

CEVAT DARGIN

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RESEARCH PROFILE

Historian of the modern Middle East specializing in state formation, political violence, and the afterlives of empire. My work examines how late Ottoman and post-Ottoman transformations shaped regimes of governance, identity, and territorial control, with a particular focus on Kurdish regions and the production of statelessness, within broader global histories of conflict, race, and sovereignty.

EDUCATION

Princeton University Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies	2015–2021
New York University M.A. in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies	2012–2014
City University of New York, Brooklyn College M.A. in Political Science	2010–2012
Boğaziçi University B.A. in Political Science and International Relations	2002–2007

LANGUAGE TRAINING

Alliance Française, Paris, France Advanced French	2019
Middlebury Language Schools, Middlebury, VT Advanced Russian	2018
Derzhavin Institute, St. Petersburg, Russia Intermediate Russian	2017
Dehkhoda Institute, University of Tehran, Iran Advanced Persian	2016

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Norwich University Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern and North African History and Director of International Studies Program at the Department of History and Political Science	2025–Present
Columbia University Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies	2023–2024
University of Michigan in Ann Arbor Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of History	2022–2023
Princeton University Postgraduate Research Associate	Spring 2022

RESEARCH AND TEACHING AREAS

Modern Middle East, 19th–21st Centuries
Empire, State Formation, and Post-Imperial Transition
War, Historical Geography, and Political Violence
Nationalism, Race, and Minority Politics
Kurdish Studies and Statelessness
Ottoman and Late Ottoman History
Colonialism and the Global Middle East
Comparative Histories of Conflict and Nation-Building
Political Islam and Islamic Thought in the Modern Era

BOOK PROJECTS

Roads to Dersim: Kurds, Empire, Race, and the State examines how infrastructure, race, and empire fused into a model of governance in Dersim—a predominantly Alevi Kurdish populated region in Eastern Anatolia—across the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one that distills the dynamics of state formation and statelessness across the Middle East and continues to shape debates on sovereignty today. (under preparation).

Mapping Empire: The United States and the Post-Ottoman Middle East explores how American scholars and policymakers imagined and engineered new sovereignties in the post-Ottoman world. (envisioning).

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Articles

“Anticipatory Historical Geographies of Violence: Imagining, Mapping and Integrating Dersim into the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish State, 1866–1939,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 81 (2023): 162–178.

Book Chapters

“The State of the Kurdish Question since the End of the Ottoman Empire,” in *The I.B.Tauris Handbook of the Late Ottoman Empire: History and Legacy*, eds. Hans Lukas Kieser and Khatchig Mouradian (London: I.B. Tauris, 2025).

“Hayali İsyancılar: Türk ulus inşasında Alevi Kürtler” [Imagined Rebels: Alevi Kurds in Turkish Nation-Building], in *Kürtler ve Cumhuriyet* [The Kurds and the Republic], eds. Ayhan Işık, et al., 217–228 (Ankara: Dipnot, 2023).

“Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e bir ‘Eşkîyalık Efsanesi’: Koçan Aşireti (1890–1938)” [“A Legend of Banditry Across Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey”], in *Şekâvet, Hiyânet, İsyân: Geç Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Eşkîyalık* [Brigandage, Treachery, Rebellion: Banditry from the Late Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey], eds. Yalçın Çakmak & Ahmet Özcan, 69–89 (İletişim, 2023).

Forthcoming & Under Review

“The *Rhetoric of Rebellion*: Inventing the Rebel Kurd and the Making of Modern Sovereignty” (under review).

“Charting Transitions: Perspectives on the Late Ottoman Empire and Post–Ottoman Transformations” (in development).

“Self–Determination for Whom? Race, Cartography, and Sovereignty in the Post–Ottoman Settlements” (in development).

Book Reviews

Review of *Losing Istanbul: Arab–Ottoman Imperialists and the End of Empire*, by Mustafa Minawi, *Journal of Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 11, no. 1 (2024): 256–259.

Review of *Inventing the Berbers: History and Ideology in the Maghrib*, by Ramzi Rouighi, *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 152 (2022): Online.

Review of *Contributions to Zagrology: V. F. Minorsky and C. J. Edmonds Correspondence (192–1965)* by Gennady Kurin and Metin Atmaca. *Journal of Iranian Studies*. 2025.

Public Scholarship and Op-Eds

“America’s Kurdish Pivot in the “New” Middle East,” *Voices on Peace and War* (Mar 27, 2026).

“What Happens in Syria Does not Stay in Syria,” *Voices on Peace and War* (September 16, 2025).

“Precarious Alliances: Turkey, Israel, Öcalan, and the Kurds Amid Shifting Middle Eastern Geopolitics,” *Voices on Peace and War* (January 23, 2025).

“Turkish Elections, Kurdish Votes, and the Question of Race,” *Jadaliyya* (2023) [online].

“Kimin için Self Determinasyon? Lozan Antlaşması, Kürt Sorunu ve Uluslararası Hukukta Irk Meselesi” [Self–Determination for Whom? The Treaty of Lausanne, the Kurdish Issue, and the Question of Race in International Law], *PolitikART*, 318 (2023): Online.

“Why Does Televizyon Become Vizonte? Kurds and Orientalism from Within,” *Annual Review*, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, New York University (2014), 19.

“Turkey’s Shifting Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East and Its Relationship with Israel,” *Journal of Turkish Weekly*, December 23, 2011.

“The Arab Spring and the Waves of Democracy,” *Journal of Turkish Weekly* September 22, 2011.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Conducted multilingual archival research in:

Turkey: Ottoman Imperial Archives (BOA), Republican Archives, Turkish General Staff Archives (ATASE), Turkish Historical Society, National Library of Turkey.

France: Archives nationales, Archives diplomatiques, and Bibliothèque nationale de France.

United Kingdom: The National Archives and Foreign Office Records.

United States: National Archives and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives.

Russia: Archive of the Foreign Policy of Imperial Russia and Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences.

Armenia: National Archives of Armenia, Archives of Radio Yerevan.

Iran: National Archives and Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

LANGUAGES

English (fluent), Turkish (native), Kurdish (native), Russian (advanced), Persian (advanced), French (advanced), Ottoman Turkish (reading competency), Arabic (basic).

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

Postdoctoral Fellowship , Department of History, University of Michigan in Ann Arbor	2021–2022
Research Grant , the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research	2022
Dean’s Dissertation Completion Fellowship , Princeton University	2021
Research Grant , American Research Institute in Turkey	2019
Research Fellowship , Donald and Mary Hyde Foundation Research Fellowship	2018
Language Study Grant , Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies	2017
Research Grant , Department of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University	2016
Language Study Grant , Mossavar–Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies	2015

RECOGNITIONS AND SHORTLISTS

Finalist , Tenure–Track Position in the History of the Middle East, including the history of science, technology, environment, or medicine in the region, Carnegie Mellon University	2024
Semifinalist , Assistant Professor of Politics in the Modern Islamic World, Emory University	2024
Runner–up finalist , Assistant Professor in Armenian History, UC Berkeley	2024
Semifinalist , Postdoctoral Fellowship, Society of Fellows, USC	2023
Runner–up finalist , Teaching Professor, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh	2023
Finalist , Postdoctoral Associate, Program in Agrarian Studies, Yale University	2023
Offer declined , Postdoctoral Fellowship, Promise Armenian Institute, UCLA	2022
Finalist , Assistant Professor of Race and Ethnicity, Washington University in St. Louis	2022
Finalist , Lecturer on Modern History of Iran or Turkey, NELC, Harvard University	2021

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Norwich University

Political Islam (capstone seminar, Spring 2026) — examines Islamic thought and movements in relation to modernity, colonialism, and political power.

Israel & Palestine: Past & Present (Spring 2026) — traces the historical roots and contemporary dynamics of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

History of the Middle East (Spring & Fall 2025) — survey of political, social, and environmental change from antiquity to the present.

Introduction to International Studies (Spring & Fall 2025) — interdisciplinary overview of global systems, institutions, and transnational interactions.

Columbia University

Armenians and the Modern World (Spring 2024) — transimperial histories of diaspora, genocide, and global Armenian experience.

University of Michigan in Ann Arbor

Nations and Nationalism (Spring 2023) — theories of nation–building, identity, and belonging in comparative and global contexts.

Princeton University

Undergraduate Research Mentorship	2021–2022
<i>The Politics of Modern Islam</i> (Assistant Instructor)	Fall 2020
<i>Minorities in the Middle East and North Africa</i> (reading seminar)	Fall 2017
<i>Nations and Nationalism in the Middle East and Eurasia</i> (reading seminar)	Spring 2017
Teaching Certificate, McGraw Center for Teaching	Spring 2016

WORKSHOP ORGANIZED

“Modern State and Internal Colonialism: Peoples, Places, and Power across Empire and Nation–State.” University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (2022). In collaboration with Melanie S. Tanielian, Hakem Al–Rustom, and Gottfried Hagen.

INVITED LECTURES AND BROWN BAG TALKS

Norwich University, “Remapping Syria and the Middle East After Assad.” Center for Peace and War, Northfield, VT (2025).

UC Berkeley: “‘Final Solution’ to the Dersim Question: Ottoman Afterlives, Racialized Violence, and Kurdish Resilience.” Annual Kurdish Studies Lecture, Berkeley, CA (2025).

University of Chicago: “‘The Black Box of the Republic’: Dersim '38 and the Making of the Modern Turkish State.” Zahra Institute, Chicago, IL (2025).

Stanford University: “*Empire of Mountains: Environmental Racialization and Colonial Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey.*” Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies, Palo Alto, CA (2024).

New York University: “*Roads to Civilization: Imagining, Mapping, and Integrating Dersim into the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish State.*” Ottoman and Turkish Studies, New York, NY (2024).

UC Berkeley: “*Empire of Questions: The Late Ottoman Empire and Dersim '38.*” Center for Armenian Studies, Berkeley, CA (2024).

UCLA: “*Empire of Questions: The Late Ottoman Empire and Dersim '38.*” The Promise Armenian Institute, Los Angeles, CA (2024).

Harvard University: “*Rebellion as Myth in State-Making: The Case of Dersim across Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey.*” New Horizons in Kurdish History Lecture Series, Cambridge, MA (2022).

University of Michigan: “A Disease in the Lungs of Anatolia”: Politics of Reform and Modernization at the Intersection of Armenian, Kurdish, and Kizilbash Questions.” Center for Armenian Studies, (2022).

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Columbia University: “Founding Acts: Historical Perspectives on State Violence in the Early Turkish Republic.” Workshop, New York, NY (2026).

Middle Eastern Studies Association: “*Legacies of Command: Ottoman Epistemologies and Post-Ottoman State Formation in Dersim.*” Annual Conference. Washington, DC (2025).

International Symposium of Military Academies, Represented Norwich University at an international forum on military education, emerging technologies, and leadership. Kosovo (2025).

Yale University: “*Race, Rhetoric, and Rebellion: Afterlives of Ottoman Collapse in the Making of Dersim '38.*” Macmillan Center Council on Middle East Studies. Conference: *The Long Twentieth Century of Kurds and Kurdistan* (2024).

Oxford University: “*The Orient of the Orientalized: The Kurdish Other at the Intersection of Western Orientalism and Ottoman Colonialism.*” The Institute of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Conference: *Orientalism and Western Travelers to the Levant before the First World War* (2024).

Princeton University: “*Roadlessness: Ottoman Modernity Navigating Uncharted Territories.*” Conference: 4th Annual Mid-Atlantic Ottomanist Workshop (2023).

University of Michigan in Ann Arbor: “*Roadlessness: Ottoman Modernity Navigating Uncharted Territories.*” Conference: *11th Workshop on Armenian and Turkish Scholarship* (2023).

Middle Eastern Studies Association: “*‘You are Real and Pure Turks!’: Racialization and Colonial Violence in the Middle East.*” Annual Conference. Montreal, Canada (2023).

Northwestern University: “Self-Determination for Whom? The Treaty of Lausanne, the Question of Race, and the Politics of International Law.” Conference: *The Afterlives of Lausanne* (2023).

American Society for Environmental History: “*A Boil in the Heart of Anatolia: Environmental Knowledge in the Making of Ottoman and Turkish Colonial Encounters*. Roundtable: *Resisting Nature: European Imperial Projects and the Limits of Environmental Knowledge*. Annual Meeting, (2023).

Heidelberg University: “*Ottoman Collapse or Absolute Sovereignty? The Dersim ‘Rebellion’ as Myth in State–Making and State–Evasion*.” Conference: *Diaspora and Indigeneity: Intersections of Modern Jewish, Kurdish, and Amazigh History*. Germany (2023).

The Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies: “*Ottoman Collapse or Absolute Sovereignty? The Dersim ‘Rebellion’ as Myth in State–Making and State–Evasion*.” Annual Meeting: *The Middle East in Myth and Reality*, Reykjavik, Iceland (2022).

Middle Eastern Studies Association: “*Internal Colonialism in the Middle East: The Case of Dersim across Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey (1877–1938)*.” Annual Conference. Denver, CO (2022).

Social Science and History Association: “*Internal Colonialism in the Middle East: The Case of Dersim across Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey (1877–1938)*.” Annual Conference. Session: *Reverberations of Empire: Histories, Legacies & Lineages*, Chicago, IL (2022).

Third Annual Mid–Atlantic Ottomanists Workshop: “*Internal Colonialism in the Middle East: The Case of Dersim across Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey (1877–1938)*.” Workshop: *Continuity and Change Throughout the Ottoman Longue Durée*, University of Mary Washington, VA (2022).

Flanders Fields Museum: “*The Kizilbash Kurds’ Dangerous Mission: Smuggling Armenian Genocide Survivors to Safety During World War I*.” Conference: *The First World War in the Middle East: Aftermath and Legacies*, Ypres, Belgium (2022).

Hokkaido University: “*The Middle East in Rebellion: Resistance to Nation–States and Colonial Administrations in the Aftermath of Ottoman Collapse (1918–1938)*.” Symposium: *An Anarchist Turn? Imperial Rule and Resistance in the Long Twentieth Century*, Sapporo, Japan (2022).

Islamic College, London: “*Governing a Nonstate Space: Alevism in Theory and Practice*.” Shai Studies Conference (2022).

Harvard University and College of William and Mary: “*A Mobile and Invisible Religion: The Kizilbash Belief System in Practice*.” Workshop: *New Horizons in Alevi and Bektashi History* (2022).

Russian Academy of Sciences: “*Alî Şîr: A Kurdish Nationalist Poet and Warrior in the Early 20th Century*.” Workshop: *Kurdish Nationalism and Russian Imperial Projects*, Moscow, Russia (2019).

Northwestern University: “*United Kingdom and the Kurds during World War I: A Critical Analysis of British Documentary Sources: 1914–1920*.” Conference: *Historical and Comparative Perspectives on Kurdish Politics*. Buffett Institute (2016).

New York University: “*Identity in the Ideology, Art, and Literature of Kurdish Intellectuals at the End(s) of the Ottoman Empire*.” Workshop on identity politics, New York, NY (2015).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Podcast: “Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Dersim’de Devlet İnşası” (State–Making in Dersim across Empire and Nation–State). *Kıymık*, podcast hosted by Yalçın Çakmak (2023).

Panel: “Turkey and Democracy at the Crossroads.” Panel organized by Writers for Democratic Action & Democracy Book Club. Moderated by Peter Balakian (2023).

Film Screening: “Zer: A film by Kazım Öz.” Q&A Coordinator, Princeton University (2018).

Panel: “A Voice from Syrian Kurdistan: The Civil War, Refugees, and Women.” Panel hosted by Liechtenstein Institute on Self–Determination, Princeton University (2017).

Panel: “Beyond the Arab Spring: Political (De)formation and Social Revolution in Rojava.” Panel hosted by Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, NYU (2015).

Public Programs and Outreach Assistant, Center for Near Eastern Studies, NYU (2013–2014).

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (OUTSIDE ACADEMIA)

Research Assistant Intern, World Policy Institute, New York City	2011
Assistant Proposition Development Specialist, İş Bank Headquarters, Istanbul	2009
Military Service, Turkish Armed Forces	2008
CIEE, <i>Work and Travel Program</i> , Michigan, Colorado, and New York	2005–6–7

WORK AUTHORIZATION STATUS

Legally authorized for unrestricted and permanent employment in the United States.