



Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences



Wicked Problems, Contested Administrations:
Knowledge, Coordination, Strategy

The Research Colloquium of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences:
Perspectives on Knowledge in and of Public Administrations

“Seeing Like the State in the Digital Age”

Venue: University of Potsdam,
Campus Griebnitzsee
House 6, Room S15

Date: 18 January 2017

Time: 12.00 - 14.00 c.t.

Prof. Dr. Jan-Peter Voß

Junior Professor, Planning Building and Environment,
Technical University of Berlin

Prof. Dr. Werner Rammert

Professor of Sociology and Technology Studies,
Technical University of Berlin

Organized by
Jana Bertels, Minh-Nguyet Le & Basanta Thapa
WIPCAD Doctoral Researchers



“Seeing Like the State in the Digital Age”

What and how does the politico-administrative system know about the society it governs? What kind of knowledge is considered a legitimate basis for government decisions? Social scientists have declared a shift in the answers to these questions during the last decades: We have moved from centralized, authoritative governmental knowledge production to a more plural and democratic mode, e.g. labelled “fragmented knowledge production” and “Mode II production of knowledge.”

However, how does this observation hold in the digital age? Visions of digital government either highlight the democratic potential of information technology, with technologies like social media lending everyone a voice and allowing government to deliberately address specific target groups. Or they stress information technology’s enabling qualities for centralised governmental control, powered by connected sensors, the Internet of Things, and Big Data that enable 360° real-time monitoring of the world.

Thus, we want to discuss what “Seeing Like a State” means in the digital age with the two presenters who have both contributed to ‘the knowledge turn’ in governance and policy studies.



Jan-Peter Voß is a political and social scientist specializing in the field of science and technology research. His overriding interest in research is the relationship between politics and science in the establishment of collective orders. He works on the development of a constructivist governance research, which examines collective order processes as a co-production of political and epistemic authority, focusing on practices and discourses of representation as well as on their performative effect for the constitution of objective realities and subjective interests. Central research areas are emerging forms of "governance of sustainable development" and the "production of knowledge about governance" as well as processes of "innovation of new forms of governance" and methods of "constructive innovation assessment".



Werner Rammert is Professor of Sociology and Technology Studies at the Technical University of Berlin. He is a member of the European Committee COST A 4 "Social Shaping of Technologies", research fellow at the Management School of Northwestern University and at Stanford University. As an expert of innovation networks, human-technology configurations, and the future of technological developments he cooperates with Daimler, Bosch, Volkswagen/AUDI, BMW and INTEL. As an expert on artificial intelligence and new media he gave advice to the Commission of Inquiry of the German Bundestag, the Telekom-Labs and the National Academy of Engineering Sciences. Professor Rammert co-founded the DFG research program on “Socionics” with computer scientists, and currently he is head master of the Graduate School on “The Innovation Society Today: The Reflexive Creation of Novelty”.