

MICS – a Nordic network for studies on Migration, Identity, Communication and Identity in Turkey and Eurasia

Final Report on workshop program funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, Sweden (grant no. F13-1436:1), 2014–2015

Introduction

The general point of departure for activities within the MICS program was to form, consolidate and sustain a network for Nordic and Eurasian scholars in humanities and social sciences. More specifically, the rationale was to promote cooperation and scholarly advances in issues pertaining to Migration, Identity, Communication and Security in Eurasia. These four, closely intertwined, processes denote key societal challenges which scholars and practitioners alike will need to confront continuously within the foreseeable future.

MICS helped to create a research infrastructure among institutions in Sweden, Finland and Denmark with an interest in Turkey and the Eurasian region. The close attachment of MICS to SRII in Istanbul was very important. The SRII is in a Nordic context very unique and having SRII to host MICS was an asset to everybody in the network.

The founding members of MICS:

Birgit Schlyter, Professor of Central Asian Studies, Stockholm University, Director of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 2012-2014, Head of project

Bo Petersson, Professor of Political Science and IMER (International Migration & Ethnic Relations), Pro-Dean for Research at Faculty of Culture and Society, Malmö University

Hans-Åke Persson, Professor, Roskilde University

Cecilie Felicia Stokholm Banke, Senior Researcher, PhD, Danish Institute for International Studies

Administrator - budget and coordination:

Marie Brobeck, Roskilde University

Project Assistants:

Azize Güneş, MA student, Lund University

Hetav Rojan, MA student, DIIS

A MICS website was established for a presentation of the network program and communication with workshop participants: <http://micsnetwork.org/>, with pictures from the workshops.

According to the original plan, four workshops were held with the participation of scholars from various academic career stages and graduate students, as presented below.

Workshop 1

NATIONAL IDENTITY VERSUS TRANSNATIONALISM: TURKEY AND EURASIA

26–27 June, 2014

Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul

Organizer: Professor Birgit Schlyter

The notion of “identity” was investigated through analyses of historical narratives and foreign policies as well as large-scale processes shaping and promoting different types of identity formation within groups belonging to a nation, religion, minority or diaspora.

Identity formation is a continuously ongoing process sensitive to among other things increasing waves of migration and evolving technology and communication. Senses of loyalty and belonging are affected by foreign policies as well as physical changes, leading to new ways of identification, sometimes crossing the traditional borders of nations and cultures. During the two-day workshop, identity making at different levels was considered in Turkish, Eurasian, Middle Eastern, Russian and Swedish contexts, providing insights into historical as well as contemporary discourses of identity and belonging. The researchers participating in the workshop came from different fields of study, such as International Relations, History, Linguistics, Religion, Psychology and Philosophy.

Contributions:

Assel Rustemova

Senior Lecturer, Gediz University

Between Distribution and Procedure: Lessons on the Future of Democracy in MENA and Central Asia

Karina Vamling

Professor, Caucasus Studies, Malmö University

Identity, Identity Documents and Politics: The Case of the Caucasus

Önver Cetrez

Senior Lecturer, Psychology of Religion, Uppsala University

“If only I am good enough, they will like me...”: Crossing of Identity Borders among Iraqi Immigrants

Giray Sadık

Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Ankara

Analyzing Turks’ Growing Euroscepticism and Turkey’s Search for Eurasian Alternatives

Olga Malinova

Professor, Higher School of Economics, National Research University, Moscow

Constructing Macro-Political Identity in Post-Imperial Context: Russia between Ideas of Nation and Civilization

Igor Torbakov

Senior Fellow, Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University

The Ukraine Crisis: What Does It Mean for the Development of Russian Nationalism(s)

Maria Engström
Assistant Professor, Head of the Russian Department, Dalarna University
Reconstructing Katechon: Russian Neo-Conservatism and Foreign Politics

Tolga Demiryol
Assistant Professor, Political Science, Istanbul Kemerburgaz University
The Ties that Bind? Energy and Security in Russian-Turkish Relations

Abdullah Şimşek
Postdoctoral Fellow, Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen
“We are all Ottomans before the law!”: Competing Visions of Ottomanism and Identity
Politics in the Late Ottoman World

Cecilie Stokholm Banke
Senior Researcher, Foreign Policy, Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS
National Narrative and Global Memory in Turkey

Mogens Pelt
Associate Professor, Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen
Turkey and the Middle East in the 1950s

Anita Sengupta
Research Fellow, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata
The Turkish Model and the Arab Spring

Ayhan Kaya
Professor, Jean Monnet Chair of European Politics of Interculturalism, Istanbul Bilgi
University
Turkey as an Emerging Destination Country for Immigration

Jacob Lindgaard
Associate Professor, Danish Institute for Study Abroad, Copenhagen
An Islamic-Turkish Synthesis?

Khalid Khayati
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Studies of Social Change and Culture,
Linköping University
Diaspora and Transnational Cities: The Case of Diaspora Kurds in Sweden

Workshop 2
LABOR MIGRATION AND THE IDENTITY-SECURITY NEXUS
6-7 November, 2014
Malmö University
Organizer: Professor Bo Petersson

This workshop explored labor migration, by high-skilled as well as low-skilled workers, and focused especially on labor migration that connects the EU with Eurasia, predominantly Turkey, the Middle East, Russia and the former Soviet Union. It reflected particularly on the

ways that labor migration relates to domains of security and identity in contemporary political discourses and debates in the receiving as well as the sending countries.

Contributions:

Annika Lindberg

MSc, London School of Economics

Let the Right One In? Sovereign Borders and Banal Racism in the Post-National Nation-State

Hikmet Kirik

Associate Professor, Istanbul University

Securing Europe with a Human Face

Halina Grzymala-Moszczynska

Professor, Jagiellonian University, Krakow

Ukrainian Female Labor Migrants in Poland

Olga R. Gulina

Ph.D., Institute on Migration Policy, Moscow/Berlin

Comparing Immigration Policy: The German and Russian Experience

Rano Turaeva

Affiliated Researcher, Ph.D., Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle

Informal Economies and Alternative Systems of Belonging among Central Asian Migrants in Russia

Gülay Sahin

MSc, University of Copenhagen

Rural Turkey in Copenhagen and Istanbul

Ayhan Kaya

Professor, Bilgi University, Istanbul

Turkey as an Emerging Destination Country for Immigration: Transformation of Migration and Asylum Policies in Turkey

Giray Sadik

Associate Professor, Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Ankara

From Refugees to Terrorists: Emerging Transnational Challenges from Syria to the European Union and Turkey

Jakob Lindgaard

Associate Professor, Danish Institute for Study Abroad, Copenhagen

Glocal Islamic Calvinists: The Gülen Network in Denmark

Workshop 3

IN THE AFTERMATH OF GEZI– FROM SOCIAL MOVEMENT TO SOCIAL CHANGE

4-5 May, 2015

Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul

Organizers: Professors Oscar Hemer, Hans-Åke Persson, Thomas Tufte

While the second workshop within the MICS Network was dedicated to migration, the third MICS workshop focused on communication. Together, migration and communication represent mobility at a physical as well as a psychological level. The concepts are routinely associated with dynamic processes. Media, and social media in particular, have for example played a pivotal role in the events of the Egyptian Tahrir revolution as well as in the Gezi events at the Taksim Square in Istanbul. The aim of the third MICS workshop was to analyze the Gezi events and its aftermath in a regional and global perspective, with specific focus on communication and media's part in the social mobilization and transformation.

Contributions:

Anita Sengupta

Research Fellow, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata
Rhetoric and Gezi Park

Ronald Stade

Professor, Malmö University
Violent Communication -The Case of Gezi Park

Milja Rämö

PhD. student, University of Helsinki
Why and How were the Gezi Park Protestors Othered?

Pola Rojan Bagger

Journalist, Danish Television TV2
Turkey's Faceless Enemies

Cengiz Aktar

Professor, Bahçeşehir University
Gezi along 4 Topics: Governmental Control of Public Space; Governmental Control of Political Space; Heterogeneity of Gezi Versus Monolithic and Homogeneous Nation; Gezi as a Best Practice

Jacob Lindgaard

Associate Professor, Danish Institute for Study Abroad, Copenhagen
It is too Dangerous to be an Individual in Turkey!

Spyros Sofos

Senior Research Fellow, Lunds University
Alone in the City: Gezi as a Moment of Transgression

Serhat Koç

Journalist, Istanbul
Turkey according to Recent Changes in Internet Laws in the Light of Gezi Park Protests

Zeyno Pekünlü

Professor, Kültür University, Istanbul
Newly Emerged Dissidents after Gezi Resistance

Reece Waldron
MA, Lunds University
The 'Gezi Spirit' As Social Change! An Evident but Overlooked Process

Christian Christensen
Professor, Stockholms University
Turkey, Twitter & the Political Economy of Journalism

Marco Zoppi
Ph.D. student, Roskilde University
Erliza Lopez Pedersen
PhD. student, Malmö University
From Gezi to Gezi: Media's Role in Sending (or Not Sending) the Message Beyond Gezi

Sofia Hafdell
MA, Malmö University
The Potential of Social Media as Alternative Media in Turkey

Thomas Tufte
Professor, Roskilde University
Communication for Social Change in and Beyond Gezi: Epistemologies, Logics and Narratives

Workshop 4
ADVERSARIES, NEIGHBORS, KINS?: TENSIONS AND SECURITY POTENTIALS IN
TURKEY AND THE EURASIAN REGION
19-20 November, 2015
Danish Institute for International Studies
Organizer: Senior Researcher, Dr. Cecilie Felicia Stokholm Banke

The role of Turkey as a crucial player for stability and security in the Eurasian region has led to a series of new questions regarding Turkey and its relations with its neighbors. Some are strangers, some are neighbors, and some are historically considered to be kins. To what extent are these relations changing? What is based on old habits and good neighborhood policy, and where do traditions cause problems rather advantages? During this workshop participants explored the tensions and security potentials in Turkey and the Eurasian region, leading to a general discussion about Turkish foreign policy during the AKP-government.

Contributions:

Hans-Åke Persson
Professor, Roskilde University
Between Path Dependency and Path Breaking Critique Crises: An Alternative Approach to Understand the Relation between Turkey and EU

Hikmet Kirik
Professor, Istanbul University

Don't Buy a House, Buy a Neighbor: Has Europe Enough Heat for Melting the Frozen Conflicts in South Caucasus?

Giray Sadik

Assistant Professor, Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Ankara

Analyzing In/Security Interdependence among Europe, Turkey, Russia and North Africa

Toni Alaranta

Postdoctoral Fellow, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki

The Islamic Conservative State Project in Turkey: Already Exhausted?

Pola Rojan

Journalist TV2, Copenhagen, External Consultant, DIIS

AKP's Dangerous Game - Turkey's Loss of Critical Authority in its Own Backyard

Abdullah Simşek

Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Copenhagen

Boundaries in Transition from Empire to Republic in Turkey

Eric Sjöberg

Postdoctoral Fellow, Umeå University

The Cold War of Genocides: Greek National Populism, Memory Politics and the Greek-Turkish Conflict in the 21st Century

Mogens Pelt

Associate Professor, University of Copenhagen

The Cyprus Issue in Turkey in its Impact on Turkey's Relations in the 1950s

Umut Uzer

Associate Professor, Istanbul Technical University

Changing State Identity of Turkey and its Implications for Turkish Foreign Policy under the Justice and Development Party (2002-2015)

Bo Petersson

Professor, Malmö University

Flexing Muscles: Syria, Putin and the Russian Great Power Game

Results

The immediate aim of this project was to organize four international workshops within a period of two years, 2014–2015, on one or more of the four key issues of the MICS program.

This was accomplished in a comprehensive manner as regards both topics and participants.

The total number of contributions was 47 papers delivered by scholars and students from 12 different countries (Albania, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, India, Kazakhstan, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, and Uzbekistan) and 35 universities or research institutes.

Besides senior as well as junior researchers there were participants representing other fields of sociopolitical and cultural work, such as journalists, photographers, artists et al.

Graduate students were also engaged in our network activities for the sake of research training in their capacities as internees (MA Reece Waldron, exchange student from Great Britain, and Master's student Azize Güneş from Lund University) and scholarship holders (BA Gülay Şahin, Copenhagen, and BA Hetav Rojan, Roskilde) at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

Workshop programs with abstracts and lists of participants can be found on the MICS website <http://www.micsnetwork.org>. For follow-ups of MICS activities, a forum for discussions under the title of "The Central Eurasia Discourse" will be introduced in May-June, 2016, on Professor Birgit Schlyter's blog www.sipcatsdirector.wordpress.com, to which the participants from all of the four MICS workshops will be invited. The Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, will expand its research on Turkey and Turkish foreign policy in the years to come and regards its experiences of the MICS program as an asset for this enterprise. Plans for joint research on legacies of old-time empires and their impact on present-day policies in Eurasia are being discussed between MICS founders and researchers in Political Science at Istanbul University under the leadership of Professor Hikmet Kırık, who participated in two MICS workshops on migration and security, respectively.

Printed and online publications from the MICS project:

Schlyter, Birgit, & Azize Güneş, "Sidenvägsstudier och internationella nätverk vid SFII," in *Dragomanen*, vol. 17 (2015), pp.13-18.

Hemer, Oscar, Hans-Åke Persson & Thomas Tufte (eds), *In the Aftermath of Gezi: From Social Movement to Social Change*. Palgrave Studies in Communication for Social Change (forthcoming).

Social Movements, Media, and Social Change: Looking Back at the Gezi Uprisings, by Thomas Tufte, published at <https://orecomm.net/blog/2015/06/01/social-movements-media-and-social-change-looking-back-at-the-gezi-uprisings/>, Orecomm, Centre for Communication and Global Change, 01.06.2015.

Gezi once more, by Azize Güneş, published at <http://sipcatsdirector.wordpress.com/2015/06/17/gezi-once-more/>, 17.06.2015.

Related publications by members of MICS in the course of the present project:

Bagger, Pola Rojan & Cecilie Felicia Stokholm Banke, *Tyrkiet Træder ind i Koalition*. En analyse af Tyrkiets udenrigspolitiske kompas, DIIS Report 2015:20.

Banke, Cecilie Felicia Stokholm, "Global Memory and Dialogic Forgetting: The Armenian Case," in Tea Sindbæk Andersen & Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (eds), *Disputed Memories. Emotions and Memory Politics in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe*, Berlin: De Gruyter, May 2016.

Banke, Cecilie Felicia Stokholm, 2016, "The Beginning of a 'Beautiful' Relationship? Sketches of Danish Turkish Relations during the AKP-government", in Nanna Hvidt & Hans Mouritzen (eds), *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2016*, Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.