



blickwechsel
Contemporary Turkey Studies **Türkei**
A Programme by Stiftung Mercator



Call for Papers

The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Turkey

International Academic Workshop

28-30 September 2017

Department of Sociology, Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, Istanbul

Submission Deadline: 1 June 2017

On 28-30 September 2017, Bahçeşehir University's Department of Sociology will be hosting an international academic workshop on “The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Turkey.” The purpose of this workshop will be to investigate contemporary (counter)hegemonic discourses on culture in Turkish society. Political power in modern, capitalist societies, as outlined by Antonio Gramsci in his famous *Prison Notebooks*, works through consensus more than force. Consensus, however, is based on the ruling elite's ability to obtain cultural hegemony and to establish its world view as the commonly accepted norm. Accordingly, culture must be seen as a site of ideological struggle and a terrain of containment and resistance, in which different world views and ways of life compete with each other. From this perspective, the question of how a person lives—or, more particularly, how a person displays his or her way of life publicly—can easily turn into an ideological power struggle, resulting in the stigmatization of the ideological ‘other.’ Lifestyle presence, in this sense, can be an efficient means to lay claim to public space and to demand or contest political power. The issue of culture will be investigated from this perspective.

The organizers' approach to culture relies in great part on the tradition of British Cultural Studies. The production of culture is thus not restricted to the realm of the arts (theatre, cinema, visual arts, literature, etc.), but also explicitly includes the realm of the ordinary—that is, performative acts such as, for instance, consuming alcoholic beverages in public, wearing a particular form of dress, or using a specific rhetoric. Consequentially, this workshop aims to critically engage with questions of everyday cultural politics and institutionalized cultural policies alike. The organizers seek at bringing together researchers from different academic fields who are interested in critically discussing the politics of culture in contemporary

Turkey. The outcome of this workshop will function as a starting point for a joint book project.

This workshop is a cooperation between the Department of Sociology at Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi (BAU) and the Centre for Near and Middle Eastern Studies (CNMS) at Philipps-Universität Marburg. It is part of the program “Blickwechsel: Contemporary Turkey Studies,” funded by Stiftung Mercator and organized by Ass. Prof. Dr. Kaya Akyıldız and Dr. Pierre Hecker, who are coordinating a research project of the same title (“The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Turkey”). The organizers invite academics from the fields of anthropology, cultural studies, education studies, film and media studies, gender studies, literary studies, memory studies, political science, religious studies, and urban studies to submit papers focusing on the following issues, among others:

- cultural resistance and containment as represented in contemporary Turkish cinema, music, street art, fine arts, photography, literature, comic books, etc.
- neo-religious conservatism as represented in school curricula, television programs, fashion, pious entertainment, etc.
- neo-Ottomanism
- secular and religious lifestyle practices
- politics of difference and representations of nationalist, secular, pious, subcultural, etc. identities
- cultural economics and cultural policies
- politics of memory and the re-invention of national history

Speakers will be given **20 minutes** to present their papers and half an hour for Q&A at the end of their panels.

To apply, please email an abstract of your paper (300 words) to pierre.hecker@staff.uni-marburg.de. Please put “**BAU Workshop**” in the subject line. Please include your name, discipline of study, your academic affiliation, and your email address in the body of your email.

Deadline for the submissions is **01 June 2017**.

As an **invited speaker**, your expenses (travel, accommodation, meals) will be covered.

If you wish to attend the workshop without presenting a paper, please email your request to kaya.akyildiz@eas.bau.edu.tr. Please include your name, discipline of study, and your academic affiliation in the body of your email, and put “**BAU Workshop Attendee**” in the subject line. Only those who have expressed their interest in advance in this way will be able to participate in the workshop.