



RESEARCH SEMINAR
SR11, Wednesday,
December 11, 2019, 15:00

Fé de Jonge (SOAS, University of London)
When Laws Meet: The Ottoman-European Encounter 1860

After the end of the Mount Lebanon civil war of 1860, the Ottoman Empire created the Extraordinary Tribunal for Beirut to try individuals for mass atrocities committed during this conflict, while five European states created an International Commission of Inquiry to assist and advise the Tribunal in its proceedings. The creation of the Commission is one example of the encounter between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, during which a meeting of multiple rival jurisdictions produced an institution outwardly focused on establishing individual criminal responsibility, but inwardly a site of control, contestation and resistance. This research project involves an in-depth study of the Tribunal and Commission, their creation and proceedings, and asks how competing forms of authority were performed by the Ottoman Empire and European states in the context of the Tribunal and Commission.

Jonas Bergan Dræge (John F Kennedy School of Government, University of Harvard)
Narrow Responses to Broad Movements:
Opposition Fragmentation and Turkey's Gezi Protests

How and why do opposition parties in authoritarian contexts pursue narrow and fragmented electoral strategies in the face of a broad and unifying protest movement? This article draws upon an original dataset of parliamentary interventions and extensive fieldwork in Turkey following the 2013 Gezi protests to demonstrate that opposition party responses differed in important ways. Deputies addressed demands that best aligned with their respective parties' pre-existing agendas, and emphasized different components of the protests. One party praised the message, the other the messenger. I argue that the parties responded in divergent ways in order to claim ownership to the anti-government energy that the movement brought about, while avoiding to upset core supporters – Turkish nationalists and Kurdish voters, respectively. Such selective responses with a narrow locus of attention is likely to be prevalent in other semi-authoritarian systems too. Opposition parties in authoritarian contexts are not only faced with the regime threat, but also threats to their own survival. Forming a broad opposition platform is therefore a gamble for the parties involved. Selective and limited support for protest movements may function as a way to give the impression of a dedication to a regime-ending strategy, while still catering to a narrow core voting group. Broad movements can therefore be a mixed blessing for facilitating pro-democracy unity: while such movements may unify civil society, they also enable opposition parties to cherry-pick the aspects of the protests they want to focus on, and maintain a narrow electoral strategy.