

Scientific governance: excellence and impact



Robert Braun

**Towards a
sociology of
excellence:
constructing and
deconstructing
scientific impact**
6th – 30 April, 2021

@Masaryk University 2021



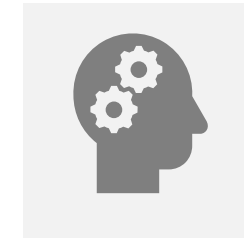
Completion

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)

Specific
assignment(s)

+

TBD



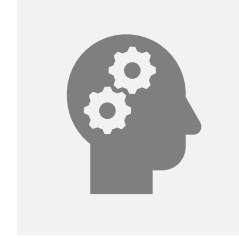
Final paper

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



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”

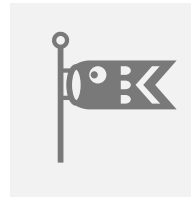


SCIENCE

What is science?

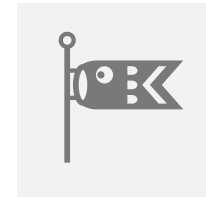
Hood & Wilson: The literature of bibliometrics, scientometrics, and informetrics

Science as



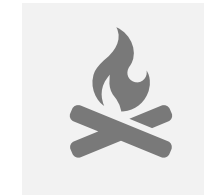
Ideology

Order, security, safety



Ideology

Productivity



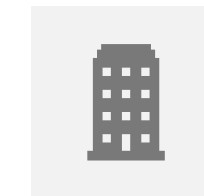
Politics

Fight for liberation from superstition and centralization



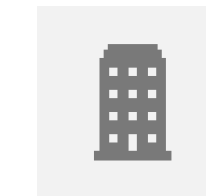
Politics

Fight for recognition and status



Institution

Unaccountability, inherent inscrutability



Institution

Peer accountability, social inscrutability

Scientific revolution

Science policy

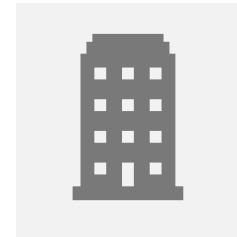


What is science policy?

Bush (1945) Science the Endless Frontier (summary & introduction)

Polanyi: The Republic of Science

The emergence of science as political institution



Economics

Economics of productivity



Efficiency and neoliberalism



Politics

Post-Keynsian liberalism



Self governing authoritarian republic

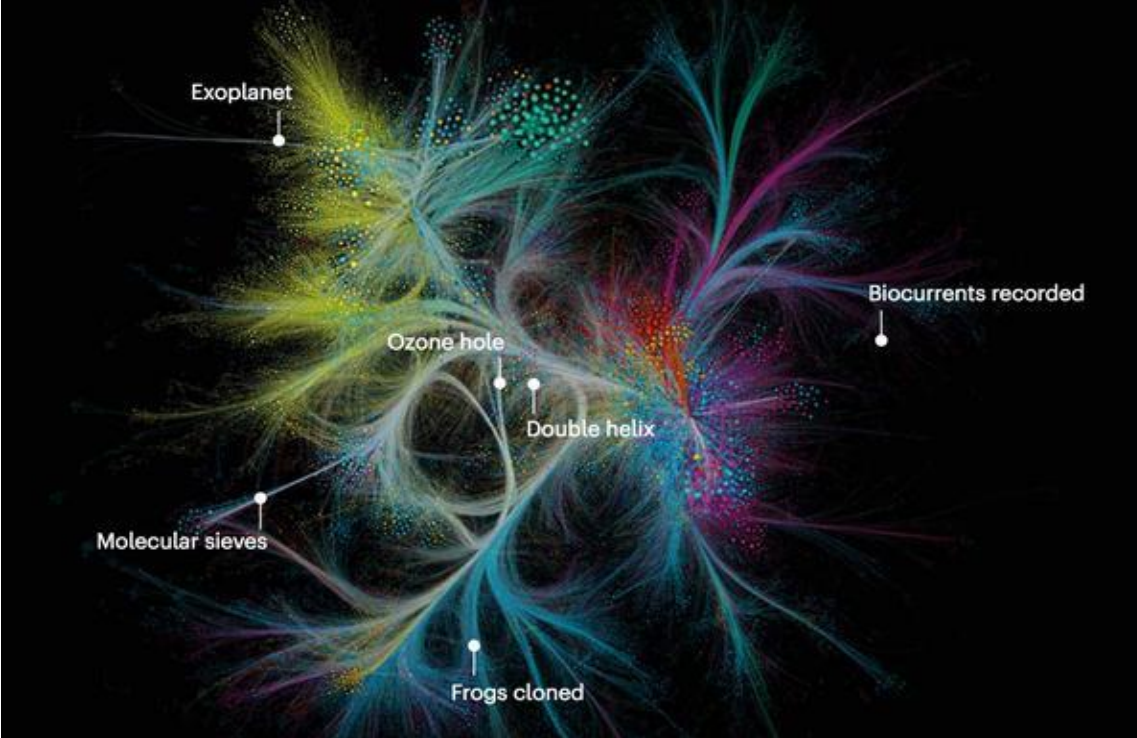


Vision

Material progress & open sky



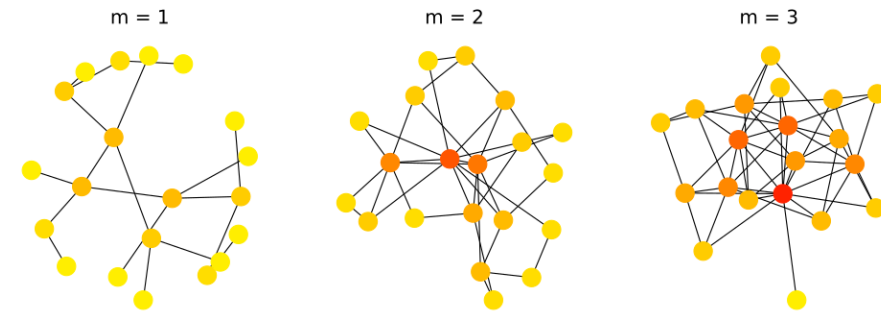
Realist, universalist progress



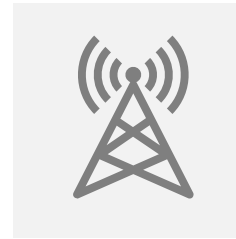
What is the science of science?

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

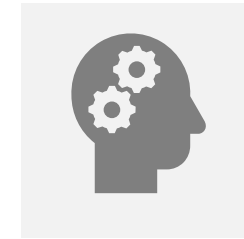
Science as institution



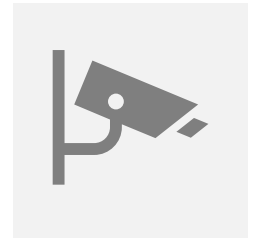
- **Imagined** as chemistry: ideas and scientific outputs as atoms, molecules and molecular transactional processes;
- **Operated** as mathematical physics: arithmetized interactions between constituents of the observable scientific universe;
- **Analysed** as creating economic value and as the production,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



Chemistry



Physics



Economics



Examples from
Wikipedia?

Assignment

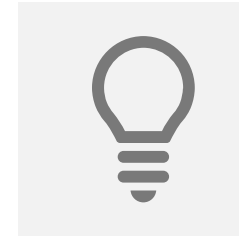
What you need to do?



The politics of science

Kjetil Rommetveit, Roger Strand, Ragnar Fjelland & Silvio Funtowicz (2013). „What can history teach us about the prospects of a European Research Area?“ Ispra: JRC

Transforming imaginaries



Space



Politics



Telos

Transcendental space

Liberation
(from superstition)

Knowledge

Spatialized transcendence

Independence
(from centralization)

Order

Governance of space



Sovereignty



Power

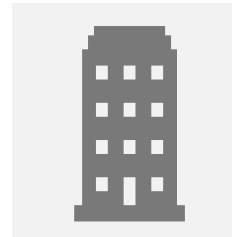




From symbol to institution

Polanyi: The Republic of Science

Operationalized excellence



Discipline

The ideal of self-improvement.



Output

The outcome of individual initiatives.



Mode

- ✓ Comprised of "units of thought"
- ✓ Assessed by the logic of computation, relationship and interaction of 'particles'
- ✓ Value expressed in measurable transactional units

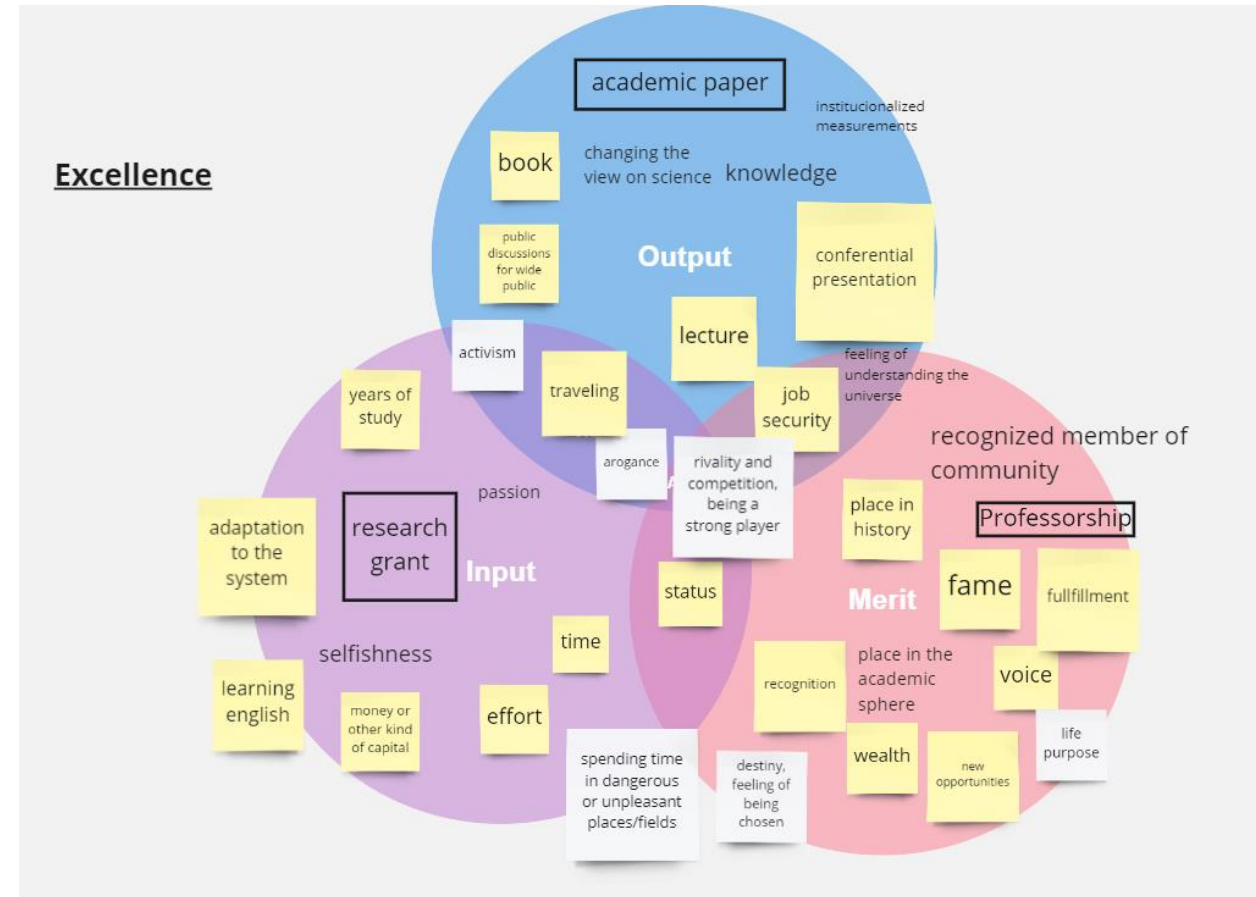




From symbol to institution

Polanyi: The Republic of Science

What is excellence?



https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_IHYs_CM=/



What is scientific excellence

Polanyi: The Republic of Science

What is excellence?

Mentimeter

Excellence is the institutionalisation of a certain way of thinking about science

It is a system of colonial, racial, ethnical and colonial exclusion covered by facade of desire for knowledge of the best quality.

It supports status quo and its embodied inequalities.

is a system of the world of science that came up from historic events and which is based on competition embodied in specific rules.

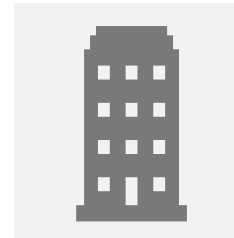
Naturalization and legitimacy.



European Research Council

Nowotny: ERC – the next 10 years

Defining excellence (JRC)



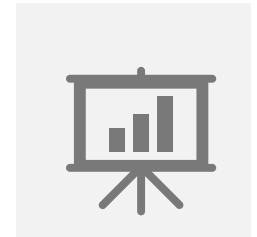
Research

“Creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge”



Excellence

“The top-end quality outcome of systematically performed creative work undertaken to increase the stock of knowledge.”



Excellent research

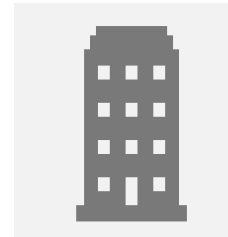
- ✓ Highly cited publications
- ✓ World class institutional background
- ✓ High prestige research grants



European Research Council

Nowotny: ERC – the next 10 years

The excellence institution: ERC



History

In 2006, the European Parliament and EU Council of Ministers accepted the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) for the European Union's support for research, of which the ERC was a flagship component.



Purpose

Research grant applications should be judged using the sole criterion of peer-reviewed excellence, independent of political, geographic or economic considerations. Frontier research should be targeted by encouraging high-risk, high-reward proposals that may revolutionise science and potentially lead to innovation if successful.



Output

70% grants to natural sciences

Top countries: UK, Ger, FRA

Budget from 2014 to 2020 is more than €13 billion (approx. 17% of total)



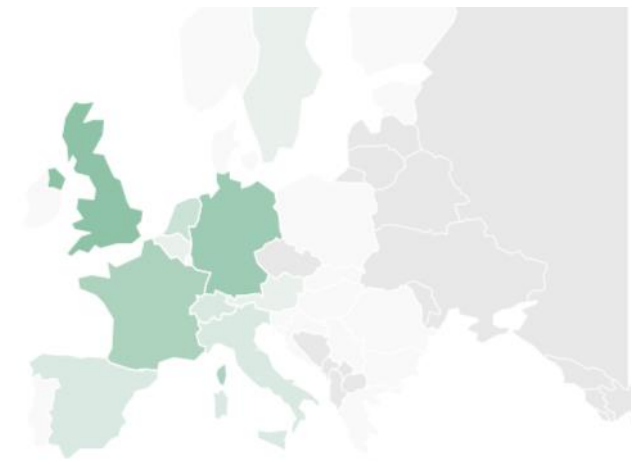
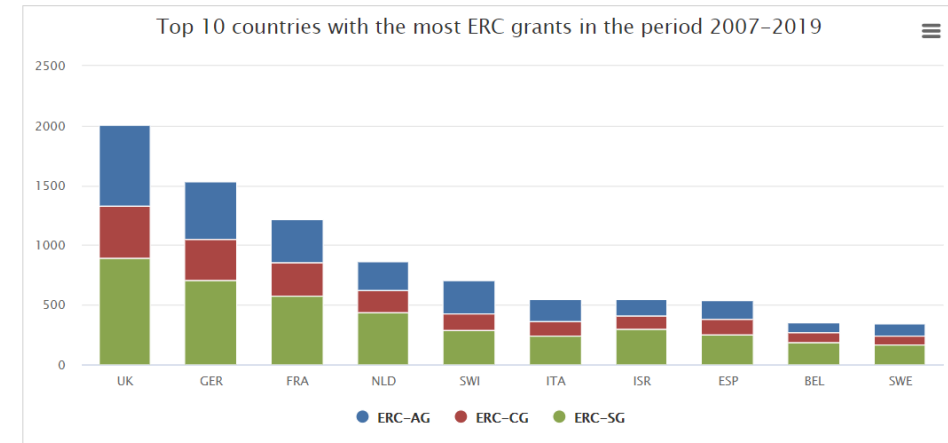
European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

European Research Council

Nowotny: ERC – the next 10 years

The excellence institution: ERC



European Research Area



European Research Council

Nowotny: ERC – the next 10 years

The excellence institution: ERC

“Success story”

“Achievements in funding fundamental research are widely admired.”

“Their carriers received a substantial boost.”

“Set the gold standard for fundamental research.”

“Bold experiment to put the scientific community in charge.”

“Excellent science is its hallmark.”

“The frontier spirit”



What is excellence?

Nowotny: ERC – the next 10 years

Production of scientific “space”

“The frontier spirit”

➤ **Space is a (social) product.**

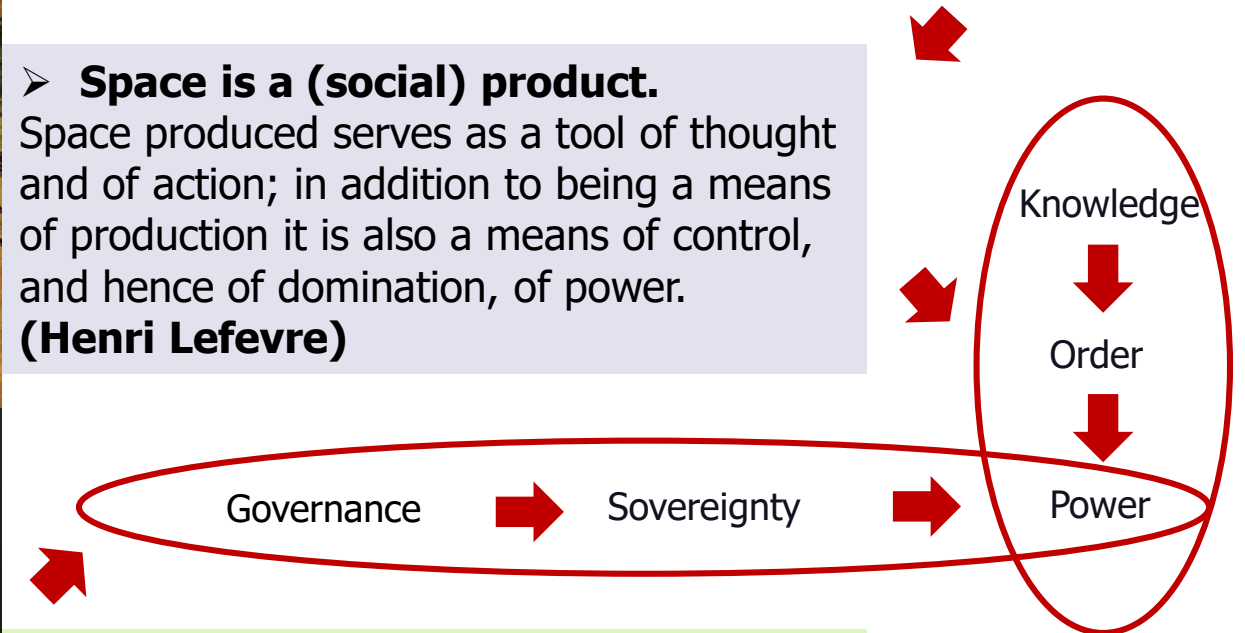
Space produced serves as a tool of thought and of action; in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power.

(Henri Lefevre)

➤ **Nomos is of space:**

“the immediate form in which the political and social order of a people becomes spatially visible, comprising the land-appropriation as well as the concrete order contained in it and following from it.”

(Carl Schmitt)

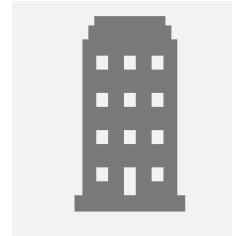




What is excellence?

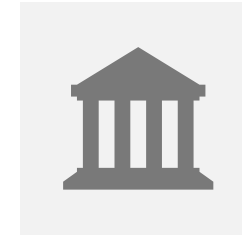
Carl Schmitt: The Nomos of the Earth

Excellence as nomocracy



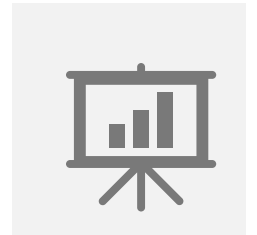
Truth

Nomos as creating order in total war (war assumed to be the normal state)



Science

Nomos as bracketing violence (war) and making order visible (e.g. what is true and what is not)



Excellence

- Nomos as being sovereign (e.g. autonomous);
- "Cratos" as creating power
- Excellence as constitutive of the nomos/space/order of science with power/violence at its core (inside/outside; bracketing; order)
- "Frontier spirit" (Grossraume and fighting the war elsewhere)



What is excellence?

Nowotny: ERC – the next 10 years

A (new) definition



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.



Feedback

The course

How was class today?

supporting challenging

great

added another perspective

moving radical


Go to www.menti.com





Questions

Thank you

 Robert Braun

 +43159991134

 braun@ihs.ac.at

 <http://www.ihs.ac.at/>