

ESF Exploratory Workshop on
**PUTTING SCIENCE ON THE AIR
IN EUROPE, 1920s TO 1980s**

Berlin (Germany), 3-5 May 2012

Convened by:

Arne Schirrmacher

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Co-sponsored by





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Main Objectives of the Workshop:

The workshop aims at exploring key issues of science communication in the 20th century. As it were primarily radio and television that created the prevalent experience of a "knowledge society" both history of science and media studies need to extend their current foci, i.e. beyond restrictions to print and the 19th century and towards attention to the fields of science and technology, resp. The different political, economic and cultural forces that interacted in this "scientification" of the European societies can be exhibited and analysed fully only by investigating the processes of putting science on the air in comparative studies.

The Case for an Exploratory Workshop:

Given the fact that radio and television were set up in very different ways in the various countries – i.e. in Portugal it were amateurs that organised early radio, in Germany strong state-control was decisive, in France it was the electro-technical industry, in the Netherlands listeners' associations and in the US commercial networks – the following topics arise:

(A) with regard to general questions of history of science, media and education in the various European societies:

- factors favouring science programmes
- radio as a "scientific" medium (both the producer as well as the listeners had to acquire a certain technical aptitude); therefore with respective content?
- radio and television as means of education
- media-related paths of scientification

(B) with regard to historical and sociological questions on society:

- new "understanding" or new "culture" of science through new media
- political, economical and cultural agendas impeding science communication, e.g. i) in authoritarian regimes of Eastern Europe, ii) in the German or Iberian dictatorships, but also, iii) in democratic states

The feasibility of achieving the aims of the exploratory workshop is facilitated by the following conditions:

- national histories of radio and television have been written
- radio magazines provide a good picture of quality and quantity of science content on the air to start from
- strategies of making radio and television into means of education, propaganda etc. with respect to science and technology are known for some cases
- comparative approaches have successfully been implemented in recent studies of science in newspapers and journals
- available theories of media in general and of mediatisation of science in particular allow to integrate with the intended historical frame

The proposed workshop is furthermore meant to identify fields of comparative work and to incite farther-reaching collaborative projects on pairs or groups European countries by bringing together scholars that can at least for their home countries specify general developments, help locate relevant sources and identify primary dimensions of comparison in order to propose follow-up grant proposals for comparative in-depth historical studies.

The workshop in itself may, however, already provide and disseminate insights as

- that current problems of science communication seen from a historical perspective, turn out to be rather old ones (like discussions on the best way to deal with science and technology in newspapers),
- that history may help to better integrate (public) issues of science and technology as societies have become more and more science based, and
- that tracing the emergence of national scientific cultures may help to better deal with current projects and problems of science education, science literacy and science understanding in more convincing ways.

Workshop Agenda

The key objective of the workshop shall be pursued in three consecutive steps. Step One provides a comprehensive introduction to the latest historiographical perspectives (“Is History of Science Prepared for Science on the Air?”). Step Two applies these historical and analytic perspectives to case studies of popular science on radio, television and film, and opens comparative views by juxtaposing different national developments, political regimes and local practices of broadcasting (“Exploring the European Perspectives of Science on the Air”). Step Three synthesises the results of these contrasting sets in order identify general stands of impact the media-science interaction exhibited in various cultural, societal and national contexts, thus leading to a (re-)definition of the emergence of European “knowledge societies” and a reflection on epistemological questions of what it means to “understand” science (“Historical Lessons on Media and Science Understanding”).

To foster interaction of participants in preparing for the workshop, sessions of mostly four talks have been scheduled (numbered I to VIII). In this way exchange and introductory reading on the contrasting cases (to those each participant had studied already in detail) have been enabled in a manageable way. Participants are supposed to pre-circulate short (1-2 pages) background papers (“cribs”), which provide central theses, relevant literature as well as short characterisation or main protagonists, institutions and media structures. In this way broad discussions with the full group of scholars can concentrate on the overarching questions while exploiting the case studies readily. In the same way future lines of research shall become discernible in more generality and clarity.

Report publication and dissemination

The Workshop Report will be published online at <http://histscicom.hu-berlin.de>

PROGRAMME (as of Apr. 25)

Thursday, 3 May 2012

- 14.30-14.35 **Welcome by the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy I**
Michael Seadle (Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany)
- 14.35-14.45 **Introductory remarks**
Arne Schirmacher (Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany)
- 14.45-15.00 **Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)**
Jan Jirak (Member of the ESF Standing Committee for Social Sciences –
Charles University Prague, Czech Republic)

Is History of Science Prepared for Science on the Air?

- 15.00-16.30** **I. Histories of radio and television**
- 15.00-15.40 **Changing structures in European radio broadcasting**
Jürg Häusermann (University of Tübingen, Germany)
- 15.40-15.50 **Discussion**
- 15.50-16.30 **Media histories of Eastern Europe**
Tomasz Goban-Klas (Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland)
- 16.30-16.40 **Discussion**
- 16.40-17.00 *Coffee Break*
- 17.00-18.30** **II. Historiographical trends in science communication**
Chair: Faidra Papanelopoulou
- 17.00-17.30 **The popularization of ideology and the ideology of popularization:
Issues related to the History of Science**
Kostas Gavroglu (University of Athens, Greece)
- 17.30-18.00 **Science in audiovisual media. Production and perception in Europe**
Markus Lehmkuhl (Free University Berlin, Germany)
- 18.00-18.30 **Discussion**
- 18.30 *Buffet reception (on site)*

Friday, 4 May 2012

Exploring the European Perspectives of Science on the Air

- 09.00-10.50** **III. British vs. French models of science on the air**
Chair: Peter Bowler
- 09.00-09.20 **The BBC, scientific intellectuals and the British public, 1930-1950**
Ralph Desmarais (Imperial College, London, United Kingdom)
- 09.20-09.40 **Horizon and the origins of British science television**
Timothy Boon (Science Museum, London, United Kingdom)

- 09.40-10.00 **Science and the media: Modern tools for a modern France, 1950-1975**
Andrée Bergeron (EHESS, Paris, France)
- 10.00-10.20 **Science in the air: Which questions with which methods?**
Daniel Raichvarg (University of Bourgogne, Dijon, France)
- 10.20-10.50 **Discussion**
10.50-11.10 *Coffee Break*
- 11.10-13.00** **IV. German v. Eastern European models of science on the air**
Chair: Tomasz Goban-Klas
- 11.10-11.30 **Popular science as a cultural dispositif**
Arne Schirmacher (Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany)
- 11.30-11.50 **Science television and its audience in Germany**
Jutta Milde (University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany)
- 11.50-12.10 **Science, Culture and Tradition in Polish Radio Broadcasting during the Interwar Period**
Leszek Zasztowt (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland)
- 12.10-12.30 **From Science theatre to science on the air in Hungary**
Gabor Pallo (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary)
- 12.30-13.00 **Discussion**
13.00 *Lunch at Restaurant "Traube" (Reinhardtstr. 33)*
- 15.00-16.50** **V. Centre and periphery – did it matter for mediatization of science?**
Chair: Agustí Nieto-Galan
- 15.00-15.20 **STEP: Lessons on the role and uses of new media for science**
Ana Simoes (CIUHCT, Lisbon, Portugal)
- 15.20-15.40 **Discourses of historical actors around the possibilities of using radio to enhance Portuguese people's literacy**
Ana Paula Silva (CIUHCT, Lisbon, Portugal)
- 15.40-16.00 **"Stay away! But come and see!" Scientific nationalism in "peripheral" countries in paleoanthropology and archaeology**
Oliver Hochadel (Institució Milà i Fontanals, Barcelona, Spain)
- 16.00-16.20 **Late or early? Media adoption for science communication in the periphery**
Faidra Papanelopoulou (University of Athens, Greece)
- 16.20-16.50 **Discussion**
16.50-17.10 *Coffee Break*
- 17.10-18.20** **VI. Between independent science reporting and propaganda**
Chair: Néstor Herran
- 17.10-17.30 **Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente's cross-platform broadcasting of nature in a context of social, political and cultural transformation in Spain, 1962-1980**
Carlos Tabernero (Autonomous University, Barcelona, Spain)

- 17.30-17.50 **The Soviet documentary film as a model for Eastern Europe**
Barbara Wurm (Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany)
- 17.50-18.20 **Discussion**
- tbc on Saturday
- 20.00 *Dinner at Restaurant "Jolesch" (Muskauerstr. 1, 10997 Berlin)*

Saturday, 5 May 2012

cont. of session VI

- 09.00-09.30 **Screening science, producing the nation: Popular science programs on Israeli television**
Merav Katz-Kimchi (University of California, Berkeley, United States)

Historical Lessons on Media and Science Understanding

- 09.30-10.30** **VII. Media changes, changes of genre**
Chair: Timothy Boon
- 09.30-09.50 **Science popularization in Spanish film and TV**
Nestor Herran (University Pierre and Marie Curie, Paris, France)
- 09.50-10.10 **Reflections on the basic function of text in the popular presentation of science**
Safia Azzouni (Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany)
- 10.10-10.30 **Discussion**
- 10.30-11.00 *Coffee Break*
- 11.00-12.30** **VIII. Science understanding in context**
Chair: Kostas Gavroglu
- 11.00-11.30 **The uses of popular science**
Peter Bowler (Queen's College, Belfast, United Kingdom)
- 11.30-12.00 **Science popularization as cultural hegemony: From dictatorship to democracy**
Agustí Nieto-Galan (Autonomous University, Barcelona, Spain)
- 12.00-12.30 **Discussion**
- 12.30 *Lunch (on site)*
- 13.30-15.00** **IX. Next steps**
- 13.30-14.00 **Brief statements**
- 14.00-15.00 **Round table discussion**
- 15.00 *End of Workshop and departure*

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Objectives of the ESF Standing Committee for Social Sciences (SCSS)

The mission of the **ESF Standing Committee for Social Sciences (SCSS)** is as follows:

- to promote high quality social science research at the European level;
- to bring 'added value' to nationally funded research through European collaboration between ESF Member Organisations;
- to help support innovative research ideas and approaches emanating from the scientific community, and
- to play an institutional role in strengthening European social science research infrastructure.

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