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The Representation of Disability in Higher Education Institutions in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf

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ABSTRACT

Investment in education and cultural development over the past 50 years has seen a rapid expansion in higher education throughout the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC). This expansion of higher education has brought ethnic diversity, with students and staff from many countries moving through the region to study or teach. However, although this ethnic diversity is now common, there remain few students or academic staff members with openly-declared physical or learning disabilities in GCC higher education. This chapter has two aims. The first aim is to discuss the findings of a review of documents and datasets on higher education and disability in the GCC. The second aim is to contribute to the debate on the economic, social and cultural promotion of inclusion in GCC universities and higher colleges. The results of the review demonstrate: 1) the continued lack of students and staff with declared disabilities could in part be due to and reflected in the lack of recognition of disability in documentation on higher education in the GCC; 2) few data sets exist that can determine the influences on a changing demography in the GCC's jurisdictions or the pressures of the GCC's economy on the education, training and social and financial support for people with disabilities in the region. The review concludes that the continued lack of students and staff with

declared disabilities is in part due to and reflected in the lack of recognition of disability in the culture of higher education in the GCC.

Keywords: Disability, Arabian Gulf, Higher Education, GCC, Access, Inclusion, Exclusion, Datasets, Statistics, Policy, Student Support

Introduction

This chapter discusses a review on the culture of support for disability in higher education in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC). The review follows previous research by the author on the broader topic of sustainability and the GCC's disabled community (Hayhoe, 2014). This earlier review examined cultural and epistemological attitudes to people with disabilities and was designed to evaluate the sustainability of a population of people with disabilities in the region. At the time, it was felt that the review was particularly necessary as the countries of the GCC had undergone a political and cultural paradigm shift in the structure of their economies. This shift subsequently stimulated a process of moving from being largely dependent on oil-based economy to a post-oil, knowledge, skills, industrialized and trading economy. This paradigm shift was necessary at the time, as prices of crude oil of the type found in the Gulf were fluctuating, and its growing population was placing an increasing strain on social services.

In addition to its economic ambitions, in its fifteen-year development strategy the GCC focussed on the United Nations' (UN) cultural, social and environmental sustainability goals as a part of its goals from 2010-2025 (GCC Secretariat General, 2011). It was felt this support of people with disabilities could be said to be tacitly included in the GCCs remit, as the right to long-term quality of life for all was set out in the UN Millennium Goals (United Nations, 2000) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2012). Moreover, this earlier project identified that by placing an emphasis on sustainability it became necessary to evaluate the role of its existing institutions, distribution of resources and the education of its population.

In contrast, this review is designed to identify: 1) cultural, epistemological and practical issues and tensions of support for members of GCC higher education; 2) the gaps in policies, practices and evidence-based understanding affecting disability in GCC higher education; 3) the influences of external factors on the understanding of disability in GCC higher education – this latter analysis was informed by the epistemological model of disability as a foundation of analysis (Hayhoe, 2016). To update this earlier review, it was also decided to use a model of inclusive capital that was developed as a new framework of analysis for use in recent studies of access to cultural institutions (Hayhoe, Tonin & Lunardi, 2017). This framework is now discussed in greater detail.

Inclusive Capital

Material philosophies of human value, which see people as having psychological and social worth, evolved chronologically from the Enlightenment through to the latter half of the Twentieth Century (see for example the discussions of human value from Smith (2005) through Marx (1986) and onto Bourdieu (2010)). Human value, often referred to by these authors as intangible practice, skills and knowledge has also traditionally been seen as an effective way of understanding our personal needs. Furthermore, human values are also seen as ethical practice and knowledge that shape our individual identity and behavior, and our ways of thinking about motives that drive the inclusion of people with disabilities in higher education.

Previous philosophies on human value have a common theme: they value a *sense of inclusion* as part of our human condition to feel part of a network. That is to say, they determine the value of family, friends, social class, religion or ethnicity as a community (Bourdieu, 2010). Subsequently, these philosophies agree it is important for people to network and learn through others - although there are better and worse ways of networking and learning and we might be

encouraged to use one way over another, networking and learning are part of our human condition. Through practices such as education, we also seek value to feel a *sense of inclusion*, and this inclusion fosters our *sense of value*. Consequently, to develop inclusive capital can also provide us with a *sense of value*.

Previously, it has been argued that acquiring inclusive capital is important for those who are disabled, because people with disabilities are more likely to find barriers to accessing the first steps of inclusive capital (Hayhoe, Tonin & Lunardi, 2017). This leads to a lessening of a *sense of inclusion* in mainstream society, and to a growing *sense of social and cultural exclusion* and isolation. For instance, people with disabilities often find it harder to access technologies they interact with, or to access the environments of cultural institutions such as universities. People with disabilities are also less likely to have their needs understood, or be thought of as needing access to the learning of people without disabilities. They are often thought to want services that separate them from the community they were raised in.

The physical nature of some disabilities or infirmities can also lessen access to acquiring inclusive capital. For example, acquiring a visual impairment after childhood can make it harder to join group discussions that are an essential part of networking for gaining information. In particular, research has found that people who have later sensory impairments often refuse to learn codes such as sign language or Braille or identify themselves as being disabled (Holder & Assaf, 2017). Physical disabilities may also make it harder to use transportation or access university campuses or physical academic networks, such as study groups. Late acquired learning disabilities can similarly be thought to restrict access to mainstream learning, and the spaces and places of cultural institutions that people once enjoyed. Therefore, it is another task of this review to illustrate the need for universities and policy makers to recognize the need for

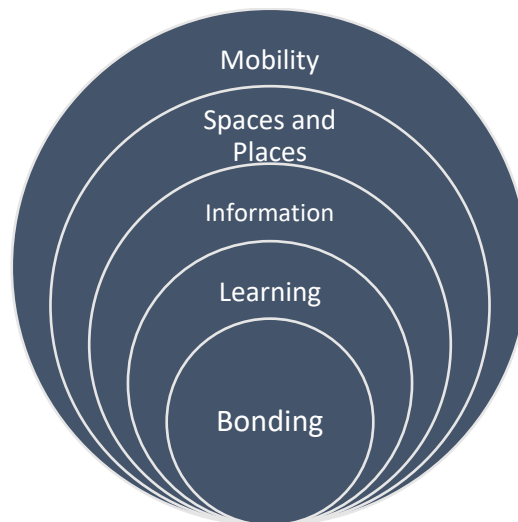
inclusive capital in an attempt to foster a sense of inclusion. Moreover, universities need to understand this *sense of inclusion* for all their members.

Practically, universities must also understand ways in which they can adapt their spaces and places – both their physical and virtual environments. These institutions and teachers also need to adapt their own behaviour to develop habits and practices that recognize a sense of inclusion in others. Subsequently, to provide a context for the use of inclusive capital as a means of analysing the cultural approach to disability in higher education, five stages of developing inclusive capital used to focus the search of documents is discussed below.

Five Stages of Developing Inclusive Capital in Higher Education

Inclusive capital can be said to develop in five stages, and these five stages are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The development of inclusive capital and a sense of inclusion



The first stage of inclusive capital is developing *connections and bonds* within a group of people. These groups are largely families or groups of friends, classmates or workmates or, as

Yardi (2010) observes, connecting and bonding through virtual communities on social media. Without connecting with and bonding to a social or cultural network, there is no sense of inclusion. Consequently, creating a service with a sense of inclusion must be premised on a social and cultural process of making a member of a higher education institution feel valued in these bonds and connections.

The second stage of providing services is to provide a *means of learning* inclusive capital through networks – that is to say, to use our families, friends, communities and peers to learn and acquire inclusive capital. Consequently, learning inclusive capital consists of acquiring habits, knowledge and practices that can lead to a *sense of inclusion*. Another element of learning inclusive capital is seeing ourselves as being equally included. And, through this form of learning we also develop a further sense, the moral *sense of justice*, which can also be described as a form of moral knowledge – i.e. people have refused services previously if they feel they are unjust to their needs or teach skills they don't feel are right (Holder & Assaf, 2017).

The third stage of service provision is helping people *collect information* that points to or later leads to knowledge. This collection of information can include finding out about our surroundings, making judgements about their worth or planning to move within our surroundings. For example, this information could be providing websites that help university applications. Such forms of information can also be acquired through the use of technology for gaining information. In the modern era, this third stage can also mean accessing digital networks or learning. Information is consequently a vital part of planning and designing inclusive capital, and its subsequent habits and practice. It can be described as the raw material or the atomic level of inclusive capital.

The fourth stage of acquiring inclusive capital is providing universities that allow for *physical or virtual access to spaces and places*, such as visiting or attending spaces in communities. These institutions can include physical college buildings or, as Yardi (2009, 2010) suggests, online learning and social networking.

The fifth stage of acquiring inclusive capital is providing *physical and virtual mobility*, which allows for navigation through spaces and places, networks, information and learning. For instance, this mobility can be the skills needed to move around or between university environments, move between groups of friends or dexterously navigate technologies like web browsers. Conversely, lacking mobility can lead to exclusion, such as being unable to attend a university as a place or being unable to find information because you are unable to navigate a website. It can also be, the inability to move between networks, such as the inability to join mainstream social networks. Subsequently, mobility is the essential catalyst of all inclusive capitals.

This five-stage model of inclusive capital was used in this review as a filter for searching for and analysing documents that represented the elements of inclusion in higher education. Although not only surveying disability in higher education that fit the model, the survey focused on elements of higher education that fit into the five stages of developing inclusive capital as a measurement of relevance. The model was also used to identify policies and demographic data for the first stage of data analysis. For instance, during analysis of university and GCC governmental documentation, issues of access to premises were searched for. Similarly, information provision through websites by universities about issues such as applications, accommodation and libraries were examined and compared in different jurisdictions. Similarly,

in later analysis documents with transportation, networking, the effects of accessible communal working and physical isolation were emphasised in key-word searches.

The following report of the review is broken into three sections: 1) the grounded methodology and process used to analyse and categorise the surveys included in the review; 2) findings from the three stages of analysis, and the development of an initial hypothesis; 3) conclusions and recommendations drawn from the review.

The Review Process

The methodology used in the review was an adaptation of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), termed grounded methodology (Hayhoe, 2012, 2020). Like grounded theory, the research was qualitative and conducted using three phases of analysis. In traditional grounded theory and more formal grounded methodology these are referred to as open (first), axial (second) and selective (third) phases of analysis, although these technical terms were not relevant in this review so plain English terms were used instead.

Also like grounded theory, during the three phases of analysis data was analysed in a progressively more focussed way and all forms of data were treated as equally important. This system of data analysis suited the reflexive, problem solving approach to this novel cultural context and topic and kept the formal structure of triangulating different forms of data, data analysis and data collection methods. However, unlike grounded theory this method encouraged the evolution of culturally deduced theories in the style of cultural anthropology (Geertz, 1989). Consequently, data was collected and analysed asynchronously – the data was pre-defined, as was the nature of the review in the original proposal - and used deductive logic, as this

adaptation of grounded theory was influenced by Popper's (1959, 1979) criticism of induction as unnatural human law.

In this application of grounded methodology, a mixture of qualitative and quantitative secondary source data was collected, as it was felt to be appropriate to the analysis. Although, like traditional grounded theories, all primary data was analysed qualitatively and secondary source statistics were only used to indicate epistemological trends in the region.

The Search of Documentation

As stated above, the data for this review was: a) GCC documentation and related secondary source literature on disability, higher education and the cultural context of institutions in the GCC; b) public websites of universities and a well-known, respected Arabic university "league table," QS University Arab Rankings (QS Rankings, n.d.a), which included recognised higher education institutions in the GCC; c) publicly available data on the demographics of disability and / or higher education in the GCC and its constituent jurisdictions. The searches of all this documentation was conducted in parallel and asynchronously from January to late April 2019 – i.e. the searches of literature, websites and datasets were conducted in parallel during the time afforded for the review, although they were then analysed in three separate phases.

The search of datasets and policies from the GCC, including the demographic figures from national censuses and academic literature, was extracted from: a) published documents on the website of the GCC's official statistical repository, GCC-STAT (n.d.), and the statistical offices of the constituent jurisdictions of the GCC, which are shown in Table 1; b) the websites of selected universities in the jurisdictions of the GCC; c) searches of academic literature through online and library databases – see below on the specific search strategies.

Table 1: Table of Statistical Offices and Their Public Websites Used in the First Phase

JURISDICTION	STATISTICAL AGENCY	WEBSITE
GCC	GCC-STAT	https://gccstat.org/en/
Bahrain	Information and e-Government Authority	http://www.data.gov.bh/
Kuwait	Central Statistical Bureau	https://www.csb.gov.kw/Default_EN
Oman	National Centre for Statistics and Information	https://www.ncsi.gov.om/Pages/Register.aspx
Qatar	Ministry of Development, Planning and Statistics	https://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/statistics1/pages/default.aspx
Saudi Arabia	General Authority for Statistics	https://www.stats.gov.sa/en
United Arab Emirates	Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority	http://fcsa.gov.ae/en-us

To access demographic data on the various websites, searches of specific datasets on higher education and disability were made. In addition, general demographic data on disability and higher education (where it existed) were also assessed and downloaded. This search of data on universities in the GCC identified the top-ranked university in each of the region's jurisdictions – this ranking was chosen, as it used a reliable set of metrics with an established reputation. The methodology used by QS for this ranking included six metrics, each of which was weighted according to the importance of its survey by its users and international universities themselves. These metrics were as follows:

1. “Academic Reputation
2. Employer Reputation

3. Faculty/Student Ratio
4. Citations per faculty
5. International Faculty Ratio
6. International Student Ratio” (QS Rankings, n.d.b, Paragraph 2)

From this process, the following universities in each of the GCC’s jurisdictions were identified:

1. University of Bahrain (Bahrain)
2. University of Kuwait (Kuwait)
3. Sultan Qaboos University (Oman)
4. University of Qatar (Qatar)
5. King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals (Saudi Arabia)
6. United Arab Emirates University (United Arab Emirates)

These universities’ websites, the official GCC websites, the websites of agencies from each jurisdiction, and the websites of specialist Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), such as the World Health Organisation, were then searched. These searches were made using a regular Google search-engine on Chrome and through the respective websites’ menus and internal search engines.

The search of literature on disability and higher education gave preference to the most recent documents where possible. The document searches included the following research literature databases: the British Education Index, US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health’s PubMed database, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar – although this research literature only supported the context of the review, and confirmatory secondary source data. Other than Scopus and Google Scholar, all academic databases were chosen on the

basis that they recognised both higher education and disability in journals and conference proceedings, and access was available to them through a university library. Google Scholar was chosen as it is a general database of documents and identified journals and proceedings from other disciplines not recognised in the specialised databases.

Boolean Searches and Analysis

During the searches of documents and datasets, combinations of the following keywords or key phrases in two different categories relating to higher education and disability were used: CATEGORY A KEYWORDS: impairment, disability, special need, handicap (not a favoured term, but included as it may be included in older documents), special needs, disabilities; CATEGORY B KEYWORDS: higher education, universities, education, degrees, undergraduate, postgraduate, academia. The keywords in CATEGORY A were adapted from previous studies in related fields, using a logical interrogatory method (Hayhoe, 2020). Subsequently, each keyword from CATEGORY A was combined with each keyword from CATEGORY B and separated by a Boolean “AND,” meaning documents had to contain at least a keyword from each category.

There were restrictions to this method of sampling documentation and data sets in this and previous studies, which made it an imperfect science. For example, it was observed that certain databases used different search algorithms, and these provided potential inconsistencies in keyword searches- these unique algorithms included the internal search facilities of specialist websites. It was also observed that there is no definitive database of all higher education and disability documentation and datasets. Therefore, it was assumed that some lesser known institutions, NGOs and publishers were potentially missed.

Following these searches, the three phases of data analysis were conducted as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Outline of the Stages of Analysis Used During the Review



During the first phase, GCC policies and contextual observations from academic literature were analysed against the five stages of inclusive capital, and focussed observations were made. From these early observations, foci of analysis were slowly identified, and these informed the developmental categories in the second phase. During the second phase, demographic datasets and their correlations from the GCC and its constituent jurisdictions were analysed in categories. As this was a tertiary review, only processed data from reliable, officially published, secondary source datasets were used, as it was felt that introducing other data sets using different methodologies would be inconsistent. During this data search, graphs from the GCC were also referred to and the initial hypothesis was formulated. During the third phase, the hypothesis was tested using data from the six different universities, their strategies of access and

inclusion and their cultural context. In this meta-analysis, trends in overlapping categories were observed and the areas of support that showed specific correlations were identified.

This review is now discussed in the following section.

Review of Public Information

First Phase of Analysis

The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) was founded in May 1981 (21st Rajab 1401 AH in the Islamic calendar) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The organisation consisted of the governments of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait. The council was established with a number of objectives in mind, the most important of which was to coordinate, integrate and interconnect all six countries' populations and cultural institutions. These objective were specified in its statement of Foundations and Concepts as follows:

[The GCC is the] institutional embodiment of a historical, social and cultural reality. Deep [Islamic] religious and cultural ties link the six states, and strong kin relations prevail among their citizens. All these factors, enhanced by one geographical entity extending from sea to desert, have facilitated contacts and interaction among them, and created homogeneous values and characteristics ... It is also a fulfilment of the aspirations of its citizens towards some sort of Arab regional unity (GCC Secretariat General, n.d., Concepts and Foundations).

Since its beginnings, GCC policy development has largely focussed on the economy of the region, with the stability of money supply, employment and trade being the single largest issue in the region. In the early years of the new millennium, new objectives were drafted,

including a proposal that the GCC should launch a single currency to be used by all its jurisdictions by 2010 (IMF, 2011). Although it was never brought into existence, the proposed currency was to be similar in means and distribution to that of the single European currency (the Euro), which was referred to as a model of development (Khan, 2009).

The purpose of launching the single currency was to improve the economic prospects of its constituent countries and provide a cultural initiative that would obviate its need to rely on the dollar – i.e. this would be an *oil currency*. In addition, it was believed that by easing economic boundaries, smoother business partnerships and cooperation between institutions and industrial and business projects could be more easily developed. Following problems with the Euro in the European Union and a number of local and global economic problems, steps towards changing the objectives and constitution of the GCC were abandoned for at least the medium term (Vine et. al., 2010). This move appeared to change the cultural emphasis of higher education to one of a newer, competitive economic models, one which saw cultural development as subservient to its economic aims.

However, despite its fears, the instabilities in similar economic unions and political and social unrest in neighbouring regions - and in some of its own jurisdictions - the GCC remained economically stable in the short to medium term. Significantly, and although it has not been as rapid as its recent past, economic and social development in GCC states has continued in the short to medium term (Vine et. al., 2010). This economic development has come with significant growth in the population and quality of life amongst the younger population of its constituent jurisdictions. This growth is due to falling infant mortality rates and increased adult life expectancy (IMF, 2011), and arguably leads to a continued growth in the number and form of people with disabilities and an increase in higher education.

Consequently, it can be suggested that decreased infant mortality has led to the survival of children with potentially significant health problems, producing a greater need for educational development. This educational development includes an aspiration for higher education in this sector of the population (United Nations, 2006). Given continued economic, social and cultural evolution in the jurisdictions of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), in 1999 the GCC published a number of revised future plans for its constituent countries up until 2025 (IMF, 2011). This initiative was part of a broader initiative that began at the start of the new millennium. Central to these plans were revised goals and strategic objectives, the foremost of which were designed to develop a socially and economically stable population in all its jurisdictions. As this plan states:

The comprehensive concept of sustainable development should be promoted over the time period in which this strategy will be implemented. This is because the concept of sustainable development stresses the fact that development is a continuous process transcending generations and that it is the outcome of human interaction with the existing resources [including human resources] as well the prevailing conditions that cause constant advancement of society and increases the efficient use of human, material and technological resources. That requires adopting the following approaches:

1. Optimal utilization of the available resources and allocation of human and material resources in an appropriate manner.
2. Deriving maximum benefit from the technical capabilities and adapting their use for promoting growth and enhancing human capacities.

3. Enhancing understanding of the modern functions of government, which ensure sustainable development and adopting policies that ensure economic and social stability and performance in terms of development.
4. Participation of all community institutions in in the development process and seriously handling the options and priorities.
5. Developing the institutional capacities and creating a good environment for the general economic and social policies.
6. Emphasizing correlations between productive work, consumption patterns and development of human resources.
7. Participation of the work force in productive economic activities and guaranteeing their rights and constantly rehabilitating and training them for the job market (GCC Secretariat General, 1999, pp.18-19).

During the analysis of documentation, it was observed that there was a correlation between the model of inclusive capital and the development of cultural cohesion. For instance, although the GCC was founded on largely economic policies, there was also an emphasis in these policies on a need for networking / bonding, the sharing of information and the importance of learning. Four GCC ambitions that sign-posted these elements were: 1) recognizing a shared cultural and familial heritage; 2) developing homogenous economic, business, financial, legal, and administrative information to inform holistic regulation; 3) maintaining cross-border scientific and technical research and education in industry, mining, agriculture, water and animal resources; 4) creating research centers, joint ventures, and cooperation within private industry (GCC Secretariat General, n.d.).

However, on searching newer documents on the GCC, it was observed that there were still no whole-GCC policies or strategic plans on social inclusion for people with disabilities since the original review. This newer survey also showed the documentation in the first phase of research provided no consideration of specific inclusion of students or academics in higher education at a whole GCC level. As with the previous review, no GCC-wide policies on disability and higher education appeared to exist. Similarly, no official documentation defined disability on a whole GCC level and no discussion of the concept of disability seemed to have been debated by the GCC Secretariat General. Moreover, apart from the earlier review, no academic literature or statistical reports of international *umbrella* organizations relating to the GCC discussed disability in higher education as a specific GCC issue (Hayhoe, 2014).

Over six years on from the earlier review, there also appeared to be little increase in topics of critical debate on disability in the GCC, or a critical analysis of models of disability in the region. In addition, as the previous project observed, documents on disability in the constituent countries of the GCC often referred to Arabic culture rather than a specific GCC culture (see for example, Gharaibeh, 2009; Al Thani, 2006). Furthermore, it was observed that documents on disability in the GCC generally still tended to focus on disability as a medical issue. They also tended to draw on the support of people with disabilities by traditional impairments and medicalised conditions, something that was identified previously as an epistemological trend (See for example El-Islam, 2008; Hamdi, Amin & Abou-Saleh, M.T., 1997; Yaqub & Daif 1988).

Following this analysis of data, the following general findings were taken forward to the next phase of analysis: (a) given a lack of common policy on disability and higher education, the only commonality between all the jurisdictions was their definition of disability - importantly,

none of the jurisdictions appeared to mention mental health issues as a form of disability; (b) apart from these definitions, there appeared to less promotion of broader cultural issues and inclusion in higher education over its economic aims. This led to the following questions for research in the second phase of analysis: (1) Does the statistical analysis of higher education and disability in the GCC reflect this lack of policy on higher education and disability? (2) Do the statistics gathered and published by the GCC reflect the five stages of inclusive capital, given its lack of debate on inclusion and disability? These trends thus became the focus of analysis in the axial coding phase.

The Second Phase of Analysis

As part of its drive for economic and cultural development, the GCC's central source of statistics, GCC-STAT, was founded to inform, drive and evaluate its economic and cultural policies (GCC-STAT, n.d.). However, in common with the findings of the policy survey above, GCC-STAT appears not to have generated datasets on disability, and has not correlated disability and higher education. Moreover, the survey of these datasets showed a similar emphasis on economic data and a lack of correlation between the five stages of inclusive capital and statistics that promote cultural inclusion, as the first phase of analysis observed (Bourdieu, 2010). It was also observable that there were limited datasets on disability in higher education, and limited datasets on disability in general across the jurisdictions that make up the GCC.

GCC-STAT publish figures on mortality and significant illnesses such as diabetes and cancer, which are prevalent across the region and add to an understanding of impairments leading to disability. However, there appear to be no datasets on key statistics related to higher education and these impairments, such as figures on the age groups effected by illnesses or the effects of these illnesses as a cause of exclusion from higher education. Although the GCC's

discussion on higher education relates to the space and place stage of inclusive capital, there is no mention of physical accessibility of buildings, the relationship between institutions or the other four stages of inclusive capital. There is also inconsistency of data collection across the jurisdictions of the GCC, although these figures are more reliably collected by the GCC's individual jurisdictions, i.e. there appear to be fewer gaps in figures across these individual jurisdictions. For instance, GCC-STAT (n.d.) publish figures on the education systems of its constituent jurisdictions via an Educational Bulletin, and the introduction to this bulletin emphasises the importance of the role of these statistics in GCC education planning and policy decisions. It is arguable therefore that these statistics could be interpreted as representing the inclusive capital stages of Information and Learning.

“There is no doubt that education statistics play an important role in the preparation of key reports, draw plans and strategic policies and make decisions that contribute to raising the educational process in any society and an inquiry set development goals. This bulletin reviews the most important statistics relating to education, which serve users, researchers, and decision makers at the level of the Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as in various other sectors. This bulletin is a tributary of knowledge to supplement the statistical knowledge of various education statistics, and the preparation of research, studies, and reports, which reflect the educational process in the GCC countries, which is considered a starting point for planning, and a drawing of the policies and decision-making.” (GCC-STAT, n.d., Paragraphs 2-3)

However, despite its emphasis on the importance of these statistics, the figures presented in its tables tend also to be related to economic activity and reported figures such as student and staff numbers. Furthermore, the reported figures are infrequent, rarely demonstrates uniformity,

where correlations exist in this data it often relates to one or two unrelated variables and lacks social and cultural context. For example, at the time of writing GCC-STAT's (n.d.) current Education Bulletin, which includes figures on teachers in higher education from 2012-2017, features a break down per jurisdiction of the GCC correlated with citizen / non-citizen status of staff members and gender by year. There is, however, no explanation or report on why these figures are relevant to its analysis or a report highlighting the relevance of these figures.

The figures presented in the latest Education Bulletin also appear to demonstrate that: a) few of the represented jurisdictions collect complete statistics for all the featured years; b) Saudi Arabia has only collected data by citizen / non-citizen for two of the featured years intermittently yet consistently collected statistics on gender; c) up until the year 2016-2017, the only other jurisdiction reporting consistent figures on university teachers by gender and nationality was Oman. There is also some ambiguity about how these statistics were collected, with no *comparative methodology* being published about the datasets. As stated above, datasets from the constituent jurisdictions of the GCC are more detailed and more recently collated – many of the statistics run up to 2017. However, as with the observation on GCC policies, there seem to be significant variations in the type and correlation of datasets and the methods of collecting data on disability in higher education. This seems to render any comparison of jurisdictions scientifically unreliable.

More importantly, where they can be mapped to the five stages of inclusive capital, these datasets show a tendency to exclude in space and place, as there is an emphasis on separate social centres in the figures. For example, only Qatar's Ministry of Development, Planning and Statistics (2017) and Saudi Arabia's General Authority for Statistics (2017) publish datasets showing a relationship between disability and higher education, or develop an image of inclusion

in universities' spaces; these statistics show the number of people with disabilities registered for different levels of academic and vocational programs, with Qatar publishing statistics on types of degree and Saudi Arabia publishing statistics on university attendance alone.

However, even though both Saudi Arabia and Qatar publish statistics on university attendance, there is no evidence of any other stages of inclusive capital in these datasets. Furthermore, there is also no evidence of any forward planning using these statistics as a foundation of review. For example, in 2008 the Qatari Government published a National Vision to be achieved by 2030 – five years after the GCC's own millennium goals (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008). However, in their National Vision document there is no mention of disability, and education is only discussed generally, with no mention of university education in particular, and no figures or targets for achievement mentioned.

It was also observed that all other GCC jurisdictions show various correlations between disability, geographical region, gender and social support. For example, where Kuwait (Central Statistical Bureau, 2017) and the UAE (Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority, n.d.) discuss disability, they produce statistics on people with disabilities under the social care system, with the UAE in particular discussing People of Determination centres.

The initial hypothesis based on these findings was as follows: *The GCC as an institution and the governments of its constituent jurisdictions has done little to develop a strategy for inclusion and access to higher education for people with disabilities. Therefore, government-run universities in these jurisdictions will have no co-ordinated, overall direction for inclusion.*

The Third Phase of Analysis

The results of the survey of each top university in each jurisdiction can be found in Table 2. It is important to note that although the quantity of information published on each university

website is commented on, as this was a qualitative appraisal, no metrics on the stages of inclusive capital were used. Instead, only the consideration or the non-consideration of the stages of inclusive capital and the context of the universities' attitudes to support is recorded.

Table 2: Results of the survey of access and inclusion top public universities in the GCC

Country, University and Description	Networking	Learning	Information	Space & Place	Mobility
BAHRAIN - University of Bahrain (UoB) is a government funded English medium university based in Sakir, has a student population of over 22,000 and an academic staff population of just under 1,000. The university was founded in 1986, is research intensive and is ranked 25 th in the QS Arab University Rankings.	None found.	UoB service center coordinates peer-volunteers and supports the registration process (UoB, n.d.e). Students without disabilities are encouraged to work with people with disabilities (UoB, n.d.c).	Apart from disability support services, the only information services are careers advise for students with disabilities (UoB, n.d.a).	The only concession to the spaces in the university for students with disability is the library (UoB, n.d.b).	Student services advertises accessible buses on and off campuses, although like its library environment no detail is given (UoB, n.d.d).

<p>KUWAIT – University of Kuwait (UoK) is a government funded English medium university based in Kuwait City, the Kuwaiti capital, has a student population of more than 32,600, and a staff population of over 1,750. The university is one of the oldest in the GCC, founded as it was in 1966, and is ranked 19th in the QS Arab university rankings.</p>	<p>Social Security Fund – staff-funded, and if staff become disabled it pays for support – no detail about support for staff with disabilities who remain in work (UoK, n.d.b).</p>	<p>No support services for members of the university advertised, but initiatives to promote services for people with some specific disabilities exist (UoK, n.d.a).</p>	<p>Information for students and candidates with disabilities about the application and registration process (UoK, n.d.c).</p>	<p>None found.</p>	<p>None found.</p>
<p>OMAN - Sultan Qaboos University was founded by the ruler of Oman, Sultan Qaboos bin Said, and accepted its first students in 1986, is government funded, English language medium and is based in Muscat, the Omani capital. It has a student population of over 7,300, a staff population of over 860, is ranked 10th QS Arab university rankings and ranked joint 450th in the QS global rankings.</p>	<p>None found.</p>	<p>Departments publish guidelines for academics teaching students with disabilities. Issues covered include enhanced programs available, and differentiated</p>	<p>There is provision for accessible technologies at Sultan Qaboos University, and this is supported by an Assistive Technology Lab (College of Science, 2016; College of Arts and Social Sciences, 2016).</p>	<p>Accommodation Sultan Qaboos University has adapted accommodation for students with physical disabilities (College of Science, 2016; College of Arts and Social Sciences, 2016).</p>	<p>None found.</p>

		teaching and assessment (College of Science, 2016; College of Arts and Social Sciences, 2016).	and Social Sciences, 2016).		
QATAR – University of Qatar (UoQ) is a government funded, English medium university based in Doha, the Qatari capital, and was founded in 1979. It has a student population of just under 9,200 students and an academic staff of just under 1,050, is ranked 6 th in the QS Arab university rankings, 332 nd in the QS global university rankings and is ranked 36 th in the best global universities under fifty years old.	Conferences and separate events to promote access for students with disabilities, and for students with disabilities to be seen throughout the university (UoQ, n.d.a).	Differentiated learning and assessment throughout the university, and there is also provision for supporters and technologies to support students (UoQ, n.d.b).	Specialist careers advise, frequent reporting of issues related to disability in the university newsletter, CampusLife, multi-media communications where it is available and a specialist assistive technology laboratory.	Discounts for members of the university with disabilities at their nursery, accessible accommodation and accessibility on campus for members of the university with disabilities (UoQ, n.d.c).	None found.
SAUDI ARABIA – King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals (King Fahd University) is a	None found.	Distance learning technology as	Documents outlining the nature of	None found.	None found.

<p>government funded and research highly intensive university, teaching in English medium and admitted students in 1964, making it one of the first universities in the GCC. It has a student population of just under 6,200 students, just over 1,000 academic staff, is ranked 1st in the QS Arab university rankings and 189th in the QS global university rankings.</p>		<p>a means of support, and a proposal for an Office of Disability Services (King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals, n.d.b).</p>	<p>certain forms of disability, particularly inherited conditions that cause disability (King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals, n.d.b).</p>		
<p>UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) is a government funded university and research-intensive university, which teaches mainly in an English medium. UAEU was founded in 1976. The campus is based in Al Ain, an old city in the desert region of Abu Dhabi, the country's largest emirate, and has just over 7,500 students and over 820 academic staff. UAEU is ranked 5th in the QS Arab university rankings, 350th in the QS global rankings and is ranked 39th in the best global universities under fifty years old.</p>	<p>Founding of the Assessment and Remedial Unit (ARU) for members of university and community with disabilities (UAEU, 2013).</p>	<p>Sign language classes are available, tutoring, services, financial aid, counseling through a special needs support center exists to provide support for students and advise teaching staff (UAEU, 2016).</p>	<p>Sources of advice on applications, admissions and numerous services available and an assistive technology lab (UAEU, n.d.a, n.d.b).</p>	<p>Accessible accommodation and resource rooms available (UAEU, n.d.a, n.d.b).</p>	<p>Specialist physical orientation for members of the university who are blind or visually impaired (UAEU, 2012).</p>

The results of the survey appear to challenge the tentative hypothesis that a lack of governmental and GCC policy and datasets negatively influence university policy. Importantly, all the top GCC public universities seemed to have at least some policies and strategies for including people with disabilities, and these initiatives are usually more forward thinking than their jurisdictions. However, although there was a greater emphasis on inclusion and access by individual universities, these policies varied significantly between jurisdictions and some stages of inclusive capital did not receive attention; although, it was also notable that the support offered in some universities reflected the willingness of their governments to collect statistics on disability and higher education.

In the different jurisdictions, it was also observable that support for university staff with disabilities were rarely mentioned against the stages of inclusive capital. Furthermore, it was observed that some universities discussed staff members giving up work when they acquired disabilities. Thus, when students with disabilities manage to achieve academic success in higher education, there may still be little support for them when they become professional academics.

Conclusion

The GCC has progressed in developing a stable economy and higher education system, the latter of which is identified as a fundamental part of this stability. People with disabilities are also becoming an important part of the higher education community in their respective institutions, and this inclusion is contributing to the region's cultural stability. There are also many important and pioneering initiatives and models of good practice for support for students with disabilities in individual universities in the GCC. As important in this process, there is a willingness by academics and university leaders to see disability as an important topic that needs

more attention, and resources have been supplied to support students with disabilities. However, although there is an increasingly positive culture of inclusion and access in higher education institutions themselves, there is also a lack of policy at GCC level. Furthermore, there seems to be a need for further evidence-based inquiry and strategization at a jurisdictional level.

In the foundational review on disability and sustainability in the GCC, it was observed that little encouragement of independent disability rights organizations raising public awareness existed in the region. Similarly, in the conclusions to the earlier review it was argued there was a lack of research literature in the GCC or an analysis of the changing nature of the region's disabled population. Unfortunately, in the intervening years little seems to have changed at a jurisdictional or GCC level. Perhaps more worryingly, there does not appear to be a willingness to debate disability issues at a whole GCC level, despite the founding intention of the institution to promote cultural initiatives to support its population. In future, this lack of debate could continue to hinder the development of an educationally independent and sustainable community of people with disabilities in the region.

Consequently, as it promotes higher education, the GCC Secretariat General must now return to its founding statement and promote stable cultural development as much as it promotes economic development. In order to achieve this aim, the Secretariat General must also promote and lead a coordinated system of open discussion, strategization and policy making that is agreed upon and implemented. It must also strive to lead this debate for the whole MENA region. It is only through this promotion of cultural development will people with disabilities achieve their ambitions and need less support or charity, and will the GCC develop a more stable, equitable society for university educated people with disabilities.

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