

## *The State of Democracy in Turkey: Institutions, Society and Foreign Relations*

### Workshop Programme

20 March 2015, 08.30 – 16.30, Room 9.04, Tower 2, Clement's Inn, LSE

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**08.30 - 09.00**      **Coffee and registration**

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**09.00 - 09.15**      **Introduction**

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**09.15 - 11.15**      **Session One: State Institutions and the Rule of Law**

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**The constitution and legal changes**

Dr Levent Korkut, Medipol Üniversitesi

**The judiciary, the legislature and separation of powers**

Dr Levent Köker, Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi

**Security sector reform and democratisation during the AKP era**

Dr Yaprak Gürsoy, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi

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**11.15 - 11.30**      **Coffee Break**

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**11.30 - 13.30**      **Session Two: Civil Society and Political Culture**

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**Rethinking political opposition: splits in the city and schisms in the state**

Dr Berna Turam, Northeastern University

**Minority issues in Turkey**

Dr Mücahit Bilici, John Jay College, City University

**Body, violence, and the state in new Turkey**

Dr Can Aciksoz, University of Arizona

**Between Culturalism and Capitalism: the localisation of LGBT identities in Turkey**

Dr Serkan Delice, London College of Fashion

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**13.30 - 14.30**      **Lunch**

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**14.30 - 16.30**      **Session Three: Democracy, the European Union and the Middle East**

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**The trajectory of legal reform for advancing human rights in Turkey and the role of civil society**

Emma Sinclair Webb, Human Rights Watch

**Backsliding into authoritarianism in Turkey: the European Union accession process and the limits of political conditionality**

Dr Meltem Müftüler-Baç, Sabancı Üniversitesi

**Turkey and the Middle East: Turkish activism and value-based foreign policy**

Dr Nuri Yurdusev, Middle East Technical University

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## **Paper Abstracts**

### **Session One: State Institutions and the Rule of Law**

#### **The constitution and legal changes**

**Dr Levent Korkut, Hacettepe Üniversitesi**

This paper explores the long-standing constitutional debates in Turkey and the changes to the constitution that have been proposed and carried out over the past decade. In particular, it focuses on the effect that the constitutional processes have had on democratic practices and institutions.

#### **The judiciary, the legislature and separation of powers**

**Dr Levent Köker, Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi**

This paper analyses the role of the judiciary and legislature both separately and together, and looks at their relationship with the executive. It explores the question of judicial independence in Turkey and the internal changes undergone by the judiciary, as well as the main transformations to the position and powers of the Turkish National Assembly.

#### **Security sector reform and democratisation during the AKP era**

**Dr Yaprak Gursoy, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi**

Security sector reform has been at the heart of questions of democracy and democratisation in Turkey. This paper explores its evolution in the post-2002 period, focusing on the role of the armed forces, intelligence and police services. It argues that reforms in civil-military relations brought Turkey close to being an ideal type of democracy. However, an overall assessment, not only of civil-military relations, but also of the police and intelligence services, tells us that these reforms fell short of bringing about democratisation.

## **Session Two: Civil Society and Political Culture**

### **Rethinking political opposition: splits in the city and schisms in the state**

**Dr Berna Turam, Northeastern University**

This paper discusses changes and continuities in state-civil society relations, with specific emphasis on the complex network of relations between *cemaat*, state, and the government. It also explores the tension between growing demands for societal freedoms and heightening authoritarian tendencies of the Turkish government.

### **Minority issues in Turkey**

**Dr Mücahit Bilici, City University**

This paper explores the evolution of government policies and popular attitudes towards minorities. The focus of the presentation will be on the peace process with the Kurds and, more broadly, issues of recognition and the ignoring of their demands. The presentation will also focus on the AKP's attitudes towards sectarian issues and their impact on the Alevi population.

### **Body, violence, and the state in new Turkey**

**Dr Salih Can Aciksoz, University of Arizona**

This paper builds on the findings of two ethnographic research projects: one on the disabled army veterans of the Kurdish conflict and the other on the use of tear gas during the *Gezi* protests. It examines the changing discursive and technological modalities of political violence in Turkey. Focusing on the political production of disabled bodies in relation to different configurations of sovereignty and state violence, this paper analyses the violent contents and discontents of the AKP era.

### **Between culturalism and capitalism: the localisation of LGBT identities in Turkey**

**Dr Serkan Delice, London College of Fashion**

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) movement plays a leading role in giving voice to broader demands for increased freedoms and recognition of difference in Turkey. Whilst recognising the centrality of the movement to the struggle for democracy, this paper focuses on the concomitant and problematic localisation of LGBT identities in Islamist and neo-Ottomanist discourses, which obscure and reinforce the hegemony of capitalism.

## **Session Three: Democracy, the European Union and the Middle East**

### **The trajectory of legal reform for advancing human rights in Turkey and the role of civil society**

**Emma Sinclair Webb, Human Rights Watch**

This paper explores the impact of international norms, either through the legal process or more informally in terms of ideas and norms, on the development of democratic laws, attitudes and institutions in Turkey. This is done through investigating legislative changes, government initiatives and civil society practices.

### **Backsliding into authoritarianism in Turkey: the European Union accession process and the limits of political conditionality**

**Dr Meltem Müftüler-Baç, Sabanci Üniversitesi**

This paper assesses the impact of the changing EU-Turkey relationship on democratic practices, laws and institutions in Turkey, placing the accession process within the context of the broader political relationship between Turkey and the EU.

### **Turkey and the Middle East: Turkish activism and value-based foreign policy**

**Dr Nuri Yurdusev, Middle East Technical Üniversitesi**

This paper investigates the impact of democratic norms on Turkey's foreign policy towards the Middle East, simultaneously looking at the ways in which this foreign policy has influenced political practice and ideologies within Turkey itself.