

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE IN PUBLIC DELIBERATION: TOWARD A THEORY OF CONTRIBUTORY POLICY EXPERTISE

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Taking Collins and Evans's discussion of a "Third Wave" in science studies as a point of departure, this presentation examines the way in which empirical inquiry is inherently situated in a normative context. Arguing that there is no direct bridge from the empirical into the normative, the discussion seeks to supply the connection through a turn to interpretive analysis. In this view, following work in social constructionism, both empirical and normative analysis can be seen as end points on a spectrum of interpretive inquiry. As both contain elements of interpretation (to greater or lesser degrees), the standard either-or approach to these two modes of inquiry that has long hindered their integration can be brought together in a single framework. Rather than seeing qualitative investigation as an inferior substitute for empirical analysis, both are seen to belong to the realm of the interpretation. Beyond demonstrating the implications of this perspective for policy analysis, the presentation also explores its implications for deliberative interactions between policy experts and citizens in matters related to socio-technical transitions.