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Professionalisation of policy making and emerging technologies of governing

Jan-Peter Voß
Innovation in Governance Research Group,
Berlin Institute of Technology
www.innovation-in-governance.org
jan-peter.voss@tu-berlin.de

The paper explores shifting practices of policy-making in connection with the institutionalisation of policy knowledge, especially theoretical knowledge about *how to govern society* devised by professional policy designers.

I wish to probe a diagnosis of ongoing developments in policy practice since about WWII as the emergence of range of differentiated technologies of governing: While the development of policy knowledge is undergoing professionalization, policy-making becomes less a matter of ad-hoc programme design, and more a matter of choosing from a set of universally available design. This introduces a division of labour between local policy networks where choices are made and global designs are fitted to and translated with local contexts, and global design networks where policy instruments are developed, maintained, and evaluated. A constitutive feature of this emerging constellation is the objectification of policy knowledge in form of tools, instruments or modes of governance. While policy expertise is increasingly “sourced out” to private consultants and service providers, policy instruments gather a transnational constituency of expert designers, service providers and evaluators which may become further institutionalised in form of specialised service industries catering for a particular policy instrument (e.g. emissions trading, consensus conferences, new public management, regulation of infrastructures, public-private partnerships, cross-border leasing, e-government). This means that policy instruments take on a social life of their own and introduce a distinct force to the dynamics of governance change. Against this background transnational policy change (e.g. privatisation and liberalisation, new public management, participatory governance) can be reinterpreted as partly driven by emerging technologies of governing and their dynamics.

The paper develops concept and diagnosis with close attendance to emissions trading and citizens’ juries as two exemplary cases.

In conclusion I discuss new insights into the dynamics of policy change and the ambivalences of technologisation in policy-making as regards governing capacities and their democratic control.