The spatial issue of the disputed territories between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Baghdad

The ongoing breakdown of the state in Iraq is somehow veiling the unsettle issue of the disputed territories on the edge of the autonomous Kurdish region, defined by the 2005 post-baathist Constitution. Despite an article in the Constitution and a UN plan to solve the crisis within two years after the Constitution’s implementation, the situation of the 30’000sq/km space in-between the two entities of the Iraqi federation stayed unsolved. This presentation intends to highlight the various dimension and issues at stake with these territories, caught between the identity politics of the KRG claims and the Baghdad sovereign state policy, the latter being hold up by the Shi’ite since the end of the Baathist era. In the middle of the disputed territories, one may find huge hydrocarbon resources that are whetting appetite of the rival parties. These are including several regional powers (Turkey, Iran, Russia) and local militias linked to these states in Sinjar, Kirkuk or Tuz Khurmatu, three case study of disputed territories. In this presentation, we will discuss the type of conceptualization that is required to catch the whole picture, at different scale and different moment of the process – before ISIS invasion, before the Kurdish referendum of 2017 and after – in order to describe a contemporary form of political in-betweenness.

Readings