

***LERC Attends International Conference on Relationships between Diasporas and Their 'Homelands' and Their Impact on the State, National Identities, and Peace & Conflict.***

Reported by Shereen Mahshi, Intern, *Winner of the Akiki Grant*

The Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at NDU attended an international conference entitled *Relationships between Diasporas and Their 'Homelands' and Their Impact on the State, National Identities, and Peace & Conflict*, on February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2012 at the Lebanese American University (LAU) which through group and roundtable discussions studied the different perspectives on the matter and the possibility of future collaboration between the participants.

The organizers of this international conference included Dr. Paul Tabar, Marie Murray, and Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss from the Institute for Migration Studies at LAU, Dr. Anton Escher and Tobias Boos from the Johannes Gutenberg-Universitat, Mainz, Germany.

LERC Director Guita Hourani, and LERC Chief Indexer and Archivist Liliane Haddad attended the conference. They were part of Group A, chaired by Ray Jureidini, a professor at LAU.

The participants in Group A also included Isabel Ruck with her paper on the '*The Diaspora's Role in homeland peacekeeping: The case of the Lebanese Maronite, Greek Orthodox and Armenian Community*' where she focused on the three Christian communities and how they have been involved in the politics of their homeland.

Alice Crabtree discussed the Lebanese government's proposal to extend voting rights to non-resident Lebanese citizens in her paper titled '*The Widening of the Sectarian Gap at Home and Abroad: Transnational Electoral Participation in the Lebanese Diaspora*'.

Cornelia Epuras and Semanur Karaman in their paper titled '*A Dialogue between Past and Future-The Lebanese Diaspora and Trans-national Political Participation*' explored the identity politics embedded in Lebanese diasporas scattered around the world, with the primary objective of conducting a comparative trans-national study on Muslim and Christian Lebanese diasporas to qualitatively measure disembedded national identity and sense of continuity to the homeland.

Finally, Cynthia Salloum in her paper '*Lebanese diaspora in France, Mexico and the USA: A comparative approach of a political incorporation*' studied how the Lebanese communities in the three host countries incorporate politically and how the states allow this incorporation to occur.