

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

EUROPEAN INSTITUTE

Graduate Student Workshop on De-Provincializing Soft Power: Perspectives from Turkey

Date: June 11-12, 2015

Location: Istanbul

Columbia University Global Center in Istanbul, in collaboration with the European Institute at Columbia University, is organizing an interdisciplinary graduate student workshop titled "De-Provincializing Soft Power: Perspectives from Turkey" on June 11-12, 2015. As part of a 3-year project that aims to document a global history of soft power that would juxtapose perspectives from the United States and Europe with strong cases from China, Brazil and Turkey, this graduate student workshop invites papers which examine Turkey's use of cultural persuasion in its recent history of international relations.

Particularly since 2004, Turkey has been ambitious about asserting itself as a regional power by opening onto the Balkans, the Middle East, and Turkic-language areas of the former USSR under the rubric of neo-Ottomanism. The growing allure of Turkey in those regions, with its television stars, popular politicians, education programs, development projects, growing economy, and its leaders' rhetorical strategies, offers an opportunity to examine how the concept and practices of soft/normative power are re-appropriated and by whom. Rather than pre-determining the meaning of soft power as taken up and examined in Western theories, we use it as an entry point to uncover how Turkey has come up with new ways of thinking about non-coercive/normative/soft influence in international relations. Who are the actors that latch onto these concepts? What are the local notions that inflect the acts of soft/normative power? How do government, civil society, and cultural institutions use concepts of soft/normative power to identify policies? Why do particular areas such as commercial culture, Gulenist movement or Islamic development projects matter? Most importantly, what do the debates and practices over soft/normative power, in the specific context of Turkey, show us about the country's imaginaries of the international system?

Instead of applying a rigid framework of soft/normative power, we invite graduate students from international relations, history, political science, sociology, and communications to present papers that identify the institutions, civil society initiatives, state and cultural diplomacy practices, commercial cultural activities, diasporic networks, and rhetorical toolkits on which Turkey has drawn to reposition itself in an age of international insecurity.

To apply please email the following to europaeaninstitute@columbia.edu. In the subject line, please indicate you are applying to the Graduate Student Workshop in Istanbul:

- Curriculum Vitae
- A 4-page abstract of your paper (1000 words)
- Name and contact information for faculty adviser(s)

The deadline for applications is May 22, 2015. Accepted papers will be announced in the week of May 25, 2015. Columbia University will cover the costs of travel and lodging for those who need to travel to Istanbul.