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CONGRESS

Middle East and Muslim Worlds
Studies

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Panel 29

Spaces of Negotiation in Migrants' Dynamics in Turkey

Since the years 2010, and particularly after the «Arab springs», Turkey has experienced an increase in the number of migrants, unprecedented in its strength and the origins of the people involved in these dynamics. Media and research attention is directed towards Syrians, although some of these migrants come from other Arab countries. They are refugees, regular or irregular migrants, students, businessmen or tourists.

This panel explores the dynamics of Arab migration in Turkey and focuses on Istanbul. It is here that the local, national, regional and global intersect, and that different forms of politicization and contestation emerge. This implies a reflection on the tensions and possibilities offered by the city, and on the dynamics which show a particular cosmopolitanism.

This will involve describing the discourses and practices of individuals and actors (governments, opposition groups, businessmen, NGO workers, intellectuals, the media) who adjust their discourses and postures according to the political, social or economic situation. The multidimensional processes of negotiation in action affect several levels (state or non-state) and are of interest to the whole population (Turkish and migrant). We will analyze institutional discourses, reactions within Turkish society and individual tactics implemented by migrants, as well as the different hierarchies that exist within this group (in terms of nationality/dual nationality or region of origin, social class, gender or date of arrival).

People in charge : Gasparotto Mariangela (IRIS, IFEA) et Kaya Uğur Baran (Nişantaşı, IFEA, CeTOBaC)
Discussant : Bourmaud Philippe (Lyon 3 – Jean Moulin, LARHRA, IFEA)

Program

Nouran Gad (CHERPA, Science Po Aix et Institut Français des Études Anatoliennes, IFEA)

What is the status of the «politics» of «Arab» migrants in Istanbul?

Numbers of the MENA (the Middle East and North Africa) countries population is subsequent of so-called "Arab Springs". Most of them arrived after taking part directly or indirectly in these events, or after having seen their life affected by this sequence of popular revolts and its consequences in their countries of origin. Once in Istanbul, a large proportion of them opt to some specific sectors such as journalism, media or research. Without always showing any will to activism or political mobilization, they nevertheless excel in the field of "politics without appearing to be", allowing to build the image of Istanbul as the capital of the Arab opposition.

Mariangela Gasparotto (IRIS/IFEA)

Young Palestinians in Istanbul

Without being directly related to “Arab springs”, Palestinian circulations in Turkey have been increasing rapidly since 2000. Most Palestinians in Istanbul are students, but they are also restaurant owners or workers, who came to study or work. Their presence is certainly encouraged by the strong and vocal support by the AKP leadership who presents itself as the “natural” defender of Palestinians, in the name of Islam and of the Muslim community. Nevertheless, Istanbul emerges as a place of fluctuation, where people forge new spaces where they can distance themselves (even if only partially) from the social, sexual, and religious norms of their community. My presentation will describe daily practices in Istanbul, which will show appropriations, fractures, and recompositions of public spaces.

Uğur Baran Kaya (Université de Nişantaşı, IFEA, CETOBaC)

Foreign students in Turkey: actors, challenges, negotiations

The number of foreign students attending higher education in establishments in Turkey has multiplied by 15 over the past 15 years. It reaches 155 000 in 2019. This substantial increase is to report on various political, ideological, economic, and (of course) personal reasons and involves various actors, both institutional and private. This paper seeks to develop the debate on international students in Turkey, and, more specifically, on those who come from Arab countries. I will analyze the objectives, strategies, and tactics of all parties involved, and examine interactions and ongoing negotiations taking place between these actors around current issues.

Solène Poyraz (EHESS/CETOBaC, IFEA)

Intellectuals of Turkey and the Syrian fact

My study will focus more precisely on Turkish intellectuals who developed an expertise on the Syrian crisis (arrival and settlement of Syrians, terrorist attacks, military operations, ...) since 2011. Through an inventory of scientific productions and a prosopographical approach of some intellectuals, I will question their role in the construction of a speech about the Syrian fact in Turkey. Consequently, I will tackle the relationship between the intellectuals and power, and the mechanisms of ideas’ circulation. It leads to the reflection about the creation of a strategic action field about Syria in Turkey, implying actors, but also power struggles and strategies.