Prof. Simon Mabon Bio

Professor Simon Mabon is Chair in International Politics at Lancaster University where he directs the Richardson Institute. He holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of Leeds and is the director of the SEPAD Project, funded by Carnegie Corporation which looks at the position and contestation of sectarian identities within the contemporary Middle East (www.sepad.org.uk).

Mabon is the author of a number of books on the contemporary Middle East including: *Houses built on sand: Sectarianism, revolution and violence in the Middle East* (Manchester University Press, 2020); *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East* (IB Tauris, 2013); and *The Struggle for Supremacy: Saudi Arabia and Iran* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). He has published in a range of Middle East and International Relations journals including: *Review of International Studies; Middle East Journal; Middle East Policy; British Journal of Middle East Studies; Politics, Religion and Ideology;* and *Third World Quarterly.* He is the co-editor of a major new Middle Eastern book series with Manchester University Press.

In 2016-7 Mabon served as academic advisor to the House of Lords International Relations committee report into the UK’s relations with the Middle East. He regularly consults with governmental agencies and for international news outlets including the BBC, CNN, CNBC, Sky, Al Jazeera, Al Arabiyya, France 24, Deutsche Welle, and others. He tweets @profmabon.

Dr. Luciano Zaccara Bio

Dr. Luciano Zaccara is Research Assistant Professor in Gulf Politics at the Qatar University, Gulf Studies Center. He is also a Visiting Assistant Professor at the Georgetown University in Qatar, and Director of the Observatory on Politics and Elections in the Arab and Muslim World, Spain.

He obtained a BA in Political Science from National University of Rosario, Argentina, and a PhD in Arab and Islamic Studies from Autonoma University of Madrid, Spain. He has been post-doctoral fellow at Autonoma University of Barcelona; Visiting Researcher at Exeter University, Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies; and Visiting Researcher at Princeton University, Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies.

His research interests are Iranian Politics and Foreign Policy; Gulf Politics; International Relations in the Persian Gulf; and Electoral Systems in MENA region.

His latest publication is “Foreign Policy of Iran under President Hassan Rouhani's First Term (2013–2017)”, Zaccara, Luciano (Ed.), Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

Dr. Lucia Ardovini Bio

Dr. Lucia Ardovini is a Research Fellow in the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Swedish Institute of International Affairs. Her research focuses on current trajectories of Islamist movements across the MENA region, with a special focus on the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. In particular, she is tracing the organization's restructuring process following the 2013 coup, examining its repercussions on ideology, identity, and organizational structures.

Lucia received her Ph.D in International Relations from Lancaster University in 2017. Her research interests include political Islam, social movements, the politics of resistance and state-society relations.

Dr. Rashed Alrasheed

D. Rashed Alrasheed is a lecturer in Applied Science University, Bahrain and a fellow at the Richardson Institute, Lancaster University. His research interests center around the Middle East Studies with a focus on the Foreign policy, Diplomacy, International Relations and Political Sociology. His also broadly interested in Political Islam, trans-state loyalties, Islamic groups and the relationship between religion, authority, society and state in the Middle East. Rashed is the author of *Parliamentary diplomacy: the objectives, mechanisms & roles* (Case study of the Bahraini Council of Representatives).

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