[Katrine Scott](http://www.genus.lu.se/o.o.i.s/31366%22%20%5Ct%20%22_top). Everyday student resistances in the Kurdish region of Iraq

**Abstract:**The role of higher education in post-conflict societies is an expanding research field. Experiences of everyday student life at higher education institutions are a central point of departure in order to understand social transformations in a post-conflict society. The perspective on students’ everyday experiences is pointing towards new horizons away from the usual picture of war and violence, which is often focused on in relation to a post-conflict situation. The aim of this paper is to explore the making of university structures, policies and spaces as experienced by students in the Kurdish region of Iraq. Central to the study is the tension between the historical legacy of a violent conflict and the emerging of a successful middle class in the larger cities with a consumer oriented lifestyle. Exploring the emergence of a well-educated urban middle class is important in order to understand how new class formations and forms of reactions towards the political regime are taking place in the Kurdish region of Iraq.
Theoretically, the paper departs from postcolonial scholarship that has illuminated the central role higher education plays in the construction of the nation and its citizens, and feminist scholarship that has identified the role of gender in the making of ethnicity and nationhood (Naidoo 2011, Yuval-Davis 1997). Methodologically, the study is an ethnographic case study of two universities in the city of Sulaimani in Kurdistan: the private American University (established 2007) and the public University of Sulaimani (established in 1968, reopened in 1992).
The focus of the paper is on students’ everyday life at the university, exploring the strategies developed to adapt and succeed in a society (and in higher education) within a process of rapid and powerful social transformation in all areas of social life. Drawing on previous theoretical debates on the concept of everyday resistances (Scott 1985, Abu-Lughod 1990), the paper will specifically explore in what ways students’ strategies can be understood as reactions towards the present political regime. Students’ reactions are ranging from manifestations demanding better financial support for studying to personal strategies taken up to deal with the high unemployment rate among university graduates.

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