

ELIZABETH M. EKREN, PhD

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Cosmopolitan social scientist ready to advance interdisciplinary insights with mixed-methods approaches, data-driven stories, and solutions-oriented thinking in human development and resiliency contexts. Proven experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection, management, analysis, and visualization, as well as multi-stakeholder communication of results.

EDUCATION

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Development Studies** **2021**
University of Bonn, Center for Development Studies (*Summa cum laude*)
- **Thesis:** Agency, opportunity structure and empowerment in everyday refugee life: Enduring and overcoming challenges of daily living in Cologne refugee shelters
 - **Skills gained:** Understanding of interdisciplinary development issues; familiarity with resilience approaches, community-based interventions, evaluation frameworks, and logic models; content expertise in systems strengthening, governance, political economy, and measures of multidimensional socioeconomic development
- Master of Science (MSc), Russian and East European Studies** **2010**
University of Oxford (*with Distinction in the thesis*)
- **Thesis:** Getting down to business: Evaluating the relationship between formal legal institutions and the status of small enterprise development in Russia and Georgia
- Bachelor of Arts (BA), Psychology, Russian Language** **2009**
Yale University (*with Distinction in both majors*)
- **Thesis (Psychology):** Language, Play, and Early Intervention: Ensuring the Healthy Social Emotional Development of Deaf Children
 - **Thesis (Russian Language):** Paradox, Juxtaposition and the Historical Context in Anna Akhmatova's *Requiem*
- Associate of Arts (AA), German Language** **2016**
US Department of Defense, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (*Dean's List*)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Postdoctoral Research Scholar** **July 2023 – present**
Translational Health Research Center, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX
- Design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research studies that assess social determinants of health and resilience in various Texas contexts
- Research Coordinator** **February 2021 – July 2023**
Texas School Safety Center, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX
- Design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research studies that assess the performance, success points, and improvement areas of school safety intervention programs
 - Carry out evaluations and impact analyses of training programs offered to thousands of school stakeholders across Texas
 - Design protocol and instruments for survey, interview, and focus group research
 - Perform quantitative analysis and data visualizations for large primary data sets, such as state-wide survey data
 - Conduct interviews and focus groups with a variety of participant types
 - Capture and present research results and stakeholder communications in the form of white papers, briefs, reports, literature reviews, conference abstracts, journal manuscripts, graphics, and newsletters
 - Oversee quality and successful execution of research and evaluation activities with project management software
 - Write and review materials and applications for federal and private foundation grant submissions
 - Coordinate partnerships with university faculty and research centers to obtain funding and broaden research impact

- Security Policy Research Intern** **Summer 2009**
National Defense University, Washington, DC
- Serve as research intern for Dr. Richard Andres, compiling energy/utility sector security topics for multimedia content
- Foreign Policy Research Intern** **Summer 2008**
The Heritage Foundation, Washington, DC
- Serve as research intern for Dr. Nigel Gardiner, compiling US-European topics for speeches, editorials, and white papers
- Intelligence Aid** **Summer 2007**
Office of Naval Intelligence, Washington, DC
- Support general naval security and Caribbean-area research using open-source and classified documents
- Policy Assistant** **Summer 2006**
Office of Kentucky Secretary of State, Frankfort, KY
- Develop content for state educational and election materials and support electronic archiving of historical documents

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Manager, Consulting Programs and Content Development** **July 2012 – July 2015**
AssetMark, Inc., Concord, CA
- Manage and support individual business management consulting engagements for 50+ clients to include designing customized business improvement plans and key performance indicator tracking tools
 - Write market research reports on financial services market trends and internal program evaluation reports using a variety of quantitative sales metrics and qualitative customer experience commentary
 - Collaborate with multidisciplinary teams to design content for interactive workshops and national conferences
 - Present at and facilitate interactive and rigorous learning sessions, workshops, and webinars
- Consultant** **October 2010 – July 2012**
Booz Allen Hamilton, Various locations
- Edit and compile intelligence reports and research products for dissemination through public and government channels
 - Evaluate and contextualize key performance indicators to assist senior leaders in strategic decision-making regarding improving operational processes

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- Al Munajed, D. & **Ekren, E.** (2020). Exploring the impact of multidimensional refugee vulnerability on distancing as a protective measure against COVID-19: The case of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Turkey. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 1-2, 100023.
- Ekren, E.** (2018). How can theories of institutional design and everyday innovation reveal agency for change in refugee communities? *International Journal of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies*, 3(2), 5-18.
- Ekren, E.** (2018). Obstacles to refugees' self-reliance in Germany. *Forced Migration Review*, (58), 30-32.

MANUSCRIPTS AND RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

- Valerio-Wright, L., Vaughn-Drinkard, A., **Ekren, E.**, Barnes, V. (Under review with *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*). A content analysis of memoranda of understanding between Texas public school districts and law enforcement agencies
- Ekren, E.**, Villagran, M., Tomasso, M. (target YE 2023). Mapping resilience for a transdisciplinary research framework: A machine-learning-based content analysis of 50 years of resilience literature
- Ekren, E.**, Hall, R., Pierdolla, E., Barnes, V., Boynton, C, Jarzombek, A., Morrish, D. (target May 2024). Examining the influence of facility design and planning on the security of career and technical education facilities in Texas public schools
- May, M., **Ekren, E.**, Roche, S., Barnes, V., Jarzombek, A., Acosta, H. (target May 2024). A model of personnel role-based motivation and implementation of school behavioral threat assessment processes in Texas public schools

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND PAPERS

- Co-presenter, *Motivational factors influencing school behavioral threat assessment processes*, Texas Association of School Administrators Convention, txEDCON23 (Dallas, Texas), 2023
- Presenter, *How Learning From Plane Crashes Can Make Schools Safer*, TedX at Texas State University 2023 (available at: <https://youtu.be/c8F-tJ8NJuc>), TED Editor's Pick, April 25, 2023
- Co-presenter, *Exploring the impact of multidimensional refugee vulnerability on distancing as a protective measure against COVID-19*, Bi-annual Conference of the German Anthropological Association (Remote/Bremen, Germany), 2021
- Presenter, *"Too many people, too many differences:" Limits to self-organization and community-driven change in Cologne refugee shelters*, 3rd Conference of the German Network of Forced Migration Researchers (Remote/Cologne, Germany), 2020
- Presenter, *Forever refugee? Exclusion, state negotiations, and the distinction of refugeehood in Cologne, Germany*, (Paper) Bi-annual Conference of the German Anthropological Association (Konstanz, Germany), 2019
- Presenter, *Institutions and agency for change in everyday refugee life*, 2nd International Research and Policy Workshop on Migration and Development, German Development Institute (Bonn, Germany), 2018
- Presenter, *Institutions and agency for change in everyday refugee life*, Workshop on Translocal Conflict Dynamics Among Refugees, Bonn International Center for Conversion (Bonn, Germany), 2018
- Presenter, *How can theories of institutional design and everyday innovation reveal agency for change in refugee communities?*, International Conference on Refugee and Forced Immigration Studies, EMARC (Istanbul, Turkey), 2017
- Presenter, *Obstacles to refugees' self-reliance in Germany*, MDE Workshop on Refugee Entrepreneurship (Bremen, Germany), 2017
- Presenter, *Institutions, innovation, and opportunity in asylum-seeker communities: Evidence from North Rhein Westphalia, Germany*, Institutional and Organizational Economics Academy, Scientific Institute of Cargèse (Corsica, France), 2017

GRANT-WRITING EXPERIENCE

- Awarded*: Author/key research personnel, *Establishing a dedicated state resource to provide technical assistance to support behavioral threat assessment implementation in Texas public schools*, Bureau of Justice Assistance STOP School Violence Program, O-BJA-2023-171666, Award #15PBJA-23-GG-04397-STOP (\$1,560,987)
- Applied, unfunded*: Co-author/key research personnel, *Testing the impact of a school behavioral threat assessment implementation toolkit in Texas public schools*, National Institute of Justice O-NIJ-2023-171616, August 2023
- Applied, unfunded*: Co-PI, *The influence of school policing MOUs on shaping personnel's handling of problematic student behavior*, William T. Grant Foundation Officer's Research Grant, 2022

SOFTWARE AND LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Qualitative data analysis and coding software: ATLAS.ti, NVivo, Leximancer
- Survey development software: Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey, GoogleForms
- Microsoft Office Suite: Excel (advanced analysis, queries, pivot tables), PowerPoint (data visualizations and presentations), Office, Visio, Project, Outlook, Teams
- Citation management software: Citavi, Endnote, Zotero
- Statistical software: SPSS, R, Excel
- Languages: English (native); German (C1/B2); Russian (A2/A1)

KEY AWARDS AND HONORS

- Nominee, National Dissertation Prize, German Anthropological Association, 2022
- PhD funding recipient, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (€45,000), 2017 – 2019
- Scholarship recipient, National Military Family Association (\$2,000), 2017 – 2019
- Scholarship recipient, International Promovieren in Deutschland - für alle, conference grant (\$1,000), 2018
- Fellowship recipient, Charles G. Koch Summer Fellowship for the Study of Institutional Economics, 2010
- Award recipient, Yale University Henry W. Scott Slavic Languages and Literatures Thesis Prize (\$500), 2009
- Award recipient, Kentucky Colonel's Commission for distinguished work and service in the state of Kentucky, 2006