

My interest in studying middle eastern and european politics

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I developed an admiration for Politics and International Relations when I researched the roots of the Middle East, especially those that are personal to me. My mother fled the Iranian Revolution in 1979, and it led me to research the history of Islamic fundamentalism, which then influenced my reading of ‘The Failure of Political Islam’ by Oliver Roy. The book focused on how Islamic radicalism is more of a contemporary idea than an archaic phenomenon. This questioned my belief that Islamic extremism has maintained its ideals since its origins in the 7th century. I believe the study of the Middle East is crucial due to its geographical position as a hotbed of political tensions and cultural conflicts. This therefore illustrates the importance of studying Arabic, which I have always been intrigued to study.

With the growing importance of the Middle East in world affairs, there is thus a severe lack of Arabic speaking workers in the western world who truly understand the language niches and the cultural significance.

My desire to study Arabic also stems from my interest in gaining a true understanding of all of the contextual points regarding the sociopolitical context of the region and how it is able to fluctuate and progress throughout its existence. This can be exemplified through my study of the Arab-Israeli context. While reading ‘On Palestine’ by Ilan Pappé and Noam Chomsky, I gained a better understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and an insight into the different worldwide beliefs on the conflict. I recognised the extent to which Palestinians, living in Israeli territory, need to maintain their Arab identity. Despite the fact that I agree with Chomsky’s stance on the conflict, his belief that Israel’s actions in Palestine are “worse

than the apartheid” can be viewed as radical. This fuelled me to continue my research to develop a clearer opinion on Islamic extremism. Professor Gilles Kepel’s lecture on “ Terror and Martyrdom”, I was introduced to a different stance, as he focused on how Middle Eastern nations hold themselves back and they do not allow their nations to prosper. This view questioned my opinion. Nevertheless, I disagreed with Kepel’s view as it seems logical to me that Middle Eastern nations are not able to prosper and make advancements due to interference from other states.

I combined my interests in Middle Eastern and European politics when I carried out an independent research project, on North African migration to France and its effects on culture and society. After a week’s work experience at the France 24 Headquarters in Paris, I observed and understood the importance of European Politics at a hub of global politics. I was able to twin my language and communication skills in a foreign language by working with International experts and broadcast journalists. I furthered my knowledge of the business and marketing sector when I undertook a week’s work experience at Laundrapp, a successful technology start-up company.

Moreover, I have volunteered at two separate primary schools, helping students develop language, literacy and numerical skills. In 2014, I underwent a week’s work experience at Paddock School which is a maintained special needs school for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders with severe learning difficulties. This enhanced my communication skills and acted as a memorable experience as I witnessed the pupils’ communication skills increase, illustrating the importance of volunteering. I see myself as a

dedicated and strong-minded student, and I trust that I will be able to fully immerse myself in the course, which will require the communication and leadership skills, as well as passion, that I believe I have.