Worksop

Intersections of Youth, Gender, and Religion
under Digital Media

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DFG Project "Piety and Secularity Contested: Family and Youth Politics in post-Kemalist 'New Turkey'", Institute for the Study of Religion, Leipzig University

in cooperation with

DFG Humanities Group Multiple Secularities: Beyond the West, Beyond

Modernities

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26-27 September 2024, Leipzig, Germany

Venue: Strohsack, Room 4.55, Nikolaistraße 8-10, 04109 Leipzig

The workshop will be held in hybrid format. To register for online participation, please send an email to uelker.soezen@uni-leipzig.de by September 25, Wednesday.

Convenor:

Dr. Ülker Sözen, Institute for the Study of Religion, Leipzig University & Chair of Development Politics, University of Passau

PROGRAMME

September 26, Thursday

- *13:00 - 13:30 Registration & Coffee*

- *13:30 - 13:45 Opening & Introduction*

    Markus Dressler, Leipzig University

    Ülker Sözen, Leipzig University & University of Passau

- *13:45 - 15:15 Gender, Religion, Politics 1*

    Chair: Ülker Sözen, Leipzig University & University of Passau

    "Gender rights after the historic fall of political Islam: Digital mobilizing of legal reform in post-2011 Arab countries" Jihan Zakarriya, Copenhagen University

    "Gender in and behind the screen: Exploring gendered topics and interaction among Muslims on Instagram and TikTok" Jasmin Eder & Christoph Günther, University of Erfurt

- *15:15- 15:30 Coffee Break*

- *15:30 - 17:00 Gender, Religion, Representation*

    Chair: Nil Mutluer, Leipzig University

    "Stylish identities: Social media, fashion, and postcolonial challenges for Egyptian Women" Amany Abdelrazek-Alsiefy, Humboldt University of Berlin

    "Mediated domesticity among Turkish women: Recognition labour?" Seyda Bagdogan-Beckman, Copenhagen Business School

September 27, Friday

- *10:00 - 11:30 Contesting Religion and Youth*

  Chair: Markus Dressler, Leipzig University

  "Beyond the boundaries of religion: Arab non-believers and freethinkers on YouTube" Sebastian Elsässer, CAU Kiel

  "Religious - atheist debates and the youth on Turkish social media" Ülker Sözen, Leipzig University & University of Passau

- *11:30 - 11:45 Coffee Break*

- *11:45 - 13:15 Gender, Religion, Politics 2*

  Chair: *TBA*

  "Queer Muslim TikTok: Self-presentation of Middle Eastern queer Muslims on social media as an online counterpublic space" Moh Zaimil Alivin, University of Edinburgh

  "Unveiling argumentative strategies: Feminist and queer activists' representations in Iran's Mahsa Amini protests" Hossein Kermani & Zahra Hosseini Khoo, University of Vienna

- *13:15 - 14:30 Lunch*

- *14:30 - 16:00 Belonging, Spirituality, Affect*

  Chair: Nur Yasemin Ural, Multiple Secularities KFG, Leipzig University

  "Politics of therapeutic culture in Turkey: Belonging and authenticity in Islamic and secular therapeutic discourses" Feyda Sayan-Cengiz, Manisa Celal Bayar University

  "Spiritual seeking and mediation: Is it the seekers who find?" Hande Gür, University of Alberta & Kurtuluş Cengiz, Ege University

- *16:00 - 16:15 Coffee Break*

- *16:15 - 17:30: Concluding Discussion*

ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

- **Amany Abdelrazek-Alsiefy, Humboldt University of Berlin**

Stylish Identities: Social Media, Fashion, and Postcolonial Challenges for Egyptian Women

This presentation will examine the challenges faced by stylish Egyptian women and their visibility on social media platforms within a patriarchal class society heavily influenced by consumerist norms. Drawing upon analytical frameworks rooted in fashion, feminist, and postcolonial theories, the research will explore the impact of social media and prevailing consumer culture on women's choices of attire in public spaces, their practice of faith, and their stance on Western secular values in contemporary Egypt. To achieve this aim, the presentation conducts a critical analysis of the portrayal of some stylish young Egyptian women across various social media platforms. It focuses mainly on social media influencers who adopt attractive and stylish clothing to symbolize social mobility within their conservative local culture and societal class hierarchy. This phenomenon has led to contentious debates on the social and legal reactions to their attire and visibility on social media. Additionally, the presentation will elucidate how innovative sartorial choices of stylish Egyptian hijabi social media influencers challenge Orientalist stereotypes of Muslim women. and mainstream Western fashion theory. Through this investigation, the research seeks to provide a thought-provoking critique of prevailing fashion trends and offer a scholarly perspective on the broader themes of modernity and secularism within the postcolonial context.

Amany Abdelrazek-Alsiefy is a writer and adjunct lecturer at the Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies, Humboldt University of Berlin. She holds a Master's degree in English Literature and Culture from Potsdam University (2015) and a Doctorate in English Literature and Language from the Free University of Berlin (2022). Her academic interests span multiple disciplines, including gender studies, postcolonial literature, secularization, and fashion theories. She has published numerous articles in esteemed peer-reviewed academic journals and edited volumes in both Arabic and English. She is also the author of *Modern Egyptian Women, Fashion, and Faith: Discourses and Representations* (2023). Additionally, she serves as a section editor for the peer-reviewed academic journal *Open Cultural Studies* (De Gruyter).

- **Feyda Sayan-Cengiz, Manisa Celal Bayar University**

Politics of therapeutic culture in Turkey: Belonging and authenticity in Islamic and secular therapeutic discourses

Turkey has been witnessing the rise of therapeutic culture especially since the early 2000's, in line with the rise of therapeutic self-help as a global industry (Nehring et.al 2016). Turkey's therapeutic discourses have flourished in two main forms, namely Islamic-oriented and secular versions, with authors and influencers of popular psychology who follow separate trajectories in addressing to Islamic and secular audiences (Sayan-Cengiz, 2020, 2023). Many of these authors have high public visibility, mainly through their active use of social media platforms, posting therapeutic advice to be consumed by millions of followers on a daily basis. Islamic-oriented and secular trajectories of therapeutic discourses focus on similar themes but subscribe to contending constructions of subjectivity, particularly with regard to notions of authenticity and belonging. These contending notions intersect with the Islamic / secular divide in society that has been sharpened by the affective polarization during the rule of the Justice and Development Party (JDP).

Therapeutic culture figures as an increasingly influential source of constructing contemporary subjectivities across the globe. Social theory has long been critically discussing the social and cultural implications of therapeutic culture in two main ways: First, by framing it as a "culture of narcissism" (Lasch, 1979) that paves the way for the detachment of the individual from collective responsibilities and belongings (Rieff, 1987; Moskowitz, 2001); and second, by underlining the constructions of neoliberal subjectivities that toe the line with neoliberal forms of governance through individualized notions of authenticity, responsibility, freedom, entrepreneurship (Rose, 1989; Rimke, 2000; Binkley, 2011; Foster, 2016). Yet, the discussion has been shaped by two limitations. Even though therapeutic culture is a transnational phenomenon, the literature on it has mostly focused on Western advanced industrialized societies (Nehring and Kerrigan, 2022), and thus how therapeutic discourses take shape in relation to different social, cultural and political contexts, has been sidelined. Moreover, the critique of therapeutic culture has foregrounded the neoliberal formations of 'atomized individual', overlooking how it speaks to contemporary pursuits of the collective self and collective belongings (Grosglik and Lerner, 2021).

Contextualizing therapeutic culture makes it possible to observe how socially and culturally embedded 'structures of feeling' (Williams, 1977) interact, overlap, and sometimes contradict with global notions of therapeutic subject formation; as well as what kinds of affective belongings and collective emotional attachments are constructed. This research aims to address this issue by focusing on Turkey, where processes of affective polarization along Islamic/secular lines interact with the surging interest in separate but related trajectories of Islamic-oriented and secular therapeutic discourses. Which notions of belonging and authenticity are promoted in these therapeutic discourses? What do these notions show us about politics of belonging and affective polarization in Turkey? To answer these questions, the study draws on a discourse analysis of social media posts (including YouTube videos and Instagram posts) and best-selling books of publicly visible Islamic-oriented and secular authors

of therapeutic culture in Turkey and compares the constructions of belonging and authenticity in both trajectories.

Feyda Sayan-Cengiz is Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Manisa Celal Bayar University, Turkey. She got her BA from Boğaziçi University (2001) and her PhD from Bilkent University Political Science Department (2014). She was a visiting researcher at Columbia University Department of Anthropology in 2010. Her book, "Beyond Headscarf Culture in Turkey's Retail Sector" was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2016. She has published on Turkey's gender politics and its reflections in popular culture; populism, gender and masculinity; and self-help culture in several international journals and edited volumes. Her current research agenda focuses on the nexus of therapeutic culture and affective politics in Turkey.

- **Hande Gür, University of Alberta & Kurtuluş Cengiz, Ege University**

Spiritual Seeking and Mediation: Is it the seekers who find?

Regarding the contemporary debates on spirituality, spiritual seekers have many alternatives for their search and research, from traditional outlets like bookstores and retreats to cyberspace now. Such an expansion of the "religious field," as conceptualized by Bourdieu, reflects a change in spiritual engagements and its encounters (Roof 2009, Gür 2018). Whether through Instagram or YouTube, contemporary spiritual seekers in Türkiye navigate a virtual landscape of spiritual guidance, following diverse sources and traditions, which showcases the adaptability of contemporary spiritual practices in response to digital affordances. In line with this, the prevalence of social media has opened up new dimensions in spiritual narratives and experiences, entailing a reconsideration of concepts such as media and mediation. Because actors who navigate these digital spaces usually view media as tools, but not as facilitators of immediate spiritual experiences. However, in mediation, media both shape and are shaped by the content they transmit (Latour 2005). Building on the insights of scholars such as Birgit Meyer (2013) and Sara Ahmed (2015), this paper explores the relation between media, spirituality, and its practitioners. Rather than perceiving spiritual experiences as vulnerable to mass media influence, it argues for understanding how digital platforms actively shape religious transformations (Meyer 2013). The concept of affect is central to our exploration of such transformations since it emphasizes the experiential and relational aspects of spirituality in digital environments, even the emergence of digital spiritualities.

Studying the complexities of mediation and affect in relation to spirituality through our research on "Spiritual Seeking in Türkiye" (Cengiz, Küçükural and Gür 2021), this paper discusses the transformative potential of digital media in shaping spiritual narrative and experience in Türkiye. It invites further inquiry into the ever-changing

dynamics of spiritualities in an increasingly digitized world, while reconsidering what media and mediation are in spiritual contexts.

Hande Gur is a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alberta with a specialization in the anthropology of religion, spirituality, gender, and religious and social movements. She received her MSc in Sociology from METU and completed an MA in Social Research Methodology at Hacettepe University. Her doctoral research is an ethnographic study of the rise of Sufi—or mystical Islamic—practices among mainly young, middle-class women of Turkish origin. Gür brings to this research a solid record of academic research and publishing. She published her first solo article on this research in the Journal of Empirical Theology in 2020 and co-wrote a Turkish book based on nationwide research, entitled "Spiritual Seeking in Türkiye" (Türkiye'de Spiritüel Arayışlar) in 2021.

Kurtuluş Cengiz is working as an associate professor in the Department of Sociology at Ege University. He received his BSc. from METU, Department of Political Science and Public Administration; MA. and Ph.D. from METU, Department of Sociology. He is the author of "Yav İşte Fabrikalaşak": Anadolu Sermayesinin Oluşumu: Kayseri-Hacılar Örneği ["Let's Man-ufacture": The Making of Anatolian Capital; The Case of Kayseri-Hacılar] (İletişim Yayınları, 2013). He is also one of the co-authors of Türkiye'de Spiritüel Arayışlar: Deizm, Yoga, Meditasyon Reiki vb. (Spiritual Seeking in Turkey: Deism, Yoga, Meditation, Reiki etc.) İletişim Yayınları, 2021; Türkiye'de Dindarlık [Religiosity in Turkey] (İletişim Yayınları, 2012) and "Yaşlılar ve Yaşlı Yakınları Açısından Yaşam Biçimi Tercihleri" (The Living Arrangements of the Elderly from the Perspective of Themselves and Their Relatives) Ankara: TÜBA (Turkish Academy of Sciences Publications 2004). His research interests include sociology of industrialization and of religion; masculinity studies; sociology of literature and political sociology (citizenship, civil society and the public sphere).

- **Hossein Kermani & Zahra Hosseini Khoo, University of Vienna**

Unveiling Argumentative Strategies: Feminist and Queer Activists' Representations in Iran's Mahsa Amini Protests

The Mahsa Amini protests in Iran provide a backdrop for understanding the complex dynamics of gender, sexuality, and activism within a deeply patriarchal society. This study uses a methodological fusion of Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) and Feminist Discourse Analysis (FDA) to examine the argumentative strategies used to define, describe, and discredit female and queer activists during these protests on Farsi social media, Instagram and X (Twitter).

Using a DHA lens, this study investigates the historical and sociopolitical contexts that shape the discourse surrounding female and queer activists in Iran. This study identifies rhetorical strategies used to construct and perpetuate gendered and sexualized narratives by analyzing textual and visual data from online platforms, X

and Instagram. This study seeks to uncover underlying power dynamics and ideological frameworks embedded in the discourse by interrogating the linguistic choices, argument structures, and rhetorical devices used.

Furthermore, building on FDA principles, this study critically examines the intersectional dimensions of gender and sexuality in the context of Iranian activism. By focusing on the experiences and voices of female and queer activists, this study aims to shed light on how their identities are constructed, contested, and marginalized within dominant discourses. Moreover, this study aims to follow those rhetorical strategies through time and dissect how competing political fractions, both within pro- and anti-regime forces, weaponised the narrative to further their political agenda.

This study's findings highlight the prevalence of gendered and sexualized discourses in the contexts of the Mahsa Amini protests. Female and queer activists are routinely discredited and delegitimized in public discourse by using tactics such as victim blaming, slut-shaming, and homophobic rhetoric. Furthermore, the study demonstrates the interplay of state power, religious authority, and patriarchal norms in shaping the representation of activism and dissent. In addition, the study finds similarities between the tactics and narrative of the pro-regime forces and the monarchist anti-regime fractions in their attacks on the more liberal, feminist activists.

This study adds to existing scholarship by providing a more nuanced understanding of the complex power dynamics underlying female and queer activism in Iran. This study illuminates the larger mechanisms of social control and resistance within authoritarian regimes by elucidating the argumentative strategies used to define, describe, and disempower these activists. Furthermore, by highlighting the voices of marginalized activists, this study emphasizes the value of intersectional feminist approaches to analysing and challenging dominant discourses.

Hossein Kermani is a MSCA post-doctoral researcher at the Political Communication Research Group of the University of Vienna. Hossein is studying social media, digital repression, computational propaganda and political activism in restrictive contexts, with particular attention to Iran. His research mainly revolves around a) the discursive power of social media in changing the microphysics of power and playing with the political and social structures, and b) the strategies that have been employed to manipulate and dismantle social media activism in non-democratic societies. In order to do so, Hossein is chiefly combining social and communication theories with computational techniques, in particular Social Network Analysis (SNA), Natural Language Processing (NLP), and critical discourse analysis. Hossein has recently published in, among others, New Media and Society, Big Data & Society, Information, Communication, and Society and Asian Journal of Communication. His first book, social media research in Iran (in Farsi), was published in 2020. He is now working on his first English book, Twitter activism in Iran, which Palgrave Macmillan will publish in 2025.

Zahra Hosseini Khoo is a PhD candidate at the University of Vienna's Institute of Linguistics. Zahra is engrossed in Critical Discourse Studies, her dissertation centres on exploring the intricate field of the Iranian nuclear crisis and international

negotiations. Her research interests hinge on analysing political discourse and its function in international conflicts, as well as investigating the subtleties of gender linguistics and mediated communication.

Zahra has already made major contributions to the academic community; she has written two publications about how the #MeToo movement is represented in Austrian media. Her work demonstrates a dedication to comprehending and evaluating current issues that influence societal narratives.

- **Jasmin Eder & Christoph Günter, Department of Religious Studies, University of Erfurt**

Gender on and behind the Screen: Exploring gendered topics and interaction among Muslims on Instagram and TikTok

This paper is based on an ongoing collaborative research project on 'Islam and Digitality' and focuses on audiovisual (re)presentations of gendered aspects within Islam. We explore gender representation in audiovisual formats through a twofold approach: analyzing TikTok videos of Muslim couples and investigating the activities of male and female members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat on TikTok and Instagram. We will explore the ways in which gender norms are tied to notions of Muslim religiosity, examining the self-presentation of Muslim actors and the gender-based topics they engage with. We will also investigate the dynamics of interaction between male and female actors. We argue that the technological affordances of these platforms, i.e., short videos and image-based communication, seem to privilege unequivocal positions of religious (gender) norms and, at the same time, hamper theological reasoning and contextualization, which are transferred to either the comments sections or different formats.

Christoph Günther currently holds a Heisenberg position for Islamic Studies at the Department of Religious Studies / Universität Erfurt. Trained in Islamic Studies, History, and Arabic, his research and teaching touch upon issues of religion and digital media, visual culture, as well as social change and the role of religio-political actors therein. His current research focuses on the ways in which contemporary Muslim preachers design their audiovisual mediations and how Muslim practitioners engage with such videos and images in the course of their daily religious and media practices. He is the author of *Entrepreneurs of Identity: The Islamic State's Symbolic Repertoire* (Berghahn Books, 2022) and co-editor of *Jihadi Audiovisuality and its Entanglements: Meanings, Aesthetics, Appropriations* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020) and *Disentangling Jihad, Political Violence and Media* (Edinburgh University Press, 2023).

Jasmin Eder is a PhD candidate in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Erfurt. She studied Religious Studies and Arabistic and Islamic Studies at Leipzig University. Currently, she is involved in the AIWG project 'Islam and

Digitality,' where she examines the activities of the Ahmadiyya community on social media.

● **Jihan Zakarriya, Associate Professor, Copenhagen University**

Gender Rights after the Historic Fall of Political Islam: Digital Mobilizing of Legal Reform in post-2011 Arab Countries

Religious and political dualisms have dominated the political scenes in almost all post-independence Arab countries. Militarist and royal regimes have used and shared power with Islamists and political Islam groups to inhibit democratic, liberal, or socialist opposition from effecting real transformations in their countries. In doing so, different governing regimes in the Middle East and North African countries have guaranteed Islamists and political Islam groups access to sociocultural and public spaces who actively deepened and circulated gendered stereotypes and their strict religious interpretations. For example, Muslim Brotherhoods in Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain have been the only financially and organizationally valid opposition in these countries. Likewise, Wahhabist scholars have participated in legitimizing and supporting the Saudi royal family. Nonetheless, following Arab Spring protests, and the subsequent fall of political Islam rule in Egypt, and Tunisia, along with the emergence of regional terrorist organizations such as ISIS, deep-seated power equations are disturbed in many countries. Women in all Arab and middle Eastern countries have a great role in igniting political change, and in effecting transformation in their legal rights. For example, the guardianship system is reformed in Saudi Arabi, anti-sexual violence legislations are issued, and women's equal access to work opportunities has increased. The paper examines how Arab women propose themselves as agents of positive social and legal change in the post Arab Spring era. It specifically focuses on women's digital activism.

Jihan Zakarriya is an associate professor at ToRs, Copenhagen University. She works on feminist movements in the Gulf, and their activism to mobilize women's legal rights.

● **Moh Zaimil Alivin, University of Edinburgh**

Queer Muslim TikTok: Self-presentation of Middle Eastern Queer Muslims on Social Media as an Online Counterpublic Space

In the context of post 9/11 and 7/7 attacks, queer Muslims often fall into the problematic point between the Islamophobic West and the homophobic Muslim world. Muslims identifying themselves as a part of the LGBTQ+ community are often excluded from their faith or religious communities and believed as going against the nature of human beings according to the dominant patriarchal interpretation of the

sacred texts. Moreover, being a queer is often considered antithetical to being a good Muslim.

In countering such hegemonic discourse, TikTok as a video sharing application widely used by youths serves as a free platform for Muslims from gender and sexual minorities to propose alternative viewpoints towards themselves against the existing hegemonic narratives to speak up their underrepresented and polemically constructed identities in dominant Islamic discourse. The representation of queer Muslim on TikTok videos inevitably fosters pressing debates, especially among users and creators with opposing views. Thus, this project aims to reveal the process and structure of oppression, liberation and resistance within Middle Eastern queer Muslim communities in TikTok videos, presented either in the form of speech, explanatory or entertainment videos. This project aims to shed light on experiences, challenges and forms of self-expression of queer Muslim community within the digital realm. It also offers insights into the ways in which social media platforms provide alternative spaces for marginalised individuals to connect, share their stories and challenge dominant narratives.

In this study, digital ethnography is employed to investigate relationships and connections among TikTok creators and users as gender and sexual minorities. The use of digital ethnography in this context allows the researcher to overcome geographical limitations that are typically encountered in traditional ethnographic research. Throughout the research period, the researcher dedicates approximately 60 minutes each day, at various times, to engage with Middle Eastern Muslim gender and sexual minority TikTok content. Given the dynamic nature of social media, this regular involvement is crucial for observing recurring themes and content. Additionally, the researcher follows specific hashtags, such as #queermuslim #lgbtmuslim #queerarab #gayarab #queerhijabi and sought out videos created by queer Muslim TikTok creators, particularly those in the English-speaking community, who produced content for wider Muslim gender and sexual minority audiences.

Moh Zaimil Alivin is a PhD candidate in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, the University of Edinburgh, with a doctoral scholarship awarded by Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education, Ministry of Finance, Republic of Indonesia. Driven by a passion for language, literature, and cultural studies, as well as his academic background in Literary Studies, his research interests cover diaspora writings, identity, transnational literature as well as Muslim gender and sexual minorities representations. His professional trajectory includes roles in Indonesian Islamic Boarding School/*Pesantren* and as an active volunteer, coordinating logistics for major events and contributing to educational initiatives.

- **Sebastian Elsässer, CAU Kiel (Germany)**

Beyond the boundaries of religion: Arab non-believers and freethinkers on YouTube

With the spread of digital media in the Arab world, a broad spectrum of non-belief and religious criticism has become visible in the last decade, mostly directed at a young and media-savvy audience. While some influencers produce content that directly contradicts and seeks to disprove conventional religion, others avoid a direct confrontation with religion and its representatives, but nevertheless promote world-views and values that go against the grain of dominant religious culture.

By using an inductive method that starts with the emic categories used by social media creators to describe their own being and doing, I will propose a preliminary map of non-belief in the Arab world. There is an important distinction between non-believers who openly declare their 'religious status' (e.g. as atheist, non-believer, etc.) and those who refuse to do so. Open non-believers tend to agree on the use of lā-dīnī (being „of no religion") as an umbrella term, rather than the more specific term atheist (mulḥid). For apparent non-believers, apatheists and skeptics who refuse to declare their religious status, I propose the term 'freethinkers'. I argue that they are a significant group in their own right and must not be dismissed as mere 'closet atheists'.

Evidence from the social media shows that non-believers and freethinkers (and even 'secular Muslims') actually share a number of core topics, such as a rejection of religious dogmatism and scripturalism, and the embracement of rational thinking and ethical universalism. Even though the differences between these groups are significant, ideas and arguments are circulating between them and into wider society, contributing to the general dynamism of religious change and the – possible – shift away from the dominance of conservative religion in Arab societies.

Sebastian Elsässer is a lecturer at the department of Middle Eastern at Christian-Albrechts-Universität and the director of the research unit "Generations of Islamic Activism" (2023-2026). He received his M.A. degree in Islamic Studies, Political Science and Political Economy from Freie Universität Berlin in 2005 and his Ph.D. degree from Freie Universität Berlin in 2012. He was a guest doctoral researcher at the CEDEJ, a French research center for the social sciences, in Cairo between 2008 and 2011, and has been teaching Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the universities of Kiel, Hamburg and Freiburg since 2011. His research interests include the ideological and sociocultural history of the Muslim Brotherhood, Coptic Christians in Egypt, and non-religion in the Arab world.

- **Seyda Bagdogan-Beckman, Department of Management, Society and Communication, Copenhagen Business School**

Mediated Domesticity Among Turkish Women: Recognition Labour?

"New domesticity" is a growing phenomenon that denotes the distribution of domestic tasks via computer-mediated platforms, wherein conventional reproductive activities undergo a rebranding to be perceived as socially appealing content (Matchar, 2013).

Aside from the criticisms of new domesticity´s precarious circumstances embedded in the gendered political economy of welfare states (Adkins, 2016), an empowering narrative permeates the concept of "new domesticity", suggesting that women can excel in both domestic tasks and motherhood. In particular, women who may lack fundamental recognition as workers or family members can foster positive social identities in addition to earning "pin money" (Naulin and Jourdain, 2019). However, the existing literature on new domesticity mostly relies on the experiences of educated, middle-class, white, and Western women (e.g. in the US: Matchar, 2013; in the UK and Australia: Luckman, 2015; in Canada: Taylor, 2016; in France: Zabban, 2019; Naulin and Jourdain, 2019). In this research, the investigation of new domesticity revolves around twenty Turkish women and aims to contribute a different perspective to the literature. To be specific, the Turkish Muslim woman vloggers at the heart of the research to be less educated than the aforementioned subjects of previous studies, define themselves through their housewifery roles, have non-Western values, and live in relatively lower-income households. Creating and developing their cooking videos through their own efforts, predominantly without English skills, and without external brand collaboration, they generate income through the YouTube Partner Program (YPP). This program has an eligibility requirement for monetisation of 4,000 hours of watch time within the past 12 months and a minimum of 1,000 subscribers (Wojcicki, 2018). Once the eligibility criteria are met, vloggers receive a share of the revenue earned from advertising.

By employing Axel Honneth's (1996) recognition theory, I elaborate on Turkish women´s moral injury and struggle for recognition due to the gendered injustice they experience daily. Emphasizing the socio-cultural context and agency (Benhabib, 1995; Butler, 1995; Baum, 2004) in the discussion of the feminist politics of recognition (Fraser, 2003), I delve into the potential of institutionalized individuality (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) within the affordances of digital platforms. Considering their digital and domestic labour, I explore the impact of digital media on their self-formation in terms of fostering self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem. Additionally, taking into account the motivations of the content creators without expressly applying a gendered lens, there are various definitions of digital labour encompassed in social media such as relational labour (Baym, 2015), hope labour (Kuehn and Corrigan, 2013) and aspirational labour (Duffy, 2017). These approaches to digital labour predominantly touch upon future-oriented motivations rather than the immediate, time-dependent and self-relationship-oriented angles in connection with gendered injustice. Correspondingly, I scrutinize how the affordances of digital media platforms provide these women with the dynamism to meet their social and formal expectations for recognition in social life (Honneth, 1996).

Seyda Bagdogan-Beckman is a PhD fellow in the Department of Management, Society, and Communication at Copenhagen Business School. She holds a BA in Anthropology from Istanbul University, which she pursued after completing a degree in Mathematics. Subsequently, she earned her MSc in Global Studies from Lund University, where her thesis focused on Turkish housewives' online knitting practices. For her PhD project, she is conducting a digital ethnography on Turkish women's

traditional cooking practices on YouTube. Her research examines the impact of digitalisation on gender inequality. She investigates the self-formation process of Turkish women through their digital labour and networks. Additionally, she explores how these women exert strategic agency while adhering to modest and pious values, and analyses their positioning within patriarchal and platform capitalism. Her teaching experience includes courses on "Social and Cultural Theory" and "Digital Media and Societal Transformation".

- **Ülker Sözen, Leipzig University & Passau University**

Religious - Atheist Debates and the Youth on Turkish Digital Media

The political and religious elites in Turkey have been alarmed by the growing appeal of atheism and deism among the youth since the last several years. This situation is paralleled by the decreasing support for the cultural hegemony project of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) which blends political Islam, nationalism, and patriarchal familialism. This presentation will focus on the online debate around atheism and the advocacy for Islam, which is waged by young online content creators and digital preachers in their 20s and early 30s. The discussion will be carried out by scrutinizing the YouTube *münazara*s (debates) and street interviews produced by atheist, agnostic, and Muslim content creators, and the Reddit online forums of atheist and agnostic communities. Their discourses defending atheism, agnosticism, and Islam mainly address a younger audience when their popular cultural references and discursive strategies are considered. As such, this field of online debate can be interpreted as a campaign to convince and win over the youth's support. Furthermore, the ways in which these digital cultural entrepreneurs contest and propagate religious and non-religious worldviews reflect particular moral orders relying on nationalism, secularism, and shariah. Despite their overt collision which appears as an incident of kulturkampf and war over values, some of these opposing discourses converge on reproducing exclusionary and intolerant perspectives, which might emanate from the socio-economic and cultural insecurities impairing the life prospects of the youth in contemporary Turkey.

Ülker Sözen received her PhD degree in sociology from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University in Turkey. She was a postdoctoral fellow from 2019 to 2022 at IRGAC, wherein she conducted research on civil society, production of activism, and authoritarianism in Turkey. Since November 2022, she has worked as a postdoctoral researcher in the DFG project "Piety and Secularity Contested: Family and Youth Politics in post-Kemalist 'New Turkey'" at the Institute for the Study of Religion at Leipzig University. She studies the discourses and negotiations of sexuality, intimacy, and piety by the youth on Turkish social media. In June 2024, she commenced her research under the "Platformization, Forms of Authoritarianism, and the Future of Democracy: Perspectives from the Global South" project at the University of Passau, Chair of Development Politics.