the ACSS was going to provide technical assistance on a 2-year pilot project titled "Interdisciplinarity and Social Science Education at Iraqi Universities". The project got greatly delayed due to leadership and staff changes at TARII in 2018. As result of this, Carnegie Corporation of New York transferred the project and its grant to the ACSS in June 2019. The implementation period is now from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021. In August 2019, the ACSS engaged a lead researcher based in Amman - Dr. Lucine Taminian (a former ACSS BoT member) - to lead the research and outreach aspects of the project. With the lead researcher, the ACSS revised the workplan it had prepared for its work with TARII (Appendix 37 Iraq project workplan). In addition, the ACSS formed a three-member Advisory Committee in September 2019 to guide the development and progress of the project. The members are the three Iraqi academicians Dr. Lahay Dami Hussein (Baghdad University), Dr. Faris Kamal Nadhmi (Salaheddin University), and Dr. Haider Saeed (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies).

The Advisory Committee met on October 18, 2019 in Amman, Jordan (Appendix 38 Iraq project advisory committee meeting agenda) to discuss the goal, objectives and workplan of the project. The working title of the project was decided to be: "The Social Sciences Experience in Iraqi Universities". The goal of the project is to better understand the state of social sciences in Iraqi universities through an update of an assessment made by a group of researchers in 2007 published in the report "The State of Social Sciences in Iraqi Universities: Survey, Evaluation, and Prospects for development". It was agreed to maintain the 2 initial objectives of the project: (1) Getting a snapshot of the current status (infrastructure and social scientists) of the social sciences in Iraqi universities including through a survey in four large universities in Iraq, and (2) based on the survey results, develop a multidisciplinary course to be offered online.

A concept note for the project was developed and finalized on November 11, 2019 (Appendix 39 Iraq project concept note) and will be printed for sharing with high level stakeholders in Iraq. Data collection tools developed by the ASSM for its regional survey will be adapted for this project. In early 2020 the ASSM staff will work closely with the lead researcher to adapt the tools per the objectives of the Iraq study and to develop the survey methodology. The implementation of this project in 2020 is dependent on the security situation in Iraq.

ASSM Databases

During 2019, 2 ASSM databases were updated: the database of Universities in the Arab region and University-based research centers in the Arab region. The social sciences / humanities degree programs offered were reviewed in the Universities database when new information was available and this database was made public on the ACSS Dataverse and can be accessed on the following link: https://dataverse.theacss.org/dataverse/root;jsessionid=cb955abd5be64c62011a9e28d754?q=&fq0=authorName_ss%3A%22Arab+Social+Science+Monitor+%28ASSM%29%22&types=dataverses%3Adatasets&sort=dateSort&order=desc

The university-based research centers database was also updated based on accessible information from the websites of universities. This includes the languages of publication, fields and themes of research, types of publications and organized events. This database now contains 755 university-based research centers instead of 187 before it was updated.

An initial version of publishers of social science knowledge was developed in 2019 and will be refined in 2020. Other databases will also be refined in 2020.

According to individual dataset record pages in the Dataverse (see below), the databases have been downloaded by a good number of users, which is an indication that they are already being used by the public or at a minimum there is interest in them.

Arab Public Data Initiative

The Arab Public Data Initiative is a two-year project in collaboration with the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It aims to promote the norm of data preservation and data sharing among social scientists and research institutions, and to assist in developing policies and procedures for data archiving in the Arab region.

The two main activities of this Initiative are (1) the creation an Arab Social Science Data Archive – ACSS Dataverse and (2) capacity building for researchers, administrators, librarians, and archivists in the region on the principles and global best practices and tools in data archiving.

The work of this Initiative is guided by an active and engaged advisory committee that met once in 2019 on April 13, 2019 at the margins of the ACSS biennial conference in Beirut. It was scheduled to have a second meeting on November 23, 2019 but this meeting was postponed due to the unstable security situation in Lebanon at that time (Appendix 40 Dataverse advisory committee meeting agenda).

2019 was a productive year for this Initiative. The ACSS Dataverse – www.dataverse.theacss.org – went live in June 2019 and is the first interdisciplinary social science data archive in the Arab region (Appendix 41 Dataverse global map). Over 100 datasets have been deposited into the ACSS Dataverse in the six months after it went live. Datasets that are deposited in the ACSS Dataverse are de-identified, processed in keeping with global data archiving standards and made available to the public at no charge.

In order to help populate its Dataverse, the ACSS engaged a senior consultant – Christiane Wissa - to reach out to potential donors of datasets (both individuals and organizations). Targeted and personal communication and follow-up is needed to overcome the barriers to data sharing by data creators including notion data ownership, data confidentiality, data not considered a public good and so on.

International data fora

The ACSS is being increasingly asked to share its experience in setting up the ACSS Dataverse and data archiving in the Arab region at international fora. On June 16-19, the ACSS was invited to participate in a workshop titled "Data-Driven Digital Health Innovations to Strengthen Rights and Health Services in the Middle East and North Africa" in Amman, Jordan. The purpose of the workshop was twofold: to discuss an emerging research agenda and to develop implementation research proposals. The ACSS participated in the research agenda setting part of the workshop on June 16 and 17 given its work on the data in the region (Appendix-42 IDRC workshop agenda and IDRC workshop participants list). A list of major research questions and themes emerged from the workshop that will assist in guiding future research activities on digital health, human rights and data governance in the context of fragility.

The ACSS was invited to share its experience in managing and sharing data in the Arab region at the international conference "Managing, Sharing, and Employing of Regional Information in Asia", organized and held at Seoul National University Asia Center, Seoul, South Korea on September 27, 2019. The conference gathered data experts from many Asian countries to exchange their experiences and challenges in data management and sharing. The conference program and some photos can be found on this link http://snuac.snu.ac.kr/eng/index.php/2019/09/17/managing-sharing-and-employing-of-regional-information-in-asia/

The work of the ACSS on data was showcased at yet another international conference. Dr. Abla Amawi, Secretary General of the Higher Population Council in Jordan and a member of the ACSS Dataverse advisory committee, made a presentation in a session titled "Democratizing Data as a Public Good" at the 25th Anniversary Summit of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Nairobi, Kenya (November 12 -14, 2019). Dr. Amawi highlighted the ACSS Dataverse as an important model in data archiving for the public good. Following her presentation, she was approached by many conference attendees interested in knowing more about the ACSS

initiative and potential for collaboration. A news item on the presentation was posted on the ACSS website, Twitter and Facebook (in both Arabic and English) and can be found on the following links:
http://www.theacss.org/pages/fora-and-debates/1041/democratizing-data-as-a-public-good
http://www.theacss.org/pages/fora-and-debates/1040/
https://twitter.com/acss_org/status/1201468829920112640

With funding from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the ACSS attended another international forum on data, "Research Data Alliance (RDA)" 14th Plenary in Helsinki, Finland on October 23-25, 2019 https://www.rd-alliance.org/plenaries/rdas-14th-plenary-helsinki-finland.

Memberships and MOUs

In May 2019, the ACSS became a member of the International Federation of Data Organization (IFDO), "an organization dedicated to data sharing and the preservation of social science data around the globe. Its main purpose is to facilitate and support research through cooperation between data organizations across countries, regions, and continents."
http://www.ifdo.org/member-organizations/

In July 2019, the ACSS joined the World Data System (WDS) as an Associate Member. WDS is an interdisciplinary body of the International Science Council (ISC)
https://www.icsu-wds.org/community/membership/associate-members

The ACSS worked in 2019 on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Economic Research Forum (ERF) a well-established regional network dedicated to promoting high quality research. Through the MOU, the ACSS Dataverse portal will enable researchers to extend discovery of and access to the datasets collected and hosted by ERF's Open Access Micro Data Initiative (OAMDI). The MOU was supposed to be finalized in 2019 but finalization was delayed due to staff changes at the ERF.

Looking back and looking forward: Lessons learned

The variety of ASSM activities in 2019 made the ASSM more rounded and visible. Following the quantitative growth in 2018, the ASSM made qualitative leaps in 2019. Of special note is the work on data sharing and archiving where clearly there is much need and interest. The ACSS is now positioned

at the forefront of organizations in the Arab region that are concerned with this area of work. The ASSM will continue its work on data management and sharing in 2020 and seek to foster partnerships with other organizations. The tools of the ASSM are mostly in place now and this will assist in standardizing data collection. For example, the ASSR survey core questionnaire as well the indicators in the ASSM databases will be used for the Iraq study, security situation allowing.

In terms of governance and processes, the increased engagement of the advisory committees in the various activities of the ASSM as well as the latter's closer collaboration with other units at the ACSS has contributed to smoother implementation of its activities.

I. Research Ethics Initiative

The ACSS launched a pilot project in 2016 to promote regional collaboration on relevant research ethics guidelines, practices and structures. The Initiative aims to:

- Strengthen research ethics infrastructures in the Arab region;
- Build a network of individuals and institutions that can contribute to the development of a culture of research ethics in the region (research institutions, think tanks and NGOs…);
- Strengthen the capacity of the ACSS to mentor and train its grantees on research ethics principles and issues.

Based on learnings from the pilot phase (2016-2017), the ACSS was able to introduce various training and capacity-building methods such as the development of case studies to illustrate ethical conundrums faced by researchers in the Arab region. ACSS also developed its own document on Ethical Guidelines for Social Science Research and a working research ethics questionnaire, both of which serve to encourage researchers to engage in ethical, collaborative and reflexive research in terms of their methods and content, as well as the ways in which they choose to present their research. In 2019, a number of research ethics related activities were organized by ACSS as follows:

- A training session with grantees from cycle 6 of the Research Grants Program at the Fourth ACSS Conference
- A presentation on research ethics for the "Research on the Arts" grants program in collaboration with the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC)

- A panel session on "planning your research: ethics and proposal writing" at the 2019 Critical Security Studies Summer Institute
- A call for "case studies" on the challenges of applying research ethics principles in the social sciences and a workshop was held in December 17-18, 2019 which hosted the authors of the selected case studies in order to discuss and finalize their cases before posting them on the online forum.

The following outputs were set in motion in 2019 and will be finalized in mid-2020:

- The development of online platform for dissemination and discussion of research ethics principles and practices

  ACSS is currently searching for website developers to build the online platform for research ethics.
- The Ethical Guidelines for Social Science Research

  ACSS is currently conducting a literature review in order to revise and update its guidelines with the current debate on principles and practice of research ethics.
- Training Manual: An Essential Guide to Ethics in the Social Sciences

  The Manual will present basic case studies related to ethics in Arabic and will serve as an introduction to ethical principles in social science research. The manual will be produced in Arabic and will adopt the format of an academic syllabus including a course description, objectives and learning outcomes. Future trainings will be delivered based on this manual.
- Advanced case studies

  The call for submissions of advanced case studies seeks to identify potential contributors on complex ethical issues in research. The plan is to post give advanced cases online (on the electronic platform).

New program on research ethics: Research Ethics Discourses, Practices and Leadership in the Arab Region: Addressing Intersectionality and Fragility

In addition to ACSS own steps to enhance the culture of research ethics in the Arab region, IDRC invited the ACSS along with Birzeit University and AUB, Lebanon to write a joint proposal on Research Ethics Discourses, Practices and Leadership in the Arab Region: Addressing Intersectionality and Fragility". This project, which extends over four years, suggests a number of

activities and convenings by the three institutions that would strengthen their ongoing initiatives and seed new ones. These include: a mapping of existing practices and processes with a focus on universities (AUB), developing, hosting, and operating a learning portal (Birzeit) and supporting new research and training on research ethics (ACSS).

The specific activities that the ACSS will undertake within the grant duration address three main areas:

- Trainings: The ACSS would continue to organize sessions and workshops for training different types of researchers (academic, activist, advocacy, development) in research ethics recognizing that each group will be applying principles of ethics in different contexts. The trainings will also contribute greatly to the continued development and enhancement of the ACSS online platform as described above. We expect to conduct around 4 trainings of different sizes over the four years of the grant.
- Small grants for research into ethical dilemmas: Over the next four years, the ACSS will launch a three-cycle research grants program on research ethics, to which current and old ACSS grantees can apply and that would provide small grants (at an average of $4000 CAD per grant). For each cycle, we would select two or three themes related to research ethics such as: confidentiality, collaboration, vulnerability and conflict. The call for proposals would invite applicants to reflect upon their research design, data collection and publication experience focusing on ethical conundrums they faced while undertaking their projects. Topics addressed in the new projects would directly inform and feed into the online platform, as well as into the training workshops the ACSS organizes. We expect to give out 25-30 small grants over the three cycles of the program.
- Convenings: The ACSS will organize two major events on alternate years, the annual conference and the research forum. In each event, the ACSS would organize a special session on research ethics to which we would invite potential partners. This would be an occasion to share notes and exchange lessons on the different projects undertaken by each of the three parties as well as explore possibilities for future collaboration. We expect to convene 3 gatherings over the four years of the grant.

Lessons Learnt

Through our interaction with junior and senior researchers and our review of their proposals to various ACSS programs, we had the following observations:

- There is a noticeable interest in questions of ethics, especially among the younger generation of social scientists and there are few if any go-to sources of information to address ethical conundrums especially those that are complex and not straightforward. In general, Arab universities do not play this role.
- Notwithstanding their interrelatedness, there is confusion among younger scholars in their understanding of ethics, positionality and methods, which indicates a need for critical thinking and training in these areas.
- As is confirmed by previous ACSS experiences, researchers in general are unable to explain and write clearly their ethical conundrums and discuss specific solutions or strategies.
- There are commonalities across the region but there are also differences in the ethical dilemmas faced depending on specific contexts and topics of research. In addition, Arab researchers studying or working in the West have additional issues that they face, often brought about by ethical standards or procedures at their universities, including those imposed in the name of "security", that further complicate the fieldwork situation and the encounter between researcher and the researched community or individuals.
- From ACSS call for case studies (March 2019), a number of issues came up on research ethics in the field. First there is the question of power relations as manifested in the relationship between researchers and researched, collaborating institutions and within research teams. Second, there were issues related to confidentiality and researchers' responsibilities concerning sensitive data, particularly related to government or to health issues. Third, there were issues of access to the field and how researchers maneuver between institutions (for example, going through NGOs and CSOs to gain access to particular populations), which raised questions of how ethical procedures are implemented.

J. Regional, South-South and Global Collaborations

From inception, the ACSS has given importance to South-south, cross-regional and global collaborations as part of its identity and mission. The ACSS seeks to be an entity through which Arab researchers will engage in robust Arab region collaborations and networking but also become integrated into cross-regional and global research projects and social science convening.

The ACSS priority for South-South, cross-regional collaborations have been to work with its sister organizations, Codesria and CLACSO. Over the years there have been various exchanges during global forums (e.g. ISSC – now ISC - meetings). In addition to specific activities mentioned below, we envisage increasing our collaboration on the issue of open access publishing, research ethics in conflict contexts as well as the exploration of joint themes of interest. The year 2019 saw concrete developments in collaboration between the three organizations:

ACSS/CODESRIA collaborative project

The ACSS and CODESRIA worked closely together in 2019 to develop a joint research program on "Reimagining the Sahel: A new joint research program with CODESRIA)" Over three meetings held in Beirut, the two teams conceptualized the program, agreed on the major programmatic activities and discussed how best to synchronize their grantmaking processes. A proposal was jointly written and submitted to Sida in October 2019 and is awaiting approval. Upon approval, the first activity will be a meeting in Dakar to further settle the details of the program. This is tentatively scheduled for spring 2020.

The importance of the proposal is in terms of

- The topic – the Sahel, often seen as a divider between North Africa and Sub-saharan Africa, and dominated by security discourses overlooking the cultural richness of the region and the lives and livelihoods of its inhabitants.
- The collaboration both in terms of the organizations but also the fact that the grants program will solicit team proposals with researchers in different countries and hopefully enable collaboration between researchers from different countries and institutions in the region. (For more details about the new collaboration, see "Reimagining the Sahel" under the Fellowships and Grants section).

CLACSO

The new Executive Secretary of CLACSO, Dr. Karina Batthyany, attended the ACSS fourth conference held in Beirut on April 12-14, 2019. She spoke to the General Assembly of the ACSS giving a comprehensive overview of the history and activities of CLACSO. One panel at the conference explored Latin American/Arab region interactions and brought the importance of such cross-regional comparisons and connections to the broad regional audience in attendance. Meetings

between Dr. Batthyany and the ACSS team took place on the sidelines of the conference and it was agreed that ACSS and CLACSO would collaborate on creating a joint working group on a theme related to the ACSS working group on Critical Security Studies. These discussions developed over the subsequent months and a joint conference is planned to be held in May 2020 in Buenos Aires. The conference will identify the main themes and will help create the connections that can then lead to the formation of a joint working group.

InterAsia:

As mentioned in previous reports, the ACSS signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the InterAsia Partnership which includes (in alphabetical order) Duke University, Göttingen University, the Hong Kong Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, the National University of Singapore, the Social Science Research Council and Yale University.

As part of this partnership, ACSS hosted a planning meeting from December 5 – 8, 2019 for the Social Science Research Council (NY) for the "Transregional Collaboratory on the Indian Ocean" The Transregional Collaboratory seeks to bring together scholars across the Indian Ocean region and the globe focusing on the implications of environmental issues for other key dynamics in the region. The Collaboratory also intends to question longstanding approaches to scholarship on regional and environmental issues by bridging geographic, institutional, and academic boundaries. It also seeks to foster a new model of transnational research ethics that emphasizes South-South collaboration. The planning meeting brought together 11 researchers from different locations to discuss priorities in research on the Indian Ocean region, the promise of new approaches to environment and climate change from an Oceanic perspective and the ethics of collaboration across regions and disciplines. The location of the meeting in Beirut brought to the fore both issues of comparative research (the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean) as well as commonalities and differences in environmental challenges and political unrest across the globe.

Striking from the Margins Project

The ACSS signed a MoU with the Central European University in January 2017 to partner on a project entitled 'Striking from the Margins'. Seteney Shami attended a workshop at CEU between June 15-18, 2017 and gave a lecture as part of the seminar series of the project. The ACSS, together with CEU and the Issam Fares Institute at the American University in Beirut collaborated on organizing a joint

conference in January 15-17, 2019 in Beirut entitled "Striking from the Margins: Religion, State and Devolution of Authority in the Arab Middle East." The conference tackled a variety of debates, with a focus on Syria, Iraq and other countries in the region experiencing extreme violence and dislocation. (Conference webpage on https://www.strikingmargins.com/news-1/2018/12/06/sfm-conference-at-aub-beirut).

School on Theorizing from the South

The ACSS, the Afro-Asian Futures Past Research Program (American University of Beirut), and the Centre for Indian Studies in Africa (University of the Witwatersrand) jointly organized a five-day School entitled "Theorizing from the Global South: African and Arab Imaginaries and Circulations". The event was held on October 21-25, 2019 at the ACSS offices in Beirut, Lebanon.
The school hosted 18 junior researchers from African and Arab countries including: Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, Palestine and Egypt.

The school was led by Professor Syed Farid Alatas (National University of Singapore), Dr. Anaheed Al-Hardan (American University of Beirut), Dr. Mjiba Frehiwot (University of Ghana) and Dr. Dilip Menon (University of the Witwatersrand), and focused on theories and concepts such as: what does theorizing from the Global South mean, common intellectual traditions of liberation, and thinking de-colonially with Ibn Khaldun.

Organized amidst the October uprising taking place in Lebanon, the school also focused on histories and contemporary expressions of intellectual and political solidarity between Africa and the Arab region. (See Appendix 43 for full details of the program).

IV. OUTPUTS, DISSEMINATION AND ELECTRONIC PLATFORM

Through all the following activities, the number of outputs enabled by the ACSS or produced directly by it has been steadily growing as indicated in the following sections:

A. Online Activities

ACSS Online Directory

Over the past three years, the ACSS has been working on developing an online directory that captures all the organization's outputs, including ACSS-funded research, as well as ACSS projects. Work has been progressing somewhat slowly on this front, especially because for the directory to function smoothly, the online application process as well as of the ACSS website need to be revamped. Moving forward, the plan is to feature the database of outputs online in two ways: 1) In conjunction with the revamped website, we will create the system for the outputs to appear as part of each grantee profile; and 2) Publish the directory as an online searchable database. The new website should be available in 2020.

ACSS Website

As the ACSS programs continued to grow in 2019, we updated our website to reflect our expanding offerings. New pages (for programs, projects or activities) have been added, and selected grantees are regularly uploaded to the website.

We also continued to implement our strategic plan for the ACSS blog, known as the Digest, which is the most dynamic part of our website. Over the past year, we continued to diversify the type of content featured, and increased our coverage of our own events and activities, especially in Arabic. Calls for Applications and job opportunities have become regular posts, as more and more organizations contact us to circulate their calls. This has made the roundups of social science calls for the Arab region (published every 2 weeks) a regular staple on our blog and shared on social media and with our mailing list. We are also including our new publications (4 in 2019) on the website under "Publications" section.

The complete revamp of the ACSS website did not take place in 2018 and was postponed to 2019 mainly due to the absence of an IT officer. In February 2019 and IT officer joined the ACSS and immediately started planning for the new website development. Several meetings were organized with different website developers and a decision was reached to finalize an agreement with Born Interactive, the provider who showed technical competence and accommodated our numerous demands. The new website would become much more dynamic and allow us to better showcase the ACSS activities and the outputs of the grantees (See the section on Data-base and Information System earlier).

Social Media

As our content has become more diversified (including coverage of activities, calls for job vacancies in the region, interviews with partners and grantees, and curated posts), we have been able to increase and diversify our social media posts, thus increasing our online presence and profile. During the reporting period, our Facebook followers grew by 26% (jumping from 22,907 in January 2019 to 28,800 by the end of December 2019), despite the fact that Facebook changed its algorithm to deprioritize business pages in favor of personal posts. Worth noting here is that this spike has been organic for the most part, since we have not engaged in any direct online advertisements for the ACSS, except for a few ads to promote existing calls for applications or proposals for specific programs. With respect to Twitter, our followers grew by 41% within the reporting period, going from roughly 1,967 in December 2018 to 2,770 by the end of December 2019. This means that more and more people are finding value in our tweets and following our account. The growth in followers on Twitter was helped in part by the live tweeting we did for a series of events that took place in 2019, such as the ACSS Fourth Conference (see highlights).

ACSS Newsletter

In 2019, we released 2 issues of our newsletter (Issue 1 in English, Issue 2 in English) in Arabic, English and French - the three working languages of the ACSS. Designed to help us keep our community of researchers updated on our activities and the ways in which they can take part in them, each issue of the newsletter highlighted the major activities of the preceding period, including grantee selections and publications by grantees and members as well as open calls and events to look forward to in the following months.

Much like our blog and social media posts, the newsletter has resulted in several mailing list subscribers contacting us for help to circulate calls.

Overall, the kind of response we have been getting through our online communications tools reflects the growing interest in our work and the value in the content that we provide. This in turn is helping strengthen the position of the ACSS as a reference and resource for the social scientists in the Arab region.

B. Print Activities

Working Paper Series

Our call for Working Paper submissions remained open throughout 2019. We received 9 submissions, 4 of which were by ACSS grantees. Further to a decision by the Board of Trustees Publications Committee and the Secretariat to make the submission of a working paper a grant requirement for grantees in the Early Career Fellows Program and the ACSS-FMSH Short-Term Postdoctoral Mobility fellowships, grantees started submitting their papers as they completed their grants. Out of the 9 total submissions, none was rejected. We published 1 paper in English, which was then translated and published in Arabic. We also published 2 papers in Arabic (Paper 1, Paper 2), and 1 paper in French. Eleven papers were still under review by the end of 2019.

Occasional Publication from the Third ACSS Conference

Centered on Ghassan Salameh's keynote titled "The State: Between Longing and Trepidation" at the Third Conference, this Arabic publication included Dr. Salameh's paper, and four commentaries by four different scholars reflecting different disciplinary approaches and countries/regions, including Dr. Rahma Bourqia (Morocco), Dr. Mustafa Kamel El Sayed (Egypt), Dr. Omar El Shehabi (Bahrain) and Mr. Khaled Saghiyeh (Lebanon). This publication was published in April 2019 and disseminated during the Fourth ACSS Conference.

As for the next occasional publication, an agreement has already been reached with Dr. Jala Makhzoumi, the keynote speaker at the Fourth Conference in 2019, to publish her paper in conjunction with the Fifth Conference. As is now the practice, the publication will include Dr. Makhzoumi's lecture as well as commentaries by different scholars from the region.

Occasional Publication to Close the Hanna Batatu Lecture Series

Launched in 2015, the first annual lecture series was in honor of the late Palestinian political scientist and historian, Hanna Batatu. Three lectures were organized in Amman, Beirut and Tunisia in 2015, 2016, and 2017 respectively (2015: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qULX9qM0lyw, 2016: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xk0tK8kdzz4 , 2017: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQN1_JALB5E). Security concerns and technical challenges prevented us from holding the fourth and final lecture in this series in Iraq. To close the series, we

organized a special plenary at the Fourth ACSS Conference in 2019, during which we launched an occasional publication that paid tribute to Hanna Batatu (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMDZpbvvD1k) and his seminal work. More than 300 participants in the Fourth Conference attended this plenary.

The publication included:

- The papers of the speakers at the first three lectures: Dr. Salim Tamari, Dr. Dina Rizk Koury, and Dr. Thabit Abdullah.
- A biography of Hanna Batutu
- A bibliography for the works of Hanna Batatu.
- A commentary by Dr. Haider Saeed, an Iraqi scholar and former student of Batatu's.
- Testimonies by colleagues and students, including Dr. Tarek Mitri, Dr. Philip Khoury, Dr. Ted Swedenburg.
- Testimonies and exclusive photos acquired from the Batatu and Reynaud (Batatu's niece) families.
- Clippings of articles on Hanna Batatu from Arab and international newspapers.
- A copy of a handwritten exam by Hanna Batatu when he was a professor at the American University of Beirut.

In addition to the above, Harvard University gave us the permission to include the cover of Hanna Batatu's thesis in the publication.

This book was published in Arabic, and accompanied by a short documentary film on Hanna Batatu, which was shown during the closing session of the Fourth ACSS Conference. Please see video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eiRe6jwQj8

NPF Publication

In 2019 the ACSS published its first issue on "Gendered Resistance" that collected essays from fellows who received a NPF writing and mentorship fellowship for 9 months. The publication came out in August 2019 and featured 7 articles by female authors, each addressing a case study that built on previous fieldwork. The mentors of the program also wrote together an introduction that laid out a

critique of dominant gender paradigms and posed important questions on the notion of gender resistance triggered by the fellows' essays. The publication was divided into two thematic pillars: the first pillar addressed gendered resistance through negotiating the state and challenging it; the second pillar attempted at rethinking narratives and social norms. All the papers can be downloaded through this link.

The publication was well received by academics, activists and NGOs in the area of gender. Over 500 copies were printed and disseminated Several professors from the American University of Beirut and the American University in Cairo have included some of the essay in their academic syllabus. The ACSS is proud to have produced this publication, and looks forward to working on the second publication under the same theme "Gendered Resistance". (See Appendix 44 for book cover).

Fatema Mernissi first lecture booklet

On November 2019, the ACSS launched a new lecture series named after the late Moroccan writer and sociologist Fatema Mernissi, best known for her writings on women, feminism and Islamic thought. The inaugural lecture of the Fatema Mernissi series, took place on 28 November 2019 in Beirut, Lebanon, coinciding with the anniversary of the passing of the stellar feminist sociologist from Morocco. For more information, see section "The ACSS Annual Lecture: The Fatema Mernissi Lecture Series".

A book issued by the ACSS that includes an introduction and abstracts of the two lectures and the biography of Mernissi was also distributed. Please access the booklet at: https://bit.ly/2v4dy6J

For the second lecture scheduled for November 2020 a booklet will be issued that will include the abstract of the second lecture, as well as the abstracts from the first lecture and Mernissi's biography. The second booklet will be a continuation of the first in terms of design and spirit. We are in the process of deciding on the speakers and location for this event.

Review Volume "*Qira'at*"

The Board of Trustees and its sub-committee on Publications had previously decided that the ACSS should launch a new social science Journal and begin planning for it in 2019. Discussions over 2018, however, went in a new direction and the decision was not to launch a journal but rather a periodic

publication under the name of "*Qira'at*" (Reviews) which would be dedicated to reviewing the state of the field by themes, disciplines, fields, and areas of interest. Some issues of the "Reviews" publication would be generated through papers out of various ACSS projects (including the ASSM). A major contribution of this publication would be to present essays that review writings and literature in Arabic, English, French and other academic languages thus enabling cross-referencing and dialogue instead of the pervasive compartmentalization by language of writing which currently characterizes the region. Another justification for this kind of publication is that it would complement and strengthen existing journals and publications in the region instead of setting up a competing outlet in the form of a new journal. The Review Volume is thus important from two points of view: as a vehicle for the evaluation of knowledge production in the region and for building awareness of the topography of such production, including the gaps in research and publishing.

As of December 2019, 10 papers have been collected. Six of these papers were in English and subsequently translated into Arabic and 4 originally written in Arabic. The first "Reviews" issues (in partnership with UNESCO) includes 4 of the background papers that were prepared for ASSR2 as well as 6 papers from the following ACSS activities: (1) Background papers for the Conference on "Re-centering the humanities: Theories, approaches and knowledge production" that was co-sponsored by UNESCO (Byblos, Lebanon, May 2017); and (2) Papers from the ACSS panel at the World Humanities Conference (Liege, Belgium, August 2017).

At the Publications Committee meeting, it was decided to publish the "*Qira'at*" Review Volume in English as well, to reach an audience outside the Arab region and give them a sense of the knowledge produced in the region. (Appendix 45 Review Volume list of papers). The Review Volume, to be published by July 2020, will be co-edited by Mohammed Bamyeh (Chair of the Board of Trustees) and Seteney Shami, and will be published in Arabic and made available on the ACSS website. The Review Volume will also have an Executive Summary in English and French so that it reaches varied audiences.

Editorial Review Board

Established in 2016, the Editorial Review Board (ERB) consists of 14 scholars in the field of social sciences (including some members of the Board of Trustees Publications Committee and a representative from the ACSS Secretariat), who serve on a voluntary basis for a term of two years. In

2019, The ERB members played a crucial role in reviewing the working papers and recommending new reviewers to be added to the ACSS reviewers list.

The ERB held a fruitful meeting in conjunction with the Fourth Conference and came up with important recommendations to enhance the status of the publications at the ACSS and improve outreach The Board also suggested a mechanism to improve the working paper series and encourage researchers to publish (See "Lessons Learned" below).

V. FINAL REMARKS AND LOOKING FORWARD

It is not possible to report on 2019 without referring to the uprisings in Lebanon which started in the fall and continue to shape the national events and impact daily life of the Lebanese people. We have described the ACSS response in the first section of the report and continue to watch the situation unfold, while taking urgent steps to try and minimize the risk to the organization.

Otherwise on the institutional growth and programmatic side, 2019 was a successful year, with a number of achievements and many learnings. Our monitoring and evaluation using the logframe shows noticeable improvements across the board, including rise in number of members, increase in participation in our biennial conference, better gender representation and expressed interest in contributing to the ACSS publications. We will continue to work improving our outreach in 2020 and expect the planned overhaul of our information system during the year to make a difference in this respect. For reasons partly related to the absence of communications manager and events in Lebanon in 2019 we were not able to undertake this major project in 2019 but have now taken steps towards selecting the service provider and we expect the work to be completed in 2020.

The Board of Trustees is supporting the ACSS secretariat in important ways. As before, its members are represented in the sub-committees of membership, publications and administration and finance. As members of the committees, their discussions with the secretariat and ensuing decisions are contributing in remarkable ways to the smooth flow of the work of the secretariat. We are moving steadily towards filling the vacant positions in our office and expanding at the same time our office space to meet the need for new working stations for new staff and opening up new and larger spaces for training purposes.

On the programmatic side, major progress has been made to develop two new programs under fellowships and grants. We are expanding thematically to include environmentalism and more recently health and gendered resistance for our research grants and fellowship programs, while keeping the agenda open to early career and mobility fellows. Our partnerships with sister organizations such as AFAC are enlarging both our organizations' thematic horizons and modalities of collaboration. The partnership with CODESRIA on the research program Reimagining the Sahel promises to enrich our research programs and agenda by introducing not only an important topic but also the potential of cross country and sub-regional collaboration among researchers from different parts of the African continent. On the institutional side, it is a new step that consolidates our strategic mission of fostering partnerships with South-South organizations.

Similarly, the New Generation (NewGen) program - now taking shape – has the seeds to be a significant addition to our programs and yield institutional partnerships with Arab universities, a step that would enhance one of the key strategic goals of the ACSS. The Research Ethics initiative is developing not only as a multi component program and a signature activity of the ACSS, but it has also drawn the interest of donor institutions which saw it as providing potential grounds for collaboration with other key academic institutions in the Arab region and a step towards spreading the culture of research ethics in the region.

The ACSS has added a new working group to the existing three. Our four working groups are at different levels of development and each of them is following a specific path appropriate for its objectives and needs of the field. Just as we have formed the Research Forum around ACSS grantees and consider it a platform and space for the latter to present their work in progress, exchange ideas and build network, the ACSS Academy which will be organized in the summer of 2020 is a similar platform for our four established and burgeoning working groups. Applicants in the Academy will be encouraged to demonstrate interest in one of the four working group areas so they can receive substantive training on them in addition to participating in sessions for general skill building and networking. We are also finding ways for our programs to cross feed each other. A select group of the NewGen PhD participants will take part in the ACSS Academy.

Lessons learned

As our activities grew in 2019, so did the lessons we learned from the activities we implemented as well as plans that we were not able to accomplish during the year. Following are some reflections:

- As our Focal Point in Palestine has become more established, we have been able to shed more light on their activities by regularly featuring updates on their work. This year we were able to do the same with our Algeria Focal Point. Two new events are planned in Algeria in 2020, focusing on Research Ethics and Ethnography that we are looking forward to cover.

The low publishing rate of the working paper series is largely due to three main reasons: 1) the unexpected lengthiness of the review process; 2) the difficulty in finding reviewers covering the disciplines and topics addressed in the papers; and 3) delays in the submissions and revisions.

These are challenges that we have partially succeeded in addressing in 2019 through discussions with the ERB and the Board of Trustees Publications Committee in the context of the evaluation of the Working Paper Series as follows:

- Shortening the review period previously given to the reviewers and the authors.
- More actively engaging the ERB and the publications committee members in the review process.
- Enlarging the scope of the reviewers to reach more disciplines and countries in the Arab region.

Since we had this discussion and reached decisions on how to speed up the process, we have succeeded in publishing 5 working papers in one year.

Once the website is revamped we will be able to promote and demonstrate our work in a much more appealing manner. At the moment we are limited in what we can do with the current website. There will be sections where we can showcase the outputs of our grantees as well as promote ACSS videos and photos. There will also be daily updates of our most recent activities and social science calls, conferences and workshops happening in/on the region.

As for our social media platforms, we have succeeded in increasing the number of followers to both Facebook and Twitter through regular posts that are of interest to students and scholars of the social sciences. To maintain a large number of followers, we need to have daily posts that are visually appealing that include videos, photos, charts, flyers and links to the website (not just text).

The biweekly roundups provide information on available opportunities for scholars in and from the region. Thus, it has become an important source of information on vacancies, conferences and calls. If these opportunities continue to increase, we will start publishing the roundup weekly.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1- ACSS 2020 Strategy

Appendix 2 -Moushira CV-ACSS

Appendix 3- RBM Logframe

Appendix 4- Grantees Survey

Appendix 5- GA Agenda

Appendix 6- BoT Meeting September Agenda

Appendix 7- Audit Report

Appendix 8- HR Consultant Report

Appendix 9- Media Coverage

Appendix 10- Donors Forum letter of invitation and list of participants

Appendix 11-Status of Gender Studies in the MENA Region – Agenda

Appendix 12- Research Grants Program (RGP)

Appendix 13- RGP7 Concept Note

Appendix 14- Early Career Fellows Program (ECFP)

Appendix 15- Small Grants Program (SGP)

Appendix 16- ACSS-FMSH-Postdoctoral Mobility Program (ACSS-FMSH)

Appendix 17- Research on the Arts Program

Appendix 18- New Paradigms Factory Program on Gendered Resistance (NPF)

Appendix 19- Bassem Chit Fellowship (BCF)

Appendix 20- CODESRIA joint proposal and timeline

Appendix 21- New Gen Consultation Meeting Agenda

Appendix 22- May CV

Appendix 23 – New Gen overview of the application and the selection criteria and methodology

Appendix 24- ACSS Academy

Appendix 25- CoP Membership Based on Subgroups

Appendix 26- CoP Agenda of June 2019 meeting

Appendix 27- CoP Draft Program for the ACSS Academy

Appendix 28-Abstract of Roundtable at 4th ACSS Conference

Appendix 29- CoP Call for Abstracts

Appendix 30-Invitation to Translating Critical Theories Panel

Appendix 31- Dataverse Training Workshops

Appendix 32- ASSM advisory committee

Appendix 33-ASSR2 online campaign

Appendix 34-ASSR3 roundtable agenda

Appendix 35-ASSR3 survey questionnaire

Appendix 36- Ramallah consultation agenda

Appendix 37-Iraq project workplan

Appendix 38-Iraq project advisory Committee Meeting agenda

Appendix 39-Iraq project concept note

Appendix 40-Dataverse Advisory Committee Meeting agenda

Appendix 41-Dataverse global map

Appendix 42- IDRC workshop agenda and IDRC workshop participants list

Appendix 43- School Global South Program

Appendix 44- NPF Publication Cover

Appendix 45- Review Volume list of papers