

Foreword

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Science and technology governance and public participation in decision making have been so closely intertwined throughout the past decade that they might seem synonymous. In the industrialised (and post-industrialised) world, extending public engagement and moving it upstream have become the standard response of social scientists and policymakers to almost every contentious issue including GM agriculture, energy policy and nanotechnology. In the less-industrialised world, people have been more sceptical of what they view as yet another instrument of social control, even terming public participation as 'the new tyranny' (Cooke and Kothari 2001). Both positive and negative views of participation are often expressed with deep conviction.

An objective view of participation recognises that it almost certainly has both qualities. Janus-like, public engagement has two inseparable faces. On the one hand it exhibits the smiling face of *governance*, of citizen empowerment and deliberative democracy. On the other we see the more sinister face of what Foucault termed *governmentality*: the internalisation of social control in the individual citizen. As such it seems to be a clear instance of what Wildavsky described as the 'axiom of connectedness' (1988), that good and bad are intertwined in the same object.

Furthermore, the current enthusiasm for public participation and citizen consultation frequently embodies unexamined assumptions about citizens and their desires. The image of the citizen at the centre of the argument for maximally extending public participation is of someone who is: socially embedded in a community; locally knowledgeable and intuitively reflexive about society and nature; focused on the common good as a core value of public life; and relies on inclusionary deliberation to reveal truth. The imagined community to which such citizens belong demands constant self-awareness and

vigilance of its members. It would be unrecognisable to anyone sympathetic to A.N. Whitehead's famous claim that 'Civilization advances by extending the number of important operations which we can perform without thinking about them' (1911). Whitehead's vision of the good society is one in which the individual is freed from the drudgery of constant vigilance by competent, transparent, and trustworthy institutions, who take care of business so that the citizen can be free to engage in more fulfilling pursuits.

In marked contrast with much of the literature on public engagement and deliberative democracy, the articles in this *IDS Bulletin* eschew simple-minded advocacy in favour of unpacking the core tensions in the very idea of public participation. For instance Chataway and Smith use Hirschman's ideas of 'exit, voice, and loyalty' (1971) to explore the tensions between participation as democracy and as social marketing.

Focusing on 'participation as deliberation', the collection as a whole shows how these concepts are manifest in different forms that can work against each other. For instance, Linda Waldman highlights the mismatch between scientific and local models of harm from asbestos exposure, demonstrating that neither actually provides 'safety' for affected individuals and communities. Dominic Glover describes how Monsanto operated with an outmoded model of agricultural extension that did not meet farmers' needs. The various authors question the overall objectives for engaging in deliberative participatory processes, arguing against participation as an end in itself and showing how participation is best centred on a specific issue.

Following in the footsteps of Brian Wynne's classic exploration of the ritual dimensions of public inquiries (1982), several of the articles, such as that by Paul Richards, tease out the performative dimensions of

participation, exploring the relationship between scientific knowledge and community action in custom, everyday life and local governance. For example Harro Maat uses the concept of innovation systems to add a historical perspective to debates on participation and unpack reliance on idealised notions of democracy and the public. The various themes are plaited together by Horst *et al.* in their analysis of Europe as a test bed for multiple emerging models of science and technology governance based on a typology of discretionary, corporatist, educational, market, agonistic, and deliberative modes of engagement.

As a whole, the case studies presented in this *IDS Bulletin* cut across conventional development categories (agriculture and rural development) and those of science and technology studies (science governance, private innovation, and risk) in a variety of geographical and cultural contexts. They provide a sympathetic but critical and historical perspective that seeks to explore participation in all of its complexity and contradiction. As such the collection is a significant contribution to the discourse of deliberation.

References

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Wynne, B. (1982) *Rationality and Ritual*, Chalfont St Giles: British Society for the History of Science