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SANEM GUVENC-SALGIRLI

Marmara University, TURKEY

BAHAR AYKAN

Marmara University , TURKEY

DEFINING PUBLIC BENEFIT AND REGULATING SECURITY THROUGH STATE-INDUCED PUBLIC SPOTS IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

Abstract:

The second decade of the 2000s Turkey saw the emergence and sudden boost of public spots as a new communication material. These are forty-five seconds long clips that are prepared by the Ministries as well as NGOs and repeatedly aired on the advertising slots of national TV channels. Their pronounced aim is the pursuit of public benefit, directed towards 'raising consciousness and awareness in public' on quite a wide range of topics such as social solidarity, occupational accidents, health, food and environment. This presentation focuses on the ministry-produced public spots. Analyzing their content instead of their format and drawing on nineteen interviews conducted in 2014 with state officials involved in their preparation, we will question the very notion of public benefit and discuss how and why the public spot became a conventional medium to promote it. Our argument rests primarily on the observation that these spots of varying topics are linked through a generalized notion of security: issues concerning food, workplace, traffic, crime, and family are all problematized with the aim of regulating public safety through individual self-governance. As such, we discuss public spots as part of a neoliberal security regime induced by the state, a regime that gradually reassigns the problem of security upon the individual and advances public benefit through self-securitization.

Keywords:

self-governance; public benefit; securitization; public spots; Turkey