



WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

17.05.2023, 17:00 Uhr, HS-C (and online)
IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock

Ayşe Seda Yüksel-Pecen (University of Vienna) Wealth and War: Local Context of Urban Entrepreneurialism in Southeastern Turkey



Ayşe Seda Yüksel is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna. Her research interests are the interrelations between processes of

capitalist development and urban governance in conflict zones, the anthropology of violence and war, legal infrastructures of emergency governance and authoritarianism, class, consumption, and heritage-making processes. In her current research, she explores the temporal and spatial dimensions of emerging neoliberal legalities and their implications for the changing notions of justice and inequality.

kommende Termine

24.05.2023 Ashley Carse
[Logistics, place & the racialization of nature](#)

14.06.2023 Cameron Hu
[tba](#)

In this talk, I trace politico-moral discourses on “doing business” and entrepreneurship in an ethnically contested and economically weak post-industrial context that has been shaped by armed conflict and large-scale developmental policies, mainly focusing on Diyarbakır, a major Kurdish city in south-eastern Turkey. Based on interviews and participant observation, I analyse the recurring motives and urban myths in the stories of Kurdish business elites. In these local narratives, businesspeople are defined as “crooks” who would try to fool you, and the accumulation of wealth is associated with either luck or illegal gains, in each case an unearned success. In a rapidly neoliberalized and globalizing economy, where the entrepreneurial discourse on “making rational business,” aptitude, innovation rules not only Turkish business life but also various economies in other parts of the world, businessmen in Diyarbakır are making references either to phantasmagoric sources of wealth, such as finding buried gold, simply having good luck, or to political reasons that were beyond their control, such as unintended consequences of war. This negative connotation of what constitutes business and who represents a businessperson—as well as rumours about occult sources of wealth—that are shared by businesspeople themselves contrast with the newly emerging discourses of the local business associations that are attempting to shape a local entrepreneurial spirit in the city. Considering the contested political sphere in the city and the overlapping/conflicting discourses and economic future alternatives by the Turkish state, Kurdistan Workers’ Party and various international NGOs, I tackle the question of how these local business associations define “an entrepreneur” within a local economy that has been largely characterized by instability and uncertainty.

Details:
<https://ksa.univie.ac.at/en/department/events/wednesday-seminar/>

