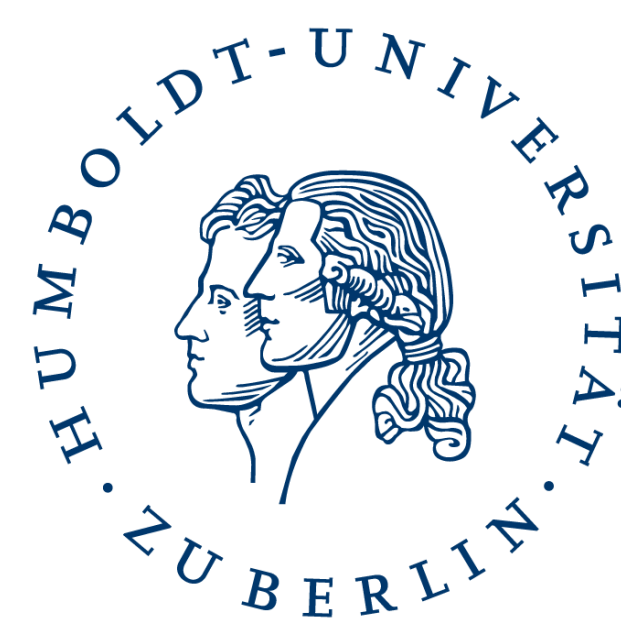


# Academics on the Move

## Focus Area 1



TOURO COLLEGE  
BERLIN



### Academics and Identities on the Move: Exploring Processes of Identity Construction

Individuals who decide to migrate to a new country face tremendous challenges in adapting to their environment, having to renegotiate who they are as individuals and where they belong (Akhtar 2014). Academics in exile are faced with similar challenges (Nesbitt, 2002; Said, 1993). These processes of **identity construction** unfold, partly, in response to identities that the new host culture as well as the home culture **ascribe** to academics in exile (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011). At the same time, academics in exile come equipped with a host of protective skills, roles, and networks that enable them to **distance** themselves from such external ascriptions and victimizations (Ratkovic, 2011).

Focus area 1 explores the **identity work** that exile academics engage in and thus represents a **psychological perspective** of academics on the move.

#### Research Questions:

- 1) How are exile academics **represented** in their home country (in terms of *ascribed* identities)?
- 2) How do exile academics **construct their identity** in their new environment and adapt?

Our focus was on **Barış için Akademisyenler (BAK)** – Academics for Peace (a specific group of academics from Turkey; see extra flyer for the history and description of this group)

#### Representation of Academics in Exile (Ascribed Identity): Study 1

##### Study 1: Content analysis of the social media platform **Ekşi Sözlük (Sour Dictionary)**

This alternative social media platform is used by the general public in Turkey to express public opinion and discuss a large variety of socio-political trends in and outside of Turkey. The platform is the largest online community in Turkey, currently hosting more than 400.000 registered users.

We content analysed all entries concerning BAK academics (N = 139). We examined whether BAK academics are seen in a positive, negative, ambivalent or neutral light, and what reasons are given for these evaluations.

Results of this study are presented on the poster

##### **Content analysis of the representation of BAK Academics on Ekşi Sözlük: Results**

#### Identity Construction of Academics in Exile: Studies 2 and 3

##### Study 2: Thematic analysis of self-descriptions on the BAK-Academics blog **Gurbetteki Akademisyenler (GAK – Academics in the Foreign Land)**

This blog is used by Turkish academics in exile as an autobiographic space for self-expression. Blog entries touch on topics as various as identity, personal struggles, home, coping strategies, and emotions.

We coded all blog entries (N = 34) by means of an open, followed by a selective coding procedure (Charmaz, 2006).

Results are presented on the poster **Thematic analysis of the self-description of BAK Academics on GAK: Results**

##### Study 3: Interviews with **BAK academics in Germany.**

We interviewed 5 BAK academics currently residing in Germany concerning their identity and adaptation in Germany (see interview guide on extra flyer).

We coded the interviews by means of a sequence of open, selective and axial coding (Charmaz, 2006; see procedure described on extra flyer).

Results are presented on the poster **Thematic analysis of interviews with BAK academics in Germany: Results**