

Call for Papers

**SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND
THE HUMANITIES?**

*Conference of the 'Centre of Quantitative Empirical Social Research'
on **Thu. 11th / Fri. 12th of June 2015** at the University of Leipzig*

Empirical knowledge is never entirely certain. Nonetheless the generally accepted opinion is that scientific methods guarantee scientific progress because of the apparently reliable insights they generate.

However, in recent years this belief was questioned again and again in a number of ways. Across disciplines non-reproducible results have risen doubts on findings which have been accepted for a long time. It has become clear, that falsifying results often disappear in the file drawers. Essentially, only the positive findings are published (publication bias).

At the same time the number of publications has been increasing across all disciplines. Therefore it gets more and more difficult to keep track of larger fields of research. Furthermore, the increasing number of publications seems paradoxical: Following the assumption that progress in knowledge means that more and more questions are being answered satisfactorily, there should actually be a decrease in the amount of publications. These and other circumstances raise questions for the idea of scientific progress:

1. What exactly is meant by „scientific progress“? Which goals are to be achieved in this process? Is it mainly about quantitative accumulation of facts or are there some qualitative criteria necessary?
2. What are examples of real scientific progress in a field and what are examples of pseudo-progress („old wine in new skins“)?
3. Which chances lie in these challenges and which obstacles hinder scientific progress? Where are these obstacles mainly found? In the methods of data collection, in the statistical and analysis methods, or in theory formation (or in

the absence of theories, respectively)? Which answers are conceivable, which solutions have already been implemented, and with what results?

4. To what extent is scientific progress promoted by thematic specialization?

We are looking forward to talks, which address these questions and/or the following problems: *publication bias, data manipulation, research artifacts, big data, theoryless research, modern scientific incentive systems, their consequences and alternatives.*

The conference will be held in German and English. Please send your abstract (max. 1 page) until the 2nd April 2015 via e-mail to: *wissfortschritt@uni-leipzig.de*

QuanteL – the Centre of Quantitative Empirical Social Research is a network of scientists from the University and other research institutions in Leipzig, that are concerned with the development and application of quantitative methods for empirical social research. For more information see (only in German):
<http://www.quantel.uni-leipzig.de>

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