Knowledge Games, Truth Seeking, and Organ Transplants Regulation

Abstract

In this paper, I examine how different relations to knowledge are enacted among experts working in the governance of kidney transplants. Using fieldwork material gathered in transplant hospital and bureaus, I analyse how legal knowledge transacts with expert and lay knowledge in the context of very pragmatic tasks: detect the "intention to donate" and the "altruistic motivations" of those who procure a kidney to someone in need. My focus is on the management and circulation of knowledge, rather than the object of knowledge - transplants. Here, the law assigns its regulatory power onto experts, and the committees of experts in turn create renewed opportunities for the use of legal forms. The assemblage of expert and lay knowledge – e.g. medical, rabbinical, psychological – does not necessarily provide the law with a clearer view of the scope it has to cover, but I explain how it provides legal forms and idioms with an occasion to expand. Further, this legally managed multidisciplinarity sometimes incites experts to literally withdraw from their own expert knowledge and science, and to rely on their understanding on legal forms and lawyerly jargon. What happens when legal knowledge gets into nonlegal settings and into the hands of nonlegal people?

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