



Contemporary
Turkish Studies

LSE Contemporary Turkish Studies Public Lecture

Wednesday, 4 February 2015

18.30-20:00

Venue: NAB.1.04, First Floor, New Academic Building (NAB), LSE

“State Violence and the Ethics of the Minority Question in Turkey”

Speaker: Dr. Kabir Tambar (Stanford University)

Chair: Associate Professor Esra Özyürek (LSE)

The category of “minority” has been constitutive of “the people” in Turkey, distilling those who do not belong to the history and destiny of the nation from those who do. “Minority,” in this sense, is not simply a demographic classification, nor merely a matter of legal recognition. It carries the weight of a historical judgment, which scaffolds ethical community by delineating which populations, languages, and religions remain outside of the framework of collective obligation and responsibility. Dr. Tambar examines comments delivered by a pro-Kurdish political party and a largely Kurdish mothers-of-the-disappeared group during the Gezi Park protests of 2013. These moments of public address participated in the broader spirit of state critique on display during those protests. They were noteworthy, however, for recasting the Gezi events as a late moment in a longer history of state violence, prefigured by a century of dispossession experienced by those who have been classed as minorities or threatened with that designation. The commentaries interrogated what we might call the negative historicity of the minority. They were not primarily aimed at repudiating that historical judgment as discriminatory or contrary to law, but instead sought to delocalize the judgment vested in the category of minority, to see in that judgment an increasingly generalized economy of political abjection, and in effect to view it as prefiguring an ethical community to come.

Kabir Tambar is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Stanford University. His work has largely centred on Turkey and has explored questions of citizenship, religion, and the politics of history. This research led to the publication of a book, *The Reckoning of Pluralism: Political Belonging and the Demands of History* (Stanford University Press, 2014). Tambar has also begun new research on military rule and the instabilities of mass politics.

This event is free and open to all. No ticket is required.

For further information about the LSE Contemporary Turkish Studies and its seminars and other activities, please contact:

E-mail: euroinst.turkish.studies@lse.ac.uk or Tel: +44 (020) 7955 6067

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/europeanInstitute/research/ContemporaryTurkishStudies/Home.aspx>