



Public Lecture

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Wednesday, 20 November 2019

**Jews, Muslims and Religious Challenges to the European
Institutions: The Headscarf and Ritual Male Circumcision Debates**

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Prof. Gökce Yurdakul, Humboldt University of Berlin

Discussant: Dr. Esma Baycan, University of Geneva

18:15 – 19:45 h

Location: University of Neuchâtel, Avenue du 1er-Mars 26, Room B32

Abstract

Can Jews and Muslims cooperate in challenging European social institutions? One of the pressing questions that European political authorities struggle to answer today is how to deal with the challenges of religious diversity in European social institutions. Religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in Europe is a highly contested subject in socio-political and legal areas. Some scholars argue that diversity policies may have negative impacts on socio-cultural integration, specifically of Muslims; others argue that “reasonable accommodation” can be reached in a combination of universalistic and particularistic adjustments. Although the policies aim to regulate religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in a top-down manner, minority groups challenge these in their everyday lives, mostly by bringing their claims for accommodation to social and political attention. Traditional top-down studies focus on linear state-minority relations and mostly fail to look at interrelations between minority religious groups. By focusing on interrelations between minorities, we can simultaneously observe how diversity is practiced and regulated, and how socio-historical contexts are contested or reaffirmed. Drawing on my fieldwork and interviews with members of Turkish, Palestinian and Jewish communities in Berlin, this lecture will engage with the ongoing debates on Muslim women’s headscarf and Jewish and Muslim ritual male circumcision and raise two questions: First, how do minorities frame their own claims by using specific framings that are actually used by the members of the majority society? Second, how do minorities collaborate in order to claim religious minority rights from the state authorities? Basically, the first question is what divides Jews and Muslims by making claims to the majority society. The second question is what brings them together while collaborating. By answering these questions, we can better understand whether common collaboration strategies that bring minorities together are possible or if there are deep divisive lines that hinder their cooperation.

Curriculum Vitae

Gökce Yurdakul is Georg Simmel Professor of Diversity and Social Conflict at the Humboldt University and the Chair in the Department of Foundations of Migration Research at the Berlin Institute of Migration and Integration Research. She studied sociology at the Bogazici University and Gender & Women’s Studies at the Middle East Technical University in Turkey. She received her PhD. from the University of Toronto, Department of Sociology. She was a visiting scholar at the Harvard University, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs (2019). She has published books and articles on immigrant integration, citizenship, Islam in Europe and issues of Muslim women in Western Europe and North America. She has been working on policy reports for the the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2010, with Anna Korteweg), the Federal Ministry of Family in Germany (2018) and for the non-governmental media outlet, Mediendienst Integration (2019). She has contributed op-ed pieces to Tagesspiegel Causa (2017) and OpenDemocracy (2018).

Selected Publications

- Korteweg, Anna, Yurdakul, Gökce (2014). *Headscarf Debates: Conflicts in National Belonging*. Stanford University Press.
- Yurdakul, Gökce, Bodemann, Michael (2010). *Staatsbürgerschaft, Migration und Minderheiten: Inklusion und Ausgrenzungsstrategien im Vergleich*. Wiesbaden: Verlag Sozialwissenschaften. (Citizenship, Migration and Minorities: Comparative Inclusion and Exclusion Strategies)
- Yurdakul, Gökce (2009). *From Guest Workers Into Muslims: Turkish Immigrant Associations In Germany*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press.
- Korteweg, Anna and Yurdakul, Gökce. (2009). Gender Islam And Immigrant Integration: Boundary Drawing on Honour Killing in The Netherlands and Germany, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 32(2): 218-238.
- Bloemraad, Irene, Korteweg, Anna, Yurdakul, Gökce. 2008. Citizenship and Immigration: Assimilation, Multiculturalism and the Challenges to the Nation State, *Annual Review of Sociology* 34: 153-179. (equal co-authors, alphabetical order of last names)