

The transformative potential of responsible research and innovation (RRI)

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Responsible research and innovation (RRI) aspires to be an umbrella term of concepts and practices that may further the transition into a different research and innovation (R&I) system. The call for such a transformation is widespread, but RRI's ability to actually foster such a shift in the R&I system is questionable.

The first part of the presentation aspires to depict a framework to talk about transformative potential. While changes in the R&I system (e.g. introduction of new innovations) basically occur at the micro-level, the desired transformation ought to happen at the systemic level. Therefore, the link between the two levels must be grasped, while also considering that complex systems are characterized by non-linear dynamics and non-deterministic change among others.

The second part focuses on the type of change RRI is in particular focused on: the introduction of new collaborative and inclusive research methods. We argue that while RRI brings together stakeholders in a consensus-oriented process, its ambition is to challenge the existing power hierarchies. This results in a tension that questions that ability of RRI to be taken on board by the current R&I system while remaining transformative at the same time.

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