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"What Silence Knows—Planning, Public Participation and Environmental Values"

Davies, Anna

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While fraught with ambiguities, support for greater public participation in environmental policy making is experiencing a renaissance amongst sections of government and academia, particularly within the field of land-use planning. There is concern within this cohort that the planning system silences public voices through its current mechanisms for community involvement. Proponents of participation often presuppose that more public participation will produce both "better" decisions and environmental benefits, but to date research has focused on the front-end, or "processes," of participation rather than the "products" that result. While procedural aspects of public participation are important it is imperative that critical consideration is also given to what emerges from the participation that is being exalted. This paper addresses this concern by focusing on the products of a public participation exercise conducted in Luton, south-east England in order to consider what it is that "silence knows."
— Text from The White Horse Press website

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