



**UNIVERSITÄT  
BIELEFELD**

Faculty of Sociology

**Colloquium Series**  
**Sociology of Transnationalization**  
**“The Transnational Lens”**

# **Making Berlin Transnational: Negotiating Cultural Differences in Turkish-Run Shops**

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Turks in Germany find themselves at the intersection of two seemingly contradictory globally rising phenomena: anti-migrant sentiments and pro-diversity discourses. Turks are seen simultaneously as “Muslim outsiders” and as faces of celebrated “cultural diversity.” Either way, they tend to be regarded as “culturally different” from the rest of the German society. Even though this cultural difference appears to simply be there—almost as natural and ahistorical— it is in fact situated in historical transformations and is produced and reshaped through everyday interactions. Therefore, it is subject to change and it entails labor. Based on fieldwork conducted in Berlin between 2014 and 2016, this presentation will analyze the ways in which Turkish business owners and workers rework their assumed cultural difference in Germany. They do so through various forms of labor which, at the same time, bring together and challenge different understandings of “Turkishness,” “Germanness,” and “Berlinerness.” As they negotiate their place in the German society and in Berlin’s economy of differences, they also contribute to actualizing the assumed special place of Berlin in Germany as “hip,” “diverse,” “international” and “inviting.” Through this example of the labor performed in Turkish-run shops as central to the city of Berlin, the talk will challenge popular understandings of minorities as peripheral to their societies. At the nexus of labor, difference and urban life, this case can help unearth not only the ambivalent reception of minorities but also their agency in shaping this reception. It also demonstrates how the labor of minorities helps actualize the constructed images of their cities. Thus, this talk helps shed light on how minorities and migrants not only respond to the changing ways cultural difference is defined and experienced but also participate in these transformations.

**Thursday, 05<sup>th</sup> May, 2022**  
**16:15 – 17:45**

**Zoom event, to register:**  
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Studies in History and Society from Koç University as well as B.A. degrees in Sociology and Business Administration from Istanbul Bilgi University. She has conducted research in Berlin through a graduate exchange fellowship at Freie Universität Berlin and DAAD research grants at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and TU Berlin.