

## **Mediating and translating social science in the governance of science and technology**

Linda Soneryd, Score (Stockholm Centre for Organizational Research), email: [linda.soneryd@score.su.se](mailto:linda.soneryd@score.su.se), paper for *Second Berlin Forum Innovation in Governance*, 19-20 May 2011

### Abstract:

This paper explores relations of knowledge and governance in the making with a particular focus on the use of social scientific knowledge in the governance of science and technology. Social scientists have in various ways contributed to the emergence of numerous mechanisms for facilitating citizen engagement in science and technology. Social science has contributed to models and methods for setting up deliberative exercises as well as for evaluating them and social science researchers have also been involved in more direct ways in designing or moderating particular deliberative events. The success or failure of this development has been discussed as well as the need to critically explore this shift towards 'participatory governance'. This paper will, rather than critiquing, look at the generative role of social sciences in the governance of science and technology. What happens with the 'social scientific knowledge' when social scientific models are used outside the academia and how is social science picked-up by a range of actors, translated and given new meanings when it is used as expertise in governance processes? The paper draws on two empirical examples – the first example is based on my observations of a range of public hearings in relation to nuclear waste management in Sweden, all based on the same communication model, developed by consultants and presented as being based on elements of Habermas' theory of communicative action; the second example is based on my own recent experience of being one of the experts in the 'social studies' group that put together WHO's 2010 research agenda for radio frequency fields.