



Middle East
Centre

LSE MIDDLE EAST CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2017|18

WELCOME

The past academic year has been the Centre's busiest and most productive. Seven new colleagues joined the Centre and we started work on 12 new research projects, while publishing 11 pieces of original research and organising 39 events.

We secured an agreement to extend the partnership between the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and LSE for another five years, with a grant of £2.7 million to fund the research activities of the Centre's Kuwait Programme. This enables us to foster enduring academic partnerships between LSE and Kuwaiti universities and to pursue world-class, innovative research.

After a successful bid to the UK Department for International Development to fund a four-year Conflict Research Programme, we began research on the drivers of conflict in Iraq and across the MENA region, in collaboration with Iraqi partners. For the Programme's launch in March, we were joined by Lyse Doucet and Javier Solana.

The Centre's Academic Collaboration with Arab Universities Programme continues to thrive and has now funded 27 projects in partnership with 17 Arab universities. This enhanced research portfolio makes a serious contribution to the understanding of our region and places the Centre at the heart of MENA work at LSE. In particular, the Centre has now developed substantial research capacity in issues including displacement, conflict, gender, political economy, media and health.

Robert Lowe and Zeynep Kaya were appointed as Specialist Advisors to the UK Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee's Inquiry into Kurdish aspirations in the Middle East, with their expert testimony published as part of a committee report, to which the government responded in April.

Madawi Al-Rasheed, Courtney Freer and Ian Black each published important new books this year, with events held at LSE to mark their release.

We are very pleased to have expanded our team as a number of talented colleagues joined the Centre over the year: Bronwen Manby, Sinéad Murphy, Rosa Pérez, Jack McGinn, Toby Fenton, Manmit Bhambra and Sophie Olver-Ellis.

The Centre continues to organise a large and very dynamic series of public events and we have also increased our commitment to specialist research workshops. The impact of our communications and outreach activities continues to expand, especially through our innovative use of video and audio materials.

This was the last of my five years as Director of the Centre. It has been a great pleasure to lead the team through a period of sustained growth and I am delighted to continue working in the Centre as Kuwait Professor. I welcome Michael Mason, who will succeed me as Director in September 2018, and look forward to another successful year.

Toby Dodge
Centre Director

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ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST CENTRE

OBJECTIVES

- Promoting independent and critical research on the Middle East and North Africa;
- Fostering open and critical debate about the politics, societies and economics of the region;
- Disseminating knowledge about the Middle East through the Centre's events, digital resources and publications and through LSE's community and media activities;
- Providing a rich research environment for scholars and students;
- Establishing and cultivating ties with colleagues in Middle East and international institutions.

FUNDERS

In 2017–18, the Centre's work was generously supported by:

- Emirates Foundation
- The Aman Trust
- Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences
- UK Department for International Development
- Gerald Gray, Institute for Redress and Recovery, Santa Clara University School of Law
- Chevron Corporation
- LSE Knowledge Exchange and Impact Fund
- IGA–Rockefeller Fund
- The British Institute for the Study of Iraq
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA)
- Global Religion Research Initiative

The Middle East Centre builds on LSE's long engagement with the Middle East and provides a central hub for the wide range of research on the region carried out around the School. LSE is one of the world's leading social science institutions and comprises departments covering all branches of the social sciences. The Centre taps into this expertise to promote both public understanding and innovative interdisciplinary research on the region, with foci on history, political economy, society and international relations.



CENTRE STAFF

Dr Manmit Bhambra **Research Assistant**

Manmit's research compares public responses to the comic character Ms Marvel in non-Muslim and Muslim societies. She is also Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at LSE and Fellow on the Generation Brexit project based in the European Institute.

Professor Toby Dodge **Centre Director**

Toby is Director and Kuwait Professor. He is also a professor in the Department of International Relations. His research concentrates on the evolution of the post-colonial state in the international system, with a main focus on the Middle East, specifically Iraq.

Toby Fenton **Projects Assistant**

Toby provides research and administrative assistance to a number of projects, looking at identity and heritage in the UAE, and displacement in the region. He holds a Master's degree in International Peace and Security from King's College London.

Dr Courtney Freer **Research Officer**

Courtney's research focuses on revising rentier state theory by examining the socio-political role played by Muslim Brotherhood affiliates in the so-called 'super-rentiers' of Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE.

Sunduss Hamdan **Research Assistant**

Sunduss provides research support for the project 'Egypt's and Morocco's GVC Integration in a Changing Global Economy'. She is in the final year of a BSc in International Relations at LSE.

Dr Aula Hariri **Research Officer**

Aula researches the historical sociology of the Middle East. This research builds on her PhD thesis which examined the role of the Iraqi independence movement on state formation in Iraq between 1914 and 1958.

Dr Zeynep Kaya **Research Fellow**

Zeynep is researching gender, displacement and the implementation of the 'Women, Peace and Security' agenda in Iraq. She is also examining the drivers of conflict in Iraq, in particular in the Kurdistan Region.

Robert Lowe

Deputy Director

Robert is responsible for running the Centre's operations, staffing, research activities, fundraising and development. His main research interest is Kurdish politics, particularly in Syria.

Kyra Luchtenberg

Research Assistant

Kyra is conducting research on 'Natural Resource Management and Peacebuilding in post-ISIS Iraq' as part of the Conflict Research Programme.

Dr Bronwen Manby

Research Fellow

Bronwen is a leading authority on nationality law and statelessness in Africa, having worked closely with UNHCR on its global campaign against statelessness. At the Centre, she is conducting research on statelessness among migrants in North Africa.

Jack McGinn

Communications Coordinator

Jack coordinates the Centre's online communications and social media, academic publications and research outputs. Prior to joining the Centre he was an editor at Hurst Publishers.

Chelsea Milsom

Projects Coordinator

Chelsea managed the Academic Collaboration with Arab Universities Programme as well as the annual Emirates scholarships for Master's and PhD students.

Dr Aitemad Muhanna-Matar

Assistant Professorial Research Fellow

Aitemad is investigating the gender impact of Syrian displacement in Jordan and Turkey, in particular the crisis of masculinity. She previously led an Oxfam-funded project on women's political participation in the Middle East and has conducted research on Tunisian Salafi youth.

Haneen Naamneh

Research Assistant

Haneen is conducting research on the project 'The Regulation of Palestinian Everyday Life', run in collaboration with Birzeit University. She is also completing her PhD in the Department of Sociology at LSE.

Sinéad Murphy

BRISMES Conference Coordinator

Sinéad is responsible for the organisation of the BRISMES Annual Conference. Sinéad is a PhD candidate in the Department of Comparative Literature, King's College, London focusing on Middle Eastern science fiction.

Dr Sophie Olver-Ellis

Research Officer

Sophie's research focuses on the transformation of political economies of the Arabian Gulf, with particular interest in labour market governance and the development 'Visions' being adopted throughout the region.

Stella Peisch

Projects Assistant

Stella provided support to the Centre's research projects and completed her MSc in International Development at LSE.

Rosa Pérez

Events Coordinator

Rosa runs the Centre's events programme. Prior to joining the Centre she worked at the Arab British Centre and the Council for Arab-British Understanding.

Sandra Sfeir

Projects Coordinator

Sandra manages and coordinates the Academic Collaboration with Arab Universities Programme, as well as the Iraq and MENA research for the Conflict Research Programme. She completed a Master's in Middle East Politics at SOAS in 2018.

Lorenzo Sileci

Research Assistant

Lorenzo joined the Centre in 2017 to work on the academic collaboration project 'Palestinian Attitude Change in Response to Conflict in the Palestinian territories'. He recently completed his Master's in Environmental Economics and Climate Change at LSE.

Ian Sinclair

Kuwait Programme Administrator

Ian is responsible for the Kuwait Programme's operations, budget and research activities. He has worked for the Kuwait Programme since 2008.

Ribale Sleiman Haidar

Communications Manager

With a background in design and development, Ribale manages the Centre's communications, outreach work and research impact. She is editor of the Centre's publications and blog, and oversees its social media and web presence.

Dr Jessica Watkins

Research Officer

Jessica joined the Centre in 2017 to research drivers of conflict in the Middle East as part of the Conflict Research Programme. She has a PhD from King's College London, where her thesis examined policing and social order in Jordan.



VISITING APPOINTMENTS

Visiting Professors

- Professor Madawi Al-Rasheed
- Professor Ali Ansari

Visiting Senior Fellows

- Dr Ian Black
- Dr Dina Matar
- Dr Rima Sabban

Visiting Fellows

- Dr Pejman Abdolmohammadi
- Dr Rahaf Aldoughli
- Dr Dari Alhuwail
- Dr Fahed Al-Sumait
- Sareta Ashraph
- Dr Shamel Azmeh
- Dr Valeria Cetorelli
- Ginny Hill
- Priscilla Toffano

It is very exciting to be surrounded by so many interesting people and ideas on a daily basis. That the MEC is also located in the heart of one of the world's greatest cities just adds to its incredible energy – it's a welcome focal point for leading scholars to explore some of the most compelling historical and contemporary aspects of these relationships.

– Fahed Al-Sumait, Visiting Fellow, Middle East Centre
Assistant Professor, Gulf University for Science and Technology, Kuwait

GOVERNANCE

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RESEARCH PROJECTS

Internal Displacement and the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Iraq

Supported by the LSE KEI Fund, this project aims to bridge the gap between policies and implementation through engaging with displaced women and local researchers in Iraq in order to increase awareness and participation of women in decision-making. The project helps develop policies on women's participation in conflict-related situations by assessing the Iraqi National Action Plan on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and making recommendations for its revision.

Principal Investigator

Dr Zeynep Kaya, LSE Middle East Centre

Documenting Yazidi Victims of ISIS

This documentation project employed rigorous demographic methods and individual-level data in order to identify every Yazidi victim of ISIS, with categories of victims defined according to the crime(s) suffered. The database that resulted can now be used to assist in identification of remains in mass gravesites, help inform the provision of counselling and medical interventions for victims, and provide reliable information toward achieving justice for ISIS's crimes against the Yazidi community of Sinjar in northern Iraq.

Principal Investigators

Dr Valeria Cetorelli, LSE Middle East Centre
Sareta Ashraph, LSE Middle East Centre

The Middle East Centre conducts and facilitates original research on the politics, societies and economics of the Middle East and North Africa. Research is conducted by Centre staff, academics based in LSE departments and by Visiting Fellows.

Gender Identity Crisis and the Link to Radicalisation: A Comparative Case Study of Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Turkey

This project studies the link between gender identity crises and Islamic radicalisation within the context of displacement. Dr Muhanna-Matar conducted fieldwork with Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey to examine how gender reconfiguration, as a means of resilience when livelihoods are threatened, may create a crisis of gender identity whereby both men and women feel demoralised by the change in gender norms. The research also examines the link between the gender identity crisis and the return to discursive tradition and religion as a means of resilience. This project is funded by the IGA–Rockefeller Fund.

Principal Investigator

Dr Aitemad Muhanna-Matar, LSE Middle East Centre

'Just Below the Horizon': Israeli–Gulf Relations and Changing Middle Eastern Geopolitics

Despite Israel having no established diplomatic relations with the GCC states, informal relationships have deepened over the past decade. This project aims to provide a coherent, analytical account of these developments using public evidence and background information. Discussions and interviews with Israeli, Arab and western officials, journalists, businessmen and experts will be conducted to clarify the nature of these ties.

Principal Investigator

Dr Ian Black, LSE Middle East Centre

After the Last 'Firman': Victimhood, Survival and Societal Transformation among the Yazidis

This project brings together international scholars to offer a unique social science perspective on the Yazidi religious community in the wake of genocidal violence. It addresses a series of questions about dimensions of Yazidi religion by empirically focusing on the lived experience of Yazidis. The research is supported by the Global Religion Research Initiative.

Principal Investigators

Dr Zeynep Kaya, LSE Middle East Centre
Dr Güneş Murat Tezcür, University of Central Florida
Dr Bayar Mustafa Sevdeen, American University of Kurdistan

Social Movements and Popular Mobilisation in the MENA

This research network brings together academics and students undertaking research on the themes of social movements, mobilisation and contestation in the MENA. The objective is to provide a platform for driving forward intellectual development and cutting-edge research in the field. As part of the network, the Centre runs a listserv, organises seminars and publishes working papers by leading researchers.

Led by

Dr John Chalcraft, LSE Department of Government

A Yazidi temple in Sinjar, Iraq. Photo taken by the MEC's Sareta Ashraph during fieldwork for the project 'Documenting Yazidi Victims of ISIS'.





CONFLICT RESEARCH PROGRAMME

IRAQ AND THE WIDER MIDDLE EAST



CONFLICT
RESEARCH
PROGRAMME



The Conflict Research Programme is funded by the UK Department for International Development to provide research and policy advice on how the risk and impact of violent conflict might be more effectively reduced through development and governance interventions. The Middle East Centre is leading the research on drivers of conflict in Iraq and the wider Middle East in partnership with the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, and Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, Baghdad. The projects listed below cover the first year of the Programme until March 2019.

Conflict, Economy and Gender: Studying Gender Norms in the Iraqi Conflict Economy

This project examines how masculinity and gender norms are contested, manipulated and influence the conflict economy in Iraq. It investigates how armed groups take advantage of gendered vulnerabilities in order to gain new recruits, engage in activities, and govern populations in the areas under their control. The research seeks to apply a gender lens to the long-term institutionalised social and political practices and values that provide the context for gendered violence, abuse and trafficking during conflict.

Principal Investigator

Dr Zeynep Kaya, LSE Middle East Centre

Moral Populism and Satellite Sectarianisation: Pan-Arab Media Rhetoric

A prevailing assumption is that pan-Arab satellite media channels such as *Al-Jazeera*, *Al-Arabiya* and *Al-Manar* are responsible for airing and stirring sectarian sentiments in the region. The research intends to articulate a more thorough understanding of how the largest Arab media outlets are dealing with, or indeed inciting, sectarian tension, but also to provide valuable context to help inform how UK policymakers should engage with them.

Principal Investigator

Dr Jessica Watkins, LSE Middle East Centre

Natural Resource Management and Peacebuilding in post-IS Iraq

This project investigates how natural resource management could support peacebuilding efforts in post-IS Iraq, with a particular focus on water resource management. Linkages between natural resources, the environment, peace and conflict will be analysed by examining the impact of various internal dynamics at the local level.

Principal Investigator

Kyra Luchtenberg, LSE Middle East Centre

Reporting the Iraqi Federal Elections

This project examines the mobilisation strategies and results of the 2018 Iraqi elections to identify change and continuity both among elites and at the popular level. The project will assess what the results mean for the reform agenda, governance and conflict dynamics.

Principal Investigator

Christine van den Toorn, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani



As part of the Programme, the Centre is hosting two Conflict Research Fellows:

Dr Zahra Ali's research project is entitled 'Building Peace and Recovering from Violence: Iraqi Civil Society Activisms'; a sociological exploration of women, youth, grassroots and diverse forms of social and civil society activism in Iraq.

Dr Dylan O'Driscoll's research project is entitled 'Everyday Peacebuilding, Everyday Nationalism, and Symbolic Capital: The old Bazaar in Kirkuk, Iraq'. Using the case study of Kurds, Arabs and Turkmen in the old bazaar in Kirkuk, the project examines how everyday nationalism and peace compete with and impact each other on multiple levels.

Payroll Expansion and the Political Marketplace

This project examines the nature of corruption – shielded in large part by the *muhāsasa ta'fīa* governance system – in both the institutions of the Government of Iraq and the Kurdish Regional Government by analysing the rapid expansion of government payrolls after 2003. It seeks to judge how much of the corruption is driven by personal greed, how much is used to build networks of personal loyalty, and how much is party political.

Principal Investigator

Ali Al-Mawlawi, Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies

Public Authority and Iraq's Disputed Territories

This project explores how competing public authorities – the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Government of Iraq – drive conflict through administrative policies, security forces and nationalism. It studies the role of public authority in the disputed territories and investigates a 'civicness' that might be galvanised to support a settlement.

Principal Investigator

Christine van den Toorn, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani



Iraq's Shia Militias: The Possibility for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

There have been several attempts to institutionalise Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces as they pose a danger to the capacity of the state, the coherence of national politics and the stability of the country. This project examines the Iraqi government's ability to control these militias and integrate them into Iraq's mainstream security forces and command structures.

Principal Investigator

Hayder Jaber, Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies

ACADEMIC COLLABORATION WITH ARAB UNIVERSITIES PROGRAMME

ONGOING PROJECTS

Shedding Light on Yemen's Forgotten Crisis: A Nationally Representative Survey

With basic services and infrastructure in Yemen on the verge of collapse, this project provides a comprehensive assessment of the multiple complex dimensions of the crisis. The research documents the full extent of the crisis and assists humanitarian actors in designing strategies for improving access to basic services, reducing mortality and morbidity, and alleviating malnutrition.

Principal Investigators

Dr Valeria Cetorelli, LSE Middle East Centre
Dr Antelak Almutawakel, Sanaa University
Dr Marwan Khawaja, UNESCWA
Professor Gilbert Burnham, JHU Center for Humanitarian Health



The Academic Collaboration Programme strengthens the Centre's role as the principal hub for Middle East Studies within the School as well as a key partner to institutions in the region. The Centre has so far run 27 projects, working with 17 different partners in Arab states. Funded by the Emirates Foundation, the programme supports collaboration and knowledge exchange between LSE and Arab universities through research and academic capacity building.

Mortality and Health Survey among Internally Displaced Persons in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

This project uses a retrospective household survey to estimate death rates and the health status of internally displaced persons in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The findings help develop humanitarian relief strategies to address the urgent health needs of IDPs. The research produced a number of policy-relevant outputs, including papers in the journals *Conflict and Health*, *PLOS ONE*, *Foreign Affairs* and *BMJ Global Health*.

Principal Investigators

Professor Tim Dyson, LSE Department of International Development
Dr Nazar Shabila, Hawler Medical University

Egypt and Morocco's Global Value Chains Integration in a Changing Global Economy

By studying the cases of Egypt and Morocco, this project examines the integration of non-oil MENA countries in global value chains (GVC) and explains the limited economic and social upgrading in GVC-integrated industries through focusing on three key developmental dimensions: economic upgrading, job creation and working conditions, and environmental upgrading/downgrading.

Principal Investigators

Dr Shamel Azmeh, LSE Middle East Centre
Dr Abeer Elshennawy, American University in Cairo

Comparing Public Responses to Ms Marvel in non-Muslim and Muslim Societies

This project compares the reception of the Ms Marvel comic figure in non-Muslim majority and Muslim majority societies. It examines the effect Ms Marvel has had on prevailing attitudes towards the socially accepted role and status of young Muslim women.

Principal Investigators

Dr Jennifer Jackson-Preece, LSE European Institute
Dr Badreya Al-Jenaibi, United Arab Emirates University

Complexity of Humanitarian Response to Internal Displacement in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

This project focuses on how the special status of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq influences the humanitarian response to displacement in the region. It examines national and international responses to the displacement crisis and the socio-political structure of the region.

Principal Investigators

Dr Zeynep Kaya, LSE Middle East Centre
Dr Deniz Gokalp, American University in Dubai

The Regulation of Palestinian Everyday Life

This project focuses on regulatory frameworks and systems of governance that manage the everyday life of Palestinians in the post-Oslo period. The research examines the way Palestinians are influenced and transformed by these systems, and their reactions to them. As part of the project, a workshop was convened at LSE in November 2017 and a report published in 2018.

Principal Investigators

Professor Chetan Bhatt, LSE Human Rights
Dr Mudar Kassis, Birzeit University

Preventing Statelessness among Migrants in North Africa and their Children

This project investigates the identification needs of Sub-Saharan African and other migrants living in North Africa, particularly focusing on children born outside their parents' country of nationality. The project aims to give guidance on providing birth registration and other forms of identification that can prevent and reduce current and future statelessness. Project meetings have been held in Cairo and Rabat to finalise research guidelines for interviews with migrants, refugees and government authorities.

Principal Investigators

Dr Bronwen Manby, LSE Middle East Centre
Dr Usha Natarajan, American University in Cairo
Dr Mohamed Kachani and Dr Malika Benradi, Association Marocaine d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Migrations

Identit(ies) and Heritage in the UAE: Examining the Roles of Kinship, Family and the State

This project examines the tensions (or lack thereof) in state versus family formulations of identity in the Gulf states. Taking into account the distinctive set of circumstances in the UAE, this project examines the interplay between how the state perpetuates heritage and identity and the ways in which families and tribes have historically done so.

Principal Investigator

Dr Courtney Freer, LSE Middle East Centre

Palestinian Expectations and Attitude Change in Response to Conflict in the Palestinian Territories

This project looks at the impact of exposure to violence on individual expectations about the future. It combines quantitative survey evidence and state-of-the-art experimental games with Palestinians to study how early life experiences of conflict shape expectations and attitudes towards cooperation across age cohorts and over time.

Principal Investigators

Dr Ben Groom, LSE Department of Geography and Environment
Dr Guy Burton, Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government

Working with Bronwen Manby, an expert on statelessness, is indispensable. Her expertise in the field has proven essential in undertaking a study of this kind, the first project on statelessness among migrants and refugees in Egypt.

— Nourhan Abdel Aziz, American University of Cairo

PROJECTS COMMENCING IN 2018–19

Bridging the Micro–Macro Divide in Approaches to the Middle East

This project seeks to develop a multidisciplinary relational methodology to studying the Middle East, which bridges the divide between macro and micro approaches. Its relational methodology will be applied to two in-depth case studies: the first on state–society relations in revolutionary Iraq (1958–63) and the second on the transnational migratory routes of Chinese Muslims into the Arabian Gulf.

Principal Investigators

Dr Aula Hariri, LSE Middle East Centre

Dr Yuting Wang, American University of Sharjah

The Middle Eastern Gender Health Paradox in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia

Obesity rates in the MENA region are higher among women than among men. This project will investigate research hypotheses related to the formation of nutrition and health behaviour of these populations to explain the gender disparity in obesity rates. The project seeks to understand this gender difference through econometric analysis and experimental evidence.

Principal Investigators

Dr Joan Costa-Font, LSE Department of Health Policy

Dr Aristeidis Samitas, Zayed University

Mapping Memories of Resistance: The Untold Story of the Occupation of the Golan Heights

This project aims to document and narrate the untold story of the occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights in its political, socio-economic and cultural elements pertaining to the lived experience of the Syrians who remained and the story of their resistance to military occupation. It will develop a teaching curriculum on the history of the Jawlani resistance from 1967–82 for Birzeit University students, as well as an interactive digital database and documentation portal on the history of Arab resistance to the occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights.

Principal Investigators

Dr Michael Mason, LSE Department of Geography and Environment

Dr Munir Fakher Eldin, Birzeit University



Re-Conceptualising Health in Wars and Conflicts: A New Focus on Deprivation and Suffering

This project aims to understand the traumas and impacts of conflict and military occupation, and how people give meaning to, make sense of, and cope with various forms of deprivation. It will develop and test new metrics to assess deprivation and its links to health outcomes. By integrating evidence from existing secondary data and primary qualitative data, the project seeks to reconceptualise deprivation and its multiple dimensions.

Principal Investigators

Dr Tiziana Leone, LSE Department of International Development

Dr Ernestina Coast, LSE Department of International Development

Professor Rita Giacaman, Birzeit University





KUWAIT PROGRAMME

Examining and Informing Public Policy to Meet the Challenge of Global Warming in Kuwait

The importance of metrics in assessing the sustainability of the development path in a national economy is now well established. This research seeks to contribute to the debate by deepening the evidence base in Kuwait through: constructing a wealth (and natural capital) account for Kuwait, including a thorough country-level inventory of greenhouse gas emissions; and developing an economy-wide model which can be used to simulate interactions between economy, environment and society.

Principal Investigators

Professor Giles Atkinson, LSE Department of Geography and Environment

Dr Ayele Gelan, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research



Established in 2007, the Kuwait Programme is a world-leading hub for research and expertise on Kuwait. The Programme is funded by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and directed by Toby Dodge, Kuwait Professor. Kuwait Programme Research Grants support LSE colleagues to conduct policy-relevant research on contemporary Kuwait. Through the Kuwait Academic Collaborations, the Centre runs an open competition for Kuwait-based and LSE academics to form joint research teams for long-term collaborative research and capacity building.

Understanding the Changing Water–Energy–Food Nexus in Kuwait and the Gulf Region

This project investigates existing approaches to assessing the Water–Energy–Food (WEF) nexus and their relevance for understanding the nexus in the GCC states. It also quantifies and maps the trends in WEF resource use, their interdependencies, tradeoffs and co-benefits for Kuwait and other GCC states.

Principal Investigator

Dr Christian Siderius, LSE Grantham Research Institute

Estimating the Economic Impact of Alternative Wealth Distribution Policies in Kuwait

GCC governments share their oil wealth with their citizens through low domestic energy prices and excess public sector employment. Another policy is both economically and arguably politically superior: the introduction of a universal basic income (UBI), to gradually replace energy subsidies and a bloated public sector. Based on field research and interviews with policymakers in Kuwait, this project seeks to outline different implementation options for a UBI scheme in Kuwait.

Principal Investigator

Dr Steffen Hertog, LSE Department of Government

Qabila in the 21st Century: The Role of Tribes in the Domestic Politics of the Gulf

This research project analyses the political role of tribes within Gulf societies, which are often described as intensely tribal. It seeks to answer critical questions about the degree to which tribes hinder or advance popular participation in government, as well as to reveal how and to what extent tribes exert domestic political power. A workshop was held at LSE in June 2018 and a series of blog posts from participants was published.

Principal Investigator

Dr Courtney Freer, LSE Middle East Centre

Building the 'New Kuwait': The Role of the Private Sector in the Post-Oil Economy

This research project analyses the emerging 'New Kuwait', with particular focus on the role of the private sector in the post-oil dependent Kuwaiti political economy. It seeks to empirically examine how the government is attempting to encourage the private sector to spearhead the country's economic diversification efforts, especially towards it becoming 'knowledge-based'.

Principal Investigator

Dr Sophie Olver-Ellis, LSE Middle East Centre

Resource Urbanisms: Natural Resources, Urban Form and Infrastructure in the Case of Asia's Diverging City Models

This project focuses on the case of two natural resources – land and energy – and explores their relationships with city form, urban dwelling and mobility. It analyses these relationships through a comparative case study approach, which considers divergent city models across Asia: Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Hong Kong and Singapore. The report was launched in Kuwait and London in November 2017.

Principal Investigator

Dr Philipp Rode, LSE Cities

Utilising Applied Behavioural Research to Execute Subsidy Reform in Kuwait

This project aims to identify methods of applied behavioural research through which Kuwait's government can successfully implement sustainable economic reform. It analyses why current government subsidies are unsustainable and assesses the likelihood of long-running, record fiscal deficits.

Principal Investigator

Dr Hessah Al-Ojayan, LSE Middle East Centre





PUBLICATIONS



The 2018 Iraqi Federal Elections: A Population in Transition?

Renad Mansour and Christine van den Toorn, August 2018

On 12 May 2018, Iraqis went to the polls to vote for their next parliament, prime minister and cabinet. The elections delivered a surprise, with Muqtada al-Sadr's Saairun Coalition winning the most seats of any bloc, although not enough to form a government alone. This report is the second in a series of three produced by the Institute of Regional and International Studies (IRIS) as the outcome of a project examining the mobilisation strategies and results of the 2018 Iraqi elections. This project forms part of the Conflict Research Programme, funded by the UK Department for International Development.

The Centre's research is published in three formats. Our flagship, peer-reviewed Paper Series disseminates substantive, original research generated by Centre activities. Reports and Event Proceedings deliver policy recommendations and timely analysis based on research projects and workshops supported by the Centre.



The Regulation of Palestinian Everyday Life

July 2018

Since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, Palestinian society has been subjected to multiple regulatory frameworks and normative rules enacted by a range of national and external actors and institutions. This workshop examined questions on ethnographic research in Palestine, including the challenges of carrying out ethnographic research within a society affected by a continuous state of violence.



How do Sovereign Wealth Funds Pay their Portfolio Companies' Executives? Evidence from Kuwait

Bader S. Alhashel and Sulaiman H. Albader, June 2018

Sovereign wealth funds (SWFs) are major players in the global markets. This paper examines the possible value SWFs bring to their domestic holdings by examining the impact of SWF ownership on firms' executive compensation, with a focus on Kuwaiti SWFs.



The Iraqi Protest Movement: From Identity Politics to Issue Politics

Faleh A. Jabar, June 2018

Beginning in mid-July 2015, one of the largest social protest movements in modern Iraqi history erupted in Basra and spread to cities in central and southern Iraq. In this paper, the late Iraqi sociologist Faleh Jabar examined the principal aspects of this social movement and analysed the impact of the shift from identity-based to issue-based politics in Iraq, as was most evident in the May 2018 elections.



Iraq and its Regions: The Future of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq After the Referendum

May 2018

The Kurdish referendum delivered an overwhelming endorsement of a split from Iraq. However, the referendum did not provide enhanced bargaining power for the Kurdistan Region in negotiating independence. This workshop held in March 2018 examined the major dynamics that will shape future Iraqi–Kurdish politics.



Regulation of Healthcare Advertisements: Comparing Media Regulation of the Pharmaceutical Industry in Kuwait and the GCC

Mariam Alkazemi, April 2018

Mariam Alkazemi examines the laws and media regulations pertaining to the advertisement of pharmaceutical products in Kuwait and the GCC states, comparing them to those in the UK and US. The findings suggest that Kuwaiti and GCC cultural communication styles result in more ambiguous regulations than those in the West.



Dialectics of Struggle: Challenges to the Kurdish Women's Movement

Nadje Al-Ali and Latif Tas, March 2018

Nadje Al-Ali and Latif Tas critically explore attempts by activists in the Kurdish political movement – in the Middle East and among the diaspora – to challenge patriarchal and masculinist ideology and practices. This paper sheds light on the dialectic processes through which the movement translates its political principles of democratic confederalism and gender equality.



Iraq and its Regions: Baghdad–Provincial Relations after Mosul and Kirkuk

March 2018

Iraq's May 2018 national elections took place against the background of two momentous events – the liberation of Mosul and the referendum on Kurdish independence. This workshop examined the major dynamics that will drive the relationship between Baghdad and other regions of Iraq, as well as between the state and society.



Urbanisation and Physical Activity in the GCC: A Case Study of Oman

Ruth Mabry, February 2018

Urbanisation and modernisation have dramatically changed the urban landscape in Oman and neighbouring countries, and noncommunicable diseases have become a major health burden. Transforming the urban environment to support physical activity would have wide-ranging benefits. Using the draft WHO technical package on promoting physical activity, this paper examines how the urban landscape needs to change if physical activity is to become a natural part of daily activity in Oman.



Prospects for Climate Change Integration into the GCC Economic Diversification Strategies

Aisha Al-Sarihi, February 2018

The economies of GCC states are highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. By studying the interplay between climate change mitigation efforts and attempts to diversify GCC economies, this paper identifies the benefits of mainstreaming climate change measures into long-term economic planning.



Show us the Money: Oil Revenues, Undisclosed Allocations and Accountability in Budgets of the GCC States

Omar AlShehabi, September 2017

This paper traces the historical evolution of the transparency, independence and accountability of public revenues and expenditures in each of the GCC countries. It argues that with the exception of Kuwait, there is strong evidence to suggest that a significant amount of oil revenues are undeclared, which go either into private hands or into undisclosed government transactions.



King Salman and His Son: Winning the US, Losing the Rest

Madawi Al-Rasheed, September 2017

This paper assesses the prospects for new directions in Saudi foreign policy following the appointment of Muhammad bin Salman as crown prince in 2017. It finds that amidst a series of foreign policy failures, winning the favour of the US has been the major achievement of the new Saudi leadership. However, Saudi foreign policy in Europe has taken a back seat, where there are serious doubts as to the merit of the assertive and interventionist Saudi regional policy.

Fashionable Alternatives to Sykes Picot



EVENTS

PUBLIC LECTURES

September 2017

Journey Behind the Lines of Jihad: A Conversation with Souad Mekhennet
Souad Mekhennet

October 2017

Trump and the Middle East: Personality, Ideology and Militarisation
Toby Dodge, LSE

Reorienting the PKK: Rojava and the Political Thought of Abdullah Öcalan
Joost Jongerden, Wageningen University

Redefining the Political: The Ultras Football 'Movement' in Egypt
Rabab El-Mahdi, American University in Cairo

Searching for the 'Post' in 'Postcolonial': Reflections on Studying Contemporary Algeria
Michael Willis, University of Oxford

November 2017

And Then God Created the Middle East and Said 'Let There Be Breaking News and Analysis'
Karl Sharro (aka Karl reMarks)

Education Reform in Qatar: The Role of Policy Borrowing
Lolwah Alkhater, University of Oxford

In the academic year 2017–18, the MEC hosted 39 public events, attracting over 2,500 participants. The Centre also organised workshops and research seminars bringing together academics, practitioners and experts. All Centre events reach wide audiences through publications, podcasts, videos and social media.

Enemies and Neighbours: Arabs and Jews in Palestine and Israel
Ian Black, LSE; Tom Phillips, RCDS

December 2017

Bombs, Bridges, and Biography: Lessons for the Present from the Father of Algeria?
Tom Woerner-Powell, University of Manchester

New Saudi State, Same Old Problems?
Steffen Hertog, LSE; Stéphane Lacroix, Sciences Po

January 2018

In Memoriam: Peter Sluglett (1943–2017)
Toby Dodge, LSE; Nelida Fuccaro, SOAS; Sami Zubaida, Birkbeck, University of London

Shadow of a Man? Understanding Masculinities in the MENA
Shereen El Feki, Chatham House; Joey Ayoub, University of Edinburgh; Courtney Freer, LSE

In the Name of Modernity: Urban Expansion and Land Grabs in Morocco

Soraya El Kahlaoui, School of Social Science, Institute for Advanced Study

Resource Urbanisms: London Report Launch

Philipp Rode, LSE

Egypt as Effigy: Predatory Power, Hijacked History, and the Devolution of Revolution

Adel Iskandar, Simon Fraser University

Middle East Career Opportunities

Silvia Quattrini, MRG International; Austen Josephs, Alaco Limited; Jessica Watkins and Robert Lowe, LSE; Alexandra Buccianti, BBC Media Action

February 2018

Kurdish Women Fighters: A Path Out of Patriarchy?

Güneş Murat Tezcür, University of Central Florida



From the Sinai to Kuwait: The Significance of Britain's Desert Empire

Robert Fletcher, University of Warwick

March 2018

Salman's Legacy: The Dilemmas of a New Era in Saudi Arabia

Madawi Al-Rasheed and Steffen Hertog, LSE; Michael Farquhar, King's College London

Impressions of Algeria: In Conversation with Andrew Noble

Andrew Noble, Former UK Ambassador to Algeria

The Arab/Persian Binary: Histories of Culture and Conflict in the Persian Gulf

Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, University of Pennsylvania

My lecture at the LSE Middle East Centre was without a doubt the best talk I have ever given. The full auditorium was buzzing with energy, largely because of the excellent promotion and organisation of the event. The questions were thoughtful and incisive, and the audience was unmatched. I was very impressed with the Centre's excellent team, I will always cherish this event.

– Karl Sharro (Karl reMarks), Satirist

**Understanding Violence in the Middle East and Africa:
Launch of LSE's Conflict Research Programme**

Toby Dodge, Rachel Ibreck and Rim Turkmani, LSE;
Lyse Doucet, BBC; Javier Solana

We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled: Voices from Syria

Wendy Pearlman, Northwestern University

**Mixed Moralities: Cybersecurity in Kuwait, Egypt and
the GCC**

James Shires, University of Oxford

May 2018

**Strikes, Riots and Laughter: Egypt's 1918 Peasant
Insurrection**

Alia Mosallam, Forum Transregionale Studien

**Syria's Enduring Conflict: What Next? Dr Nasr al-Hariri
in Conversation with Ian Black**

Nasr al-Hariri, Syrian Negotiation Commission; Ian
Black, LSE

**The Yazidi Genocide: Future Prospects for Justice and
Security**

Sareta Ashraph, LSE; Roza Saeed Al-Qaidi and Bahaa
Ilyas, Yazidi activists

June 2018

In Memoriam: Faleh A. Jabar (1946–2018)

Toby Dodge, LSE; Renad Mansour, Chatham House;
Charles Tripp and Deniz Kandiyoti, SOAS

**Rap Beyond Resistance: Staging Power in
Contemporary Morocco**

Cristina Moreno Almeida, King's College London



CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Efficiency by Design: Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Hong Kong and Singapore

7–8 November 2017

The LSE Cities report 'Resource Urbanisms: Asia's divergent city models of Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Singapore and Hong Kong', was launched in Kuwait.

The Regulation of Palestinian Everyday Life

27 November 2017

Organised jointly with LSE Human Rights, this workshop examined questions on ethnographic research in Palestine, including the challenges of carrying out research within a society affected by a continuous state of violence.

Responses to Displacement in the Middle East

30 November 2017

There are far more IDPs than refugees in the world and the scale of the problem is challenging the capacity of humanitarian organisations and governments. This conference presented a collection of papers focused on internal displacement in the Middle East.

Iraq and its Regions: Baghdad–Provincial Relations After Mosul and Kirkuk

15 January 2018

This workshop examined the major dynamics that will shape Iraqi politics following key events in Mosul and Kirkuk, and drive the relationship between Baghdad and other regions of Iraq.

Iraq and its Regions: The Future of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq After the Referendum

16 March 2018

The second workshop of the series discussed the possible future implications of the failed KRI independence referendum for Iraqi–Kurdish relations.

Russia's Strategy in the Middle East

28 March 2018

Organised with the RAND Corporation, this workshop examined Russia's activities, relationships and strategy in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia and Iran: Beyond Conflict and Co-existence?

8 May 2018

This workshop explored the roots of the Saudi–Iranian rivalry and moved the debate beyond religion and sectarianism.



Tribe and State in the Middle East

13 June 2018

Experts on tribes from disciplines ranging from anthropology to political science examined the political and social role played by tribes in the Middle East and in state formation more broadly.

The Comparative Politics of Sub-State Identity in the Middle East

29 June 2018

This workshop brought together leading academics working on sectarianism, mobilisation and political identity to critically interact with the existing literature on sectarian mobilisation in the Middle East.



BLOG



Emiratis, Omanis, Saudis: The Rising Competition for Yemen's Al Mahra

Eleonora Ardemagni, December 2017

Views: 1,698

118%
increase
in Blog
views



The MEC Blog delivers accessible analysis of the Middle East and North Africa to a wide readership, drawing primarily on the community of academics and researchers at LSE, but also including outside contributors. In the past year we have published 140 pieces, attracting over 103,000 views. Below are some highlights.



King Salman and His Son: Winning the US, Losing the Rest

Madawi Al-Rasheed, September 2017

Views: 7,390



Studying Libya today: Exploring the Past to Understand the Present and Shape Future Research

Anna Baldinetti, November 2017

Views: 1,262



As Protests Sweep Iraq, are the Country's Political Elites Running out of Options?

Benedict Robin-D'Cruz, July 2018

Views: 1,275



Gender Equality in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan

Zeynep Kaya, December 2017

Views: 1,856



Russia's Strategy in the Middle East (Blog series)

LSE Middle East Centre/RAND Corporation, May 2018

Views: 3,623



Middle East Careers



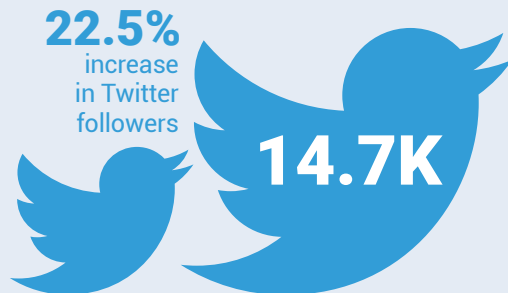
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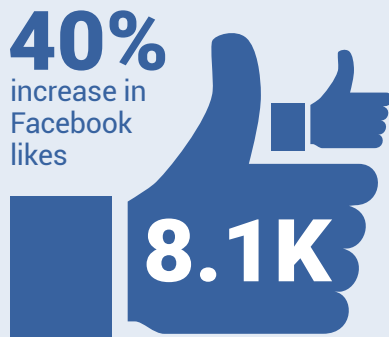


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THE PAST YEAR IN NUMBERS



42.4% increase in
Newsletter recipients



45,056 listens for
our new podcast series

11 new videos
9,605
views



39 public events attracting
over **2,500** attendees



74K
visitors to
our website (up 14.3%)



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