

Being a newly established journal, *Nidaba* aims to provide a platform for new approaches to the Middle East to be shared with scholars, policy makers, and the public.

Introduction

by Dalia Abdelhady | Editor-in-chief

For many observers of the Middle East, the region has historically been fraught with divisions and conflicts. The current influx of Syrian refugees to Europe and North America (despite the fact that neighboring countries continue to carry the mass of the burden) has extended the geographical reach of these conflicts, increasing the sense of emergency, crisis and fear of the Other. At the same time, academics researching the Middle East find their work often scrutinized, criticized and undervalued. Despite these challenges, the region offers a diversity of societies and cultures, political systems, and historical developments that leaves us with much to learn and investigate. Like other parts of the world, the intersection of cultures, histories, and social forces that are observed in the Middle East attests to the interconnectedness of our world. It is the aim of *Nidaba* to highlight such interconnectedness, reveal the diversity in the Middle East, and reflect the multiple ways it can be studied.

Being a newly established journal, *Nidaba* aims to provide a platform for new approaches to the Middle East to be shared with scholars, policy makers, and the public. As such, *Nidaba* encourages submissions from scholars who are at the early stages of their careers or are interested in exploring non-traditional

approaches to the study of the region. *Nidaba* also aspires to reflect the interdisciplinary structure of CMES. Ranging from historians, sociologists and anthropologists, to political scientists and economists, and including engineers and natural geographers, CMES embodies inter-disciplinarity in its research projects and outlook to the region. In its attempt to push disciplinary boundaries that reflects the research environment at CMES, *Nidaba* also strives to offer a re-thinking of the physical boundaries of the region across and within the articles it publishes. As an open access journal, *Nidaba* also wishes to contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and debates beyond academic institutions.

This inaugural issue includes a collection of articles that are somewhat unique. Earlier drafts of these articles were presented at the Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) in Cambridge in July 2012. Under the title “Women and Globalization in the GCC: Negotiating States, Agency and Social Change,” May Aldabbagh (New York University, Abu Dhabi) and I organized a two-day workshop where fifteen papers were presented. The papers presented at the workshop demonstrated the diverse institutional and cultural mechanisms that influence gender dynamics in the GCC. Collectively, workshop papers explored the



In dedication to professor emeritus Mary Ann Tétreault

complicated and contradictory interactions between women, states, and societies in the Gulf region which shape (and are shaped by) globalization processes (Abdelhady, Aldabbagh and Gargani 2013). Bringing together scholars from literature, anthropology, sociology, and business, the workshop was a fruitful exchange of ideas, approaches and critiques. The six articles included here were selected for publication from among the fifteen workshop papers by the two workshop organizers and then blindly peer-reviewed prior to their publication.

Given the thematic focus of the articles presented here, it seems befitting that the inaugural issue of *Nidaba* is dedicated to the late Mary Ann Tétreault, the Una Chapman Cox Distinguished Professor of International Affairs Emerita at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. The late professor dedicated much of her academic career to the study of gender in the Middle East in general and the GCC in specific. In spite of the fact that Mary Ann did not participate in the GRM workshop where the articles here were first presented, her influence is reflected in almost all of them. Beyond her academic legacy, Mary Ann was known to others in the field as a supportive colleague, generous mentor and inspirational intellectual. Her departure in November 2015 constitutes a major loss

to many who are interested in the study of gender, the Middle East, and international political economy.

Nidaba is the Sumerian goddess of harvest, learning, and writing, who was the patron of scribes, and she is considered to be the provider of the reed stylus. By choosing to name our new journal after Nidaba, we truly hope to offer a new and novel platform for learning and writing about the Middle East that can reflect and contribute to the interconnectedness and diversity in the region, our fields of study and indeed the world we live in.

REFERENCES

- Abdelhady, Dalia, May Aldabbagh and Ghalia Gargani. 2013. *Women and Globalization in the GCC: Negotiating States, Agency and Social Change*. Proceedings Report. Dubai School of Government.