Call for Papers

Interdisciplinary International Graduate Summer School
at the University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU,
Donostia-San Sebastian, Spain,
from 18 to 22th July 2016

The Post-Graduate Program in Philosophy, Science and Values (University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU, National Autonomous University of Mexico UNAM, and University Carlos III Madrid) and the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (KIT/ITAS) will be hosting an International Summer School for PhD students. The Summer School is part of the UPV/EHU XXXV Summer Courses.

Under the supervision of Professor Andoni Ibarra (UPV/EHU), Dr. Bettina-Johanna Krings and PD Dr. Stefan Böschen (both KIT/ITAS), the subject of the Summer School will be:

Techno Science Societies: Between Myth Formation and Societal Structure

Energy transitions, food systems restructuring, climate change adaptation: We live in an age of massive deliberate transformations. These transformations are deeply connected with the emergence of technological "progress" as a fundamental part of contemporary societal identity. Today, information and communication technologies (ICT) enable and/or accompany a majority of these processes, making much of these developments "big data" phenomena. In this way, ever more entangled "systems of systems" with unparalleled complexity are intentionally pursued and incorporated in national and international policy programs. As a result of the broad, yet finely grained targets of socio-technical change envisioned in these programs, expectations of governance effectiveness in tackling these policies increase simultaneously. However, we assume that potentials for disappointment grow similarly since the quality and impact of governance does not reflect these expectations – even if political control myths might suggest otherwise. In other words: Claims and their possible realization are likely to drift further apart.

As a consequence, we expect re-arrangements in the relation "between myth formation and societal structure". To be clear, we understand myths as a necessary functional requirement of socio-technical transitions in order to create a common point of reference between actors from fields such as politics, the economy, NGOs and science. Myths as such - as conventional wisdom might suggest - are not necessarily some sort of distracted reality or false legend. A political myth can be described as "the continual process of work on a common narrative by which the members of a social group can provide significance to their political conditions and experience" (Bottici & Challand, 2006). In fact, political science has long discovered that every political myth has a *symbolic* and an *instrumental* function (Edelman, 1985) which catches the dualistic notion of politics that "talk and action" (Brunsson, 1989) are not always congruent. Against this background, our angle focuses on *alterations of myths that necessarily need to be told*. Yet, descriptions of society and political intervention are increasingly controversial. Consequently, the cohesive function of prevailing political myths seems to be gradually substituted by more differentiated, particularized and contested ways of "story-telling" (Weick, 1995).

In particular, tensions between leading myths such as scientifically driven growth and its implicitly shared premises become visible: "The organizing myth of techno scientific innovation orients the expectations and priorities of scientists and other social actors just as much or as little as did the powerful myth of science as a legacy of the Enlightenment." (Nordmann, 2010, p. 6) Paradoxically, the changes envisioned in transition programs such as renewable energy turns intend to alter socio-technical patterns through the very application of technology: The deployment of big data analytics, for instance, is not only supposed to be a result of energy transitions but *also a means to get there.* It helps to realize more detailed governance objectives through collecting, assessing and re-applying data. In this way, "professional knowledge activities are expanding in current western societies and constitute the leading edge of postindustrial work" […], whereas the "epistemic practices may come to dominate other kinds of practice" (Knorr Cetina, 2001, p. 185). At the summer school, we look for contributions unraveling these "post-social constellations" (ibd.) and discrepancies.

Keynote lecturers (confirmed):

Maja Horst, PhD, Professor at University of Copenhagen, Head of Department of Media, Cognition and Communication, Denmark

Karin Knorr-Cetina, PhD, Professor emeritus of Sociology, University of Constance, Germany, and George Wells Beadle Distinguished Service Professor, University of Chicago, US

Andrew Stirling, PhD, Professor of Science & Technology Policy (SPRU - Science Policy Research Unit, School of Business, Management and Economics, The Sussex Energy Group), University of Sussex, UK

Objectives & Guiding Questions

The main objective of this summer school is to unfold the changes in social structure and the narratives about them as well as their reciprocal dynamic of amplification and demise. What is the relation between changing social structures and new purposes for regulation? What role do political myths play along these processes? *Against this background, we pursue a threefold summer school agenda:*

1. **How is the emergence of political myths related to changes of social structure?** We are living in times where the articulation and expression about radical change has become quite common. Diagnosing necessities of 'Great Transformations', living in the 'Anthropocene', the quest for a 'post-carbon society' or the upcoming of a 'TechnoScienceSociety' (Maasen et al. 2016) are self-descriptions of societies or the conditions of human life offered by professional observers – and some of them are even circulating in the wider public. Yet these ideas are not only self-descriptions. At the same time, they are political myths by serving as narratives of big deliberate transformations – they are an instrument to explain the changes in the present and to ascribe responsibility, blame and expectations.
   In this section, we look for their *description, ways of unfolding and reconstructive analyses* of myth creation and impact. We apply a special focus on how this formation of myths is related to changes in social structure. Therefore, we invite papers which are looking at alterations of social structure in specific arenas (these might relate to a single technology such as nanotechnology or robotics as

much as to broad socio-technical programs such as energy transitions, big data or military technology) and which align these changes with the narratives brought about. What do these narratives indicate about the changes observed? In what way can we understand these relations between myth formation and social structure?

2. **What are regulatory processes political myths are aligned with?** As social structures are undergoing a more or less fundamental change, problems of regulation emerge. This description is tightly connected to the question of how far-reaching changes in social structure are. In many cases, these changes are driven by a paradoxical logic of building up complexity in order to increase the regulatory problem-solving capacity. One example is the establishment of the precautionary principle while hoping to address not only known risks but also unknown ones to prevent future hazard. Such processes can be observed in the regulation of GMOs (genetically modified organisms) or the regulation of chemicals, but also with regard to the establishment of transnational regimes as the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) or IPBES (Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem services). Precaution in the light of the unknown, regulation of the thermostat of the earth or conservation of biodiversity for sustainability purposes, these are stories about control options in situations of high fragility.
   In this section, we invite papers to address the relations between (political) myths and the emergence of new forms of regulation – or the perpetuation of previous arrangements despite evolutions in the overall situation. Of interest are also specific elements of regulation like trust or responsibility and their rearrangement while structures are undergoing a more or less fundamental change.

3. **What are instrumental and symbolic functions of political myths?** "Narrative variations" can lead to multiple ways of telling the story around a political myth, e.g. to instigate or prevent an innovation process or evoke a whole research program such as "Horizon 2020" under the label of promoting "responsible research and innovation". Instrumental functions are those *that a myth "really", i.e. operatively unfolds* compared to those that are merely stated or normatively associated with it, such as the promotion of responsibility. In this way, symbolic functions of myths often relate to the *legitimization of policies* toward interest groups, the public or political opposition. In the case of "responsible research and innovation", for instance, processes of involving potentially affected – the public – are commonly regarded as a means to stipulate "consensus" among developers, politics and civil society. Still, empirical observations suggest that many participation procedures lack the desired impact while the important decisions are taken elsewhere. Is there a *discrepancy* between symbolic (consensus, acceptance) and instrumental (legitimization, distraction) functions? Another example is the field of *technology assessment* (TA): Can this practice of scientific policy consulting on emerging technologies lead to better decision-making? What is the relation between possible *symbols* (legitimizing decisions through scientific reference) and *actual impacts* such as successful cases of responsible technology development?
   In this section, we invite papers which are tracking the emergence and the social as well as structural relevance of selected political myths. Thereby light should be shed on the specific form, function and historic variation of political myths while influencing changes of social structure.

References

Bottici, C., Challand, B. (2006). Rethinking Political Myth. The Clash of Civilizations as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy. In: European Journal of Social Theory 9(3): 315–336.

Brunsson, N. (1989). The organization of hypocrisy: talk, decisions and actions in organizations. New York: Wiley.

Edelman, M. (1985). The Symbolic Uses of Politics (2 edition). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Knorr-Cetina, K. (2001). Objectual practice. In: Schatzky, Th.R., Knorr-Cetina, K., Savigny, E. von: The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory. London/New York: Routledge: 184-197.

Maasen, S.; Dickel, S.; Schneider, C. (eds.; 2016): TechnoScienceSociety. Berlin: Springer (forthcoming).

Nordmann, A. (2010). A forensics of wishing: technology assessment in the age of technoscience. Poiesis Prax 7(1–2): 5–15.

Weick, K. E. (1995). Sensemaking in Organizations. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Concept

The Summer School provides PhD students with the opportunity to develop their projects in a stimulating working atmosphere and in an international context. We aim at an inspirational environment for learning and discussion that ensures excellent feedback on everyone's work. In formats such as "Lecture", "Individual Presentation", "Workshop" and "Poster Presentation", a varied intellectual experience shall be created. At the same time, San Sebastian provides participants with the opportunity for a week of relaxed interchange, discussion and networking with experienced scholars and other PhD students.

- "Lecture": Established researchers will present their basic positions in lectures.
- "Individual Presentation": This format consists of a 30 minute paper, in which PhD students present their project to the plenum. A senior scholar will provide comments on the presentation, based on a previously submitted paper- and the presentation will then be discussed in the plenum.
- "Workshop": In the workshop, problems of relevance to the work of the PhD students will be addressed and discussed in small groups. Each group will be chaired by a researcher with considerable experience in the relevant field. In this intense format, the students will be able to submit and discuss their own concrete problems.
- "Poster Presentation": PhD students bring a poster showing the key questions and issues related to their work. Creative designs are encouraged. The posters will be featured in a special session, presented in a Flash Talk and facilitate the mutual learning in the group.

The language of the Summer School will be English. On successful completion of the Summer School, the graduate will receive a certificate of attendance.

Registration

The Summer School is open to PhD students at various stages of progress in their dissertation project, and offers two forms of participation: graduates may take part either with a proposed individual presentation or with a poster.

- To apply for <u>participation with individual presentation</u>, please send us, at the <u>latest by February 28th 2016</u>, an abstract of max. 3.000 characters outlining your PhD project and in particular the background to the problem discussed, research questions as well as the methods and theoretical approaches to be adopted, together with a CV.
- To apply as <u>participant with a poster</u>, please send us, at the <u>latest by February, 28th 2016</u>, an abstract of max. 1.500 characters briefly outlining your PhD project, together with a CV.

Please send your suggestions to Constanze Scherz (email: scherz@kit.edu). Applicants will receive notification of acceptance by April, 30th 2016.

Participation in the course is free of charge. Unfortunately, the organizers cannot cover any travel or accommodation costs. We would like to draw your attention to national sponsorship institutions like the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) in the case of Germany, who offer training course scholarships for students. Please contact your university's international office for further information on scholarships available in your country.

Further information: http://www.itas.kit.edu/english/events_2016_summerschool.php