

Towards a Curriculum of Political Epistemology: Theory and Case Studies

Submitted by: *Pietro Daniel Omodeo (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) in December 2017*

Political epistemology brings into focus the praxis of science in its collective and oriented character. It programmatically aims to reach a unified cultural understanding of the apparently disunited strands and dimensions of science.

Its historical-epistemological approach considers that science emerges from the historical terrain of human activities that bring together the hand and the mind within collective spaces of interaction. It specifically looks at science as mediating between the socio-economic and the cultural-ideological. On the one hand, it takes into account the function of science to secure the production and reproduction of societal formations. On the other, it takes into account the ideological dimension of science insofar as it provides for ways to justify and criticize the social order and helps reorient, transform, and imagine alternative ways of living. In accordance with these premises, we propose that historians of science explore cases that enable us to contend with the political economy of knowledge in its genesis and development. In particular, we would like to emphasize the following entangled themes:

- The political dimension of cognition as alienated (extracted, codified, abstracted, externalized) practical knowledge should be investigated through the ways in which science historically reflects (mirrors, parallels, reinforces) social difference and power relations.
- Further research in the history of science should consider how political structures and ethos (in democratic republics, authoritarian states, court society etc.) informs science at the level of content, epistemic values, and methodologies (for instance, argumentation, demonstrative procedures, reasoning, and style).
- Political epistemology also requires the study of the political directedness of science, that is, to study it as a contested field of ideological struggles for cultural hegemony.

The contributions to this panel address case studies and theoretical problems of political epistemology, comparatively taken from various epochs and different global contexts and ideally making the theoretical connection with the above mentioned questions explicit.

The scholars involved in this panel belong to different institutions in Europe and India and their expertise covers different epochs (ancient, modern and contemporary) and geographical areas (ranging from Europe to India and China).