



THE REPUBLIC UNSETTLED // MUSLIM FRENCH AND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF SECULARISM

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Public Talk, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2016, 2-4 pm

Department of Anthropology, Aarhus University, Moesgaard, Foredragssalen, room 4206-139

Discussant: Heiko Henkel, Ass. Prof., Head of Studies, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen

This talk examines how Muslim French—i.e. those committed to practicing Islam as French citizens and practicing citizenship as pious Muslims—negotiate a social and political world in which they are imagined, *a priori*, as always already not-French because they are Muslim. It explores how this impasse is not only lived but also challenged by a post-immigration generation of Muslim civic activists. In so doing, it considers the ways that French secularism (*laïcité*) and French republicanism—and not Muslims—may be the real problems for pluralism. Rather than accepting the conventional narratives that *laïcité* entails strict neutrality and that the French nation is one and indivisible, my talk analyzes French secularism and French republicanism as “myths” that are historically fabricated but have real effects on the world. Through ethnography and critical historiography, it also reflects on new forms of public religiosity, national citizenship, and political possibility in France.