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# The Global South as Foreignization: The Case of the Kurdish Diaspora in Europe

Ipek Demir

## ABSTRACT

This article tilts the North/South axis of the Global South scholarship towards the East/West axis, specifically the Middle East and Kurds. I first re-visit the notion of the Global South by using the conceptual tools of translation studies, especially the notion of “foreignizing translation,” a strategy aimed at pushing the boundaries of the target language (and culture) rather than simply assimilating the translated text into it. Besides arguing that the Global South perspective concerns itself with questioning North-South relations temporally and spatially, I focus on the foreignizations diasporas can bring to the Global North. As both insiders and outsiders to Northern spaces, diasporas are uniquely placed both in terms of the foreignizations they bring to the Global North and the entanglements of the North and South which they expose. In this paper I examine the “Global South in the North” by taking the Kurdish diaspora living in European metropolises as a case study and conceptualizing the Kurdish movement as a transnational indigenous movement. I argue that through the foreignizations diasporas bring, the Global South is making claims not only *in* the North but also *on* the North. By focusing on the role of diasporas and the Middle East, areas which have received little attention within Global South scholarship, I seek to complicate and thus enrich our understandings of the Global South.

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## The Global South: Temporal and Spatial Dimensions<sup>1</sup>

Global South scholarship has not only aimed to challenge how we discuss notions such as globalization, modernity, and social justice, but also questioned

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Northern epistemologies, especially how the North conceptualizes, and problematically reproduces, North-centric discourses on such processes. The epistemological interventions of Global South literature have thus sought to show how traditional Euro-centric ways of knowing have created epistemic violence against others (Mignolo 2011; Santos 2014) while simultaneously creating a narrowly bounded European history and an inadequate understanding of modernity and of today (Bhambra 1997; Chakrabarty 2000).

It is therefore no coincidence that Global South scholarship has its roots in earlier Third World perspectives on liberation as well as the literature on postcolonialism and decoloniality. The latter two have interlinking and “complementary trajectories with similar goals of transformation” (Mignolo 2011, xxvi) despite their intellectual genealogies being fed from different origins. Postcolonialism has its origins in British and French colonialism, and decoloniality in the Latin American context, especially the Spanish and Portuguese colonies. Global South scholars also draw from approaches including, but not exclusive to, transnational feminism, critical race theory, and world systems theory, all of which have yielded insights on gendered, racialized, economic, and epistemological inequalities. These fields have played an important role in terms of showing the interconnections and intersections between these inequalities.

Critics of Global South scholarship often repeat the claim that the South is a blanket term and that countries and groups referred to as the South are differentiated between themselves and within themselves, refusing to fit any easy generalizations or categorizations. The same could of course be said about the notions of “West” or even of “Europe”: states and peoples within these categories are also differentiated between and within themselves, resisting easy categorizations and geographical distinctions—yet Northern epistemologies hardly bring that to the table.

The Global South does not refer to a place as such, just as postcoloniality does not necessarily refer to a specific date or time. The Global South is a perspective, a normative conceptualization, arising from both social movements and from academic scholarship. It questions our temporal and spatial sensibilities, moral compasses, and political solidarities, insisting on decoloniality. In this article, I use the notions of North and South geographically and Global South and Global North as perspectives. Yet the geo-political dimensions of the Global South and Global North, and also of South and North, are unavoidable.

As Arif Dirlik has highlighted:

While [“Global South”] was no doubt not intended by its coiners to be taken in a literal physical geographical sense, it seems worth pointing out, nevertheless, that like all geographical designations for ideological and political spaces and projects (globalization comes to mind readily),

its geography is much more complicated than the term suggests, and subject to change over time; so that the “South” of the contemporary world may be significantly different in its composition and territorial spread than the South of the early 1970s, or the colonial South of the immediate post-World War period. The Inuits are practically on the North Pole, while some formerly colonial or neocolonial urban centers are a match in activity and appearance for metropolitan cities at the headquarters of Capital. (2007, 13)

The demarcations of the terms Global South and Global North have also been traced and questioned, for example, by Levander and Mignolo (2011), who argue that the Global South is not a geography but a case of demanding decoloniality. Trefzer, Jackson, McKee, and Dellinger “unmoor [the South] from a distinct geographical association” yet see the Global South and the Global North as “fundamentally intertwined” (2014, 2).

While it is helpful to unmoor the South itself geographically, I argue that there needs to be a wider recognition of the fact that the Global South expands our temporal and spatial sensibilities. Firstly, the Global South perspective concerns itself with questioning North-South relations *temporally*, that is via an engagement with the past, exposing their interconnected histories, politics, and sociologies. Secondly, Global South literature questions North-South relations *spatially*: it prioritizes the telling of stories from today’s margins and tries to de-center the North while calling for a politics of solidarity. In this sense, if there is something which connects those who broadly concern themselves with the Global South, it is the fact that they challenge the peripheralization of the South in temporal or spatial terms and connect this peripheralization to the production of knowledge and domination today.

In this article I use the insights of translation studies on “foreignization” and discuss the contributions it can bring to our conceptualizations of the Global South. I also argue that we can expand the spatial and temporal sensibilities of the Global South and complicate this notion by turning our attention to diasporic communities living in the North. As I discuss below, the foreignizations diasporic communities bring to the North enable the Global South to make claims not only in the North, but also on the North. I take the Kurdish diaspora living in European metropolises as my case study. By focusing on diasporas and also on the Middle East, areas which have received little attention from Global South scholarship, I seek to complicate and thus enhance our understandings of the Global South.

### **Global South as Foreignizing Translation**

Translation has been a source of inspiration and also of concern for critical social theorists, especially for those who are postcolonial thinkers. Gayatri

Chakravorty Spivak, for example, sees translation as a strategy; she theorizes it in the context of submission and understanding rather than equivalence. By assuming the easy translatability and mappability of concepts and cultures, Northern epistemologies have obscured subaltern voices and practices. Spivak therefore calls for reflexivity in translation and notes its political consequences (1998). Postcolonial scholars such as Homi Bhabha (1994), on the other hand, have noted the role of cultural translators, especially those located in in-between spaces who create hybrid visions and perspectives. Cultural translation has further been a source of concern for Talal Asad's engagement with Euro-centricism in the field of anthropology. Following Walter Benjamin, the philosopher and social theorist, Asad argues that translators should concern themselves with testing the tolerance of their own language and culture—dissecting, reshaping and rewriting sources rather than searching for equivalence (1986, 157). Hence not only translation as a metaphor but also translation studies as a field offer many conceptual tools and enrichment for Global South scholarship. I draw from central arguments within translation studies to further this endeavor.

Venuti's seminal works on translation go beyond conceptualizations of translation which typically focus on fidelity, fluency, transfer of meaning, and the mapping of information and language from one language to another (1995, 2002, 2008). They instead examine the uneasy nature of translation between the languages and cultures of the core and the periphery, exposing asymmetries and domination produced and reproduced via translation. The instrumental role of translation in colonialism and in current forms of domination is discussed in Venuti's work, revealing that "The colonization of the Americas, Asia, and Africa could not have occurred without interpreters, both native and colonial, nor without the translations of effective texts, religious, legal, educational" (2002, 158). Translations by colonial regimes constituted the basis of Orientalized and racialized stereotypes and have enabled rationalized domination to take hold. Such translations were also instrumental in shaping the way in which the colonized perceived themselves, helped by the way, for example, Indians learned about their cultural texts via the translations of these into English by colonial governments (e.g., the East India Company):

European translations of Indian texts prepared for a Western audience provided the "educated" Indian with a whole range of Orientalist images. Even when the Anglicized Indian spoke a language other than English, "he" would have preferred, because of the symbolic power conveyed by English, to gain access to his own past through the translations and histories circulating through colonial discourse (Niranjana 1992, 31).

Another example of the circulation of translation is the way in which US publishers, in their translations, established a canon of Japanese fiction based

around stereotypes; these were then translated from English into other languages and thus positioned certain stereotypes of Japan in other cultures and languages, diverging “all too widely from the reality of contemporary Japan” (Fowler 1992, 3).

Translation can thus install stereotypes of the periphery; it can even fix those stereotypes of the periphery in the language and mind of the periphery itself. However, we need to recognize that the asymmetries enabled by translation are not only historical. Current translation practices also establish a hierarchical relationship between spaces and peoples, the core and the periphery, and corporations and indigenous groups, and thus “function in the same fundamental ways as those that underwrote European colonialism” (Venuti 2002, 165). The globalization of English and the dominance of English-language cultural and literary products reproduce inequalities and asymmetries, including how others are framed in the Western media (Bielsa and Bassnett 2008). The “trade deficit” between the core and the periphery in terms of how little is translated into English is also striking.

Complacency of Anglo-American translations into other languages—that is, translations from the North to the South—however, should not be our only concern. As scholars of the Global South, we need to examine the way in which the South is peripheralized in its translation to the culture and worldview of the North. Antoine Berman, another prominent scholar of translation studies, has discussed this ethnocentric element of translation, emphasizing how certain translations can hamper dialogue, cross-breeding, and learning and instead reproduce stereotypes. Bad translation “generally under the guise of transmissibility carries out a systematic negation of the strangeness of the foreign work” (Berman 1992, 5). Venuti also traces the way in which peripheral languages and cultures that are translated end up being made to be intelligible for the language and culture of the dominant, namely the North. He calls this “domesticating translation” and sees it as an ethnocentric process, not only because it allows the translated text and culture to be read fluently by the North, but also because in this process the disruptions the peripheral can bring to the receiving dominant language and culture are eliminated. As translations are for specific cultural consumers of the North, they suppress difference of the foreign and pander to readers’ expectations, prejudices, and worldviews. Hierarchical relationships are not flattened. On the contrary, they are reproduced. The challenge of the foreign and the perspective of the different are hidden away. In its attempts to focus on “epistemic violence” of modernity and of the North, the scholarship on the Global South and the body of work known as postcolonialism and decoloniality (and also Orientalism) have sought to interrupt exactly this type of domestication which tells the histories and cultures of “elsewhere” in a sanitized way. Such works have sought to show that modernity is rooted in conquest, colonization, dispossession, and appropriation by

bringing unsavory histories to light (e.g., Bhabra 2007; Dunbar-Ortiz 2014; Fanon 1963; Mignolo 2007; Said 1995). Their goal is not just to challenge the way we understand yesterday but also to make this understanding of the past shift the way we understand today.

Venuti's other concept of "foreignizing translation" is contrasted with "domesticating translation." While domestication is useful for understanding the appropriation of the other, foreignization signals the possibilities translation can bring. Foreignizing translation is a type of translation whereby the core can enter a new non-hierarchical relationship with its others. The periphery and core languages and cultures can interact by engaging in non-erased and non-smoothed-over texts and values, allowing for collective rather than hierarchical futures. In other words, foreignizing translation seeks an epistemological change in how we have conceptualized the relationships and the movement of texts, ideas, and practices across and between previously established borders. It is this conceptual insight, namely "foreignization," which brings Global South scholarship and concerns over translation closer together.

The works of scholars from the Global South literature discuss examples of what I call foreignization. Sousa Santos's "epistemologies of the south" (2014), Walter Mignolo's call for "epistemic disobedience" (2009), and Arturo Escobar's "relational ontologies" (2010) unpack the new possibilities which the peoples of the South offer. They provide plenty of examples of epistemological and ontological challenges to modernity and coloniality, as well as of the Global South's invitations to foreignize. Escobar discusses the social movements from South America in the last two decades, especially the struggles in Chiapas, Oaxaca, Columbia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru, and others. He examines in detail the way in which they seek to establish relational ontologies that question the central divisions in liberal modernity—such as between the individual and community, nature and culture, developed and underdeveloped, civilized and uncivilized—demanding also a representation of non-human entities in their ontological visions. The work of Sousa Santos seeks to denounce Northern models of production of knowledge due to its refusal to enter into a horizontal dialogue with other knowledges. Presenting the South as an alternative form of knowledge production, he underlines the "epistemicide" which these cultures face as well as the "learned ignorance" which the North perpetuates (2009). He instead defends an "ecology of knowledge" whereby Northern and Southern modes of understanding enter into a non-hierarchical dialogue and, in Venuti's terms, foreignize each other. Mignolo (2009) and Raewyn Connell (2007), on the other hand, focus on exposing the exclusions of the academic metropole and Northern theorizing. While Connell's work examines the erasures of the sociological canon which, she argues, rarely takes as its starting point the thought or experiences "generated in the majority of the world" (2007, 64), Mignolo's work makes interventions that question Northern epistemologies,

calling for “decolonial thinking” and “epistemic disobedience” (2009). In other words, Global South scholarship not only re-reads the Northern canon through critical eyes, but also brings to the table the various perspectives from the Global South (both academic and social movements) which have traditionally been ignored. I argue that they collectively call for Northern epistemologies to “give into” the Global South and to foreignize.

### **The Global South in the North: The Case of Kurds in Europe**

As discussed above, perspectives from the Global South, both as a body of literature and as social movements, have highlighted the need to go beyond typically Northern tropes and have brought into our sphere of knowledge the experiences and insights of those outside of the Global North, foreignizing and expanding our spatial and temporal horizons. What I call the “Global North’s Southern others,” namely diasporic communities living in the North, however, have received much less attention within Global South literature. Diasporic groups are both outsiders and insiders to Northern spaces. They are therefore uniquely placed in terms of engaging with the Global North and challenging their host countries’ role in their own predicament.

The “entanglements of the South and the North in one another” has of course already been complicated by Dirlik (2007, 16). His work recognizes that “there are groups and classes in most societies of the South who are already part of a transnational economy and its social formation, and have a stake in its perpetuation and expansion” (2007, 16). My aim is to further complicate perspectives on this entanglement by turning our attention to diasporic postcolonial subjects living in the metropolises of the North. An examination of their relationship with cultures and communities in their new locales not only renders the Global North as a site of conflict whereby the challenge of the Global South has to be reckoned with, but also complicates our understandings of the Global South itself. Such considerations would thus allow us to highlight yet another entanglement of the South and the North in one another. Moreover, by focusing on the questions diasporic communities pose to the Global North, it moves the Global South from its typically conceived place, namely that of the victim.

Neoliberal democracies of the North have typically been ignorant about the critical voices of the diasporic communities living among them, except of course when diasporas are seen as a threat and subjected to surveillance and control. In fact, diasporic communities can find that they are sometimes peripheralized twice over—in the homeland and also in the North. Now, however, some of these groups are challenging this peripheralization in their new homes. More importantly they are discussing how the North’s peripheralization of the South is constitutive of the North’s relationship with diasporic



groups from the South living in the North. They do this through their direct translation of homeland struggles to Northern audiences—borrowing Venuti's terms, through the foreignization of the Northern political sphere, unsettling and troubling it. Some of the foreignizations diasporic communities bring to the table have the potential to enable the Global South to make claims not only in the North but also on the North's engagement with the Global South. By taking Kurdish diaspora living in Europe as a case study, I examine the foreignizations Kurds bring to Europe and the role they assign to Northern epistemologies in their own predicament.

Turkey's framing of the Kurdish issue (e.g., Bayir 2013; Watts 2007; Yeğen 2007) has shaped and conditioned contemporary misapprehensions regarding Kurds in the North in general and Europe in particular. One of the main challenges to the official and dominant Turkish stance comes from the Kurdish diaspora in Europe. Immigrants from Turkey have been present in Europe for many decades—for example, from the 1960s onwards, having arrived as *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) following a labor agreement signed between Turkey and West Germany. Kurds, together with other politicized Turks and asylum seekers from Turkey, however, mainly came to Europe in the the 1980s and 1990s, following the 1980 coup and its violent aftermath in Turkey. There were also influxes following the armed guerrilla campaign of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the security- and military-focused approach of the Turkish state to Kurdish demands for more autonomy and rights. There was thus an upsurge in the number of Kurds in Europe and also an increase in the number of "Turkish economic migrants" in Europe who over time began to self-identify as Kurdish (Demir 2017; Leggewie 1996).

Kurds from Turkey are now a substantial part of European metropolises such as Berlin, London, Paris, and Stockholm, not only in terms of their numbers but also through their critical voice and activism (see, for example, Baser 2015; Bilgin 2011; Eccarius-Kelly 2002). They have created a vibrant political space in Europe and continue ethno-political battles with Turkey at a distance. Diasporic Kurds, like any other ethnic group, are not homogeneous. There are considerable differences in educational levels, language, class positions, and sectarian allegiances. More importantly for this research, not all are politically engaged. The research and arguments underpinning this article focus on highly political and mobilized Kurds who originate from Turkey. However, it should also be remembered that Amir Hassanpour and Shahrzad Mojab (2004) have emphasized the overall high level of mobilization of Kurds of Turkey in diaspora compared with Kurds from elsewhere. As I have discussed in previous work (Demir 2015), mobilized Kurds translate their suffering and rebellion to audiences in Europe as a means to challenge the way in which the Kurdish issue is typically narrated within Turkey and also presented by Turkey to Europe and beyond. Furthermore, they foreignize European publics by challenging their

host countries' role in their own predicament. I argue that there are various ways in which mobilized Kurds attempt to foreignize Europe in their translations of their uprising and hardships. Below, I focus on three central and contemporarily important ones.

### ***(i) Epistemological Interventions***

Kurds of Europe are challenging the way in which knowledges created about them in Turkey are taken up and reproduced in Europe. This is especially visible in their struggle against the reproduction of Orientalist and backward depictions of Kurds and the presentation of the Kurdish issue in Turkey as a problem of terrorism. Founded upon the demise of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey's nation-building project saw the multi-ethnicity and multi-religiosity of the Ottoman order as major threats to Turkish modernization and nationalism. The nationalist elites who led these efforts mainly came from the military and bureaucratic cadres of the Ottoman Empire. They were deeply inspired by European Romantic nationalist thought and longed for a homogenous, centralized, and secular nation-state. These in their eyes would ensure purity and strength, making Turkey "civilized," akin to the modernity of the European states. Such efforts to westernize and "reach the European level of modernity" required certain parts of the society to "do away with their backwardness," expressed in their so-called "primitive, feudal, and tribal" practices and thoughts, and to assimilate into the modern Turkish Republic. The sizable Kurdish population, and their perennial revolts against centralization, were regarded as obstructions to these aspirations and to the state's homogenization efforts (Bozarslan 2007; White 2007; Smith 2005). The Kurds' refusal to assimilate into Turkishness came to be told as a story of refusal to adjust to modernity and to "civilize" in official Turkish discourse. This Orientalist narrative—reproduced in the media, in school textbooks, and via state institutions—coupled with the presentation of Kurdish demands for more autonomy and rights as a problem of terrorism, came to shape the way in which Turkey understood and presented the perennial Kurdish issue not only in Turkey but also to Europe.

It is such discourses which the Kurds of Europe seek to challenge. They demand an epistemic change in how the Kurdish issue is understood in Europe. They foreignize European publics by re-telling a counter-history of the homogenization efforts and the ensuing violence. Kurds were, and continue to be, stigmatized and excluded in Turkey in various ways (see, for example, Houston 2004; Saraçoğlu 2010; Watts 2007; White 2007). They are constructed as disloyal others, "pseudo-citizens" (Yeğen 2007; 2009), and Oriental others (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008), and face anti-Kurdish sentiment in the media and in the legal system (Bayir 2013). The construction of the Kurdish

issue in Turkey predominantly as a case of terrorism persists, and human rights violations, violence, and intolerance have intensified since 2015.<sup>2</sup>

Refusing to stay silent, Kurds interrupt the order of things in Europe by holding public demonstrations, rallies, and gatherings and questioning the silence of Europe on the ensuing violence and oppression Kurds face. For example, on March 6th, 2016, the “Break the Silence” demonstration was held in London’s Trafalgar Square. It assembled in front of the BBC but aimed to engage western media in general. The media were called upon, in Global South lingua, to overcome their epistemic ignorance and start reporting what the demonstrators called the “ongoing violence on Kurdish cities.” In November 5th, 2016, following the arrest of Kurdish and Turkish MPs of the pro-Kurdish HDP, simultaneous rallies in Cologne, Paris, Stockholm, Berlin, and London took place alongside substantial online mobilizations on Facebook and Twitter calling for an epistemic shift in the way the Kurdish issue is discussed and reported in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Kurds also force the European public to engage in the demanding job of listening and learning by correcting what they see as Turkish biases in their European interlocutors’ discourses, including, for example, the use of “east of Turkey” instead of Kurdistan or the use of “Turkish” when referring to Kurdish people. They call for European media to refrain from reporting by solely relying on Turkish state discourse and mainstream media from Turkey. Through such online and offline translations of Kurdish struggle and suffering, mobilized Kurds foreignize the European public sphere—albeit at times via uncomfortable renderings—and challenge the way in which knowledges created about them in Turkey are taken up and reproduced in Europe. In summary, epistemic violence and ignorance are combatted—albeit not always with success.<sup>4</sup>

### ***(ii) Exposing Links between the Kurdish Predicament and Europe: Current and Historical***

Mobilized Kurds of Europe also attempt to heighten and sharpen European sensibilities, both current and historical. They highlight what they see as their host countries’ action (or inaction) for the Kurdish predicament, as well as the opportunism of Europe in its dealings with Turkey. Nowhere has this been more pronounced than in the recent European migration crisis. Turkey hosts about 2.5 million Syrian refugees. In order to appease the anti-immigration sentiment and the popular politics of resentment in their countries, European leaders have aimed to stem the flow of refugees arriving in Greece through Turkey. In their desperation to seal the European borders, they signed a Refugee Readmission agreement with Turkey. According to the agreement, from 20 March 2016, all irregular “migrants” crossing from Turkey to Greece will be returned to Turkey, and for each who is returned, a Syrian

will instead be settled in an EU country.<sup>5</sup> The Syrian refugee crisis has given Turkey immense political leverage and freedom to pursue what are regarded as authoritarian and anti-democratic policies and practices in Turkey and in its dealings with the Kurdish movement in Turkey and Syria. The criticism of this deal is one of the ways in which the Kurdish diaspora underline their host countries' involvement in the Kurds' predicament, troubling consensus and foreignizing Europe.

The Kurdish diaspora also foreignizes Europe historically, highlighting European involvement in the carving up of Kurdish lands in the first half of the 20th century and supporting oppressive regimes politically and militarily in the region throughout the 20th century. The Sykes-Picot (secret) agreement signed in 1916 carved up the Middle East into zones of influence and control. It put Syria and Lebanon under French rule, and Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine under British control. It also divided Kurds across four countries, creating artificial borders and paying little attention to religious, ethnic, or sectarian traits in the region. The Sykes-Picot agreement is regarded as central to the construction of the borders in the Middle East. Many of today's borders in the Middle East are an outcome of such colonial histories and various interventions. In this sense diasporic Kurds echo the "we are here because you were there" sentiment, which postcolonial diasporas in the UK—recalling colonial ties and imperialism—utilized in their responses to rising anti-immigrant discourses in the 1960s. This historical dimension has always been present in the minds of politicized Kurds in Europe. It has now captured the attention of other less politicized diasporic Kurds, allowing them to underline their current predicament by linking it to past injustices and imperialism in the Middle East, akin to the way in which other social movements of the Global South make connections between their contemporary and historical erasure and colonization.

### ***(iii) The Transnational (Kurdish) Indigenous Movement***

The ongoing social and political transformations in Syrian Kurdistan (Rojava) have allowed Kurds across different borders in the Middle East and the diaspora to further connect emotionally as part of a transnational indigenous movement. While knowledges of spatial and temporal links with other Kurds have always existed for those closely involved in the Kurdish movement, developments in Rojava have strengthened the emotional and transnational ties of Kurds, as well as their relationship with the European left. Those living in Syria's Rojava cantons have established a communally organized entity that is based on what they call democratic autonomy. It claims to reject capitalism as well as reactionary ethnic or nationalist ideology and is radically feminist. The Syrian Kurds—that is the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), the

armed wing of the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Unity Party (PYD)—have pushed ISIS back and extended control over much of northern Syria. The PYD also declared self-administration in this Kurdish region of Syria in November 2013. In the three Rojava cantons of Cizire, Kobane, and Efrin, Syrian Kurds now maintain control and have turned Rojava into a laboratory for democratic autonomy and its associated ideals. They have close links with the PKK in Turkey, and, to Turkey's dismay, they have received positive reactions from the western media and politicians in their fight against ISIS (Leezenberg 2016).<sup>6</sup> The Women's Protection Unit (YPJ)—that is the female Kurdish guerrillas—have even been introduced to the world by *Marie Claire* (2014), a fashionable woman's magazine, under the title "These Remarkable Women Are Fighting ISIS. It's Time You Know Who They Are." Even though such introductions might be seen as superficial, ignoring the history and struggle of women in the Kurdish movement, they have helped challenge received knowledges on gender and oppression in the Middle East, which have traditionally been constitutive of the North's framing of the region.

The Kurdish counter-hegemonic resistance is critical of capitalism, ethnic essentialism, and patriarchy. It instead draws inspiration from radical-democratic thinking expressed in post-national and feminist discourses. Their platform has resonated with diasporic Kurds in Europe and with leftist groups and circles in Europe, such as the Confederal Group of the European United Left & Nordic Green Left (of the European Parliament), the General Federation of Trade Unions of the UK, and even European artists and cartoonists (e.g., the Italian Zerocalcare who wrote *Kobane Calling* [2015]). Critical analysis of the divergences between the ideological underpinnings of democratic autonomy and its practical implementation do exist (e.g., Leezenberg 2016, Human Rights Watch Report 2014). However, there is no denying that the "Rojava Revolution" has energized Kurdish awareness in the Middle East and in Europe, further transnationalizing the Kurdish movement, sharpening Kurds' awareness and discourses of indigeneity and autonomy as well as connecting them to the European left. As such, new entanglements of the North and the South have taken hold.

Another interesting aspect of these developments is the overlap between the cultural and political mobilizations in Latin America and the democratic autonomy ideals of the Kurdish movement. The demands in Latin America are articulated in and through the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* (boards of good governance) in Chiapas, the movements in Oaxaca, the uprisings in Ecuador and Bolivia, movements in Guatemala, Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Colombia, and the *pueblos originarios*. According to Escobar, their key arguments center around "the defence of territory as the site of production and the place of culture ... the right over a measure of autonomy and self-determination around the control of natural resources and 'development'; and ... the relation to the

state and nation, most cogently articulated in the notion of pluri-nationality” (2010, 10). Such values and demands overlap with those of the Kurdish movement, which seeks not only liberation for Kurds along similar lines but also democratic confederalism for the peoples of the Middle East. Most importantly, however, as part of the Global South, such movements in disparate parts of the world aim to challenge Northern epistemologies’ assumptions about “native” populations and seek to enter into the international order as equals without reproducing atavism or portraying a determinative essence of indigeneity.

## Conclusion

In this article I have examined the relationship between translation and the Global South. Besides discussing the central role of translation in colonization, domination, and domestication, I explored the insight that foreignization can bring. I argued that the Global South, both as disparate social movements and scholarship foreignizes Northern epistemologies and expands our temporal and spatial sensibilities. I then turned my attention to diasporic groups living in Northern metropolises, that is “the North’s Southern others” who have received little attention within Global South scholarship. I argued that, as both insiders and outsiders to Northern spaces, diasporas are uniquely placed both in terms of the foreignizations they bring to the North and the entanglements of the North and South which they expose. By taking the Kurdish diaspora living in European cities as my case study, I examined three central and contemporary ways in which mobilized diasporic Kurds foreignize, yet connect with, Europe: first, through their epistemic interventions; second, by exposing links between their predicament and Europe; and third, by advancing a transnational indigenous movement which also makes connections with the European left. Such foreignizations seek an epistemological change not only in how the Kurdish issue is understood and represented in Europe, but also in European self-understanding, modernity, and narratives concerning history.

Through a focus on diasporas and on the Middle East, areas which have received little attention from Global South scholarship, this article complicates and enriches our understandings of the Global South. By examining mobilizations and foreignizations of the Kurdish diaspora, the Global South is moved from its typically conceived place, namely that of the victim. In addition, the North/South axis of Global South literature has been tilted towards the East/West axis, and towards the Middle East and Kurds. Last but not least, this article conceptualizes the Kurdish movement as a transnational indigenous movement. It considers the way in which Rojava, a recent development, has come to play an increasingly important role in Kurdish imaginary, broadening

Kurds' sensibilities and emotional bonds temporally and spatially, as well as igniting new relationships and bonds across disparate social movements and indigenous groups of the Global South. Kurdish foreignizations have begun to sow the seeds of conviviality between different Global Souths, which had not traditionally engaged with one another. The burgeoning conviviality created between, for example, the Zapatista and the Kurdish movements is worth watching out for as they may promote cosmopolitan justice-based solidarities across the Global South. They may constitute the next turn in "subaltern cosmopolitanisms" enabled by online and offline solidarities, which these two movements of the Global South are beginning to establish and promote (Sousa Santos and Rodríguez-Garavito 2005).<sup>7</sup>

However, South to South conversations are not enough. While the telling and sharing of stories from today's margins are essential, solidarities with those who are subjugated or who are facing a backlash in the North are just as indispensable. The North has entered a new age: an age of the rise of far-right parties in Europe, of Trump and Brexit, of white nationalism and anti-immigration policies and stances. We are bearing witness to a nativist backlash against the removal of injustices faced by previously subjugated groups, including diasporas, and perhaps also reduced chances for an international order formed around ethics and social responsibility. Resisting such developments in the North requires a serious engagement not only with the foreignizations the Global South offers, but also with the solidarities it seeks.

## Notes

1. The work for this article was supported by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Fellowship Programme, AHRC Grant #AH/J001015/1.
2. Following the breakdown of peace talks and the ceasefire between the PKK and the Turkish government, a high-intensity urban warfare between the Kurdish rebels and the Turkish army during 2015 and 2016 led to the complete destruction of various neighborhoods of various Kurdish-majority cities. This was followed by a crackdown on the pro-Kurdish left People's Democratic Party (HDP) and the media. See Human Rights Watch Report 2016, International Crisis Group Report 2016, and Amnesty International 2016. See Gunes 2012 on the PKK.
3. It should also be remembered that, "While commonly seen as the main pro-Kurdish party, HDP is an eclectic grouping which also appeals to leftists, liberals, environmentalists, gay rights activists and pious Muslims. That explains why it is Turkey's third-largest party" (BBC 2016).
4. Orientalist discourses and Turkish biases also exist amongst the Kurdish diaspora. For empirical examples and discussion of the existence of such discourses amongst diasporic Kurds—and also how Kurdish brokers intervene to correct other, less politicized Kurds' discourses in diaspora—please see Demir 2017.
5. It is interesting to note that the agreement refers to Syrians as *migrants* and not as *refugees*. For details of the agreement, see <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/>.

6. The PKK is listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the European Union, and the United States while the PYD is not. Turkey has been calling for the recognition of PYD as a terrorist organization.
7. See Gambetti (2009) for a comparison of the spatial dynamics of the Kurdish and Zapatista movements.

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