Participation

I participate , you participate, he participates
....they organize

An institutional approach to participatory environmental governance
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Participation in science and technology studies, political science, planning, and environmental social sciences broadly

Critical strand

-Participation as legitimation devices

-The potential of participation to exclude, disempower and oppress

-Efforts to optimize participation adds a new layer of technocracy

Normative strand

- Concerned with improving and optimizing participation

- Experimenting with and evaluating the effectiveness of new participatory methods and designs

- Aim is to liberate and empower citizens by providing for a neutral or unbiased setting of deliberation

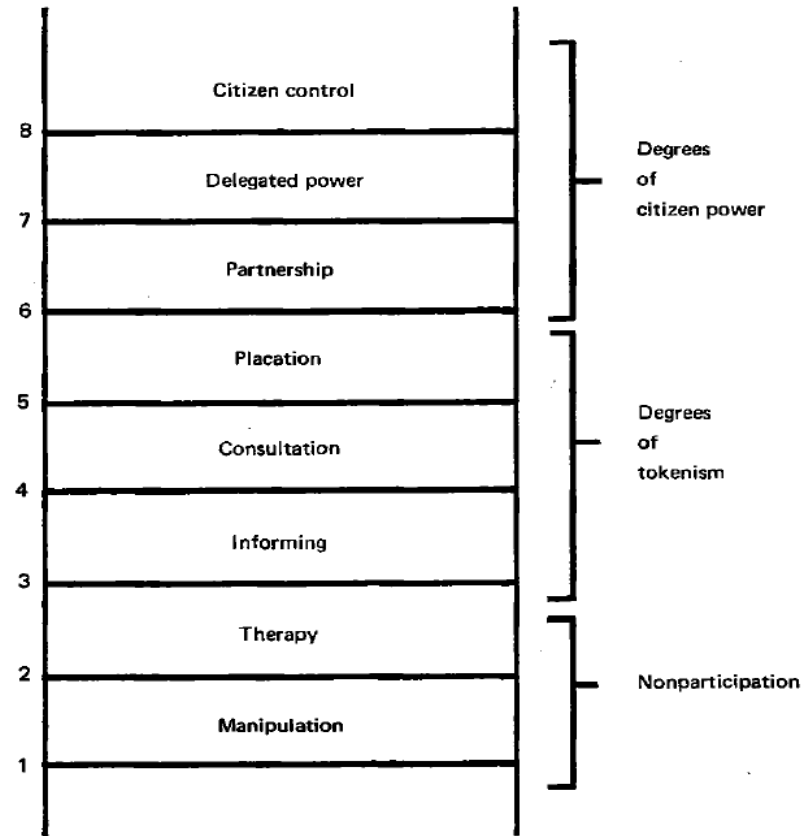# Sherry R Arnstein (1969) A Ladder of Citizen Participation

FIGURE 2   *Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation*

Critique against focus on organized forms of participation

1) relies on unreflected normative premises that favour rational, deliberative, and organized forms of participation.

2) takes us away from the interrelations between society and nature, publics and material engagement

3) lack of conceptual clarity (conflates democracy and participation, and uses terms interchangeably: engagement, participation, involvement etc.)

Literature review: participation and the environment

•Rich site for empirical investigations (policy makers claiming to extend participation) – mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion

•The deliberative turn – not only focus on 'form' but exploring deliberation (in various forms) as a means to 'bring nature back in' (Habermas' technocracy critique vs simplified versions of the ideal speech situation)

•The participatory turn – language of STS/environmental sociology reconstructed as the language of policy

A focus on the institutional context and organizational aspects of participation enables us to go beyond the polarization between the critical-normative

…and avoids conflating participation with democracy

It is fully possible that partial participation takes place without a democratisation of authority structures, and that full participation takes place at a lower level in the management structure but "within the context of a non-democratic authority structure overall" (Pateman 1970:73).

Institutional dimensions

Institutions as 'made rules'
Institutions as the taken-for-granted and opposed to organization as decided rules
Institutions as both constraining and enabling

The institutions of modern society as belonging to separated functional spheres: Economy, culture/science, legal, political,family

Institutions as the taken-for-granted:
Strong ideas that science and politics are separated
Dominating ideas about markets and market mechanisms paired with participation/deliberation as good governance

Institutional dimensions of the participatory turn and new forms of governance

Participatory turn
- supported by international conventions and national legislation (Aarhus convention, EIA-directive, Water Framework directive etc.)

- explosion of methods/instruments: citizen panels, citizen advisory committees, scenario workshops, deliberative polls etc.

- assistance to government bodies to choose the right 'event genre': planning tools, how-to-do guides, consultants, good examples

New forms of governance
- ad-hoc organisation (multistakeholder involvement)
- forms of 'voluntary rules', global blueprints for good governance (standards, certification systems etc.)

Breakdown of democratic institutions (?) but **still strong commitments to the idea of democracy** (often confused with participation/stakeholder involvement)

Organizational dimensions

Organizing – how things are done in concrete processes of organizing and with what effects

Organization - as decided rules

What organizations are involved in governance structures in particular areas?

The myth of the modern actor: an expectation on the modern actor as capable of acting as an authorized agent for various interests (Meyer and Jepperson 2000)

Organized hypocrisy (Brunsson 1989)

Organizational dimensions of the participatory turn and new forms of governance

Participatory turn

-supported and practiced by powerful international organizations: the EU, national governments etc.

-organizations that develop and promote particular methods/instruments: bodies for technology assessments, consultant firms and universities and function as 'experts' on participation

New forms of governance

-is not the result of a 'natural evolution' but the result of decisions taken by organizations (often national governments)

Organisations show **strong commitments to the idea of democracy** as well as ideas of markets, efficiency, science etc. (because that is the expectations on the 'modern actor')

Participation as organized 1/2

• makes sense from an 'everyday language' use of the word (all our activities cannot simply be subsumed under the term 'participation')

• there is *usually* an organizer that can be distinguished from other participants

• to approach participation in relation to organization has a tradition in theories of democracy

•If we want to critically analyse 'the participatory turn' we need to focus empirically on what organizations do and what they mean when they talk about and organize participatory events and processes

Participation as organised 2/2

•A participant can make sense of participation in another way than the organiser (Felt and Fochler 2010);

•Participants might refuse to adjust to the given order (Callon and Rabeharisoa 2004);

•Organisers might need to adjust to unforeseen events (Lezaun and Soneryd);

•Boundaries are made between those that are invited and those that are uninvited and not seen as legitimate participants by the organisers (Wynne 2007)

•inclusive –exclusive approaches embedded in the history and practice of particular organizations (Welsh and Wynne 2013).

Participation is always organised within an institutional context

• 'Participation' as an organised phenomenon – a simple proposition but *how* we approach this dependent on a number of theoretical and methodological choices

• avoid unnecessary confusions between participation and democratisation,

• enable a range of questions into: who organises, how, who does it include and exclude, what forms of protest does it generate

• In what institutional context? The history and practices of particular organizations: previous responses to critical groups (i.e Welsh & Wynne 2013 how policy-makers have imagined publics as 'passive objects' or 'threats'). In what governance structures, organizational landscape, legislative and normative frameworks: WWV on climate change vs policing demonstrators in Paris 2015