



Invitation

Tuesday, October 1st, 2013, 5 pm

Secular Risk Governmentality Against the "Risk of Islamism": Looking Back to the Turkish Military's Battle With Political Islam

Venue

Zentrum Moderner Orient

Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin

Lecture by Hülya Arik

During one of the most vibrant social upheavals in the history of modern Turkey, on June 27th 2013, the ruling JDP government proposed a parliamentary bill to redefine the tasks and responsibilities of the Turkish Military. The bill aimed to eliminate the legal grounds of military intervention in civilian politics, which had been used as the leverage to suppress political Islam, specifically from 1980s through 2000s. Defined as the guardian of the Turkish Republic and its ideological principles, the Turkish Military has actively worked to not only ward off political arena from "Islamist" parties, but also to institute a particular understanding of secularism and a secular life style as a norm. In this talk, I examine how the Turkish Military mobilized secularist security discourses and practices within its own structure to securitize the military personnel, their families and everyday spaces of the military. Particularly epitomized in the image of the headscarved "Islamist" military wife, the military defines the "risk of Islamism" through "excessive" forms of religious embodiment and practice, which is the seepage of religion outside the confines of private sphere and individuals' conscience. Residing in every individual as a potential in the form of religious faith, securitization against "risk of Islamism" required renewed and encompassing forms of surveillance and risk technologies that aimed to regulate individuals across institutional and everyday levels. The official security regulations of the military has also given way to hybrid practices that turned individuals into security agents who monitor and police each other and themselves to maintain the "secularity" of military spaces. Drawing on Michel Foucault's works, I define the security practices of the Turkish Military as an amalgamation of precautionary risk governance (dispositif of risk) and secular governmentality, and I reflect on how particular forms of the self, sociability and space are constructed at the intersections of secularism and national security.

Hülya Arik is a doctoral candidate at the Geography department of the York University, Toronto. Her primary research interests are feminist geography, geographies of religion and secularism, security theories and militarism. The working title of her dissertation is "Secular Bodyscapes: Intersections of Security and Secularism in the Construction of the Female Body".

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