2nd International Kurdish Migration Conference

Globalisation, Diaspora and Transnational Belonging

June 15-16, 2017, Middlesex University, London, UK

Middlesex University, Hendon Campus,
College Building, The Boardroom C219-C220,
The Burroughs, London, NW4 4BT, UK

Convenors
Dr. Janroj Yilmaz Keles and Dr. Alessio D’Angelo

Photo: Syrian-Kurdish Refugee camp in Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq 2017, by Janroj Yilmaz Keles

This conference is organised by the Business School and the Social Policy Research Centre at Middlesex University with support from The British Institute for the Study of Iraq
2nd International Kurdish Migration Conference
Globalisation, Diaspora and Transnational Belonging

Conference Aims and Objectives

Following the success of the first international Kurdish migration conference (IKMC) held in 2016 at Middlesex University (London) and the strong interest and participation by the international scholarly community, the 2nd IKMC will be held at Middlesex University on 15 and 16 June 2017.

Displacement and forced migration have a distinct meaning and significance in the history of the Middle East. In recent years, the political and economic instability of the area, together with the repressive and coercive policies of most regional states and their international allies, the marginalisation of minority groups and the rise of fundamentalist movements, continue causing permanent crises, fuelling displacements and forced migrations. Millions of people have lost their homes and livelihood and were forced to seek a haven either in the neighbouring countries or taking a long and dangerous journey to Europe. The images of drowned three-year-old Kurdish boy Alan Kurdi in the Aegean Sea, mass killing of Yazidis and Syrian nationals, displacements of religious and ethnic minorities made global headlines without any effect.

Similarly to its neighbouring countries, today the Kurdistan Region in Iraq hosts some 1.8 million refugees from Syria and internally displaced persons. A considerable number of refugees and displaced people are also hosted by the Kurdish Cantons in Rojava (Kurdish region in Syria) and by municipalities in the Kurdish Region of Turkey.

Far away from the homeland, the over 2 million Kurds living in Europe, the USA, Canada, Former Soviet republics and other countries are following with great concern the events in the Middle East. Since the 1980s, the Kurdish diaspora in the Western has played an important role, recreating new Kurdish diasporic spaces in settlement countries while simultaneously reconnecting to their home country and making the question of Kurdistan a transnational political issue through their political engagement, media and cultural production and activism. However, what is the relationship of the Kurdish diaspora with the contemporary challenges and conflicts in and around Kurdistan? What kind of exchanges and interactions are taking place? How do Kurds relate with new refugees and displaced people living in Kurdistan, the Middle East and Europe? Moreover, what are the experiences of the Kurdish diaspora in countries where hostility and discrimination towards immigrants are alarmingly on the rise?

The 2nd International Kurdish Migration Conference 2017 aims to bring together researchers from a range of disciplines working on Kurdish migration to discuss these and other relevant questions and to exchange their views and findings about all aspects of migration from, through and into Kurdistan, as well as about the experiences of diasporic communities and second generations abroad.
Plenary sessions

Thursday, 15 June 2017

10:00 - 10:45 – Plenary session, Room C219-20

Keynote lecture
Identity, Conflict and Flight: readdressing the territorial dimension of statehood in the ‘Middle East’ through international Law

Professor Joshua Castellino,
Professor of Law & Dean School of Law & Business School
Middlesex University, London, UK

10:45 - 11:00 – Plenary session, Room C219-20

Refugees and IDPs in Kurdistan- Iraq (Room C219-20)
H.E. Karwan Jamal Tahir
Kurdistan Regional Government High Representative to the UK

Friday, 16 June 2017

10:00 – 11:00 - Plenary session, Room C219-20

Keynote lecture
The Future of the Kurdish Diaspora

Dr Östen Wahlbeck,
Senior Lecturer in Sociology
University of Helsinki, Finland
Conference Programme

Thursday, 15 June 2017

8:30 - 9:30 - Registration/ Coffee – 2nd Floor Mezzanine

9:30 - 10:00 – Welcome and introduction (Room C219-20)
Prof. Eleonore Kofman, Co-Director, Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC)
Dr. Janroj Yilmaz Keles (Business School) and Dr. Alessio D’Angelo (SPRC), Conference convenors

10:00 - 10:45 – Plenary sessions (Room C219-20)
Keynote lecture: Identity, Conflict and Flight: readdressing the territorial dimension of statehood in the ‘Middle East’ through international Law
Professor Joshua Castellino, Middlesex University, London, UK

10:45 - 11:00 - Refugees and IDPs in Kurdistan- Iraq (Room C219-20)
H.E. Karwan Jamal Tahir, Kurdistan Regional Government High Representative to the UK

11:00 - 12:30 - Parallel sessions

Room C204 - Migration, Gender and identities
Panel chair: Houzan Mahmoud, organiser of the panel, Cultural Project, UK
• “Is It OK?” Challenging Gender Roles Online
  Jowan Mahmod, Independent scholar, Sweden
• Queer Imagination of Kurdistan: Diaspora, Gender Identity and Belonging
  Hakan Sandal, St Catharine's College University of Cambridge, UK
• Kurdish Women Narratives after Forced Village Evacuations:
  The Case of Kucukcekmece Kanarya Neighbourhood, 2014
  Melike Gul Demir, Maltepe University, Turkey

Room C209 - Kurdish Refugees from Rojava/Syria
Panel chair: Brad Blitz, Middlesex University, UK
• Syrian Stateless Kurds: Vulnerabilities in Displacement
  Thomas McGee, Independent Researcher, Kurdistan
• The Syrian Kurds: A Diaspora within a Diaspora
  Anne Sofie Schott, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
• “Labour Market Situation for Syrian Refugees in Iraq”
  Aram Mahmood, Iraq-Impact, Kurdistan [SKYPE], Kurdistan
• Refugees and IDP in Rojava
  Margaret Owen OBE, International Human Rights Lawyer and Director WPD, UK
12:30 - 13:30 - Lunch Break – 2nd Floor Mezzanine

13:30 - 15:00 – Parallel sessions

**Room C204 – Citizenship and transnational identities**
Panel chair: Eleonore Kofman, Middlesex University, UK
- Digital diaspora and social capital
  *Janroj Keles, Middlesex University, UK*
- Do emigrants self-select along cultural traits? Evidence from the MENA countries
  *Riccardo Turati, Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium*
- The Yezidi Diaspora in Arizona, Islamophobia, and Transnational Belonging
  *Mija Sanders, University of Arizona, USA*
- Citizenship, Migration and Gender: Kurdish women in the U.S.
  *Ghomri Rostampour, Harvard University, USA*

**Room C209 - Diaspora and belonging**
Panel chair: Alessio D’Angelo, Middlesex University, UK
- Exploring identities among the second-generation Kurdish diaspora in the UK
  *Shayan Moftizadeh, UCL, UK*
- The worry of being misunderstood: Caucasian Diaspora, identity construction and the shadow of the Kurdish issue
  *Veysel Erdemli, University of Birmingham, UK*
- Resilience in the face of uncertainty: exploring social identity as a protective factor in refugee adolescents.
  *Shilan Keskin, University College London, UK*
- Researching Kurdish Diasporic Communities: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations
  *Ali Zalme, University of the West of England, UK*

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break – 2nd Floor Mezzanine
15:30 – 17:00 – Parallel sessions

Room C204 – Gendered and political struggle in Kurdistan
Panel chair: Naif Bezwan, LSE, UK
- Gender and multilayered citizenship:
  - Kurdish women’s politics and agency in Turkey/ North Kurdistan
    Necla Acik, University of Manchester/ Umut Erel, Open University, UK
- Female Fighters Within National Movements
  Mustafa Kemal Topal, Roskilde University, Denmark

Room C209 – Conflict and Displacement
Panel chair: Edel Hughes, Middlesex University, UK
- Demographic displacement in the 21st century: TOKI and urban renewal projects from the 2011 Van earthquake to urban warfare in 2015
  Peter Klempner, Independent scholar, Turkey
- Border as ‘zone of indistinction’: “Forced Migration and Urban Destruction in Kurdish Cities along Turkey Border with Syria
  Ezgi Tuncer Gurkas, Kadir Has University, UK
- Geopolitics of Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Turkish Grand Strategy in the Middle East
  Tunc Aybak, Middlesex University, UK
- Iraqi Yazidis in Iraq: Motivations to emigrate to Europe
  Karel Černý, Charles University, Czech Republic

Room C219-20 and 2nd Floor Mezzanine -17:00 - 17:30
Book launch
From Imagined Community to Managing Communities
Jowan Mahmod
Friday, 16 June 2017

10:00 – 11:00 - Plenary session (Room C219-20)
Keynote lecture: The Future of the Kurdish Diaspora
Dr Östen Wahlbeck, University of Helsinki, Finland

11:00 – 12:30 - Parallel sessions

Room C207 - Diaspora, politics and Transnational Networks
Panel chair: Nick Clark, Middlesex University, UK
- Explaining the Role of Diasporas and Transnational Networks in Peace Settlements
  Sinem Arslan, University of Essex, UK
- Kurdish Diaspora Politics in Germany and Canada
  Pia Morar, London School of Economics, UK
- Politics of Kurdish Migration
  Diyako Rahmani, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
- Kurds’ External Voting Experience for Turkey: The Case of Germany
  Inci Oyku Yener-Roderburg, University of Strasbourg, University of Duisburg-Essen

Room C205 – Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Migration
Panel chair: Zeynep Arslan (organiser of the panel), University of Vienna, Austria
- Identity Construction in Diaspora: The case for the Zazaki-speakers
  Zeynep Arslan, University of Vienna, Austria
- Migration waves from Dersim to Europe
  Huseyin Celik, University of Zurich, Switzerland
- Kirmançki, Zazaki and the remembrance of Tertele. The language as a key and catalyser for memory processes
  Maria Six-Hohenbalken, University of Vienna & Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austria

12:30 – 13:30 – Lunch Break – 2nd Floor Mezzanine
13:30 – 15:00 - Parallel session

Room C207—Kurdish Studies at British Universities
Panel chair: Janroj Yilmaz Keles, Middlesex University, UK
- Hegemony and the Logics of Kurdish Conflict in Turkey
  Recep Onursal, University of Kent, UK
- Partition as a Solution to Ethnic Conflict in Iraq
  Yousif Mustafa Sindi, Leeds Beckett University, UK
- Mesopotamia: Formulation of the sustainability of its natural resources
  Muhamad Tawfiq Ali, MCIL, UK

Room C205—Migration culture and visual representations
Panel chair: Magali Peyrefitte, Middlesex University, UK
- Kurdish Literary works in the West: its social and political expressions
  Shilan Fuad Hussain Hussain, Independent researcher, Italy
- The vulnerable heritage of displaced religious minorities in Iraq
  Richard Wilding, Photographer and Creative Director of Gulan, UK
- Bridge to Kobane: Bridging future horizons in Kurdistan
  Lana Askari, University of Manchester, UK

15:00 – 16:00 – Parallel sessions

Room C207—Return Migration and the Labour Market
Panel chair: Umut Erel, Open University, UK
- Realities and Challenges of Return Migration to Iraqi Kurdistan: Diasporic Experience,
  Motivations for Return, Transnational Ties and Re-embracing “Home”
  Bahar Baser, Coventry University, UK
  Mari Toivanen, Stellenbosch University, University of Turku/ EHESS, Finland
- The Effect of Reintegration Assistance on Sustainable Return Migration in the Context of
  Kurdistan Region of Iraq
  Wria Rashid, IOM, Kurdistan
- Turning back: Policy and data analysis of Iraqis moving back from Europe
  Alex Odlum, Information Analyst (Mixed Migration Platform) [SKYPE]

Room C205—Forced migration, trauma and mental health
Panel chair: Rachel Seoighe, Middlesex University, UK
- Dersim Massacre (1937-38) and Native Languages of Dersimis: Implications of the Loss of the
  Native Language as an Effect of Intergenerational Trauma
  Filiz Celik Swansea University, UK
- Understanding mental health Issues: Based on Life Story Approach among Kurdish Refugees in
  Finland
  Afrouz Zibaei, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

16:00 – 17:00 – Reception – 2nd Floor Mezzanine
Keynote speakers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keynote speaker</th>
<th>Professor Joshua Castellino</th>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Middlesex University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>IDENTITY, CONFLICT AND FLIGHT: READDRESSING THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF STATEHOOD IN THE “MIDDLE EAST” THROUGH INTERNATIONAL LAW</td>
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</table>

Abstract

The Sykes Picot Agreement (1916), The Treaty of Sèvres (1920) and the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) are key international legal documents that have shaped the territorial dimensions of the “Middle East”. In the nearly one hundred years since their framing, international society has tried but failed to outlaw war, been moderately successful in generating international institutions to promote peace and security, and created a fledgling system of protecting those fleeing conflict.

Over the century international society has changed dramatically as new sovereign states emerged from decolonization to become key global players. International law, generated mainly by states’ consensus, now encompasses prohibitions against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, within legally binding human rights regimes at national, regional and international levels. These standards often ring hollow in the context of the “Middle East”, where identity, conflict and flight have impacted generations of Armenians, Jews, Palestinians, Kurds, Christians and many religious, ethno-religious, ethno-sectarian and linguistic communities.

This address opens by briefly highlighting these trends across the region, before focussing on the Kurdish experience from the perspective of the territorial determination of the boundaries of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Drawing on distinctions in international law in the status of “peoples”, “nations” and “minorities” it will present the contemporary context for the division of Kurdistan, emphasizing its political overtones. The main contribution of the address lies in the attempt to identify key impediments to rethinking international law governing questions of title to territory; and in proposing an “emirates” based approach to statehood, with a view to creating greater territorial certainties that mitigate conflict and flight in and from the region.

Short Bio

Joshua Castellino is Professor of Law & Dean of the School of Law, as well as the Business School at Middlesex University, London. He is also Adjunct Professor of Law at the Irish Centre for Human Rights, Galway, Ireland, and Visiting Professor at the College of Europe, Natolin, Poland. He has held visiting positions in Ireland, Spain, Hungary and Italy. He worked as a journalist in Mumbai, with the Indian Express Group, was awarded a Chevening Scholarship to pursue an MA in International Law & Politics in 1995, and completed his PhD in International Law in 1998. He has authored and edited eight books in international law and human rights law, on self-determination, title to territory and indigenous peoples rights, besides several articles on a range of these and other legal sub-topics. He has completed the third, in a five-book series published by Oxford University Press, on issues concerning Global Minority Rights Law, the latest entitled Minority Rights in the Middle East: A Comparative Legal Analysis (with Kathleen Cavanaugh).
Joshua was part of the EU-China Experts & Diplomatic Dialogue and Lawyers for the New Millennium: Support for the Arab Law Union. He regularly engages with multilateral organizations and with Law Societies and NGOs in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, on issues of human rights advocacy and public international law. He is on the Leadership Council of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network where he co-chairs the Thematic Group on Social Inclusion, Gender and Human Rights. He was appointed Chair, by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the 8th Forum on Minority Issues, an inter-governmental dialogue with civil society under the auspices of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>University of Helsinki, Finland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>The Future of the Kurdish Diaspora</td>
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**Abstract**

Many academic studies have described the Kurdish communities outside of Kurdistan as diasporas. Today, well-established Kurdish communities are found all over the world and the Kurds constitute a global diaspora, which is characterised by continuous transnational social ties between countries of settlement and countries of origin. However, there are new migration patterns and new generations that will replace the ones that previously have dominated the Kurdish communities. To what extent can we expect the concept of diaspora to be a relevant concept to describe the Kurdish communities in the future? According to diaspora theory, time has to pass in order to assess whether a minority community forms a diaspora, or whether the community follows another integration or assimilation trajectory. Diasporas have traditionally been defined as “expatriate communities” that are characterised by their specific relation to a real or imagined “homeland”. Yet, the relationship to the idea of a “homeland” may change over time, and it is already possible to find some significant developments in this respect among the Kurds in Europe. Many recent academic studies indicate that the meaning of the Kurdish identity changes in later generations. Among later generations the Kurdish identity can be strong, despite the fact that it is no longer rooted in the geographical region of Kurdistan, but connected to identity politics in the societies of settlement. In my presentation, I will point out some recent developments among the Kurdish communities, and some aspects of diaspora theory, which both suggest that the concept of diaspora can be a useful analytical concept also in the future.

**Short Bio**

Östen Wahlbeck is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at University of Helsinki, Finland, Adjunct Professor of Sociology at University of Tampere, Finland, and Professor II at the University College of Southeast Norway. He holds a PhD in Ethnic Relations from University of Warwick, UK (1997). He is the author of the monograph Kurdish Diasporas (Macmillan 1999) and a number of edited books, including Debating Multiculturalism in the Nordic Welfare States (together with Peter Kivisto, Palgrave 2013). He has published more than 20 international refereed academic articles in the field of international migration and ethnic relations, including articles in Ethnicities, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Journal of Refugee Studies, Journal of Intercultural Studies, and Mobilities. In addition, he is the author of numerous book chapters published in various languages. His research interests include transnational migration, immigrant businesses, refugee studies, and integration policies. He has been the project leader of several major research projects in these areas funded by the Academy of Finland.
## Conference Presenters, Abstracts and Short Biogs

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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Necla Acik / Umut Erel</th>
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<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
<td>University of Manchester/ The Open University, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Gender and multilayered citizenship: Kurdish women’s politics and agency in Turkey/ North Kurdistan</td>
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### Abstract
Mobilising the theoretical framework of gender and intersectional, multilayered citizenship, the paper explores how the Kurdish women’s movement co-constituted the Kurdish national movement in Turkey/North Kurdistan. Since the 1990s, Kurdish women established a consciousness within the Kurdish national movement that gender equality is a cornerstone of democracy and ethnic rights. We identify three key measures: autonomous women’s assemblies, women’s quotas in pro-Kurdish rights parties and the co-chair system where all elected positions within the pro-Kurdish parties and local government are jointly occupied by a male and female. These have achieved a better representation of women in formal politics, rendered gender equality and sexual violence legitimate subjects of politics and contributed to establishing an aspiration for a more dialogic political ethos. While the women’s movement’s close affiliation with the Kurdish national movement has been highly effective, there can be a risk that it circumscribes gender roles to fit its agendas.

### Short Bio
**Necla Acik (University of Manchester)** is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice (CC CJ), School of Law, University of Manchester. She is teaching courses on research methodology and counter-terrorism. Her research interests are in youth and mobilisation, education and counter-terrorism, civic engagement, migration, ethnicity, and Kurdish women’s movement.

**Umut Erel (Open University)** is Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Open University, UK. She has widely published on migration, ethnicity, gender and class. She is interested in how these issues play out in practices of citizenship, differentiated along gender and ethnic lines. Currently she is exploring migrant women’s mothering practices as citizenship practices in their own right and with respect to shaping their children’s ethnic, cultural, political identities and modes of citizenship. She is Principal Investigator (with Prof. Maggie O’Neill, University of York and Prof. Tracey Reynolds, University of Greenwich) of PASAR - Participation Arts and Social Action in Research, funded by the ESRC [http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/PASAR/] investigating the potential of participatory theatre and walking as research methods for the social sciences.

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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Muhamad Tawfiq Ali</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
<td>MCIL</td>
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<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Mesopotamia: Formulation of the sustainability of its natural resources</td>
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### Introduction
Climatic changes elsewhere and/or scarcity of fresh water were most probably the main cause of historical migrations of peoples from the Downstream south towards the upstream north of Mesopotamia and later on from the east towards the west about fourteen and eight centuries ago, respectively. Ever since the discovery of oil in the region, it has replaced...
water in strategic importance. As a result of advancement in modern technology in alternatives to hydrocarbon fuels, this role might be reversed in future.

**Key Words**


**Geography**

Longitude 35°E to 50°E, latitude 30°N to 40°N, incorporating Greater Kurdistan and the Fertile Crescent. See Diagram 1, geographical model, and maps. Climate is Sub-tropical. History See Diagram 2, historical model

**Ethnography**

Consequently, the resulting ethnographic landscape mosaic of the region is Semitic in the south/west, Iranian in the north/east and Turkic in the north/west

**Culture**

It is the birthplace of three monotheist religions of the world, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the Rise and fall of several empires and the 20th century first genocide. The resulting culture is an Islamic majority with ever diminishing ethnic and religious indigenous communities, the most vulnerable to migration.

**Methodology**

I have considered different agents of change and resources, mainly qualitative, some quantitative, concentrating on fresh water throughout history and on oil & gas, since WW1.

**Analysis:**

Discourse analysis comprises some tools used in management studies.

**Diagram 3**

Stakeholders Map of Resources, natural, human and material. The direction of water flow by gravity determines the pecking order of the riparian states as upstream, midstream and downstream

**Diagram 4**

PEST Analysis. Political, economic, social and technical factors plus Remarks, including (ISIS).

**Diagram 5**

SWOT Analysis. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, including oil prices.

**Conclusions**

The violence currently unleashed in the region is a war by proxy by umpteen local, regional and world powers, deploying water as a weapon. Academic scholars and many politicians have already concluded that both Syria and Iraq are failed states, which I have independently labelled as failing states.

**Recommendations**

This calls for their political mandate by the UN. As the natural waterways form an Integrated transnational system, its water management should also be another remit of UN

**Short Bio**
He has retired from his main profession, civil engineering, but not from his pet subject, translation. Most of this has been as voluntary work for the Kurdish and Iraqi community Associations, of which he is a founder member, and solidarity campaigns with their respective peoples. He is a Fellow of Chartered Institute of Linguists (FCIL), member of Association of Iraqi Academics (AIA), British Institute for the study of Iraq (BISI) at British Academy, an affiliate of LMEI at SOAS and a trustee of Enheduanna Society, Zipang, Mesopotamia. Qualifications include GCSE Turkish, GCE Arabic and P/G Dip. Translation English/Arabic.


Solidarity in (CAAT), (UKWG) on landmines, (MAG), via (CARDRI) and Liberation in War on Want, (FoE), which culminated in “History of the Ilisu Dam Campaign. http://www.ilisu.org.uk/”.

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<tr>
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<th>Sinem Arslan</th>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Michael Nicholson Center for Conflict and Cooperation, University of Essex, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Explaining the Role of Diasporas and Transnational Networks In Peace Settlements</td>
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Diasporas and transnational networks can get involved in homeland conflict by variety of ways including providing financial, human military support as well as by their mediation efforts. While the impact of such networks has been widely documented by the rich qualitative literature, there is still not yet an established consensus whether diasporas are positively or negatively affecting the homeland conflicts. The peace-maker or the peace wrecker controversy in the literature, is mainly due to that these studies are based on specific cases and they lack a common indicator to assess the diaspora performance. By measuring diasporas and transnational network support by using two different datasets, based on the peace processes literature and rational choice models, this paper argues that not only by their lobbying efforts to push for mediation but even by funding the militant organization that these transnational networks make the peace processes more likely. As the governments only negotiate with strong deep pocketed rebels, the groups that receive the support of any transna-
tional constituency are more likely to see peace settlements than rebel groups that do not have such constituency. Consistent with the expectation, the data on all 358 Conflict Dyads from 1946 to 2011 proves this point.

**Short Bio**
Sinem Arslan is a PhD candidate and teaching assistant at the Department of Government, University of Essex

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<th><strong>Presenter</strong></th>
<th><strong>Zeynep Arslan</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
<td>University of Vienna, Austria</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Identity building processes and nationalism in the 21st century – The Zazaki speakers</td>
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**Abstract**
Originally performed in the ancient region of Dersim, it is estimated that around 6 million people do speak Zazaki in the world. Zazaki is an Indo-European language of the Northwestern branch of Iranian languages. Many have had to flee the region to the large cities in Turkey and to Europe amongst others due to the assimilation policies of the Turkish state. While some Zazaki-speakers define themselves as Kurds and Zazaki as a Kurdish dialect, another -mostly in Europe organized part argues Zaza as a distinct ethnicity that could not define an independent and conscious identity yet. This contribution handles about the question of identity definition processes and belonging of the Zazaki-speakers in respect to the existing nationalisms in the region of heritage and the European Diaspora. Geographically living quite in the transition zone between the parts of theregions dominated by the Turkish and the Kurdish ethnicity, the Zazaki-speakers are challenged within their own rows which is denoted by the polarization of belonging to the Sunni (South) and the Alevi (North) religion too. The more democratic circumstances in the European Diaspora enabled the re-discovery of Zazaki and raised questions about Zazaki as an independent language and Zaza as a distinct ethnicity independent from the Kurdish one. The complexity about the actually experienced identity building processes within the Zazaki-speakers nowadays force to question the function of nation(al) states in a world system that is ruled by a neo-liberal capitalist economy. This contribution comes to the conclusion that there is a need to question the options of a Zaza-nation building process in respect to other possibilities beyond an independent nation(al) state. The methods used to prepare this contribution are content discourse-analytical researches, literature analyses, qualitative interviews and participatory observation. Theories about identity and belonging, nationalism and nation state building are discussed in respect to socio-political developments in the European Diaspora and Turkey.

**Short Bio**
MMag. Dr. Zeynep Arslan, M.A. is Social Scientist, journalist, author, trainer, project- and organization manager. Her main emphasis in research handles about Turkey, Middle East, Europe, International Politics and geostrategic correlations, International Relations, peace and conflict studies, Gender Studies, studies about democracy development and stabilization processes in Europe and Turkey, intercultural dialogue, migration, democratic communication policies, ethnic and religious minority groups in Turkey, identity definition processes and issues about belonging, Zazaki and Zaza People and Alevism(s). Zeynep Arslan is Co-President of the Zaza Language Association in Austria and the Journal about and in Zaza(ki) “Raa Ma”.

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## Presenters

**Presenter** | **Lana Askari**  
---|---  
**Institution** | University of Manchester, UK  
**Title** | Bridge to Kobane: Bridging future horizons in Kurdistan

### Abstract
Discussing my recent fieldwork and ethnographic documentary film Bridge to Kobane (2016), I will consider the visual and theoretical approaches to exploring how residents and refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan re-negotiate their future plans through the city space. Fleeing the war in Syria, this documentary follows Mihemed, a journalist from Kobane, as he renegotiates his future whilst living as a refugee in Slemani, Iraqi Kurdistan. Unable to cover the war any longer, Mihemed works for an NGO in the refugee camp he lives in, in order to support his family. While dreaming of returning to his hometown Kobane, now a symbol for the Kurdish fight against ISIS, return remains impossible and Mihemed is left to constantly renegotiate his future plans. This film is part of my PhD research project on imagining future in times of crisis in Iraqi Kurdistan. This film and discussion explore issues on future imaginations, Kurdish (cross-border) migration dynamics, transnationalism and planning in times of crisis.

### Short Bio
Lana Askari is a PhD candidate in Social Anthropology with Visual Media at the University of Manchester, BISI research grant holder and Research Affiliate at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani. Trained in Anthropology (MPhil Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge) and Documentary Filmmaking (MA Visual Anthropology, University of Manchester), she is currently conducting her fieldwork in Sulaimani, Iraqi Kurdistan. Her research areas include Visual and Museum Anthropology, Ethnographic Documentary Film, Diaspora and Migration, the Anthropology of Time, Infrastructure and the State.

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**Presenter** | **Tunc Aybak**  
---|---  
**Institution** | Middlesex University  
**Title** | 'Geopolitics of Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Turkish Grand Strategy in the Middle East'

### Abstract
The aim of this paper is to analyse the Syrian refugee crisis in the context of the Middle East. I will focus on Turkish foreign policy discourse in terms of its grand strategy of Neo-Ottomanism. I will argue that the Justice and Development Party's policy towards Syrian refugees is driven by its Neo-Ottomanist ambitions that lead to the marginalization and stratification of Syrian refugee communities in Turkey.

### Short Bio
Dr Tunc Aybak is currently the leader of International Politics Undergraduate Programme at School of Law, Middlesex University. He graduated from School of Political Science, Ankara University in International Relations and Diplomacy. He completed his PhD at the University of Hull in International law and Politics. He teaches on BA International Politics and MA International Relations programmes specializing in critical studies in geopolitics and diplomacy, foreign policy analysis, international political economy and politics of Eu-
rope. His main research areas and field work include Turkish and Russian foreign policy, citizenship and human rights issues in Europe. His recent publication include: Geopolitics of Denial: Turkish State’s ‘Armenian Problem’ Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies Vol. 18 (2) 2016

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<tr>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Bahar Baser &amp; Mari Toivanen</th>
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| Institution | Coventry University, UK/ Stellenbosch University, South Africa  
University of Turku, Finland/ EHESS, France |
| Title | Realities and Challenges of Return Migration to Iraqi Kurdistan: Diasporic Experience, Motivations for Return, Transnational Ties and Re-embracing “Home” |

**Abstract**  
This article focuses on various aspects of counter-diasporic migration to Iraqi-Kurdistan and sheds light on the realities and challenges of return by investigating the profiles of return migrants, their vulnerabilities and advantages upon their return as well as issues related to reintegration. Since the Kurdish Regional Government has become a prominent actor in the region due to its autonomous situation, several diaspora members have been returning in order to contribute to nation-building by playing a vital role in economic and political development of the KRG. The main question of this article concerns the dynamics behind the return process such as motivations of return, obstacles and facilitators in this process. Based on in-depth interviews conducted with 30 returnees in the Kurdish Region of Iraq (in Hewler, Suleimani and Dohuk) between January and April 2016, this project maps the current situation and points out to future scenarios.

**Short Bios**  
**Bahar Başer** is a research fellow at the Centre for Peace, Trust and Social Relations at Coventry University. She is also an associate research fellow at the Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa (SIGLA) at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. She completed her PhD in social and political sciences at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. Bahar’s research interests include ethno-national conflicts and political violence, conflict resolution, third-party mediation, migration and diaspora studies. Bahar is the author of Diasporas and Homeland Conflicts (2015) and has various publications in peer-reviewed academic journals such as Terrorism and Political Violence, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, Ethnopolitics and Middle Eastern Journal of Culture and Communication.

**Mari Toivanen**, PhD, is an Academy of Finland Postdoctoral Researcher (2015-2018) at the University of Turku, Finland. Her prior research focused on the second generation of Kurdish background in Finland, whereas her current research project deals with the political and civic participation of Kurdish diaspora communities in Finland and France and their transnational engagements towards the Kurdistan. She has written scientific articles concerning political activism, diaspora participation, Kurdish diaspora and identity, as well as media representations of Kurdish female fighters. Her research interests cover also broader themes such as politics of belonging, nationalism, and immigration. She holds a Ph.D. degree in Social Sciences from the University of Turku, and is an affiliated member of the School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS).
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<th><strong>Presenter</strong></th>
<th>Filiz Celik</th>
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<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
<td>Swansea University</td>
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<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Dersim Massacre (1937-38) And Native Languages Of Dersimis: Implications Of The Loss Of The Native Language As An Effect Of Intergenerational Trauma</td>
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**Abstract**

Looking at the effects of the trauma of the Dersim Massacre on subsequent generations this chapter will focus on the assimilation of the native languages (Kurmanči and Zaza). Current literature on transgenerational trauma identifies loss of languages among the effects of the experience of massive trauma however aforementioned literature is yet to be expanded on the effects of the loss of language on the transgenerational trauma process. This presentation will aim to address this issue through the results of 30 semi-structured in depth interviews conducted with people of Dersim (Dermisi/s). The analysis revealed that the loss of language can have traumatic effects among members of subsequent generations; that is firstly through experiences of the survivors and their children in being forced to be monolingual in Turkish and secondly through rupture in intergenerational continuity of the culture created by the Massacre and intensified through loss of the use of the language. This paper aims to contribute to this panel by expanding the issue of loss of native languages among Kurdish and Zaza speaking communities of Dersim now living in numerous Diasporas. In doing so, a psychosocial approach will enable to understand effects of the loss of language both in personal and collective domains and the on-going circular interactions between these domains.

**Short Bio**

Dr. Filiz Çelik is researcher at the languages and translation department of the University of Swansea. Çelik focuses on inter-generational transmission of psychological traumas in case of human-made disasters and how genocides, ethnic cleansing, massacres and other types of mass violence influence lives of those who were not born until after the atrocities.

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<th><strong>Presenter</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
<td>University of Zurich</td>
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<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Migration waves from Dersim to Europe</td>
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The following paper will deal with the migration movement from the Dersim region (mainly) to Europe and it is divided in two parts. The first part delivers a short historical and geographical overview, while the second part, focuses on the solidarity networks and association established by migrants from Dersim in Europe.

Until the 20th century, Dersim was a region, which hosted an incoming population from other parts of the old Ottoman Empire. According to the last census of January 2017, Dersim is the province with the lowest population of Turkey. Between 1990 and 2000 the population decreased 30% from 133,584 inhabitants to 93,584.

It is documented that the first migration from Dersim occurred in the late 19th century. This labour migration wave followed the route from Harput to the USA through the Black Sea ports. The first mass migration from Dersim took place after the 1915 Armenian Genocide. The largest internal migration was characterised by Dersimi sent to exile to the western part of Turkey after the Dersim Genocide (Tertele), in the scope of the Compulsory Settlement Law of 1938. The first mass migration from Dersim to Europe happened during the Repub-
lic era as a result of the "Turkey-Germany Labour Force Agreement" of 1961. The latest wave of migration was an outcome of forced displacement during the internal conflict in the 90s and due to the eviction of the villagers.

This paper shows, that the main reason for migration waves from Dersim is not economic but political. The examples of the Armenian and Dersim Genocide as well as the forced displacements in the 1990s illustrate the negative social effects on the population, which could even amount to serious violations of human rights.

The Data used is based on statistical surveys and field research.

**Short Bio**
Currently, Çelik is post-doctoral student and lecturer at the Faculty of Law at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. His research interests are Constitutional Law, European law, International Law and Energy Law. He has also researched on parliamentarianism, democracy, nation state and migration. Title of his doctoral thesis is "Europäisches Mehrebenen-Legislativsystem. Beteiligung nationaler Parlamente und Auswirkungen auf die repräsentative Demokratie" (English: European multi level legislative system. Participation of national governments and incepts on representative democracy).

**Presenter** | **Karel Černý**
---|---
**Institution** | Charles University
**Title** | Iraqi Yazidis: Motivations to emigrate to Europe
**Abstract** | The paper deals with refugees (IDPs) from Yazidi minority in Iraq. It is a case study based on a field research conducted in March 2016 on the territory of the Kurdish regional government in Northern Iraq. The paper is based on more than thirty in-depth semi-structured interviews with refugees both inside and outsider refugee camps and it discusses the many and complex motivations that the refugees take into consideration while making decisions about their past and possible future migration. Such a case study provides a perspective of the Yazidi refugees themselves that is in some respect specific for this religious minority but also contributes to the more general discussion about the many motivations of refugees from the war zones.

**Short Bio**
Karel Černý holds a doctoral degree in sociology. He focuses on historical sociology and the Middle East. He is also conducting research on Muslim immigrants in Europe and the United States in comparative perspective. He was a Fulbright fellow at the University of California in Santa Barbara (prof. Mark Juergensmeyer) and is currently a researcher and lecturer at Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Humanities. His recent publications in English include Instability in the Middle East: Structural Roots and Uneven Modernisation 1950-2015 (2017).
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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Veysel Erdemli</th>
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<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
<td>University of Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>The worry of being misunderstood: Caucasian Diaspora, identity construction and the shadow of the Kurdish issue</td>
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**Abstract**

The Kurdish issue has long been a question of great interest in a wide range of fields. Thus, not surprisingly, a considerable amount of literature has been published on the topic. Most studies have focused on the impact of the Kurdish issue on Turkish foreign and regional policies, and Turkey’s democracy. Nevertheless, surprisingly, the impact of the Kurdish issue on other ethnic groups in Turkey has not been addressed adequately. Therefore, the paper seeks to answer the question of how the Kurdish issue influences other ethnic groups in Turkey, with a special emphasis on the Caucasian Diaspora. The data for this paper were collected through a long-term ethnographic research from 2013 to 2016. This paper is part of my ongoing doctoral dissertation in the Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS)/Centre for Russian, European and Eurasian Studies (CRESS) at the University of Birmingham.

<table>
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<th>Short Bio</th>
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<tr>
<td>Short Bio: Veysel Erdemli is a doctoral researcher at the Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS), Centre for Russian, European and Eurasian Studies (CRESS), University of Birmingham, UK. He holds a postgraduate diploma from SOAS, University of London, in the media and cultural studies. He conducted empirical research on issues related to migration, diaspora, identity formation, development and ethnic associations in Turkey, Georgia and the UK.</td>
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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Shilan Fuad Hussain Hussain</th>
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<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
<td>Independent researcher, Italy</td>
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<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Kurdish Literary works in the West: its social and ideological expressions</td>
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**Abstract**

Abstract

Modern Kurdish novelistic discourse produced by migrants', is compatible with diasporic discourses, which in general represents the nostalgia for a lost home, and the struggle for a homeland. This presentation is based on the investigation of certain works from Kurdish literature, that developed in the diaspora in Iraq from the 1990s onwards. My research refers to the historical, social and political discourses in the literary works, representing Kurdish identity, ideology, and the struggle for the configuration of a homeland. It seems that Kurdish literature is a tool express the political ideology, personal viewpoints, identity, presenting a full range of Kurdish experiences through the novels. On the one hand, it expresses conflicting representation of the Middle-East, and finely criticizes the flaws of the Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish societies. On the other hand, it displays the life conditions of migrants in the West, their process of settlement and integration, the sense of estrangement, and so forth, disclosing essential issues ascribable to Kurdish modern day society.
Short Bio

Dr Shilan Fuad Hussain's research area is Comparative Literature, in particular the Islamic contributions to Europe, from Late Antiquity to the Modern Era. More specifically, she studies the circulation of Arabic-Persian Manuscripts in Europe, with a special focus on the Thousand and One Nights, and its reception and adaptation in the Modern Era, as well as on the fairy-tale in Islamic literature. She has published papers on the influence of the Thousand and One Nights on the works of Marcel Proust, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Nagib Mahfuz, among others. Over the last years she has developed a specific interest in Modern Kurdish Literature, highlighting the historical and ideological meaning of the works analysed. The project is to result in the publication of an Italian-language book.

Dr Shilan Fuad received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Urbino (2014), and her M. Phil. in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Bologna (2011). She is an independent researcher, as well as an interpreter and translator. She also taught Modern Arabic Literature and Culture in Italy.

Presenter | Melike Gul Demir
--- | ---
Institution | Maltepe University, Turkey
Title | Kurdish Women Narratives after Forced Village Evacuations: The Case of Kucukcekmece Kanarya Neighbourhood, 2014,

Abstract
The purpose of this research is to understand the narratives of the women who migrated to Kanarya neighbourhood of Kucukcemecce, Istanbul, after they were forced to leave their villages that were evacuated as a result of the war between Turkish security forces including the military and the village guards (korucu), the Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan-PKK). According to the reports of non-governmental organizations, four million people were exiled. This research aims to explore this exile forced migration in connection to the issues such as identity formation and womanhood in Turkey as a nation-state. The reason why Kanarya neighbourhood is chosen as the field of the research is that most of the people who were forced to migrate settled in this part of Istanbul according to the data collected by The Social Assistance and Culture Association of Migrants or Displaced People (Goc-Der).

They want to return to their villages, poverty, continuation of the existence of village guards and the fear of facing the same violence and oppression in the case of a possible return prevent them from doing so. Socially discriminated because of their mother tongue (Kurdish) and their way of dressing, women articulate peace as the only hope for them to free from cultural and ethnic discrimination, to become equal female citizens of Turkey and not to experience any more losses. This study argues that women are politicized by the deaths of their husbands, fathers, brothers, and children. They become aware of their rights by experiencing their absence. As a result of these experiences of forced migration and state violence they developed a will that deny all kinds of power and oppression relations that put women into secondary and dominated positions.

Presenter | Dr Janroj Yilmaz Keles
--- | ---
Institution | Middlesex University, UK
Title | Digital Diaspora and Social Capital

Abstract
The Internet and its applications, such as social media, have revolutionized the way stateless diasporas communicate transnationally. This new virtual, deterritorialized
conversation between diasporic individuals contributes to building (digital) social networks which constitute resources and opportunities for diasporas, central to social and geographical mobility. This paper explores the role of the Internet in connecting diasporas without a home nation-state, encouraging subordinated people to participate in civic society and creating a collective source of digital social capital in the diaspora. I argue that the Internet, particularly social media, contributes to the growth of social networks, social capital and the community’s cultural and political participation within and across nation-state borders.

Short Bio
Dr Janroj Yilmaz Keles received his Ph.D. in Sociology and Communications from Brunel University. Since 2013, he has been working as a Research Fellow at the Department of Leadership, Work and Organisations, Middlesex University, is a research fellow at Middlesex University, working on ethno-national conflicts, migration, media, representation identity and statelessness. Previously he worked as a Lecturer, teaching sociology and media studies at Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, London Metropolitan University and an Associate Lecturer at Department of Media and Cultural Studies at Birkbeck. He has widely published in peer reviewed journals. He is also the author of the book titled Media, Diaspora and Conflict: Nationalism and Identity amongst Turkish and Kurdish Migrants in Europe. Further information can be found at http://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/staff-directory/keles-janroj

Presenter | Shilan Keskin
--- | ---
**Institution** | University College London
**Title** | Resilience in the face of uncertainty: exploring social identity as a protective factor in refugee adolescents.

**Abstract**
Introduction: Amidst the current context of heightened stigmatisation, and the increasing social and political conflicts, integration of forcibly resettled people becomes a primary concern. Research concerned with integration of refugees shows that aside from existing risk factors of conflict, they also often experience discrimination and a lack of belonging (Mann, 2008). These have been associated with stress (Williams & Berry, 1991) and low self-esteem (Tarrant, MacKenzie & Hewitt, 2006). Berry Acculturation framework (Berry, 1997) explores the integration processes that occur during resettlement. It explains how individuals acculturate (integrate) in different ways, but is limited in explaining why such differences occur. The current project proposes a Social-Identity-Theory perspective (Tajfel, 1972) to understand this process, particularly in first- (born in country of origin) and second- generation (children of refugees, born in host country) refugees. The present research will observe how belonging and group identification can promote resilience, and explore such differences in acculturation strategies between first and second- generation refugees. Methods and Design: The sample will consist of 30 first- and 30 second- generation adolescent refugees (aged 11-18). A self-report questionnaire will be used, and short optional interviews conducted with a smaller number of participants. The questionnaire will involve various measures exploring identity, well-being, and acculturation strategies. The design will be correlational.

Results: Data will be analysed with SPSS. It is anticipated that first- generation refugees will perceive higher discrimination than second- generation refugees. They will therefore have a stronger identification with being a refugee, compared to second-generation. It is expected that acculturative strategies, and strength of identification with their group will act as a mediator between risk factors (discrimination) and outcome (wellbeing). It is predicted that perceived discrimination and strength of identification mediate the acculturation strate-
gies employed.

Implications: Not only is this research important for understanding the identity crises of Kurds who have resettled in the diaspora, it is also critical for understanding the conflict and large division between Kurds in different occupied regions.

Additionally, although a strategy of separation may promote a sense of belonging and resilience in the individual or group, the creation of an insular and separate existence of a minority group can also produce further issues of isolation. As such, it is greatly important to understand the mechanisms, such as social identities, which drive the different strategies adopted by refugees. Understanding this can promote further integration of refugees. Findings from this research will be influential to policy makers and organisations working with refugee integration.

**Short Bio**

Shilan Keskin (MBPsS) completed her BSc in Psychology at the University of Exeter, and is presently studying her MSc in Child Development at University College London, Institute of Education. Her current research explores identity and belonging as a resilience strategy in first- and second- generation adolescent refugees. She explores group membership and integration in the context of Acculturation through Social Identity Theory. She is interested in the various shifts and differences in the identities of Kurds in the different occupied regions, and the impact of these on children’s developmental trajectories. As well as being an artist, she hopes to continue with her PhD, and later use Art and Expression as a method of psychotherapy for unsettled refugees, resettled communities, and abused women and children in Kurdistan.

**Presenter**  
Peter Klempner

**Institution**  
Independent scholar, Turkey

**Title**  
Demographic displacement in the 21st century: TOKI and urban renewal projects from the 2011 Van earthquake to urban warfare in 2015

**Abstract**

The Republic of Turkey's urban renewal law, the impetus of which was to rebuild out of the destruction of the 2011 earthquake in Van, has been used as a vehicle to uproot Kurdish and other minority communities both in the country's Kurdish east and southeast as well as in urban centers such as Istanbul and Izmir in the west. The Housing Development Administration, which falls under the purview of the Prime Ministry, has been tasked with Urban Regeneration and Slum Transformation projects, the implementation of which has uprooted Kurdish and other minority communities throughout the country.

Whereas the Turkish state has used the demographic game since its inception to politically intimidate, alter demographics in the state's favor, force people from rural to what were once more controllable urban areas, and eliminate material support for the PKK, the systematic dispersion of Kurdish communities at the hand of TOKI as a government institution, has brought this phenomenon outside, yet still very much tied to, its earlier mostly military setting. TOKI now functions as the second phase of systematic demographic dispersion after military operations in the southeast. The AKP government opening TOKI to neoliberal private partnerships in 2003 and selling nearly all state-owned urban land to it has opened up opportunities for corruption in its urban development schemes. This coupled with the disaster capitalism in the southeast results in the AKP government's ability to uproot entire communities in the name of progress while profiting off of its ties with the country's construction industry. While in urban centers displacement from development projects often
results in worsening poverty, intimidation, and loss of communal cohesion, the end product has been more severe in the Kurdish southeast. Entire cities under months-long curfews amid urban warfare between the Turkish military and the PKK has completely destroyed the urban fabric in places such as Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Silopi, and Sirnak, opening the up to TOKI's renewal projects. What remains to be seen from the massive displacement in the southeast is how large voting blocs, who in the most recent two elections in 2015 overwhelming supported the HDP, have been dispersed and possibly diluted, how the intimidation through military intervention has affected the Kurdish electorate who remain, and who will be filling the newly built TOKI housing once it is built. State displacement of the Kurdish population is nothing new in Turkey. However, the more recent move from a focus on rural to urban areas and the injection of TOKI into the process in order to rebuild what the state has destroyed and, therefore, profit from it, in addition to the policies the government has, and continues, to carry out, opens new incentives for displacement of Turkey's already marginalized minority populations.

**Presenter**

Jowan Mahmod

**Institution**

Independent scholar, Sweden

**Title**

Is It OK? “Challenging Gender Roles Online

**Abstract**

While new communication technologies are often described as tools with which diasporic people can connect to their origin country, they also serve as powerful transnational platforms for individuals of the same ethnic group to meet to discuss, contest and redefine their cultural identities. Therefore, beyond issues of discrimination and marginalisation in their settlement countries, Kurdish diasporic women and men are increasingly involved in dealing with internal issues, within the cultures they were born, such as gender roles, sexuality, and marital obligations. Internet has paved the way for new forms of communications that have allowed sensitive topics to be discussed in ways not possible, or desirable, earlier. Based on more than a two-year long online ethnographic research and offline-interviews, this paper presents how young Kurds in diaspora challenge old norms and scripts of have to behave as a Kurdish woman, or a Kurdish man, in their redefinitions of Kurdish identities. They speak from the perspective of Western liberal societies, cultural traditions, as well as familial expectations, placing them in between new opportunities and old obligations, none of them undisputable or easy to live with and adapt to. Thus, rather than referring online flames and insults in these discussions to anonymity and other technical factors, it is interesting to explore how the online environment opens up for new ways of conceiving diaspora formations and identity change, with specific focus on gender aspects.

**Short Bio**

Dr. Jowan Mahmod was awarded her PhD at Goldsmiths University of London, 2012. She completed her BA and MA within Media and Communications at Uppsala University, Sweden. She is the author of Kurdish Diaspora Online: From Imagined Community to Managing Communities (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). The book has recently nominated for the Peter Katzenstein Book Prize, New York City.

Previous work professions include editor, translator, and most recently she worked within the management at Iraq’s leading Holding company in Kurdistan, Iraq, between 2013-2015. She is currently preparing a short book with focus on how diasporas/repatriates can serve as ‘diaspora capital’, and be a potential source of post-conflict transformation and democracy-
building processes in the homeland. The material is based on a two-year long ethnographic fieldwork in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Her research interests include diaspora, identity, ethnic relations, transnationalism, new technology and online activities.

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<tr>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Aram Mahmood</th>
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<td>Institution</td>
<td>Iraq-Impact</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>&quot;Labour Market Situation for Syrian Refugees in Iraq&quot; Case Study Arbat Refugee Camp - Kurdistan Region</td>
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**Abstract**

The Syrian civil war generated waves of refugees who flow into neighbouring countries. These refugees have been creating excess supply of labour in host countries. This study involves a series of interviews in which respondents shared their perceptions of their involvement in the labour market in Iraq. These interviews provide a broad and in-depth explanation of why they became refugees, their desire to join the labour force, and their settlement preferences. The results of this study show that i) economic disintegration of Syria, unemployment, and compulsory military recruitment are significant push factors which explains the outflow of refugees from Syria; ii) Syrian refugees cited economic the well-being of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), treatment by locals, and the feeling of detachment from the host community due to their temporary status as the main barriers for participating in the host labour market. iii) A significant portion of the refugees in the camp is from the working class and currently unemployed individuals. These findings justify the decision to become a refugee, difficulties refugees face in participating the host labour market, and their motives to settle inside the refugee camp.

**Short Bio**

Aram was born and grew up in Kurdistan region of Iraq KRI. He holds a BS in Economics from the University of Sulaimani. His interest in policy, politics, and economy had led him to pursue higher education at the Oregon State University, USA, where he was awarded the International Cultural Services Scholarship and finished a post-baccalaureate degree in Managerial Economics. After this, Aram continued his enrollment in OSU and completed his MA in Interdisciplinary Studies. While at OSU, he focused on three areas of concentrations: political science, applied economics, and sociology. In his MA thesis, Aram studied about labor market situation for Syrian Refugees in Iraq- Kurdistan Region. Upon his return to KRI, He worked for Zhin Organization for Refugee services as a research consultant, where he conducted market demand analysis for the UNDP-funded project “Increasing Accesses to livelihood opportunities for displaced populations and affected communities in Erbil Governorate-KRI”. He also worked side-by-side with the Handicap International as a part-time project officer in their community-based rehabilitation projects. Aram previously worked as a junior research fellow, writing policy note and policy brief on developing economics, international political economics, public economics, and refugee studies at Middle East Research Institutes. Currently, Aram works for Iraq-Impact a Non-governmental organization in KRI as Program Manager. At IMPACT, he works on “Empowering People” and “Increasing livelihood through Vocational Training and Job Placement” Projects funded by United Nations Developing Program UNDP and GIZ.

Language spoken

English, Farsi, Kurdish and Arabic
**Presenter** | Thomas McGee  
**Institution** | Independent Researcher, Kurdistan  
**Title** | Syrian Stateless Kurds: Vulnerabilities in Displacement  

**Abstract**  
Tell my story to the people of your country, one stateless Kurd from Syria told me in 2011.  

With this paper, I hope to trace migratory narratives from within this particular group of doubly stateless individuals, looking at the intersection of persecution in the place of origin (Kurdistan of Syria/Rojava) to the challenges some have experienced as asylum seekers in the European context. The focus will be on how the status of persons who are already stateless can trigger new and additional vulnerabilities in displacement contexts, and examining that experience as a perceived extension of the ethnically-based discrimination committed by the state in Syria. One aim of this paper is to make visible the suffering of such stateless persons within the large refugee and migrant flows since the onset of the recent Mediterranean crisis, while also highlighting deficiencies in the response of immigration and humanitarian actors to adequately understand their situation. This includes the exclusion of stateless Kurds from the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (VPR) programme, through which 20,000 Syrian refugees are to be resettled to the UK. Ultimately it is necessary to recognize how the protection concerns associated with each of statelessness and displacement respectively are often mutually exacerbating, multiplying the vulnerabilities faced by stateless Kurds in Europe. Based on this case study, the paper concludes by suggesting a series of areas for advocacy attention in order to ensure the best interests stateless refugees.

**Short Bio**  
Thomas McGee is an independent researcher based in Duhok, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. He is a graduate from the University of Cambridge, and holds a Masters in Kurdish Studies from the University of Exeter, where he worked particularly on ethnographical studies of the stateless Kurds of Syria. On this, he has published in Tilburg Law Review and contributed to the Open Society’s MENA Nationality and Statelessness Research Project. Speaking Kurdish (Kurmanci dialect) and Arabic, Thomas has conducted extensive field research in (predominantly Kurdish areas of) Syria, Iraq and Turkey since 2009. His article ‘Mapping action and identity in the Kobani crisis response’ was published by the Kurdish Studies Journal in 2016. Thomas has worked with humanitarian organizations to deliver assistance in Iraq and Syria, including emergency aid, legal assistance and post-conflict infrastructure rehabilitation. Most recently, Thomas’ research has focused on problems related to nationality and documentation acquisition for both Syrian refugees and children born to Yezidi survivors of ISIS captivity.

**Presenter** | Shayan Moftizadeh  
**Institution** | UCL, UK  
**Title** | Exploring identities among the second-generation Kurdish diaspora in the UK  

**Abstract**  
My thesis will explore the identity constructions of second-generation Kurdish youth in the UK. The Kurdish diaspora is understudied in the UK, and the children of Kurdish immigrants are invisible in academic and policy research. This study will provide an insight into how young Kurds negotiate belonging in relation to
their parent homelands and how they navigate identification within their own country of residence. The research will explore how diverse national backgrounds and factors such as social status, gender, religion and locality shape the identities of young Kurds. The study will identify key drivers of belonging and alienation in the process of identity formation, and explore how young Kurds describe Kurdishness, given the variety of national backgrounds and linguistic and religious diversity within Kurds.

The proposed session will provide a general exploration of the key theories and concepts of 'identity' among diaspora, with a particular focus on second-generation Kurdish youth. However, the main focus of the session will be to discuss the methodological challenges of engaging with potential participants for the research. The session will seek to stimulate conversation around the best ways of engaging with different Kurdish youth; particularly with those who do not directly align themselves or identify with being 'Kurdish'. Key questions to be explored by the session include:

- What is the best way to reach out to young people of Kurdish heritage in London?
- What does it mean to be 'Kurdish', and how does this impact the sampling approach for this research project?
- How can the research best capture more ambivalent attitudes towards Kurdishness and explore how second-generation youth exercise agency in defining their own identity?
- How can the research successfully identify and engage with a comprehensive study sample of Kurds without 'reifying' or imbuing cultural structures and identities upon the participants (particularly those who do not engage with the discourse or perform 'Kurdishness' themselves)?

It is hoped that the session will shed light on the complexities of identity formation within intergenerational diaspora communities, and stimulate discussion about appropriate methodology and sampling approaches when conducting research in this field.

**Short Bio**
Shayan Moftizadeh was born to Kurdish parents in France, and was raised in London, England. She completed a degree in Social and Political Sciences and a Masters in Multi-disciplinary Gender Studies at Cambridge University. She is currently studying for a PhD at University College London, exploring the negotiations and contestations of identity for second-generation Kurdish youth in London. Shayan is also a researcher at the Department for Communities and Local Government, working on community cohesion.

**Presenter**
Pia Morar

**Institution**
London School of Economics

**Title**
Kurdish Diaspora Politics in Germany and Canada

**Abstract**
This paper is concerned with Turkey’s Kurdish diaspora in Germany and Canada. The research aims to discover how the nature of the Kurdish diaspora in Germany and Canada as well as the political culture in the two states impacts the success of the Kurdish movement in the respective countries. More specifically, the paper seeks to understand why the German state is more committed and involved in (criticizing) Turkey’s Kurdish politics, while Canadian foreign policy is not as concerned with the Kurdish question. The paper argues that the Kurdish movement is more successful in Germany, as the Kurdish diaspora
is better organized and greater in number compared to Canada. Moreover, in Canada there are less Kurds from Turkey and the Kurdish community is less politically involved. In Germany there is more ‘receptivity’ and interest in the Kurdish issue than in Canada, where political activism is less developed, and the Kurdish-Turkish issue is frequently framed in terms of terrorism. To support these claims the paper examines the nature and history of the Kurdish diaspora in Canada and Germany and compares the diaspora communities in regards to their size, Turkish-Kurdish proportion, nationalist sentiment, and the level of education among the diaspora. The political culture in Germany and Canada is likewise studied to determine the political activism and, consequently, the government’s involvement. The paper is grounded in the theoretical framework of Ayhan Kaya’s work on the Kurdish diaspora in Germany. Furthermore, articles and pamphlets published in German and English and written by and about the Kurdish diaspora in Germany and Canada are analyzed.

Short bio
Pia Morar received her high-school education in Germany. She obtained her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Toronto in Canada, in Political Science and Near and Middle East Studies. Before commencing her Master’s study, she worked with different NGOs in Slovakia and Turkey. She has a strong interest in minority rights. At present, she is completing a master’s degree at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her research is focused on Middle East Politics, especially the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. Her Master’s thesis will focus on the Kurdish Diaspora in Canada and Germany, comparing the political communities in these two countries.

Presenter | Alex Odlum
---|---
Institution | Information Analyst (Mixed Migration Platform)
Title | Turning back: Policy and data analysis of Iraqis moving back from Europe
Abstract
Increasing numbers of newly arrived Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers in Europe are turning back. Both Iraqi Kurds and non-Kurds are returning to Iraq, including to locations facing ongoing conflict and instability and/or limited job opportunities and economic prospects. These returns occur not only with the formal assistance of governments and/or IOM, but also with the help of people smugglers, travel agents, or independently without any assistance at all. While data on formally assisted returns from Europe is available, more research is needed on those who return informally, often overland via Kurdish-majority areas of Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. A better understanding of returns to Iraq, the routes used, and the challenges faced in transit and upon return, is crucial to ensuring returning migrants’ protection needs are met, and that return migration policies allow for informed, voluntary and sustainable return and reintegration.

The paper outlines the policy framework governing return migration from Europe, and analyses trends in Iraqi return migration, the reasons Iraqis return, and the conditions they face upon return. It compares Eurostat data on asylum applications and rejections, with data on the volume and types of return, including formal returns under the IOM Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme, to estimate the scale of informal returns from Europe. Further, it draws on primary data collected through online surveys and focus group discussions with key humanitarian practitioners, to explore the risks and needs Iraqis face when returning informally. While the paper does not focus exclusively on Iraqi Kurds, it
aims to better disaggregate knowledge and assumptions on Iraqi return migration, thereby improving understandings of Kurdish returnees’ needs, as well as those of other social groups in Iraq. The paper forms part of the work of the Mixed Migration Platform, a joint-NGO initiative aiming to improve information management, information exchange, and policy/advocacy on mixed migration flows to, from and within the Middle East.

Short Bio
Alex Odlum is an Information Analyst with ACAPS – The Assessment Capacities Project – and the Mixed Migration Platform (MMP), based in Amman. Alex has a background in law, international relations and public policy with his research focusing on housing, land and property rights in situations of displacement and return migration. He holds degrees in law and international studies from the University of Adelaide and a Master of Public Policy from the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin.

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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Recep Onursal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>University of Kent</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Hegemony and The Logics of Kurdish Conflict in Turkey</td>
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Abstract
Despite of its violent history, Turkish Republic has seen a movement towards peace with the inception of negotiation-like talks between the state and Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the PKK (Kurdistan Worker Party), since 2009. Especially, the last attempt called ‘Resolution Process’ (December 2012- July 2015) was widely considered as the best chance for lasting the Kurdish Conflict that had become a Gordian knot. However, this attempt was also failed in July 2015 and conflict has escalated again. Taking the Kurdish Conflict as a theoretical and empirical object of investigation, this research aim to understand why there has been no political solution to the conflict. It suggests that a discourse-theoretically informed analysis of the Kurdish Conflict and Resolution Process can shed light on and indeed help explain the resistance to the settling of the conflict. Drawing on Poststructuralist Discourse Theory - PDT (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) and the Logics of Critical Explanation - LCE (Glynos and Howarth 2007), it aims to examine the political discourses of the conflicted parties on Kurdish Conflict from the inception of the last Kurdish insurgency (the PKK, 1984) until last Resolution Process (July 2015). It not only aims to map the different understanding of the Kurdish Conflict and its resolution but also examines the social, political and fantasmatic logics underpinning constructions of the relationship between conflicted parties.

Short Bio
Recep currently pursues a PhD in International Conflict Analysis at University of Kent after being awarded a Vice Chancellor's Research Scholarship. His research lies at the intersection between the post-structuralist discourse theory (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) and conflict analysis theories. Within this broad research agenda, he deals with the notion of discourse/language by stressing the relevance of discourse in political conflicts and problematises the role of the former in resolving the latter. His main research interests are poststructuralist theories of society and politics, focusing especially on the empirical study of political ideologies and discourses; the resolution of violent conflicts (e.g. Kurdish Conflict in Turkey); the relationship between identity, difference, and subjectivity.

Prior to his PhD, Recep completed an MSc in Conflict Resolution (with Academic Excellence Scholarship) at the University of Essex. His thesis, supervised by Dr Jason Glynos and Prof David Howarth, was entitled "Dangerously Floating? Hegemony and the logics of
the peace process in Turkey” was awarded a distinction. He also holds a MSc in Finance and Management from University of Essex (with Jean Monnet Scholarship). During his BA in Business Administration at Middle East Technical University (Turkey), he also spent an exchange semester at the Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, Germany.

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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Margaret Owen</th>
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<td>Institution</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Refugees and IPD in Rojava</td>
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**Abstract**

Over 2 million Kurds lived in what is now Rojava, Syrian Kurdistan, before the conflict started. But today over 2 million IDPs, (at least 60% are women and children) have more than doubled Rojava’s original population, thus putting huge strains on the hosting people, because barely any international humanitarian aid is being delivered. The IDPs are of all ethnicities and religions, Arabs, Turkmen, Alevi, Christians, Copts, and Yezidis.

The situation of the IDPs, (refugees in all but name) has now become a humanitarian disaster. As the battle to liberate Raqqa continues, and people flee Mosul in Iraq, in recent weeks some 500 families a day have sought refuge.

Shelter, food, medicines, clothing are desperately needed. As are services, such as health care and education for the many children. There are 5.4 million children displaced inside Syria and half of these are not in school.

UNHCR set up a camp for Yezidis rescued or escaped from ISIS, and there are two other IDP camps in Rojava but many of the IDPs, possibly the majority, are “self-setters”, living either with hospitable families that share their own scarce food rations, or struggling to survive on their own in any vacant building, damaged shops and offices vacated by the regime. Because these people are IDPs and not officially registered as refugees, they are almost invisible to the international aid agencies. Rojava is not recognised by the UN. Geopolitical priorities appear to trump a people-related policy.

But Rojava is now through its constitution a multi-ethnic, secular, federation, committed to gender equality, pluralism fairness, and justice, and among the IDPs, many women and girls are finding opportunities to engage in civil society in a way that they never had before, under the regime or under ISIS. Yet their basic needs for food, shelter, medicine, education, decent employment, and above all peace are yet to be met.

**Short Bio**

Margaret Owen is an International Human Rights Lawyer, Director WIDOWS FOR PEACE THROUGH DEMOCRACY and Patron Peace in Kurdistan

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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Diyako Rahmani</th>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>University of Jyväskylä, Finland</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Politics of Kurdish Migration</td>
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**Abstract**

During the 20th century Kurdistan has faced significant sociopolitical changes that have deeply affected the Kurdish community. One consequence of such changes was the immigration of millions of the Kurdish people to Europe and North America. However, this immigration(s) took place due to different socio-political reasons and motivations. Applying a
theoretical analysis methodology, this paper compares the main economic, political and military incidents that have encouraged or forced the Kurdish people from Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria to immigrate to European and North American countries during the 20th century.

Short Bio
Diyako Rahmani is a PhD candidate in communication in The University of Jyväskylä in Finland. He has widely published on media and representation including; Rahmani, D. (2010). Behind the mirrors: Analysis of Iran representation in the New York Times. Saarbrucken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing. The paperback book is available for on-demand sale only and can be found in uread.com


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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Wria Rashid</th>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>International Organisation of Migration, Kurdistan</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>The Effect of Reintegration Assistance on Sustainable Return Migration in the Context of Kurdistan Region of Iraq</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Addressing one of the hottest topics in the 21st century, the present research aims at shedding light over the effect of Reintegration Assistance on sustainability of return, with a focus on Kurdistan Region of Iraq. A mixed research methodology, where questionnaires are followed up by in-depth interviews, comes to reveal the efficiency of the current reintegration programs on avoiding further irregular migration attempts. The first-hand data obtained through the structured questionnaire is compared against and further analysed and explained through the information gathered from the in-depth interviews. Data gathered through stratified probable random sampling during which return migrants located in Dahok, Erbil and Sulaimaniya are considered. The clear understanding of the current reintegration process, the daily challenges faced by respondents in the reintegration process, their perception of the packages offered and their understanding of the sustainable return are points of interest to the present work. The study shows that the reintegration assistance regardless of its various components contributes largely to the sustainability of the return. Research findings help the donors and implementers of the reintegration assistance programs to understand the level of satisfaction among beneficiaries and look into the possibilities of adjustments.</td>
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Short Bio
Wria Rashid is an IOM Iraq employee based in Erbil. He has been working for IOM for the
past ten years. As a specialist in return and reintegration of Iraqi migrants who voluntarily choose to return home, Rashid has engaged deeply in the whole process of reintegration of hundreds of returned migrants both in Erbil and other parts of Iraq. His vast experience in providing optimal reintegration services served him as basis for his Master of Advanced Studies in Humanitarian Operations and Supply Chain Management; his research implied a comprehensive study where Rashid looked into the effect of the provision of reintegration assistance packages on sustainable return of Iraqi Migrants to Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Throughout his career with the IOM, Rashid did his best to apply his beliefs when it comes to humanitarian aid to the vulnerable migrants. In order to provide reintegration counselling services the best way possible, he has found more appropriate to first understand the needs and expectations migrants have prior to return to home country. For this, he benefited from the opportunities of been on various missions to European countries where he had the chance to be in direct contact with his co-nationals residing in reception centers in order to have a clear understanding of their experience as irregular migrants, as well as to gather information about their plans to return and restart their lives back in their home country.

Since 2009, Mr. Rashid is the Head of IOM Iraq Ankawa sub-office in Erbil; and since beginning of 2013 he is in charge of IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programs in Iraq, with returned clients from all over Europe, Australia and Indonesia.

### Presenter
Ghomri Rostampour

### Institution
Harvard University, USA

### Title
Citizenship, Migration and Gender: Kurdish women in the U.S.

### Abstract
How does becoming a U. S. Citizen open doors for Kurdish women. Historically, Kurdish women have been oppressed and continue to be in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Beginning in 1970, a continuous migration of Kurdish women to the United States has occurred. These women arrive from countries where economic and political oppression threaten their quality of life, their future prospects and in particular regions, their very existence. As they immigrate to the United States how do Kurdish women adjust socially, economically and politically. Do they need to become a U.S. Citizens to be a resourceful, productive citizen? This study will focus on whether having citizenship empowers Kurdish women social-economically and politically or not. The concentration will be on comparing Kurdish women who immigrated and sought U.S. citizenship and those Kurdish women who immigrated and retained foreign national status. This research will show what citizenship means and its economic and political impact for a Kurdish woman.

### Short Bio
Ghomri Rostampour was born in East Kurdistan. She moved to the U.S. in 1999. She received her associate’s degree in Computer Technology at SMCC (Southern Maine Community College) in 2003. She received her BA from USM (University Southern of Maine) in computer technology. She is doing her MA in international relations at Harvard University in Boston.
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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Hakan Sandal</th>
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<td>Institution</td>
<td>Centre for Gender Studies Member of St Catharine's College University of Cambridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Queer Imagination of Kurdistan: Diaspora, Gender Identity and Belonging</td>
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**Abstract**

This paper examines the ways in which London's queer Kurdish people imagine Kurdistan, their relation to the political discourse surrounding the Kurdish struggle, and the sexual attributions to the "homeland." Although there are works focusing on the Kurdish diaspora in Europe, there is still a gap in the literature when it comes to queer voices, including in the studies investigating diaspora Kurdish communities. How do ethnic and gender identities negotiate whilst imagining and (re)constructing the homeland? What is the role of emotions attributed to, and acquired from this process? Can these experiences subvert the orientalist gaze, or reproduce it in various ways? By seeking answers to those questions, this project aims to understand the queer Kurds' perceptions, and to provide an alternative perspective in de-heteronormatising the diaspora narratives, while decolonising the knowledge production regarding the Kurds. Thus, this paper will shed light not only on the experiences of a segment of the queer Middle East diaspora community, but also on the mobilisation of the diasporic queer impulsions within the political sphere, contributing to the deconstruction of the presumed understanding of a monolithic group, namely the Kurdish diaspora.

**Short Bio**

Hakan Sandal is a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge - Centre for Gender Studies. He completed his MA in Cultural Studies at Istanbul Bilgi University. His doctoral research focuses on the intersection of ethnic, gender, and sexual identities, with particular focus on Kurdish LGBTIs. His research interests include Gender Studies, Queer Theory, Postcolonial Studies, and Critical Theory. He is an editorial board member of the journal Toplum ve Kuram and writes occasionally about Kurdish and LGBTI+ politics in various newspapers and journals including Jadaliyya and Kurdish Question. He is currently the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Representative for Cambridge University Students' Union LGBT+ Campaign.

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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Mija Sanders</th>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>University of Arizona, USA</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>The Yezidi Diaspora in Arizona, Islamophobia, and Transnational Belonging</td>
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**Abstract**

Diasporic narratives of belonging have taken common but troubling forms in the Kurdish speaking Yezidi community in Phoenix, Arizona, in the U.S. This paper examines the experiences of Yezidis in diaspora with regard to Islamophobia and right-wing activism amongst Yezidis living under the Trump presidency. Specifically, my work speaks to the Islamophobic activism and everyday world making effects of Yezidis who imagine Muslims to be a negative monolithic global force. Rather than being an isolated discourse, my study suggests that the Yezidi diaspora in the U.S. is prompted by a transnational Islamophobic platform which is rooted in Yezidi ethnic-nationalisms. I read ethnic-nationalisms as historically rooted in unique national contexts. The 2014 targeted violence by ISIS which produced collective trauma for Yezidis in Sinjar, Iraq, has been articulated on an international stage.
(Buffon and Allison, 2016). My ethnographic study based on oral histories shows that Yezidis continue to define their ethnic identity in opposition to "Muslims" through boundary making practices, even as Yezidis in the U.S. live largely apart from local Muslim diasporas. This suggests that the international human rights claims of Yezidi activists may contribute to local boundary making practices for Yezidis in the diaspora. What new problems for Muslim diasporas in the U.S. may result from the use of anti-Muslim discourses which animate securitization mechanisms of the U.S. government, especially under the Trump administration? Further, what are the effects of transnational human rights based discourses for Yezidi futures in the U.S.? What kinds of work do they do? What forms of transnational belonging are produced through Islamophobic discourses for Yezidis in diaspora?

**Short Bio**

M. A. Sanders is a PhD candidate in the School of Middle Eastern & North African Studies at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. Within the Middle East region, she focuses primarily on Turkey. She is minoring in Gender Studies and in Anthropology. Her 2012 MA work focused on Kurdish LGBT activism in Diyarbakir. Currently she has two ongoing PhD projects, one focused on the Kurdish Yezidi diaspora of Arizona, and another on historical memory and migration in Izmir. Currently she is undertaking a year of dissertation research on a Fulbright-Hays grant in Izmir. In the future she aims to publish articles on both topics.

Although she is not an American Studies scholar, in spring 2016 she decided to undertake an ethnographic study of the Arizona Yezidi diaspora community because of their vibrant activism and ongoing work to preserve their cultural and religious heritage by various means. One of these means is through Yezidi ethnic nationalism which imagines "Islam" and "Muslims" as a monolithic negative force--both in the homeland of Iraq, and in the U.S. Due in part to the current climate of right-wing politics and securitization discourses in the U.S., she undertook this topic as a way of gaining further insights into Kurdish diaspora migration, transnational activism, human rights discourses, ethnic-nationalism, and Islamophobia. She is an advanced speaker of Turkish, an intermediate speaker of Arabic, and intermediate speaker of Kurdish.

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<th><strong>Presenter</strong></th>
<th>Anne Sofie Schøtt</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
<td>Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>The Syrian Kurds: A Diaspora within a Diaspora</td>
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**Abstract**

The Kurds in Europe originate from different states in the Middle East as the Kurdish homeland is divided among Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. For decades, the regimes of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria have used strategies of Turkification, Arabization and submission under a Persian national identity to dominate their citizens, including the Kurds. This paper examines how the Kurdish diaspora in Denmark identifies with these national identities. How do the Kurds cope with being a Kurd as well as a Syrian, Turkish, Iraqi or Iranian Kurd? The analysis draws on theories on identity formation claiming that collective identity is negotiated among individuals in different contexts and as such both fluid and polyform. Methodologically, the analysis is based on interviews and participant observation at political meetings and gatherings.

The Syrian Kurds who support the Syrian opposition represent a special case. They have to
deal with the well-known ambivalence of the Syrian (Arab) opposition toward the Kurds at the same time as they identify with the opposition democratic agenda. As such, the politically engaged Syrian Kurds constitute a diaspora within a diaspora.

**Short Bio**

MA in Middle East Studies and Conflict Theory.

Teaching Associate Professor, The Royal Danish Defence Academy, Institute for Strategy (from 2014).

Ph.D. Student, Department of Cross Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen (2016-2019).

My research fields include: Kurdish history and the development of Kurdish parties in Syria, diaspora mobilization among Kurds in Denmark, formation of transnational Kurdish identities in relation to the struggles in the Kurdish homeland.

Title of my Ph.D. project: “Support of the Kurdish diaspora in Denmark for the Kurdish struggle in Syria”. Many years of teaching experience at undergraduate and graduate level on conflicts in the Middle East.

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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Yousif Mustafa Sindi</th>
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<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
<td>Leeds Beckett University</td>
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<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Partition of Iraq as an example</td>
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**Abstract**

In the wake of recent ongoing bloody and protracted civil wars across the Middle East, especially Iraq and Syria conflicts, academics and policymakers are seeking an approach to prevent further calamities and manage communal strife. Some suggest that maintaining the territorial integrity in multi-ethnic countries that spilt up by conflict should be a priority. Others propose partition as an ideal solution to terminate ethnic civil strife. This study seeks to answer the following question: to what extent can territorial partition be a viable solution for ethno-sectarian conflicts, especially in the Middle East region? To answer this question, the study examines the recent and current literature on the utilising of partition as an approach to resolve ethnic and sectarian conflicts to end violence and to maintain enduring peace. The paper seeks to critically analyse partition as a theory and to discuss the extent to which partition can be used as an approach to end ethno-sectarian strife. Additionally, both sides of the arguments will be presented. Moreover, some of the partitions in the past will be reviewed and critically analysed. What is more, advantages and disadvantages of partition will be highlighted. Furthermore, the research will underline the implication of partition for regional and wider global security, peace and stability. Finally, the paper will offer a comprehensive analysis for the possible partition of Iraq: it will look at root causes of violence as well as the extent to which partition is a viable solution to end ethno-sectarian strife in Iraq. The study suggests that territorial partition can possibly provide a durable solution for ethnic and sectarian conflicts across the Middle East if partition is complete and warring groups are clearly separated both territorially and demographically supervised by international organisations such as the UN. What is more, this paper proposes that for partition to be successful, a political agreement should be in place and partition should be consensual. Finally, is it important to address the ethnic security dilemma, which is considered as a core concept of partition theory as it is essential that the concerned sides should not fear for their safety.
**Short Bio**

In 2003 Yousif Mustafa Ahmed fled Kurdistan (Iraq) on the aftermath of second Gulf War to settle in Britain. I received BA degree in International Relations with English as a Foreign Language at Leeds Beckett University in 2015. My passionate for foreign relations motivated him to pursue further study and deepen his knowledge about international relations and politics, in 2017 he successfully gained MA in International Relations from Leeds Beckett University. My research is mainly on Conflict Resolution focusing on resolving ethno sectarian conflicts through territorial partition. He is interested in Kurdish politics particularly Kurdistan Region of Iraq. I am heavily engaged with Kurdish community in North of England. I consider myself as a successful example for Kurdish migrants who made Britain their home.

I am currently researching the economic, social and political impact of Syrian refugees and Iraqi IDPS on Kurdistan Regional Government.

**Presenter** | Maria Six-Hohenbalken
---|---
**Institution** | University of Vienna & Austrian Academy of Sciences

**Title** | Kirmançî, Zazaki and the remembrance of Tertele. The language as a key and catalyser for memory processes

**Abstract**

In this contribution, I focus on the meaning of language knowledge and usage for establishing (semi) official narratives of experiences of extreme violence. The focus is on the acts of persecution, mass killings and deportations in Dersim almost eight decades ago. My aim is to elaborate on the (individual) meaning of language knowledge, besides the acquisition and maintenance of the language, for the shaping of remembrance about the acts of genocidal persecution in 1937/38 versus official policies of silencing and denial. This anthropological study shows that it was up to the young generation to foster the memory work in scrutinizing their parents and grandparents’ experiences of violence. Several young people had heard of the 1937/38 persecutions in Dersim for the first time in Vienna, others had only a rough knowledge. This encouraged them to find out more about such secrets and family histories, often during their annual visits home. The ambitions to know more about the fate of the ancestors goes hand in hand with increasing interest in Kurmançî/Zazakî, the language of their grandparents. It seems that it is the language which is the key for their emotional remembering and thus for the memory work. The research is based on qualitative interviews and a questionnaire survey within Dersim communities in Austria.

**Short Bio**

Mag. Dr. Maria Six-Hohenbalken is researcher at the Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences and lecturer at the Department for Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna. Her current project "Memoryscapes in Multiple Modernities" is funded by the Austrian Science Funds (Elise Richter Programm). Her fields of interest are political violence, migration, refuge and memory. Her latest article is “‘We Do Really Need Hollywood’” – Filmmaking and Remembrance of Acts of Genocide in the Kurdish Transnation’ in Contested Histories on the Move: Rethinking Memory through Mobility and Agency, ed. by Monika Palmberger, Jelena Tošić . Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan (2016).
Abstract
The project is based on interviews with Kurdish female fighters focusing on the dynamics and reasons that underlie in their participation in the Kurdish political movement and the armed struggle lead by the PKK - Kurdistan Workers' Party. The purpose of the project is mainly to gather knowledge about how and under what circumstances a national and political movement contributes to a change or changes of gender positions.

The project will study and analyse how women's access to the national arena as cultural and biological reprodu center of the nation has redefined the content of social and ethnic movements and the role that gender plays in war processes. Furthermore, it will look into how the woman fighters define their choice of participation in the political movement and the armed struggle as well as their opportunities to be involved and included as actors.

The project's general themes are related to discussions about resignification of categories and hegemonic ratings in political movements and socio cultural processes that contribute to change or changes in gender positions.

Other areas that the project also will focus on are such as the construction of identity in relation to political and nationalist movements, normativity and exclusion, the perception of ethnic, gender and culture's impact on women's options and decision making as well as subjective processes in relation to power.

The ongoing and unsettled war in Syria and Iraq, where the fight against the Islamic State (ISIS) occupies the Western World more than ever, has led the Western World to start looking at the Kurdish parties with different eyes, as the Kurds have been a very successful alliance in the fight against ISIS. Heroic stories where the Kurdish Female fighters have managed saving more and more civil and minority groups especially children and women from ISIS attacks have become daily news stories in the Western World both on social media and online/offline national media. This has led to, that many women from other ethnicities and minorities has joined the Kurdish Women's Movement, fighting for their freedom, among many other things as well as for Western and secular values in the region.

The project therefore aims to gain and generate new knowledge and give us a wider insight about the perception of the new development or developments of gender positions in the Middle East. It is also expected that the project would help us to draw a more diverse and real picture of the population in the Middle East, given the needs for nuances, shades and knowledge of the context of the more stereotypical images, that the media accounts for.

Short Bio
I am a PhD student at the Department of People and Technology, Roskilde University, Denmark, since 1 February 2017. The title of my project is Female Fighters Within National Movements. The project is based on interviews with Kurdish female fighters focusing on the dynamics and reasons that underlie in their participation in the Kurdish political movement and the armed struggle. The purpose of the project is mainly to gather knowledge about how and under what circumstances a national and political movement contributes to a change or changes of gender positions. Furthermore, it will look into how the woman fighters define their choice of participation in the political movement and the armed struggle as
well as their opportunities to be involved and included as actors.

I have a Master of Arts (cand.mag.) from Roskilde University back in 2009 in the subjects psychology and international development studies. Until my employment as a PhD student, I have worked in different municipalities with socially vulnerable groups, including immigrants and refugees. I have worked extensively with forced marriages and migrant marriages among Kurds in Denmark.

I came to Denmark in 1996 as a 23-year-old relocation from Turkey. I am also an active profile in the public debate in Denmark, where I have written a number of articles about radicalization among young people, integration problems, feminism and the role of women in the emerging movements.

**Presenter**  Ezgi Tuncer Gurkas  
**Institution**  Kadir Has University  
**Title**  Border as ‘zone of indistinction’: “Forced Migration and Urban Destruction in Kurdish Cities along Turkey Border with Syria

**Abstract**

Turkey’s border with Syria today is a laboratory in which the limits of the camp are tested, in which biopolitics and spectacle coincide in new ways. As a consequence of the ongoing war between the state and Kurdish insurgents, and the state of emergency accompanying it, this border region has incrementally transformed into a ‘zone of indistinction’ in which the spatial concepts of inside and outside interpenetrate. As exception is normalized, penetrating everyday life, the logic of the camp (in Agamben’s sense) tends to become a dispositif, a governmental technique that unmaking previous realities and redefines power relations, imposing a new model of truth and normality on the region. A significant turn in this context was the emergence of the peace process. In 2013 the PKK decided on ceasefire. However, the general election in June 2015, which brought with it a historic achievement for the pro-Kurdish People Democratic Party (HDP), was a significant trigger in this regard. In addition, when in the 20th of July, the same year, an ISIS suicide bomber killed 34 and injured about a hundred of others in the border town of Suruc, the government was blamed for supporting them. PKK responded to the flow of events with new-armed attacks against the Turkish military and police. At the same time, several Kurdish municipalities along the Syrian border declared a demand for self-government. In response, the government re-created a terror agenda and halted the peace process. Next is intensified bio-political and media war. Curfews and military blockading of urban areas by cutting their access to electricity and water supplies followed. Many civilians, including children and elders, became casualties of war; many urban areas were ruined, damaged or bulldozed. Especially in border towns such as Nusaybin, Cizre, Silopi, the majority of inhabitants were displaced. By then, new strategy of the state has become blockading, evacuating and destructing cores of Kurdish cities. Not only the new ones but also historical cores such as Diyarbakir, Sur District have become places of destruction. In addition to that it was not solely cities and urban life but spatial memory, politic identity and collective cultures of Kurds was annihilated. Consequently, by the end of the peace process, state of exception proceeded by the destruction of urban space, home, belonging, collective memory and identity of Kurds. Furthermore, exception transformed to the spectacle of destruction, which is presented through the mainstream media that constituted a consensus on Kurds as terrorists and legitimized barbarian conducts of state forces as counterterrorism. However, after some months, destructions became an excuse for reconstructions by Islamic capital seeking for the production of capitalism of terror.
Dr. Tuncer graduated from the Faculty of Architecture (Department of Architecture) at Yildiz Technical University (Istanbul) in 2003. She received her M.A. degree in the program of Architectural Design, at the same university in 2005. She defended her doctoral dissertation titled ‘A Genealogy on ‘Place’: Place-making Practices in Samatya’ in 2010 at YTU. Studied at Georgia Institute of Technology as a short-term visiting scholar in the Spring 2008. Studied at Lancaster University in the Department of Sociology as a post-doctoral scholar in the 2013 – 2014 academic year. Worked at YTU between 2004 – 2010, at Mardin Artuklu University between 2011 – 2016. Presently, carries out research in the field of theory of space and place, urban studies, border studies and philosophy of politics. Teaches architectural and urban design at Kadir Has University, Department of Architecture.

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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Riccardo Turati</th>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Université Catholique de Louvain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Do emigrants self-select along cultural traits? Evidence from the MENA countries</td>
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**Abstract**

This paper investigates whether emigrants from MENA countries self-select on cultural traits such as religiosity and gender-egalitarian attitudes. It uses Gallup World Poll data on opinions and beliefs, migration aspirations, plans to emigrate and preferred destination choices. It finds that individuals intending to emigrate to OECD countries exhibit significantly lower levels of religiosity than the rest of the population. They also share more gender-egalitarian views, but the effect is smaller with a high presence of Sunni Muslims. For countries mostly affected by Arab Spring, we find a robust negative effect of the Arab Spring on the intensity of cultural selection. It is thus likely that emigration affects the distribution of cultural traits in the population left behind, with implications for modernization, growth and democracy.

**Short Bio**

Born in Giussano, close to Milan (Italy), in 1991. After attending a Classical High school, I attended my bachelor in Economics at the University Catholic of Milan from 2010 to 2013. Then I participate to a Joint Master Degree in Economics, with a focus on Research, between Bocconi University (Milan, Italy) and Université Catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium). After my graduation in September 2015, I have started a PhD in Economics with prof. Frédéric Docquier (Université Catholique de Louvain) on the impact of migration on developed countries and migrants selection from the origin countries, with a particular focus on the role of culture. Moreover, from September 2015 I am Teaching Assistant for Principle of Economics, Macroeconomics (Bachelor) and Advanced Macroeconomics I (Master) at the Université Catholique de Louvain.

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<tr>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Richard Wilding</th>
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<td>Institution</td>
<td>Creative Director of Gulan</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>The vulnerable heritage of displaced ethnic and religious minorities in Iraqi Kurdistan</td>
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Abstract

Documenting the culture of displaced people has become a crucial and innovative strain of migration studies. This photographic presentation focuses on the vulnerable heritage of displaced and persecuted ethnic and religious minorities in Iraqi Kurdistan and Northern Iraq.

Christian communities, once numerous throughout Iraq, are now concentrated in just a few towns in the Kurdistan region. The Dominican monk Father Nageeb rescued ancient books and manuscripts from imminent destruction in Mosul, moved them to Qaraqosh and then to the Kurdistan region for preservation and restoration. They have been joined by other manuscripts rescued from Baghdad. These unique historical artefacts have in their own way become ‘refugees’, victims of the sectarianism that has gripped Iraq.

The Jews, who historically formed an important component of Iraqi and Kurdish society, were exiled from Iraq in the 1950s. The heritage they left behind, such as the tomb of Old Testament Jewish prophet Nahum in Al Kosh, near Mosul, is now in a vulnerable situation with no host community to sustain it.

The Yezidis claim to follow the world’s oldest religion, citing the antiquity of their calendar which they trace back 6,767 years. Lalish to the north-east of Mosul is the Yezidis’ spiritual centre. Under attack from DAESH, many Yezidis fled to Lalish, while others seek to maintain their Yezidi identity in refugee camps. One outcome of this latest wave of persecution (counted by the Yezidis as the 74th in their history) has been that the Yezidis, traditionally an insular people, are making greater efforts to educate the outside world about their traditions and beliefs.

I have taken the photographs shown in this presentation in Iraqi Kurdistan during the years 2013 - 2017. While showing the images, I will argue that the persecution and displacement of minorities has led both to the destruction of unique legacies, but also some opportunity for cultural awakening and renaissance.

Short Bio

Richard Wilding is a London based producer and photographer working internationally with museums, charities and governments on cultural exhibitions, websites and printed publications. He specialises in the documentation of architecture, archaeology and costume and is currently engaged with projects in the UK, Saudi Arabia and Iraqi Kurdistan.

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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Inci Oyku Yener-Roderburg</th>
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<td>Institution</td>
<td>University of Duisburg-Essen, University of Strasbourg</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Kurds’ External Voting Experience for Turkey: The Case of Germany</td>
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Kurds’ External Voting Experience for Turkey: The Case of Germany

Europe is the home for more than 2 million Kurdish people. By having around 1.1 million Kurdish population by 2015, Germany is the residence for the largest Kurdish diaspora. The largest Kurdish diaspora does not only mean being a regional hub for recreating the identity, but also the source of major political activities regarding issues on Kurdistan, such as raising awareness on forced displacements in Kurdish regions and political unrest against pro-
Kurdish political views.

The failed July 2016 coup of Turkey and the political stance of the ruling party (AKP) against pro-Kurdish political standing that resulted in ever-increasing number of arrested HDP members—the political party affiliated with the Kurdish movement—created an uneasy environment for Kurds living in Turkey. Since then, the number of political asylum seekers has increased drastically from 1700 in 2015 to 5000 in 2016. Kurds are consisting of more than 80 percent of the asylum seekers who majorly chose Germany.

With the new asylum wave from Turkey, the Kurdish community in Germany increased their interest towards reshaping Kurdish identity and changing Turkey’s Kurdish politics. Moreover, changes to the Turkish election law in 2012, which enabled voting for the citizens residing abroad from their country of residences, brought out an entirely new circumstance that gave power to the Kurds holding Turkish citizenship. Heightened political interest of the community with voting right from their country of residences revealed its significant potential in the June and November 2015 Turkish general elections. The HDP became the second leading party in the external electoral districts, while it had the fourth place in Turkey.

This work argues that the majority of Kurds who came from Turkey are not only highly involved in lobbying activities elevating their political stance in and outside of Turkey, but also largely directed within the diaspora unlike the other Turkish political party supporters. This paper claims that the politicization of diaspora Kurds is ever growing with the impact of changes in election law, which requires a further study. With this work the researcher aims to find answers to the questions including the following, but not limited to: Is there a significant change in the political interest of the Kurdish community living in Germany after the amendment of the new Turkish election law? What does majorly determine Kurds’ political preferences in Germany? What will be the expectations in the political stance of the Kurdish community in Germany in the long run?

In light of the questions above and due to its focal area, this work will be empirical. Having the largest Kurdish diaspora, Germany will be the case country. Thus, the primary sources will be the detailed results of the 2015 Turkish general elections and the 2017 constitutional referendum held in Germany. Additionally, 30 in-depth interviews will be conducted with members of the Kurdish community in Germany.

Key words: Euro-Kurds, external voting, Kurdish diaspora, Turkish elections

Short Bio
İnci Öykü Yener-Roderburg is a Ph.D. candidate as a co-tutelle student at the University of Duisburg-Essen (DuE) and University of Strasbourg. Her supervisors are Prof. Dr. Kader Konuk from DuE and Prof. Dr. Samim Akgönül from University of Strasbourg. The working title of her dissertation is “Turkey’s Election Politics for Citizens Residing Abroad and Its Effects on the Voting Behavior of Turkish Citizens Living in Germany and France”. She holds a master’s degree in Middle Eastern and Central Asian studies from the Australian National University, Canberra (2014). Her M.A. thesis titled “Defined on the Edge of Power: The Alevi Identity through Centuries of Transition in Turkey”. She has a B.A. in Political Science and International Relations from Bogazici University, Istanbul (2011). Yener-Roderburg is currently working as a research and teaching assistant at DuE. Her research interests include transnationalism, voting behaviour, external voting, citizenship, electoral studies and political participation of immigrants. She can be contacted at: inci.yener-roderburg@uni-due.de
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<tr>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Ali Zalme</th>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Researching Kurdish Diasporic Communities; Theoretical and Methodological Considerations</td>
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**Abstract**

Conducting research among refugee communities has been considered a complex task by researchers (Ellis et al., 2007, Temple & Moran 2006, Arnall 2003) and as a refugee researcher carrying out research on your own communities is even harder. This paper justifies a multi-sited ethnography and autoethnography approach, as an appropriate methodology for researching diasporic and refugee communities. Particularly, focuses on my own experiences as a Kurdish researcher conducting research among Kurdish communities here in the United Kingdom. First, I shall consider the adoption of such an approach and discusses a theoretical justification of particularity and uniqueness regarding the nature of this research. Special attention to the number of challenges that faced during the research will be drawn. Then I shall discuss the way in which the research was adopted and how the process and product will proceed. This includes the rationale for the utilisation of in-depth interviews the use of my own biography as a starting point for theoretical and methodological consideration.

Despite the fact that conducting research within diasporic communities is fraught with methodological and ethical challenges, I have argued throughout this research that adapting a flexible methodology is best-suited way to this type of research. Adopting multi-sited ethnography and an autoethnographical method enables me to think about the relationship between myself as researcher and my participants in a more convincing way and more precisely to immerse myself in my study. Multi-sited ethnography is useful to gain access to members of the Kurdish communities that have spread across the United Kingdom.

**Short Bio**

My name is Ali Zalme and I am a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at University of the West of England-Bristol. My thesis entitled: “Kurdish Diasporas: Identity Construction and Perceptions of “home” among Kurdish Immigrant generations in the United Kingdom”. I am interested in a dynamic and hybrid identities among diasporic communities and young generations in the globalisation context. I was born and raised in the city of Halabja-southern Kurdistan and I am living, studying and working in Bristol-UK.

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<th>Presenter</th>
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<td>Institution</td>
<td>Manchester Metropolitan University</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Understanding mental health Issues Based on Life Story Approach among Kurdish Refugees in Finland</td>
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**Abstract**

Refugees are forced to escape their countries for a variety of reasons such as war, conflict, persecution and severe human rights violations. The psychological and social stresses often experienced by refugees during migration can double the prevalence of severe disorders (psychosis, severe depression and disabling anxiety), and increase the figures of mild to moderate mental disorders from 10% to 15-20%, according to the World Health Organiza-
tion (2012). According to the Finnish statistics Centre report 2015 about 11000 Kurdish immigrants and refugees are living in Finland. According THL research study 2015, mental health symptoms are highly prevalent particularly in Kurdish migrants in Finland. They reported that prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms were higher in Kurdish men (23%) and women (49%) than in the Finnish population (9-10%). This research will use a life story approach to investigate the experience of Kurdish refugees in Finland with a particular emphasis on their mental health and wellbeing. This method has been chosen because of its potential to provide very rich information about the Kurdish asylum seeker experience in Finland. The method will be used to collate and analyze Kurdish refugees experiences in three periods of their lives, firstly their experience in their homeland, secondly their experience in the refugee process and thirdly their experience in the host country. The qualitative method has chosen for this study based on Life story approach to explore mental health issue of Kurdish refugees through their individual life stories. A life story is a story person chooses to tell us about their lives. The first stage of the research will involve a collection of data and information about Kurdish refugees in Finland from the Internet, scientific literature (books, Journals, conference publications), Kurdish organizations, research connections and conference participations. The second stage will involve interviews with Kurdish refugees in Finland. During the interviews, participants will be invited to share documents and images as well as stories, each interview will be individual depending on the circumstances and wishes of the individual participant. In some cases, there will be more than one interview and in several cases the interviews will involve family members of the principal participant. A range of data analysis methods will be considered for the design of this research. The framework method has chosen as the method of analyzing data for this work, the Framework Method is becoming an increasingly popular approach to the management and analysis of qualitative data in health research. Three main methods of data collected in life story work which I will use include: 1) Qualitative Interview 2) Personal Documents 3) Visual Forms of Life Story.

**Short Bio**
Afrouz Zibaei is a Kurdish-Finnish PhD student in the Faculty of Health, Psychology & Social Care at Manchester Metropolitan University. She received her Bachler of public health in 2003 from Turku Polytechnic and Master of health promotion in 2013 from Kotka University of Applied Sciences in Finland. Currently she is working as a nurse at Turku Hospital. Her research interests include immigration and health issue, Kurdish refugee and mental health and Kurdish refugee women’s health.