

Innovation in Governance and Knowledge Controversies

Knowing Governance: the Making of Governance Knowledge and the Transformation of Politics, Second Berlin Forum *Innovation in Governance*

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Studies of knowledge and governance often have little to say about the dynamics and consequences of controversy. In the sociological tradition, the production of knowledge tends to be thought as an anti-political force, enabling the scope for disagreement to be managed and reduced, rendering disputes into matters about which experts can decide. Yet such an account of the politics of knowledge fails to attend to the ways in which the production of knowledge may create new objects of controversies and generate new sites within which disputes can be articulated. Indeed, the process through which knowledge is both produced and made public has often itself become a focus for controversy. Far from reducing the scope for disagreement, the production of knowledge seems to multiply the range of questions about which it is possible to disagree, including the question of who should be engaged in the production of knowledge. At the same time, controversies have frequently generated demands for greater transparency as well as the development of new regulatory spaces, the operation of which entails the production of more knowledge. In this paper I reflect on the importance of controversies to any account of the relations between the production of knowledge and transformations in politics and governance. I reflect on two key issues. One concerns the relation between different forms and spaces of knowledge and expertise, including expertise in the practice of politics. In particular, I consider the distinction between those forms of expertise that are thought to have transnational application, and those forms of political expertise that are specific to particular regions or states. Secondly, I sketch an account of what I term political situations within which the production of knowledge has come to have a critical role, and consider the significance of transnational communities to both the generation and containment of such situations.

Biographical note

Andrew Barry is Reader in the School of Geography and the Environment at Oxford University and a Fellow of St Catherine's College. He is the author of *Political Machines: Governing a Technological Society* (Athlone Press), and co-editor of *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government* (Chicago University Press), *The Technological Economy* (Routledge) Originally trained in natural sciences and the history and philosophy of science, his work has been particularly concerned with the significance of materials in political life, the relations between science and politics, and the process of invention. Most recently, he has been engaged in research on the politics of oil infrastructures in the Caucasus and the geography of knowledge controversies.