

2014 Annual Conference of the EA European Academy: "SKIN 3: Joining Complexity Science and Social Simulation for Policy – Third Workshop on the Agent-based SKIN Model"

EA European Academy welcomed delegates from all over the world

Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, 24th May 2014. – At the annual conference of the EA European Academy, which took place at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest/Hungary from 22 to 23 May 2014, researchers explored how complexity science and social simulation can be used to improve and inform public policy. Many of them apply, adapt and develop the SKIN model in their research (Simulating Knowledge Dynamics in Innovation Networks), an agent-based model to simulate the structure and dynamics of innovation networks in complex social systems.

In their introduction, the organisers of the conference – Petra Ahrweiler (EA European Academy, Germany), Nigel Gilbert (University of Surrey, UK) and Andreas Pyka (University of Hohenheim, Germany) – set out three key overlapping themes to be explored: 1. modelling, understanding and managing research and innovation policy domains using the SKIN model; 2. investigating big data and scalability issues for policy modelling; and 3. examining mechanisms and components of the SKIN model between complexity science and social science.

In his talk "Opening governance so complexity can flourish", first keynote speaker Erik Johnston (Center for Policy Informatics, Arizona State University, USA) gave examples of opening governance that can be informed by the interaction of complexity science and social simulation. While – historically – governance had been driven by hierarchical institutions, advances in communication and computational technology were now enabling "open governance" as a new paradigm to help solving problems.

After an intense day with eight further speakers in three thematic sessions and various poster presentations during the breaks, the first SKIN book was launched within an evening reception of the conference delegates at the Petöfi Museum of Literature. The book, published by the Springer Publishing House and edited by Nigel Gilbert, Petra Ahrweiler and Andreas Pyka, contains the contributions of last year's second SKIN Workshop with its focus on joint knowledge creation and exchange of knowledge in innovation co-operations and networks. Invited guest speaker at the book launch was Béla Kardon, Head of Science Policy at the Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources, with extensive experience in EU research politics. In his lecture about challenges and possible pitfalls in technology transfer and smart specialisation, with particular attention to Hungary, he called for "an active involvement of higher education institutions into the drafting and implementation of Smart Specialisation Strategies for innovative regions".

The second conference day started with keynote speaker Bruce Edmonds (Centre for Policy Modelling, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, UK). He generally regarded models as "providing a good way of thinking about things", but warned in his talk that "this does not make them true". Therefore, he concluded that simply giving policymakers or advisers predictions would be "as unwise as giving a sharp knife to a child – at best it will not be useful to them and at worst it could cause a horrible accident and it will be your fault".

After further nine speakers in three sessions and again poster presentations covering research projects from technology assessment, innovation economics and policy studies, the conference finished with a feedback session, where an invitation of the Italian delegates was gladly accepted to organise the fourth SKIN Workshop for Spring 2015 at the Federico II University of Naples, Italy. Papers of the two workshops, 2014 and 2015, will be joined in an upcoming publication. The many young researchers present at the conference discussed to organise interactive working sessions at

SKIN 4, while in the meantime the collaboration space at the SKIN webpage will be extended and elaborated to enable research cooperation on innovation policy issues in the time between the conferences.

Organisation

- Prof. Dr. Petra Ahrweiler ([EA European Academy of Technology and Innovation Assessment GmbH](#), Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, Germany)
- Prof. Dr. Nigel Gilbert ([Centre for Research on Social Simulation](#), CRESS, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK)
- Prof. Dr. Andreas Pyka ([Innovation Economics, University of Hohenheim](#), Germany)
- Local host: Prof. Dr. George Kampis (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary)

Funding

- FP7 EU Coordination and Support Action [eGovPoliNet](#)
- EU COST Action [KNOWeSCAPE](#)
- FP7 EU Coordination and Support Action [NESS](#)

Further Information

- [EA webpage](#)
- [SKIN webpage](#)
- SKIN publication: Springer Publishing House, "Understanding Complex Systems" series, available soon at [www.springer.com](#)

About the EA European Academy GmbH:

Science, technology and innovation change our societies rapidly. They open new courses of action and create opportunities, but also introduce unknown risks and consequences. As an interdisciplinary research institute, the EA European Academy of Technology and Innovation Assessment GmbH analyses and reflects these developments. Different scenarios are experimentally tested to provide knowledge about innovation policies. The EA European Academy was established as a non-profit corporation in 1996 by the Federal German state of Rhineland-Palatinate and the German Aerospace Center (DLR). Further information: [www.ea-aw.org](#).

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