

TRANSLOCAL COMMONS // A COLLOQUIUM WITH SUSAN BUCK-MORSS

31 October 2013, Albert Long Hall - Boğaziçi University Bebek Campus

PROGRAM

13.30-15.00 FLOWS AND BORDERS: GLOBAL, NATIONAL, REGIONAL

Unpacking “bulldozer” neoliberalization in Turkey: Side effects of AKP and beyond
Mine Eder, Professor of Political Science and International Studies, Boğaziçi University

Sovereignty

Mahmut Mutman, Professor of Cultural Studies, Istanbul Şehir University

“As if all life had vanished...”: The return of kurdish villagers to their hometowns
Şemsa Özar, Professor of Economics, Department of Economics, Boğaziçi University

Today, despite the resilience of global economic depression, economic values (goods as well as funds) continue to flow uninterruptedly across national borders. Indeed, the very integrated network of global financial markets creates unexpected and uneven outcomes across the globe. For instance, the sustained expansionary monetary policy by the US Federal Reserve (both prior to and after the 2008 Crash) has created highly suitable conditions for the strengthening and consolidation of the sovereignty of certain group of nation-states known as “emerging markets”. For the last decade, Turkey, an “emerging market” herself, has managed the flow of values rather successfully and consolidated its domestic as well as regional sovereignty. Yet, on the nether side of this success-story is the persistence of double-digit unemployment rates among the youth, the deepening indebtedness of middle and working classes and the increasing violence against women; the matter of the oppression of Kurds with its multiple dimensions, ranging from the fragmentation of the Kurds across four nation-states in the region and many others beyond, to their forced migration and dislocation to metropolises where they swell the ranks of the labor market; and the series of social antagonisms unleashed by the ecological destruction and the urban dislocation that results from the processes of accumulation proper as well as “accumulation by dispossession”. This complex picture incites us to think about flows and borders not only literally but also metaphorically: not only flows of values but also bodies; not only borders that delineate nation-states but also internal borders that divide regions within nations, neighborhoods within towns, districts within cities. Gendered bodies, silenced bodies moving across different labor markets, across different class statuses, some of them going upward, others downward.

15.15-16.45 RECLAIMING DEMOCRACY: POPULAR POLITICS BEYOND ELECTIONS

The gap that “government does not allow”: Populist containment of desire for democracy in Turkey
Dr. Ceren Özselçuk, Boğaziçi University, Sociology Department

Claims to self-rule in the fever of war in Syria

Dr. Seda Altuğ, The Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History, Boğaziçi University

Contesting pieties: searching for Islam in Islamism

Ayşe Çavdar, Journalist, researcher, Express Magazine and European University of Viadrina

Revolutionary uprisings across the Mediterranean basin, from Tunus to Tahrir and then back to Plaza del Sol in Spain, articulated a demand for freedom and democracy, whether it is against military-backed regimes of dictatorship or expert-backed regimes of neoliberal austerity. From the Occupy

movements in various incarnations all the way to the most recent uprisings at Gezi Park, given that they themselves refer to these uprisings, can be seen as the after-shocks of the revolutionary upheavals that began in 2011. While each and every uprising is an overdetermined event, they all tend to practice a horizontal politics and they tend to demand a deepening of democracy against the economic, political and cultural forms of authoritarianism. In particular, these uprisings, in the way they are being enacted, articulate and practice a new form of popular, participatory, horizontalist politics that cannot be contained by the limited channels of participation offered by electoral politics—even in those cases when the very objective of the movement is to secure a free and fair election or to aggregate itself into an electoral force.

While the standard geopolitical narratives of petro-economic interests or the worn-out culturalist narratives of religious rivalries may explain certain aspects of the matter, a yet to be accounted for factor that may help us make sense of what is novel in these tumultuous times in the Middle East is the very contemporaneity of these nascent forms of popular politics across the entire Mediterranean basin despite the unevenness of institutional forms (ranging from dictatorships to capitalist democracies) that enframe them. In this vein, while an Ottoman-revivalist neoliberal developmentalism remains to be the dominant modality in which Turkey projects herself both domestically and regionally, recent developments have shown that there are other kinds of political imaginaries that also question, rethink and render redundant both internal and external borders, albeit in different ways.

17.15-18.45 TRANSLOCAL COMMONS AND THE GLOBAL CROWD

A Public Lecture by

Susan Buck-Morss, Distinguished Professor of Political Philosophy, CUNY Graduate Center

SPEAKERS

Seda Altuğ studied in the department of Economics at Boğaziçi University and made her masters at the ATA Institute of the same university. Her MA was about popular nationalisms in the Sanjak of Alexandretta under the French mandate (1921- 1939). She received her PhD from Utrecht University, Department of Oriental Studies in 2011. Her dissertation was a historical anthropology study of sectarianism in Syria during the French mandate. Her current research is about the changing state-society and inter-communal relations during the Ottoman reform period and rise of agrarian capitalism in the countryside of Diyarbakır and Batman in mid-19th century. The land issue is the primary lens through which she deals with the increasing inter- and intra-communal violence between different ethno-religious groups in the region. Currently, she has been teaching at Boğaziçi University, ATA institute. Her research interests include inter-communal relations, modern Middle East history, empire and political economy.

Susan Buck-Morss is a distinguished Professor of Political Philosophy at the CUNY Graduate Center, NYC, where she is a core faculty member of the Committee on Globalization and Social Change. She is Professor Emeritus in the Government Department of Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. Her work crosses disciplines, including Art History, Architecture, Comparative Literature, Cultural Studies, German Studies, Philosophy, History, and Visual Culture. She is currently writing on the philosophy of history: *History as the Cosmology of Modernity*. <http://susanbuckmorss.info>

Ayşe Çavdar graduated from Ankara University, department of Journalism and received an MA in history from Boğaziçi University. She has worked as a journalist for *Yeni Yüzyıl*, *Nokta*, *Ülke*, *Atlas*, *Istanbul*, *Express* and *Bir+Bir*, and was an adjunct lecturer at Kadir Has University, where she gave courses on journalism and public relations. In 2010 her extensive interview with the sociologist Nilufer Göle was published as a book titled *Mahrem'in Göçü (The Migration of the Intimacy)*. Together with Pelin Tan she co-edited the book titled *Müstesna Şehrin İstisna Hali (The State of Exception in an Exceptional City)*.

Mine Eder is a professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Boğaziçi University. She received her PHD. from University of Virginia where she specialised on political economy of late-industrialisation. She has written extensively on various aspects of Turkey's political economy including regionalism, populism, and welfare state reforms. Her recent work focuses on two related themes, processes of marginalization/ segmentation in Istanbul and vulnerabilities of female migrant workers. She is currently working on a book manuscript on female migration in Turkey. Mine Eder was also a visiting professor at Yale University 2006-2007 and 2009-2010.

Mahmut Mutman teaches cultural theory, media and cultural studies in the Department of Cinema and Television and is the coordinator of the MA Program in Cultural Studies at the Istanbul Sehir University, Turkey. He is the author of *The Politics of Writing Islam: Voicing Difference (forthcoming from Bloomsbury/Continuum in 2004)* and has a collection on orientalism as well as several articles on orientalism, nationalism, postmodernism, and film and media published in *Cultural Critique*, *Postmodern Culture*, *New Formations*, *Rethinking Marxism*, *Anthropological Theory*, *Radical Philosophy*, *Third Text*, and *Parallax*.

Şemsa Özar graduated from Boğaziçi University in 1978 with an MA degree in Economics. She worked at the State Institute of Statistics (1978-1980) and Industrial Development Bank of Turkey (1980-1983) and went on to study at the Institute of Advanced Studies and Scientific Research in Vienna/Austria (1986-88). In 1990 she graduated from Wirtshaftsuniversitaet, Vienna with a PhD. Since 1990 she teaches at Boğaziçi University primarily economic development and gender courses. Her research and writing concentrates on gender aspects of work, social policy, forced migration, informal labor and micro and small enterprises. Her recent publication, *Ne Değişti? Kürt Kadınların Zorunlu Göç Deneyimi (What Has Changed? Kurdish Women's Experiences of Forced Migration)* coauthored by Handan Çağlayan and Ayşe Tepe Doğan offers a gendered perspective on the immigration of Kurds in Turkey. She is a feminist activist and a founding member of the Initiative for Women's Labor and Employment, a network of 24 women's NGOs working against discrimination of women in paid and unpaid work. She is also a founding member of DİSA (Diyarbakır Institute for Political and Social Research), an institute primarily conducting and disseminating research on social, economic and political problems related with the Kurdish issue.

Ceren Özselçuk is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. Her research intersects the fields of post-Althusserian thought, Marxian political economy and Lacanian psychoanalysis. She is a member of the editorial board of the journal *Rethinking Marxism*. She has published and co-authored essays in edited book volumes and a number of academic journals in English and Turkish such as *Rethinking Marxism*, *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society*, *Subjectivity* and *Toplum ve Bilim*. She is currently finishing a book entitled, *Economic Necessity, Political Contingency and the Limits of Post-Marxism* (forthcoming in Routledge New Political Economy Book Series). She is also working on a new book manuscript (together with Yahya Madra), provisionally entitled as *Sexuating Class: A Psychoanalytical Critique of Political Economy*.