

Scientific governance: excellence and impact



Robert Braun

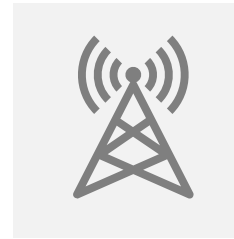
**Towards a
sociology of
excellence:
constructing and
deconstructing
scientific impact**
8th - 21 May, 2021

@Masaryk University 2021



Completion

What you need to do?



Participate

seminar
(online)



One academic
blog post

The academic blog
should reflect some
current
sociotechnical
challenge,
addressed via
learnings acquired
in the course (250-
500 words)



Final paper

the final paper will
address a specific
question within the
realm of STS and
analyze it according
to general academic
practice, (2500-
3000 words)

+

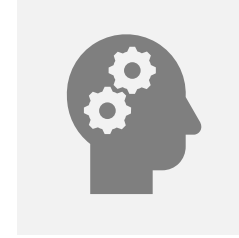
Specific
assignment(s)

TBD



What will happen?

The course



Science & society: the beginnings

- What is science?
- The politics of science
- The beginnings of science policy

Science & society: Creating the idea of excellence

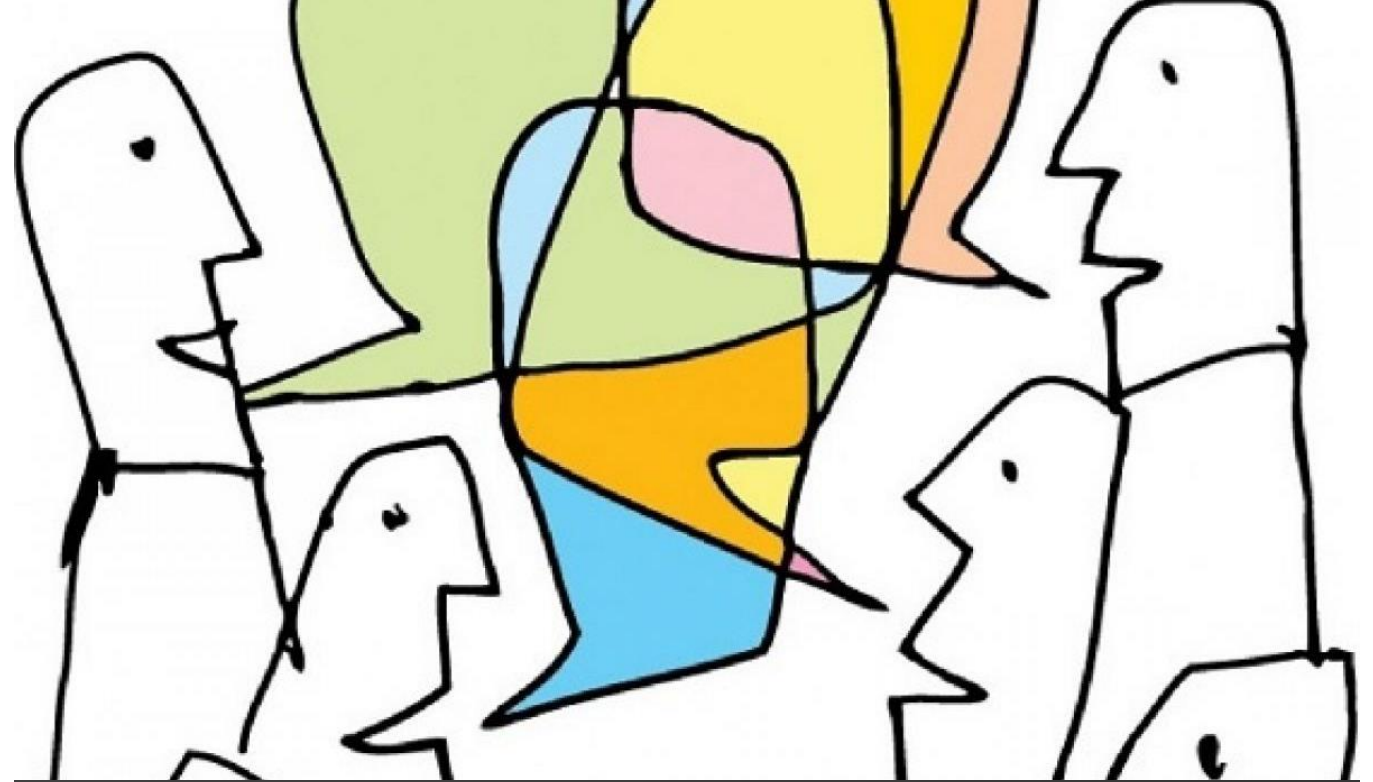
- What is science policy?
- The Republic of Science
- Measuring excellence
- The European Research Council

Science & society: Critique of excellence

- ✓ Responsible research and innovation
- “Destitute excellence”:
decolonizing science
- The future of “excellence”

- Responsible Research and Innovation is a **transparent**, interactive process by which societal actors and innovators become mutually responsive to each other with a view to the (ethical) **acceptability**, **sustainability** and societal **desirability** of the innovation process and its marketable products (in order to allow a proper embedding of scientific and technological advances in our society)

- Von Schomberg, Rene (2012)



Responsibility

Stewardship of the future

Entering into RRI

What's in it for me? Play your part in Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)

Stakeholders

Policy Makers



Research Community



Education Community




Business and Industry





Civil Society Organisations





Policy Agendas


 Ethics

 Gender Equality

 Governance

 Open Access

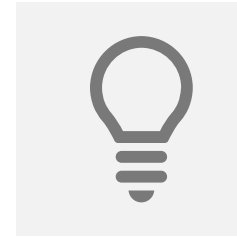
 Public Engagement

 Science Education



Major changes in science politics

Transformations



Thinking

Science is a concern for the whole of society and a tool for equitability and democracy



Who is thinking?

Everybody (e.g. expert and lay inclusion, participation in agenda setting & research)



What is being thought?

Transdisciplinarity
Participatory science
Citizen's science
Open science



Major changes in science politics

Transformations

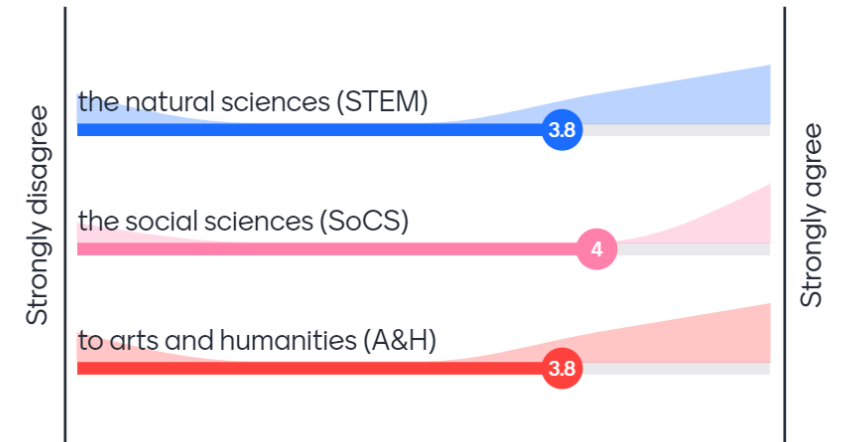
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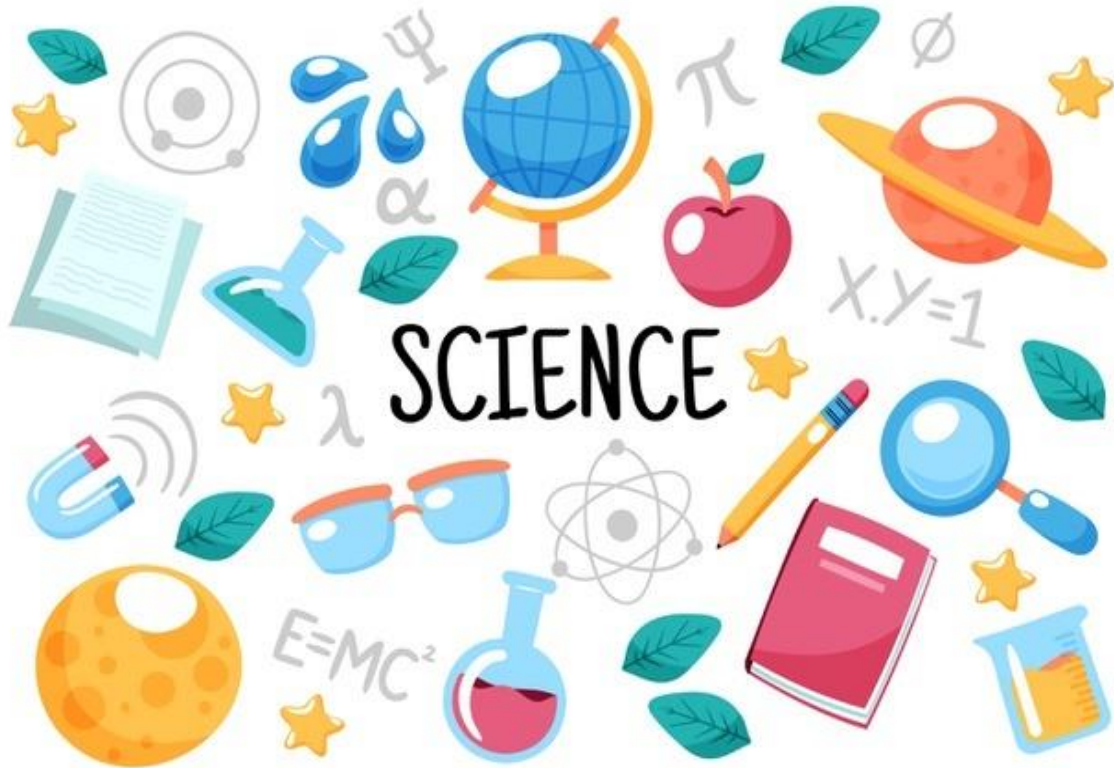
What does Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) mean to you?



empathy

everyday lives
decolonization
inclusion





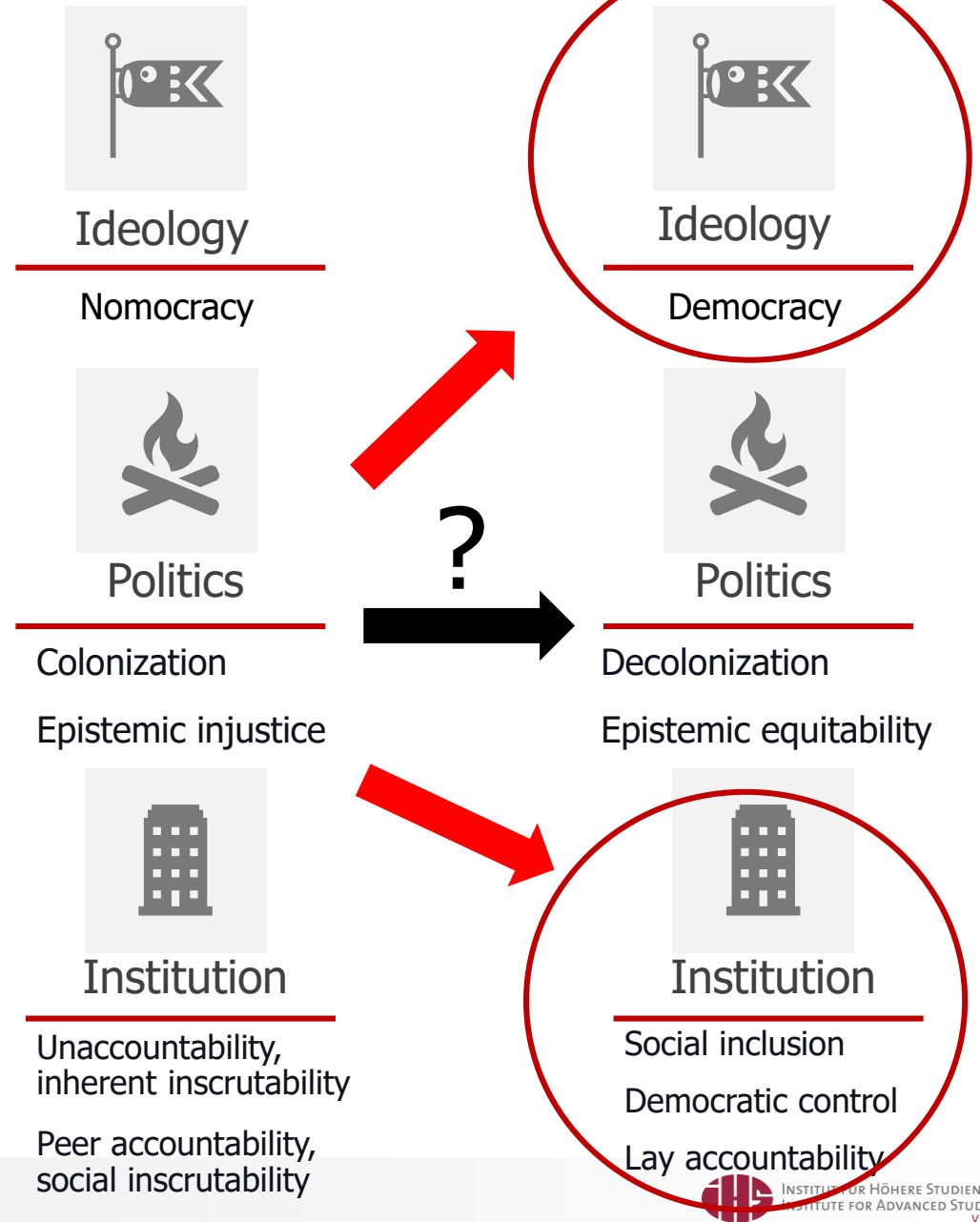
What is science?

Hood & Wilson: The literature of bibliometrics, scientometrics, and informetrics

Excellence as

Scientific excellence

deconstructing excellence

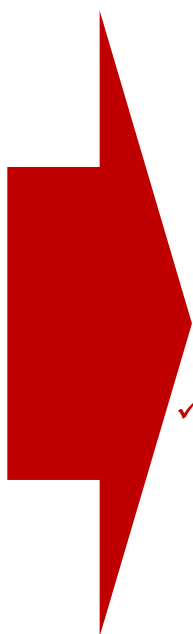




What is excellence?



Deconstructing Excellence

- Excellence is the institution representing and operating the nomocratic order that is science.
 - Science is a space produced ("the ever new frontier") of which epistemic violence is constitutive and, as it is bracketed, it is normalized to include/exclude knowledges and their subjects.
 - The "science of science" is the map, producing space and the nomos (order made visible). "Just" and "unjust" enemies are created, frontiers are colonized by the sovereign that is "Western" science, operated by the "laws of scientometrics" the power/violence that is its apparatus.
- 
- ✓ Questioning the nomocratic order that is science.
 - ✓ Rethinking space/frontier and addressing it as "camp".
 - ✓ Decolonizing science: addressing sovereignty questions and critically assessing the power/violence that is its apparatus.



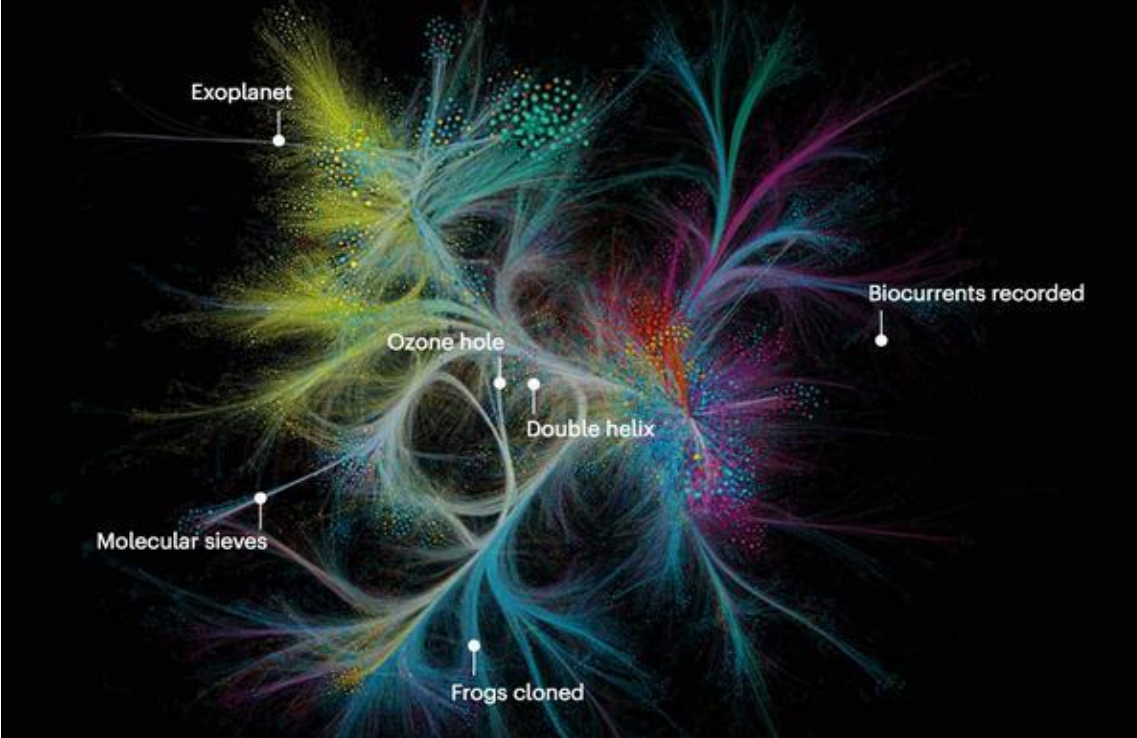
Science as apparatus

Foucault

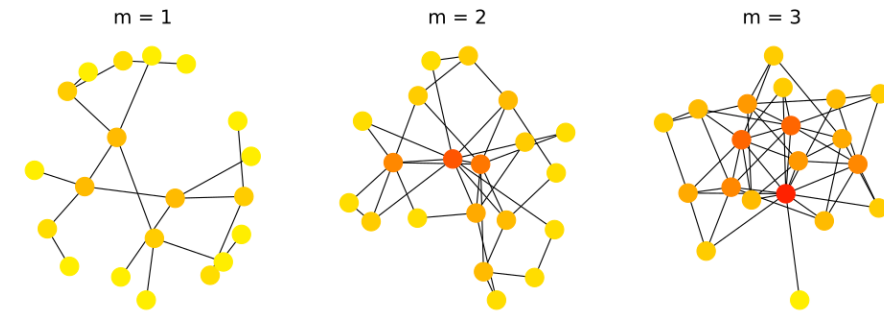
The problem of RRI



“What I’m trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. **The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements.** Secondly, what I am trying to identify in this apparatus is precisely **the nature of the connection** that can exist between these heterogeneous elements ... Thirdly, I understand by the term ‘apparatus’ a sort of – shall we say – formation which has as its **major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an urgent need.** The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function.”



Science as apparatus



- **Imagined** as chemistry: ideas and scientific outputs as atoms, molecules and molecular transactional processes;
- **Operated** as mathematical physics: arithmetized interactions between constituents of the observable scientific universe;
- **Analysed** as creating economic value and as the production, distribution, and consumption of scientific goods and services.

What is the science of science?

Hood & Wilson: The literature of bibliometrics, scientometrics, and informetrics



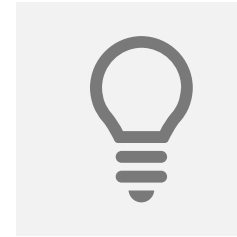
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Excellence as depoliticized operator

Foucault

Excellence as operator



Thinking

system of relations



Who is thinking?

the nature of the connection



What is being thought?

At a given historical moment responding to an urgent need.

the intersection of power relations and relations of knowledge, a set of strategies of relations of forces supporting, and supported by, certain types of knowledge.



Science as “camp”

Agamben

The “camp”



- “Insofar as its inhabitants were stripped of every political status and wholly reduced to bare life, the camp was [...] **the most absolute biopolitical space ever to have been realized, in which power confronts nothing but pure life, without any mediation.**”
- “If there is a line in every modern state marking the point at which the decision on life becomes a decision on death, and biopolitics can turn into thanatopolitics, this line no longer appears today as a stable border dividing two clearly distinct zones. This line is now in motion and gradually **moving into areas other than that of political life, areas in which the sovereign is entering into an ever more intimate symbiosis not only with the jurist but also with the doctor, the scientist, the expert, and the priest.**”



Science as “camp”

Agamben

Science as “camp”



- “the sovereign is entering into an intimate symbiosis with the scientist”
 - [A] power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavours to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations.
 - [The power that] focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population.*



Science as biopower

Feyerabend/Foucault

Science as “camp”



- “But the assumption of the inherent superiority of science has moved beyond science and **has become an article of faith for almost everyone**. Moreover, **science is no longer a particular institution**; it is now part of the basic fabric of democracy just as the Church was once part of the basic fabric of society. Of course, Church and State are now carefully separated. State and Science, however, work closely together.”
- **Human relations are subjected to scientific treatment** as is shown by education programmes, proposals for prison reform, army training and so on. The power of the medical profession over every stage of our lives already exceeds the power once wielded by the Church. Almost all scientific subjects are compulsory subjects in our schools. [...] **Physics, astronomy, history must be learned; they cannot be replaced by magic, astrology, or by a study of legends.**
- When Blacks, Indians and other suppressed races first emerged into the broad daylight of civic life their leaders and their supporters among Whites demanded equality. But equality, 'racial' equality included, then did not mean equality of traditions; **it meant equality of access to one particular tradition - the tradition of the White Man**. The Whites who supported the demand opened the Promised Land - but it was a Promised Land built after their own specifications and furnished with their own favourite playthings.

underprivileged poverty stricken
pauperism innocent shortage
indigence down and out indigent truant
penury hardship deprived devoid barren
in need bereft beggar begging
poor void free
penniless poverty famish needy
homeless impoverished disadvantaged neediness
pauper impecunious starve
nothing necessitous mendicant
unemployed privations sympathy

destitute

Destitute power

Agemben

Destituting science



- **Rendering inoperative the biological, economic, and social operations**, they show what the human body can do, opening it to a new possible use.
- If the fundamental ontological question today is not work but inoperativity, and if this inoperativity can, however, be deployed only through a work, then the corresponding political concept can no longer be that of 'constituent power' [potere costituente], but something that could be called '**destituent power**' [potenza destituente].
- And if revolutions and insurrections correspond to constituent power, that is, a violence that establishes and constitutes the new law, in order to think **a destituent power we have to imagine completely other strategies**, whose definition is the task of the **coming politics**. A power that was only just overthrown by violence will rise again in another form, in the incessant, inevitable dialectic between constituent power and constituted power, violence which makes the law and violence that preserves it.

destitute

underprivileged poverty stricken pauperism innocent shortage indigent down and out indigent truant indigence deprived devoid barren penury hardship in need bereft beggar begging poor penniless poverty famish needy impoverished disadvantaged neediness pauper impecunious nothing necessitous mendicant unemployed privations sympathy

Destituting science



https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_IDVeKbQ=

Destitute science

Mind map



Major changes in science politics

Post Truth

Destituting excellence



Thinking

Multiverse/post-truth



Who is thinking?

The destitute subject



What is being thought?

“have-not” –
use but not “own”

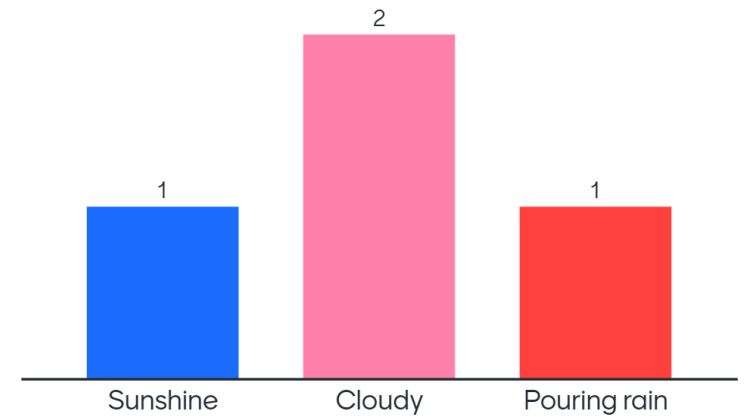
Forms of knowledge no longer privileged over other forms
(re)politicizing science



Feedback

The course

How was class today




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Questions

Thank you

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