

Call for Applications

Online Workshop

New Perspectives in Turkey Studies in the German-Speaking Countries

VI

Junge Perspektiven der Türkeiforschung im deutschsprachigen Raum

VI

30-31 October, 2020

This workshop brings together graduate students (PhD students, MA students, and BA students in the process of graduation) who are involved in research on contemporary Turkey and its diasporas. The objective of the workshop is to encourage interdisciplinary exchange and debate among young scholars and to help further establish Turkey-related research in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The workshop is the sixth event of the 'Türkeiforschung in Deutschland' series, established in 2010 and co-organised by Network Turkey, TürkeiEuropaZentrum (TEZ) at Universität Hamburg, and the Blickwechsel Contemporary Turkey Studies program at Humboldt-Universität Berlin. It is funded by Stiftung Mercator.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the workshop takes place online and this time it is also open to scholars from non-German-speaking countries. The main working language of the workshop is English. Selected workshop contributions will be published in the series 'Junge Perspektiven der Türkeiforschung im deutschsprachigen Raum' (VS Springer).

Workshop Groups

- **Civil Society in Turkey – Annegret Warth** (2018/19 Mercator-IPC Fellow, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)
- **Solidarity and Sexual Dissidence – Nazlı Cabadağ** (CARMAH, Humboldt-Universität Berlin)
- **The Past in the Present – Tabea Becker-Bertau** (Universität Hamburg)
- **Turkey Abroad: Public Diplomacy Between Rise and Decline – Thomas Schad** (Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies, Humboldt-Universität Berlin)

Between Conflict and Cooperation – State and Society in Contemporary Turkey

When social scientists address the current political situation in Turkey, they often address the topic of *polarisation*. While this is in no way an unfamiliar phenomenon in Turkey, the (failed) coup attempt of 2016 and the ensuing constitutional changes seem to have escalated binary tensions to an unprecedented level between religious and secular, conservative and liberal, eastern and western, and opposition and ruling parties – to only name a few. Concomitant effects of these tensions include acutely tightened state control, shrinking personal and societal freedoms, and record numbers of detained journalists and persecuted academics. At the same time, citizens continue to protest, demand social change and find creative ways for expressing their individual agency. In these times of ever heightening conflict and opposition, we ask:

How can state and non-state actors still engage with each other? What are the limitations to and the possibilities for the social, civic and political participation of various groups? Are there loopholes out of this impasse and how do social actors envisage them? How do marginalised groups that do not fit into binary categories figure into this strained interplay? How do the state and society, together and/or separately, deal with the challenges of war, violence and economic decline? How do different actors in Turkish society perceive the numerous refugees and the recent warlike operations in neighbouring Syria and in Libya? How do Turkey's internal tensions affect and intermingle with global issues and the country's role as an increasingly visible and active global player?

These questions will be addressed in the following four sub-groups dealing with different areas of research. Applicants are to apply to one of the sub-groups. However, presentation topics may go beyond the ideas outlined below.

1) Civil Society in Turkey – Annegret Warth (2018/19 Mercator-IPC Fellow, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Civil society provides spaces for the self-organisation and participation of citizens. Civil society organisations can raise awareness of societal issues, advocate rights and interests of the people, hold institutions to account and promote transparency. Civil society in Turkey flourished in the 1990s and 2000s. It developed ways to relate to public institutions in between conflict and cooperation within the context of relentless challenges to democracy and civil liberties. Particularly recently, Turkey is experiencing the contraction of civic spaces. The workshop group aims to make an inventory on recent civil society practices in an increasingly authoritarian context.

- How does civil society react to shrinking civic spaces? In what ways do actors build up their resilience? What are limitations to and possibilities for the social, civic and political participation of different groups?
- How does civil society relate to public institutions? What kinds of cooperation exist? Which conflict lines are present?
- What impact does civil society have in Turkey? Does civil society bridge Turkey's ethnic, religious, and social divisions, and help to reduce societal tensions? If so, how?

2) Solidarity and Sexual Dissidence – Nazlı Cabadağ (CARMAH, Humboldt-Universität Berlin)

Contemporary queer and feminist movements in Turkey have gone through a paradoxical decade pertaining to the normative framings of progression and visibility. While the neoliberal authoritarianism of the AKP regime targeted queer and feminist lives and movements in various ways, space-making and community-building practices took new shapes and continued to flourish. Departing from the recent developments in Turkey, the workshop aims to pursue the politics of gender and sexuality to understand the power structures in the country as well as in its diasporas. Participants dealing with the following questions are encouraged to apply:

- Do the emergent practices and meanings of anti-heterosexist activism propose a new political imagination? If so, how?
- What kind of intersectional politics are negotiated and employed by queer and feminist groups?
- What kind of affective resonances are at stake in queer and feminist strategies, practices and politics?
- How do local activisms interact with the hegemonically globalising repertoires of LGBTQ rights-based agendas and politics? How do they translate and translocalise knowledge and practices of sexual dissidence?
- What are the dynamics of transnational and translocal solidarities, and how is solidarity negotiated across borders?

The workshop group discussing these topics will be working exclusively in English.

3) The Past in the Present – Tabea Becker-Bertau (Universität Hamburg)

National narratives about the past may appear as indisputable truths and commemorative events as never-changing, well-rehearsed exercises. But change, contestation and counter-narratives are always present. Different memory groups compete for representation in politics and in the public sphere, and individual citizens – as ‘carriers’ of memory – exert agency of their own by visiting museums, venerating forefathers and linking up their personal stories with larger historic contexts. This workshop group aims to cast light on the multiple roles the past plays in the present. Participants are invited to discuss the following or related questions on history and commemoration in Turkey:

- Who are the agents of memory production and memory culture in Turkey today? And how do different (state and non-state) actors make sense and use of the past in the present?
- What are recurring themes and discourses in the context of present discussions about the past? Why and how do they reappear in different contexts?
- Why do certain memories gain importance while others are neglected? When and where do mainstream narratives and marginalised memories meet? What are the implications of such entanglements?
- What types of interplay between local, national and global memory cultures can we observe in Turkey?

4) Turkey Abroad: Public Diplomacy Between Rise and Decline – Thomas Schad (Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies, Humboldt-Universität Berlin)

One of the most significant changes that Turkey underwent in the past three decades is its arrival on the world stage of global, public diplomacy. A highly visible manifestation of this change is the popularity of Turkish TV drama series in the Balkans, the Middle East, Latin America and elsewhere. Beyond pop culture, there are numerous official cultural diplomats, represented in the country's cultural centres, schools and universities abroad, as well as news agencies, academic mobility programs and interventions in the political realm. In revisiting Turkey's rise to soft power while considering more recent developments, the workshop group invites applicants who address the following questions:

- What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the deepening, economic crisis on Turkey's official public diplomacy?
- Which goals do Turkish cultural diplomats pursue with their campaigns? How do these campaigns differ regionally?
- Is it possible to evaluate Turkish public diplomacy abroad in terms of success/failure?
- What is the agency of diasporic or 'related' groups abroad in Turkey's public diplomacy?
- What will come next? How do personnel changes within the AKP ruling party and the foundation of new political parties affect public diplomacy abroad?

Application process

Please submit your application for the workshop and the publication by **Tuesday, 1 September 2020** at 23:30 CET. Participants will be notified of admission by **1 October 2020**.

The deadline for the submission of articles is the **15 January 2021**. Final approval for the publication can only be confirmed after the full text has been submitted.

There is the possibility of follow-up panels at Turkologentag 2021 in Mainz (24-26 March 2021) where participants will be able to meet in person and present their revised and expanded papers.

Application details

Please send the following as one pdf file:

- Cover sheet with contact information, academic title and affiliation, working title of your presentation, and the chosen workshop group
- Abstract (max. 500 words)
 - Word document, 12pt Times New Roman, double line spacing (incl. footnotes)
 - Including clear description of the topic and the questions examined, linking the proposed topic with the theme of the workshop and the topic of the chosen workshop group, and information on methods and theoretical concepts
- Separate bibliography with the most important research literature (max. one A4 page)
- Current CV (max. one A4 page)

Requirements for the publication:

- Max. 6500 words
- Word document, 12pt Times New Roman, double line spacing (including footnotes)
- Cover page with author's name, academic title, contact information and working title
- Short abstract in both German and English
- Separate bibliography

Please send your questions and your application to Tabea Becker-Bertau (tuerkeiforschungsworkshop@gmail.com).