Programme Point Sud 2021

Science as a Site of Inequality: An Exploratory Workshop for Sharing Evidence and Experience from Environment-Related Research Fields

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Conveners

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Abstract

According to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, reducing inequality (SDG 10) is an essential prerequisite for a world of justice and equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential. Science is expected to play a key part in achieving this vision – although being as well structured by multiple forms of inequality within its own system. Epistemic hierarchies not only put certain disciplines before others, but also marginalize knowledge not conforming to dominant paradigms and/or produced outside scientific centers. Against the ideal of universality, researchers' position in the global research landscape as well as socially constructed categories such as gender and ethnicity affect the degree of scientific credibility ascribed to them. This is concerning for normative reasons but also due to potential epistemic effects, particularly in research related to environmental challenges which would need to take into account diverse perspectives in order to provide effective problem-solutions.

Against this background, the Programme Point Sud 2020 offers a workshop that makes inequality in science subject of debate, with a particular focus on environment-related research fields. Fostering inter- and transdisciplinary exchange, the workshop aims to explore how inequality manifests, is created and perpetuated in four scenes of scientific activity: (1) research agenda setting and funding; (2) research collaboration and data sharing; (3) research publishing; and (4) research engagement and uptake. The programme will comprise thematic sessions linked to these activities including individual participants' presentations, round-table discussions and interactive group sessions, in which participants from Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe share evidence and experiences from their respective professional contexts. As a forum of dialogue between scholars and practitioners concerned with environmental issues, the workshop aims to give impetus for building an international network which crosses disciplinary, geographical, cultural and linguistic boundaries, and works towards pluralistic knowledge cultures in science and society.