

Not to Be Forgotten: the Human Factor in Contemporary Scientific Research.

Par . Le 2 juin 2010

■ Recent key macro studies agree that scientific research is increasingly entangled in various societal rationales. On the one hand, these analyses should be understood within the context of the growing importance attributed to scientific and technological innovation for shaping contemporary societies. On the other hand, society's readiness to contribute to an innovation-friendly climate is considered a key-asset for materializing this imagined progress. For both issues, the human side of science, thus researchers and their way of doing research, their values and their readiness to engage with both science and society, is perceived as essential.

As this unfolds on a global scale, it is interesting to observe within research policy and science institutions the convergence of various discourses that stress and imagine what seem to be the key values or myths guiding research today: excellence, accountability, mobility, flexibility, ethical conduct, societal relevance or application orientation, to mention but a few. However, far too little analytic attention has been devoted to

- how these broad and ostensibly universal notions impinge on different work and knowledge production cultures,
- how specific local histories and contingencies play out in practice,
- how these global changes get refracted locally and personally, and
- how all this re-frames what being a researcher today actually means.

This lack seems astonishing given the importance the “human factor” is attributed in current policy discourses around innovation.

The [Institut für Wissenschaftsforschung](#) at the Universität Wien is hosting a conference devoted to

these questions, to take place from June 9 to 11, 2010 at the Albert Schweitzer Haus in Vienna under the title “[Risky Entanglements? Contemporary Research Cultures Imagined and Practised](#)”. This event, supported by [Gen-Au](#), will feature contributions that address change and continuity of work and knowledge-production cultures in research, and ask in which processes ethical, societal and economic rationales shape these very cultures. By combining works that address different regional-historical contexts and different scientific fields, the conference’s explicit goal is to open up comparative perspectives, thus contributing to a broader understanding of contemporary research cultures.

For more detail, you can [download the full programme](#), with a complete list of the themes covered. To register, please [use this online form](#).

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