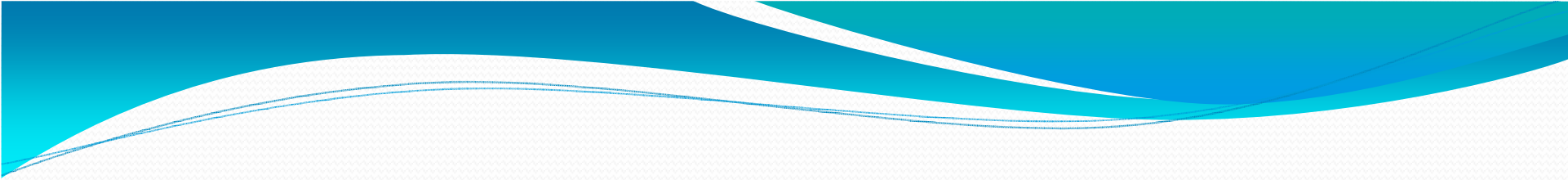


# Participation

What is behind this keyword?

Stefan Huber

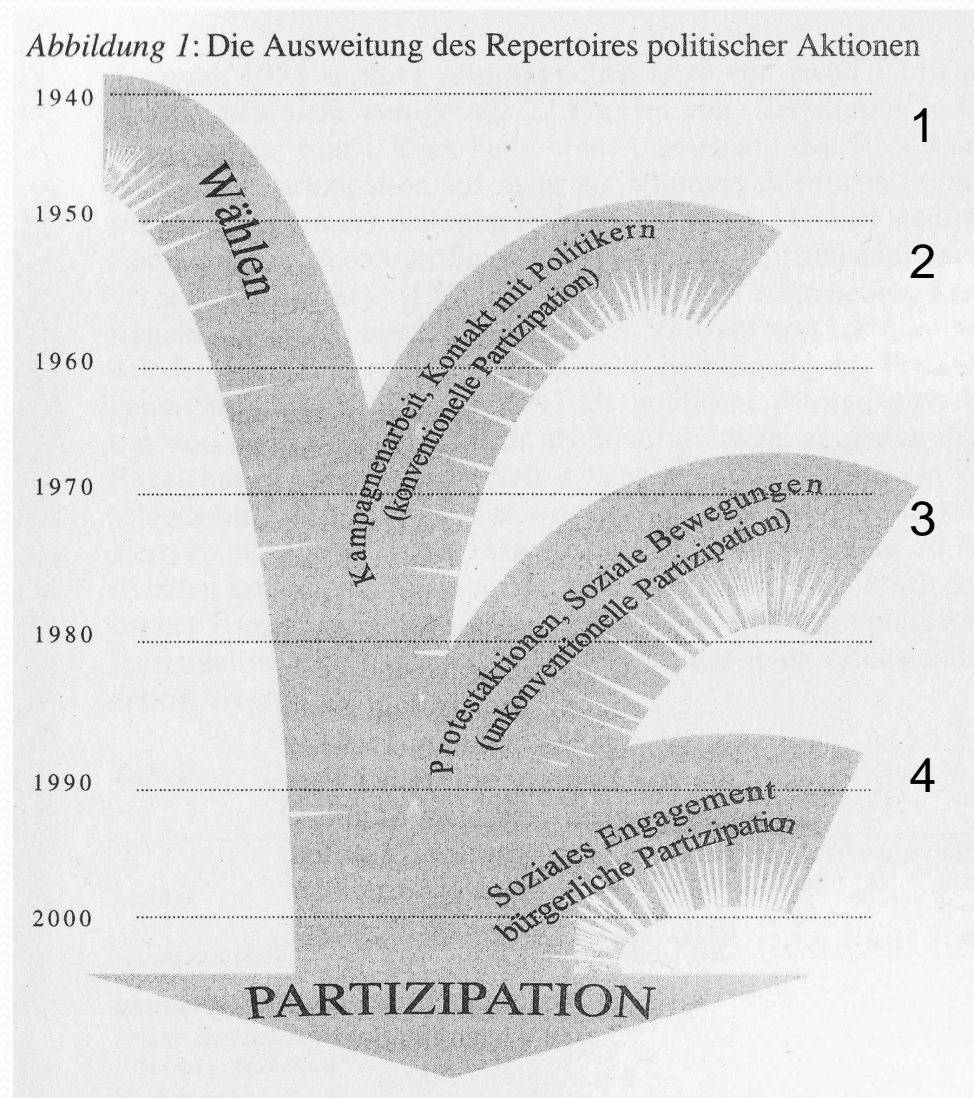


Citizen participation is at the heart of democracy. Indeed, democracy is unthinkable without the ability of citizens to participate in the governing process.

Sidney Verba et al. 1995, S. 1

## Participation: Genealogy of a concept

1. **Elections (active and passive)**
2. **Conventional participation**  
Petitions, representative participation
3. **Unconventional participation**  
Social movements, demonstrations,  
strikes und squats  
Informal and action oriented
4. **Social engagement**  
Volunteering  
Associations...



Source: Van Deth, Jan W. 2006, S. 173

# Definition

- „Through their activity citizens in a democracy seek to control who will hold public Office and to influence what government does. Political participation provides the mechanism by which citizens can communicate Information about their interests, preferences, and needs whilst generating pressure to respond”

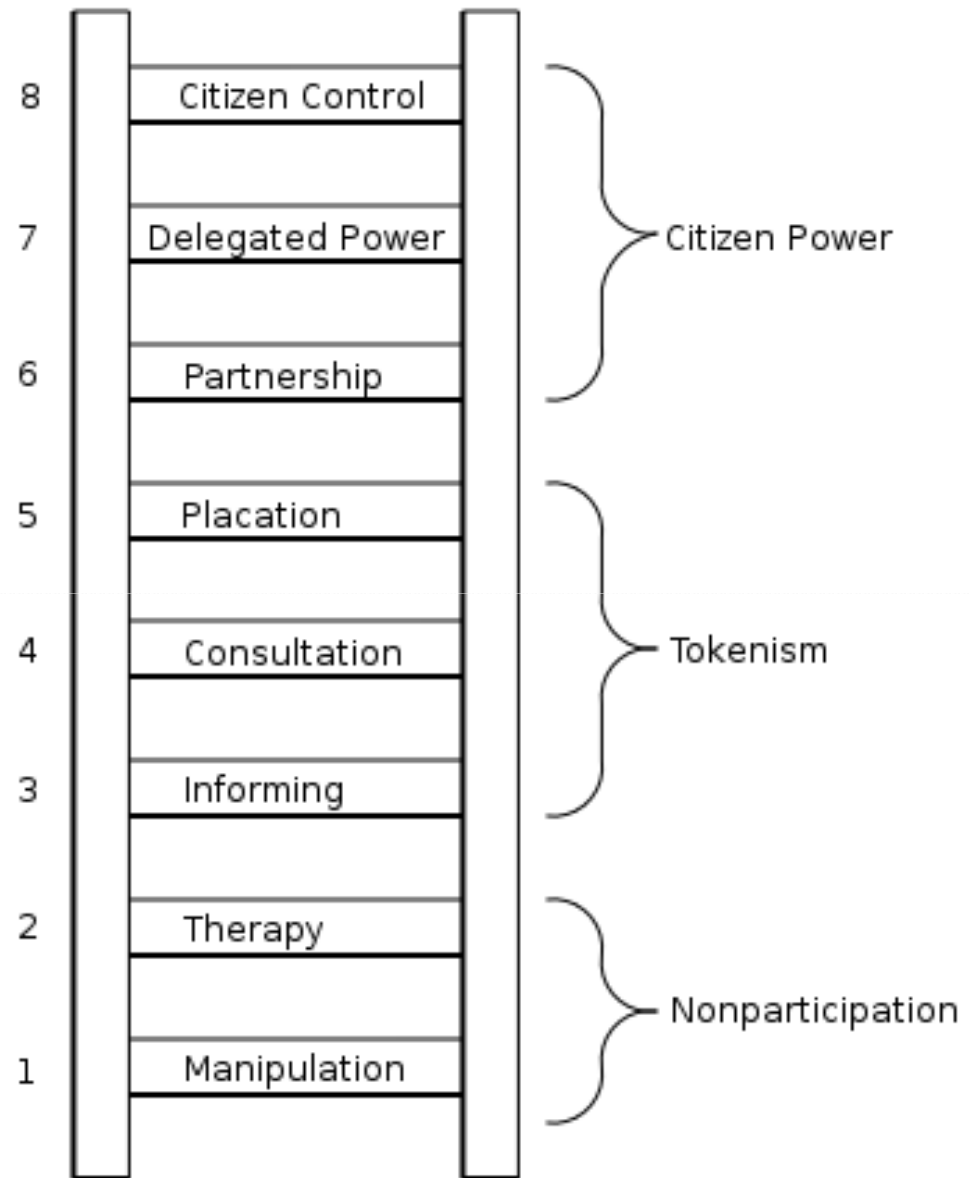
Sidney Verba et al. 1995, S. 1

## *Definition II*

Participation refers to social acts with a specific purpose, oriented by interests. Decisions can be influenced directly or by delegating power. Participation implies taking part in decision making processes by free choice in order to achieve more balanced decisions. The most important purpose is the limitation of authority and dominance. Participation implies to assume citizen rights and duties and presupposes equality of all citizens before the law ensuring that all citizens can participate.

Vgl. Lars Holtkamp et al. 2006, S. 71f.

# Ladder of Citizen Participation



Arnstein (1969)

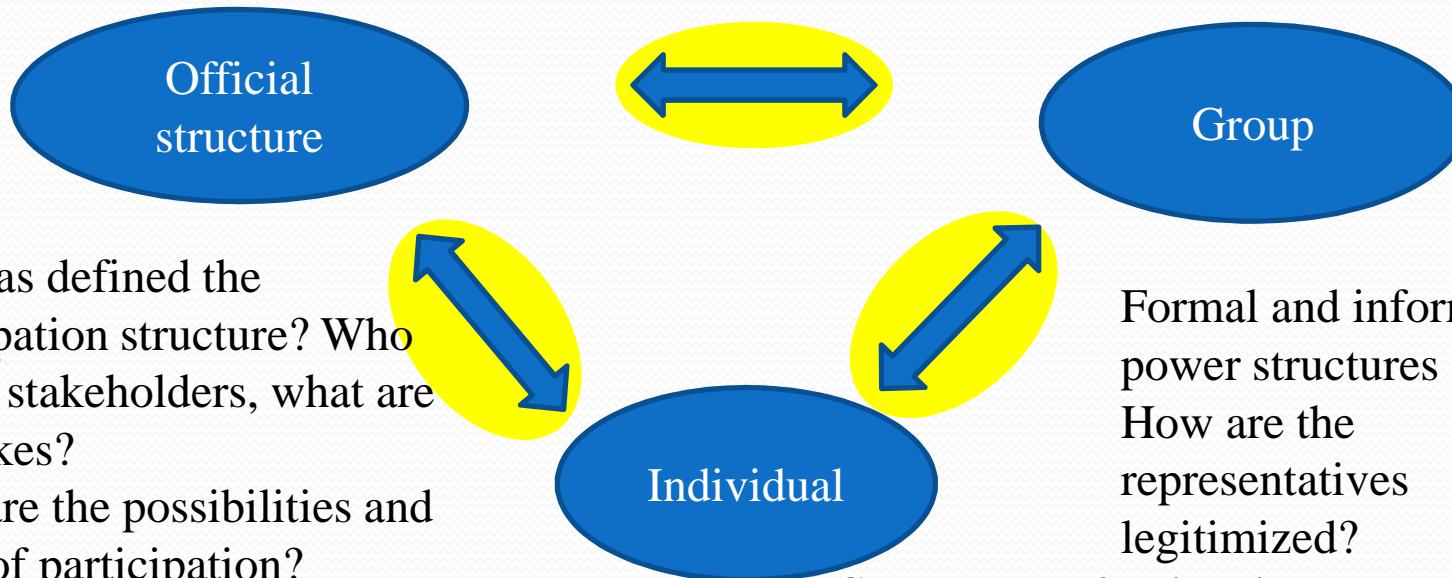
16.10.2010

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# Criteria and preconditions

Who lets whom participate?



Who has defined the participation structure? Who are the stakeholders, what are the stakes?  
What are the possibilities and limits of participation?

Formal and informal power structures  
How are the representatives legitimized?

Competences? What does empowerment mean? Who empowers whom?

How can participation be promoted? What does this mean?

What does „successful participation“ mean?

# Criteria and preconditions

- Sustainability
- Guaranteed structures
- Relevant and concrete issues
- Openness
- Legitimacy
- Consciousness about conflicts
- Guaranteed rights
- Decision making influence / power
- Transparency
- Space for self organisation
- Independency



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