

Wednesday, 16 October, 2013, 11 a.m.

Fellow Seminar

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*Emel Akçali*

The Limits of Neo-liberal Governmentality and the Challenges of State (Trans-)formation in post-revolutionary Tunisia

It has been argued that with the Arab Uprisings, we have witnessed the emergence and existence of 'a new subjectivity' in the Arab world and 'a renewed sense of belonging to the dreamed-of middle classes and, beyond that, to a new humanity, inclusive of the West'. To an extent, such views resonate with policies that have been seeking to foster a mode of subjectivity in the Arab countries that is conducive to neoliberal logics, in other words, the market which serves as the organizational principle for the state and society. However, a closer look to the Arab street reveals how the understanding of political freedom and socio-economic improvement is plural and that these concepts might be constituted in ways that differ from the liberal individualistic understandings. The areas subject to such contestation include, but may not be limited to, the role of the state in the economy, the role of religion within the state, and the preferred framework for rights, freedoms and citizenship. By scrutinizing such pluralistic narratives in the post-revolutionary Tunisian society and the current challenges of the state (trans-)formation process, this presentation will attempt to explore the limits of the applicability of neoliberal governmentality outside the Western realm.

Emel Akçali is Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations and European Studies of Central European University in Budapest. Her current research interests cover the state, society and politics in the Middle East, the EU's democratization efforts in its periphery, non-Western and alternative globalist geopolitical discourses, neo and post-neoliberalism and critical realist philosophy. She has published in peer-reviewed journals such as the Security Dialogue, Eurasian Geography and Economics; Antipode; Annals of the Association of American Geographers and Geopolitics and is the author of the book *Chypre : Un enjeu géopolitique actuel* published by L'Harmattan in Paris, in 2009.

Photo: taken by Emel Akçali on 27 July 2013 in Tunis during the funeral of the assassinated Tunisian politician Mohamed Brahmi