



## Turkish Migration Studies network (TurkMiS)

### 11th WORKSHOP 'MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN TURKEY'

Friday 29 May 2015, 12.00-18.00

Oxford, University of Oxford, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, 64  
Banbury Road

12.00 Welcome

12.30 Introduction, Franck Düvell

#### **13-15.00 Panel I 'The Syrian refugee crisis'**

*Paper 1 'Struggling to survive: Syrians Refugees in Istanbul and the south eastern cities',  
Müge Dalkıran, Istanbul Bilgi University and Istanbul Kültür University*

*Paper 2 'The Risk and Protective Factors for the Mental Health of Syrian Asylum Seekers in  
the Camps of Turkey', Duygu Cantegin, Middle East Technical University, Ankara*

15.00 Coffee Break

#### **15.30 -17.30 Panel II 'New Migrations'**

*Paper 3 'Afghan Migration through Turkey: new approaches to understanding Transit  
Migration', Kamyar Jarahzadeh, University of Oxford*

*Paper 4 'Rebuilding Home: Russian Marriage Migrants in Istanbul', Ayla Deniz, Ankara  
University*

17.30 Closing

18.00 Diner (optional)

## Abstracts

### **Struggling to survive: Syrians Refugees in Istanbul and the south eastern cities**

*Müge Dalkıran (research assistant), Istanbul Bilgi University and Istanbul Kültür University*

Over 1,6 million Syrians have fled to Turkey since the civil war in Syria started in 2011. Only about 13-14 percent of these refugees live in refugee camps. The rest of them are spread all over Turkey and live in urban areas in 72 different cities. According to the report published by AFAD (Prime Ministry Disaster & Emergency Management Authority), there are serious disparities in access to the basic necessities between insiders and outsiders. Considering that 75 percent of the Syrian refugees are children and women, access to the health service and the educational needs become prominent necessities. However, in this context, there are a number of challenges that the Syrians are faced with. In that sense, the urban refugee policy pursued by the Turkish government should be questioned in terms of adequateness. Firstly, the paper analyzes the legal status and the registry of the Syrian refugees in Turkey. Secondly, it examines the challenges that the urban Syrian refugees are faced with regard to basic needs. It particularly focuses on issues related to shelter, food, health, education and work. Special problems with the children, such as child labour and child marriage are also discussed. By considering all these difficulties, it evaluates the urban refugee policy in Turkey.

### **The Risk and Protective Factors for the Mental Health of Syrian Asylum Seekers in the Camps of Turkey**

*Duygu Cantegin (PhD), Middle East Technical University, Ankara*

The primary aim of the present study was to investigate the effects of socio-demographic characteristics, pre-migration traumatic events, and post-migration living difficulties towards mental health outcomes of Syrian asylum seekers residing in Turkish camps. Moreover, personal, cultural and environmental resources were explored as protective factors for the mental health outcomes. 111 asylum seekers staying in three different camps located on the Syrian border of Turkey were recruited. The mixed-method research design was utilized. Participants were administered an interview package including informed consent form, semi-structured interview and a battery of questionnaires. Quantitative analyses revealed that young, female and unmarried asylum seekers were at-risk groups for mental health problems. Among pre-migration traumatic events, forced separation and loss of loved ones was found as a significant predictor for post-traumatic stress and depression whereas among post-migration living difficulties, loss of culture and support was observed as more impactful determinant of mental health status. Qualitative results indicated that participants reported using a number of resources which helped them to overcome the deleterious effects of their experiences across the phases of migration, including differential social support from the ethnic group and the host community, reliance on religious faith, a sense of commitment to a political cause of war and personal attitudes. The findings of the study were expected to have implications for intervention development targeting current stressors as well as traumatic events, and program and policy development aimed at improving life conditions and strengthening support systems of asylum seekers to promote resiliency.

### **Afghan Migration through Turkey: new approaches to understanding Transit Migration**

*Kamyar Jarahzadeh, University of Oxford*

Currently, Turkey is home to over 35,000 Afghan refugees registered in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) resettlement program. At the same time, an unknown amount of irregular Afghans also live in the country. For the former group, most refugees can be understood as awaiting resettlement in a third country, whereas the practices and aspirations of the latter group are less clear. Despite the long history of Afghan migration into and through Turkey, there continues to be a lack of information regarding the nature of life for this population. This paper hopes to fill that literature gap by offering a broad look at Afghan life in Turkey based on an ongoing qualitative research project. Based on these findings, this paper will examine the social, economic, and political status of the Afghan community in Turkey, and the ongoing development of these elements. In light of focusing on a definitive theoretical approach to gaining more understanding

regarding the past, present, and future of this community, this paper will present a cursory look at some of the strands of literature that have been drawn upon in the study of Afghan migration through Turkey, and in particular, focus on the potential application of Carling's capabilities and aspirations framework.

### **Rebuilding Home: Russian Marriage Migrants in Istanbul**

*Ayla Deniz (PhD student), Ankara University*

After the 1990s, many Russian women have begun coming to Turkey as well as to many other countries by way of circular or seasonal migration and for the purpose of economic activities and employment. Over time, the duration of stay of Russian women in Istanbul became longer, migration patterns changed and more and more women essentially became immigrants. This was influenced by political, social and economic changes in Turkey as well as in Russia which resulted in a diversification of their trajectories. One of the drivers of new types of migration and of the rise in immigration is the increasing number of marriages between Russian women and Turkish men. This is the result of Russian female migration to Turkey, the transnational mobility of Russian men migrating to Russia for work coming back with Russian wives as well as web-based services. Today, there are thousands of Russian marriage migrants living in Istanbul. This paper analyses the transnational (family) lives of Russian marriage migrants through their social and economic practices and the spaces they create or reproduce in Istanbul.