



CONSEJO SUPERIOR  
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Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales  
Instituto de Políticas y Bienes Públicos - IPP

**SEMINARIOS DEL GRUPO DE INVESTIGACIÓN SOBRE  
“SISTEMAS Y POLÍTICAS DE INVESTIGACIÓN E INNOVACIÓN” -  
Systems and Policies of Research and Innovation (SPRI-Spain)**

Researching the implications of genomics: the importance of  
the old

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## RESUMEN

Recent debates in science and technology studies as well as more practical approaches to science policy both at national and European level have stressed the relevance of citizenship in the field of science. This is mainly for two reasons: i) It is nowadays widely accepted that science cannot be approached as a neutral activity, qualitatively distinct from other social activities. Rather, science and technology are the result of a process of *co-production* in which social, political and scientific actors interact and finally determine the directions, the priorities and the advances of the scientific activity. ii) Moreover science plays a dominant role in the political arena, as governments increasingly need to rely on scientific expertise, and the threat of technocracy demand democratic control over government appointed experts. Both co-production of science and democratic control over those who are appointed as technical and scientific experts raise the question of not only *who* is supposed to be taking part in the scientific activity but also of *what kind of participation* is appropriate. This paper takes issue with these questions by presenting two cases studies of civil society organisation participation in the field of novel biotechnologies in Germany and Spain. In Germany strategies of participation in the field of biotechnologies have been experimented since the early 1990's whilst in Spain the theme has been treated until recently as a topic for scientists only. The comparative analysis of the experiences into these two countries offers evidence of how, despite an unspecific claim of more and broader participation seems legitimate from a normative point of view, in practice strategies of participation that do not give rise to a genuine exchange between the public and institutional actors are cause of public cynicism and disaffection towards institution, rather than a bust to trust in institutions and democratic legitimacy.