

Collection

Special Issue: Scientific Communication. Observed with Social System Theory

Submission status

Open

Open for submission from

01 January 2023

Submission deadline

Ongoing

Science is a dynamic social system. New scientific topics and fields emerge from the system's continuous observations of society, its environment, and science itself. Reflection on scientific communication as both self- and hetero-referential is thus essential to science and to the reproduction of its code, true/false. But science is by no means unchallenged as the system devoted to truth. During the COVID-19 crisis, science has seen its monopoly on the definition of truth being disputed, as various claims on the reliability and trustworthiness of, for example, COVID-19 vaccines have been discussed in public debates defined by power struggles over 'the truth' and the use labels such as 'fake news' as a strategy for epistemic discreditation. At the same time, political actors have as often repurposed scientific knowledge for the legitimation of drastic political decisions as they have changed them. Moreover, political decision-makers have presumed to judge what science is and is not, thus causing symptoms of a great irritation of the scientific by the political function system. The COVID-19 pandemic thereby

illustrates a broader trend to substantial challenges or outright dismissals of scientific truths, thus seemingly turning them into a matter of opinion.

But this is not the only challenge science faces today. Throughout the world, an increasing commodification or financialization of science is affecting not only employment prospects, but also personal and institutional research agendas and publication strategies. At the same time, topics such as climate crises, social inequality, gender, identity, and race have made some scholars pursue goals that rather appear political than scientific. A growing proportion of ostensibly scientific communication is thus undertaken with motives other than purely scientific ones. Should science embrace these tendencies and become activist like some scholars seem to argue with regard to these issues? Or should researchers strive at abstaining from any form of non-scientific communication? What about the role and prospects of the not always peaceful co-existence of science and other function systems in institutions of higher education?.

Against the backdrop of these and similar questions, science is forced to reflect upon the criteria applied in defining what can or must be observed as true or false knowledge. A central part of scientific communication is therefore constituted theoretical and methodological challenges. Does the digitalization of society pose new ontological and epistemological challenges or opportunities to science? Does the possibility of working with 'big data'-size survey dataset provide new grounds for knowledge and hence new philosophical issues? Or can these new forms of data easily be handled within existing theoretical and methodological positions?

The role of institutions of higher education, too, is changing in the 21st century. Shall universities continue to pursue knowledge for the sake of knowledge, or is it only fair to accept that those who pay for research have some form of influence on the topics and scope of the agendas? Is science a public or private good? Can the truth established by scholars only be challenge by other scholars following the century-old tradition of exchanging opinions via scientific publications? Or should

scholars accept that established knowledge and dogmas may also be challenged in the mass-media?

This special issue of SPAA calls for contributions that analyze, discuss, or identify the above and further past, present, and futures challenges to science. The special issue is open for theoretical and empirical studies in all fields, disciplines, and branches of science. Contributions are welcome that apply, compare, or combine social systems theory or functional analyses to or with other theories or methodologies such as those developed by Foucault, Bourdieu, Deleuze, discourse analysts, or critical theorists.

— [show less](#)

Editors



[Steffen Roth](#),



[Kresimir Zazar](#),



[Lars Clausen](#) &



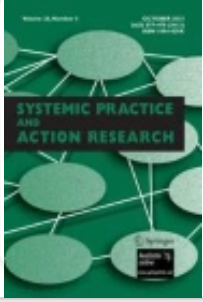
[Tilia Stingl de Vasconcelos Guedes](#)

Articles



Articles will be displayed here once they are published.

Participating journals



Systemic Practice and Action Research

→ [Submit to this journal](#)

→ [Read submission guidelines](#)

Not logged in - 46.114.205.215

Not affiliated

SPRINGER NATURE

© 2023 Springer Nature Switzerland AG. Part of [Springer Nature](#).