

DIMECCE 2nd Workshop: “From Immigrants to Citizens? Middle Eastern Christian Identities in Europe”, 21-22 October 2014, Lodz, Poland

The DIMECCE research team invites you to participate in a research workshop “From Immigrants to Citizens? Middle Eastern Christian Identities in Europe” on 21-22 October 2014 at the Department of Middle East and North Africa, University of Lodz, Poland. The workshop is organized by the research team working on the project “Defining and Identifying Middle Eastern Christian Communities in Europe” (DIMECCE), funded by Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) and involving partner institutions at the universities of St. Andrews (UK), Roskilde (Denmark), and Lodz (Poland). For further information on the project, please see the DIMECCE website <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/dimecce>.

Objectives of the workshop

The research workshop aims to engage with scholarship on issues relating to the migrant experiences of Middle Eastern Christians in Europe. The DIMECCE team will present papers based on fieldwork conducted in early 2014 in the project case study countries, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Sweden. This comparative workshop seeks to explore similarities and differences among various Middle Eastern Christian communities both in the case study countries and other European countries, especially Southern European fieldsites given the DIMECCE project’s focus on Northern Europe. Selected papers will be invited to contribute to a planned edited volume.

The theme

Amid national debates over immigration reforms, Christian immigrants and refugees from the Middle East face many challenges in Europe. Some of them have come for study or in search of better living conditions but many have fled their homelands suffering from civil conflict and/or sectarian violence. While they may not experience conflict situations in Europe, they may encounter discrimination in housing, education, employment, health care, experience cultural and language barriers and/or continue to be emotionally affected by events in the homeland. Many Middle Eastern Christians perceive themselves to be second class citizens in the homeland but is this a status being replicated in Europe? Or, on the contrary, is it in the diaspora that they are able to become full and engaged citizens? In what ways does becoming a citizen of a European country influence their traditional ethno-religious identities? What and where is home? To what extent have state policies led to integration, assimilation or segregation and should these be seen as a threat to their faith/ethnic/cultural identity and their ability to participate and be accepted as citizens of the state they now reside in? What factors determine the nature and outcome of cultural encounters of Middle Eastern Christians with society in European countries? These are some of the questions this workshop intends to engage with.

The workshop is open to contributions from a diverse range of disciplines, including political science, international relations, sociology, anthropology, development and religious studies. The organizers welcome papers which engage with any migration or citizenship topic relating to Middle Eastern Christians in Europe, but particular topics of interest include:

- migrant experiences of Middle Eastern Christian communities in Europe
- categorisation of migrants and its implications for integration
- identity construction within Middle Eastern Christian migrant groups
- cultural encounters between Middle Eastern Christian migrants, the countries of residence and transnational actors
- Middle Eastern Christians as citizens in European countries
- the role of churches, political and social organisations as well as influential individuals in negotiating cultural encounters
- Middle Eastern Christian media
- internal competition and negotiations among Middle Eastern Christians
- perceptions of Middle Eastern Christians in the countries of residence
- Middle Eastern Christians' encounters with other migrant groups in Europe

Practical Details and How to Apply

The workshop will be open only to invited researchers, approx. 30, and we will allocate considerable time for questions and discussions in addition to the 20 minutes provided for each speaker's talk. A full written paper is not required for the workshop. There is no conference fee and we will provide conference materials, as well as beverages and lunches during the conference. Participants are responsible for their own travel and accommodation costs. However, there will be limited funding available to assist with these costs for Ph.D students and early career scholars. Please indicate when applying if you wish to be considered for this funding. We will organise a walking tour of Lodz the day after the workshop depending upon interest.

If you wish to apply to the workshop, please submit an abstract (200-300 words) along with a short biography (max. 100 words) to the workshop organizer Dr Marta Wozniak: martawozniak@uni.lodz.pl by 15th June, 2014. Successful applicants will be notified by 30th June, 2014. For queries relating to the workshop, please contact Dr Marta Wozniak martawozniak@uni.lodz.pl. For more information on the project and DIMECCE team, please visit our website <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/dimecce> or contact dimecce@st-andrews.ac.uk.