



EINLADUNG ZUM KOLLOQUIUM

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Nobel Prize discoveries and their diffusion mechanisms

In this study we elaborate on the concept of the top layer of researchers that have been identified as “star scientist” and their involvement in the knowledge diffusion process. Using the Nobel Prize as a proxy for excellent research this study focuses on the dissemination of knowledge and to what extent the Nobel Laureates have been involved in the translation and commercialization of their breakthrough discoveries. We focus on the Nobel Laureates in Physiology or Medicine over the 35 last years and explore to what degree these “star scientist” have been involved in commercial activities and engagements with industry. We collect information about involvement in industry collaborations, patent activity, start-ups and scientific boards during their entire career. Through in-depth interviews with 32 Nobel Laureates we discuss the motives behind engaging in different industrial activities. Our results challenge previous findings about the role of “star scientists” in the commercialization process. Even though our quantitative results point towards a high involvement of the Nobel Laureates in commercialization, the interviews stress that the Laureates are not the main driver for commercializing their research. Rather, external actors are the main initiators in the translational process. Our results highlight the importance of providing a supportive environment for radical discoveries where others than the “star scientist” can continue to develop the discoveries to benefit society.

Pauline is a senior researcher at Karolinska Institutet, Sweden. Her research is mainly focused on issues related to knowledge transfer, innovation and science/technology policy especially in the life science sector. She has previously been a post-doc at MIT Sloan School of Management and Social Science Research Centre (WZB) Berlin. She has also been a consultant for the Technopolis Group and a researcher at the ECs Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS). She previously served as the vice-president of Euroscience.

Mittwoch, 20.04.2016

18 c.t. Uhr

Raum N.10.20

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