Winter School 2015

Democracy, expertise and power:

the role of experts in modern European societies

7 - 15 FEBRUARY 2015

Within the last few decades, changes in democracy have been noticed. On the one hand, policymakers have started to rely on experts and their emergence and involvement in modern societies has raised fundamental questions about their responsibilities and the status of knowledge, but also the connection between universities, business, politics and society. The university is no longer only seen through the prism of its educational, cultural and social mission, but it has become one of the most important elements of national policies on innovation, a contributor to economic development of country as well as an important actor influencing democratic processes and the development of civil society. On the other hand, there have been remarkable changes concerning the status and character of knowledge in society. The development of new mass and social media has led to the process of democratization of knowledge and greater access to knowledge. It has also empowered citizens to become active contributors and participants in their local communities and society in general. It is believed that we live in "social movement societies" and, as a result, the status of knowledge and the status of experts can no longer be taken for granted – they have become on of the actors influencing social structures and policy-making. Within this context it is, however, important to examine what knowledge is produced by social movements, civil society and mass media, how it reflects contemporary debates and how it can help to respond to the complex crisis we are currently facing.

This Winter School takes as its point of departure the increasing role of experts and expertise in democracies. It will discuss the challenges, limits and legitimate role of expertise. What is knowledge? Who is an expert? How can we reconcile expertise with various types of democracy (i.e. representative, participatory, deliberative)? Is expertise a driving force for modern democracies or is it a tool which is changing democratic debate into technocratic rule? What is the role of academia in contemporary society and what are the implications of public-private partnership? Finally, the role of mass media will be discussed: what is the role of mass/social media in developing social movements and democracy? Do they really influence how knowledge is produced and interpreted? Do they offer new tools to promote governmental transparency? In what circumstances can the democratization of knowledge help to develop new participatory spaces and bring about social and political change?

PROGRAMME OF LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS

PART I
Knowledge-based society. Theoretical discussions

Meeting 1: *Knowledge, society and democracy*

"Knowledge-based society" is a key contemporary diagnosis. Also policies are expected to be knowledge-based or even evidence-based. What terms such as knowledge and evidence mean, and what it means for policies to be based on it is, however, contested. Is knowledge more than science? What is good science? Is knowledge and evidence the same thing? How can a knowledge of facts tell us which policies we ought to make? Are policies necessary good if they are knowledge-based? Different approaches differ also in their views as to how to assess modern societies' knowledge-dependence and knowledge-focus as well as potential ways ahead. Is knowledge-based society good or bad news for democracy? How should we organize society and design our institutions in the years to come?

Meeting 2: *The role of expertise in policy-making and experts' performance*

Why do politicians and public officials seek expert advice? The use of knowledge and expertise in political processes and decision-making has different functions. The official and most intuitive of these functions are problem-solving and enlightenment, referring to how experts provide the knowledge necessary for the formulation of well-informed decisions. Knowledge can also serve more strategic functions, however, with policy and decision-makers using expertise to shield themselves against public rebuke for an unpopular decision, to legitimize predetermined ideologically-driven policies, or to add epistemic authority to policies and strengthen their hand vis-à-vis other institutions and stakeholders in a symbolic gesture. Furthermore, experts' do not necessarily behave and perform as we ideally would hope for. Experts are supposed to contribute to improved policies and better decisions – but what if they don't?

Meeting 3: *Public intellectuals in Europe*

The process of European integration has been pursued as an elite-driven project. In recent years, this elitist character of Europe has been challenged and various concepts of Europe have emerged. On the one hand, Europe and European integration are still defined from above, which makes them unintelligible to citizens, but, on the other hand, we can observe various forms of europscepticism, as well as the rise of populist parties. This seminar presents an overview of the current notion of European integration and

"Europeaness" among various actors: political elites, decision-makers, business leaders, citizens. It also investigates the trust in EU institutions and European integration as well as the democratic deficit and democratic accountability. Finally, the role of academia in creating Europe is discussed.

Meeting 4: *Workshop*: *Challenges of conducting research. Case studies.*

Meeting 5: *Knowledge-based society and the crisis in Europe*

Several European countries are currently experiencing severe economic recession or even crisis after the global economic meltdown in 2008 and onwards and the euro crisis. Problems are now haunting the broader society and not only in the economic sphere; Europe and the EU in particular are also confronted with deep political and social problems. What are the root causes of the difficulties European countries and European integration are facing today? And which are the better ways out of Europe's recession and crises? At the heart of these debates are different conceptions, criticisms and hopes for knowledge-based society, democracy and policy-making.

Part II
Expertise and power

Meeting 1: *Universities and their role as knowledge institutions*

This meeting takes as its point of departure the key role that universities play in a knowledge-based society, economy and democracy. We first focus on drawing up a conceptual framework for making sense of the current dynamics of the university based on institutional theory. With this analytical lens, we examine how universities have been linked to the nation state through (changing) governance arrangements that have produced national systemic diversity in Europe as well as national 'sensitivities' attached to national knowledge systems. We then look into how this is challenged by the dynamics of the currently evolving 'Europe of Knowledge'. Here we focus in particular on the institutionalisation of European level knowledge governance and the increasing importance of Europe as the framework for university reforms and for how the universities adapt to changing demands and expectations, challenging traditional institutional identities.

Meeting 2: *Knowledge and Policy in Europe – the role of expertise in European policy making*

In this session we examine the other side of the 'Europe of Knowledge', namely the role of knowledge in policy making and the link between executive politics – how policies are

made and implemented - and professional expertise in the EU. We look at the overall organisational forms by which expertise is connected to the executive in the EU, the patterns of expert participation and different modalities in the use of expertise. We discuss how the main patterns can be accounted for in theoretical terms, as well as the implications for how policies are shaped and implemented in the EU.

Meeting 3: *Is it possible to combine an academic and a business career?*

The aim of the lecture is to evaluate the possibility of combining two demanding career paths – the academic and that of business. Both these activities require dedication and usually they have different outcomes. On the one hand, in academic life the target is to conduct research and "produce" high - quality publications. On the other hand, the business world focuses on profit and wealth maximization. However, there are numerous examples of successful academics who have established their own profitable companies. In a post-communist country like Poland, academics have had a specific social role - they have had to promote market reforms and entrepreneurship. Some of them, like prof. Janusz Filipiak, are excellent academics (more than 100 publications, 6 books etc. in the field of telecommunication and IT technologies) and a businessman. He established one of the biggest Central European IT companies, COMARCH. The lecture technique and the case study method will be applied during the meeting.

Meeting 4: *Forth power? The role of social/new media in contemporary democracies*

This lecture proposes a reading of the contemporary transformation of the public sphere in relation to the new communication technologies provided by the digital media. Accounts of the internet's power to transform our democratic systems describe two different realities. Some point to the distorting, manipulating and ultimately catastrophic effects of online communications on democracy. Others emphasize the online sphere's inclusiveness and creative intelligence that contribute to a new culture of knowledge production, a more equal distribution of power and a more participatory democracy. The lecture will collect evidence for both the cyberoptimist and cyberpessimist scenario and show how these two realities often coexist. This will help us to compare the opportunities and also the risks of digital democracy in relation to traditional representative 'mass democracy.'

Meeting 5: Workshop: *Working with media.*

Part III
Democracy, citizens and urban movement

Meeting 1: *Civic agency - the social scientist as knowledge co-creator*

The growing awareness that disillusionment with politics needs a reaction on the level of arrangement of social life which has to be reflected in a new approach in social science as well. In what circumstances can progressive social and political change happen? What should be done to help overhaul our thinking, to consider social issues as common tasks meaningful for everyone rather than only the task of elected politicians? The answer to the lack of trust in public life is the development of a civic agency that is defined as the capacity of communities and groups to act cooperatively and collectively on common problems across their differences of view. Today many divisions along lines of class, religion, race or gender undermine capacities for collective action, but common goals needs the public work of all citizens. What in such circumstances can social science do? First of all we need to shift from an expert controlled system into a new paradigm. From service deliverer and outside expert to collaborator, organizer, and catalyst - "on tap not on top" that helps to animate public life. It is an important step into a new public work perspective, citizen-centered, where democracy is lived cultural experience, not mainly elections and where the social scientist gives up the illusion that they should control entire processes.

Meeting 2: *Urban movements as a new political actor in democratic societies?*

This seminar has two principal aims. Firstly, it introduces the basic concepts of a hegemony approach to political protest and analysis of urban movements. Secondly, it serves as an opportunity to discuss particular case studies, such as the Polish anti-Olympics movement.

Meeting 3: *Deliberation: How can deliberative democracy and mass democracy be brought together*

This lecture analyses whether (and how) the normative assumptions of deliberative democracy can stand empirical tests. There has been a long discussion with regards how to assess the discursive quality of deliberative democracy and the validity claims generated by them. The main aspects of discursive quality within a deliberative setting are based on the following assumptions: discussions should a) pay respect to each participant and offer a fair chance to be heard (the equality condition), b) be ruled by the informational and the substantive value of the arguments (the epistemic condition). We argue that these two criteria relate to the internal validity of the deliberative setting but

are not sufficient to generate democratic legitimacy. In order for public deliberation to claim democratic legitimacy, two additional requirements need to be met: deliberative bodies in order to generate democratic legitimacy need c) to represent the informed opinions of the general public (the representativity condition) and d) to address and to potentially include all the citizens that collective decisions apply to (the publicity condition). In short, we need to discuss ways of reconciling deliberative democracy and mass democracy. The question is: How can deliberation be both epistemic and moral at the same time? In other words, how can it be made effective as a way of common problem solving and, at the same time, be justified through the consent of all that are potentially affected by it?

Meeting 4: *Krakow: a City without barriers?*

The aim of this seminar is to discuss the community video as a method in academy teaching and research which can lead to empowering research participants. We will start with a presentation of a community video *Krakow: City without barriers* made by students of sociology. Taking the problems mentioned by women with disabilities during the interviews conducted in the project "From a comprehensive diagnosis of the situation of people with disabilities in Poland to a new model of social policy for disability" as a departure point, students focus on the most important barriers preventing people with disabilities from participation in the public sphere and from enjoying their citizens' rights. In the second part of a meeting we will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this method. We will present how preparing the community video influenced the students and how it changed their perceptions, opening them up to the people with disabilities. Secondly, we will talk about the participants of our research: the developments and transformations we were able to observe in their attitudes and behaviour.

Meeting 5: *Being in Palestine: The Ethics and Geography of Working in (a) Conflict*

How can someone be in a place that does not formally exist, or that exists only in spots and moments - here and there, down this road, but not that road. Or perhaps the question that I am more interested in asking is this: how can one not be in Palestine? If Palestine is not recognized as a state with boundaries and borders, then once you're (t)here is it really ever possible to leave? Borders and boundaries constantly shift, are usurped and repossessed, made permanent, cemented and normalized. Checked and rechecked. (Please take off your belt for this one!) This seminar will address the question of visiting Palestine and working with Palestinians to end the occupation. What are the ethics of being here and being there? Where and how can we do our most effective work? From what theoretical and philosophical standpoints can we most effectively argue the case for a free Palestine? And, of course, the most important (if not a bit overly sentimental) question: do we ever leave Palestine behind completely? Can we?