



MOSAIC

Middle East Initiative
Harvard Kennedy School
2020-2021



HARVARD Kennedy School
BELFER CENTER
for Science and International Affairs
MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVE

Greetings مرحبا سلام ܡܪܗܒܐ Merhaba,

As the world begins to exit the global pandemic that has cut short millions of lives and strained millions more livelihoods, I find myself in awe of how our students, faculty, and staff managed to carry on during that most difficult of times. In the pages that follow, we chronicle all of the ways that the Middle East Initiative was able to transcend the challenges of the pandemic to continue to fulfill its twin missions: To enable the Harvard community to better understand the complexities of this most complex of world regions; and to bring policymakers, scholars, and intellectuals from the Middle East into close contact with the fertile thinking and policy solutions generated by that special community of innovators known as the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

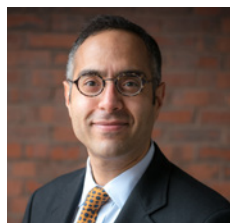
During the last year, our team assembled a diverse array of public programming, and took full advantage of our new online format to take the work of the Middle East Initiative out of Harvard's halls and beam it into offices and living rooms around the globe. With MEI Senior Fellow, Karim Haggag, I hosted a series of conversations on the 2020 United States presidential election with Arab thought leaders, including former Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi; former Egyptian Foreign Minister, Nabil Fahmy; and noted Lebanese journalist Raghida Dergham (p. 4). In March 2021, the Middle East Initiative hosted Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for a celebration of International Women's Day (p. 7). In April 2021, MEI Senior Fellow James Snyder hosted Israeli actor Sasson Gabay—most famous for his turn as an Egyptian band leader in the musical, *The Band's Visit*—for an exploration of art's power to bridge seemingly unbridgeable divides. In December 2020, MEI Fellow Yael Berda hosted a discussion of alternative visions of peace in Israel and Palestine with Palestinian and Israeli legal scholars and activists. And in February 2021, MEI partnered with Professor Salman Keshavjee of the Harvard Medical School and the Harvard Center for Global Health Delivery to bring to our audiences the latest research on the potential of germicidal ultraviolet light to mitigate the spread of COVID19. Each of these events found a broad reception at Harvard and in the region, and we fully expect that such online programming will constitute a significant part of the Middle East Initiative's portfolio into the future.

In addition to maintaining the tempo of our public events and outreach, the Middle East Initiative also managed to continue to support faculty research aimed at solving some of the region's most pressing public problems. Under the Kuwait Program, the Emirates Leadership Initiative, and the Hamida Ben-Gacem Program on Tunisia, MEI was able to conduct survey research on the impact of the COVID19 pandemic in the Arab world (p. 10), and to support faculty projects on tolerance-building in Saudi Arabia, social protections in Morocco, and urban design in Kuwait (p. 11).

We were also able to bring new people to our research community. Last year, we welcomed six new pre- and post-doctoral fellows under the Emirates Leadership Initiative. These cutting-edge, policy oriented social scientists of the Middle East work on an array of issues, from intercommunal trust in Israel to popular politics in Tunisia and Jordan, to political party growth in Turkey and Lebanon. Although public health restrictions meant we were never able to gather in person with this group of innovative scholars, we marveled at how they were nonetheless able to build a strong and cohesive intellectual community bound by nothing but e-mails and Zoom calls.

The pandemic is far from over, and its aftershocks will be with us for a long time to come. But, as we look forward to the gradual resumption of our in-person activities, we are particularly excited about new initiatives that will once again take us to the region—including a January-term course, to be taught with Kuwait Foundation Visiting Scholar Sultan Sooud al-Qassemi, on the social and economic changes currently underway in the Gulf region.

As always, we hope to see you at our events and workshops, and we hope also that you'll reach out with any ideas you might have that would enable us to better fulfill our twin missions of bringing the Middle East to Harvard, and Harvard to the Middle East.


Tarek Masoud*Faculty Director, Middle East Initiative*

To learn more about
Professor Masoud, visit
[belfercenter.org/person/
tarek-masoud](https://belfercenter.org/person/tarek-masoud)

Middle East Initiative

MOSAIC 2020-2021

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James Snyder
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ALUMNI
COMMUNITY

MEI BY THE NUMBERS

29

events with world-renowned scholars, officials, and leaders

120

research fellowship applications highlighting the breadth of MEI's extensive regional research activities

6

senior fellows and scholars from accomplished backgrounds in journalism, international development, political science, and arts and culture

13

research fellows working on diverse topics such as media, foreign policy, peacebuilding, and democratization

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HKS student fellows engaging with MEI's extensive and influential academic and professional network

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Executive Education participants from the MENA region attending Harvard University programs

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publications covering the most important developments and movements in the region

4

faculty research projects supporting the study of citizenship and tolerance, Morocco's labor market, inclusive urban design, and the regional impact of the coronavirus pandemic



USA 2020: The View from the Arab World

In fall 2020, MEI launched a new event series titled “USA 2020: The View from the Arab World.” Co-hosted by MEI Faculty Director Tarek Masoud and MEI Visiting Fellow Karim Haggag, the series featured Arab thought leaders discussing the 2020 U.S. elections and the role of the U.S. in the Middle East. Given its global importance, the 2020 U.S. presidential election offered an opportunity to bring perspectives and analyses from the Middle East to the Harvard community.



The series featured Nabil Fahmy, former foreign minister of Egypt; Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, former professor of political science and author of *The Gulf Moment*; Ahmed Shihab-Eldin, Emmy-nominated journalist, producer, and actor; Dr. Ayad Allawi, former prime minister of Iraq; Mina Al Oraibi, Iraqi-British journalist, political analyst, and editor-in-chief of *The National*; Raghida Dergham, award winning journalist and founder and executive chairman of the Beirut Institute; and Mohammed Alyahya, analyst, commentator, and editor-in-chief of *Al Arabiya English*.

Masoud and Haggag asked Al-Oraibi how the Trump presidency changed the Arab perception of democracy. “The past four years in the U.S. have in some ways made people question democracy,” she said. “I think it’s more the question of, will the institution be able to maintain what was left of its resilience in the face of Donald Trump’s aspirations? That, in a way, will make people question how much American institutions can stand all of the chipping away that has occurred in the last four years.”

This series highlighted the value of hearing the commentary of Arab academics and practitioners on U.S. domestic issues. Through conversations like these, MEI deepens mutual understanding between the Harvard community and the Arab world and contributes to diversifying political discourse in the U.S.

“Each week we’ve met with leading Arabs from the worlds of policy and practice to explore their perceptions of the current electoral season in the U.S., their sense of where they see the world’s sole superpower headed, and what they think all of this means for the future of the Middle East.”

TAREK MASOUD



Scan to listen to USA 2020 episodes,
<https://www.belfercenter.org/project/middle-east-initiative#!videos-and-podcast>

MEI Supports Inaugural Harvard Undergraduate International Relations Scholars Program

In June 2021, the Harvard Undergraduate Foreign Policy Initiative (HUFPI) hosted the inaugural Harvard Undergraduate International Relations Scholars Program, a conference for high school students interested in pursuing studies and careers in foreign policy and national security. Sama Kubba, vice president of HUFPI and an Iraqi-American freshman at Harvard College, was inspired to curate and coordinate the conference to give high school students the opportunities to engage in foreign policy that she wished she had.

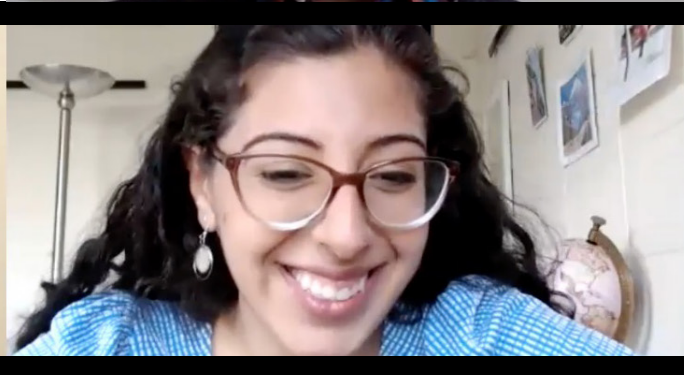
“MEI’s support was critical to transforming the vision into an actual event,” explained Kubba. “Professor Masoud believed in our mission to liberalize access to the field of international relations. With MEI’s support, we were able to bring students of diverse socioeconomic, geographic, and racial backgrounds to the conference and build a curriculum that facilitated mentorships between students and high-level practitioners and academics.”

“It touched me to learn that as an Arab woman organizing this conference, I made other Arab women feel like they are capable leaders who can pursue peaceful change for the world.”

SAMA KUBBA, ALM 2024, VICE PRESIDENT OF HUFPI

The conference welcomed 615 students from 62 countries and more than 150 experts, including former U.S. secretaries of state and defense; U.S. ambassadors; officers from the Central Intelligence Agency; representatives from the United Nations, European Union, and various foreign governments; policy advisors; and academics. Conference participants selected among eleven regional tracks and learned real-world policy writing skills, cross cultural leadership techniques, and strategies for addressing global challenges. MEI Research Fellows Yuree Noh and Kelly Stedem led workshops on Middle East politics, policy, and culture.

Reflecting on the most memorable moment from the conference, Kubba said, “At the closing ceremony, Arab and Arab-American girls shared how meaningful it was to engage with senior U.S. foreign policy officials doing work in the MENA region. Prior to this, they had not been aware of, let alone considered, a career in diplomacy and foreign policy.”



From left: Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, Chief Diversity Officer at the State Department; Sama Kubba, HUFPI Vice President; and Bishop Garrison, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Photo: Sama Kubba)

MEI Speaker Series and Events

MEI hosted numerous events with researchers and academics for discussions that deepened our understanding of the complexities of the Middle East today.

September 2020

“Frontiers in Big Data Analyses on Economic Reforms: The Case of Gulf Cooperation Council Countries”

Co-sponsored with the Office of the Chief Economist for the Middle East and North Africa at the World Bank.

Speakers: Rabah Arezki, chief economist, Middle East and North Africa, World Bank; Ferid Belhaj, vice president, Middle East and North Africa, World Bank; Ha Nguyen, senior economist, Office of the Chief Economist for the Middle East and North Africa, World Bank; Tarek Masoud, MEI faculty director

December 2020

“Beyond Oslo? Peril and Possibility in Israel/Palestine 2020”

Panelists: Diana Buttu, lawyer specializing in negotiations, international law, and international human rights law; Assaf David, director of the Israel in the Middle East Cluster at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and co-founder of the Forum for Regional Thinking; Honaïda Ghanim, director of Madar Research Center for Israeli Studies; Daniel Levy, president of the U.S./Middle East Project; Dahlia Scheindlin, fellow at The Century Foundation

January 2021

“Flap My Wings: 10 Years Since Tahrir Square”

Co-sponsored with the American Repertory Theater

Speakers: Emel, Tunisian singer-songwriter; Ganzeer, Egyptian artist; Ramy Essam, Egyptian rock artist and human rights defender; Tarek Masoud, MEI faculty director; Hamed Sinno, lead singer of Lebanese band Mashrou' Leila

February 2021

“Is Islam Exceptional?” with Shadi Hamid, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution's Center for Middle East Policy and author of *Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle Over Islam is Reshaping the World*

“Lebanon on the Brink” with Nadim Shehadi, executive director of the Lebanese American University's New York Headquarters and Academic Center and associate fellow at the Middle East and North Africa Program at Chatham House in London



Tarek Masoud



Shadi Hamid



Marsin Alshamary

Her Majesty Queen
Rania Al Abdullah

Bernard Haykel



Emel Mathlouthi

February 2021 cnt.

“Keeping Public Space Safe: Germicidal Ultraviolet Light for Air Sanitation During COVID-19”

Co-sponsored with the Harvard Medical School Center for Global Health Delivery, the Harvard Global Health Institute, and the Advance Access & Delivery Organization

Speakers: Bill Bahnfleth, professor at The Pennsylvania State University and chair of the ASHRAE Epidemic Task Force; Paul Jenson, engineer with the Infection Research and Programs Branch, Division of Tuberculosis Elimination, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Don Milton, professor of environmental health at the University of Maryland School of Public Health; Ed Nardell, professor of global health and social medicine, immunology, and infectious diseases at Harvard Medical School and Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health; David Sliney, chair of the Photobiology Committee of the Illuminating Engineering Society and associate faculty with the Department of Environmental Health Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

March 2021

“A Celebration of International Women’s Day with Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan”

Co-sponsored with the Center for International Development, Women and Public Policy Program, and the Institute of Politics at Harvard Kennedy School

Speakers: Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan; Melani Cammett, Clarence Dillon Professor of International Affairs at Harvard University.

“Whither Saudi Arabia” with Bernard A. Haykel, professor of Near Eastern Studies and director of the Institute for Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East at Princeton University

“Charismatic Leaders and Nation Building: Atatürk’s Role in the Formation of Turkish Identity” with Lydia Assouad, PhD candidate at the Paris School of Economics and research fellow at the World Inequality Lab

April 2021

“The Challenges Facing Iraq Today and the Path Forward” with Marsin Alshamary, postdoctoral research fellow at the Brookings Institution’s Foreign Policy Program and fellow at the Institute of Regional & International Studies, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani

“Taking Stock of the Arab Uprisings” with Michael Hanna, senior fellow at The Century Foundation

“After Repression: How Polarization Derails Democratic Transition” with Elizabeth Nugent, assistant professor in the Department of Political Science, Yale University

“Equality, Sovereignty, Freedom of Movement: New Research on Prospects for a Confederation”

Panelists: Ameer Fakhoury, lawyer, researcher, and theorist specializing in ethnic and national groups and inter-group conflict; Omar Rahman, visiting fellow at the Brookings Doha Center; Limor Yehouda, academic director of the Transitional Justice Program at the Minerva Center for Human Rights at Tel-Aviv University Law School

May 2021

“Book Talk: Faith in Numbers: Religion, Sectarianism, and Democracy” with Michael Hoffman, assistant professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame

“MEI events were an integral part of my co-curricular learning at Harvard. Expertly moderated by Dr. Masoud, MEI events were diverse, substantive, and provided valuable insight. These events were enriching discussions that were different than those in the classroom. They added significantly to our practical understanding of issues and challenges facing the Arab world today.”

SUMAYA MALAS AM 2022

James Snyder in Conversation

MEI Senior Fellow James Snyder, executive chairman of the Jerusalem Foundation, Inc. and director emeritus of the Israel Museum, continued his event series, “James Snyder in Conversation,” for a second year. Through this series, Snyder has created a unique forum for expression at Harvard where artists and scholars can share insights on the intersection of art, culture, and politics in the modern Middle East and explore possibilities for transcending conflict in the region.

While the study of conflict in the Middle East is not new to Harvard scholars, approaching the topic through the lens of art offers a different but important perspective. Lauren Morganbesser, a freshman at Harvard College, reflected on the value of the series in the context of

her study of government and the modern Middle East saying,

“James clearly believes in the power of art as a channel for cross-cultural dialogue. I, too, have come to see the importance of appreciating art not only for its beauty, but also for the role it plays in reflecting the political dynamics of the Middle East and commenting on them in a personal way.”



Throughout the year, Snyder hosted a diverse array of academics and artists:

- MEI Faculty Director Tarek Masoud on Jerusalem's cultural landscape and how it can be a source of unity and division.
- Biblical scholar and Gruss Professor of Law at New York University Moshe Halbertal and American countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo on creative interpretations of a single, all-powerful God.
- Israeli filmmaker Joseph Cedar and Palestinian filmmaker Tawfik Abu Wael on television as a medium for expressing cross-cultural narratives in Israel and Palestine with accuracy and sensitivity.
- Award-winning Palestinian-Israeli architect Senan Abdelqader on the influences of Arab culture on art, architecture, and design.
- Artistic Director and Choreographer of the Batsheva Dance Company Ohad Naharin on interpreting the challenges of the region through dance.
- Director of the Louvre Abu Dhabi Manuel Rabaté on the meaning of a universal museum in the Middle East.
- Award-winning Israeli-Arab stage, film, and television actor Sasson Gabay on the portrayal of Jewish Arabs and Arab Jews on stage and screen.
- Soviet-born Israeli painter Zoya Cherkassky on the power of art to shed light on the complex experience of immigrants and outsiders in Israel and Palestine.

Snyder elevates often unheard voices from Palestine and Israel, bringing their complex and nuanced experiences of identity to the audiences at Harvard. Soviet-Israeli painter Zoya Cherkassky discussed her use of art as a window into the lived experience of minorities and immigrants in Israel. "I am trying to catch a collective memory or collective experience," she explained, "I try to find the essence."

In his conversation with Snyder, Israeli-Arab actor Sasson Gabay emphasized the power of the stage in sharing unheard narratives and building cross-cultural empathy. "It's about the ability to identify and see the other person and your people... So for an actor to be an observant actor, they need to be able to see the other one, to see deeply into the other one and have the ability to identify with them, to see his way of thinking," he said.

Snyder will continue his series in the 2021-2022 academic year.

RABAH AREZKI



Rabah Arezki is chief economist and vice president of economic governance and knowledge management at the African Development Bank. In September 2020, when Arezki was chief economist for the World Bank, his office partnered with MEI to co-host a virtual workshop titled "Frontiers in Big Data Analyses on Economic Reforms: The Case of Gulf Cooperation Council Countries," which he led with other World Bank experts. Throughout the year, Arezki wrote three MEI-published working papers and a policy brief that covered the role of social media as a catalyst for violent and nonviolent protests, the effect of oil shocks on electoral outcomes, dynamics between reform chatter and economic downturns, and mechanisms for stability in Gulf Cooperation Countries amidst the dual shock of a pandemic and oil price crash.

RAMI KHOURI



Rami Khouri is an internationally renowned political columnist, book author, and director of global engagement and journalism at the American University of Beirut. In August 2020, MEI Faculty Director Tarek Masoud interviewed Khouri about the future of Lebanon after the Beirut blast for the "HKS in Conversation" podcast. In May 2021, Khouri published a report on "The Decade of Defiance & Resistance: Reflections on Arab Revolutionary Uprisings and Responses From 2010-2020" with the Soufan Center. Khouri drew on his fifty years of research and travel across the region for this report, which studies the ways in which Arabs are creating meaningful change in their communities. During the 2021-2022 academic year, he will lead a study group at HKS on approaches to conflict resolution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



Tarek Masoud



Yuree Noh

MEI awards research grants to Harvard faculty pursuing research on policy topics related to the Middle East and North Africa. These grants are made possible through HKS's Emirates Leadership Initiative, Kuwait Program, and the Tunisia Program made possible by the Hamida Ben-Gacem Tunisia Graduate Fellowship Fund. The 2020-2021 grant recipients' research explored diverse topics, such as how to integrate climate change solutions into traditional urban life; how COVID-19 has affected labor markets and how governments should respond; and how to develop youth programs that instill the values of tolerance in diverse societies.

MENA COVID-19 Economic Impact Survey

In 2019, MEI Faculty Director Tarek Masoud and MEI Research Fellow Yuree Noh launched the Kuwait Public Policy Opinions Project (KPPPOP) to evaluate public opinion and produce policy-relevant insights on important economic, political, and social issues in the MENA region. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic inspired Masoud and Noh to expand the scope of KPPPOP to include the "MENA COVID-19 Economic Impact Survey." This survey, made possible by the Kuwait Program and the Tunisia Program, evaluates the economic and social effects of COVID-19 on residents of the MENA region.

As of March 2021, the research team had conducted surveys in Tunisia, Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates. Preliminary analyses revealed that the economic consequences of the pandemic on the MENA region are widespread across all five countries.

Key findings include:

23%

report losing a job or income since the beginning of the pandemic.

8%

report that their family members have lost jobs.

Access to food or to a variety of foods has worsened, even in the affluent Gulf region.

Despite the consistencies in economic impact, respondents' opinions about their government's response to the pandemic varied significantly across the countries:

88%

of respondents in each of Saudi Arabia and the UAE said their government's response is excellent or good.

68%

of Kuwaitis called their government's response excellent or good.

44%

of Egyptians called their government's response excellent or good.

7%

of Tunisians called their government's response excellent or good.

As policymakers in the region work to respond to the societal and economic consequences of the ongoing public health crisis, this project's findings will help them craft short- and long-term data-driven policy solutions that are tailored to the communities hit hardest by the pandemic.

“To respond effectively and help mitigate the short- and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, policymakers must understand the most pressing issues, how different demographic groups are affected, and factors contributing to policy compliance.”

DR. YUREE NOH



Asim Khwaja

Engaging with Others: Measuring and Building Non-Cognitive Values for Arab Youth

Researcher: Asim Khwaja, Professor of International Finance and Development, Harvard Kennedy School and Director of the Center for International Development and the Sumitomo-Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development

Critical factors in creating an effective and responsible citizenry in an increasingly diverse society are tolerance, cooperation, and leadership. Several initiatives are underway across the MENA region to help adolescents develop these skills and values. However, these initiatives are facing the pivotal challenges of how to define and measure these values and how to develop evidence-based metrics to assess the effectiveness of different programs. With funding from the Emirates Leadership Initiative, this project will measure and evaluate different approaches to tolerance-building among young people in Saudi Arabia and the region at large. It will also consider the effect of COVID-19 in influencing values and biases towards different groups in the region.



Rema Hanna

Identifying Labor Market and Social Protection Trends and Gaps in Morocco to Inform Research and Policy

Researcher: Rema Hanna, Jeffrey Cheah Professor of South-East Asia Studies and Chair of the International Development Area, Harvard Kennedy School

COVID-19 has wrought havoc on labor markets worldwide with significant economic and social ramifications. With funding from the Emirates Leadership Initiative and in collaboration with the Moroccan government, this project aims to better understand the challenges in Morocco's labor market and what the government can do to alleviate labor market constraints. Researchers will conduct a representative survey across Morocco with the National Observatory for Human Development focused on labor markets and social protection, with the goal of providing a descriptive picture of the state of the labor market that researchers and policymakers can use to design future government interventions.



Gareth Doherty

Design with Darkness: Inhabiting the Kuwaiti Nighttime in the Era of Climate Change

Researcher: Gareth Doherty, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture and Director of the Master in Landscape Architecture Program, Harvard University Graduate School of Design

Significant rises in global temperatures have led many Kuwaitis, and people across the region, to transition to a more nocturnal lifestyle. The question of how to effectively incorporate nocturnally inhabited environments into the fabric of traditional urban life has remained largely unaddressed by landscape architects and urban planners. Funded by the Kuwait Program, this project aims to develop strategies for creating more socially inclusive, culturally dynamic, and environmentally sensitive urban nocturnal spaces in Kuwait.

2020-2021 Middle East Initiative Research Fellowship Program

The Middle East Initiative Research Fellowship Program, part of the Emirates Leadership Initiative, offers one-year fellowships to researchers at the pre-doctoral, postdoctoral, and junior faculty level for research related to MENA governance and public policy. The fellows in the 2020-2021 cohort conducted research on a wide array of topics, including governance, foreign policy, democracy and democratic transitions, electoral systems, public opinion and policymaking, and ethnic politics.

“The resources that are available to research fellows at Harvard University is unmatched. Dr. Masoud’s mentorship was invaluable. The support from the Middle East Initiative staff was incredible and I learned so much from my cohort. My fellowship at MEI was pivotal to my learning, research, and networking.”

DR. LANA SALMAN

BUILDING DEMOCRACY THROUGH JUST CITIES IN POST-REVOLUTION TUNISIA

Lana Salman, *Postdoctoral Fellow*



Salman holds a PhD in city and regional planning with a designated emphasis in global metropolitan studies from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research focuses on local governance, women’s role in democratizing politics, and how international financial institutions reconfigure the cities of the Global South. She will continue her postdoctoral fellowship at MEI during the 2021-2022 academic year.

In the decade since the unfolding of the 2011 Arab uprisings, research has focused on national level dynamics and procedural dimensions of democratic transition. In this scholarship, Tunisia stood as a model for a peaceful and relatively successful democratic transition in contrast to the civil wars in Yemen, Syria and Libya and the reentrenchment of authoritarianism in Egypt. However, this narrative about Tunisian exceptionalism obfuscated the Tunisian citizens’ lived experiences of democracy. As an observer embedded in local governments and popular neighborhoods, I was able to draw on ethnographic research to investigate what building democracy from the ground up entails.

Every January since the revolution, Tunisians have flooded the country’s streets in protest, repeating the yet unmet demands of the revolution: shoghol, hurriya, karama wataniya (jobs, freedom, national dignity). The 2021 protests, marking a decade since the revolution, were spectacular. They showed that protestors’ grievances were born out of their milieu: unequal cities that relegate them to stigmatized neighborhoods that lack the basic infrastructure that make cities livable. For these protestors, neither freedom of expression, partisan politics, nor elections were enough. Most of them hailed from the country’s popular neighborhoods, urban quarters built at the edges of cities, often in defiance of planning regulations. They demanded dignified livelihoods and lives, their right to decent housing, paved streets, affordable services like electricity and water, and access to safe recreational spaces for their children; in short, the material things that make a city livable.

The research I conducted with inhabitants of popular neighborhoods showed that behind such spectacular forms of politics and the procedural dimensions of democratic transformation, the urban poor build democracy everyday by working to create a more just city. At municipal planning meetings they contest the inequitable cities that exclude them, and at the neighborhood level they strive to protect the collective lives of their communities. Through these actions, they pioneer more just and democratic cities.

THE SOCIAL BUREAUCRAT

Tugba Bozcaga, *Postdoctoral Fellow*



Bozcaga holds a PhD in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her research interests are in the political economy of development, with a focus on governance, bureaucracy, social welfare, and distributive politics. Starting in fall 2021, she will be an assistant professor at King's College London. She will continue her association with MEI as a non-resident fellow.

When we think about government performance and public services, we tend to think about accountability: voters elect politicians who employ good bureaucrats and punish those who do not. While this approach has merit, it obscures the role of bureaucratic capacity and attributes state failures to democracy's ineffectiveness.

To reveal how differences in bureaucratic capacity lead to unequal access to public services, I shift the focus from citizen-bureaucrat or citizen-politician relationships to intra-bureaucrat relationships. I argue that bureaucratic capacity can be higher in places with greater social proximity among bureaucrats. The informal relationships between bureaucrats are key because they strengthen communication and socialization and decrease transaction costs of the production of public services.

This argument was informed by eight months of fieldwork in regions of Turkey with different ethnic and social demographics. To test my theory, I focused on spatial variations in village-level development outcomes related to the quality of water infrastructure and services—a sector that relies heavily on local bureaucratic coordination and is one of the most salient issues in rural Turkey.

The results illuminated how local bureaucratic capacity varies substantially across a country. Using geographic proximity as a proxy indicator for social proximity, I found that villages with higher geographic proximity have better water infrastructure. District officials in these areas are also more likely to have a village head's cell phone number. Interestingly, the results also showed that geographic proximity is a less relevant determinant of bureaucratic capacity in socially fragmented and diverse administrative units, or where there are ethnic or religious divisions between bureaucrats.

By demonstrating that bureaucratic capacity can vary systematically by the local social context, this study points to the societal underpinnings of state capacity and public service provision. It also informs a range of potential policy recommendations; for example, new technology can provide opportunities for rural administrative units to improve communication and cooperation with the higher levels of hierarchy.

SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION THROUGH DIVERSIONARY FOREIGN POLICY IN MENA

Thoraya El-Rayyes, *Pre-doctoral Fellow*



El-Rayyes is a PhD candidate in political science at the London School of Economics. She is a scholar of Middle East politics interested in the study of political economy, authoritarianism, and contentious politics.

Recent research shows that during politically turbulent times, regimes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region often resort to low-cost diversionary tactics to shore up their domestic position. In Egypt and Syria, foreign policy and security threats are manipulated in the media to divert public attention from the government's domestic shortcomings and to dissuade protesting. However, the effectiveness of such tactics remains an open question; the scarcity of public opinion data in the MENA region has posed a challenge to understanding the impact of these diversions. My research draws on novel public opinion survey data from Jordan to investigate this question.

In mid-2018, Jordan was shaken by a week of mass protests against an income tax law and increases in energy prices, resulting in the resignation of the prime minister and abandonment of proposed tax increases. Months later, as discussions on increasing income taxes resurfaced, the Jordanian government dramatically announced its withdrawal from an annex to the Israel-Jordan peace treaty, through which uninhabited Jordanian border areas had been leased to the Israeli government. Billed by the Jordanian regime as the liberation of Jordanian land, the decision received extensive adulatory coverage in the local media.

My analysis of a nationally representative public opinion survey fielded during the month of this announcement shows that it led to a substantial improvement in citizens' assessments of the government's performance among those with below average levels of education; however, no such rallying effect occurred among the rest of the population.

It is important to note that Jordanians with lower levels of education tend to be less interested in politics. Thus, these findings suggest that low-cost diversionary tactics are ineffective among the most politically relevant citizens. It is also well-established that more highly educated MENA citizens are more likely to protest. Not only do diversionary tactics fail to remedy the underlying political and socioeconomic grievances of Arab citizens, this evidence also suggests they may not even be an effective short-term tactic for managing political crises.

SECULAR PARTIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST: EXPLAINING THEIR ELECTORAL UNDERPERFORMANCE



Aytug Sasmaz, *Pre-doctoral Fellow*

Sasmaz is a PhD candidate in the Department of Government at Harvard University. He studies politics of development and party politics in the Middle East and North Africa. In fall 2021, he will be a postdoctoral fellow at the Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law at Stanford University.

Why have secular parties been weak vis-a-vis Islamist parties during the post-Arab uprisings era of the 2010s? Many uprisings were led by secular social forces and public opinion surveys indicate that large swaths of the population embrace political secularism. Historical secular parties, or their successors, in countries like Tunisia, Turkey, and Morocco have extensive networks of activists. So, why are secular parties with roots in national liberation unable to transform into robust electoral alternatives?

I turn the spotlight to the secular parties of the MENA region to explore the organizational evolution of the secular parties founded in the early 20th century by the professional middle class that led national liberation struggles, like the Neo-Destour in Tunisia, Republican People's Party in Turkey, and Istiqlal in Morocco. I argue that the electoral underperformance of such parties, or their successors, can be partially explained by organizational characteristics, i.e., what's happening inside the parties.

Unlike the Islamist parties that have cultivated an image of cohesion, the region's contemporary secular parties are characterized by intra-party conflict and factionalism, which undermines their ability to signal good governance credentials to the electorate. Additionally, they do not select the most qualified candidates, although secular voter bases are better educated and have higher collective orientation levels. Interviews and a conjoint experiment with secular party elites suggest that they prefer loyalty over competence, while Islamist parties recruit the most qualified candidates. This difference in candidate quality exacerbates secular parties' disadvantage in good governance credentials.

The problems that the secular parties in the MENA region face in building a robust, competent, and cohesive organization are likely not exclusive to the region. Across the Global South, parties of the professional middle class, especially those with a legacy in patronage distribution from the state-building phase, face such challenges. Younger generations of this core constituency either shy away from party politics or favor emerging parties that are more liberal and less hierarchical. Meanwhile, populist and nativist parties become hegemonic.

UNDERSTANDING THE CLIENTELIZATION OF SECURITY IN LEBANON



Kelly Stedem, *Postdoctoral Fellow*

Stedem holds a PhD in politics from Brandeis University. She is a scholar of Middle East politics whose research includes the practices of patronage and clientelism, ethnic politics, and security in Lebanon. She will begin a visiting assistant professorship at Roanoke College in fall 2021.

Recent research shows that during politically turbulent times, My research seeks to understand the logic of political parties that offer the conditional exchange of material goods or resources to voters for political support. I examine these practices through the lens of security, the canonical public good provided by the state to all citizens. Yet, many states, especially those in the late developing world, are incapable or unwilling to provide citizens with security. The provision of security, order, and management of crime is a crucial "good" that political parties can and do offer their constituents, particularly in divided and insecure societies.

In Lebanon, some political parties organize security measures in regions of political influence. This can take the form of highly visible barricades and checkpoints, networks of neighborhood watches, even intervening to negotiate dispute settlements outside of formal state institutions. Sometimes these security activities are operated and managed by the party, and in other cases the parties work with state institutions, thereby mixing the image of state-provided public goods with clientelistic services offered privately by the party.

I looked at the variation in security provision across political parties in five different locales in Lebanon to explain why certain parties defer to the state for security, as opposed to providing their own security. Like typical goods and services of clientelism, such as subsidized healthcare, the provision of security requires a high degree of coordination between the political party and its local members, as well as with neighborhood residents.

I found that the organizational cohesion of the party and its linkages at the local level determine whether a party will offer security, and if so, what kind. Focusing on the clientelization of security, as opposed to other resources, thus provides new insights into the willingness and motivations of political parties to engage in clientelistic activity and illuminates new aspects of the relationship between these parties and the state.

HOW TO DEPOLARIZE ISRAELI POLITICS

Chagai Weiss, *Pre-doctoral Fellow*



Weiss is a PhD candidate at the Department of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His work is focused on ethnic politics, political psychology, and intergroup conflict in the Middle East. He will continue his pre-doctoral fellowship at MEI for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Over the past two years, Israelis have voted in four national elections. The unprecedented recurrence of elections was a consequence of political gridlock by which party leaders were unable to form stable coalition governments. However, a recent unity government, comprised of eight Israeli parties from a broad ideological spectrum, may put an end to the ongoing political and electoral crisis.

In my joint research with Lotem Bassan-Nygate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, detailed in a forthcoming article in *Comparative Political Studies*, we identify how electoral competition in Israel polarizes Israeli voters and demonstrate that the formation of ideologically diverse unity governments can depolarize the Israeli public.

We analyze Israeli public opinion data to show that electoral competition leads citizens to adopt unfavorable views of their political competitors, fuels polarization, and impairs intergroup relations. This finding is alarming because elections are a foundational element of democracy. In light of this finding, we examine how democratic institutions can depolarize voters.

We focus on the role of unity governments, which require cooperation between ideologically diverse parties. In an experiment implemented following the 22nd national Israeli election, respondents informed about the likely formation of a unity government report lower levels of polarization and more favorable views of their political opponents. This study emphasizes how institutions that facilitate cooperation between ideologically diverse political factions can depolarize voters and improve intergroup relations.

The recently formed unity government, led by Naftali Bennet (Yamina) and Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid), is commonly referred to as “The Government of Change.” Bennet and Lapid often emphasize that a central part of this “change” is affirming that politicians from both sides of the aisle can cooperate and improve life for all Israeli citizens. Our research suggests that such messages, and the institutional framework in which Bennet and Lapid are operating, can depolarize the Israeli electorate.

“Spending time at MEI has been a fantastic experience. The feedback and support I received from Prof. Masoud and my cohort members during our weekly research seminars has greatly contributed to and improved my work.”

CHAGAI WEISS

MEI provides support to students studying at HKS from the Middle East and North Africa. Many of these students come to HKS through the generosity of fellowships that seek to advance the education of young leaders from the region.

Emirates Leadership Initiative Fellowship

The Emirates Leadership Initiative Fellowships are made possible by the generous support of the government of the United Arab Emirates. Fellows are selected based on merit and a demonstrated interest in developing leadership skills focused on the Arab world. Fellows participate in an enriching co-curricular experience designed to enhance and engage their development as the next generation of public leaders.

Yousif Foolathi Alkhoori MC/MPA 2021 has worked as an accountant at Musanada and as head of the Financial Planning and Analysis Unit and acting head of the Budgeting Unit at the Crown Prince Court in Abu Dhabi. He holds a bachelor's in accounting from Abu Dhabi University and is a Mason Fellow at HKS.



Shada El-Sharif MC/MPA 2021 served as senior advisor to the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development and helped establish Jordan's National Center for Innovation. She has also served as director of the Jordan Environment Fund and cleantech director under the USAID-funded Jordan Competitiveness Program. She holds a master's in engineering and a bachelor's in environmental engineering from Cornell University.



Mohammed Alhuraimel Alshamsi MC/MPA 2021 has served as director of utilities in Mubadala Investments Company and as director of strategy and policy at the UAE Prime Minister's Office. He holds an MBA from the HEC School of Management – Paris and a bachelor's degree from the American University of Sharjah. He is a Mason Fellow at HKS.



Tahany Maalla MPA 2022 is the former policy and governance coordinator at AQUA4Sudan Partnership. She has also worked at a think tank in Khartoum as a policy analyst for public sector reform issues in Sudan. She holds an MPP from the University of Nottingham and a bachelor's in civil engineering from the University of Khartoum.



Roukaya El Houda MPA/ID 2021 is a Moroccan former engagement manager at McKinsey & Company. She has also worked at the World Bank implementing infrastructure projects in African countries and co-created the social impact program at Paris Est Design School. She holds a master's in engineering from École des ponts ParisTech and a master's in decision science and optimization from Conservatoire national des arts et métiers.



Wahid Masri MPP/MBA 2021 started his professional career in private equity investing in small and medium enterprises. He later founded and headed a waste management company servicing over 70,000 people and has led development-focused work in high-tech and agriculture sectors. He holds a bachelor's in accounting from Butler University.



Awab Elmesbah, MPP 2022 has worked as a TV producer for a well-known political talk shows in Sudan. He also helped establish an independent think tank in Sudan where he led the policy and research and communications divisions. He holds a master's in African development from the London School of Economics and a bachelor's in electrical and electronic engineering from the University of Khartoum.



Abdulla Saif, MPA/ID 2021 worked for Mubadala Capital before attending HKS. He has represented the UAE in the International Mathematical Olympiad and received the President's Distinguished Students' Scholarship. He earned a bachelor's in economics, international studies, and mathematics from the University of Pennsylvania.

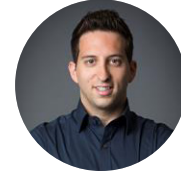


Sammy Ofer Fellowship for Emerging Leaders from Israel and Palestine

The Sammy Ofer Fellowship for Emerging Leaders from Israel and Palestine is awarded on a competitive, merit basis to deserving applicants from Israel and Palestine who have demonstrated a commitment to advancing peaceful relations in the region. The fellowship was established in memory of Israeli businessman Sammy Ofer, who in his lifetime was a firm believer in the role that education plays in sound leadership and promoting peace and coexistence in the region.



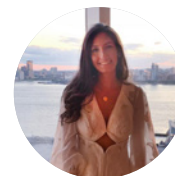
Muath Ibaid MPP 2021 has served as an analyst for Ernst & Young's Quantitative Economics and Statistics Team, where he worked with economists and public policy experts to solve business and policy issues for private and public sector clients. At age 16, he became one of only five students from Palestine offered a scholarship to study at the United World Colleges. He holds a bachelor's from Macalester College.



Assaf Yablon MPA 2022/MIT Sloan MBA 2022 has worked for Baker Tilly's Strategy and Management Consulting Division as a business analyst and consultant. He developed an automated financial valuation program for the Israeli government and served in the Israel Defense Forces as a deputy submarine commander. He holds a master's in computer science from the University of Pennsylvania and a bachelor's from the University of Haifa.

Rawabi Fellowship for Leaders from Palestine

Made possible by the generous support of Bashar Masri, a Palestinian business executive, this fellowship provides financial support to degree program students from Palestine. Ideally, fellowship recipients will use their knowledge, networks, and expertise honed at HKS to improve opportunities for the people of Palestine.



Majd Steitieh MPP 2022 worked for PwC for five years in their Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, and Qatar offices. During this time, she worked as a management consultant and in their assurance practice. She also started a socially motivated women's fashion brand to raise money for post-traumatic stress disorder treatment for Syrian and Palestinian refugees. She holds a bachelor's in accounting from McGill University.



Hamida Ben-Gacem Tunisia Graduate Fellowship

The Hamida Ben-Gacem Tunisia Graduate Fellowship supports selected students from Tunisia admitted to an HKS degree program and who have demonstrated interest or existing leadership in government or civil society.



Iheb Chalouate MPA 2022 has worked for the World Bank as a public sector analyst and as a member of the Maghreb Public Sector Management Team. He has also worked on public sector projects with A.T. Kearney and with the United Nations Development Programme in Tunisia. He holds a master's in international public policy from University College London and a bachelor's from the University of Michigan.

Alumni Spotlight: Sahar Albazar, MPA 2015, Egypt

Sahar Albazar MPA 2015 is a member of the Egyptian Parliament and deputy chair of the Foreign Relations Committee in the Egyptian House of Representatives. She is also president of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians at the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an organization founded to support and elevate the voices of young people working in parliaments around the world. Before running for public office, she served as an advisor to Egypt's Minister of Social Solidarity and a consultant for the World Bank's Cairo office on social protection programs. MEI asked her about her experience as a public servant and how her HKS education helped prepare her for the challenges of leadership.



What motivated you to run for public office?

A desire to serve! The feeling that I can make a difference motivated me to run for public office. I believe that engaging in policy and politics will lead to better results than the status quo and that's exactly what I am aiming for. I am a firm believer that change is possible, whether it's introducing a bill, revitalizing a downtown area, improving infrastructure, providing affordable housing, or working towards a safe and protected community. Public service is a fulfilling career and allows us to find new ways to leave a legacy.

How has your Harvard Kennedy School education shaped your approach to leadership and public service?

My education at HKS helped on so many levels. First, let's start by saying that I didn't have a political background or experience before I decided to run. My HKS education helped me gain the trust of my party's leadership to give me the chance to join them and run under their name. Second, it gave me the technical skills that helped me introduce comprehensive and evidence-based bills.

What have been the most rewarding and challenging aspects of your experience in public service?

Seeing the impact of my work on people and influencing society is one of the most rewarding parts of the job. For example, I worked on the new sexual harassment penal code amendments that made sexual harassment a felony instead of a misdemeanor. Now I see more women speak up and stand up, knowing that they are backed with their country's law. For the challenges, being with the majority party, people tend to expect me to defend government work instead of defending their rights. And that's normal when we don't have awareness of the true role of a parliament member. The launch of a parliament simulation activity in the public universities was a positive and necessary action to raise awareness about what MPs do, how political parties work, and how youth can engage with parliament.

Can you discuss your journey with the Forum of Young Parliamentarians? What do you hope to accomplish as the organization's president?

I had the extraordinary privilege I am grateful to have been nominated by the Egyptian Parliament to be a member of the board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians-IPU. I ran in an international election among 12 country representatives for the president position. I was honored to be elected and for the coming two years, and I plan to use this position to empower 25,000 young parliamentarians in 179 countries by providing technical skills trainings and opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. I also plan on publishing research and papers that could be of help and working on various bills to promote youth representation in parliaments around the world.

“My HKS network of international alumni and faculty have always supported me with guidance to this day.”

What advice do you have for HKS students pursuing a career in public service?

My advice would be to think of a career in public service only as a means to serve your fellow citizens and communities. The best public servants have the best motives. They will be unselfish, willing to sacrifice, open-minded, and considerate of their colleagues, staff, and constituents. I would recommend starting as early as possible with volunteering in a public servant's office or at an NGO to gain hands-on experience before starting your career, in order to be more prepared with clear objectives for what you want to do once you start your public service career.

“Public service is a fulfilling career and allows us to find new ways to leave a legacy.”



MEI Fellowship Alumni Updates

After completing their research fellowships at MEI, these fellowship alumni continued their notable accomplishments, influential scholarship, and meaningful work worldwide.

Alexei Abrahams, (2016-2017 Postdoctoral Fellow)

Dr. Abrahams went on to a postdoctoral fellowship at HKS's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy. He received a World Bank grant to study social media in the MENA region and has given presentations on "Measuring the Web (In)security of MENA Civil Society and Media" and "Monitoring the Social Media Discourse" at Hamad bin Khalifa University of Qatar.

Marsin Alshamary, (2019-2020 Pre-doctoral Fellow)

Dr. Alshamary joined the Brookings Institution as a 2020-2021 postdoctoral research fellow. This year, she presented to NATO on "Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Iraq" and to the United Kingdom's Foreign Commonwealth Office on "Likely Electoral Outcomes in Iraq."

Lihi Ben Shitrit, (2018-19 Postdoctoral Fellow)

Dr. Ben Shitrit is an associate professor at the School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Georgia. In 2020, she published her book, *Women and the Holy City: The Struggle over Jerusalem's Sacred Space* (Cambridge University Press). She also published two book chapters with Routledge: "Religion and Gender Constructions across Muslim and Jewish Contexts" and "The Politics of De-Radicalization in Israel/Palestine."

Matt Buehler, (2016-2017 Postdoctoral Fellow)

Dr. Buehler is an associate professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Tennessee. He received a \$190,000 grant from Y-12 National Security Complex/U.S. Department of Energy for his project, "NA-211 Nuclear Security Research Projects: Russian and Chinese Nuclear Diplomacy in North and Sub-Saharan Africa."

Lillian Frost, (2018-2019 Pre-doctoral Fellow)

Dr. Frost is an assistant professor of political science at Virginia Tech. In collaboration with Professor Nathan Brown of The George Washington University, she published an article in *Digest of the Middle East* on "Quasi-Citizenship as a Potential Alternative to Naturalization in the Arab World."

Diana Greenwald, (2017-2018 Postdoctoral Fellow)

Dr. Greenwald is an assistant professor in the political science department at City College of New York. This year, she published a book review in *Mediterranean Politics* and a short essay with POMEPS. She is working on a book project that examines pathways and obstacles to self-rule for nationalist movements.

Kimberly Guiler, (2018-2019 Postdoctoral Fellow)

Dr. Guiler is a research analyst with the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research and Office of Opinion Research where she conducts public opinion research in the MENA region. She published a *Research & Politics* article on "Conspiracy Theories, Election Rigging, and Support for Democratic Norms."

Jamal Ibrahim Haidar, (2015-2016 Postdoctoral Fellow)

Dr. Haidar is an assistant professor of economics at the American University in Cairo. He published an *Economics Letters* article, "Late-Movers Outperform First-Movers in Export Markets" and a chapter titled and a chapter titled "How Did Egypt Soften the Impact of Covid-19?" with CEPR Press. He also authored several articles in outlets such as *The Washington Post* and *VoxEU*.

Allison Hartnett, (2017-2018 Pre-doctoral Fellow)

Dr. Hartnett is an assistant professor of political science and international relations at the University of Southern California. She is Co-PI of the CoronaNet Dataset, which has cataloged government policies from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project recently published their open-source dataset in *Nature Human Behavior*.

M. Tahir Kilavuz, (2019-2020 Postdoctoral Fellow)

Dr. Kilavuz is an assistant professor of political science at Marmara University. He received a research grant from the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame for research on “Tradeoffs Between Religion and Democracy: Survey Evidence from the Muslim World.” He published articles in *Democratization* and *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* and three book chapters with Routledge, İLEM Yayınları, and Başkanlığı Yayınları.

Jean Lachapelle, (2014-2015 Pre-doctoral Fellow)

Dr. Lachapelle is a research fellow at the University of Gothenburg and a member of the Pandemic Backsliding Project. He will be a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oslo. This year, he published articles in *World Politics*, *Democratization*, and the *Journal of Politics*, as well as a book chapter with Oxford University Press.

Davide Luca, (2016-2017 Postdoctoral Fellow)

Dr. Luca is an assistant professor in the Department of Land Economy at Cambridge University. He has forthcoming articles in *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, and the *Journal of Regional Science*. He received the Best 2018-2019 Paper Award from the Quality of Government Institute, University of Gothenburg.

Andrew March, (2018-2019 Visiting Scholar)

Dr. March was promoted to professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He published an article in the *American Journal of Islam and Society* and is co-authoring a book, *On Muslim Democracy*, with Rached Ghannouchi (Oxford University Press, 2022, forthcoming).

Steve Monroe, (2019-2020 Postdoctoral Fellow)

Dr. Monroe is an assistant professor of political science at Yale-NUS College. He received the 2020 APSA Best Dissertation Award on MENA politics and will publish an article on, “Earned Income and Women’s Segmented Empowerment,” in the *American Journal of Political Science*.

Yuree Noh, (2018-2019 Postdoctoral Fellow)

Dr. Noh continues to collaborate with MEI Faculty Director Tarek Masoud on the MENA COVID-19 Economic Impact Survey and the Kuwait Public Policy Opinion Project. She has a forthcoming paper in the *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* and co-authored a paper in *Energy Research and Social Science*. She won the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond Grant from University of Gothenburg to host a virtual conference and in-person workshop on gender and politics in the region.

Christiana Parriera, (2019-2020 Pre-doctoral Fellow)

Dr. Parriera is a postdoctoral research associate at Princeton University. She published a journal article on “Power Politics: Armed Non-State Actors and the Capture of Public Electricity in Post-Invasion Baghdad” in the *Journal of Peace Research*. She will join the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva as an assistant professor of political science.

Amanda Rizkallah, (2015-2016 Pre-doctoral Fellow)

Dr. Rizkallah is an assistant professor of international relations at Pepperdine University. She is working on a project, to be fielded in summer 2021, for which she is conducting a phone survey in Lebanon that explores the politics of vaccine distribution and hesitancy in Lebanon.

Alexandra Stark, (2018-2019 Pre-doctoral Fellow)

Dr. Stark is a senior researcher with New America where she co-authored a report, “The Meaning of Security: Can a Divided Society Provide for the Common Defense?” She also published op-eds in *The Washington Post* and *Just Security* and the Sana’a Center for Strategic Studies.

Erin York, (2019-2021 Postdoctoral Fellow)

Dr. York joined Princeton University’s Niehaus Center for Globalization and Governance as a 2020-2021 postdoctoral fellow. She co-authored journal articles in the *Journal of Politics and Ecological Economics* and has a forthcoming paper in *Studies in Comparative International Development*.



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The Middle East Initiative at Harvard Kennedy School is dedicated to advancing public policy in the Middle East by convening the world's foremost academic and policy experts, developing the next generation of leaders, and promoting community engagement on campus and in the region.