

Practicing Evidence – Evidencing Practice

How is (Scientific) Knowledge Validated, Valued and Contested?

International Conference and Pre-Conference Workshop

19-21st February, 2020

Munich, Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung

DFG Research Group 2448

Deadline (extended): 15th October 2019



Keynote: Angela Creager, Professor in the History of Science, Princeton University

“Evidence” has been generating a lot of interest lately. The concept has become central to public controversies surrounding issues such as climate change and the anti-vaccination movement, and it served as a kind of rallying cry in the “science marches” and debates about the “post-truth” society. Campaigns for more data-driven, “evidence-based” decision-making have emerged in fields as diverse as medicine, politics and management. Meanwhile, the number of conferences and research projects reflecting on the nature and functions of the concept seem to be on the rise too.

Evidence has been a crucial element of (scientific) epistemology since at least the Early Modern period – and the object of intense controversies for just as long. To this day, there is little agreement on an exact definition of “evidence”, or on what may count as such in a given situation and in different disciplinary contexts. Drawing on insights from practice theory, we propose to re-examine the question of evidence from a different angle: instead of asking what evidence is, we start with the question of how evidence is “done” in practice. From this perspective, the production of evidence (practicing evidence) cannot be seen as independent of its use (evidencing practice). For this reason, evidence practices are best understood as socio-epistemic configurations. They are constructed and re-constructed in negotiation processes between not only actors but also discourses and materialities.

Accordingly, we are interested in questions such as: How is knowledge validated? What counts (or does not count) as evidence in a given (disciplinary) context, and how does this affect scientific practices? How do evidence practices change over time? What happens to practices of evidence when established knowledge is challenged? What is the role of evidence-based knowledge in neoliberal, democratic and knowledge-based societies? We also welcome papers which analyze the forums of public engagement with science (natural and social sciences and humanities) including the ways in which popular discourses may influence practices of evidence. What kinds of publics are constituted within such forums and how do these publics engage with evidence practices and with changing concepts of expertise? How does the wider public react to (scientific) crises of evidence and the perceived blurring of boundaries between fact and opinion?

We invite contributions from sociology, history of science, technology and medicine, science and technology studies, media and communication studies, political science, economics, philosophy and related fields. We welcome submissions from contemporary as well as historical contexts.

The conference is developed and organized by the DFG research group 2448, Practicing Evidence – Evidencing Practice; an interdisciplinary research group working on evidence. For more information about the DFG research group 2448 Practicing Evidence – Evidencing Practice, please visit: <https://www.evidenzpraktiken-dfg.tum.de/>

The organizers will cover travel and accommodation expenses for all contributing participants.

Pre-Conference Workshop: 19.02.2020

In addition to the main conference, we invite submissions for a workshop on works in progress, which may include projects in planning stages or doctoral projects. We plan to invite up to 15 early career researchers to present their work in progress and discuss it in an open and supportive atmosphere. During the workshop you will have the chance to discuss and develop your work with invited experts and commentators. The workshop participants are then invited to join the main conference. As the workshop includes a symposium on interdisciplinary research, we encourage applications from early stage researchers and doctoral students.

The idea of the pre-conference workshop is to bring together junior scholars who are working in related fields. We are open to suggestions as to the exact topic you would like to address. You can either give us a broad overview of your dissertation project or you can address specific questions, discuss your theoretical perspectives, present selected source material etc. In short, as long as it is related to evidence practices, you are free to pick your exact topic. We ask for an abstract (max. 500 words) including a brief project description and a short bio.

Submission Deadlines

For the main conference, invitations are now open for the submission of abstracts for 20 minute presentations. To apply to the main conference, please send proposals of 500 words for papers lasting 20 minutes and short bios, **by 15th October 2019**, to evidence.practices.conference@gmail.com.

If you are interested in the workshop, please send your applications **by 15th October 2019** to evidence.practices.workshop@gmail.com.

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