

**FINAL PROGRAMME**  
**Kurdish Studies Conference**

24-25 April 2023 | Marshall Building, London School of Economics

**Monday 24 April 2023**

**09.00–09.30 Registration**

**09.30–11.00 Panel 1A – Affective Politics of Kurdish Everyday Life, Political Mobilization, and Conflict in the Middle East**

Room 1.04

Chair: Emrah Karakus, Brandeis University

*Kurdish revolutionary affect and politics of friendship in the 1990s*  
Delal Aydin, University of Duisburg-Essen

*Feeling debt: Affect and intimacy in Kurdish queer/trans worlds*  
Emrah Karakus, Brandeis University

*Deployment of the “Berxwedan” (resistance) narrative: Experiences of loss and recovery in Rojava*  
Thomas McGee, University of Melbourne

**Room 1.10 Panel 1B – GCRF Hub Research: Gendered Migrations, Displacements and Masculinity in Kurdistan**

Chair: Janroj Yilmaz Keles, Middlesex University

*Gendered return mobilities to conflicted regions: The Kurdish case*  
Janroj Yilmaz Keles & Muslih Irwani, American University of Iraq - Baghdad

*Gendered labour migrations in KRI*  
Eleonore Kofman, Middlesex University, Muslih Irwani & Jiyar Aghapouri, American University of Kurdistan

*Prolonged displacement and gender in Diyarbakir*  
Necla Acik, Middlesex University & Zeynep Ceren Eren Benlisoy, Erasmus University of Rotterdam

*Masculinity and violence*  
Twana Hassan, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani

*Backlash against the women’s rights movement*  
Choman Hardi, American University of Iraq, Sulaimani

**Room 2.04 Panel 1C – Social-psychological Approaches to Studying the Turkish-Kurdish Conflict: The Role of Multiple Identities in Conflict, Peace and Reconciliation**

Chair: Arda Bilgen, LSE Middle East Centre

*The role of Turkish and Kurdish identities, allyship, and conflict narratives in supporting pro-Kurdish policies among Turks and Kurds*  
Özden Melis Uluğ, University of Sussex

*Village guards as “in between” in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict: Re-examining identity and position in intergroup conflict*  
Yasemin Gülsüm Acar, University of Dundee

*Reflecting on the role of Kurdish, Muslim, and Turkiyeli identities for reconciliation and peace*  
Gülseli Baysu, Queen’s University Belfast

*Dangerous knowledge and proxy-reasons: therapeutic attempts of a former PKK fighter*  
Nerina Weiss, Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Studies, Norway

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Room 2.10      **Panel 1D – Kurds in Iran: Protests, Islam and Intersectionality**  
Chair: Marouf Cabi, LSE Middle East Centre

*The hashtag Mahsa\_Amin or Zhina\_Amini: A social media ethnography on the ontological relationship between Kurdish identity and Iranian identity during the 2022 Iranian protests*  
Jiyar Aghapouri, American University of Kurdistan

*The Muslim Peshmerga and the IRGC: How the Iranian Islamist regime won and lost its Kurdish allies*  
Siarhei Bohdan, Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies

*Komala: a popular left-wing organisation*  
Marouf Cabi, LSE Middle East Centre

*A comparative study of the response of the Islamic Republic of Iran to religious political groups in Iranian Kurdistan*  
Mehdi Dehnavi, Journalist & Researcher & Zarifeh Ahmadi, Researcher

*Intersectionality and multitasking: The struggle of Kurdish women in Iranian Kurdistan (Rojhelat)*  
Rahim Hajiagha, Jagiellonian University

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**11.00–11.30      Coffee break**

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Room 1.04      **Panel 2A – Kurdish Refugees in the Diaspora: Integration, Self-governance and Space**  
Chair: Fiona Adamson, SOAS

*Toward a multi-scalar understanding of integration: Kurdish refugees between state, diaspora and geopolitics*  
Fiona Adamson & Veysi Dag, SOAS

*Self-governing from below: Kurdish refugees on the margins of European societies*  
Veysi Dag, SOAS

*Criminalisation, self-defence and special warfare*  
Iida Käyhkö, Royal Holloway, University of London

*Inscriptions of Kurdish politics into spaces of exile and radical internationalist politics in Greece*  
Beja Protner, University of Cambridge

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Room 1.10      **Panel 2B – Kurmanji and Zazaki Identity and Linguistics**  
Chair: Janroj Yilmaz Keles, Middlesex University

*Speaking Kurdish: A space of one's own in language*  
Alex Pillen, University College London

*Bi-/multilingual identity and linguistic behaviour of Kurdish heritage speakers*  
Alex Bellem, Aga Khan University & Mehmet Yonat, Mardin Artuklu University

*Linguistic characteristics of the Zazaki Mutki dialect*  
Pinar Yildiz, Mardin Artuklu University

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Room 2.04      **Panel 2C – The KRI in Regional and Global Context**  
Chair: Zeynep Kaya, LSE Middle East Centre

*The role of external actors in the making and breaking of states: Germany and the consolidation of statehood of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq between 1991 and 2020*  
Silvia Nicola, Centre for Military History and Social Sciences of the Bundeswehr

*China's soft power in Iraqi Kurdistan*  
Sardar Aziz, Researcher & Writer

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*"Selling" the Kurdish plight in Iraq to the U.S. of the 1980s and 90s: The messaging of the Kurdish National Congress of North America*  
Lily Hindy, University of California, Los Angeles

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Room 2.10

**Panel 2D – Urban Development, Heritage and Politics in Turkey**

Chair: Veli Yadirgi, LSE Middle East Centre

*Uproot, detach and pacify: On the Turkish state's infrastructural politics in northern Kurdistan*

Kamuran Akin, Humboldt University of Berlin

*Mastering the past, becoming a tourist: Heritage-making as a means of counterinsurgency in the post-conflict era*

Ronay Bakan, Johns Hopkins University

*Turkey's military urbanism and neo-colonial architecture in Kurdish Cities*

Diren Taş, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

*Resurrecting the ruins: A Kurdish haunting of Suriçi's landscape*

Aalekh Dhaliwal, University of Cambridge

*(Re)thinking class conflict for Kurdish politics from 'Neoliberalizing Amed'*

Esra Karadas Ekinci, Ankara University

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**13.00–14.00**

**Lunch**

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**14.00–15.30**

**Panel 3A – Democracy, Citizenship, Justice and Education in Rojava**

Room 1.04

Chair: Robert Lowe, LSE Middle East Centre

*Is the future of democracy hybrid? Lessons from Mexico and Kurdistan about how to reconcile direct and representative democracy*

Hanifi Baris, University of Aberdeen

*Reconfiguration of citizenship beyond state boundaries*

Atefeh Ramsari, Bielefeld Graduate School of History and Sociology in Germany

*Rethinking justice in Rojava*

Hasret Cetinkaya, Department of Gender Studies, LSE

*Politics of education choice in North-East Syria*

Benoîte Martin, Ulster University

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Room 1.10

**Panel 3B – Kurdish Women and Politics of Gender in the Diaspora**

Chair: Eleonore Kofman, Middlesex University

*Formative experiences of Kurdish women activists setting up small-scale activist projects in Kurdistan and the Diaspora*

Wendelmoet Hamelink, University of Oslo

*Transnational decolonial encounters: The Kurdish women's movement and western feminism in Europe*

Eleanora Gea Piccardi, Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra

*Negotiating alternative social spaces - Kurdish gender roles within families and activism in diaspora*

Hayal Hanoglu & Karol Kaczorowski, Cracow University of Economics

*Kurdish women's ordinary life and trajectories of subjectivity, a case study in the triangle of Istanbul, Berlin and Paris*

Dilan Salik, Researcher

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Room 2.04      **Panel 3C – Activism and Identification through Art, Ethnography and Music**  
Chair: Isabel Käser , LSE Middle East Centre

*Art as an ethnographic event: The art of Ismail Khayat*  
Autumn Cockrell-Abdullah, Researcher

*Walking, Kurdish movies and crisis in collective identification*  
Hemen Heidari, University of Amsterdam

*Documenting the lost practices of Kurdish felt and felt-making in the foothills of the Zagros Mountains*  
Renas Babakir, Culture Project, EMKP grantee

*What is the role of Kurdish music in the transnational space and the post-national discourse?*  
Mediha Inan, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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Room 2.10      **Panel 3D – Canon and Decolonial Critique in Kurdish Studies**  
Chair: Spyros Sofos, LSE Middle East Centre

*Reporting on Kurdistan. A critical examination of Western post-2014 fieldwork in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the Autonomous Administration of North-East Syria*  
Dastan Jasim, German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA)

*Ethnicization and sectarianization in the Kurdistan region of Iraq*  
Michiel Leezenberg, University of Amsterdam

*The intellectual and prophecy in the colony and diasporas*  
Bilal Ata Aktas, École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS)

*Imagined or imaginary Kurdistan: What do we know about the political stance of Kurdish youth living in Kurdistan?*  
Baris Oktem, Researcher

*Ethical and methodological challenges of an emergent scholarship in Kurdish Studies*  
Mashuq Kurt, Royal Holloway University of London

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**15.30–16.00      Break**

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**16.00–17.00      Keynote Lecture: The History and Development of Kurdish Studies**  
**Professor Martin van Bruinessen, Emeritus Professor, Utrecht University**  
Chair: Zeynep Kaya, LSE Middle East Centre  
Sheikh Zayed Lecture Theatre, New Academic Building

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**17.00–18.30      Drinks Reception**  
Great Hall, Marshall Building  
*Music by Peyman Heydarian*

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09.30–11.00  
Room 1.04

**Panel 4A– Kurds in-between Multiple Political Spaces and Discourses**

Chair: Matthew Whiting, University of York

*Displaced bodies: Syrians in Kurdistan and Kurds in Syria*  
Yunus Abakay, University of Exeter

*Three new datasets on the transformation of the Turkey-PKK conflict since 1984*  
Amy Austin Holmes, George Washington University & Diween Hawezzy, Researcher

*Sub-state diplomacy at work – The KRG and the Syrian conflict*  
Tamas Dudlak, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest

*The Democratic Union Party (PYD) and People’s Protection Units (YPG) in Turkish official discourse*  
Azad Deewanee, Researcher

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Room 1.10

**Panel 4B– Ideology, Governance and Reconciliation in Conflict**

Chair: Isabel Käser, LSE Middle East Centre

*Governance without territorial control: The experiences of the PKK in 1970s Turkey*  
Francis O’Connor & Joost Jongerden, Wageningen University

*The discourse of death in PKK’s ideology: A journey to fathom political violence and fascination for death*  
Emdjed Kurdnidjad, European University Institute

*Deliberation in the contexts of ethnic conflict: Kurdish peace process example*  
Musa Akgül, Lancaster University & Çiğdem Görgün Akgül, Ordu University

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Room 2.04

**Panel 4C– The Question of Kurdistan, Colonialism and Historiography**

Chair: Francis Owtram, University of Exeter

*The perceived image of the other: British in Kurdish literary discourse in post-World War I and Post-2003*  
Karzan Kareem Ameen, Salahaddin University- Erbil

*Kurdish nationalist historiography: Narrative, identity and belonging*  
Mohammed Kareem, Independent Researcher

*The question of Kurdistan: Integral colonisation after imperial domination*  
Naif Bezwan, University of Vienna

*The Kurdish quest for independence since the First World War: The struggle for identity, autonomy, and a sovereign state*  
Francis Owtram, University of Exeter

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Room 2.10

**Panel 4D– Constructions of Kurdishness at the Global Level**

Chair: Spyros Sofos, LSE Middle East Centre

*Reproduction strategies among stateless migrants: the Syrian Kurds in Sweden*  
Nubin Ciziri, Uppsala University

*International football through a Kurdish perspective: The local versus the global*  
Tiago Duarte Dias, Fluminense Federal University

*Black skins white languages: Artmaking by Kurdish migrant women artists*  
Özlem Belçim Galip, University of Oxford

*Social construction of homeland and diasporic national identity among the Kurdish diaspora in the West with a particular focus on the youth*  
Soheila Shahriari, École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS)

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11.00–11.30

**Coffee break**

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11.30–13.00  
Room 1.04

**Panel 5A – Judiciary and Governance in the KRI**  
Chair: Ahmed Tabaqchali, LSE Middle East Centre

*The politics of judiciary in Iraq: An opportunity or a challenge for post-referendum Kurdistan*

Majida Ismael, Liverpool John Moores University

*The impact of the judiciary on development and democratisation in the KRI*

Banaz Taha, City, University of London

*The interrelationship between state building and good governance: The case of KRI*

Dara Salam, SOAS

*Management of religion and governance in Iraqi Kurdistan*

Kamaran Palani, Salahaddin University–Erbil

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Room 1.10

**Panel 5B – Kurdish Women at the Centre of Political Life**  
Chair: Polly Withers, LSE Middle East Centre

*Transformation of gender regimes through entrepreneurship among Kurdish women in post-ISIS Kurdistan*

Kaziwa Salih, Jagiellonian University

*Kurdish women in the KRI: Surveying gains and setbacks*

Shilan Fuad Hussain, Middlesex University

*The Kurdish female fighter as an exoticized neo-Orientalist trope*

Nazy Raouf, SOAS

*On the everyday life of women in illicit economies of Iranian Kurdistan*

Peyman Zinati, University of Exeter

*An ethnography on Gazete Sujin: Women-centered journalism of Kurdish women*

Zubeyde Karagoz, Istanbul Bilgi University

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Room 2.04

**Panel 5C – Kurdish Socioeconomics and Marginalization in Iran**  
Chair: Marouf Cabi, LSE Middle East Centre

*Landscapes of il/legality: Contraband mobility in the Kurdish mountains of the Iran-Iraq border*

Moslem Ghomashlouyan, University of Bern

*Have cross border activities been beneficial for Kurdish movements?*

Hemn Seyedi, University of Exeter

*Kurds and their rights: A key to Iran's socioeconomic advancement*

Tahiri Danesh, Researcher

*The marginalization process of the Kurmanji-speaking Kurds from the core of Kurdish politics in Iran*

Mostafa Khalili, Kyoto University

*The Kurdish archives in Iran: Significance and challenges*

Rafiqfuad Yarahmadi, Filmmaker

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Room 2.10

**Panel 5D – Space and Institutions in Rojava**  
Chair: Zeynep Kaya, LSE Middle East Centre

*Space, place, gender, struggle: Sociospatial pedagogy as data Collection in Collaboration with the University of Rojava*

Charlotte Grace, Researcher

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*Searching for theoretical-methodological approaches to the study of democratic confederalism in Rojava*

Erika Aguilar, National Autonomous University of Mexico

*Autonomous administration of North and East Syria/Rojava: State-like entity in the making or hybrid form of governance beyond the one-nation state?*

Katia Zagoritou, University of Peloponnese

*Political violence and decolonial construction process: An analysis of the relationship between self-defense and the building of new institutions in Rojava*

Pedro Campos & Marcial Suarez, Fluminense Federal University

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**13.00–14.00**      **Lunch**

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**14.00–15.30**      **Panel 6A – Neoliberalism, Security and Social Movements in the KRI**

Room 1.04      Chair: Isabel Käser, LSE Middle East Centre

*Neoliberalism in Iraqi Kurdistan: Nationalism, dissent, and new forms of political engagement*

Müjge Küçükkeleş, Global Partners Governance

*Path dependence from proxy agent to de facto state: A history of 'strategic exploitation' of the Kurds as a context of the Iraqi Kurdistan security policy*

Piotr Sosnowski, University of Warsaw

*Why do social movements not arise? Civic dis/engagement and youth migration in Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI)*

Hewa Khedir, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust

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Room 1.10      **Panel 6B – Transformations and Continuities in Kurdish Identity**

Chair: Arda Bilgen, LSE Middle East Centre

*What do the Kurds want now? Spotlighting the gap in public and private perceptions in the Southeast and Istanbul*

Aslam Kakar, Rutgers University- Newark

*Prefiguring post national identities through learning and knowledge making process: Insights from the Peoples' Democratic Congress (HDK), Turkey*

Birgul Kutan, University of Sussex

*Songs and the performance of Kurdish Identity*

Ana Cristina Henriquez Marques & Vienna Salam, University of Kurdistan Hewlêr

*Kurds of Central Anatolia as an alternative Kurdishness*

Haci Cevik, University of Potsdam

*Glocal securitization of the Kurdish identity and desecuritization of the Kurdish question in Turkey*

Ibrahim Has, Independent Researcher

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Room 2.04      **Panel 6C – Ottoman Kurdistan**

Chair: Veli Yadirgi, LSE Middle East Centre

*Road to rebellion: A prehistory of Sheikh Ubeidullah rebellion*

Sabri Ates, Southern Methodist University

*The Sheikh Ubeydullah debate and the origins of Kurdish nationalism*

Djene Rhys Bajalan, Missouri State University

*Shaikh Mahmud and the Kurdish revolt*

Richard Wilding

*Four-legged capitalism: Kurdistan's economy in the nineteenth century*

Zozan Pehlivan, University of Minnesota Twin Cities

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Room 2.10      **Panel 6D – Aspects of Yezidi and Soviet Kurdish Studies**  
Chair: William Park, King's College London

*Soviet Kurdish studies and policies towards the Kurds: The problem of agents and agency*  
Angelika Pobedonostseva-Kaya, Saint Petersburg State University

*The new elite within Yezidi Siberian diaspora: Breaking of religious boundaries and new political consciousness*  
Henriette Raddatz, Free University of Berlin

*The next step on the way to orthodoxy: The International Yezidi Theological Academy in Georgia and its activities*  
Artur Rodziewicz, University of Warsaw

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**15.30–16.00      Break**

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Room 1.04      **Panel 7A – Trans Aesthetics and Activism, Marriage and Women's Resistance**  
Chair: Necla Acik, Middlesex University

*Towards Kurdish Trans aesthetics: Art, materiality, and Queer politics*  
Heja Aksünger, Mimar Sinan University

*Kurdish Queer/Trans interventions: Rethinking Queer politics and activism in Turkey*  
Rukan Atçeken, Istanbul University

*Marriages and the politicization of Kurdish culture in Turkey in the context of the civil war*  
Derya Kiliç, Pantheon-Sorbonne University

*Kurdish women's democratic experiment in Rojava*  
Mustafa Kemal Topal, Roskilde University

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Room 1.10      **Panel 7B – Justice, Indigeneity and Displacement in Turkey**  
Chair: Arda Bilgen, LSE Middle East Centre

*Transitional justice trajectories in Turkey's Kurdish conflict*  
Nisan Alici, Nottingham Trent University

*Tribal conflict resolution among Kurds of Turkey – The current state, the need, and the future*  
Jan Byczkowski, Marmara University

*The radical democracy model of the Kurdish political movement in Turkey: Mesopotamian indigeneity with honeycomb analogy*  
Aynur Unal, Arden University

*Entangled atmospheres of affect: The ambivalence of displacement, resettlement and the Kurdish question in Hasankeyf, Turkey*  
Cansu Sonmez, Gran Sasso Science Institute

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Room 2.04      **Panel 7C – Liberation, Activism, and Memorialisation**  
Chair: Francis O'Connor, Wageningen University

*The national liberation movement of the Kurds, the other of the international system*  
Sahar Bagheri, Sorbonne Paris Nord University

*Imagining freedom beyond state-seeking: On Kurdish transformative mobilization*  
Rosa Burc, Scuola Normale Superiore

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*Multidirectional travel of the concept of "Genocide" in the Kurdish victimo-mémorial grammar across time and space*

Adnan Celik, Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, Germany

*The applicability of small state theories on Iraqi and Syrian Kurdistan*

Máté Szalai, Ca' Foscari University

*Unstable climate in unstable land: Kurdish activists facing ecological catastrophe*

Dobrosława Wiktor-Mach, Cracow University of Economics & Marcin Skupiński, University of Warsaw

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**17.30**

**Close of conference**

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