



ZMO-Kolloquium

“New Perspectives on Gender and Globalization”

Thursday, 17 June 2010, 6 pm

Young Women’s Urban Lifestyles in Riyadh: Between National Reform and Global Dynamics

Lecture by Dr. Amélie Le Renard

Venue

Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
Conference Hall

14129 Berlin

In the last decade, Saudi Arabian government policies promoting reform have encouraged the development of the private sector, the nationalization of jobs, and, linked to this, Saudi women’s work. This has opened new spaces and opportunities to some Saudi women – especially the young, urban, educated. Through this process, norms of femininity, class and national belonging are reshaped.

Based on eleven months of ethnographic fieldwork in Riyadh between 2005 and 2010, this lecture will explore the interactions between national reform, global dynamics and urban young women’s practices regarding professional work and consumption in Riyadh, the Saudi capital. It will show to which extent the policies of national reform, which are deeply embedded in global dynamics of economic liberalization, are a necessary condition to the emergence of mobile, professional and consumerist lifestyles among Saudi women, shaping new femininities.

Amélie Le Renard is a postdoctoral fellow of the Graduate School of Muslim Cultures and Societies at Freie Universität, Berlin. She completed her PhD in political sociology at Sciences Po, Paris, in 2009, after studying political science, Arabic and Persian in Paris. Between 2005 and 2010, she spent eleven months altogether in the Saudi capital as an invited researcher at King Faisal Center for Islamic research and studies, during which she conducted ethnographic fieldwork on young Saudi women. In Fall 2009, she was a visiting PhD student at Columbia, supported by a Columbia-Paris Alliance Doctoral Mobility Grant.

Her PhD dissertation is entitled *Urban lifestyles and the reinvention of femininities: a political sociology of young Saudi women’s access to public spaces in Riyadh*. Among her publications in English is “Only for women: Women, the State and Reform in Saudi Arabia,” *Middle East Journal*, Fall 2008, pp.610-629. In French, she has published on charities in Saudi Arabia, Saudi women’s appropriations of religious discourses, and young Saudi women’s practices in shopping malls.

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