

## Workshop: Gender Politics and Feminist Activism in Turkey and Beyond

### Preliminary timetable

Time	Speaker and Title
9.30 – 10.00h	Welcome & Introduction
12.00	10.00-10.40 <i>Funda Hülagü</i> <b>Rethinking the Feminist Demands for Security in Turkey: Is a Politics of Emancipation still possible?</b>  10.40-11.20 Ayşe Çavdar <b>Searching for security, finding secularity: The role of femicide in the secularization of young women in the conservative religious families</b>  11.20-12.00 Pinar Tuzcu <b>Mobile Feminisms: Building Transnational Feminist Collaboration within and without the Academy</b>
12.00-13.00	Lunch
Panel II	13.00-13.40 İrem Akı <b>Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention: an analysis from a queer perspective</b>  13.40- 14.20 Begüm Başdaş <b>Spaces of Inquiry: LGBTI+ refugees at the borderlands of Europe</b>
14.20-14.40	Coffee break
14.40-16.00	<b>Closed meeting of the workshop participants</b>

Abstracts:

*Funda Hülagü (University of Marburg)*

### **Rethinking the Feminist Demands for Security in Turkey: Is a Politics of Emancipation still possible?**

This paper aims to critically review the current feminist interventions in and against the state in Turkey – with comparative insights from the wider Middle Eastern context – regarding the issues of gender-based violence and violence against women. The main premise of this analysis is that despite being lately the most active and persuasive social movement in the authoritarian context of the Erdoğan regime, the feminist mobilization for women's protection and human security risks of getting resigned and/or sub-alternised by the state. The paper proposes the social philosophical discussion of Rahel Jaeggi on the crisis of life-

forms as a potential skeleton key to a reinvigorated politics of emancipation in and beyond Turkey.

*Ayşe Çavdar (University of Marburg/Berlin)*

### **Searching for security, finding secularity: The role of femicide in the secularization of young women in the conservative religious families**

Femicide is unquestionably the most severe issue among the problems on the agenda of the feminist movement in Turkey. In recent years, the frequency of murders has increased considerably, and the deliberate reluctance of the state in taking effective measures on this matter also leads to an escalating resistance. Although in a few emblematic cases, the state authorities and the ruling AKP elite show symbolic enthusiasm in response to the murders, there is also a debate among conservative religious circles that the real cause of the femicide cases is the victims' behavior. Family-centered social policies and family propaganda, which the AKP government has been systematically implementing for years, provide a supportive basis for this classical conservative argumentation concerning femicide. In the presentation, I will focus on how the public debate regarding femicide resonates in the young women who grow up in conservative religious families. The conservative argument blaming the deceased women, claiming that they provoke the murderer with their various behaviors or decisions, leads young women to question whether they are safe in their own families and religious-conservative lifestyle. They look for alternative securities and meet the feminist movement, considering that they will not be with the family and the state when they "fall" in similar circumstances. The violence they see when they begin to question religiosity regarding both the lifestyle and mentality proves their doubts and fears and prompts them to recognize secularity as a promise of security. From this perspective, I will discuss how feminist activism on femicide inspire secularization, based on the experiences of young women I have been in contact with for nearly three years.

*Pinar Tuzcu (University Kassel)*

### **Mobile Feminisms: Building Transnational Feminist Collaboration within and without the Academy**

From its first institutional establishment, feminist studies has faced a constant struggle in the academy as a field of inquiry. Albeit its complex propositions of doing research and enriching perspectives, it has always occupied a precarious position as an academic area of knowledge. Highlighting the social, political, and economical tensions within the societies, feminist studies has also dealt with and developed ongoing discussions concerning its own approaches towards sexual diversity, racial inequalities, and eurocentric knowledge structures. With its concerns regarding social injustices in general, gender inequalities in particular, feminism in the academy today once again targeted by conservative, right-wing politics as a threatening project. With the global rise of right-wing-oriented advocates of hetero-patriarchal structures, both in the academy and beyond, the effort of invalidating feminist studies as an academic area of knowledge has gained a transnational character. In this talk, I will argue that we need to look for ways to create different forms of mobile feminist studies in order to build transnational collaborations and strategies to deal with the precarious position of feminist studies globally. With the term mobile feminism, this talk aims to take its energizing inspirations from the perspectives of critical migration studies,

digital feminism, and anti-racist movements to make feminism, both as a movement and as an area of knowledge, transnationally accessible (again).

*İrem Akı*

### **Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention: an analysis from a queer perspective**

Turkey withdrew from the Istanbul Convention by a presidential decree and the withdrawal was criticised by the Council of Europe, EU leaders, UN Special Rapporteurs, UN women, to name but a few. In all these statements, the emphasis was only on cis-women or violence against cis women. As many reports indicate gender violence does not only harm cis women, but also diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Therefore, we need an analysis beyond a framework which is based on the gender binary and heteronormativity. In this presentation, I will use a queer lens to analyse the process of the withdrawal and the consequent statements of politicians and woman organizations of Turkey.

*Begüm Başdaş* (Humboldt University Berlin)

### **Spaces of Injury: LGBTI+ refugees at the borderlands of Europe**

Abstract: There is no safe space in the camps at the borderlands of Europe and LGBTI+ refugees are lost, hidden, and invisible under multiple layers of everyday violence. Exacerbated by the physical conditions, to become visible as LGBTI+ in camps almost always means threat, mocking, assault and at times physical violence and rape. Furthermore, lack of common EU asylum laws effects LGBTI+ asylum seekers disproportionately throughout Europe. The situation is particularly worse on the overcrowded Greek hotspot islands. This paper discusses the conditions of the refugee camps on the Greek islands and questions our ethical responsibilities to render queer refugee lives visible.