

7th International Conference of the European Society for the History of Science, Prague 2016

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Science and power, science as power

The 7th International Conference of the European Society for the History of Science will be held in Prague, Czech Republic, 22–24 September, 2016. The Conference is organized by the Society for the History of Sciences and Technology of the Czech Republic.

The theme of the Conference is "Science and power, Science as power". Please, find below the presentation of the theme.

In recent decades, the themes of the relationship between science and power, and of science as power, have emerged as important topics, likely to shed interesting light on many aspects of both science and power. The nature of scientific knowledge and the practice of scientific activities have undergone significant changes throughout history. Similarly, the nature of power and its structures, taken broadly, also testify substantial transformations. How were these historical processes related to each other? What types of relationship can we identify between these two ranges of phenomena in different historical contexts, and how has science as power varied accordingly? By inviting historians of science working on different time periods and on different parts of the planet to concentrate on these issues, the conference aims to create the possibility of a first synthesis on these issues.

Contributions on all specific fields ranging from astral sciences, statistics, physics and other branches of "hard science", through chemical and biological disciplines to social sciences and the humanities are also welcome. These various fields have established ties with power in different ways, and this variety can thus help our reflection on the issues at stake.

Note that the term "power" is most frequently associated with politics, and we expect that this interpretation, narrow as it may be, will play a major role in our reflections. We do not intend, however, to limit the contributions to this interpretation.

The following sub-thematic clusters illustrate the range of topics we suggest placing at the focus of our attention during this congress:

A) Science, technology, and the management of power.

How have scientific and technological practices and knowledge been sources of power? How have different kinds of power managed the cultural, economic and social effects of change that occurred in scientific and technological knowledge? What challenges have these changes created for political power, as one example among many? How have they been involved in the transformation, and even sometimes in the redefinition, of the exercise of political, and other forms of, power?

B) Power and the ambivalent character of the applications of scientific and technological knowledge.

Bodies of scientific and technological knowledge can be employed in various ways, often with benefits and negative side effects, depending on their applications. How do those exercising power manage these different dimensions of the same facts? How can competition between various powers be approached from this perspective? The negative

effects of science and technology on societies have given rise to scholarly developments, such as discussion on the “personal ethical responsibility of the scientist,” and they have also provided inspiration in the arts artists’ work. Their analysis can be topics addressed in contributions to the congress.

C) Sources of funding and other forms of support.

Power in relation to science and technology can be considered from the viewpoint of the sources of funding. How, and by whom, were resources allocated to scholarly or technical activities in the various historical contexts? How have various types of power interfered with the pursuit of activities in science and technology through management, funding schemes and other forms of support? How have power structures developed within groups of scholars in relation to the access to, and management of, these resources? How has the development of knowledge around scientific and technological activities, e.g., the emergence of disciplines like “science policy,” affected the management of these activities?

D) Science, technology and power in specific circumstances.

How have the relationships between science, technology and power been transformed in extreme circumstances, e.g. the preparation for war or in wartime? What impact have such events had on science as power? What effects have these phenomena had on the development of scientific and technological knowledge, and on the institutions and practices of science and technology?

E) Science and technology in the context of specific political regimes...

whose policies exert heavy ideological pressure on science. Contributions on all forms of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes are welcome (Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, the empires and their colonies, etc.). We invite talks on the impact of these regimes on the development of specific types of science and technology and specific discourses about knowledge, and on the transformation of scholarly institutions and the mobility of scholars.

F) Scholars as actors in the structures of power.

Politics has become the subject of scholarly disciplines (politology, political science), which could be discussed at the congress from a historical perspective. On the other hand, we invite contributions on the many types of involvement of scholars, or scholarly institutions, in arenas of power. How, in various contexts, have scholars been involved in power structures and institutions, qua scientists or not? What other roles have they taken in the management of power? What benefits can history of science derive from taking these factors into account? These are some important issues to address.

G) Science and the scientific method as ideals of power management.

How thinkers have speculated about the role and use of science qua science, in the management of society and other human collectives, is an important facet of our theme. We welcome contributions on, e.g., utopias that gave science pride of place in this respect, and on theories advocating the application of scientific methods to the administration of society, or a “scientific management of society.” How these concepts have influenced the societies in which they were brought into play is another question the congress can help examine.

The whole range of topics outlined above can be discussed, from antiquity up to the present day.

Abstracts will be accepted on the basis of their scientific merit and relevance.

ONCE ACCEPTED, ABSTRACTS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

ONLY
IF REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED
BY JUNE 30, 2016

For further information please see [REGISTRATION & PAYMENT](#).

Language

Abstracts and presentations should be in English.

Deadlines

November 30, 2015	<u>Deadline for the symposia submission</u>
January 2015	Deadline for symposia acceptance notification
January 31, 2016	Registration opening
February 29, 2016	Deadline for stand-alone papers submission
April 30, 2016	Deadline for stand-alone papers acceptance notification

For any other information please contact local secretariat 7eshs2016@guarant.cz.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Prague!

Sincerely yours,
Organizing Committee

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