

Why stakeholders refuse participation? Understanding the conflicts between local communities and nature conservation

Engaging people in nature conservation - developing a toolbox
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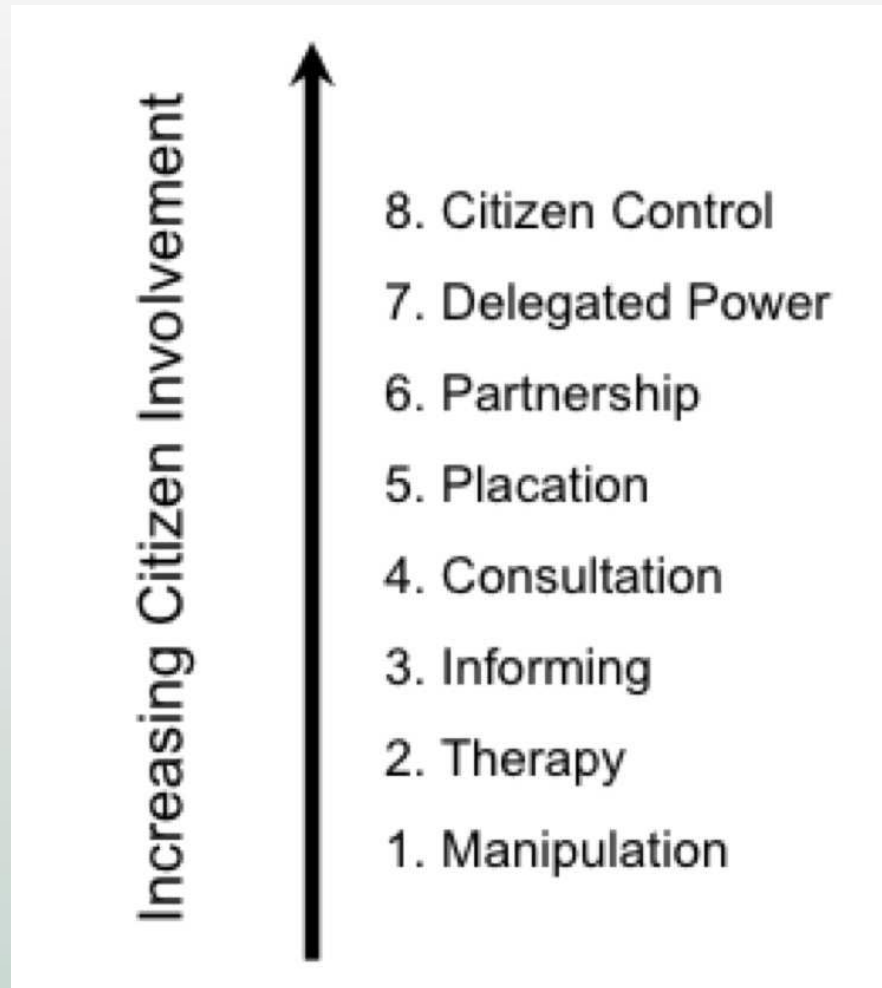
Why does stakeholder participation emerge in nature conservation?

- Centralized, top-down resource management is often blamed for increased vulnerability of resource-dependent communities worldwide (Zerner 2000; Colfer 2005)
- Recognition that ecological systems are dynamic and non-linear (Levin 1999) → inadequacy of “command and control” resource management
- Centralized bureaucracies and management are limited in their ability to respond to changing social and environmental conditions (Berkes et al. 2003)
- To Incorporate a wide range of perspectives and ideas, resulting in improved decision making and management (Friedman & Miles 2006)

Is stakeholder participation necessary?

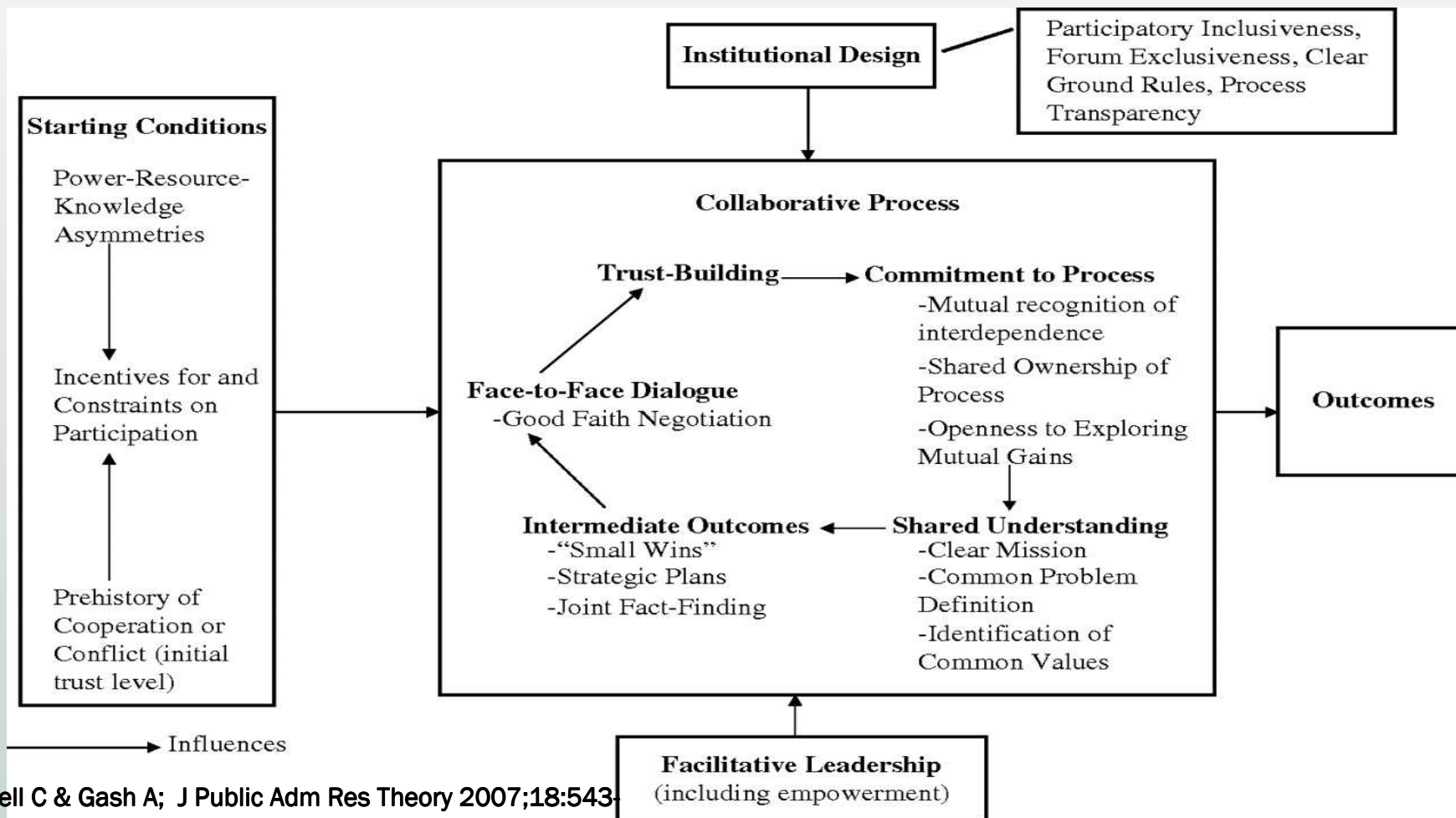
- Research findings demonstrate that when participation is lacking:
 - a) Policy decisions affecting people behavior and identity may become difficult to implement
 - b) The level of trust into the political system decreases
 - c) People find alternative ways to participate

Main arrangements for stakeholder participation – Classical approach



Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969)

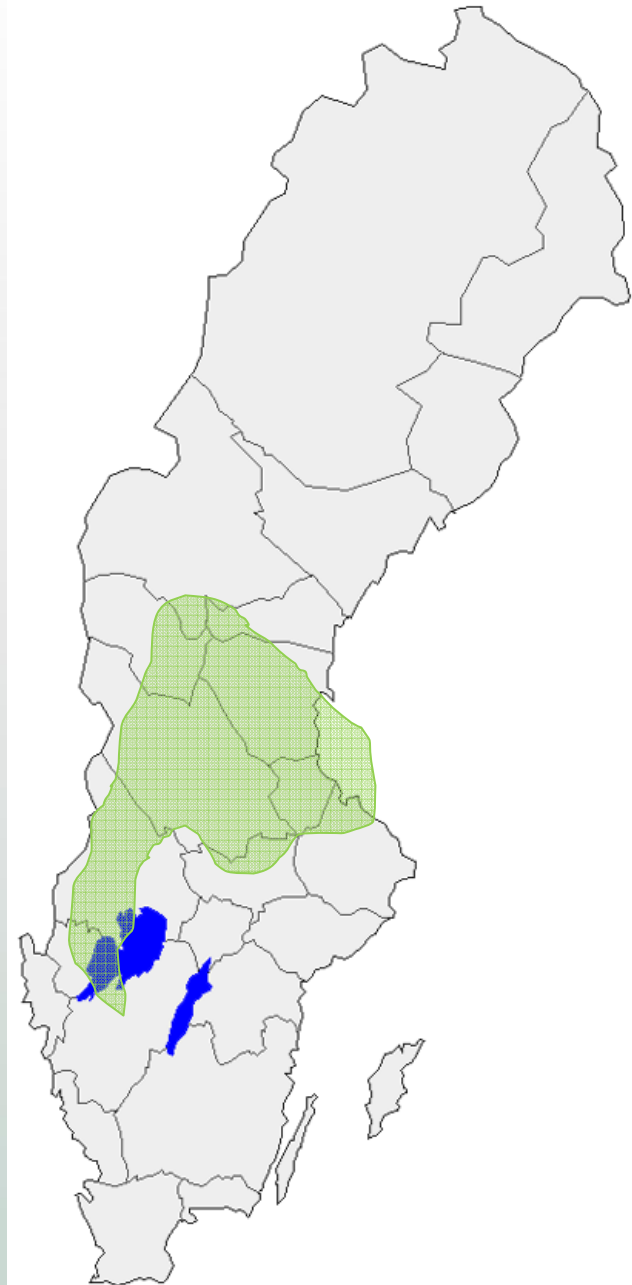
Main arrangements for stakeholder participation - Collaborative approach



...But still, many stakeholders
refuse participation

Case one – Wolf management in Sweden

- 19th century – 1.500 individuals
- Mid 1960's wolf protected by law
- Expansion of population in the 1980's and 1990's
- Scandinavian wolf population amounts to 250 wolves in 32 territories (both Sweden and Norway)



Wolf recovery – “To some extent a success story, to some extent a disappointment”

- The majority of Swedish citizens accept the presence of large carnivores in the country, however...
- Local mistrust and discontent for the management system (authorities and strategies)
- Pro- and anti-wolf movements
- People skeptical/afraid of wolves
- Illegal hunting

Predator Emergency Groups – collaborative approach

To mitigate protests, the Government decided in 2006 to initiate two collaborative experiments in the counties of Värmland and Dalarna

Group objectives: Facilitate dialogue and communication between stakeholders (primarily hunters and farmers) and the local government; Include stakeholders into the policy implementation at the local level; Adapt the national regulation to the local context



Several positive achievements

- The *encounter* between local government and stakeholders *reduced the distance*
- *Meeting each other out on the field* contributes to *rebalance the power* difference between decision makers and stakeholders
- Many stakeholders and local managers developed a *mutual understanding*
- Not only communication, but also *learning by doing*

Yet, many hunters and farmers
refuse participation

- These stakeholders don't trust the local managers

Pre-history of distrust

“I appreciate that the ranger took contact with me to inform about the compensation procedures. However, he started to praise the management of large predators in Dalarna and then I stopped listening because I know very much about the officer who rules the county and I do not like him at all” (Hunter living in Dalarna)

- They believe that their arguments are not taken seriously

Fear to be treated as ignorant, unwilling or irrational

*“When I see a wolf track, I say to myself that I should report it to the predator group. But every time I feel unsure of how they will treat me and how this information will be processed”
(Farmer living in Värmland)*

- They believe that their participation will legitimate the decision makers

Power legitimacy

*“I was invited to participate to a public meeting and tell about my work and how I prevent damages by large carnivores. But I refused. I don't want to contribute to the mess they created”
(Farmer living in Dalarna)*

Case two- La Majella National Park, Italy



When the park was established- local discontent and boycott

- The National park existence was questioned by local communities - no longer permitted to hunt or fish wildlife (previously freely available)
- High expectations – such as tourism and job opportunities for local communities - were neglected
- Depopulation of entire areas of the park – people move to the big city and change job

Quality project & Cultivate diversity

- Counteract the extinction of autochthonous agricultural varieties
- Raising awareness and promotion of local products
- Involving the farmers in a “on farm” conservation strategy
- The “Keeper Farmers” Network – reduce the distance between stakeholders and local communities



Yet, many farmers abandon the projects

- Some stakeholders decided to quit the project since they did not see any tangible result

“I have local people employed in my business and I contribute to the local economy. I make it possible for people and families to stay here and find employment. I contribute to the local economy more than the park did through several projects” (local farmer)

The park doesn't deliver economic growth to the local communities

Many stakeholders experience marginalization

- They feel that their knowledge is not classified as valuable and significant

*“We [new entrepreneurs] that have moved here from other regions, are not allowed to participate into the projects since the park tell us that we have nothing to contribute in terms of local knowledge”
(Restaurant owner)*

Inclusion and exclusion

Experience of being marginalized

Conclusions – To understanding conflicts between local communities and nature conservation

- We need to change perspective on stakeholder participation, addressing the question: “Why some stakeholders refuse or quit participation?”
- We should investigate how different participative experiments actually fall into place and become reality
- Need to better investigate and evaluate the consequences of exclusion and marginalization

Thank you