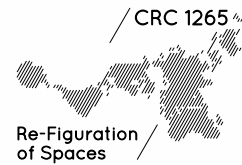




SMUS



# Towards an Empirical Theory of Science?

Challenges and (Possible) Standards of Scientific Research Today

Joint Workshop of the Collaborative Research Center “Re-Figuration of Spaces” (CRC 1265) and the “Global Center of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability” (SMUS)

Technische Universität Berlin  
Ernst-Reuter-Platz 1 – 10587 Berlin – BH-N 230

27./28.06.2024

**Organizers:** Hubert Knoblauch, Nina Baur, Silke Steets and Séverine Marguin

The workshop is jointly organized by the Collaborative Research Center “Re-Figuration of Spaces” (CRC 1265) and the “Global Center of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability” (SMUS). In the CRC 1265 ([www.sfb1265.de](http://www.sfb1265.de)), scholars from sociology, art, geography, architecture, anthropology, communication studies, and urban planning have been working together for over six years to develop a theory of spatial change. SMUS (<https://gcsmus.org/>) connects 48 institutional partners from 48 countries, with the majority of partners coming from the Global South. SMUS aims to decolonize social science methodology and develop transdisciplinary spatial methods.

Research in such an inter- and transdisciplinary as well as cross-cultural and transnational context offers a wide range of options and opportunities for knowledge production and, in particular, for knowledge transfer and innovation in various forms of collaboration. In this way, inter- and transdisciplinary as well as cross-cultural and transnational research contributes to the so-called transfer of academic knowledge, to its public dissemination and thus to its legitimation in society. On the other hand, heterogeneous collaborations challenge the role of academic disciplines and their methods, thereby contributing to the “fractalization” of science. In addition, the extension of scientific communication to different societal actors, the public understanding of science and the various forms of public science (e.g. public sociology) have evidently contributed to a crisis of scientific expertise, to its de-legitimization and ultimately to the questioning of science itself. Indeed, this issue has been raised in a number of different contexts, e.g. as a problem of relativity, as standpoint dependence of scientific knowledge, or as the construction of scientific knowledge.

Although science itself has become the subject of a wide range of studies, including the Social Studies of Science, the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge, and Science and Technology Studies (STS), it seems to us that especially empirical studies of the sciences in general and the social sciences in particular (on which we focus in this workshop) have not been linked and integrated with the demands and challenges of the Philosophy of Science or what has been called in German “Wissenschaftstheorie”. As much as we know about the social and cultural particularities of the social sciences, their practices, and their dependence on and effects of ideologies or economic power structures, including the role of gender, race and class, the findings of these empirical studies of science have rarely been linked to the more normative questions of the

Philosophy of Science, such as how we “should” do science and what are the legitimate epistemic requirements for scientific communication.

As these issues are usually discussed within different fields of expertise, in this workshop we invited experts from various academic fields who have engaged with science in a theoretical and/or empirical way in their research to discuss the following questions: What is scientific about research and how should science be done? And to what extent do the current inter- and transdisciplinary as well as cross-cultural and transnational contexts inflect the current renegotiations of the normative definition of science?

## Program

### Thursday, 27.6.2024

12:00-12:15 Hubert Knoblauch, Séverine Marguin, Silke Steets  
Welcome and Introduction

12:15-13:00 Hubert Knoblauch (TU Berlin)  
Introducing the Empirical Theory of Science

### Empirical Theory of Science and Epistemologies

13:00-13:45 Peter Fischer (TU Dresden)  
Towards an Empirical Theory of Science? Lessons from the History of the Philosophy of Social Science

13:45-14:30 Jörg Niewöhner (TU München)  
Epistemic Agonism. Developing a science after progress

14:30-15:00 Coffee break

15:00-15:45 Fabian Anicker (HH Universität Düsseldorf):  
Bottom-up epistemology: Overcoming scientific fragmentation from within

15:45-16:30 Silke Steets (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg)  
Maps as Epistemic and Communicative Devices

16:30-17:00 Coffee break

### Coproduction, Collaboration and Power Relations

17:00-17:45 Gabriel Faimau (University of Botswana)  
Towards Decolonial Reflexivity and Co-Production of Scientific Knowledge

17:45-18:30 Cornelia Schendzielorz, Martin Reinhart (HU Berlin)  
Research Collaborations as a Prism for Power-Knowledge Relations

19:00 Dinner

Friday, 28.6.2024

Belief and Science

- 9:00-09:45 Nona-Schulte Römer, Ignacio Farías, and Brett Mommersteg (HU Berlin)  
Do Electromagnetic Waves Kill? The Dilemma of Evidence-Making in Post-Normal Science
- 09:45-10:30 Claire Wagner (University of Pretoria, South Africa)  
The good, the bad and the bizarre: Environmental psychology's role in guiding beliefs about climate change in a post-truth society
- 10:30-11:00 Coffee break

Science and the Professions

- 11:00-11:45 Séverine Marguin (TU Berlin)  
Multiperspectival research: Embracing heterogeneity through design-synthetic thinking
- 11:45-12:30 Jacques du Toit (University of Pretoria, South Africa)  
The 'relevance' of social scientific research for the applied built environment professions: Epistemological and methodological questions and implications for social scientific research?
- 12:30-13:30 Lunch break
- 13:30-14:15 Jakkrit Sangkhamanee (Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok)  
When an Anthropologist Meets Hydrologists: A Reflection on the Sociology of Knowledge of Mekong Hydrology
- 14:15-15:00 Sabine Ammon (TU Berlin)  
The Normativity of Research in the Engineering and Design Sciences
- 15:00-15:30 Nina Baur (TU Berlin): Wrap Up/ Conclusion

**DFG**

