

Call for papers

Recent trends in the social studies of quantification

A conference organised by the **Society for the Social Studies of Quantification** and the **Centre Maurice Halbwachs** (EHESS/ENS-PSL/CNRS).

Paris, June, 19-20-21, 2024

Numbers play an ever growing role in contemporary societies, be it in the administration, in the ruling of democracy, in the economy, or in our very personal life, to name only a few examples. The goal of the conference is to draw a panorama of the questions that have recently emerged in a field dedicated to capture the social role of numbers: social studies of quantification, and to highlight the vibrancy of the field, be it through rejuvenating classical issues or opening up new empirical venues.

The **socio-history of quantification** is a particularly dynamic branch of sociology and of history of science and technology that has stemmed from pioneering work carried out in France in the 1970s and in the United States in the 1980s. It takes interest in a wide variety of social processes revolving around the activity of *counting* itself, which refers from a technical point of view to statistics and probability and, by extension, to accounting – be it public or private. One defining feature of this strand of literature lies in its strong reflexive stance, which combines internalist and externalist approaches and calls for particular attention to the quantitative data and processing methods used, on the one hand; and their historical context, as well as their scientific, social and political production and reception on the other hand.

A large body of work has emerged since then, focusing mainly on how quantification relates to government issues as well as its role in the production of knowledge. These analyses are inherently multidisciplinary, at the crossroads of history, sociology, political science, anthropology and philosophy. But they have also departed from purely Western-centric studies and are now being conducted all around the world.

This conference welcomes all scholars belonging directly or indirectly to the field of socio-history of quantification and sets out three objectives:

1. Highlighting the renewal of long-standing issues in the field, such as those listed in the beginning of this text.
2. Putting the emphasis on newly identified subfields of research, e.g., the role of quantification in defining and understanding the environment; the effects of data visualisation; instrumentation of quantification; how numbers can mediate emotions and affect; practices surrounding ethno-accounting and artificial intelligence; etc.
3. Illustrate the different national traditions that are developing in the field and new empirical findings, especially outside Europe and North America, that still remain the most studied geographical areas.

Participants commit to presenting unpublished research and to sending their paper to the organisers **one month** before the conference.

Proposals should be no longer than 500 words and include a series of keywords. Participants are also kindly invited to share a short biography of around 200 words. The working languages of the conference are English and French.

The proposals should be sent to sssq.seminar@gmail.com by **December, 15 2023**.

Limited funds are available to cover for travel and accommodation expenses if needed. To apply for such a grant, please provide a one-paragraph statement detailing your request for financial support.

Scientific Committee : Thomas Amossé (CNAM), Bruce Carruthers (Northwestern), Emmanuel Didier (CNRS/ENS), Quentin Dufour (CMH-ENS), Wendy Espeland (Northwestern), Mary Morgan (LSE), Richard Rottenburg (Witts University), Ted Porter (UCLA).

Organizing Committee : Pauline Adam (ULB), Camille Beaurepaire (INSEE), Dorian Groll (CMH - EHESS), Thomas Kekenbosch (CMH-ENS), Thomas Maillet-Mezeray (CERMES3), Ariane Sessego (INED).