

Kristen E. Kao

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education

Ph.D., Political Science. University of California, Los Angeles. December 2015.

Committee: Barbara Geddes, Daniel Posner, Ellen Lust, Leonard Binder, and Rogers Brubaker
Fields: Comparative Politics; Race, Ethnicity and Politics, International Relations

M.A. Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles. 2010.

B.A. Political Science and History. University of California, San Diego. 2005. *Cum Laude.*
Thesis: “Islamic Diversity: The Response of Jihadi, Nationalist, and Moderate Islamic Movements to the West.” High Honors.

University of California Education Abroad Program in France. 2003-2004.

Le Mirail Université de Toulouse & L’Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Toulouse

Employment

2015-Present Political Science Department – The Program on Governance and Local Development (GLD) at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.
Senior Research Fellow

2014-2015 Research Assistant, Professor Ellen Lust
Department of Political Science, Yale University

2012 Research Assistant, The Center for Strategic Studies
University of Jordan, Dr. Walid al-Khatib

2009-2011 Research Assistant. Professor Rogers Brubaker.
Department of Sociology – University of California, Los Angeles.

Publications and Working Papers

Kao, Kristen. With Mara Revkin. Forthcoming. “Retribution or Reconciliation? Attitudes Towards Rebel Collaborators After Conflict.” *American Journal of Political Science*. Winner of the Franklin L. Burdette/Pi Sigma Alpha Best Paper Award for APSA 2019.

Kao, Kristen. With Adam Harris, Karen Ferree, Boniface Dulani, Ellen Lust, Erica Metheney, and Cecilia Ahsan. Forthcoming. “Elections in the Time of Covid-19: The Triple Crises Around Malawi’s 2020 Presidential Elections.” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties*.

Kao, Kristen. With Ellen Lust and Gibran Okar. 2021. “Historical Legacies, Social Cleavages, and Support for Political Islam.” *The Oxford Handbook of Politics in Muslim Societies*, edited by Melani Cammett and Pauline Jones. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190931056.001.0001

Kao, Kristen. With Adam Harris, Karen Ferree, Boniface Dulani, Ellen Lust, Erica Metheney, and Cecilia Ahsan. 2021. “Stigma, Trust, and Procedural Integrity: Covid-19 Testing in Malawi.” *World Development*.

Kao, Kristen. With Lindsay Benstead. 2020. “Female Electability in the Arab World: The Advantages of Intersectionality.” *Comparative Politics*. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. 2020. With Lindsay Benstead and Ellen Lust. “Does it Matter What Observers Say? The Impact of International Election Monitoring on Legitimacy.” *Mediterranean Politics*. 1-22. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. With Ellen Lust, Boniface Dulani, Karen Ferree, Adam Harris, and Erica Metheney. 2020. “The ABCs of Covid-19 Prevention in Malawi: Authority, Benefits and, Costs of Compliance.” *World Development*. 137: 105167. Available [here](#).

Kao Kristen. 2020. With Ferree, Karen, Boniface Dulani, Adam S. Harris, Ellen Lust, Cecilia Ahsan Jansson, and Erica Metheney. “Disease Threat, Stereotypes, and Covid-19: An Early View from Malawi and Zambia,” *The Program on Governance and Local Development Working Paper Series*, No. 36, University of Gothenburg, Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. With Ezra Karmel. 2020. “What do Jordan’s Election Results Mean?” *The Washington Post/Monkey Cage*. Available [here](#). Picked up and translated [locally](#), discussed on Al Hurra News Channel [here](#) and on Al Jazeera’s Facebook page with thousands of likes and hundreds of comments [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. With Ellen Lust, Chagai Weiss, Marwa Shalaby, Eric Vollmann, Sylvia, Bergh, Sylvia I., E.J. Karmel, Miriam Bohn, Intissar Kherigi, and Zeynep Kadirbeyoglu. 2020 The Dynamics of Decentralization in the MENA: Processes, Outcomes, and Obstacles. The Program on Governance and Local Development Working Paper No. 31, University of Gothenburg, Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. 2017-2021. Freedom in the World Report: Jordan. *Freedom House*.

Kao, Kristen. With Mara Revkin. “How Does Punishment Affect Reintegration of Former Offenders? Evidence from Iraq” (Under Review). Working paper available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen, Ellen Lust, and Lise Rakner. Under Review. “Poverty and Clientelism: Do the Poor Demand Clientelism?” *The Program on Governance and Local Development Working*

Paper Series. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen and Mara Revkin. 2019. “How the Iraqi crackdown on the Islamic State may actually increase support for the Islamic State.” *Washington Post/Monkey Cage*. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen, Ellen Lust, and Marc Lynch. 2017. “Are Islamists making a comeback in the Middle East? Here’s why they succeed—and fail”. *Washington Post/Monkey Cage*. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. 2017. “Electoral Institutions and Ethnic Clientelism.” *American Political Science Association Comparative Politics Newsletter*. 17(2): 44–50. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. 2017. “Review: *The Arab Spring: Pathways of and Reform*.” By Jason Brownlee, Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.” *Perspectives on Politics*. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen, Lauren Baker, Ellen Lust, and Marc Lynch. 2017. “Islam in a Changing Middle East: Local Politics and Islamist Movements.” *Project on Middle East Political Science Studies*. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen and Ellen Lust. 2017. “Why Did the Arab Uprisings Turn Out as They Did? A Survey of the Literature.” *Project on Middle East Democracy*. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen, Ruth Carlitz, Pierre Landry, Ellen Lust, and Lise Rakner. 2017. “Beyond the State: Measuring Governance at the Community Level.” *APSA Comparative Democratization Newsletter*. 17(2): 26–29. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen, Adam Harris, Ellen Lust, Jens Ewald, and Peter Holmgren. 2017. “Governance in Service Delivery in the MENA.” *World Bank*. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. 2017. “Jordan: Negotiating Political, Economic, and Social Minefields.” *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook. 2017. European Institute of the Mediterranean*. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen, Lindsay J. Benstead, Pierre F. Landry, Ellen M. Lust, and Dhafer Malouche. 2017. “Using Tablet Computers to Implement Surveys in Challenging Environments.” *Survey Practice*. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. 2016. “How Jordan’s Election Revealed Enduring Weaknesses in its Political System.” *Washington Post/Monkey Cage*. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. 2015. “Do Jordan’s Tribes Challenge or Strengthen the State?” *Washington Post/Monkey Cage*. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. 2012. “Jordan’s Ongoing Election Law Battle.” *Sada*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available [here](#).

Kao, Kristen. 2012. "Jordan." *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

- Principal Investigator. From Revenge to Forgiveness: Strengthening Durable Peace in Post-Conflict Societies. Riksbanken Jubileumsfond and the Folke Bernadotte Academy, 2020-2022. With Michael Bang Petersen and Kristin Fabbe. (3.57 million SEK/\$412,000).
- Principal Investigator. To Punish or To Pardon? Attitudes Towards Justice and Reintegration for Swedes who Cooperated with the Islamic State. With Peter Esaiasson. Wilhelm & Martina Lundgren Vetenskapsfond, 2020-2022. (66,000 SEK/\$7,750).
- Principal Investigator. Building Bridges? Intergroup Contact, Power Status, and Coexistence in Jordan. With Salma Mousa and Ala' Alrababa'h. Funded by Hicham Alaoui Foundation for the *GLD in the MENA* edited volume, 2020-2021. (\$10,000).
- Co-Principal Investigator. Poverty and Participation: The Role of Social Ties Across Individuals and Contexts. With Prisca Jöst. Funded by Hicham Alaoui Foundation for the *GLD in the MENA* edited volume and the Project on Middle East Political Science, 2020-2021. (\$13,000).
- Co-Principal Investigator. Refugee Migration and Cities: Social Institutions, Political Governance and Integration in Jordan, Turkey and Sweden (SIPGI). Vetenskapsrådet (Swedish Research Council), 2019-2025. With Andrea Spehar (Co-PI), Ellen Lust, Josepha Wessels, Mine Eder, and Isabell Schierenbeck. (17.7 million SEK/\$2 million).
- Local Governance under Decentralization: Oman in Comparative Perspective. Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2019-2021. With Marwa Shalaby (PI) and Ellen Lust. (3 million SEK/\$350,000).
- Challenges & Opportunities of Urbanization in Tanzania, Zambia, & Kenya. FORMAS, 2017-2020. With Ellen Lust, Boniface Dulani, Adam Harris, and Pierre Landry. (9.1 million SEK/\$991,115).
- Social Institutions and Governance: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa. Vetenskapsrådet (Swedish Research Council), 2017-2021. With Ellen Lust, Adam Harris, Boniface Dulani, and Pierre Landry. (7.8 million SEK/\$860,000).
- Principal Investigator. Middle East and North Africa Workshop Research Grant. American Political Science Association, 2015. Funding for coding of tribal voting data in Jordan, 2016. (\$1,000).
- World Bank "Governance and Service" with Ellen Lust, Adam Harris, and Boniface Dulani, (\$10,969)
- Middle East and North Africa Workshop, Qatar and Kuwait, 2015. American Political Science Association. Housing and stipend for 2 weeks in each country.
- Alice Belkin Memorial Scholarship, 2014. (\$4,000).
- Doctoral Dissertation Writing Grant, Political Science Department, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), 2014-2015. (Tuition plus a stipend for 9 months of \$19,924.93).
- Charles F. Scott Fellowship, 2013-2014. (Tuition plus stipend for 9 months of \$15,000).
- Project on Middle East Political Science, Summer Travel Research Engagement Grant, Kuwait, 2013. "Comparing Jordanian and Kuwaiti Electoral Systems." (\$3,000).
- The National Science Foundation, Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant. 2012. "Voter Expectations of Candidates in Parliamentary Elections in the Middle East," Jordan and Kuwait. (\$11,990).
- Boren Fellowship, Jordan and Kuwait. 2011-2012. (Tuition plus stipend for 9 months of \$9,383).
- American Center for Oriental Research Dissertation Grant, 2010-2011. (Room and board for 5 months in Jordan plus stipend of \$10,200).
- Social Science Research Council, Summer Dissertation Proposal Development Grant – Syria & Jordan

2010. “Voting for Islamism versus Tribalism.” (\$5,000).
- Political Science Department, UCLA, Summer Research Mentorship Grant, Syria, 2009. “The Saliency of Ethnic Identity in Displacement: Iraqi Refugees in Syria.” (\$5,000).
 - Department of Education, Foreign Language & Area Studies Fellowship, Advanced Arabic/Middle East Studies, 2008-2011. (Tuition for 3 years plus stipend for 3 years of \$45,000).
 - Department of State – Critical Language Scholarship, Intensive Intermediate Arabic Summer Program, Oman, 2008. (3 months of room and board in Oman).
 - Political Science Department, UCLA, Summer Fieldwork Grant, Egypt, 2008. (\$4,500).
 - Institute of International Education, Fulbright Student Grant Program, Egypt, 2006. “Islamic Education and the Cultivation of Egyptian National Identity.” (\$20,000).

Selected Presentations

- “From Revenge to Forgiveness: Strengthening Durable Peace in Post-Conflict Societies.” The Folke Bernadotte Academy, (Swedish Government Agency for Peace, Security and Development), Stockholm, Sweden, February 6, 2020.
- “Retribution or Reconciliation? Attitudes Toward Rebel Collaborators in Iraq.” Middle East Initiative, Harvard Kennedy School, Boston, USA, December 9, 2019. Hosted by Tarek Massoud.
- “Historical Legacies, Social Cleavages, and Support for Political Islam.” *Oxford Handbook of Politics in Muslim Societies*, Melani Cammett and Pauline Jones, Harvard University, Boston, USA, 2020.
- “On Lineage and Authority: Compliance, Participation and Contributions in Malawi’s Matrilineal and Patrilineal Communities” and “Retribution or Reconciliation? Attitudes Toward Rebel Collaborators in Iraq” APSA, Washington, DC, 2019.
- “Leveraging Localism: Local Origins, Ethnicity, and Electoral Choice in Malawi” American Political Science Association, Boston, MA, 2018.
- “Competing or Complementary? Gender, Islamism, and Ethnicity in Elections.” International Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, 2017 & American Political Science Association, San Francisco, CA, 2017.
- “Community-Driven or Self-Interested Voters? A Conjoint Experiment on Vote Buying and Identity in Malawi.” Quality of Government Annual Conference, Budapest, Hungary, 2017 & European Political Science Association, Milan, Italy, 2017.
- “Does it Matter What Observers Say? The Impact of International Monitoring on the Electoral Legitimacy.” (Co-authors: Ellen Lust and Lindsay Benstead). American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA & Southern Political Science Association, Puerto Rico, 2016.
- “Electoral Institutions and Ethnic Clientelism in Jordan.” APSA, Philadelphia, 2016, & MENA Research Group University of Gothenburg, 2016 & European Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Brussels, Belgium, 2016.
- “The Parliamentary Puzzle: Why Vote in an Autocracy?” Dissertation Launchpad, UCLA. 2015. (A research presentation to a general public audience after 10 weeks of help from a presentation coach.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUsqdbE8Axw>

Invited Talks

- “Retribution or Reconciliation: Post-Conflict Attitudes Towards Enemy Collaborators” University of California, San Diego, Comparative Politics Workshop, Dec 2, 2020.
- “Retribution or Reconciliation? Attitudes Towards Rebel Collaborators After Conflict.” Harvard University, Kennedy School, Boston, MA, USA, Dec 10, 2019.
- “From Revenge to Forgiveness: Strengthening Durable Peace in Post-Conflict Societies.” Folke Bernadotte Academy (the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development), Stockholm, Sweden, Feb 6, 2020.
- “To Punish or to Pardon? Attitudes Toward Rebel Collaborators in Iraq.” Presented at the Copenhagen Business School Inequality Platform in the Department of International Economics, Government and Business, Copenhagen, Denmark, June 6, 2019.
- “Variation in Exposure to Rebel Governance and Preferences for Transitional Justice: Experimental Evidence from Iraq.” Graduate Institute International Relations/Political Science Colloquium Series, The Graduate Institute, Geneva, December 4, 2018.
- “Money Machine: Do the Poor Demand Clientelism?” Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town, November 7, 2018.

Teaching Experience

Advisor to 5 Master’s students and 1 PhD student

2019 Co-Leader – Governance and Service Delivery in the Global South

With Professor Ellen Lust– University of Gothenburg, *PhD Course*

2016 Co-Leader – Governance and Service Delivery in the Global South

With Professor Ellen Lust and Adam Harris – University of Gothenburg, *PhD Course*

2011 Teaching Assistant – Great Powers in the Middle East

Professor Steven Spiegel – University of California, Los Angeles

2011 Teaching Assistant – Introduction to American Politics

Professor Lynn Vavreck – University of California, Los Angeles

2010 Course Grader – African Politics

Professor Daniel Posner – University of California, Los Angeles

2009 Course Grader – Crisis Decision Making in US Foreign Policy

Professor Katja Favretto – University of California, Los Angeles

2007 Teaching Assistant– International Relations of the Middle East

Professor Leonard Binder – University of California, Los Angeles

Policy Consulting

Coder/Report Writer for Freedom House and Varieties of Democracy

2012-2013 International Election Monitoring Short-Term Consultant

The Carter Center – Jordan

2012-2013 Program Reporting Assistant

National Democratic Institute – Jordan

2012 Program Development Consultant

Integrated Services, Indigenous Solutions – Jordan

Languages

Modern Standard Arabic (Working research fluency), Levantine Arabic (Working research fluency), Egyptian Arabic (Intermediate skills), French (Intermediate skills), Swedish (Beginner)

Fieldwork

Fall 2019 Jordan

Three weeks in Jordan spent interviewing Jordanians and Syrian refugees as well as local civil society organizations and researchers working on the topic of refugee integration.

Spring 2019 Kenya and Zambia

Five weeks conducting fieldwork on rural-urban migration, inequalities, and local governance, running trainings for a large-N survey, and programming aspects of the survey to prepare it for launch

Spring and Fall 2018 Jordan

Four weeks in Jordan interviewing tribal leaders, politicians, and development practitioners to update the Freedom in the World Report and inform work on tribalism in the Middle East

Spring 2017 Lebanon

Two and a half weeks in Lebanon developing contacts and collecting data as well as running interviews on local governance, refugee governance, and information on public opinion polling options in the country.

Spring 2016 Malawi

Three weeks spent implementing a nationwide survey (N=8,000) with GLD.

Spring 2014 Jordan

Six weeks spent traveling throughout Jordan spent implementing a nationwide survey (N=1,500) with the Governance and Local Development Program at Yale.

2010-2013 Amman, Jordan and Kuwait City, Kuwait

Dissertation fieldwork including over 150 interviews with stakeholders. Completed an intensive advanced Arabic program at the Qasid Institute over the course of 6 months.

Summer 2010 Damascus, Syria and Amman, Jordan: Social Science Research Council
SSRC Dissertation Proposal Development Grant “Voting for Islamism versus Tribalism.”
Carried out over 50 interviews in Jordan and Syria to develop my dissertation prospectus.

Summer 2009 Damascus, Syria: UCLA Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship
“The Saliency of Ethnic Identity in Displacement: Iraqi Refugees in Syria.” Carried out 113 face-to-face surveys in Arabic with Iraqi refugees living in Syria and completed a quantitative, cross-country comparison of the results with World Values Surveys in other Arab countries.

Summer 2008 Salalah, Oman: U.S. Department of State – Critical Language Scholarship
Took an intensive Arabic program for three months.

2006-2007 Cairo, Egypt: Fulbright Student Scholar Program in Cairo, Egypt

Research Project: "Islamic Education and the Cultivation of Egyptian National Identity."

Took courses in formal and colloquial Arabic for six months at Kalimat Institute in Mohandiseen, Cairo.