

Contested Authorities over the Body: The State, the Secular, and the Religious

KEYNOTE LECTURE



Pascale Fournier
(University of Ottawa)
“Regulating Bodies & State
Recognition: Jewish and Muslim
Women in Contested Spaces in the
West”

Discussants:

Yofi Tirosh (Tel Aviv University
Faculty of Law and Sapir Academic
College)

Anna Korteweg (University of
Toronto, Department of Sociology)

Introduction and moderation:
Gökce Yurdakul (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

When & where:

WZB (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung), room A 300
17th October 2017, keynote lecture 16:00-18:00h, reception 18:00-19:00h

Organized as part of the international workshop “Contested Authorities over the Body: The State, the Secular, and the Religious”, generously funded by the German-Israeli Foundation Research Grant (Principal Investigators: Shai Lavi and Gökce Yurdakul) and supported by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Tel Aviv University. The keynote lecture is organized in cooperation with WZB, Research Unit “Migration, Integration, Transnationalization”.

Pascale Fournier (University of Ottawa)

“Regulating Bodies & State Recognition: Jewish and Muslim Women in Contested Spaces in the West”

The past few decades have witnessed a significant increase in scholarly attention to the subject of the interaction between secular law and religious norms. From the regulation of Muslim women’s bodies (most notably as it relates to the wearing of the niqab) to the recognition of religious family law, much of the debate in the West has centered on the appropriateness of state intervention in intersecting and contested cultural and legal spaces.

A dichotomous view of the relationship between religious law and secular law permeates the debates across the varied positions along the political spectrum. Those who perceive religion as a form of oppression towards women envision secular law as capable of ensuring gender equality. On the other hand, those who advocate the legitimacy of religion law claim that women use religious narrative as a form of identity and that this private and parallel sphere of normative expression should be respected as such in a multicultural state.

Drawing on her field research in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Canada, Dr. Pascale Fournier’s keynote address will explore interesting and unexpected patterns of women’s agency, religious critique, and navigation of parallel civil and religious structures. In doing so, she will assess different models of secularism that are developing in the Western world and that can be deciphered by examining each country’s approach to policing religious women’s bodies and to recognising religious family law. Throughout, Dr. Fournier will insist on the lived experiences of religious women as narrated by religious women interviewed in the context of her field research, in the hopes of contributing to a broader dialogue on the integration of minorities through recognition of their distinct religious normative orders.

Get in touch:

Like us on facebook: “Department of Diversity and Social Conflict at Humboldt University Berlin”

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