

# T07P08 / The Accountability and Legitimacy of Knowledge Expert in Policy Making

**Topic :** T07 / Policy Design, Policy Analysis, Expertise and Evaluation

**Chair :** Jon Pierre (Dept of Political Science, University of Gothenburg)

**Second Chair :** Sullivan Helen (Australian National University)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The role of experts and the legitimacy of expertise in public policy are in question. Established relationships between politicians, experts and citizens are breaking down as communities lose faith in the core institutions and practices of governance. Academics have devoted much attention to the reimagining of governance institutions and the practices of governing but have paid less attention to the role of experts and expertise in those institutions and practices. This panel will address that gap, focusing on the relationship between expertise and legitimacy.

Experts play a central role in society as they provide the bridge between specialist understanding and citizen acceptance. Questioning expertise means understanding the nature of its legitimacy in the process of policy making. What determines the (input) legitimacy of experts to open up and animate the debate? What determines the (output) legitimacy through expertise to validate a public decision and close the debate? How is expertise made accountable? This panel aims to identify the determinants (political, social, economic, organisational, historical, technological or other) of the legitimacy of expert knowledge, by analysing the conditions in which independent knowledge is created and communicated and examining the role of institutions and actors in supporting or limiting legitimacy.

These issues are highly relevant in a situation of concomitant distrust in expertise and public policies, and are fed by a widening gap between scientific and human progress: while scientific advances and innovation are accelerating, populism constitutes a major social risk for democracies. Recently, the authority and legitimacy of experts have been eroded by some high profile policy failures. This panel aims to understand the sources of these failures. Explanations might be both endogenous and exogenous to the activity of experts, since for policy-making, the legitimate provision of expertise requires both responsible agents and a vigilant principal (Jasanoff, 2003).

In a context of the reduction of public research budgets and research privatisation, potential conflicts of interest can compromise independent expertise and its accountability. Moreover, the lack of transparency and traceability in the collection, accumulation and modification of data are problematic when science becomes more data driven. When do experts behave opportunistically, how can this be detected, and who monitors experts? Finally, in the current environment of 'post-truth politics', we need to better understand how new social risks (such as inequalities and populism) interact with expertise, generating doubts about and providing alternatives to expert knowledge.

Jasanoff, S. (2003), '(No) Accounting for Expertise?', *Science and Public Policy* 30(3):157-62.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

At a time when the economic, social and environmental governance challenges facing contemporary societies have grown in severity, scope and complexity, the role of expertise in policymaking has increasingly been called into question. Between suspicion and criticism, forecast errors and accusations of collusion with private companies, the possibility of independent expertise is questioned. Recently, populist and anti-globalisation movements have achieved electoral success by playing on these doubts and by rejecting the claims to specialized knowledge and authority of experts.

What roles do experts and expertise play in governance and policymaking, and how has this changed over time? This panel considers the changing role of expertise in governance and the legitimacy and accountability of expert knowledge in policymaking. What is the legitimacy of expertise? What kinds of expertise are there in contemporary governance and who are the experts? Who selects experts, and how? To what degree do different governance arrangements such as hierarchies, networks and hybrid organizations differ with regard to their capacity to sustain expertise as a key component in policymaking?

What are the mechanisms, procedures and historical contingencies that explain the legitimacy of expert knowledge? Finally, how do conventions and power relationships modify the production and distribution of expertise?

The panel invites the submission from different disciplines and different sectors, bringing together a collaborative network of leading local and international scholars and institutions to explore the historical, contemporary and future roles of expertise in governance. It will explore the central questions of the accountability and legitimacy of experts and expertise and combine academic enquiry and knowledge creation with policy focus and practical application.

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## Session 1 Legitimacy and accountability of knowledge experts in policy making

Friday, June 30th 08:15 to 10:15 (CJK 1 - 1)

### **Discussants**

Anders Esmark (University of Copenhagen)

### **Policy evidence and expertise in contemporary parliamentary committees**

Carolyn Hendriks (Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU)

Sue Regan

### **Scientific Ignorance and Public Inaction: How Scientific Expertise Builds the Non-Problem of Occupational Health**

Emmanuel Henry (Université Paris-Dauphine (Paris IX))

### **Policy Punctuation or Politics As Usual?: The Congressional Dynamics of Science and Technology Policy**

Renee Johnson (Rhodes College)

Erin Dolgoy (Rhodes College)

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## Session 2 The legitimacy and accountability of knowledge expert in policy making

Friday, June 30th 10:30 to 12:30 (CJK 1 - 1)

### Discussants

Carolyn Hendriks (Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU)

### **The Role and Influence of Independent Policy Experts in Public Policy Making in Nondemocratic States: The Case of Human Trafficking Legislation in Post-Soviet States**

Elena Maltseva (University of Windsor)

### **We're all managers now: Ideas, expertise, and management consultants**

Martin Bortz (University of Melbourne)

### **The legitimacy of expert knowledge: the case of the Notre-Dame-Des-Landes airport project**

Dounia Khallouki (ENTPE)

### **Technocracy revisited. Reasserting democracy against connectivity, reflexivity and accountability**

Anders Esmark (University of Copenhagen)