



Call for Papers and Panels

Out of Control? How Concepts and Practices Circulate across Boundaries

4th Annual Conference

Käte Hamburger Kolleg/Centre for Global Cooperation Research
in cooperation with
Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) Essen
and
Main Research Area Transformation of Contemporary Societies

Thursday, 27 October – Friday, 28 October 2022

Gerhard Mercator Haus, Duisburg

Concepts and practices are essential for how we think about the world and how we act in it. They provide orientation, guide expectations, and provide the grounds for communication and social coordination. In an increasingly complex world, cross-border transfer, dissemination, and circulation of concepts and practices are essential for global cooperation and science communication alike. Yet, concepts do not mean the same thing to everyone. Ways of doing things are not necessarily shared across the boundaries of societal sectors, nation states, or regional entities. However, despite the intricacies involved, researchers and practitioners often assume that direct policy transfer across world regions or sectors is attainable, or that projected knowledge transfer from the academic to the political or the public sphere is possible. But what happens if the circulation of concepts and practices flies 'out of control' – when through appropriation and translation they develop a life of their own, or circulation meets obstacles that disrupt it altogether?

These processes can also be related to the study of conceptions of world order and global politics. Examples include attempts by Western, Chinese, and Russian actors to diffuse and legitimize their own world order conceptions. More recently, in the Ukraine war, a bounded conception of imperial world order confronts Western conceptions of liberal international order, while at the same time appropriating (and mis-using?) some of its elements. In the field of science communication studies, increasing attention is directed towards understanding how and why attempts of making academic knowledge accessible to wider publics meet rejection and refusal, while scientific practices are (mis)appropriated to produce pseudo-knowledge. The translation of complex academic concepts and practices into popular notions might also generate dissonance that estranges scientists from the aims of transfer and dissemination.

The 4th Annual Conference of the KHK/Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21), organized in cooperation with the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut, KWI) Essen and the Main Research Area Transformation of Contemporary Societies, seeks to address these issues by bringing researchers from the fields of global cooperation and science communication studies into a fruitful interdisciplinary dialogue. Possible themes for presentations, panels and round tables include, but are not limited to:

Multidirectional travel of concepts and practices: Across disciplines, the pluralistic and decentralized character of circulation of concepts and practices is increasingly recognized. Yet, what are the implications for our theoretization of intentionality and agency in these processes, and what does this mean in practice for the circulation of global policy and science communication concepts across regional, national and sectoral boundaries?

New challenges for translators: The complexity of contemporary economic, environmental, humanitarian, and military crisis raises the stakes for linguistic and sense-making translation of concepts and practices. Claims to universal validity often turn out to be problematic in rather different local and sectoral contexts. What productive and unproductive conflicts arise? To what extent and by whom are they articulated? What characterizes successful mediators and translators, what are the dilemmas they face, and (how) can they be resolved?

Consonant and dissonant circulation: If a meaningful circulation of concepts and practices requires resonance between disseminators and addressees, there is a need to better understand the factors and processes that facilitate or hinder this. How are travelling concepts translated, re-interpreted, and appropriated across boundaries? What happens when there is dissonance rather than consonance, or when concepts or practices are rejected, opposed or considered as not acceptable?

Conflicting circulation: What happens when circulating concepts and/or practices come into conflict with each other? How do such conflicts in global policy diffusion and science communication unfold and have they been resolved by – to give just a few options – surrender, mediation, hybridization, or indifference?

Boomerang circulation: Do re-interpreted concepts and practices return to their places of origin, like boomerangs, but with changed meanings, and, if so, with what effects? What happens when re-interpreted concepts return to their sphere of origin in hardly recognizable forms? How do the involved actors reflect on these 'Frankenstein effects', and what are the impacts for the belief in concepts, practices, and science in larger publics?

This conference welcomes contributions from different disciplines across the humanities and social sciences and law, as well as diverse theoretical, historical and area studies perspectives. Contributions may take different forms, including research papers, short thought pieces, memos on specific methodological aspects, as well as suggestions for round tables or panels.

The Centre for Global Cooperation Research is an interdisciplinary and international learning community that seeks to enhance understanding of the possibilities and limits of global cooperation and explore new options for global public policy. The Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) Essen is an interdisciplinary inter-university institution connecting the Ruhr-University Bochum, the Technological University Dortmund and the University of Duisburg-Essen with a strong focus on Cultural Science and Science Communication Studies, as well as Cultural and Literary Sociology. The Main Research Area Transformation of Contemporary Societies is one of the five interdisciplinary interfaculty focal points of UDE research activity.

*To propose a conference contribution, please submit a title and a short abstract of maximum 250 words in English via events@gcr21.uni-due.de. **Deadline for submissions is 31st August 2022.** If you have questions, please contact Sigrid Quack (Sigrid.quack@uni-due.de).*