

Governing Knowledge – The Production of Policy Blueprints

Comparing the making of emissions trading and citizen juries¹

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Abstract

Governance on all levels is increasingly understood as “governing through instruments,” i.e. governing through the application of specific readymade templates for policy design. Surprisingly, though, the question of how policy instruments emerge, take shape, and stabilize has been treated peripheral at best. As we argue in this paper, the innovation of policy instruments has to be viewed and analyzed as a process of producing and marketing ‘knowing how to govern’ by what we call *policy instruments constituencies*. In what follows we therefore study how instrument constituencies form, how they produce specialized governance knowledge, and how they market their expertise to “users” on the instrument choice side – thereby shifting the focus from a more traditional perspective of policy choice to one of policy supply. Our paper comes in three parts. In the first we develop a framework to understand the making of policy instruments as a contingent historical process largely driven by the formation of policy instrument constituencies, i.e. networks of individuals and organizations constructing policy instruments and developing a reflexive interest in maintaining and promoting them. Such constituencies help produce cosmopolitan policy instruments by mediating between local sites of policy making as the place where designs can be tested or experimented with and more globalized centers of calculation in which working mechanisms are abstracted from their local context as to achieve cosmopolitanization of policy design. These efforts are closely linked to the active engagement of instrument constituencies in advocacy and consulting work. Instrument constituencies can develop into powerful political actors that market their solutions to problems they help to define and through political support they actively build, thereby partly shaping the innovation paths and success of their instrument designs.

In the second part of our paper we probe our theoretical framework by applying it to the innovation journeys of two different policy instruments out of two different instrument “families.” The cases are emission trading and citizen juries. In both cases the construction of ready-made options for policy making is the result of a contingent historical process largely driven by instrument constituencies. To

¹ Paper proposal for the Second Berlin Forum Innovation in Governance, 19-20 May 2011, Berlin.

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be able to compare between the cases, we analyze for each case the structure and dynamics of instrument constituencies as well as their modes of knowledge production in relation to specific characteristics of the instruments and to the contexts of implementation. This helps us understand, for example, what cultures instrument constituencies are made of and how such cultures play out on the way governance knowledge is produced or how constituencies adopt their practices to specific sizes and temporalities of their instruments.

In the final part of the paper we will compare our findings, discuss the role of instrument constituencies in contemporary governance, and conclude with an outlook on the study of instrument constituencies. Our claim is that instrument constituencies because of their involvement in the production and advocacy of supposedly “neutral” policy designs must be recognized as an important driving force in political life, up to now largely neglected in the policy studies literature and distinct from existing concepts of policy communities or networks.