CFP Open Panel – Found problems and found practices in science

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Deadline: October 31, 2022

STS scholars have developed conceptual tools to address situations where scientific research interfaces with other areas of practice, i.e. other scientific fields or other areas of human activity like medicine, agriculture, industries, trades, public services, arts, etc. Among them are nomadic concepts, theory-methods packages, boundary concepts, and boundary objects, as well as trading zones, social arenas, or ecologies of practice. All these frameworks address the circulation of elements of discourse and the spaces in which this circulation unfolds.

This open panel invites contributions reflecting on the framework of *found science*. *Found science* serves similar purposes as the mentioned frameworks but emphasizes a particular trajectory where elements are *found* by scientists outside of their own context, are noted as as interesting, and subsequently become *founded* as constituents of the science in question. The concept was inspired by an analogy to *found art* (Efstathiou 2012). The *object trouvée* of found art typically moves into an artistic context from a realm of everyday usage. Yet found objects acquire (and lose) meaning by becoming founded in new milieus and practices. Thus, the famous art piece *Fountain* is no longer properly speaking a urinal: It is a *found* art piece, or equivalently, a urinal *founded* (appropriately positioned, named, exhibited, etc.) in a context of artistic practice/use. Through this process of finding and founding, objects acquire new significances and yet still signify based on associations with milieus they originate in.

Found science uses this as a model to think about the interfaces of scientific practice with other practices and specifically about introducing ideas or elements from other contexts into science. For example, everyday ideas like race, wellbeing, or knowledge, can be picked up as interesting for scientists and founded (articulated in appropriate scientific terms, operationalised, measured, published, etc.), and thereby transfigured into scientific concepts. When human population geneticists document individuals' 'race' (Efstathiou 2012, Lee et al. 2021), when development economists estimate nations' 'wellbeing' (Efstathiou 2016), or when data scientists talk of extracting 'knowledge' from articles (Efstathiou et al. 2019), they are working with non-scientific ideas *founded* into scientific fields: these founded concepts are not the ideas of the original context anymore, but they can purport to speak back to problems in these contexts through science.

This open panel invites contributions by scholars who wish to reflect on, or bring related concepts in contact with the notion of *found science*. We are particularly interested to develop these ideas further by looking beyond founded concepts and objects to include problems and practices as elements that circulate between scientific and non-scientific domains and also between scientific fields. In biomedicine, for instance, the problems of patients living with a chronic disease become *problems* to be solved by research in precision medicine or in psychology: founded problems. When agricultural research studies tilling techniques, farming *practices* become founded in the context of this science. The finding and

founding of problems and practices can also happen across disciplines: e.g., Thorén and Persson (2013) speak of problem-feeding in sustainability science.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

- How is founding enabled and constrained by social, material, economic, environmental, disciplinary, and other infrastructures?
- How are the meanings, norms, and values of the contexts of origin carried into the science where problems and practices become founded?
- How does the process of founding a problem or practice in science affect the contexts of its origin?
- What is the role of power and of power relations in shaping possibilities and directions of founding?

Abstracts should be 250-300 words. The deadline for submission is October 31, 2022.
Please send your abstract to robert.meunier@uni-luebeck.de

References

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