



## UCSD Science Studies Program

### Colloquium Series

presents

## Charles Thorpe

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**November 23, 2009**

**4:00 – 6:00pm**

**Humanities and Social Sciences Bldg. #3027**

**Reception prior to talk at 3:30 pm in HSS 3005**

## ***Participation as Post-Fordist Politics: Demos, New Labour, and Science & Technology Studies***

### **Abstract**

The extension of public participation has been a key goal in relation to which STS scholars have influenced public policy. In the UK in recent years, public engagement has been promoted by elite science institutions and as part of government science policy. What has led to this acceptance of the goal of participation among science and policy elites? I will argue that public participation in science is one aspect of a broader adoption of participation initiatives within British policy, especially social policy. The extension of participation across the policy field was an important element of the New Labour program following the 1997 election. The Demos think-tank was influential in the 1990s in promoting participation as a component of Third Way politics, presented as necessary for the left to adapt to a new social context. Demos' take on contemporary politics grew out of the earlier formulation of 'New Times' in the pages of *Marxism Today*. The argument was that the left had to adapt to the realities of post-Fordism and that the character of the post-Fordist public required and made possible the extension of participation. In this paper, I will trace this intellectual and policy trajectory and its relationship with STS. I will argue that post-Fordism is the terrain on which STS and policy have come together in the UK.

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