

## **14. Exclusive Knowledge: Challenges, Contestations, Contradictions (Workshop)**

***Prof. Dr. Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, Bielefeld University***

***Dr. Éva Rozália Hölzle, Bielefeld University***

Despite recent efforts, such as promoting the free flow of scientific knowledge through open access, most knowledge forms remain exclusive. That is, certain knowledge forms circulate selectively within constellations of distinct communities while specific kinds of knowledge are valued and considered differently within a society. Thus, 'exclusive knowledge' indicates a threefold process. First, it can refer to knowledge deemed valuable or fashionable within a certain historical moment and social context. Second, it can denote the way some individuals or groups restrict others from accessing distinct forms of knowledge, while claiming special rights to this knowledge based on their collective membership. Third, it can designate contradictory types of knowledge that are considered incompatible. Considering all three aspects of exclusive knowledge while emphasising that inequality and its reproduction within specific constellations of belonging are key in understanding all three processes, we propose to explore some of the following questions in this panel: How and which knowledge forms are valued while others are ignored or silenced within a particular social context? How are these evaluative claims challenged and contested by those whose knowledge is disregarded or devalued? How do social actors reproduce and reinforce the parameters of belonging by restricting 'outsiders' from accessing certain types of knowledge? How does a claim on the exclusive right to knowledge foster entitlement among members of the same community? What role does ignorance play in stimulating this entitlement? How do those restricted from accessing knowledge challenge and contest their exclusion? How does exclusivity foster our understanding of polarisation processes within a given society? We invite those interested in the panel to reflect on one or two aspects of 'exclusive knowledge' through the presentation of original ethnographic case studies.

### **Beyond 'the patient perspective': Non-professional contributions to biomedical knowledge production in the UK**

***Elsbeth Davies, University of Cambridge***

Drawing on examples from ethnographic fieldwork following a cancer screening trial in the UK, this paper explores how people who become 'patients' are, at least in theory, offered the opportunity to contribute to biomedical knowledge production. These non-professionals are thought to offer 'the patient perspective'

by responding to researchers' questionnaires on quantified measures such as 'acceptability'. In this process, what constitutes 'good care' is defined a priori by biomedical practitioners, with 'patients' simply adding their 'perspective'. Despite this restricted role assigned to them in notions of 'the patient perspective', the paper explores how non-professionals find other ways to contest ideas about 'good care', beyond simply commenting on goals defined by biomedical practitioners. The paper also explores how non-engagement with the trial might sometimes be a challenge to a particular notion of 'good care', and how non-professionals' capacity to resist is unintentionally erased by discourses of 'inequality'. It considers how professionals respond to challenges to their notions of 'good care', as well as how knowledge produced by non-professionals becomes valued (or not) in particular ways.

### **Vaccine entanglements: negotiating knowledge on mental health and pandemic protection**

***Carolyn Albers, University of Hamburg***

The paper explores knowledge production around the COVID-19 vaccine and in the context of mental health. While debates about coercion in health care have been salient in medical ethics – and particularly psychiatry – for long, the pandemic has brought the topic to the fore in a new and ambivalent light. Against the backdrop of a history of coerced treatment, *Mad studies* critique the hierarchical production of knowledge in the health context that traditionally excludes those labelled as mentally ill from the production process (White 2022). Often, the knowledge that 'the Mad' present about their condition is rendered invalid by definition of their diagnostic label, placing them at the receiving end of epistemic injustice (LeBlanc and Kinsella 2016). Despite pandemic unknowns concerning, for instance, interactions between COVID-19, the vaccine and neuroinflammatory processes associated with mental illness (Bower et al. 2022), psychiatric survivors still argue that their knowledges remain unheard (Procknow 2022, White 2022). In my research, I am interested in how the navigation of this knowledge reflects the positionality of 'Mad bodies' as subjects to various societal priorities, such as protection against COVID-19 and containment of 'Madness'.

## **'Viruses hidden in plain sight': Concealing and revealing viruses in post-Ebola Guinea**

***Emmanuelle Roth, Ludwig-Maximilians-University of Munich***

In 2019, US virus hunting consortium PREDICT announced that a new species of Ebola virus had been found in insect bats in Sierra Leone. In the West African countries where the wildlife sampling enterprise was active, this disclosure was the object of diplomatic, political, and scientific transactions. Moving beneath the works on the international geopolitics of virus sample circulation, this communication engages with the regimes of exclusivity that structure the circulation of knowledge about viral findings within nation states. It shows this dissemination process to be loaded with risk to public health, to social stability, to the system of research credit, and to the very people who sample bats for viruses. I focus on the social dynamics of revelation within the Guinean team of virus hunters that I conducted 16 months of ethnographic fieldwork with. How does secrecy, and the revelations that it is bound to cause, reinforce group solidarity, in a context where uncertainty over the finding and its meaning for public health predominates? Two ethics of concealment, that of scientific research and that of certain West African socialities, are entangled and challenge the core rhetoric of virus hunting: discovering viruses will help pre-empt pandemics.

## **Chinese medicine's double diplomacy: Knowledge politics of exclusion and belonging in Taiwan's quest for soft power**

***Karoline Buchner, Freie Universität Berlin***

Science and Technology Studies has long investigated the commensuration of seemingly incommensurable ways of knowing. Some bodies of knowledge such as those of Chinese medicine (CM) and biomedicine can seem formally incompatible but are constantly combined in practice. However, century-old contradictions are not resolved and re-appear in new arenas. This contribution will examine how the CM community in Taiwan advocates for its own involvement in the high-stakes project of Taiwanese medical diplomacy. Integrated but nevertheless marginalised in the healthcare system, CM has been peripheral to Taiwan's Global Health and medical diplomacy endeavours – but the Covid-19-pandemic brought a sense of opportunity for CM advocates. As balances in world politics shift and relation-building for politically marginalised Taiwan is urgent, CM becomes an interface for questions of nation-building, global politics, and modernity. What kinds of knowledge facilitate Taiwan's place in the world? What are the conditions for access to the exclusive field of Global Health? What kind of practitioner and whose knowledge is in- and excluded in this integration manoeuvre? And how does this

change the landscape of CM practice in Taiwan and beyond? I will present preliminary answers to these questions based on my ongoing fieldwork among CM advocates in Taiwan.

### **Competing sites of knowledge: a tale from a settlement camp in India**

***Nasreen Chowdhory, Delhi University***

The paper focuses on the story of a Bengali man – Goni – whose life is embedded in the uneven and porous boundary between India and Bangladesh, *chit mahals* (Indo-Bangladesh enclaves). The distinction between citizen, and a refugee is very critical in this context, and so is the differentiation between citizen and a new citizen. While the identity of a ‘citizen’ emerged as a part of formal membership in the newly independent post-colonial state, the identity of a ‘proxy-citizen’ is rooted in the religious identity of host state population that territorially surrounds the enclave. This paper will examine the language of communication, togetherness and cultural bonding in camps constituting a new kind of hierarchy of knowledge based on a subjective differentiation between ‘us’ and ‘them’/ ‘Indians’ and ‘Bangladeshis’. Yet, the Bangla identity espouses an acute sense of belonging based on the narratives signifying the identifications and emotional attachments of individuals with the Bengali culture of the region. The paper argues that language can be a common medium of communication among the individuals that transmutes the theoretical construct of citizenship to an everyday domain through facilitating ‘mutual recognition as citizens’ agreeing (Paz 2019, 78) or confronting state apparatus and the institution of citizenship for citizens, non-citizens and other sub-alterns.

### **The value and impact of arts-based knowledge: Learning from a laboratory on the dance floor**

***Anne-Sophie Reichert, University of Chicago***

The paper focuses on an international group of contemporary dancers who dance to research rather than to perform. They are organised as the Institute for the Study of Somatic Communication (ISSC) and meet in local and virtual Co-Laboratories to investigate *attention* as a tactile skill. However, their innovative findings on attention are lacking an audience outside of the dance world. For once, their knowledge is siloed in the dance community because the ISSC lacks the resources and networks to spread their findings in public or academic discourse. Furthermore, within the current knowledge economy, dancers are not taken seriously as professional researchers on attention. Rather, cognitive scientists or

social theorists are deemed to be the legitimate experts on attention. In the talk, I'd like to outline the dancer's findings on attention and show how they complement and anticipate findings of cognitive scientists on attention. Furthermore, I'll show how the ISSC's research puts the publicly held assumption of attention as a scarce resource into question. Abstracting from the ethnographic case, I will finally think through the role, value and impact of artistic knowledge for science and society in comparison to other disciplinary forms of knowledge today.

### **Environmental Activists Knowledge in Lebanon**

***Hussein El-Mouallem, American University of Beirut***

Lebanon following the development trend in the 1950s, adopted many dams projects. However, because of the changing socio-political circumstances and the civil war, these projects were put on hold until 2010 when the dams projects were resurrected.

These policies are not neutral or technical solutions only. They are the result of knowledge production and moulding a certain kind of expertise knowledge for political benefits. In this paper, I will be exploring dam discourses in Lebanon and the counter-knowledge and expertise put forward by engineers, geologists, and other experts. Activists are using their knowledge to produce an opposing discourse to the hegemonic rhetoric empowered by the political ruling elites' plans of development, I call them expert activists as opposed to the experts of the hegemon. I investigate through ethnographic research: how, where, and in what circumstances this counter-expertise knowledge is produced.

Finally, I shed the light on a different kind of communal knowledge that the expert activists utilised and nurtured in order to oppose the World Bank's hegemonic knowledge on development and dams. This form of knowledge is the marriage of the modern technical knowledge with the traditional native knowledge.

### **The monopoly on reason as a manifestation of exclusive knowledge: Speculation, libertarian enclaves, and the reproduction of difference through narratives on the future**

***Jose Hasemann, Konstanz Universität***

The paper addresses how private city projects associated with 'enclave libertarianism' (Lynch 2017) utilise discursive practices grounded in mobilising a monopoly on reason and rationality (Gordon 2021) to reproduce notions of social difference that justify capitalist exploitation (Bear 2020). Descriptions of the

ultimate utility of sovereign libertarian enclaves promoted in corners of the Global South by 'exit libertarians' (Craib 2022) from the Global North (e.g., Próspera ZEDE off the North coast of Honduras), stress access to expert and privileged knowledge that makes it possible to anticipate the development of volatile and uncertain markets in the future (i.e., 'narrative authority', Leins 2020) as well as modes of governance. In turn, local contestations to the expert knowledge mobilised by representatives of private city projects are countered as misinformed, tendentious, or even wilfully ignorant appreciations of experiments in free-market capitalism and governance. The success of private city projects becomes a process of mobilising exclusive knowledge of the future and disavowing all other potential claims to that knowledge. To develop my argument, I focus on the narratives offered by one private city representative (Próspera ZEDE) and competing claims offered by two representatives from a village adjacent to and affected by Próspera ZEDE.