
Nadim El Kak

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EDUCATION & SKILLS

- Ongoing **MA Sociology, American University of Beirut** – Lebanon
- [Graduate Fellow](#).
 - Research Assistant: Working with Dr. Rima Majed on compiling and analyzing data about protests occurring since the start of the October 2019 revolution, as part of a larger project mapping collective actions in Lebanon since 1989.
- Sept. 2015-May 2019 **Dual BA, Political Science, Asian Languages & Civilizations (*cum laude*)**
Amherst College – Massachusetts, USA
- Five College [Certificate](#) in Middle Eastern Studies.
 - GPA in Majors: 3.86/4.00 | Cumulative GPA: 3.56/4.00.
 - Relevant courses: Middle East Economies; Comparative Politics of the Middle East; Middle East History I & II (500-Present); Sectarian Modernity; Islamic Constitutionalism; Qur'an Controversies; Democracy in the Developing World; Political Identities; The State; Politics of Extremism; Gender & Right-Wing Populism; Democratic Backsliding; Comparative Political Economy; Public Economics: Health & Inequality; Introduction to Qualitative Research.
- Senior Honors Thesis**
“Precarious Stability: Elections and Anti-Sectarian Resistance in Contemporary Lebanon” – Available [here](#) (“magna cum laude” honors by the Department of Political Science)
- Brief: The thesis examines why anti-establishment groups and movements have been failing to effect political change in Lebanon despite faltering state institutions. I draw on fourteen original interviews conducted with activists and candidates involved in the 2018 general elections as a case study. I also study how the power-sharing system defines citizens as sectarian subjects and compels them to navigate the social, political, and legal realm through strictly defined and gendered confessional identities.
- June-July 2018 **London School of Economics** – London, UK
Summer Session Course – IR210: Building Democracies from Conflict (Grade: A).
- Examined the possible answers to and various challenges of designing and sustaining democratic systems in post-conflict societies.
- Sept. 2000-June 2015 **Collège Protestant Français** – Beirut, Lebanon
- French Baccalaureate: 17.22/20 – top 5% of graduating class (“summa cum laude”).
 - **Languages:** Fluent in English, French, and Arabic.
 - **Computer Skills:** Zotero, Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point), Prezi.

RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- June 2019–Present **Researcher, Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS)** – Beirut, Lebanon
- Analyzed and coded speeches of party figureheads leading up to the 2018 Lebanese general elections. Drafted a report and book chapter based on the findings. To be published soon.
 - Conducted interviews with and analyzed the campaigns of members of emerging independent groups that ran in the 2018 Lebanese elections. Drafted a report and book chapter based on the findings. To be published soon.
 - Editing a forthcoming 10-chapter book on sectarian dynamics in Lebanon, drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, including findings from a survey of 2,500 voting-age citizens.
 - Categorized and analyzed 590 demands from 213 protesters during the latest Lebanese uprising. Findings are presented through 8 infographics available [here](#) and a short article under the “Government Monitor” series available [here](#).
 - Assisted with the administration of workshops in Beirut, Tripoli, and Zahle as part of a

comparative study on the self-identification, socio-economic challenges, aspirations, and resources at the disposal of Lebanese youths.

- Co-hosting the LCPS Podcast, which is set to launch in March 2020 to discuss social, economic, and political crises in Lebanon.

Jan. 2020–Present

Research Associate, Lebanon Support – Beirut, Lebanon

- Lebanon Support is a multidisciplinary organization that produces academic research for social change, builds networks between civil society actors, and incubates emerging CSOs.
- The center’s Research Associates program is open to like-minded scholars and young researchers from various fields to achieve greater insights and produce more impactful research.

Aug. 2017

Research Assistant, Dr. Lara Deeb (Scripps College) – Beirut, Lebanon

- Conducted in-depth interviews in Beirut with ten volunteer participants as part of Dr. Deeb’s research on social attitudes towards intersectarian relationships and marriages in Lebanon.

May-July 2017

Research Intern, Human Rights Watch – New York City, USA

- Worked on projects covering a range of human rights issues in the MENA including domestic violence, the illegal treatment of undocumented migrants, state violence against protesters, the detainment of children, and the hiring of child soldiers. Also conducted background research for the following [report](#): “Audacity in Adversity: LGBT Activism in the MENA”.

June-July 2014

Research Intern, Lebanese Center for Policy Studies – Beirut, Lebanon

- Compiled reference sheets on the attendance and participation of Lebanese MPs for a [book](#) titled: “The Lebanese Parliament 2009-2017: Between Extension and Void” (I.B. Tauris).
- Collected and analyzed data on Lebanese municipalities and their delivery of public services.

July 2013

Research Assistant, Sarafand Refugee Camp – South Lebanon

- Assisted the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service at the American University of Beirut with collecting data on the residents of the Sarafand refugee camp.

PUBLICATIONS

El Kak, N., 2020. “Are People to Blame? Debunking Counter-Revolutionary & Culturalist Arguments.” [The Public Source](#).
> An article on arguments that blame the citizens for crises rather than the establishment and its policies. The piece tackles electoral authoritarianism and argues for a move away from the colonialist civilized vs uncivilized binary. (Forthcoming)

El Kak, N. & Zoughaib S., 2020. “Grappling between past and future: will Lebanon’s political economy reproduce itself?” [openDemocracy](#), 10 January 2020.

> An article on the history of Harirism, implications of appointing Diab as PM, & possibilities of a new economic model.

El Kak, N. 2019. “Lebanon’s Sectarian Regime at a Crossroads as Taif Reaches 30-year Anniversary” [An-Nahar English](#), 21 October 2019.

> An article on the Lebanese uprising, its historical context, and prospects of desectarianization.

El Kak, N. 2019. “A Path for Political Change in Lebanon? Lessons and Narratives from the 2018 Elections.” [Bawader](#), Arab Reform Initiative. 25 July 2019. Available in [English](#) and [Arabic](#).

> A report on the electoral campaigns of independent, anti-sectarian groups and why similar attempts at change have not been successful throughout the postwar period.

FEATURED COMMENTS

• Karim Safieddine, 13 Feb. 2020. “Lebanon’s new political formula takes the country back to pax-Syriana” [Beirut Today](#).
> Commented on the overlap between Lebanon’s current political landscape and the 1990-2005 period of Syrian tutelage.

• Abby Sewell, 3 Feb. 2020. “Draft of Lebanese cabinet’s rescue plan includes ‘necessary & painful steps’” [Al Arabiya English](#).
> Commented on the Lebanese government’s ministerial statement, and its ability to tackle social and economic issues.

• Abby Sewell, 22 Jan. 2020. “Lebanon’s Crisis of Confidence in Governance.” [US News & World Report](#).
> Commented on the backgrounds of ministers in Lebanon’s new government and its prospects going forward.

• Lauren Holtmeier & Tommy Hilton, 22 Jan. 2020. “Who’s who in Lebanon’s new government.” [Al Arabiya English](#).
> Commented on the political and technical backgrounds of ministers in Lebanon’s new government.

- Michael Arnold, 25 Dec. 2019. “How sectarian politics overshadow Lebanon’s anti-establishment protests.” [TRT World](#).
> Commented on emerging political groups, sectarian identities, clientelism, and cross-confessional solidarity.
- Michael Arnold, 13 Dec. 2019. “Understanding the Dynamics of Lebanon’s Protest Movement.” [TRT World](#).
> Commented on socioeconomic grievances, communal solidarity, grassroots organizing, and avenues of political change.
- Abby Sewell, 14 Nov. 2019. “Push for independent syndicates emerges from protest movement.” [The Daily Star](#).
> Commented on the formation of alternative workers’ unions and implications of reclaiming co-opted networks.
- Emil Jorgensen, 25 Oct. 2019. “Opgør med sekterismen.” (Showdown with sectarianism), [Weekendavisen](#).
> Commented on the Lebanese revolution and anti-sectarian mobilization.
- Abby Sewell, 24 Oct. 2019. “How Lebanon’s ‘WhatsApp tax’ unleashed a flood of anger.” [Public Radio International](#).
> Commented on class identities trumping sectarian ones as the driving factor for popular mobilization.
- Abby Sewell, 23 Oct. 2019. “Data shows extent of protest movement outside Beirut”, [The Daily Star](#).
> Commented on the decentralized nature of protests, its implications, significance, and potential.
- *AJ+ Français*, 16 Oct. 2019. “Femme exhibée en vitrine.” (Woman exhibited in shop window). Available [here](#).
> Commented on the objectification of a black female model at a linen shop in Beirut.

OTHER EXPERIENCES & ENGAGEMENTS

- May 2016-Sept. 2018 **Co-Chair, Middle Eastern Students Association, Amherst College**
- Oversaw affinity group operation by hosting meetings and managing media presence. Also contributed to the organization of recreational, cultural, & educational events including film screenings, dinners, art shows, and academic guest lectures.
- Nov. 2015-May 2017 **Peer Tutor, Amherst College**
- Selected by relevant departments to tutor students in French and Arabic language courses.
- July-Aug. 2016 **Volunteer Teacher, Bar Elias Refugee Camp, Bekaa, Lebanon**
- Volunteered with the American University of Beirut’s Center for Civic Engagement to lead classes for Syrian elementary school students in the Bekaa valley using interactive methods including drawing, role-playing, and sports.
- May-June 2016 **Volunteer, Máximo Nivel Organization, Peru**
- Performed manual labor at the construction site of a kindergarten in Cusco, Peru. Also worked on different environmental and social initiatives organized by the Tierra Linda Reserve in the Manú National park of the Peruvian Amazonia.
- Jan.-March 2014 **Tutor, Nasma Learning and Resource Center, Beirut**
- Taught Lebanese public school students aged 6 to 12 biweekly lessons in English, Arabic, and mathematics.

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