

The Department of
Sociology and Social Anthropology
cordially invites you to our graduate conference

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN DEMOCRACIES
UNDER THREAT: PRODUCTION AND TRANSMISSION
OF KNOWLEDGE IN CHANGING SOCIETIES

18-19 SEPTEMBER 2017

MONUMENT BUILDING, POPPER ROOM



This graduate conference will address the current attacks on academic freedom and autonomy of universities. Governments intervened in an attempt to shut down universities labeled as producers of “political knowledge” that might undermine “state authority” -- examples abound: Russia, Turkey and, more recently, Hungary. How do universities respond to the new challenges? Are they turning into spaces of resistance against the hegemony of knowledge production in line with the dominant ideologies, or have they become sites for reproduction of market forces?

KEYNOTE I:

JANA BACEVIC – University of Cambridge: What does a university *do*? From purposes to uses of knowledge, and back

Debates about the role of education today tend to revolve around its purposes: advocates of marketisation of higher education claim that universities are there to serve the economic competitiveness of their societies or regions, while critics emphasise purposes such as social cohesion, democracy, or equality. What these debates obscure, however, is that knowledge can be used for different ends that include, but are not limited, to these, and that understanding how this happens requires insights from philosophy, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, as well as natural sciences. Looking at recent examples such as the link between levels of education and voting in the US election or the UK EU referendum, this talk addresses the ‘grey zone’ between the normative and the empirical, between the micro and the macro. It asks: What is it that gets left out from political debates about the role of knowledge in a society? What is it that we do *not* know?, and discusses the implications of these questions for the development of critical social sciences today.

PANEL I: CHALLENGES TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND AUTONOMY IN TURKEY

DIDEM ŞALGAM - CEU: Turkey’s Academia in Political Turmoil in Turkey: Outcomes of the multi-facet and transforming political-interest based relation/conflict between AKP and Gülen Community

It would be a great mistake to claim that there was an academic freedom once upon a time in Turkey. Nonetheless, the ongoing political turmoil in Turkey, especially after the 15 July Coup Attempt has given and beyond any doubt will continue to give, a horrifying harm to academic freedom and cause to immense interventions and transformations in Turkey’s academia.

Within the process after the 15 July Coup Attempt, the foundation universities associated with the Gülen community were shot down, and students in those universities were forcefully sent to other universities in different cities. Thousands of academics have been dismissed from their positions by also being disqualified to work as a public servant with the decree laws without due process and legal recourse in the name of fighting against Gülen community. However, not all the dismissed academics are associated with the Gülen community; on the contrary, innumerable academics inter alia other public servants, who have critical standing against Erdoğan regime have lost their positions and were detained. In that regard, dismissal, detainment, investigation of the signees of the Academics for Peace Petition is a great evidence.

This presentation first promises to remember and remind the political-interest based amity between AKP and Gülen community; second to probe the outcomes of the political-interest conflict between two with regard to the ways in which the ways in which Turkey’s

academia has been transformed in ways that open new areas and forms of resistance and precarity for the members of academia: academics and students.

SERKAN İLASLANER – Ankara University: Solidarity: Challenges of Academic Relations under Anti-Democratic Governance in Turkey

Since July 15 2016, after the attempted coup, Turkey is undergoing a fast paced anti-democratization process through the state of emergency and statutory decrees. Approximately 5000 academics have been fired from their posts and many more are targeted. For my presentation I will be focusing on the changing nature of knowledge production and transmission in Ankara University Gender Studies Department through the government's purging process. The critical questions I am planning to address at the conference are the following: What is the current position of Gender Studies within the overall academia in Turkey? What is the condition of Gender Studies in Turkey before and after the attempt coup? How do the anti-democratic politics of the government affect the feminist and queer knowledge production? What are the non-institutional spaces for academics to create an environment of academic continuity and resistance? How did the purging process of academics in Turkey under the state of emergency since July 2016, play into the teacher-student relationships and knowledge transmission? How does this political environment affect graduate students' academic pursuits?

In order to make a critical analysis, I have conducted a small scale focused ethnography where I have interviewed five people consisting of academics, assistants and graduate students from Ankara University Women and Gender Studies Department. Ankara University Women's Studies Graduate program was established in 1996 as an early example of institutionalization of gender studies in Turkish academia. Therefore, although the scale of this field is narrow, I believe it will indicate important aspects of the gender studies in Turkey before and within the current undergoing political climate and government's stance. My presentation, I believe, will open up a chance to discuss the condition of CEU with the Hungarian government, the educational situation under anti-democratic processes and students' experiences on a comparative basis.

ELİF BİRCED – Sabancı University: From a Profession to a Struggle: The Precarization of Social Scientists in Foundation Universities in Turkey

The literature on academics in the advanced capitalist countries and in Turkey has approached the problem of rising labor insecurity of academics with a particular focus on the changing nature of capital-labor relations with the decline of the welfare state regime and proliferation of market mechanisms to different spheres including the academia. In these studies, while discussing the ways in which academics are exposed to different insecurities in the workplace, the role of the government is whether not emphasized or its role is limited to being a regulator of capital-labor relations by introducing legal regulations. Without neglecting the reflections of the recent marketization wave in the universities all around the world, this study will, hopefully, contribute to the existing literature by analyzing the role of the government's capacity to make interventions to the university regarding its own political interests in discussions of labor insecurity experienced by the academics in Turkey.

In order to have a better understanding of how both recent marketization wave and the government can serve as a source of precarization for academics, this paper focuses on the experiences of 40 social scientists (22 professors and 18 graduate student assistants) who

were working at five different foundation universities in Turkey. By drawing on Standing's (2011) framework for different forms of labor insecurity as well as Buğra's (1997) and Keyder's ([1989] 2015) analysis on the development of the relationship between state and business people in Turkey, it provides, first of all, an analysis of the multiple ways in which social scientists suffer from precarization in their universities. In addition to looking at the academics' struggle to survive in an environment where economic and/or political concerns can dominate the academic ones, this study also discusses in detail the obstacles to and opportunities for a struggle against precarization of labor.

SEMINAR SERIES TALK:

ALEV ÖZKAZANÇ – Ankara University: Trajectory of Turkish Higher Education in the Global Context of Rising Authoritarianism

The questions I would like to pose in the presentation are as follows: in the post-human and post-political world where we are surrounded by many kinds of challenges to our familiar ways of thinking, knowing, acting and judging, is there going to be a place for an humanist type of university or even for any ideal of education at all? Or are we, as the academic left, who wants to pose questions like this, in the process of becoming outmoded and obsolete? By putting the questions of life and death of the university at the forefront, I will try to locate the trajectory of Turkish higher education in the global context of rising authoritarianism.

I will argue that we, as "the academic left" or as some call us the "cultural left" is placed at the very center of the debate about the rise of right authoritarianism. And the current disaster of the Turkish education should be explained as a reaction to the growth of democratic forces, which had a strong impact in the field of education and culture. I will present the Turkish case as a tragic story highlighting the utmost importance of political thinking as regarding the fate of the university. I will claim that the conditions of existence of not only the university but also the humanity has turned to be much more political (in the sense that Hannah Arendt suggests) than it has been before.

PANEL II: STRUCTURAL AND CULTURAL APPROACHES TO ACADEMIA

KEYNOTE II:

MARIANN DOSA AND ANDREA CSENGEI - School of Public Life - Aurora

ANNA KYRIAZI – European University Institute: “Us”, “Them” and the State Cultural Machinery: The Dispute over the Integrated Schooling of Greek and Syrian Refugee Children

In the autumn of 2016 a series of incidents occurred around Greece, ignited by the enrolment of Syrian refugee children in local schools. Agitated parents and community members gathered outside schools in protest, at times attempting to bar the entry of refugees in the buildings. Others decided to simply keep their children at home to avoid “dangerous” contact. Anxieties revolved chiefly around issues of public hygiene and safety, but utilitarian arguments also popped up, along with claims about the allegedly insurmountable religious and cultural difference between Greeks and Syrians. Beyond these local sporadic events, a broader political conflict arose between the ultranationalists, especially the fascist Golden Dawn, on the one hand, and anti-racist groups as well as Greece’s left-wing SYRIZA, government on the other hand, opposing and supporting, respectively, the integrated schooling of local and refugee children.

This controversy invites scholarly engagement not only because it directs attention to anti-refugee sentiment and stereotypical “othering” that targets a particularly vulnerable population (refugee children) exercising a fundamental human right (the right to education), but also because it reveals a deep-seated discrepancy between opposing normative conceptions about the purpose and aims of education as a mechanism of national reproduction. The extensive quantitative and qualitative media analysis of this episode provides, therefore, an opportunity to theorize public education as part of the state cultural machinery. In particular, the paper seeks to illuminate the link between exaggerated forms of nationalist ideology and education, as well as how this contrasts more inclusive conceptions of community and solidarity – especially at times of crisis.

ELIZAVETA POTAPOVA - CEU: Academic Freedom in Russia: Representation and Appraisal

There is a common assumption that only ‘democratic’ environments enable the functioning of successful academic institutions. However, modern autocracies demonstrate that universities can also work in conditions of restricted democracy, reaching the internationally recognized levels of excellence in terms of both teaching and research.

The goal of my research is to trace the borders of academic freedom in the Russian Federation, which combines the gradual development of academia in accordance with world practices, formal democratic norms fixed in the Constitution and violation of democratic principles in real practice. The intuition is that understandings of academic freedom might be contextual and we could even look at a pluralistic conception of ‘academic freedom’.

This allows us to raise the following research questions:

- How is academic freedom represented and appraised by academics in Russia?
- In what way are their representation and appraisal similar (different) to the understanding of academic freedom in the democratic context?

The theoretical contribution of the presentation is the critical engagement with the liberal discourse, which ties academic freedom to democracy not leaving a room for performance of certain freedoms, in particular academic freedom, in non-democratic regimes. The practical value is to increase academic awareness of the topic, which normally occurs in activist contexts (for example, in cases when particular universities experiences oppression from the state).

The part of the research to be presented on the conference is the first step on the way to my dissertation. Therefore, at this stage I plan to discuss the design of the research and the preliminary results of pilot field trip, not the final empirical findings.

Viorel Prostease (West University of Timișoara), Liviu Andreescu (Bucharest University), Vlad Botgros (West University of Timișoara) and Alexandra Dodita (West University of Timișoara): Repertoires of contention in post-communist Romania: a dynamic perspective on student protests

We provide a descriptive account on the evolution of student protests in post-communist Romania, in the timeframe 1990-2008. We rely primarily on empirical data collected systematically from two national newspapers with wide coverage and, especially in the early 90's, also highly partisan, such that the two sources covered the main options of the political spectrum – Adevărul (The Truth) and România Liberă (Free Romania).

The dataset comprises over 400 relevant articles which we coded and interpreted according to a frame derived primarily from social movement (and partly organizational) theory, including themes such as magnitude, duration, type of claims, outcomes, degree of disruptiveness, forms of repression, external support (from unions, political parties, academics, religious NGO's etc.) as well as how the same protest event is portrayed in the two aforementioned newspapers. The types of protests encountered range from strikes, rallies, marches, pickets, happenings, blockades, suicide threats, strike threats and open letters. Additional background data informing the analysis was gathered from interviews with key actors in the student movement in the period under scrutiny, content analysis of local media, organizational documents, and other textual and documentary sources. Our preliminary data analysis indicates a steady decline in student protests and marked changes in protest repertoires.

Our account is part of a larger research project focusing on the institutionalization of student organizations after 1990 in Romania and the determinants of their evolution to the present day.

THIRD PANEL: CHALLENGES TO GENDER STUDIES

KEYNOTE III:

NADIA JONES-GAILANI - Central European University

EVA MERENICS (Cornivus University of Budapest) and AGNES ERÖSS (ELTE): Maneuvering in multidimensional power relations: Coping with the Safarov case as Hungarian Female Scholars in Armenian Studies

Several types of power relations determine the complexity of a scholar's identities. We are citizens, scholars educated in a certain system, affiliated with our research institutions, we are also categorized of a specific gender. Being underprivileged or even stigmatized in

Goffman's terms in several of these power settings, developing strategies to maneuver and pass efficiently within this complexity is essential.

Our position is reinterpreted when moving across space and the complex power settings itself changes, too. But how can one's autonomy of research be sustained when her/his citizenship seems to overcast other features in a political crisis? How are the borders between being a scholar, a citizen, an activist redrawn? How does the gender factor interfere?

We introduce possible answers by analyzing our challenges when the diplomatic and academic ties between Armenia and Hungary broke up. The situation resulted from the extradition of the Azerbaijani military officer, Ramil Safarov. He was serving his life imprisonment in Hungary after murdering an Armenian fellow officer at a NATO Peace Partnership course in Budapest.

Our position and the settings of the research field was determined by (1) the political triangle between increasingly authoritarian Hungary, authoritarian Azerbaijan and Armenia, the third party of the case, (2) Orientalist power relations between Hungary and the two South Caucasian states (3) the collision of the academic systems of the three states and (4) us being female scholars.

We argue that though these power relations limited our freedom, we could still gain agency. This was embodied in strong personal cooperation, activism, informal networking, and finally courage not necessarily expected from a woman.

ESZTER KOVÁTS (ELTE): Attacks on gender studies and their relationship to broader crisis phenomena

Since 2012, several European countries have seen the rise of conservative and, in part, fundamentalist social movements against the perceived threat of "gender ideology". Attacks on gender studies as discipline and on public financing of gender studies departments e.g. in Germany are one of the targets of these movements. More and more researchers are convinced that we are not dealing with isolated cases, but a coherent phenomenon.

In my paper I argue twofold.

Firstly, these movements reflect the current tendencies of identity politics in feminist and LGBT activism, best known from the English speaking countries, and having a growing influence on the continent and in East-Central Europe (see Dalma Feró's paper). In this sense the paper argues that the right-wing attack of "gender" is primarily directed against the conception of gender as identity (being a very individualistic and consumerist notion, and as such, a product of neoliberalism) and not against gender as analytical category to formulate power inequalities between men and women.

Secondly, I argue that interpretations limiting this phenomenon to a 'fight between values' function rather as an obstacle to understand what is going on, by repudiating or obscuring an important structural realignment. Instead, the paper argues, one should situate this phenomenon in a broader context. Not only that these movements give a culturalist and traditionalist answer to the growing insecurities and social tensions, but also they are symptoms of a broader crisis of liberal democracy, and gender is a symbolic glue (Grzebalska, Kováts & Pető 2017), comprising various issues and concerns, among others the embeddedness of feminist and LGBT issues in the neoliberal order.

Therefore, gender studies are at the meeting point of these two: producing knowledge about gender, and at the same time having a complicated relationship with the global power order and its current crisis.

FELIPE MOREIRA (Fluminense Federal University): Virtuality politics and sketches of a counter-visual manifesto

This essay centers on matters of anthropology, bodiness, materiality and potencies, counterpointing the cartesian split project against dissident binary identities. Body and mind opposing projects (analogous to nature/culture) is thought through Ingold's perception of education as an attention sensitivity in/to the world, livelihood and exploration in ways we are yet to conceive. As the body is never a sterile signal receiver, disability studies try to grasp the multitudinal learning aspects of our bodies and ourselves in the world beyond formal institutions but also how they maim the potential of persons being conceived as "disabled" - for they fail in fitting to normality norms. As Bavcar proposes as an aesthetic of thought, light is here perceived as that homogenic expectation and a question is posed: what would we gain by treating blindness as a cosmology rather than a pathology, sightlessness as a body configuration that informs one's attention and interaction in the world, a legitimate production to be valued and encouraged?