

UC, Berkeley Ph.D. Candidate Seeks Out the LERC

LERC Staff

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The Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at the Faculty of Law and Political Science, Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), recently welcomed Ms. Julia Tierney, a Ph.D. candidate in City & Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, USA, and an affiliated scholar with the Issam Fares Institute at the American University of Beirut (AUB), who requested to interview LERC Director Guita Hourani on the role of the diaspora in the Lebanese economy in light of Lebanon's political crisis and the Syrian refugee dilemma.

Ms. Tierney's dissertation takes a political economy perspective to real estate investment in Beirut, asking why so much money is being invested in such an insecure city. To answer that question, she is tracing circulations of investment from the Lebanese diaspora to the banking system and real estate sectors (as well as in the sovereign debt of Lebanon).



Ms. Haddad and Ms. Tierney at LERC in Oct, 2015

Ms. Tierney has worked in urban development for the World Bank and as an emerging market trader at Lehman Brothers. She has a Master's degree in Urban Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a

Master's degree in International Relations and Economics from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in the U.S. She also holds a Bachelor's degree from Yale University.

In her interview with Dr. Hourani, Ms. Tierney asked questions related to the political economy activities of real estate investment in Lebanon against the background of political uncertainty, economic fragility, and regional violence. She also was interested in knowing more about the role of the Lebanese emigrants' remittances in supporting the Lebanese economy in general and the importance of the Lebanese diaspora, as real estate investors in particular.

Ms. Tierney sought Dr. Hourani's advice on methodological strategies for researching the Lebanese diaspora and possibly ways that she could benefit from the archives of the Center.

As a consequence to this meeting, Dr. Hourani offered Ms. Tierney affiliation with the Center to help her facilitate her research by joining the Center's ongoing research projects on similar topics.