

**Anglo-Turkish Society / Royal Anthropological Institute lecture, 21 May 2019, 6.00 pm**

Speaker: Noémi Lévy-Aksu

Venue: Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy St, Fitzrovia, London W1T 5BT

Title: The Power of Discretion: Martial Law in the Late Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey

İdare-i örfiyye, an equivalent of the martial law, appeared as a neologism in the 1876 Ottoman constitution. While the term referred to sultanic authority in the Ottoman-Islamic legal tradition, its definition was clearly inspired from the French “état de siège” in the 19th century. After briefly discussing the genesis of this notion in the late Ottoman Empire, this presentation will concentrate on the recurrent use of martial law and other regimes of exception since the beginning of the Turkish Republic, with a special focus on continuities and changes in the geographies and communities targeted.

It will be argued that emergency powers have been intrinsic to the articulation of sovereignty and governance in exceptional and ordinary times, creating spaces where fundamental rights are suppressed, and discretionary powers supersede the rule of law. The political and legal meaning of the martial law cannot be properly conceptualised without considering its deep social consequences and the experiences and memories of state violence and summary justice across generations.

Booking essential: <https://noemi-levy-aksu-lecture.eventbrite.co.uk>

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Noémi Lévy-Aksu is a teaching fellow at the London School of Economics, Department of International History. After receiving her Ph.D in history from the EHESS (Paris) in 2010, she worked as an assistant professor in history at Boğaziçi University (Istanbul) until 2017. She was a British Academy Newton International Fellow at Birkbeck College, School of Law between 2016 and 2018. Since her first book on public order in late Ottoman Istanbul, published in French and Turkish, her publications have focussed on late Ottoman political, social and legal history. Her current book project, at the intersection of law and history, focuses on regimes of exception in the late Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. Besides her academic activities, she is committed to human rights advocacy, with a special focus on Turkey.

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