



## Call for Papers

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International Young Researchers Colloquium

The socio-political implications of quantification in Turkey

French Institute for Anatolian Research, September 28-29, 2023

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*Bin ölçüp, bir biçmeli*

(A thousand measures, one cut)

[Turkish proverb]

This colloquium invites young researchers at all levels (master, doctorate, post-doctorate) to share original research about the uses of numbers and their socio-political implications in the Turkish context, past and present.

Numeric arguments are omnipresent in political discourse. As the time for Turkey's presidential election approaches in the aftermath of the seismic crisis, this observation may become even more relevant. Figures and estimates on key ballot issues are generated, disseminated, and interpreted by a complex body of interconnected actors: pollsters, scholars, think-tank members, political party advocates, and so forth. Inflation, for instance, is a daily topic in mainstream newspapers. The 'true' numbers of inflation are calculated by economists and then shared by journalists in the public arena where they become the subject of heated controversies in board-rooms, coffee shops, and at dinner-tables. Competitive statistical narratives also circulate as executives and ordinary people seek to make sense of current trends and likely future scenarios. As some narratives win out over others, certain public institutions have been brought into disrepute; whereas, conversely, private expertise companies have acquired new levels of credibility and trust.

By organizing this colloquium, we wish to build a springboard for importing and discussing the numerous studies dealing with the social history of statistics (see Anderson 1988, Desrosières 2010 [1993], 2008a; Didier 2000; Wuthnow 2015; Labbé 2019), the socio-political life of numbers in the public arena (see Schweyer 1991; Porter 2017 [1995]; Desrosières 2008b, 2014; Bruno, Didier & Prévieux 2014; Gasquet et al. 2021), and the renewal of quantitative methodologies and techniques in the academic field (see Bugeja-Bloch & Couto 2021) along with their impact on reframing theories (see Field 2019; Bréchon & Zwilling 2020) and shaping state policies (see Aldrin 2010). Research on quantification and the social life of numbers has been fruitful in many parts of the world but has not yet been well established in Turkey. This event represents an effort to advance a scholarly conversation about the Turkish case, including the social history of ottoman and republican censuses (see Dündar 2001, 2005), statistics in relation to technopolitics and institutional reform (see Silverstein 2020), and the sociology of the public opinion and market research industry (see Abadan-Unat 1991).

This colloquium aspires to focus on a twofold research axis. On the one hand, we intend to dissect the chain of production of statistical artifacts that we are likely to encounter in our

respective research areas. This focus entails a genealogical endeavor. To prevent the risk of anachronism or teleology, we encourage *pragmatist* approaches that examine each step of the quantification process as a practical and contingent accomplishment. Chronological patterns should therefore be embedded with grounded accounts of quantification as a social activity undertaken by specific actors (interviewers, pollsters, statisticians...), integrated into various institutional networks (companies, think-tank, NGOs, administrations...), on particular objects (public opinion, social attitudes, political trends...), by relying on evolving techniques (sampling, questionnaire design, data collection...), and requiring a handful of aptitudes (counting, calculating, estimating, predicting...).

On the other hand, we wish to study the social life of statistical artifacts, narratives, and arguments inasmuch as they provide inputs for engaging in public controversies. What kind of public issues catalyze or magnetize statistical disputes within fields as various as, for instance, state policy, administration of religious affairs, or social movements? And how discourse and collective action are framed and reframed regarding competitive figures on controversial issues such as inflation, immigration, work-related accidents, natural hazards, or feminicides?

### **Application Process:**

We invite young researchers to share their complete or in-progress work whether focused on Turkey *per se* or including Turkey in a broader comparative study. We wish to open a space for exchange and discussion, with the objective of publishing an edited volume or a journal issue.

This colloquium is being organized by a scientific committee composed of specialists of Turkey and/or issues related to quantification. More than a young researchers' workshop held in a vacuum, this colloquium is meant to be an interdisciplinary, international, and, above all, intergenerational event!

This event will be hosted by the French Institute for Anatolian Research (IFEA) in Istanbul (Turkey) for two days (September 28-29, 2023). It will be partially funded by IFEA, the

Center for Turkish, Ottoman, Balkan, and Central Asian Studies (CETOBaC), and Institute for the Study of Islam and Muslim World Societies<sup>1</sup>.

Applicants should submit the following materials: a short resumé including a brief summary of past and current research activities, and a 500-word abstract for a 15 to 20-minute-long communication in English. **These materials must be sent before April 30 to the following email address: [quanti.tr.2023@proton.me](mailto:quanti.tr.2023@proton.me)**

### Submission guidelines

Items	Timeline
Submission of 500-word abstract & short resumé in English to <a href="mailto:quanti.tr.2023@proton.me">quanti.tr.2023@proton.me</a>	April 30, 2023
Announcement of selection outcomes	May 15, 2023
Submission of full-length papers	September 15, 2023
Conference	September 28-29, 2023

<sup>1</sup> We ask the participants in need of transportation and accommodation to request the support of their institutions. If not possible, these needs are to be granted by the organizers.

### Organizers:

**Necati Mert Gümüş** is a Ph.D. candidate in political science at Aix-Marseille University, UMR7064 Mesopolhis, under the supervision of Dorota Dakowska and Claire Visier. His dissertation analyzes the role and use of participatory settings, politics, and discourse in the process of politicization and power legitimation in contemporary Turkey.

**Théo Malçok** is a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at EHESS (UMR8032 CETOBaC) under the supervision of Nathalie Clayer and Patrick Michel. His dissertation focuses on the evolution of public controversies regarding the future of religion in contemporary Turkey in the context of an ongoing process of recognition of ‘atheists’ and religiously unaffiliated groups.

### Scientific committee:

**Emmanuel Didier** (Research director in social sciences, CNRS, France)

**Fuat Dündar** (Professor in political science, TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Turkey)

**Morgane Labbé** (Research director in social sciences, EHESS, France)

**Brian Silverstein** (Associate professor of Anthropology, Arizona Center for Turkish Studies, University of Arizona, USA)

**Claire Visier** (Associate professor in political science, University of Rennes-1)

**Dilek Yankaya** (Associate professor in political science, Sciences Po Aix)

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