



Chair for Ethics, Philosophy and History of the Life Sciences, University of Tübingen

“Nikolaus”-Workshop 3. & 4. December 2025, “Fürstenzimmer” Schloss Hohentübingen

Organised by Matthias Kramm & Thomas Potthast

Knowing life forms and their contexts: Biological knowledge production as viewed from natural science, indigenous as well as traditional ecological knowledge

Knowledge on living beings and their interrelations with the world around them constitutes what might be dubbed “biological knowledge”. Such expertise can be found not only in ‘Western’ natural science, but also in ‘non-Western’ knowledge systems, such as traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) or indigenous local knowledge (ILK). In this workshop, we want to address the following questions:

- 1) Do scientific and TEK/ILK knowledge(s) speak about the same entities/ units/ processes? Do we have (in)compatible and/or even (in)commensurable knowledge forms – and why?
- 2) How could ‘Western’ scientists learn from traditional and indigenous forms of knowledge without prematurely subjecting them to Western science standards, and what about learning vice versa?
- 3) What are the implications for a broader concept of philosophy of nature?
- 4) To be sure, also the very question whether and, if yes, how (far) the binary separation between ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ makes sense is at stake. Among other things, we will discuss the way and extent to which bridges can be built between non-Western and Western biological taxonomies and the extent to which indigenous expertise could form a category of its own beyond the dichotomy of science/non-science.

Agenda structure:

- papers: 30 min presentation & 30 min discussion each
- roundtables on certain topics

Colleagues interested in presenting, please contact Matthias and Thomas

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Thursday 3. Dec:	Thursday 4. Dec:
	9:00 Arrival and tea/coffee
	9:30 Lucia C. Neco (Murcia): <i>Multispecies social Relationships, Kinship and environmental Care</i>
	10:30 short break
	10:45 Georg Oswald (Kiel): <i>Values as Nature & Nature as Subject. Relational Values as Cultural Mediators</i>
	11:45 short break
	12:00 Christina Pinsdorf (Bonn): <i>Natural Normativity as biological Knowledge?</i>
13:00 Arrival and tea/coffee	13:00 lunch snacks
14:00 Welcome	14:00 David Ludwig (Wageningen): <i>When Pluralism is not Enough: Navigating Conflicts in Collaborative Knowledge Production</i>
14:15 Matthias Kramm (Tübingen): <i>Rights of Nature between Indigenous Ontologies and Western Law</i>	15:00 short break
15:15 short break	15:15 Thomas Potthast (Tübingen): <i>On the Relations between biological Knowledge of Life and Ethics of Nature</i>
15:30 Stefan Knauß (Halle): <i>Embedded Environmental Ethics (EEE) – after the IPBES Value Assessment</i>	16:15 coffee break
16:30 coffee break	16:30 Roundtable 2: <i>Linking different knowledge forms – epistemology and ethics</i> (Opening statement: Vanessa Weihgold)
17:00 Roundtable 1: <i>Governance and/of knowing life forms</i> (Opening statement: Riccarda Flemmer)	17:30 final discussion and next steps
19:00 Conference dinner in town	19:30 <i>optional</i> cultural event in town (Sudhaus) on post-growth economics “All you need is less” (Grupo Sal & Niko Paech)