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Title	Cities, innovation and expertise: experiences from a formative evaluation
Authors	May, T and Perry, B
Type	Conference or Workshop Item
URL	This version is available at: http://usir.salford.ac.uk/17719/
Published Date	2011

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Cities, Innovation and Expertise: Experiences from a Formative Evaluation

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Submission of paper for the Second Berlin Forum Innovation in Governance, 'Knowing governance. The making of governance knowledge and the transformation of politics.'

The dynamics of the knowledge-based era have combined with those of a multi-scalar international political economy to produce the 'glocalisation' of science (Swyndegouw, 1992). Public policies at supra-national and sub-national scales have been re-populated through a new jargon of clusters, knowledge spill-overs, innovation and knowledge transfer, as science and technology are seen to be revolutionizing approaches to urban and regional development. The emphasis is on reorienting economies to build science regions and enhance urban growth through alliances between universities, industries and policy-makers. Within this context universities are increasingly required to operate at a number of spatial scales, interweaving international, national and sub-national roles (Benneworth and Hospers, 2007).

One consequence of these trends is the increasing attention cities are giving to the innovation agenda. A wide variety of case studies have been constructed of how different cities are approaching the challenges of knowledge-based growth from Eindhoven, to Barcelona, to Holon and Singapore (Clua and Albet, 2008. Fernandez-Maldono and Romein, 2010. Ooi, 2008. Wong et al., 2006). Emphasis has been placed on different pathways to development, success factors, historical trajectories and the consequences and limitations of such approaches (Carillo, 2006). Dynamics have been illuminated in relation, for instance, to the conflation between creative, digital and knowledge economies, a narrow preferencing of particular forms of knowledge and the socio-cultural implications of dominant approaches (Chapain et al, 2009). Cutting across these attempts are some central issues regarding *how* cities govern innovation in the city, using what kinds of knowledge and partnerships, through which mechanisms and the extent to which the 'new' 'innovative' modes of governance are compatible with the traditional roles and responsibilities of public service delivery bodies.

A second consequence relates to the relationship between academics and policy-makers and practitioners in an urban context. Increasingly academics are being asked to form new partnerships and collaborations, demonstrate 'impact' and engage in evaluations and placements. The relationship between the researcher and wider social interests is redefined through such processes which both confirm and undermine notions of professional and lay expertise by juxtaposing different cultures of knowledge production and reception. What is at stake is the extent to which 'academic' knowledge is commissioned, deployed, valued and utilised in policy-making processes at an urban level and with what effects.

This paper makes a contribution to the three central themes of the Forum on knowing how to govern, invisible advice and the making and contesting of knowledge about governance

via a critical reflexive examination of our experiences of conducting a formative evaluation of the Manchester Innovation Investment Fund, Greater Manchester UK, between 2007 and 2010. The Manchester Innovation Investment Fund (MIIF) was officially launched in 2007 as a funding partnership between the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), the North West Development Agency (NWDA) and Manchester City Council (MCC). It was designed as an experiment in financing innovation and transforming the innovation ecosystem of a city region. A central part of the process was a formative evaluation commissioned from university academics to capture lessons and feed those back to partner organizations with the aspiration of enabling learning to have real-time, practical effects. The paper examines these experiences from first-hand experience of seeking to develop collaborative knowledge in an urban innovation context through exploring the interplay between struggles to govern knowledge and the production of knowledge needed to govern.