



EMPIRICAL GLOBALIZATION RESEARCH

Professions, medical practices, and travelling knowledge

Conference hosted by the DFG-project

“Glocalization of medical professional knowledge and practice” (Glopro)

March 25th and 26th 2021 at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Duisburg Campus

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Call for Papers

Global Studies comprises a wealth of theoretical and empirical approaches. World systems theory, world polity theory, world society approaches, along with historical institutionalism and the sociology of global and transnational fields offer fruitful theoretical perspectives. Yet, dialogue between different approaches is rare and Global Studies is divided between macro and micro approaches.

The conference works toward an empirically grounded sociological meso-social perspective in Global Studies by combining a theoretical interest in emerging global and transnational forms with empirical studies of meso-social forms and situated practice. These studies employ various research methods, such as the analysis of global microstructures, transnational surveys, comparative statistics, global ethnographies, and the study of assemblages. They yield important insights and concepts bridging theory, methods, and empirical material with a world-wide scope.

Hannah Bradby, Karin Knorr Cetina, Peggy Levitt, and Tobias Werron have confirmed their participation as keynote speakers. We now call for abstracts concerning the following conference goals:

- to conceptualize global and transnational forms: In what ways and to what extent are professions, epistemic communities, organizations, networks, etc. transnationalizing or

globalizing? What are specific conditions for these diverse social forms to globalize or transnationalize? (cf. Heintz & Werron 2011)

- to improve our understanding of the ways in which local and global, particular and universal articulate during processes, of different temporalities, and also in situated practice. So far, such processes and practices have been variously studied, among others, as
 - standard diffusion (Dobbin et al., 2007) – often from centers to peripheries,
 - vernacularization (Levitt & Merry 2009), i.e. as universalization and re-invention on the ground,
 - “glocalization” (Robertson, 1995), in which situated knowledge from particular contexts universalizes, and is then re-appropriated by local contexts again,
 - “local universality”, as insisted on by Social Studies of Science and Medicine (Timmermans/Berg 1997), and which coincides with Sassen’s (2007) and Beck’s (2014) insight that the “Global Other” is in Our Midst”.

What can be gained from a dialogue between these approaches and how can such a dialogue become fruitful?

- to ask how new salient theoretical concepts of the global can develop from empirical research addressing micro or meso level phenomena – do new concepts synthesize older concepts or do they go beyond them?
- to consider whether particular theories of the global are suited for particular empirical approaches, or whether the relation between empirical research and theory should be kept open as wide as possible.

Based on an in-depth discussion that builds bridges between schools of thought in Global Studies, the Social Studies of Science and Technology, the sociology of professions, and also between “micro” and “macro” approaches, the conference will enable a more general reflection on theories, concepts, methodologies and research designs, stimulate further research initiatives, and prepare collaborative forms of publication.

Both advanced and junior researchers are welcome. The hosts of the conference have a focus on medical knowledge and practices. Empirically, we have studied doctor-patient-interaction in four healthcare settings in four countries and the (trans-)national regulation of medical knowledge through clinical practice guidelines.ⁱ The interest of our conference is, however, not limited to the field of medicine and professions shall be seen as the thread bringing diverse theoretical concepts and methodological approaches together. In accordance with the broad spectrum of theoretical approaches and concepts that will be addressed in the conference, a diverse range of empirical research, from comparative case studies and innovative statistics to global ethnographies and other qualitative in-depth methods are welcome.

We particularly want to encourage young scholars to send us their abstracts. Under certain conditions we can provide funding for travel and lodging and are thus looking forward to applications.

Please send your abstract to ilka.sommer@uni-due.de and benjamin.quasinowski@uni-due.de until December 16th 2020!

References

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- Timmermans, S., & Berg, M. (1997). Standardization in action: achieving local universality through medical protocols. *Social Studies of Science*, 27(2), 273-305.

ⁱ The project "Glocalization of medical professional knowledge and practice (Glopro)" aims to understand linkages between standardization processes by studying one syndrome, heart failure. Analyses of the emergence and diffusion of treatment guidelines are combined with 71 videotaped sessions in which cardiologists and physicians in training at university hospitals in Beijing (PRC), Groningen (NL), Hacettepe (TR) and Würzburg (D) treat simulated patients, i.e. actors simulating heart failure. Under restrictive conditions this unique data set can be used for secondary analysis and the conference will enable participants to explore this option.