

The public value of research in politically turbulent times (#HEGrim pact)

Chair

Dr Gemma Derrick

(@gemmaderrick)

Centre for Higher Education Research and Evaluation, Lancaster University, UK.

Speakers

Dr David Budtz Pedersen

(@humanomicsmap)

Humanomics Research Centre, Aalborg University Copenhagen, Denmark.

Dr Katja Mayer

(@katja_mat)

Department of Social Studies of science

University of Vienna

Prof Gunnar Sivertsen

(@GunnerSivertsen)

Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education

Prof Susana Borrás

(@SusanaBorrás)

Department of Business and Politics, Copenhagen Business School

Virtual co-ordination

Dr Paul Benneworth

(@heravalue)

Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies, University of Twente.

Description

Participants are encouraged to bring their phones, tablets and other devices to contribute to parallel online discussions.



#HEGrim pact

“We have watched as scientific integrity has been undermined and scientific research politicized in an effort to advance predetermined ideological agendas” (President Obama, White House 2010).

This panel will explore the potential consequences of changes in political ideology on the value associated with aspects of research impact. Recent political upheavals have wide ranging effects on the public perception of the value of public services, including the societal impact of research and higher education.

The public swing towards new, populist political movements that profess to represent “the real”, otherwise unrepresented and forgotten people that have been felt across the western world. This, the rise of social media as an active participant in the provision of (mis)information, and the decline of trust in public “experts”, raises questions regarding the changing value of research with parallel changing ideologies.

The rise of the “impact” agenda has in part provided a forum where the public value of research is discussed, weighed and promoted. It has been included as a formal criterion in many funding paradigms across Europe, UK and North America – all countries where the effect of these political changes are acutely felt. This has included the widening of research funding criteria to include notions of research excellence beyond academia, as well as the inclusion of public representatives as members of extended peer review panels. Its inclusion is reflective of the “abstract faith” that public assign trust in science (Luhmann, 1979), and the potential it brings to improving their lives.

The session is highly interactive and is purposefully designed to be different from your normal academic panel event. A parallel online discussion via twitter using the hashtag **#HEGripact** will be run during the event and in-session participants are encouraged contribute to online commentary as well, blurring the line between the physical and virtual worlds. Panellists will kick-start discussions with a 5-10 minute talks about what they see are the key dilemmas facing the assessment of Impact in changing political environments. Questions will then be taken from the floor, as well as online, with insights from the virtual discussions shared to the panel, and vice versa to stimulate debate.