

Framing the democratic interaction between scientists and civic groups.

Jeroen Van Bouwel

Ghent University, Belgium

Abstract: Harry Collins and Robert Evans (2002) suggest that the so-called “third wave” in social studies of science should address the normative question of how far citizen participation in scientific debates can legitimately be extended. In this paper, we want to argue that Helen Longino’s (1990, 2002) account of science provides us with a good normative framework to answer that question.

Longino’s CCE-norms can be understood as an updated version of Robert Merton’s CUDOS-norms of science. The update concerns at least two aspects. Firstly, contrary to Merton (1942), Longino pays attention to the diversity of social groups within science – her work was originally motivated by feminist values and has broadened to include socially and epistemically underprivileged groups. Secondly, widening the Mertonian scope, her account (especially Longino 2002) can accommodate the participation of civic groups to the debate (cf. Rolin, 2009). We will elucidate how Longino’s norms have to be understood in relation to the interaction between scientists and civic groups, making the democratic framework for interaction as well as the responsibilities of the civic participants explicit.

Finally, the inclusion of civic groups within science and/or the decision-making processes concerning science and technology is often motivated by political, democratic or moral concerns. However, if we accept Longino’s framework, a stronger claim could be made, namely that the inclusion leads to better knowledge. Hence, inclusion can be advocated on epistemic grounds.

References

- Collins, Harry and Robert Evans (2002) ‘The Third Wave of Science Studies: Studies of Expertise and Experience.’ *Social Studies of Science* 32(2), 235–96.
- Longino, H. (1990) *Science as Social Knowledge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Longino, H. (2002) *The Fate of Knowledge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Merton, R.K. (1942) ‘The Normative Structure of Science.’ In: Merton, R. K. (1973) *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rolin, K. (2009) ‘Scientific Knowledge: A Stakeholder Theory.’ In: J. Van Bouwel (ed.) *The Social Sciences and Democracy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 62-80.