

Exploring Evidence-Based Practice Through New Forms of Engagement

Isabella Pistone

Department of Philosophy, Linguistics and Theory of Science

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Abstract

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Author: Isabella Pistone

Language: English, with a Swedish summary

Department: Department of Philosophy, Linguistics and Theory of Science, University of Gothenburg, Box 200, SE - 405 30 Gothenburg

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This thesis is concerned with how to connect Science and Technology Studies (STS) with Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) through new forms of engagements. EBP is commonly associated with efforts to improve quality of welfare services. The principles and methods associated with EBP have been criticized for being reductionist. Such discussions pinpoint several challenges concerning principles for the production and utilization of evidence in EBP. At the same time, STS scholarship sheds light on informal practices that are often overseen in models and principles of EBP. In various ways, this research displays mismatches between epistemological assumptions underpinning EBP and empirical epistemologies at work when EBP is enacted by professionals in daily practice. In this thesis, I explore how such STS insights can be put to work for developing EBP. The thesis comprises five papers that work with different operationalizations of the guiding question: *How can sensibilities from STS contribute to developments of EBP knowledge practices?* The papers explore several domains of welfare where EBP principles have been adopted. Drawing on various sources of data such as interviews, observations, scholarly literature and situated experiments, these papers offer a diverse set of explorations into the current shapes of EBP and experimentation with how STS research can contribute with generative developments. Collectively, these papers challenge and expand the boundaries of EBP, offering a perspective that moves beyond narrow ideals of formalization and pre-set knowledge hierarchies. Instead, they emphasize the dynamic interplay between various forms of knowledge necessary when EBP is to be realized in daily practice. Based on these papers, I outline characteristics for an epistemological reconceptualization of EBP that challenges the conventional usage of EBP as a descriptor for standardized interventions. I discuss how the experimentation with STS approaches renegotiates roles, positions, and engagements of STS-researchers. I conclude by showing how the engagement in this thesis contribute to an expansion of boundaries; not only boundaries around EBP, but boundaries around STS scholarship as well.