

Preface

Interdisciplinary work is much in demand from policy-makers and research funding bodies alike. Understanding social phenomena is said to require a move by the different sciences beyond their disciplinary silos and some of the most significant breakthroughs in our knowledge and understanding occur at the edges of disciplines. At the same time, individual career incentives usually demand publications in each respective discipline's 'top ten' journals, offering a powerful counterweight to any attempt at working and publishing across disciplines. One way to address these largely incompatible pressures is to seek key concepts that appeal to a diversity of disciplines and attempt to establish a structured environment for conversations and research around them.

Over the past four years, the ESRC Centre for Analysis of Risk and Regulation (CARR) has provided such an environment for a conversation across disciplines on 'regulatory innovation'. As with any innovation, this book has gone through many iterations, with many avenues explored and dismissed. Participants at various conferences and workshops will bear witness to these various attempts to find a framework in which to understand regulatory innovation, for example at the Socio-Legal Studies Association, the Political Studies Association annual meetings in Britain, or seminars in CARR, and we are grateful for the comments received on these various occasions. We are also grateful to Tim Besley, a fellow member of CARR and LSE colleague, for contributing to many of our conversations, and to Bronwen Morgan and Karen Yeung, who generously participated in (endured!) a whole day of our deliberations.

This has been a truly collaborative project, and we have all read and discussed more drafts of each person's case study than we care to remember. Different members of the group have played different roles during its many stages. The idea of exploring regulatory innovation was proposed initially as a joint project by Mark Thatcher and Colin Scott, and was later broadened out to become a collaboration between all the political scientists and lawyers within CARR. Christopher Hood inspired us with his energy and incisive comments throughout. Mark Thatcher worked valiantly in the early stages to document and make sense of our numerous discussions. In the later stages, Julia Black provided the analysis of regulatory innovation and the account of the 'worlds of regulatory innovation' that provide a framing device for our respective explorations. Martin Lodge and Julia Black corralled everyone

into line at the end and attempted to draw the many threads together in the conclusion.

This book does not seek to provide the ultimate perspective on something as broad as ‘regulatory innovation’, but it is an initial and novel attempt at a systematic and comparative exploration of this concept that has much resonance across the disciplines represented in this research group in particular, and CARR more widely. One of the prerequisites for truly interdisciplinary work is a sustained period of conversations and learning across disciplines, and we are grateful to the ESRC and to CARR itself for offering us an infrastructure that allowed for our conversation to sustain itself over the different stages of this research project. Finally, we express our thanks to the staff at Edward Elgar, in particular Luke Adams, for their support in bringing this product to fruition.

**Julia Black, Martin Lodge and Mark Thatcher
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