

**Science, policy and public participation: reflections on the whys, whats, and wheres–** *David Demeritt (Geography), King's College London (GB)*

Public participation has become something of a mantra across a wide sweep of policy fields, from natural resource management and land use planning, to risk assessment, clinical drugs trials, and even criminal parole boards, that were once the exclusive preserve of scientific experts. But as the initial blush of excitement and experimentation has faded, it is becoming clear that there are different, indeed often incommensurable, reasons why participation by the lay public might be desirable, that lay publics are in fact plural and that this diversity of rationales and of publics has important implications for what kind of public engagement and where is most appropriate. Drawing on a variety of examples of public engagement with expertise, this paper seeks to clarify their varying aims and to improve the fit between those purposes and the sites and sorts of public participation best suited to meeting them.