



**UNIVERSITÄT  
BIELEFELD**

Faculty of Sociology

Colloquium Series  
Sociology of Transnationalization  
“The Transnational Lens”

# Transnational or National: Urban Mega-Projects in Turkey

**Ilknur Kursunlugil\***  
Gustave Eiffel University, France

Urban mega projects have become ubiquitous throughout the world. In Turkey, they have become part of the daily life since 2011, when Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Prime Minister at the time, announced his Kanal Istanbul project by saying: “Turkey deserves to see 2023 with such a big, crazy and great project. Today, we are rolling up our sleeves for one of the world's greatest projects, which cannot even be compared with the Panama Canal, Suez Canal or Corinth Canal”. Since then, we have been witnessing urban transformation by mega infrastructure projects along with social and political transformation of the country via economic policies that aim to keep the construction sector alive; which in turn, have strongly contributed to the emergence of a government-affiliated conservative bourgeoisie during the AKP era. This talk aims to contribute to the age-old question, famously formulated by Seymour Martin Lipset in the 1960s: What is the link between liberal economy on the one hand and political regime, whether democratic or authoritarian, on the other hand? This presentation offers an answer, based on an empirical study of two infrastructure projects, the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge and the Greater Istanbul Airport in Istanbul.

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**Bielefeld University**  
**Room: X-C3-107**

\*Following her training in sociology at Galatasaray University, Istanbul, Dr Ilknur Kursunlugil obtained her MA degree in General Sociology and Methodology at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Istanbul. She defended her PhD thesis in Urban Studies in 2019 at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris under the supervision of Prof. Hamit

Bozarslan and Prof. Thomas Faist. Currently she is a post-doctoral researcher at LISIS (interdisciplinary research laboratory on science and innovation in societies) in the framework of the project “City Sustainability: from ‘de facto’ via ‘proactive’ to ‘transformative’ innovation policies” at University of Gustave Eiffel in France.