

Call for papers

International Conference on Kurdish Migration and Diaspora

12-14 April 2012, Uppsala, Sweden

Organized by the Hugo Valentin Centre at Uppsala University
in collaboration with:

Department of Sociology at Uppsala University;
Department of Linguistics and Philology at Uppsala University;
Swedish network for studies of transnationalism and diaspora located at The Centre for
Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations (CEIFO) at Stockholm University;
Middle Eastern Studies at Stockholm University; and
Kurdish Studies Network

Current debates on the configuration of ethnic and racial boundaries in the era of transformations have refocused academic attention on the concept of diaspora. Diasporas are one kind of social phenomenon where a complex social process can be observed characterized on the one hand by dispersion, dislocation and feelings of social exclusion and on the other hand by movements for location. However, diaspora is a complex concept and can sometimes be misused and misunderstood. The concept is sometimes understood as a synonym for ethnicity and nationalism, an assumption based on the ethnic, nationalist and religious conceptions of ethnic particularity that, as Paul Gilroy points out have co-existed with the term. Moreover, the concept is often connected with and defined on the basis of specific experiences, and consequently can give rise to the problem that James Clifford highlights, namely the slippage between diaspora as theoretical concept and diaspora discourses. Hence, in order to avoid such problems, as Avtar Brah notes, there is a need for a historicity of diaspora experiences, that is, “each empirical diaspora must be analysed in its historical specificity.”

The last two decades of Kurdish history can be distinguished as a period when the Kurdish diaspora has become mobilised on a large scale. Kurdish transnational communities and Kurdish diasporic spaces are established as an outcome of the intensified Kurdish migration and relationship with the countries of origin and among Kurds settled in different countries around the globe. Furthermore, the Kurdish diaspora has played an important role in bringing international attention to the plight of the Kurds, not least in Turkey as Turkey attempts to become a member of the EU. However, diasporas as complex and dynamic social processes go through continuous change and transformation over time. As diasporic communities and identities are characterised by a triadic relationship with the home countries, host countries and the transnational diaspora communities, any change in the socio-political situation in these points of references imply certain changes in diasporic projects and identities. Additionally, any change in the composition of the diasporas, for instance regarding the emergence of new generations, affect the diaspora communities in various ways. During the last two decades a whole new generation among the Kurdish diaspora has emerged and with this also new hyphenated identities, but also new issues, conflicts and challenges have followed, for instance regarding gender issues. Importantly, during this period but especially since 2001, the political situation for and attitudes towards non-western and supposedly Muslim migrant communities in the West has worsened which has directly affected these groups in multiple ways. Within this period we have also witnessed the change of the political situation of the Kurds in Iraq and to a certain extent in Turkey. For the Iraqi Kurds, the fact that they have since 2003 achieved an advanced level of self-government and stability in the form of the Kurdish Regional Government

in Iraq has brought with it questions of home coming and return and increasing transnational activities around economic, political and social issues. Thus, this conference aims to provide an important opportunity to critically explore these processes that are of importance both for the theoretical contributions to migration and diaspora studies and for shedding light on the current state of the Kurdish diaspora which constitutes considerable minorities in several European countries.

Conference themes

Abstracts are welcomed on the following related topics.

- Kurdish diasporic communities, networks, identities, and belonging
- Diaspora and the development of the Kurdish language, media, music, and literature
- Development of Kurdish diasporic institutions during past recent decades
- Kurdish diaspora and new generations: youth and issues of identity and belonging
- Kurdish diaspora and issues of gender, generation, and sexuality
- Migration and family relations, conflicts, changes and continuities
- Kurdish diaspora and religion
- The new political situation in Iraqi Kurdistan and its impact on issues of homeland and return
- Kurdish diaspora's transnational activities related to the home countries (economic, social, and political)
- The impact of the return migration on the process of nation and state building and on the social and economic development in Iraqi Kurdistan

These themes are not exhaustive and papers relevant to the conference subject will be considered. Abstracts, in Word and of no more than 300 words should include the following information and in this order:

a) author(s)

b) affiliation (if applicable)

c) email address

d) title of abstract

e) body of abstract

The submission of pre-formed panel proposals are welcomed. The conference language will be English and all papers and presentations should be in English.

Dead line for submission of abstracts: **30 October 2011**

The organisers will inform about acceptance of paper: **15 November 2011**

Abstracts should be sent to: kurddiaspora@valentin.uu.se

Dead line for registration: **30 October 2011**

There will be a registration fee of **100 €**. For students **70 €**. It will include Conference dinner on Friday 13 April and lunch during the conference 12-14 April.

Conference home page: <http://www.valentin.uu.se/information/kurddiaspora.html>

Questions about the conference should be directed to:

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