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Abstract

In recent times there has been a surge in interest on policy instruments to stimulate scientific and engineering research that is of greater consequence, advancing our knowledge in leaps rather than steps and is therefore more ?creative? or, in the language of recent reports, ?transformative.? Associated with the language of ?transformative research? there appears to be much enthusiasm and conviction that the future of research is tied to it. However, there is very little clarity as to what exactly it is and what criteria might be used to design policy instruments to make more of it happen. In this paper, we contribute to the construction of a framework within which some conceptual clarity might be gained. We develop four analogies, or metaphors, that are found in the discourse about ?transformative research? and show what they imply for the meaning of the notion and, as a result, both the phenomena that might be associated with it and the levers that would be available to design policy instruments. The analogies serving as theoretical metaphors that we propose, and also document to be present either explicitly or implicitly in the discourse about ?transformative research,?

are the stock market highlighting risk; the process of evolution and its selection mechanisms; the process of popular culture and the power of ?hot? events; and exploration of the frontier of the unknown. No single analogy covers all the relevant issues. Together they help identify a field of phenomena and the potential and challenges ?transformative research? presents to policy. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)