

<b>Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management</b>
<b>Title of case study: Representing Migration and Cultural Diversity in European Film(making)</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Over the past eight years, Professor Daniela Berghahn has undertaken extensive research into the (self-)representation of migrant and diasporic communities in European cinema as Principal Investigator of a collaborative Research Network and through her individual research. Through the creation of various platforms of knowledge exchange, Berghahn's research has enhanced awareness of diasporic filmmaking amongst industry stakeholders and the cinema-going public and shaped cultural life. It has also led to the foundation of an audio-visual development programme, BABYLON, which has, in turn, supported film projects of ethnic minority filmmakers with a migratory background. Between 2007 and 2013, BABYLON provided workshop-based training for over one hundred filmmakers. Eight BABYLON alumni have succeeded in getting their films into production and theatrical distribution in the UK, continental Europe and further afield as well as winning awards on the international festival circuit.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The 'Migrant and Diasporic Cinema in Contemporary Europe' Research Network extends back to 2005, when Berghahn (RHUL 2006 – present) and some of her future collaborators identified migrant and diasporic cinema as an important area worthy of further investigation. She organised a research team and submitted a grant application for an international research network under the AHRC's strategic programme, 'Diasporas, Migration and Identities'. The network was funded by the AHRC between January 2006 and January 2008 but active collaboration amongst the participants - Daniela Berghahn (Principal Investigator), Claudia Sternberg (Co-Investigator, Leeds), Asu Aksoy (Istanbul Bilgi), Birgit Beumers (Bristol), Dina Jordanova (St Andrews), Gareth Jones (Scenario Films), Sarita Malik (Brunel), Dominique Nasta (Brussels), Isabel Santaolalla (Roehampton) and Carrie Tarr (Kingston) – continued well beyond the funding period. In consultation with filmmakers, producers, distributors, policy makers and festival organisers, the Network explored the evolution of migrant and diasporic cinemas in contemporary Europe over the past thirty years. It investigated how films made by migrant and diasporic filmmakers changed our understanding of European identity/ies and complicated how they had previously been constructed and narrated within distinct national cinema traditions. The Network's key research findings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migrant, diasporic and ethnic minority filmmakers have reshaped European (including British) filmmaking through innovative stylistic and generic templates.</li> <li>• They encounter greater obstacles than majority culture filmmakers, finding it harder to attract funding and, when they do, they are usually expected to carry 'the burden of representation' for their ethnic constituencies. In terms of subject matter and production opportunities, their artistic freedom is restricted compared with that of majority culture filmmakers.</li> <li>• Films about migration and cultural diversity constitute important discursive interventions in debates about the co-existence of hegemonic and minority cultures in European societies. By addressing controversial issues such as racism and other forms of social marginalisation and by rejecting (but frequently also reinforcing) ethnic stereotypes, migrant and diasporic films challenge images and reports that dominate the mass media in the West.</li> </ul> <p>For her next project on 'The Diasporic Family in Cinema', Berghahn succeeded in winning an AHRC Research Fellowship (October 2010–June 2011). Focusing once again on contemporary European (including British) cinema, Berghahn was able to demonstrate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The diasporic family on screen crystallises the emotionally ambivalent response to immigration and growing cultural diversity in western societies. Constructed as 'other' on account of its ethnicity, language and religion, it is perceived as a threat to the social cohesion of Western host societies. Conversely, the diasporic family is also nostalgically imagined as a traditional family, characterised by extended nurturing kinship networks and superior family values that contrast with the fragmentation and alleged crisis of the hegemonic family.</li> </ul>

- Thanks to the crossover appeal of family stories, a number of diasporic family films, in particular comedies, were able to break out of the ethnic niche and cross over into the mainstream.

**3. References to the research** (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Berghahn, D. (2013), *Far-Flung Families in Film: The Diasporic Family in Contemporary European Cinema*, Edinburgh University Press, 232pp. Scholarly monograph.
2. Berghahn, D. and C. Sternberg (eds) (2010) *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, 321pp. Edited collection containing chapters written by the Research Network, including one by Gareth Jones in which he discusses BABYLON's projects and mission.
3. Berghahn, D. (2009), 'From Turkish greengrocer to drag queen: Reassessing patriarchy in recent Turkish German coming-of-age-films', *New Cinemas*, 7.1, pp. 55-69. In special issue of journal on 'Turkish-German Dialogues on Screen' guest-edited by Berghahn.
4. [www.migrantcinema.net](http://www.migrantcinema.net) website that documents the work of the AHRC-funded Network, including various industry-focused events which facilitated Knowledge Exchange between academics and stakeholders in the media industry and a database of films that features *inter alia* films made by BABYLON alumni.
5. <http://www.farflungfamilies.net> website documents Berghahn's research on diasporic families
6. Podcast ([http://www.farflungfamilies.net/podcasts/item/negotiating\\_between\\_artistic\\_ambitions\\_funding\\_and\\_the\\_market\\_place](http://www.farflungfamilies.net/podcasts/item/negotiating_between_artistic_ambitions_funding_and_the_market_place)) of a round-table discussion entitled 'Negotiating between artistic ambitions and the marketplace', held at 'The Diasporic Family in Cinema' conference (21 May 2011), organised by Berghahn, which brought together directors (S. Suri, G. Jones, F. Aladag), producers (L. Udwin) and academics (Berghahn, Malik).

**Research quality indicators:** Berghahn's research was funded by two highly competitive AHRC awards: the Research Network (worth £20,368) and the Research Fellowship (£90,113). The AHRC Peer Review Panel assessed the work undertaken by the Migrant and Diasporic Cinema Network as 'Outstanding'. It particularly commended the innovative and interdisciplinary nature of the project which it described as having 'participated in the mapping of new territory for the discipline of Film Studies (in a manner that will inevitably impact upon a number of related disciplines)'. The Panel also noted that the Network generated 'an incredible amount of activity' for 'a very small investment': 'For [c. £20K] there has been thirty pages of outputs and outcomes and a great generation of academic and non-academic interaction internationally'. The project's research and knowledge transfer dimension – described as 'making an immediate impact outside academia' – was identified by the Panel as one of its many strengths. Berghahn's application for an AHRC Research Fellowship entitled 'The Diasporic Family in Cinema' received the highest possible grade – 6 - which translates into 'an outstanding proposal meeting world-class standards of scholarship, originality, quality and significance'. The peer reviewers of this application referred to Berghahn as 'an authoritative voice in the area of diasporic film studies' and 'one of the leading voices in the field' whose work has 'provided impact and awareness of diasporic cinema'.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

Berghahn's collaborative and individual research in the field of migrant and diasporic cinema has benefited filmmakers and other media professionals as well as the cinema-going public. In order to build a solid basis for knowledge exchange between academics and stakeholders in the media industry, Berghahn invited the Co-founder and Director of Studies, a filmmaker/scriptwriter/producer and MD of Scenario Films Ltd. to join the Migrant and Diasporic Cinema Research Network. He has described his participation in the Research Network as 'the single most important impetus behind the conception and foundation of BABYLON' (see testimonial under 5). The Network's research findings demonstrated that, despite various diversity initiatives within the European film industries, ethnic minority filmmakers encounter particular problems and barriers when trying to get their films into production. the Co-founder and Director of Studies (*ibid*) explains that 'this significant research finding encouraged me to found BABYLON, a cultural forum and development programme designed to support the creative ambitions of migrant and diasporic filmmakers from Europe's varied minorities. BABYLON is committed to challenging existing perceptions that have hardened into prejudice and to stimulating an industrial environment in which producers,

distributors and audiences are attracted to culturally diverse films. The first step in this direction was to increase the visibility and profile of minority filmmakers across the European film industry and to liberate new voices that had been hitherto marginalised and excluded’.

BABYLON is an audiovisual development programme that helps filmmakers to overcome these obstacles and to establish important contacts, thereby enabling competitively selected workshop participants to develop their screenplays and get them into production. The case of Turkish German filmmaker Sülbiye Günar is particularly instructive: on account of her name and earlier work, she was expected to make films about her own ethnic constituency. Television producers invited her to make a film about ‘her compatriots at the hypermarket’ and ‘a beautiful Turkish woman’. To escape from this kind of ethnic pigeonholing, she changed her name to Verena S. Freytag while working on the project ‘Alpenhof’, the working title of her film *Abgebrannt* (2011). With the support of BABYLON, she also managed to get back the rights for her screenplay ‘Alpenhof’ from Colonia Media Film/Bavaria, which the production company initially contested. ‘Without BABYLON, I would probably have given up fighting for [the rights] of the screenplay. Furthermore, at the BABYLON workshop in Rotterdam I met Burkhard Althoff from the ZDF/KF [television]. He asked me about my project, which I had originally sent to the ZDF in 2004 and he encouraged me to re-submit it to one of his colleagues. ... BABYLON was a crucial experience for my career as a scriptwriter and director and for my film’, which was eventually co-funded by the ZDF (see email correspondence between Berghahn and Freytag referenced in section 5).

Between 2007 and 2013, BABYLON provided training and support to over one hundred competitively selected filmmakers through targeted film development workshops at film festivals in Berlin, Rotterdam, Locarno, Cannes and elsewhere. BABYLON has received funding and support from the British Council, Skillset, Film Fonds Wien and the EU Media Mundus Programme. To date eight films by BABYLON alumni have been completed. They have also won a number of prestigious awards at international film festivals including Sundance, the Berlin International Film Festival, Raindance, Karlovy Vary, Toronto, Moscow and Mumbai. So far eight films have been released in cinemas and have received extensive press coverage in leading newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Die Zeit* and the trade press (*Variety*, *Hollywood Reporter*, *Sight and Sound* etc.). In particular films about (diasporic) families, including *My Brother the Devil* (2012), *Kuma* (2012) and *Son of Babylon* (2009) have been able to cross over into the mainstream, arguably because, as Berghahn has demonstrated in Outputs (referenced 1 and 6), family narratives elicit a sense of recognition and identification with the ‘other’ and, therefore, have possessed the capacity to build bridges across cultures. *Son of Babylon* was Iraq’s nomination for the Academy Awards in 2010 and was distributed in nine territories. *Kuma* premiered at the International Berlin Film Festival in 2012 and has since been released in cinemas in eight countries including Austria, Germany, Spain, the UK and France, where it was distributed with 60 prints under the title *Une seconde femme*, attracting 36,710 viewers.

In addition to providing the initial stimulus for the foundation of BABYLON, Berghahn has created numerous opportunities for knowledge exchange, consultancy and collaboration with high-profile minority filmmakers including John Akomfrah, Abdelkrim Bahloul, Feo Aladağ, diversity consultant Parminder Vir, OBE, Eve Gabereau (Soda Pictures), producers Leslee Udwin (*East is East* and *West is West*) and Ralph Schwingel (Fatih Akin’s *Head-On*) and Thierry Lenouvel (Ciné Sud Promotion). These have generated a more comprehensive understanding of diversity and equality issues amongst stakeholders in the media industry. Furthermore, at the International BFI London Film Festivals in 2011 and 2012, Jones convened industry panels entitled ‘BABYLON Burning – a public debate on film diversity’ and ‘BABYLON Breakthrough’. A productive dialogue between Nadine Marsh-Edwards (producer, board member Film London), Nadia Denton (Black Film Magazine), Leslee Udwin, David Thomson (former Head of BBC Films, now Origin Pictures) amongst others ensued at these important forums. Berghahn participated in the industry panel ‘BABYLON Burning’ in 2011, which received press coverage in *BritFlicks* (see under 5).

Berghahn designed public-facing interactive websites with archives of podcasts with filmmakers and other media professionals, blogs and searchable databases and other features for her research projects. Since the website [www.migrantcinema.net](http://www.migrantcinema.net) went live in March 2007, it has had

41,127 unique visitors. The total number of page views (until 31 July 2013) was 134,992. The website [www.farflungfamilies.net](http://www.farflungfamilies.net) has attracted 11,433 unique visitors with a total number of 30,706 page views between December 2010 and 31 July 2013. The websites have raised the public visibility of Berghahn's research and, as a result, she was invited in October 2009 to contribute to an international symposium and a German television programme entitled 'Suddenly so much Heimat: Changing Identity in Film, Culture and Society'. The public symposium was organised by the WDR (West German Broadcasting Corporation) and held at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. Berghahn was also interviewed for a documentary on the topic, broadcast by the WDR on 31 October 2009, watched by 90,000 viewers. The event, which was accompanied by a film season (*Heimat Feelings*) broadcast by the WDR between October and November 2009, was initiated by the WDR's Commissioner for Integration and Cultural Diversity and the Head of Television Drama and Film. It brought together filmmakers, journalists, film critics, policy makers and international film scholars and promoted a new concept of *Heimat*, identity and belonging, thereby supporting the WDR's mission to promote cultural diversity and integration. As Berghahn's research demonstrates (esp. Output 2), *Heimat* may be a German word but in the age of transnational migration, it has gained new meanings for the transnationally mobile citizens of plural worlds.

Berghahn created further impact through her research on the diasporic family in film through public film screenings and Q&A sessions with filmmakers at the Ciné Lumière in London. These screenings brought contested socio-political issues such as the practice of honour killings (*When We Leave*, 2010) and the integration of diasporic families into majority culture (*Almanya - Welcome to Germany*, 2011) to public attention. Despite being critically acclaimed, these films have not had a theatrical release in Britain. *When We Leave*, which was Germany's nomination for the Academy Awards in 2011, had only been shown once at the Human Rights Film Festival in London before Berghahn made it accessible to the general public at the Ciné Lumière on 21 May 2011. In a lively Q&A session with writer-director Feo Aladağ, the audience had the opportunity to discuss issues of cultural diversity and, in particular, the controversial issue of honour killings in Turkish Muslim families. Although *Almanya – Welcome to Germany* attracted over 1.4 million viewers in Germany alone and has been released in cinemas in ten European countries, it has not found a distributor in the UK. Berghahn premiered this feel-good integration comedy at the Ciné Lumière to a full house on 18 January 2012 (and subsequently at the Goethe Institute on 15 May 2013). In a Q&A session with the writer-director siblings Nesrin and Yasemin Samdereli, members of the public, and school classes who attended the screening, discussed how this film engages with and debunks ethnic stereotypes and interacts with public debates about immigration, integration and cultural diversity. A podcast of the Q&A session is available on Berghahn's research project website (source 7).

##### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Testimonial of the Co-founder and Director of Studies, corroborating that Berghahn's Migrant Cinema Network was the most significant impetus for the foundation of BABYLON.
2. Email correspondence with BABYLON alumna corroborating BABYLON's contribution to realising the production of the film *Abgebrannt*.
3. <http://www.babylon-film.eu> BABYLON website corroborates the close collaboration between BABYLON and the Research Network [www.migrantcinema.net](http://www.migrantcinema.net)
4. [http://www.farflungfamilies.net/podcasts/item/negotiating\\_between\\_artistic\\_ambitions\\_funding\\_and\\_the\\_market\\_place](http://www.farflungfamilies.net/podcasts/item/negotiating_between_artistic_ambitions_funding_and_the_market_place) podcast of an industry panel corroborating the relevance of Berghahn's research for media professionals
5. <http://www.babylon-film.eu/events.php> and <http://www.britflicks.co.uk/blog.aspx?blogid=190> corroborates that the issues addressed by Berghahn's research and the BABYLON initiative have attracted industry attention and media coverage
6. [http://www.wdr.de/unternehmen/presselounge/pressemitteilungen/2009/10/20091014\\_heimat-symposium.phtml](http://www.wdr.de/unternehmen/presselounge/pressemitteilungen/2009/10/20091014_heimat-symposium.phtml) press release documents Berghahn's participation in the public symposium *Suddenly So Much Heimat*, organised by WDR television in Cologne, and that her research feeds into public debates on immigration and cultural diversity
7. [http://www.farflungfamilies.net/podcasts/item/q\\_a\\_session\\_with\\_filmmakers](http://www.farflungfamilies.net/podcasts/item/q_a_session_with_filmmakers) podcast of an interview with filmmakers Yasemin and Nesrin Samdereli corroborates that Berghahn, who organised the UK premiere of *Almanya – Welcome to Germany* in London, has enhanced awareness of diasporic filmmaking amongst the cinema-going public