

# Abdullah al-Khonaini

## Contact Information

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## Education

- ❖ Ph.D. Candidate in the School of Government and International Affairs (SGIA), Durham University, Durham, UK – Expected September 2026  
Thesis Title: *Rituals of Power: The Functions, Dynamics, and Transfigurations of the Parliamentary Committees of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, 1963 – 2024*
- ❖ M.A. in ‘Power, Participation, and Social Change’ at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Sussex University, Brighton, UK, 2018 – 2019, with Distinction  
Thesis Title: *Critical Enquiry into the Marginalized Narratives of Expression: Reconstruction of Identity, Nationality, and Means of Participation in Kuwait*
- ❖ BSc in ‘Finance and Financial Institutions’ at the College of Business Administrative, Kuwait University, Kuwait City, 2004 – 2009

## Research Interests

Society and political economy; political institutions and social change; parliamentary committees; power-relations; citizenship and belonging; participatory action research; West Asia and North Africa; Arabian Peninsula

## Academic Publications

### Book Chapters

- ❖ ‘Citizenship Revocation & Opposition Fragmentation in Kuwait after Arab Spring’ in *Breaking the Molds: Civil Society and Public Policymaking in the Arab World*, ed. Fatima Moussawi *et al.*, Issam Faris Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI), Dar Alfarabi: Beirut, 2025 (in Arabic; English available online)
- ❖ ‘Informal Advocacy: The Politics of Kuwait’s New Mental Health Law’, in *Breaking the Molds*, 2025 (in Arabic; English available online)
- ❖ ‘Re-examining Gender Norms in Kuwait: A Case Study of Article 198 of the Penal Code’, in *Breaking the Molds*, 2025 (in Arabic; English available online)
- ❖ ‘The City and Socio-Sustainability in the Gulf States: The Northern Project’ (in Arabic), in *The Enduring and the Evolving 2020: Sustainability in the Gulf*, ed. Omar al-Shehabi, Hamad al-Rayes, Gulf Centre for Development Policies, Centre for Arab Unity Studies: Beirut, 2021
- ❖ ‘The Political Development in Kuwait: Summarising the Events of the Year 2019’ (in Arabic), in *The Enduring and the Evolving 2020: Sustainability in the Gulf*, 2021

### Peer-Reviewed Articles

- ❖ ‘Spatial Patterns and Urban Governance in Kuwait: Exploring the Links Between the Physical, the Socio-Economic and the Political’, in *LSE Middle East Centre Kuwait Programme Paper Series* (25), 2024, co-authored in consortium
- ❖ ‘Youth Citizenship Identities in Kuwait: The Role of Citizenship Education and the Kuwaiti Diwaniya’, in *LSE Middle East Centre Kuwait Programme Paper Series* (19), 2023, co-authored in consortium

### **Forthcoming Peer-Reviewed Articles**

- ❖ ‘Transposing Citizenship: Acts of Belonging and Locality Among the Non-Citizen Population in the Arabian Peninsula’, in *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism (SEN) Journal*, 2025
- ❖ ‘Built to Separate: Quantifying Migrant Residential Segregation Throughout Kuwait’s Urban Transformation, 1957-2021’, *TBD*, co-authored in consortium

### **Other Writings**

#### **Policy Writings**

- ❖ ‘How Should the Biden Administration Support Human Rights & Democracy in the MENA? (Kuwait’s Case)’, in *Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)*, Washington, D.C., 2021
- ❖ ‘How COVID-19 Stress-Tested the Relations between Residents & Citizens’, *Gulf International Forum (GIF)*, Washington, D.C., April 2020
- ❖ ‘Kuwait Debate Power over Citizenship’, *Arab Gulf States Institute (AGSI)*, Washington, D.C., 2017

#### **Public Writings**

- ❖ Whitepaper, ‘Bringing Out the Participatory Action Research (PAR) in Participants: Reflections and Lessons from *Aswatna* Programme: Educating for Inclusion’, *En.v*, Kuwait City, 2024
- ❖ Article, ‘Examining the KNA: How Did the Mayoral Legislation Originate?’ (in Arabic), *Manshoor*, Kuwait City, 2021
- ❖ Article, ‘In Its Sixteenth Anniversary: Why Do Protesters Choose al-Erada Square?’, (in Arabic), *Manshoor*, Kuwait City, 2021
- ❖ Article, ‘Understanding Kuwait’s Bureaucracy’ (in Arabic), *Manshoor*, Kuwait City, 2021
- ❖ Article, ‘Explainer: How Do We Understand the Kuwaiti State Budget? (in Arabic), *Manshoor*, Kuwait City, 2021
- ❖ Article, ‘Kuwait Voted This Weekend. Who Won?’, *Washington Post, Good Authority* (formerly known as *The Monkey Cage*), Washington, D.C., 2020, co-authored with Dr. Daniel Tavana

### **Professional and Service Positions**

#### **Teaching**

- ❖ Graduate Teaching Assistant, Durham University, SGIA, Perspectives of Political Economy (SGIA1241), 2025/26

#### **Workshops and PAR Training**

- ❖ Designer and Convener, Training of Trainers (ToT) for ‘Strengthening Migrant Rights Programme’ Participatory Action Research (PAR) Workshop, two-days, *En.v in partnership with International Labour Organisation (ILO)*, Kuwait City, 2024
- ❖ Designer and Convener, ToT for ‘*Enbat*: Nurturing Transformational Leadership’ PAR Workshop, five-days, *Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO)*, Kuwait City, 2022
- ❖ Designer and Convener, a ToT for ‘*Aswatna* Programme: Educating for Inclusion’ PAR Programme, six-days, *En.v and Data4Change*, Kuwait City, 2021
- ❖ Facilitator, ‘Build: Collaborative Ideathon for Community in Crisis’ PAR Workshops, eight-days (virtual), *En.v in partnership with Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Gray Area Collective*, Kuwait City, 2020
- ❖ Facilitator, ‘N-mu: Youth Engagement Programme’ PAR Workshops, five-days, *En.v in partnership with Eurasia Foundation and the International Research and Exchange Board*, Kuwait City, 2016

### Previous Full-Time Positions

- ❖ Research Assistant, *Rai Institute for Research and Strategic Studies*, Kuwait City, 2014 – 2018
- ❖ Accountant, *Foreign Procurement Department, Ministry of Defence*, Kuwait City, 2011 – 2014

### Previous Part-Time Positions

- ❖ Lead Researcher, 'Gender Political Economy Analysis Research in Kuwait', *Westminster Foundation for Democracy*, London, 2021 – 2022
- ❖ Lead Researcher, 'Evaluation and Monitor Report of the Legal Unit Aid Programme by the Kuwait Trade Union Federation', *International Labour Organisation (ILO)*, Kuwait City, 2022
- ❖ Editor, *Manshoor*, Kuwait, 2020 – 2021
- ❖ Researcher, 'Restructuring the Kuwaiti Government' Project, *Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) and Supreme Council for Planning and Development*, Kuwait City, 2021
- ❖ Research Assistant, 'Neighbourhood Tales: Kuwait Under Lockdown', Oral History Project, *En.v*, Kuwait City, 2020
- ❖ Research Assistant, 'KFAS Needs Assessment Project', *KFAS and En.v*, Kuwait City, 2019
- ❖ Research Assistant, 'The National Youth Policy in Kuwait' Project, *Ministry of Youth Affairs (MOYA) in partnership with Louis Berger*, Kuwait City, 2018

### Department Service

- ❖ Elected M.A. Representative on Staff-Student Committee, IDS, Sussex University, Brighton, 2018 – 2019

### Public Speaking and Conference Presentations

#### Invited Webinars and Lecture

- ❖ Webinar, 'Kuwait Goes to the Polls: Discussing the 2020 Parliamentary Elections', *LSE*, London, 2020
- ❖ Webinar, 'Kuwait's Election: Political and Economic Challenges', *GIF*, Washington, D.C., 2020
- ❖ Lecture, 'Accountability and Transparency in the National Assembly', *Women's Cultural and Social Society*, Kuwait City, 2019
- ❖ Lecture, 'Who is Censoring Us?', *Hikma Society*, Kuwait City, 2017
- ❖ Lecture, 'Examining Grassroots Civil Groups in Kuwait', *Department of Political Science, George Washington University*, Washington, D.C., 2017
- ❖ Lecture, 'Challenges to Civil Society in Kuwait', *Department of English Literature, College of Arts, Kuwait University*, Kuwait City, 2017
- ❖ Lecture, 'NGO and Non-Profit as a Driver for Sustainable Development', *College of Social Science, Kuwait University*, Kuwait City, 2017

#### Conference Presentations

- ❖ Workshop, 'The Politics of Identity in the Middle East and North Africa', *The American Political Science Association Middle East and North Africa*, Kuwait University, Kuwait City, 2024
- ❖ Roundtable, 'Revesting the Gulf Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Scope, Theory, and Data', *British International Studies Association Annual Conference*, Birmingham, 2024

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Paper Presentation, ‘Kuwaiti Youth and the Evolution of the “Democratic Diwaniya”’, <i>Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting</i>, USA, 2021</li> <li>❖ Panel Chair/Discussant, ‘Excavating Modernity in the Arab Gulf: The Case of Kuwait’, <i>Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting</i>, USA, 2020</li> <li>❖ Panel Presentation, ‘Politics Beyond the Political: The Case of Kuwait’, <i>Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting</i>, USA, 2020</li> <li>❖ Paper Presentations, ‘Civil Society and Policymaking in the Arab World Programme’, <i>IFI—Breaking the Mold</i>, Beirut, 2019</li> <li>❖ Panel Presentation, ‘Unpacking the Role of Civil Society Organizations’, <i>Nuqat’s Creative Conference: The Human Capital</i>, Kuwait City, 2018</li> <li>❖ Panel Presentation, ‘Assessing Civic Space in the Middle East and North Africa: The Case of Kuwait’, <i>International Centre for Non-Profit Law</i>, Beirut, 2017</li> </ul>
<b>Civic Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Founder, <i>Raqib50</i> – A parliament watchdog database and application website, Kuwait City, 2013 – Present</li> <li>❖ Lead Strategist, Constitutional Court Case – Abolition of penalties related to ‘Imitation of the Opposite Sex’ clause, <i>Penal Code Legislation, Article 193</i>, Kuwait City, 2020 – 2022, Verdict: Article Abolished</li> <li>❖ Policy Advocate, Legislative Amendment – Lobbying the Kuwaiti National Assembly, formal civil societies, and the Government to amend articles related to censorship, <i>Press and Publication Legislation</i>, Kuwait City, 2016 – 2020</li> </ul>
<b>Fellowships and Awards</b>	<p><b>Fellowships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Al-Sabah Programme, ‘General Sir Peter de la Billière Doctoral Fellow’, <i>Doctoral Training Programme</i>, SGIA, Durham University, 2022 – 2025</li> <li>❖ Leaders for Democracy Fellowship, <i>The U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)</i>, Centre of Politics, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 2017</li> <li>❖ Leaders for Democracy Fellowship, MEPI, AGSI, Washington, D.C., USA, 2017</li> </ul> <p><b>Awards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ ‘Kuwait Award for Excellence and Creativity in Digital Media’ for the work of <i>Raqib50</i>, <i>MOYA</i>, 2021</li> <li>❖ ‘Franco-German Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law’ for the work of <i>Raqib50</i>, <i>Franco-German Council of Ministers</i>, 2017</li> </ul>
<b>Languages And Skills</b>	<p><b>Languages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Arabic (native), English (fluent), Farsi (basic)</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Nvivo, Qualtrics, R, Obsidian, Sublime Text, Microsoft Office</li> </ul>
<b>References</b>	Upon Request