

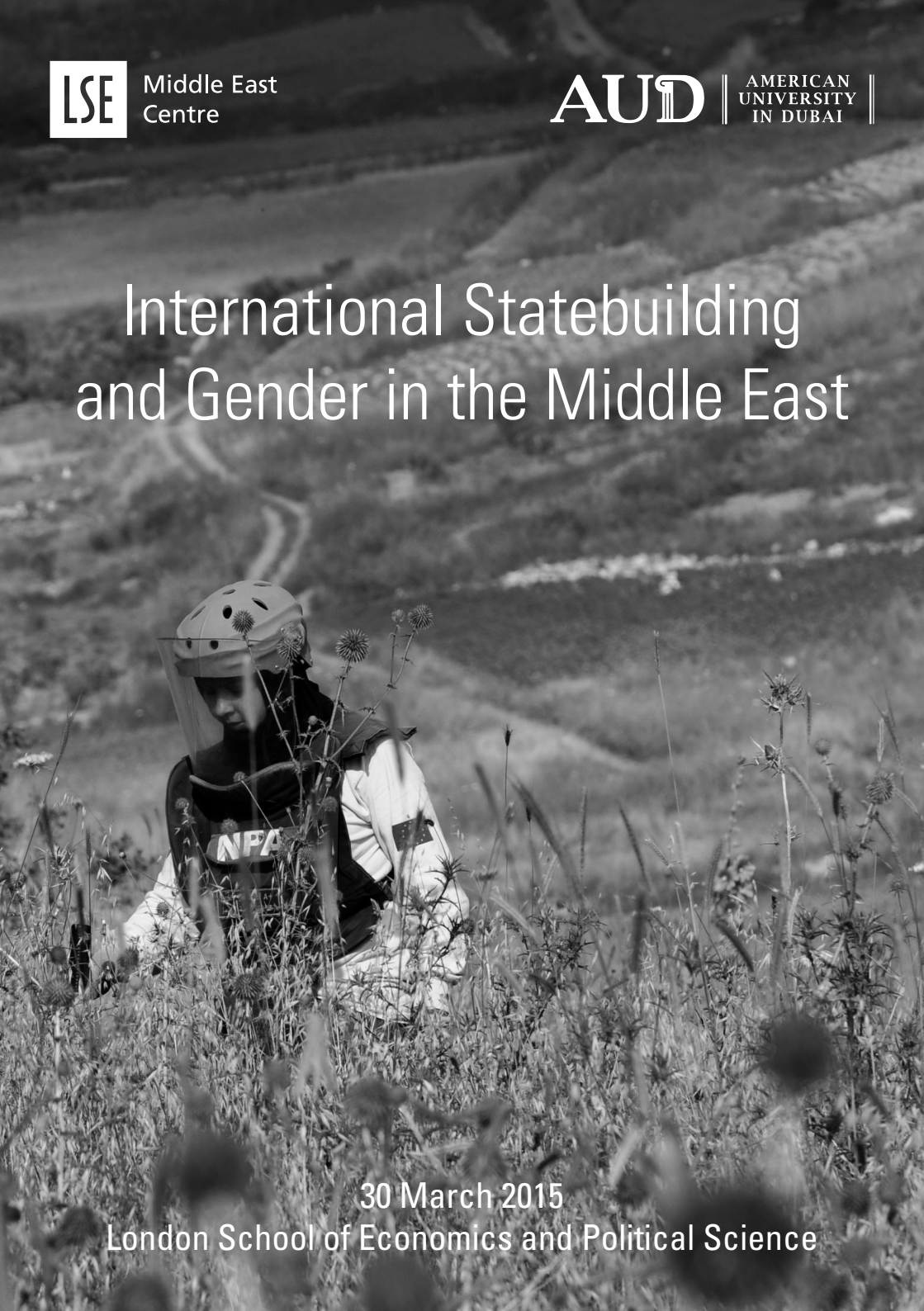


Middle East
Centre

AUD

AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
IN DUBAI

International Statebuilding and Gender in the Middle East



30 March 2015

London School of Economics and Political Science

Conference Programme

08.30 - 09.15 REGISTRATION *NAB LG*

09.15 - 09.30 WELCOME ADDRESS *Wolfson Theatre*

09.30 - 10.30 KEYNOTE SPEECH *Wolfson Theatre*

Chair: James Hughes, LSE

ISIS, the state of Kurdistan and the State of Kurdistan
Brendan O'Leary, University of Pennsylvania

10.30 - 11.00 COFFEE BREAK *NAB LG*

11.00 - 12.30 PANEL 1

Panel 1a - Security, Statebuilding and Gender *Alumni Theatre*

Chair: Filippo Dionigi, LSE

International Terrorism and the Global 'War on Terror': A critical analysis of women's agency in security sector reform in Yemen
Joana Cook, King's College London

Militant Masculinities: Military conscription and the creation of national identities in the Arab Gulf
Haya Al Noaimi, Georgetown University Qatar

A Comparative Analysis of the Relationship between Security Threats and Gender Constructions in the Nationbuilding Projects of Israel and Palestine
Katharine Brooks, University of Oxford

Panel 1b - Gender and Kurdish Politics *Thai Theatre*

Chair: Khaled Salih, University of Kurdistan-Hewlêr

Gender and Multi-layered Citizenship of Kurds in Turkey
Necla Acik, University of Manchester; Umut Erel, Open University

Gendered Aspects of Conflict and Post-conflict Processes: Kurdish women IDPs and reconciliation with the Turkish State
Ayse Betul Celik, Sabanci University

Addressing Gender-based Violence in Iraqi Kurdistan: Experiences and challenges faced
Nazand Begikhani, University of Bristol

12.30 - 13.30 LUNCH *NAB LG*

13.30 - 15.00 PANEL 2

Panel 2a - International Statebuilding and Women *Alumni Theatre*

Chair: Deniz Gokalp, American University in Dubai

Can a national action plan to implement UNSCR 1325 in Iraq lead to practical change for the position of women in the security sector?

Frances Guy, Christian Aid

Factors that Inhibit the Incorporation of Gender into International Statebuilding: Domestic factors and partial de-secularisation of Iraq

Parvin Alizadeh, Boston University, London program

The Politics of Women's Political Participation in Jordan among Local and International Actors

Marta Pietrobelli, SOAS

Panel 2b - Contemporary and Historical Factors Affecting Women's Status *Thai Theatre*

Chair: Zeynep Kaya, LSE

Protecting the Family or Protecting the Family Name? How external aid affects internal discourse on combating domestic abuse in Jordan

Jessica Watkins, King's College London

Ottoman Laws in Modern Israel: How Arab Christian women seeking a divorce are more disadvantaged than under the Caliphate

Jill Hamilton, SOAS

Domestic and International Impediments to Gendered Statebuilding: Iranian women's agency through subversion

Shahin Gerami, San Jose State University

15.00 - 15.30 COFFEE BREAK *NAB LG*

15.30 - 17.00 PANEL 3

Panel 3a - Feminism, Conservatism and Religion *Alumni Theatre*

Chair: Aitemad Muhanna-Matar, LSE

The Quest for Egyptian Feminist Identity in the Post-Mubarak Era

Ahmed Kadry, Imperial College London

Post-2003 Iraqi Women's Rights Activism: Between NGOisation, sectarianisation and rise of conservatism

Zahra Ali, EHESS

Female Islamists and Donor Support for Women's Rights in Egypt and Tunisia

Eva Dingel

Panel 3b - Gender Equality and Statebuilding in Post-conflict Contexts *Thai Theatre*

Chair: Frances Guy, Christian Aid

Differential Statemaking in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia: Are subnational solutions good news for gender equality?

Michael Harsch, New York University Abu Dhabi; Dominik Balthasar

Prosecution and Persecution: Gender and justice in Afghanistan

Hervé Nicolle, Samuel Hall

17.00 - 17.30 COFFEE BREAK *NAB LG*

17.30 - 18.30 KEYNOTE ADDRESS *Wolfson Theatre*

Chair: Marysia Zalewski, University of Aberdeen & LSE

Gendering Statebuilding in the Middle East: A Transnational Feminist Perspective

Nadje Al-Ali, SOAS

Abstracts

Panel 1a - Security, Statebuilding and Gender

International Terrorism and the Global 'War on Terror': A critical analysis of women's agency in security sector reform in Yemen

Joana Cook, King's College London

Addressing the threat of international terrorism has proven a critical and divisive topic in international relations. In light of the significant US-led security sector restructuring with fledgling governments currently underway, as well as the important roles that women of the global south have carved out for themselves in this period, this paper explores the evolving agency women have in maneuvering their own security interests against competing international interests. Using Yemen as a case study, competing narratives of security will be explored in this critical analysis of gender, counter-terrorism and security sector reform.

Militant Masculinities: Military conscription and the creation of national identities in the Arab Gulf

Haya Al Noaimi, Georgetown University Qatar

In January 2014, the governments of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar introduced a compulsory military service for their 18-30 year old male citizens. In light of the political events taking place both regionally and within the monarchic states of the Gulf, notions of gender and nationbuilding in the oil-rich Gulf states are being reconfigured. This paper aims to explore the interplays between gender, nationalism and nation-building through the lens of military conscription and argues that the concept of the Gulf 'nation-building' can no longer be considered sexless but is in fact, hegemonically masculine.

A Comparative Analysis of the Relationship between Security Threats and Gender Constructions in the Nationbuilding Projects of Israel and Palestine

Katharine Brooks, University of Oxford

When the issue of gender is discussed, if at all, in regard to the Israel-Palestine conflict, it is usually in relation to the perceived 'moral superiority' of Israel engendered by its more gender-equal, and indeed democratic, status. However, to date little sustained academic enquiry has actually been conducted into the factors that explain the discrepancy in gender equality within the two participants in the Israel-Palestine conflict. This paper seeks to address this gap within the literature and traces the process of gender construction within both Israel and Palestine since 1948.

Panel 1b - Gender and Kurdish Politics

Gender and Multi-layered Citizenship of Kurds in Turkey

Necla Acik, University of Manchester; Umut Erel, Open University

Over the last 30 years Kurdish women's involvement in the struggle for the recognition of Kurdish identity and their resistance against repressive policies and persecution by the Turkish authorities has placed them under the spotlight. This paper looks at how the Kurdish women's movement has become a popular movement since the early 1990s keeping gender inequality on their agenda through campaigns against sexual violence, separate women's organisations and the initiation of a co-chair system in pro-Kurdish political organizations, exploring these issues as an expression of Kurdish women's multi-layered citizenship (Yuval-Davis 1999).

Gendered Aspects of Conflict and Post-conflict Processes: Kurdish women IDPs and reconciliation with the Turkish State

Ayşe Betül Celik, Sabanci University

Since 2009, the Turkish state has been trying to address several components of the Kurdish Issue. However, most of these efforts concentrate on the legal changes needed to democratise the country and to disarm and re-integrate the PKK fighters to the society. Until now the peace process has not paid much attention to the gendered aspect of the long-lived war and has not included any plan to deal with the needs of the women affected by the conflict. This study analyses the internally displaced women's requests from the Turkish state and social actors for reconciliation and women's efforts to join the peace process in Turkey.

Addressing Gender-based Violence in Iraqi Kurdistan: Experiences and challenges faced

Nazand Begikhani, University of Bristol

This paper addresses the role of official agencies, as well as NGOs, in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. The paper draws on findings based on fieldwork and interviews carried out with more than 100 women activists, legal practitioners, persecutors, MPs and ministers in Iraqi Kurdistan Region. It examines how official agencies deal with GBV, the evolving attention to the issue in the Region, and women's political and organizational work in challenging gender-based violence in the context of national identity, equality and social justice.

Panel 2a - International Statebuilding and Women

Can a national action plan to implement UNSCR 1325 in Iraq lead to practical change for the position of women in the security sector?

Frances Guy, Christian Aid

Iraq is the only country in the Middle East that has agreed a National Action Plan to implement UNSCR 1325, which was approved by outgoing Prime Minister Nour el Maliki in March 2014. This paper looks at what has led to the successful implementation of National Action Plans elsewhere and assess whether there is anything about the Iraqi National Action Plan or the process that led to its agreement which gives reason to expect any practical results. Are there any lessons from this process that can be transferred to other gender-related statebuilding initiatives in Iraq or elsewhere in the Middle East? Should other countries in the region be encouraged to create National Action Plans? Would this have a positive effect on encouraging women's engagement in statebuilding? Are there specific elements of the National Action Plan that could be highlighted by other actors to help improve gender equality?

Factors that Inhibit the Incorporation of Gender into International Statebuilding: Domestic factors and partial de-secularisation of Iraq

Parvin Alizadeh, Boston University, London program

It is well documented that women's status in Iraq improved markedly during the 1960s, 70s and 80s. However, the overall environment for gender empowerment deteriorated sharply from the early 1990s with war, severe economic sanction and the annihilation of the totalitarian secular state in 2003. One legal manifestation of this is article 41 of the Iraqi 2005 constitution, which allows for personal status matters to be governed by the rules of religious groups. This in turn may easily open the door for religious leaders to infringe on women's rights. More importantly the international statebuilding in Iraq is taking place in the context of a society that is experiencing a rapid rise of religiosity, sectarian religious conflicts and religious -based identity politics. These developments have strengthened and validated traditional values that limit women's social participation. Above all the institution of patriarchy has been enormously strengthened in response to these developments.

The Politics of Women's Political Participation in Jordan among Local and International Actors

Marta Pietrobelli, SOAS

This paper aims to critically investigate the extent to which, in the context of women's political participation in Jordan, the incorporation of gender in the processes of democratisation among different actors, being local, national and international, may involve (or not) feminist social transformation. Specifically, by analysing the operationalisation of the notion of 'gender mainstreaming' by local, national and international actors and the introduction of a reserved quota-system for women in the Jordanian Parliament, it analyses the interactions between the different actors in integrating gender into political, social and institutional transformation.

Panel 2b - Contemporary and Historical Factors Affecting Women's Status

Protecting the Family or Protecting the Family Name? How external aid affects internal discourse on combating domestic abuse in Jordan

Jessica Watkins, King's College London

Public measures to confront domestic abuse aim to build state security in a comprehensive sense. Within the MENA region, Jordan has led the way in introducing legal provisions, procedural measures and support networks to tackle violence against women and children since the late 1990s, and the international community has played a large part in this. Today, much of the pressure for further reform is being driven forward by Jordanian women's rights groups, whose projects are dependent on international aid. Ultimately, however, the state retains control over these organisations, and the enforcement of so-called family protection initiatives is largely dependent on royal backing. This paper uses ethnographic analysis to explore how Jordanian perceptions of foreign influence are shaping the internal discourse over what the public role should be in combating domestic abuse.

Ottoman Laws in Modern Israel: How Arab Christian women seeking a divorce are more disadvantaged than under the Caliphate

Jill Hamilton, SOAS

Apart from Turkey and Tunisia, there are no civil Personal Status laws in the Middle East and North Africa. This paper asks why modified versions of the Ottoman millet system remain long after these countries repealed the Ottoman laws that were once the backbone to their legal systems. This paper focuses on occupied East Jerusalem and the one country in the Middle East which does not have a Muslim majority, Israel. It argues that state sectarian laws strengthen the overlap between law, nationality and religious identity, and that both government and clerical patriarchy mutually reinforce one another at the expense of women, especially the Arab Christian women who cannot divorce. The paper concludes that Israel's state sectarian laws are in keeping with its Zionist aim of creating a Jewish state as they impede intermarriage and weaken the opposition by fracturing the populations along sectarian lines, thus entrenching divisions within Arab society.

Domestic and International Impediments to Gendered Statebuilding: Iranian women's agency through subversion

Shahin Gerami, San Jose State University

The extreme sanctions imposed by the UN resolution 1696 against Iran since 2006, have impeded civil participation of all strata in state building and civil engagements. Women have borne the brunt of the sanctions at social and political arenas and as a result of economic hardship affecting families. This paper examines women's challenge to domestic and international impediments through tactics of subversion. It specifically examines two strategies of subversion: subversion of the state's codes of public behavior through embodiment, and E-subversion through social media. Through an ethnographical study of embodiment and E-subversion, it problematises how Iranian women create and claim under currents of agency. These strategic fields of agency reverberate to the surface and engender state building process at intersection of international/domestic fields.

Panel 3a - Feminism, Conservatism and Religion

The Quest for Egyptian Feminist Identity in the Post-Mubarak Era

Ahmed Kadry, Imperial College London

The aim of this paper is to highlight the historical and colonial legacy of feminism in Egypt in order to contextualise and understand why feminism, specifically tangible and intangible women's rights and protection, remains difficultly sought after across political and social spectrums in the post-Mubarak era. Moreover, feminism, as both a label and as an ideology, remains far from consolidated among gender rights activists themselves, partly due to its continued association with the 'West', which not only effects the target audience of gender activists who seek change, such as political actors, but encourages gender activists to carve out their own branch of feminism that holds no contradictions with Egyptian cultural and religious history. In turn, this has led to an internal debate among gender activists who work on/in Egypt, across international and domestic NGOs, on what exactly constitutes Egyptian feminism and how does it correlate or differ from 'universal' understandings of feminism.

Post-2003 Iraqi Women's Rights Activism: Between NGOisation, sectarianisation and rise of conservatisms

Zahra Ali, EHESS

The research is based on an ethnography of women political organizations in Baghdad primarily, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan secondarily, conducted between October 2010 and June 2012 (80 semi-structured interviews and life-stories, participant observation), and an in depth socio-historical analysis of the relationship between Gender, Nation, State and Religion in Iraq since 1958. This paper seeks to present the realities and issues at stake for Iraqi women's rights activists in the post-Saddam era focusing on three dimensions: 1. The involvement of UN-Women and international Ngos and its concrete impact on the way in which Iraqi women activists organized and elaborated their advocacy for women's rights. 2. The relationship between the sectarianisation of Iraqi institutions and political life and the redefinition of women's rights issues and activism since 2003. 3. The rise of social, political and religious conservatisms in relation to the weakness of the Iraqi state, the fragmentation of the Iraqi citizenship and the militarization of its society and public sphere, in the backdrop of dramatic politico-sectarian violence.

Invisible to the Western Eye: Female islamists and donor support for women's rights in Egypt and Tunisia

Eva Dingel

This paper considers how the failure of Western development actors to work with Islamist women's organisations both reflects and furthers the latter's marginalisation. It argues that Islamist women's organisations constitute a 'double blind spot' for international actors who often bypass Islamist organisations, and spend even less time considering cooperation with the women's branches of such organisations. Looking at Egypt and Tunisia as case studies, the paper investigates the following questions: 1) How do Western donor discourses about women's agency and rights compare to their record of support for women's organisations? 2) Which actors dominate debates about women's rights in Egypt and Tunisia? 3) How do women members of Islamist organisations view their own political activism?

Panel 3b - Gender Equality and Statebuilding in Post-conflict Contexts

Differential Statemaking in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia: Are subnational solutions good news for gender equality?

Michael Harsch, New York University Abu Dhabi; Dominik Balthasar

Under what conditions is statemaking in severely war-torn countries successful? One approach to post-war situations has been dominating the international debate since the early 1990s: liberal statebuilding. Yet, liberal statebuilding is based on problematic assumptions about the context, logic and means of statemaking. As a result, it has not provided a viable strategy for promoting peace in most war-torn, ethnically-divided societies. This paper argues that in cases where national governments lack basic capacity and legitimacy to govern, a differential approach to statemaking might be more promising. By comparing recent state formation processes in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia, it highlights that statemaking has been moderately successful at the sub-national level. This paper suggests that the international community should support these polities as long as they (a) have reasonably inclusive mechanisms for providing its citizens with the opportunity to voice their preferences, and (b) keep violations of fundamental rights to a minimum.

Prosecution and Persecution: Gender and justice in Afghanistan

Hervé Nicolle, Samuel Hall

A 2013 empirical research with 5,000 respondents in 5 provinces of Afghanistan - including 50% of female respondents - highlights the key compromises made in women's needs and access to justice in the country. What are the paths to and outcome of justice for women in Afghanistan? This paper discusses three findings on women's access to justice in Afghanistan: 1. The border between statutory and non-statutory justice is often not valid in practice in Afghanistan; 2. Western concepts of justice are not relevant to Afghanistan, where justice is conceived as a means to reach reconciliation and to preserve social peace; and 3. When the majority of Afghan women have little contact with state institutions, community norms can turn into coercive behaviours negatively impacting women's access to justice. This paper concludes on the need for policies that address gender-based inequities in women's access to justice in Afghanistan and in justice outcomes for women.



Middle East Centre

London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE

blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec

@LSEmiddleeast

lse.ac.uk/middleeastcentre

Cover Image: Sukeina Ismael searches for cluster bombs in South Lebanon.

© Cluster Munition Coalition, 2011.