KIT-Campus Nord

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Call for Papers:

International Graduate Summer School, IUC Dubrovnik, Croatia

Dubrovnik, Croatia, September 13 – 17, 2010

From the 13th to the 17th of September 2010, the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (Prof. Dr. Grunwald) together with the Institute for Sociology (Prof. Dr. Pfadenhauer) is organizing a Graduate Summer School at the Inter University Centre Dubrovnik (IUC). This international conference under the scientific direction of Prof. Armin Grunwald (KIT/ITAS), Prof. Vitaly Gorokhov (Lomonossow University, Moscow) and Prof. Imre Hronszky (Technical University Budapest) on the subject of

"Beyond Knowledge Society: Scientific knowledge production, consumption and transformation"

offers doctoral candidates and young scientists the opportunity of discussing their social scientific research work with experienced scientists.

Subject:

The importance of scientific knowledge has changed in the past decades. Science's cognition-oriented self-concept as a place for academic contemplation, for the art of experimentation and theory formation, which corresponded to the ideal of classical physics — and from there, set out on its triumphant advance — is now to be found in only some of the sciences. Other sciences, however, are drawn into society's decision-making processes, and are changed by them. The background of this development is that, in decision-making and organizational processes, knowledge is retrieved which is also needed for political opinion formation.

Through comprehensive research programs and new forms of organization (like, for example, the Helmholtz Association), new methods of scientific knowledge production are being firmly institutionalized. Science is called for to subject these scientific production methods to a re-evaluation, and to examine them with regard to the question, to which extent basic research should and can be societally relevant. The performance potentials of this "new" form of scientific knowledge must, for that reason, be analyzed with respect to its societal relevance, and be oriented on higher-ranking formulations of problems. Besides (1) the production of scientific knowledge, closer examination of (2) the consumption and (3) the transformation of scientific knowledge can provide an analytical framework.

(1) The production of scientific knowledge should be integrated directly into processes of economic and political decision-making, science's importance for the economy (innovations) and for politics (knowledge as decision support) is growing. Science influences the capability of these societal areas, because it not only provides explanations, but also draws up models for shaping reality, as well as decision alternatives. Conversely, the differentiation of research orientations in the economy and politics can be deemed to be an indispensable prerequisite for setting structural linkages between science and politics, resp., between science and the economy. This differentiation becomes apparent in processes of adaptation to economic principles which are taking place within the science system. This affects, above all —, but not exclusively — universities and research institutions, which are going through a period of upheaval. This upheaval seems to be closely associated with the introduction of new control instruments into science.
The key issue is, which institutional and epistemic consequences this re-orientation has for the core of scientific research. Our inquiry's interest is directed in particular at the context of research, at the disciplinary configuration, and at methods of quality management.

(2) The consumption of scientific knowledge is mirrored in its performance potential for political decision-making, and for economic innovations. On the one hand, the results of scientific research enter directly into advisory processes; on the other, they are generalized through a sort of expertise-oriented action, which makes their integratability into science and society at all possible. This diffusion and communication of scientific knowledge does, in fact, facilitate active reference to science, and, in this manner, improves the translatability of scientific- in societal ways of looking at problems (and vice versa). On the other hand, this sort of (possibly strategically and programmatically oriented) precautionary- and innovation research confronts scientific knowledge with its own particular challenges: New forms of knowledge develop, which, in their organizational form, no longer fit into the classical trinity of basic research, applied research, and commercialization.
The key issue is, which institutional and epistemic consequences result out of the interconnection of scientific professionalism with the necessity of political decision-making, or with research-based technical innovations. Our inquiry's interest is focussed less on science's role as a provider of information pertinent to advice and innovation, than much rather on the strategic re-orientation of scientific research (accountability).

(3) The transformation of scientific knowledge addresses — as its consumption also does — the problem of embedding scientific knowledge in the various stocks of societal interpretative knowledge. Through transformation, however, societal interpretative knowledge itself, on the other hand — more than that —, is supposed to be rendered scientific. In this way, science loses a part of the "innocence" which it had propagandistically defended by means of the norm of value-freedom. Value-freedom means, among other things, the objectivity of knowledge. While science is increasingly in demand in the economy, politics, and culture, and takes on obligations in these systems, the context of scientific knowledge gains in importance. Science is forced to reflect upon the conditions and on the consequences of its own application — and it can't do this other than with the help of scientific methods.
With science's nascent reflexiveness with respect to its societal environments, its mode of legitimation also changes. The "objectivity of knowledge" is no longer alone decisive for science's prestige, but rather also science's importance and its practical benefits for its users in the various societal areas. Science in this way takes on the task of answering to political goals and to societal needs. The scientific representation of practical relationships, including forecasting, is increasingly necessary for political and societal innovations, since the secondary consequences syndrome (unintended consequences) has grown to incalculable dimensions. With the emergence of new fields of research and reflection on the societal consequences of scientific and technical development, not only new themes for science come into being, but one can definitely assume a changed societal role of scientific knowledge. The central point may be that the contingency of scientifically-gained knowledge has become conscious, and is communicated in society as a knowledge gap.
The key issue is, which institutional and epistemic consequences result out of a science system which also "makes policy" by formulating how science should be constituted which meets the changed societal demands (e.g., transdisciplinarity).

Our inquiry's interest is, in the process, directed at the specific features of criteria for the validity of scientific knowledge and at their theory-guided efficacy.

The summer schools central matter of concern is to make an assessment of the changed production, consumption and transformation of knowledge — from varying disciplinary as well as varying cultural perspectives. To this end, the relevant theoretical perspectives and discourses will be introduced by experienced scientists in a first part. In a second part, the empirical and theoretical perspectives of young scientists will be presented. The objective is to gather different perspectives, to bring them to discussion, and, in this manner, to open — particularly for young scientists — an international and interdisciplinary view on this subject matter.

Program:

The summer school is distinguished by its conference-like nature: Papers read by young scientists alternate with invited lectures by senior researchers and critical discussions. The speakers can rely on qualitatively high-grade commentaries and inputs from the participants. The young scientists taking part will be given the opportunity of presenting their planned doctoral thesis and of bringing them up for discussion, of exchanging viewpoints with one another, and of making contacts. As a far-reaching aim, the Summer School intends to found an international network of young scientists in the fields of epistemology and science theory and to establish it on the longer term.

Submitting Papers:

We invite doctoral students and young scientists to submit papers concerning the summer schools theme. The papers can discuss empirical as well as theoretical questions. Please submit a paper proposal, including a short abstract of the doctoral thesis (if different) (500 - 800 words) until May 15th at the latest.

We would like to encourage those who concern themselves with these questions in their work, but aren't able to read a paper to apply as a discussion partner. To this end, please submit your CV as well as a short description of the current focus of your research / or your planned doctoral thesis (max. 200 words) until May 15th 2010 at the latest. We will communicate the acceptance or rejection of the abstracts until May 28th at the latest.

Please send your proposals to Simon.Pfersdorf@kit.edu.

The organizers are trying to acquire partial-cost scholarships to help pay the participants' travel expenses and accommodations. The award of such scholarships can, however, not be guaranteed. We would also very much like to draw your attention to the DAAD (the German student exchange service) training course scholarships for students - scholarships which support participants in training courses offered by institutions of higher learning and by scientific organizations abroad in European countries.

Information and an online form under:

http://www.daad.de/ausland/foerderungsmoeglichkeiten/stipendiendatenbank/00658.de.html?detailid=203&fachrichtung=4&land=8&status=1&seite=1

- The Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports awards scholarships to postgraduate students of Croatian origin. You can find further details on the IUC pages: http://www.iuc.hr/croatian-ministry.php
- You can find further details on the IUC pages: http://www.iuc.hr/hesp-osi.php
- Interested parties from other countries should please consult their respective national sponsorship institutions, etc.

All information about the International Graduate Summer School can be gathered from our homepage: http://www.itas.fzk.de/v/dubrovnik/

Please forward this call to anyone who might be interested.