

Reimagining Africa in AKP's Turkey*
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Over the last decade, sub-Saharan Africa emerged as the new site in and through which Turkey has been fashioning itself as a global power. Not only the total number of Turkish embassies on the continent tripled in the last decade, but the largest Turkish embassy and military base are now located in Africa, more specifically in Somalia. The outflows of humanitarian and development aid by the hand of the Turkish state and Muslim civil society have been followed by the increasing inflows of profit through the economic relations of Turkish industrial manufacturers, contractors, constructionists and investors. Underlying these material practices and processes is a racial project of whitening the Turkish citizen that has escaped academic attention so far. This academic inattention is part of the persistent neglect of race and racialization in the study of contemporary Middle East, Europe and Africa. This presentation discusses the changing meanings of whiteness and blackness through reimagining Africa and Turkey's position in the world.

Ezgi Güner received her BA degree in Cultural Studies from Sabanci University, Istanbul. Currently, she is a PhD candidate in the Anthropology Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her dissertation research focuses on the articulation of race and religion with global capital accumulation in the context of Turkey's contemporary relations with sub-Saharan Africa. With support from SSRC, Wenner-Gren Foundation and the Graduate College at UIUC, Güner conducted a multisited ethnography with business organizations, state institutions, faith-based NGOs and Islamic schools in Turkey, Tanzania, Senegal, Benin and Gambia. During Fall 2018, she was a visiting fellow in the Anthropology Department at Harvard University. Supported by the Ernst Mach Grant, she is currently a visiting fellow at the Centre for Southeast European Studies at Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz where she is completing her dissertation.

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