UMUT YILDIRIM

Associate Professor of Anthropology
Department of Anthropology and Sociology
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RESEARCH INTERESTS

State, sovereignty, colonialism, and war; Extractivism; Development, welfare, and gender; Decolonization, political mobilization, and political subjectivity; Forced migration and resettlement; Theories of affect and racialization; Environmental Anthropology; Maritime and Marine Anthropology; Kurdish studies; Ottoman and Modern Turkish historiography; Middle Eastern, European, and Mediterranean ethnography.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

September 2022 onwards
Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology & Sociology
Faculty Associate, Global Migration Center
Faculty Associate, The Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy
Faculty Associate, Gender Center
Faculty Associate, Hoffman Centre for Global Sustainability

January 2022–August 2022
Distinguished Research Fellow, UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies, USA

September 2020–December 2021
Einstein Stiftung Research Fellow, Freie Universität Berlin, Institute for Cultural and Social Anthropology, Germany

September 2018–August 2020
Post-doctoral Fellow, Institute for Cultural Inquiry, ICI Berlin, Germany

September 2010–June 2017
Part-time faculty, Department of Sociology, Boğaziçi University, Turkey; Cultural Studies Program, Sabancı University, Turkey; Department of Cultural Studies, Bilgi University, Turkey

EDUCATION

September 2004–February 2011
MPhil and PhD University of Cambridge, Department of Social Anthropology, UK

September 2003–June 2004
MSc The London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Social Anthropology, London, UK

September 2000–June 2003
MA Boğaziçi University, Institute for Modern Turkish History & Department of History,

Istanbul, Turkey

September 1995–June 2000
BA Business Administration, Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey

PUBLICATIONS

Book Manuscript

2026 *Extractive States: War and Resistance in Turkey's Kurdish Heartland.* The **Stanford Studies in Middle Eastern and Islamic Societies and Cultures** Series. Redwood: Stanford University Press.

Edited Book Volume

2023 *War-torn Ecologies, An-archic Fragments: Reflections from the Middle East.* Foreword by Françoise Vergès. Cultural Inquiry Series, 27. Berlin: ICI Berlin Press.

Special Issue

2027 *Political Mass Violence and More-than-Human Memory,* co-edited with Yael Navaro and Daniel Ruiz-Serna. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute.* Forthcoming Spring 2027.

Book Chapters

2024 Eco-redaction as Method. In *[Redacted]: Ethnography in the Negative Space of Political Power,* Franck Billé, Lisa Min, and Charlene Makley. California: Punctum Press. [Excerpt from Mulberry Affects].

2023 War-torn Ecologies: Human and More-than-Human Intersections of Ethnography and the Arts. In *War-torn Ecologies, An-archic Fragments: Reflections from the Middle East.* Foreword by Françoise Vergès. Cultural Inquiry Series, 27. Pp. 1–26. Berlin: ICI Berlin Press.

2023 Mulberry Affects: Ecology, Memory, and Aesthetics on the Shores of the Tigris River in the Wake of Genocide. In *War-torn Ecologies, An-archic Fragments: Reflections from the Middle East.* Foreword by Françoise Vergès. Cultural Inquiry Series, 27. Pp. 27–66. Berlin: ICI Berlin Press.

*Turkish translation. 2026, "Dut Tetikler: Soykırım Girdabında Dicle Nehri'nin Kıyılarında Ekoloji, Hafıza ve Estetik," *Soykırım ve Ötesi: Zulmü Adlandırmak*, der. Devrim Sezer ve Ümit Kurt, çeviri Çağdaş Sümer. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları.

2020 Glaze, or Formulas to Get through Bad Weather. In *The Weather,* ed. by Christoph F. E. Holzhey, Cultural Inquiry, 16. Berlin: ICI Berlin Press.

Peer-reviewed Journal Articles

2027 "More-than-human Memory: Introduction," co-authored with Yael Navaro and Daniel Ruiz-Serna for the Special Issue on *Political Mass Violence and More-than-Human Memory,* co-edited with Yael Navaro and Daniel Ruiz-Serna. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute.* Forthcoming Spring 2027.

2027 "A Marine Archive: Hauling Up More-than-human Displacement Along Marmara's Istanbul Shores". In *Political Mass Violence and More-than-Human Memory*, co-edited with Yael Navaro and Daniel Ruiz-Serna. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute.*

Forthcoming Spring 2027.

2024 Resistant Breathing: Ruined and Decolonial Ecologies in a Middle Eastern Heritage Site. *Current Anthropology* 65(1):123–142.

2024 Breathing at Low Intensity. *Current Anthropology* 65(1):143–149.

2021 Spaced out States: Decolonizing Trauma in a War-torn Middle Eastern City. *Current Anthropology* 62(6):717–734.

*Kurdish translation forthcoming in Spring 2027 in *Psychology Kurdî* by Gülistan Zeren.

2021 Spacing out Methodologically: A response. *Current Anthropology* 62(6):735–740.

2019 Space, Loss, and Resistance: A Haunted Pool-Map in South-Eastern Turkey. *Anthropological Theory* 19(4): 440–469.

2013 An Impromptu Uprising: Ethnographic Reflections on the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey (co-edited with Yael Navaro-Yashin). Special Issue. Fieldsights–Hot Spots, *Cultural Anthropology*, October 31, 2013. https://web.archive.org/web/20181213213448/https://culanth.org/fieldsights/391- an-impromptu-uprising-ethnographic-reflections-on-the-gezi-park-protests-in-turkey

2013 Editorial–An Uprising on the Verge of Comparison. In Yildirim, Umut and Navaro-Yashin, Yael. "An Impromptu Uprising: Ethnographic Reflections on the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey." Special Issue. Fieldsights–Hot Spots, *Cultural Anthropology*, October 31, 2013. https://web.archive.org/web/20181213224138/https://culanth.org/fieldsights/410-editorial-an-uprising- on- the-verge-of-comparison

2013 Nefes: Notes on Breath. In Yildirim, Umut and Navaro-Yashin, Yael. "An Impromptu Uprising: Ethnographic Reflections on the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey." Special Issue. Fieldsights–Hot Spots, *Cultural Anthropology,* October 31, 2013. https://web.archive.org/web/20181213224214/https://culanth.org/fieldsights/406- nefes-notes-on-breath

Public Scholarship

2024 Kurdish Decolonial Ecologies. Middle Eastern Review. MERIP. July 2024.

2023 Resurgence in Translation. *Globe: La Revue de L'Institut*, 31. Printemps 2023.

2022 Resistant Roots: Occupied Ecologies on the Shores of Tigris River. *Jadaliyya*.

2018 Lungs, a zine on Hewsel Gardens exibited in the art program, *Koloni,* curated by Kevser Güler**,** Derya Bayraktaroğlu, and Aylime Aslı Demir in Abud Efendi Konağı in Istanbul and the Berlin Schwules Museum.

2017 Rust. In *The Catalogue of the 15th Istanbul Biennial: A Good Neighbour* curated by the artist duo Elmgreen and Dragset. Pp. 493–503.

2016 Beyond the Lesser Evil: A Critical Engagement with Brexit (co-authored with Salih Can Açıksöz). In Green, Sarah*, et al.* Brexit Referendum: First Reactions from Anthropology. *Social Anthropology*: 487–488.

2015 Facades and Facelesness. *AllegraLAb.* June 2015, online.

Peer-reviewed Journal Articles in Turkish

2002 Magazin Dergilerinde Amerikan Imgesi 1948–1960. *Toplum ve Bilim* 94: 21–217. (The perception of the United States in Popular Magazines in Turkey 1948—1960).

2001 Tarih Yazımına Farklı Bir Öneri: Maduniyet Çalışmaları Projesi. *Toplum ve Bilim* 91:334–343. (An Alternative Historiography: The Subaltern Studies Project).

AWARDS and GRANTS

25 September 2026
Swiss National Science Foundation. Division 1 Research Grant: "Between Corridor and Frontier: Maritime Extraction in Turkey's the Sea of Marmara." Swiss National Science Foundation.

22 November 2025
SNF Scientific Exchange Grant for Workshops: "Dying Seas: The Intersection of Capital, Sovereignty, and Logistics in the Maritime Crisis."

June 2024
Project Seed Money for Fieldwork Research: *The Liquid Frontier: Mobility, Sovereignty, and Environmental Politics in the Near-Dead Sea of Marmara.* Research Office.

November 2023
Publication Seed Money for Fieldwork Research: *Decolonial Ecologies in the Kurdish Region in Turkey.* Research Office.

2021–2022
The Middle Eastern Studies Association, MESA Global Academy Grant.

September 2020–March 2021
Einstein Stiftung Fieldwork Grant.

June 10–16, 2018
Scholarship to attend The New School, Institute for Critical and Social Inquiry, New York, USA. "Theory from the South: Interrogating the Global Dis/Order."

September 2004–February 2011
Gates Cambridge Trust, Full grant for the MPhil and the PhD.

September 2005–February 2007
Gates Cambridge Trust, Fieldwork Grant.

September 2005–February 2007
The Board of Graduate Studies, University of Cambridge Dissertation Grant.

September 2005–February 2007

Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge, Dissertation Research Grant.

ORGANIZATION OF MEETINGS

November 21–24, 2026
Panel co-organizer with Fırat Bozçalı, "Extractive States: Reflections from the Middle East," Conference, Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) Meetings, Boston, US.

November 18–24, 2026
Double panel co-organizer with Fırat Bozçalı, "Peace on the Brink: Of Borderlands and Heartlands of Turkey's Extractive War," Conference, American Anthropological Association (AAA) Meetings, St. Louis, US.

September 8–9, 2026
Workshop organizer, "Dying Seas: The Intersection of Capital, Sovereignty, and Logistics in the Maritime Crisis," The Graduate Institute of Geneva, Switzerland.

June 27–29, 2024
Research consultant and co-curator with Odessa Warren, Angelina Radakovic, Siegrun Salmanian, Reem Shadid. Art programme, "War-torn Ecologies, Resistant Worlds," with Beirut Art Center and the Mosaic Rooms, UK.

November 9–13, 2022
Panel organizer, Executive Panel, "Occupied Ecologies: Politics of War and Life in the Middle East," Conference, American Anthropological Association (AAA) Meetings, Seattle, USA. Discussant: Eleana Kim. Paper presented: "Resistant Breathing on the Shores of Tigris River."

November 14–18, 2019
Panel co-organizer with Munira Khayyat, "Eco-Redaction in a Middle Eastern Natural Heritage Site" in "Militarized Ecologies in the Middle East," Conference, American Anthropological Association (AAA) Meetings, Vancouver, Canada. Discussant: Derek Gregory.

July 1, 2019
Workshop organizer, "Affective Ecologies, Ethnographic Fragments: Documenting Militarized Worlds," Institute for Cultural Inquiry, Berlin, Germany. Discussant: Françoise Vergès. Paper presented: "Mulberry Affects: Genocidal Aftermaths and An-archic Aesthetics on the Shores of Tigris River in Upper Mesopotamia."

November 14–17, 2018
Panel co-organizer with Munira Khayyat, "Affective Ecologies," Conference, American Anthropological Association (AAA) Meetings, San Jose, USA. Discussant: Marisol de la Cadena. Paper presented: "Breathing as Praxis."

May 9–10, 2014
Panel organizer, "Dematerialization, Trauma, and the Politics of Bare Life," the Society for Cultural Anthropology (SCA) Biennial Meeting, Detroit, USA. Discussant: Kath Weston. Paper presented: "Displacement and War-Trauma in a City under Blockade."

November 20–24, 2013

Panel organizer, "The Affects of Activism," Conference, American, Anthropological Association (AAA) Meetings, Chicago, USA. Discussant: Ann Allison. Paper presented: "Spaced-Out Acts: Trauma, Displacement and Humanitarian Rehabilitation."

November 16–20, 2011
Panel co-organizer with Yael Navaro-Yashin, Executive Panel, "Affects of Displacement," Conference, American Anthropological Association (AAA) Meetings, Montreal, Canada. Discussant: Liisa H. Malkki. Paper presented: "Dissonant Affects of Feminism."

SELECTED INVITED TALKS, SEMINARS, and KEYNOTE SPEECHES

February 18, 2027
Book talk, "Extractive States: War and Resistance in Turkey's Kurdish Heartland." Centre for Turkish, Ottoman, Balkan and Central Asian Studies (CETOBaC), École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris, France.

February 3, 2027
Book talk, "Extractive States: War and Resistance in Turkey's Kurdish Heartland." Department of Anthropology and Sociology, School of Oriental and African Studies, (SOAS), London, UK.

December 9–11, 2026
Panel presentation, "Extractive States, Environmental Stakes in Turkey's Kurdish Heartland." International conference on "Ecologism of War and Conflict in the Middle East," organized by the ANR IMAGIN-E and the CAREP at the Académie du Climat. Paris, France.

December 3–4, 2026
Invited Panel, "Extractive States: Reflections from the Middle East." International Symposium on *Technologies of Peace*: *Art and Transition in Contemporary Europe (1989–*2026*),* Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland.

November 24, 2026
Panel presentation, "An Extractive Peace?" in "Extractive States: Reflections from the Middle East," Conference, Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) Meetings, Boston, US.

November 23, 2026
Invited roundtable participation "Living On: Psychiatry, Collective Loss, and Temporality of Crisis in the Middle East," with Byron Good, Christopher Dole, Sa'ed Atshan, and Alize Arican. Conference, Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) Meetings, Boston, US.

November 20, 2026
Panel presentation, "An Extractive Peace?" in "Peace on the Brink: Of Borderlands and Heartlands of Turkey's Extractive War," Conference, American Anthropological Association (AAA) Meetings, St. Louis, US.

November 17, 2026
Book talk, "Extractive States: War and Resistance in Turkey's Kurdish Heartland." Institut für Ethnologie, Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt University, Germany.

October 23, 2026
Book talk, "Everyday Decolonization: War and Resistance in Turkey's Extractive Regime." Department of Anthropology. University of Cambridge, UK.

October 20, 2026
Book talk, "Everyday Decolonization: War and Resistance in Turkey's Extractive Regime." ANSO conversations, The Geneva Graduate Institute, Switzerland.

November 3–5, 2025
Workshop, "The Sea Ends Here: Past Apocalypses, Future Grabs and Itineraries in-between," organized by the European Association of Anthropologist, the SEA Network, Algericas, Spain.

September 20, 2025
Invited panel discussion with Mahmoud Alhaj, moderated by Dr Marianna Liosi, "On Digital Memory, Ecocides and Landscapes' Traumas," in Techno-Ökologien und erinnernde Materie: Die umkämpfte Umwelt, Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Berlin, Germany.

July 8, 2025
Invited commentator, Seminar III · Thinking with the Elements: Ecologies of Excess and Resistance, in Arab Urbanism, Thinking with the Elements, University of Cambridge, UK.

April 29, 2025
Invited senior seminar, "Mulberry Affects: Mass Violence and Ecology in the Trail of the Genocide," In Ecologies and the Living in Crises and Wars—Arab Contemporary Societies and Muslim Worlds, EHESS, Paris, France.

April 15, 2025
Senior seminar, "Occupied Ecologies: From Palestine to Kurdistan" with Associate Professor Omar Jabary Salamanca, ANSO Conversations, The Graduate Institute of Geneva, Switzerland.

February 17, 2025
Invited discussant, "Thinking Far-right Movements Globally: on Banning Gender and the Rise of Anti-Wokery. A workshop with Professor Nadje Al-Ali, Brown University." University of Lausanne, Switzerland.

February 26, 2025
Invited discussant, Panel on "Climatic and Biospheric Crisis," in Symposium Ear-Witness: Listening to Violence, Migration, Climate, HEAD-Genève, Switzerland.

February 7, 2025
Invited keynote, "War-torn Ecologies," in Learning with Mountains: Recalibrating How We Understand Art and Planet conference, Celadon Center for Arts & Ecologies, Nicosia/Kapedes, Cyprus, 5-8 Feb 2025.

October 25, 2024
Invited roundtable talk, "Feminist Approaches to Political Violence," The Annual Meeting of the Swiss Association of Gender Studies (SAGS), Neuchatel, Switzerland.

July 16–20, 2024
Invited lecture, Seminar on "Environmental Humanities, Anthropology, and Mass Violence." Summer School at the National University of Architecture, Yerevan, Armenia.

July 18, 2024

Invited lecture, Seminar on "Ecology and Immobility." Summer School on Migration and Refugee Studies. Harvard University and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

June 27, 2024
Keynote, "War-torn Ecologies" with Françoise Vergès. Co-curator with Odessa Warren, Angelina Radakovic, Siegrun Salmanian, Reem Shadid, the Mosaic Rooms, UK.

May 7, 2024
Invited senior seminar, "Resistant Breathing: Ruined and Decolonial Ecologies in a Middle Eastern Heritage Site," Department of Anthropology, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland.

June 26–27, 2023
Invited Panel talk, "Resistant Breathing: Ruined and Decolonial Ecologies in a Middle Eastern Heritage Site" in More-than-Human Memory Conference, the Center for Research in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CRASSH), the University of Cambridge.

June 7, 2023
Invited Podcast talk, [Turkish], ""Eko-redaksiyon" ya da Doğa Siyasi Şiddete Dair Neler Söyler", KIRIK Online, Istanbul, Turkey.

May 26, 2022
Invited senior seminar, "Breathing under Blockade: Ruined and Decolonial Ecologies in a Middle Eastern Heritage Site," Department of Anthropology, UCLA.

13–15 June, 2019
Invited Panel Talk, "A Mulberry Tree in Hewsel Gardens: Genocidal Echoes in a Middle Eastern Eco-system," Symposium, "Beyond Trauma? A Transregional Perspective on Trauma and Aesthetics," organized by Stephanie Benzaquen-Gautier and Afonso Dias Ramos. The Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin, Germany.

January 10–12, 2018
Panel talk, "Breathing under Blockade: Reflections on Materiality, Affect, and Resistance," Conference, "Political Emotions in Turkey", The London School of Economics and Political Science, European Institute, London, UK.

July 20–24, 2016
Panel paper, "Can Gardens Resist? Notes on Theories of Ontological Anarchy and Perspectivism" in "Indelible Footprints and Unstable futures: Anthropology and Resource Politics," Conference, European Anthropological Association (EASA) Meetings, Milano, Italy.

November 18–22, 2015
Oral presentation, "Breathing in an Enclave" in "Enclaves, Fragments, Shards: Managing Borders Across Spatial Discontinuities," American Anthropological Association (AAA) Meetings, Washington DC, USA.

March 26–28, 2015
Invited Panel paper, "Breathing under Blockade," Conference, "Reverberations," University of Cambridge, The Department of Social Anthropology with funding from The European Research Council (ERC), Istanbul, Turkey.

December 13–14, 2013

Invited paper, Workshop, “Spaced- Out Acts,” Conference, “Feeling Differently: Emotional Non-conformism in the 20th Century,” Humboldt University and Max Plank” Institute for Social Research, Berlin, Germany.

January 10–13, 2013
Invited Panel paper: “Reflections on a Pool-Map,” Conference, “Relocating Borders: A Comparative Approach,” The EastBorder Network Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany.

October 23–25, 2012
Invited Panel paper, “Bedel as the Limit of Politics: Martyrdom in Diyarbakir,” Conference, “Ordering the Social-Producing Change: New Ethnographies of Turkey in Transformation,” Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany.

March 10, 2011
Invited Senior Seminar, “Displaced Ghosts of Diyarbakir: Gendered, Cosmopolitan, and Armed with Guns.” Cultural Studies Program, Sabancı University, Istanbul.

March 1, 2011
Invited Senior Seminar, “On Spectral Sovereignty.” Department of Sociology, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul.

LANGUAGES

Turkish (Native)
English (Professional fluency)
French (B1–B2)
Italian (A.2)
Greek (A.2)