



Afternoon Talk on Islamic Law

Tuesday, 5 November 2024 – 4:00 p.m. (CET)

Hybrid Lecture
in Gerhard Kegel Hall and via Zoom

“A New Theory of Family Law –
Polygyny in Iraqi Kurdistan”

Shéhérazade Elyazidi

(Affiliate, Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law)

All employees and guests of the institute as well as other interested parties are cordially invited to the lecture. Please register for the lecture no later than Monday, 4 November 2024 using this

[LINK](#).

Dr. Dörthe Engelcke



About the Speaker

Shéhérazade Elyazidi was a research associate in the Research Group “Changes in God’s Law – An Inner-Islamic Comparison of Family and Succession Laws” at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law from 2017–2024. From October to November 2021, she was a research guest at the Cambridge Family Law Center at Cambridge University. Shéhérazade holds a Master of Arts in Political Science and Sociology and a Bachelor of Arts in Middle East Studies and Political Science from Ruprecht-Karls-University of Heidelberg. Her research focuses on family law through the lens of social science theories, exploring the intricate relationships between legal frameworks and societal norms. She is currently finalizing her PhD thesis on the Role of National Identity in the Reform of the Kurdish Iraqi Family Law.

About the Topic

Family law research faces the challenge of adequately capturing the evolving role of the family in society. The current focus on macro-analytical phenomena often falls short, as it fails to consider the nuanced and individual experiences that shape the reality of family life. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach is necessary to comprehensively analyze the complexity of family law. To understand the dynamics within family law, it is crucial to examine the mechanisms that lead to a shift in the significance of the family. This shift is evident in how the law views and regulates the family as an institution. The law is not just a set of rules but also a product of social and cultural practices in which various actors—be they legislators, courts, or social movements—play a significant role. The talk will analyze this dynamic process through the legal institution of polygyny in Iraqi Kurdistan. The region has undergone profound societal changes in recent years, which are also reflected in family law. The Personal Status Law was reformed in 2008 to address modern demands and social changes. One of the major reforms was related to polygyny. The talk will scrutinize how the reform of polygyny in the Kurdish Region of Iraq contributed to shifting the meaning of family and which actors were involved in this process.