Half-Day Conference
Transformation of Academia in Turkey and its Impacts on German Higher Education
University of Bremen
(6th December 2017)
Haus der Wissenschaft, Sandstraße 4/5

Please note that the language of the conference is English. However Turkish and German translation will be provided, if needed.

This half-day conference will provide a forum to analyse and discuss different aspects of a very present “problem”: the increasing number of academics who were displaced by political force from Turkey and exiled to Germany. The conference specifically aims to bring this issue into an academic context and consider it from a critical academic perspective within the discipline of Education Sciences. Furthermore, the conference will not only focus on academia in Turkey but also on German Higher Education within which exiled academics are presently sustaining their academic lives.

The conference will not only focus on the present conditions of academia in Turkey but also on the historical process that had led to them. In other words, there will be the aim to find out historical as well as structural dynamics that made it easier for an authoritarian regime to involve into universities through authoritarian measures and with the aim of re-ordering and re-shaping them in line with its nationalist-conservative ideology in Turkey. Furthermore, however this seems a unique experience, in fact academic freedom is under threat not only in Turkey but also in many other parts of the world. In order to point out this general framework of new trends in the international academic context, the conference will look at the issue of academic freedom from a global perspective. Here the emphasis lies on the impacts of Neoliberalism on Higher Education in general and on some disciplines in specific. Also in the conference there will be a focus on alternative strategies and counter developments which might have the potential of challenging authoritarian developments in academic life.

Within this general context of the conference, the first session is to discuss specific academic disciplines (Gender studies, Kurdish studies, Psychology) in respect to their diverse stories of struggle for recognition and legitimation in Higher Education in Turkey. The second session is to bring a global perspective into our discussion issue and aims to analyse different examples of neoliberal and authoritarian modes of governing Higher Education Systems in different countries like England, Germany, Greece and Turkey. Lastly in the third session there is a panel discussion and various experts coming from universities and different interbranch or political organizations like “Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung” and “Education and Science Workers’ Union” (GEW). Here we aim to provide a shared context for both academics and activists to discuss together limitations as well as potentials that exist in the present system of Germany. The discussion will be run by Prof. Dr. Kader Konuk who will also wrap up the whole conference with some final comments on the general outcomes that might be drawn from the conference.

For further inquiries:
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***This conference is organized thanks to financial support from “Bremen University Faculty of Education, Intercultural Education Unit” and from “The Philipp Schwartz Initiative of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation; Special thanks go to Prof. Dr. Yasemin Karakaşolu, Britta von Schaper, Nabila Badriou (the secretary of our research unit), and the staff of International Office – particularly Andreas Volk-for their sincere support during the organization process and to those who actively involved in the task of translation which is a huge, but politically as much as practically very important work for reaching a larger and more diverse audience.***
CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Opening 13.00-13.15

Welcoming Speech
Prof. Dr. Yasemin Karakaşoğlu
(Bremen University, Faculty of Education, Intercultural Education Branch, Germany)

Opening Speech
Prof. Dr. Betül Yarar
(Philipp Schwartz Fellow, Faculty of Education, Intercultural Education Branch, Germany)

First Session 13:15-14.45
Transformation of Social Disciplines in Academia in Turkey

Moderation: Dr. Lydia Potts
(Oldenburg University, Migration, Gender and Politics)

“Academic Feminism, Feminist Academics and the Trajectory of Gender Studies in Turkey”
Prof. Dr. Alev Özkazanç (20 minutes),
(Formerly Head of the Women's Studies Program, also Professor
at the Faculty of Political Science Ankara University, Turkey)

“Is Psychology Still Worth Doing? Dead ends of Psychology Education in Turkey”
Dr. Olga Hünler (20 minutes),
(Philip Schwartz Fellow, Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research, Bremen University)

“Challenging State Certainties: Kurdish Studies Scholarship Under Ongoing Threat”
Dr. Ulrike Fiader (20 minutes)
(Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research, Bremen University)

Coffee Break: 14.45-15.00 (15 minutes)

Second Session 15.00-16.45
Impacts of Neoliberalism on Higher Education

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Yasemin Karakaşoğlu
(Bremen University, Faculty of Education, Intercultural Education Branch, Germany)

International Neoliberal Developments: British and German Higher Education Compared
Prof. Dr. Rosalind Prichard (30 minutes),
(Emeritus Professor of Education at Ulster University, UK)

“Neoliberal Austerity and the Greek Universities”
Prof. Dr. Constantine D. Skordoulis (20 minutes)
(Professor of Physics and Epistemology of Natural Sciences
the Department of Education, University of Athens, Greece)

“Neoliberalism, Authoritarianism and Transformation of Academia in Turkey”
Prof. Dr. Betül Yarar (20 minutes)
(Philipp Schwartz Fellow, Faculty of Education, Intercultural Education Branch, Germany)
Coffee Break 16.45-17.00 (15 minutes)

Third Session 17.00-18.30
Panel Discussion on Counter Practices, Strategies and Policies

Discussant and Commentator Prof. Dr. Kader Konuk
(University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany)

Prof. Dr. Vathsala Althal
University of Applied Social Science Würzburg-Schweinfurt

Andreas Keller
Vice President of the German Education and Science Workers' Union
(Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft - GEW)

Nina Locher
Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Project Management European Union/North America

Closing Speech
Prof. Dr. Kader Konuk 18:30-18.45

19:00 pm
Dinner at the City Center