



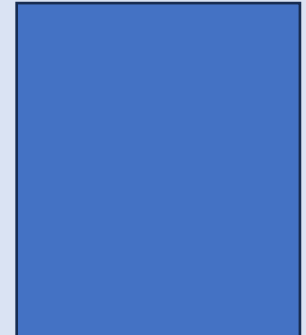
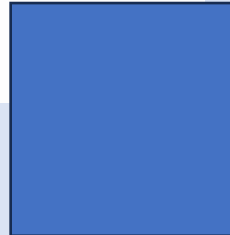
Prifysgol Cymru

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

University of Wales

Trinity Saint David

Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives



ECAY6006 The Politics of Activism

Theme 4: Principles of Empowerment (Revisited)

Part 2: Participation, Liberation, Social Capital (Bonding, Bridging and Linking)

Participation

- It is often assumed that if people are encouraged to participate in decision making, they are **automatically empowered**
- Cultural critics, such as Raymond Williams, have pointed out that the term participation 'seems never to be used unfavourably' (Williams, 1976, p.76) i.e. it is always seen as a positive
- However, many researchers have questioned this assumption
- For example, Narayan (2003, p. 2485) argues that 'Social norms and customs make women and excluded sections [of society] disinterested in participation'
- That is to say that if people feel that they have no voice then they will not speak up even when asked their opinion

Participation

- Kamruzzaman (2020) argues that participation can often be **'tokenistic'** where people are included in the process for show only
- He gives the example of the 'consultation' in Bangladesh by the IMF and World Bank in which, he argues, 'the poor were not assembled to make meaningful contributions to build a more effective policy; they were rather brought together for ceremonial and legitimating purposes—to 'display' that poor people's participation was ensured' (Kamruzzaman, 2020, no page).
- In his critique of such 'tyrannical participation' he draws on the work of Sherry Arnstein whose 'Ladder of Citizen participation' was first published in 1969 and was republished in 2019 to mark the 50th anniversary of this important work

Participation

- Whilst working as a special assistant for the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Arnstein developed her theories on what constitutes truly participatory decision making
- Her *Ladder of Citizen Participation* is still used to evaluate consultation processes
- She ranks different types of ‘participation’ in terms of the commitment to empowerment of those in power
- We will take time to look at each ‘rung’ on her ladder

Ladder of Citizen Participation

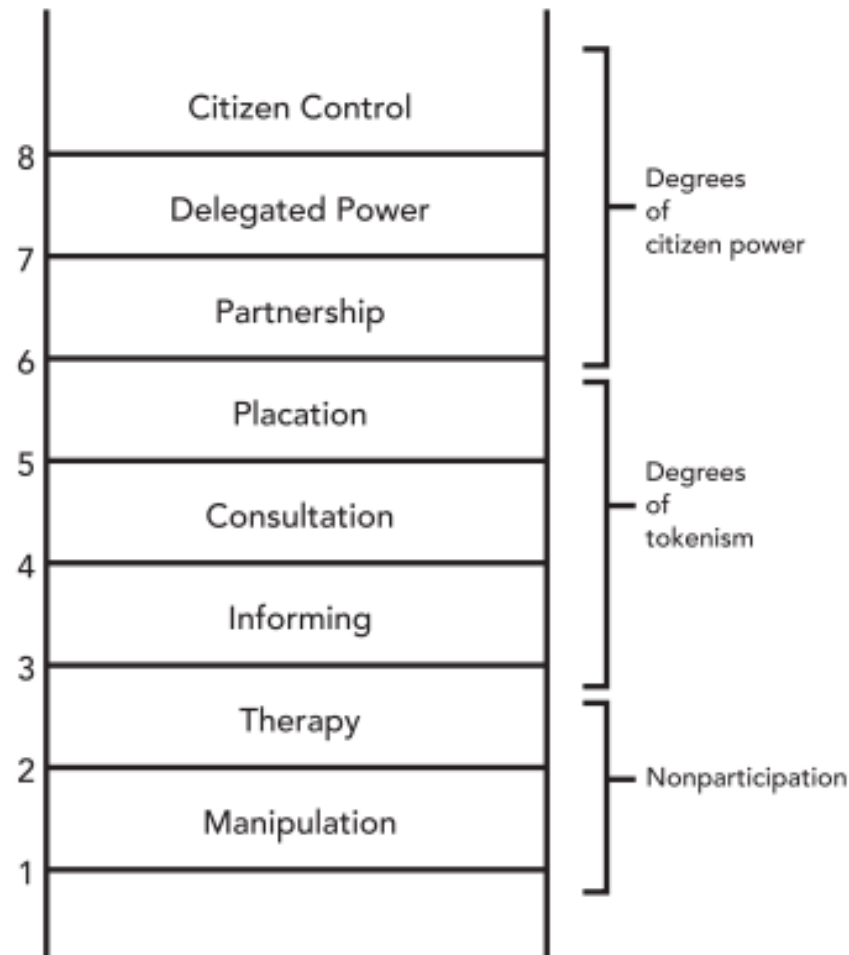


Figure 2. Eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation.

Arnstein, 2019, p.26

Ladder of Citizen Participation

1. Manipulation (nonparticipation)

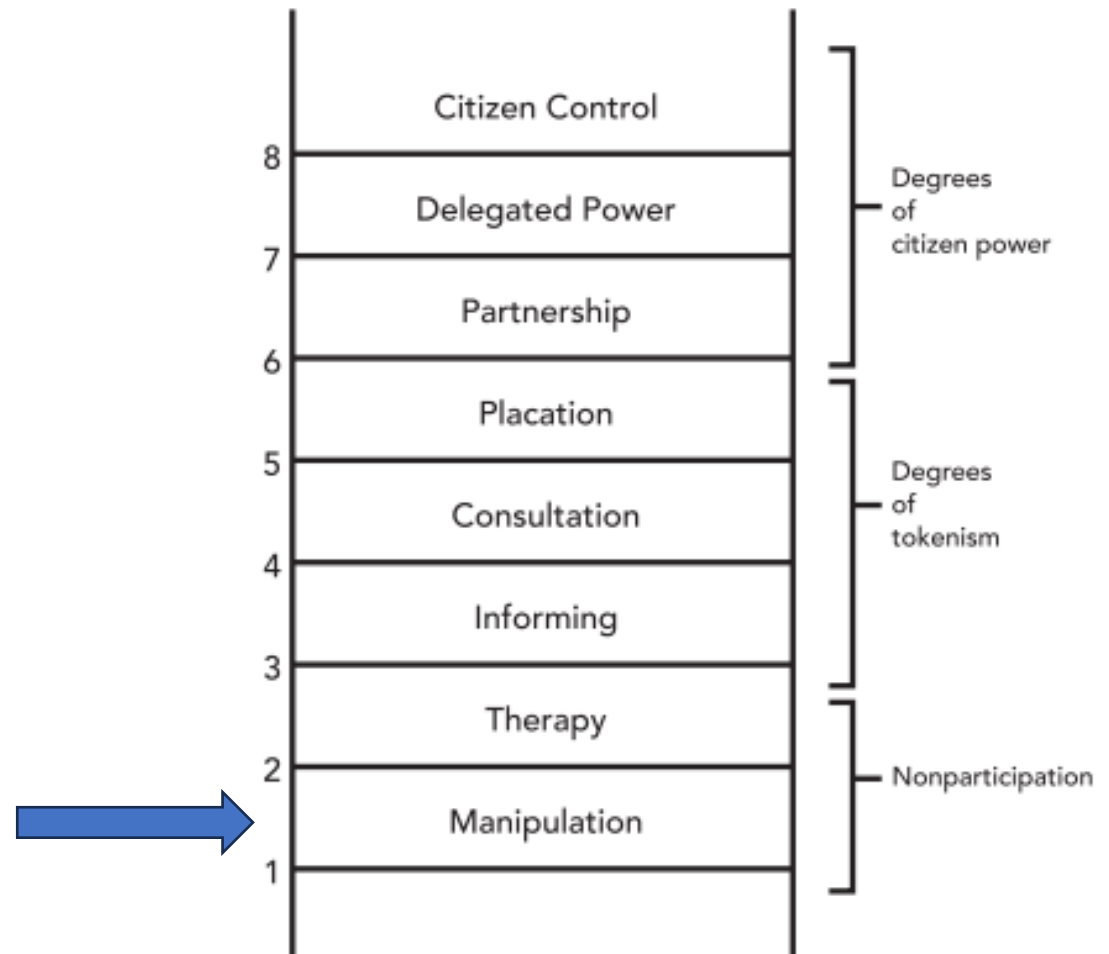


Figure 2. Eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation.

Ladder of Citizen Participation

1, Manipulation (nonparticipation)

- Arnstein argues that this not actually a form of participation
- She argues that ‘people are placed on rubberstamp advisory committees or advisory boards for the express purpose of “educating” them or engineering their support’ (Arnstein, 2019, p.26)
- She argues that ‘participants’ are often mis-informed or given very little detail
- Because of this she argues that this process ‘signifies the distortion of participation into a public relations vehicle by powerholders’ (ibid.)
- This also has links with the idea of soft social control that we looked at earlier in this Theme

Ladder of Citizen Participation

2. 'Therapy' (nonparticipation)

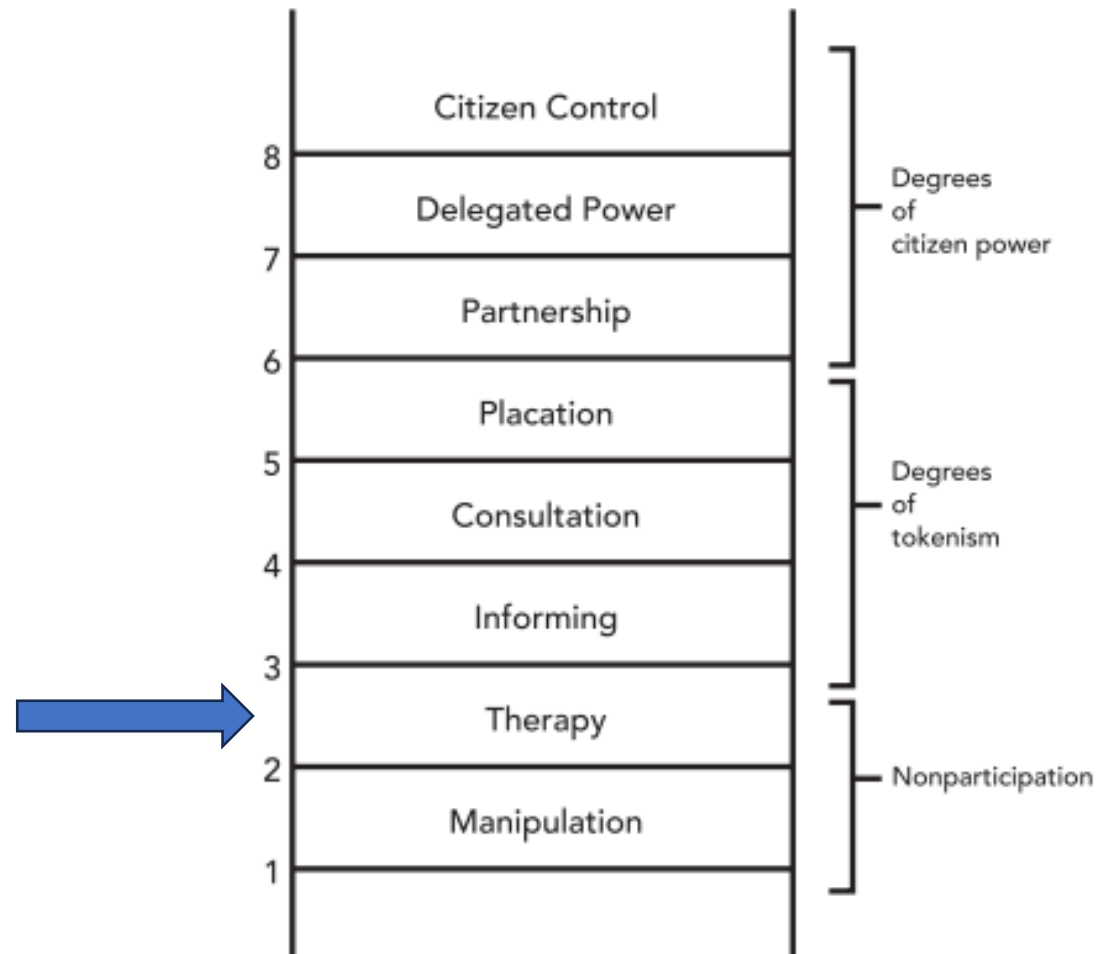


Figure 2. Eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation.

Ladder of Citizen Participation

2. 'Therapy' (nonparticipation)

- Arnstein argues that this type of participation is 'both dishonest and arrogant' in that 'citizens are engaged in extensive activity, but the focus of it is on curing them of their "pathology"' (Arnstein, 2019, p.27)
- By this, she means that the professionals involved seek to 'cure' the participants of their negative attitudes and behaviours rather than seeking their views on what would make their experiences better
- It focuses on changing the people rather than their circumstances and, in doing so 'assume[s] that powerlessness is synonymous with mental illness' (ibid.)

Ladder of Citizen Participation

3. Informing (degrees of 'tokenism')

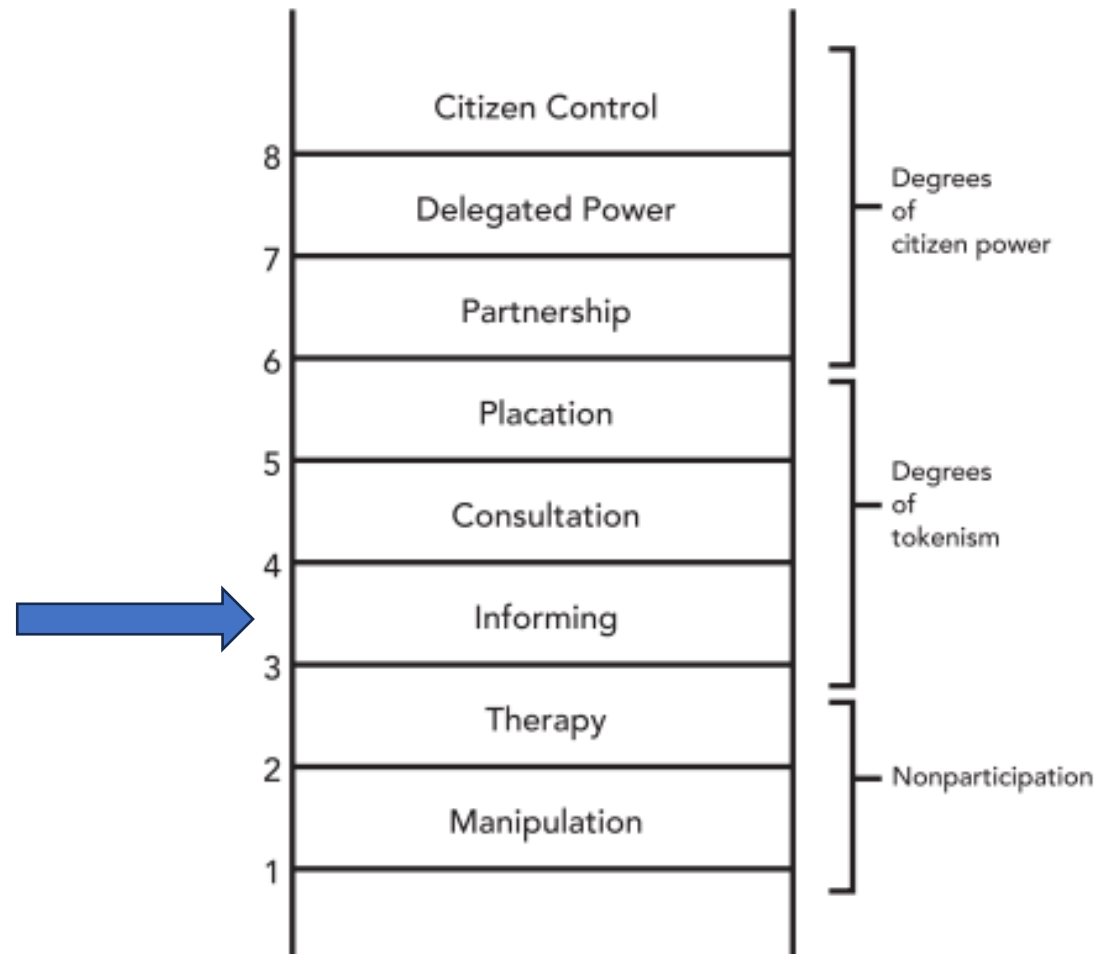


Figure 2. Eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation.

Ladder of Citizen Participation

3. Informing (degrees of 'tokenism')

- Arnstein acknowledges that this is an important first step in effective participation
- However, she argues that 'too frequently the emphasis is placed on a one-way flow of information—from officials to citizens—with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation'.(Arnstein, 2019, p27)
- Such '*information*' activities can be further manipulated by the use of 'legalistic jargon' and technical detail so that the '*participants*' do not understand what they are being asked to agree to.

Ladder of Citizen Participation

4. Consultation (degrees of 'tokenism')

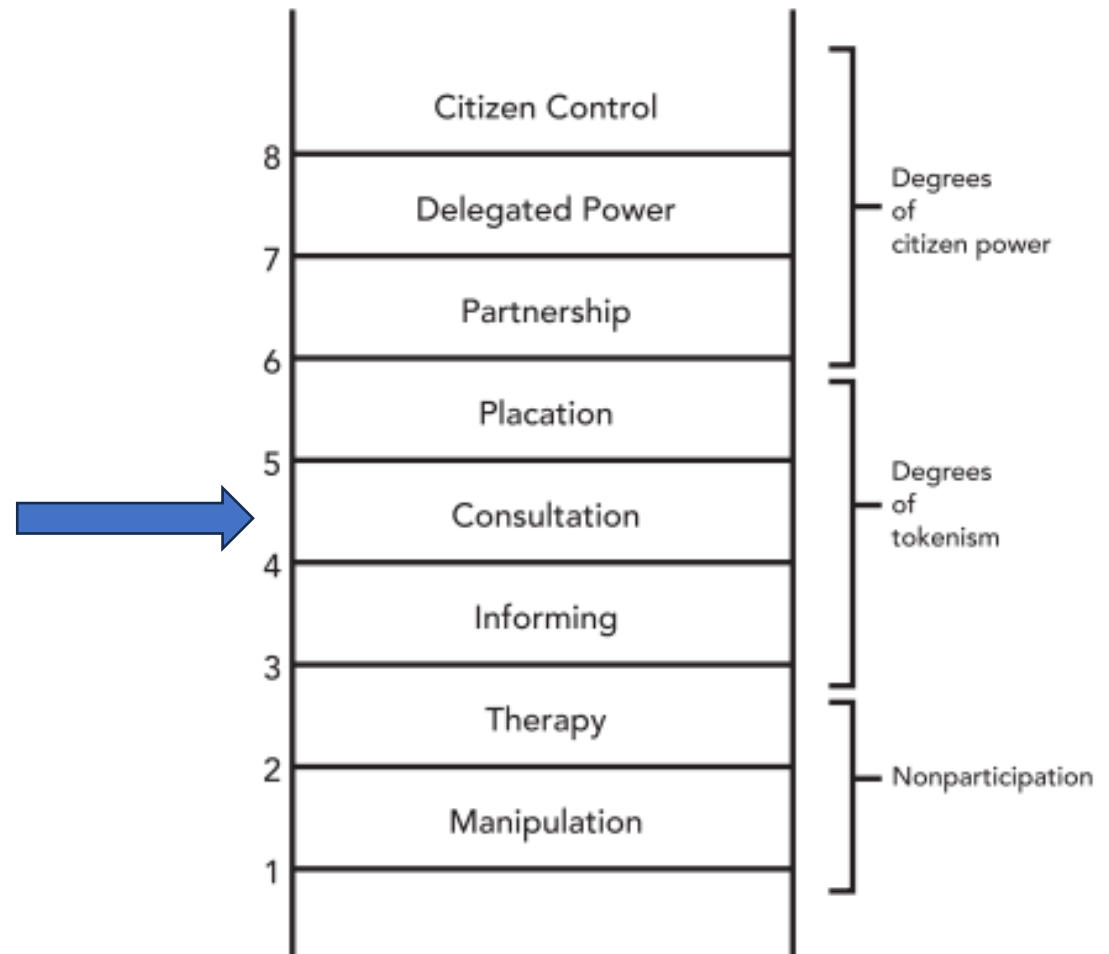


Figure 2. Eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation.

Ladder of Citizen Participation

4. Consultation (degrees of 'tokenism')

- Again, this is seen as an important aspect of true participation, but Arnstein argues that, if the process stops there then it is still 'a sham' (Arnstein, 2019, p,28)
- In order to be effective, it needs to be pursued alongside other forms of participatory activity otherwise it 'offers no assurance that citizen concerns and ideas will be taken into account' (ibid).
- Porsani & Lalander (2018) have argued that at their worst consultations are 'performative spaces in which voices have followed pre-defined scripts and **top-down** decisions have been legally ratified'
- This process has been summarised by BBC journalist Mark Easton as "[Consulting ... and ignoring](#)"

Ladder of Citizen Participation

5. Placating (degrees of 'tokenism')

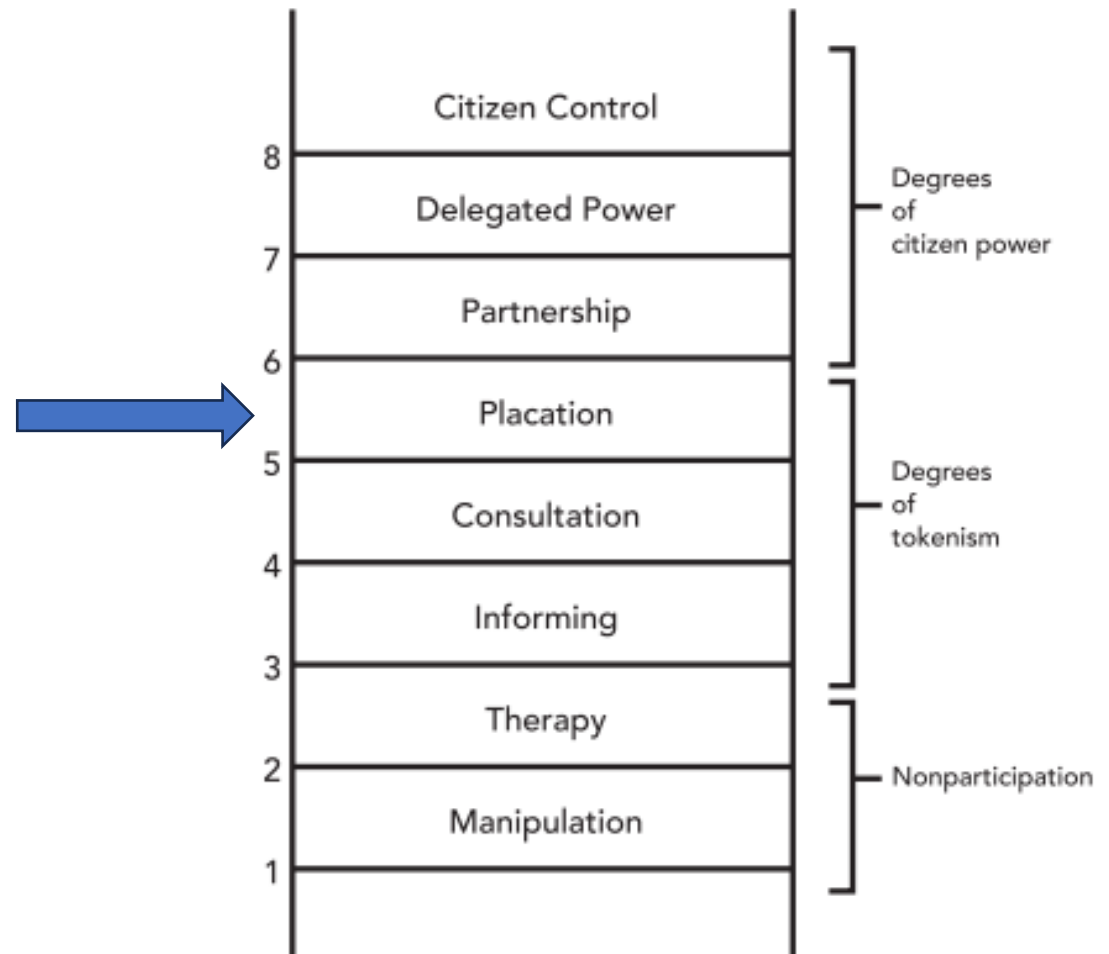


Figure 2. Eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation.

Ladder of Citizen Participation

5. Placating (degrees of 'tokenism')

- At this level there is some representation for the people affected by the decision
- However, Arnstein argues that 'If they are not accountable to a constituency in the community and if the traditional power elite hold the majority of seats, the have-nots can be easily outvoted and outfoxed' (Arnstein, 2019, p29)
- It is for this reason that she calls this type of 'participation' placating because the representatives of the 'people' have no real power to change the decisions being made.
- They are effectively told "we hear you but there is nothing we can do"

Ladder of Citizen Participation

6. Partnership (degrees of citizen power)

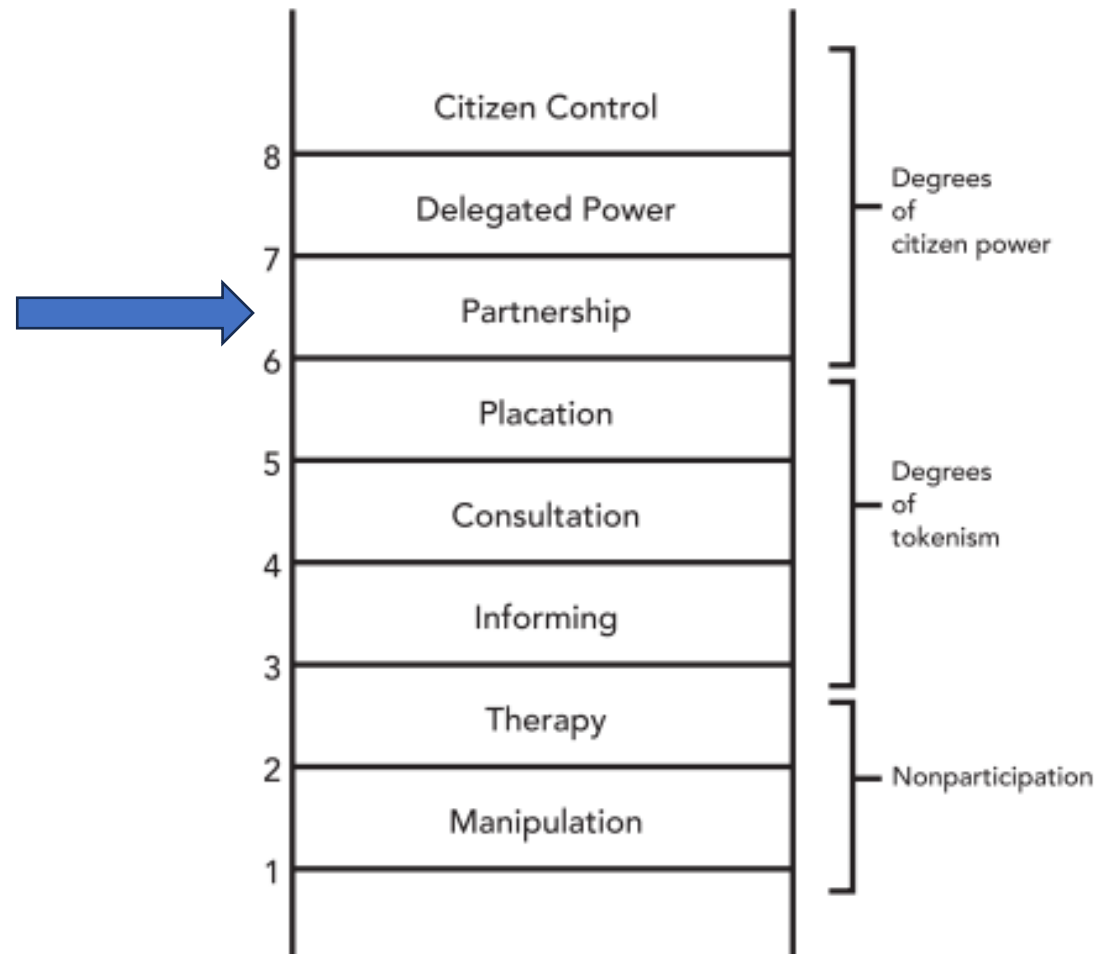


Figure 2. Eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation.

Ladder of Citizen Participation

6. Partnership (degrees of citizen power)

- This is the first genuine example of participation on Arnstein's ladder as it involved a form of partnership between 'citizens and powerholders' (Arnstein, 2019, p.30)
- 'They agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees, and mechanisms for resolving impasses' (Arnstein, 2019, p.30-31)
- After the groundrules have been established through some form of give-and-take, they are not subject to **unilateral** change. (Arnstein, 2019, p. 31)
- In order to be really effective however the 'citizens' need to represent an '**organised power-base**' within the community (ibid.) (*see **endogenous empowerment** later in this theme*)

Ladder of Citizen Participation

7. Delegated Power (degrees of citizen power)

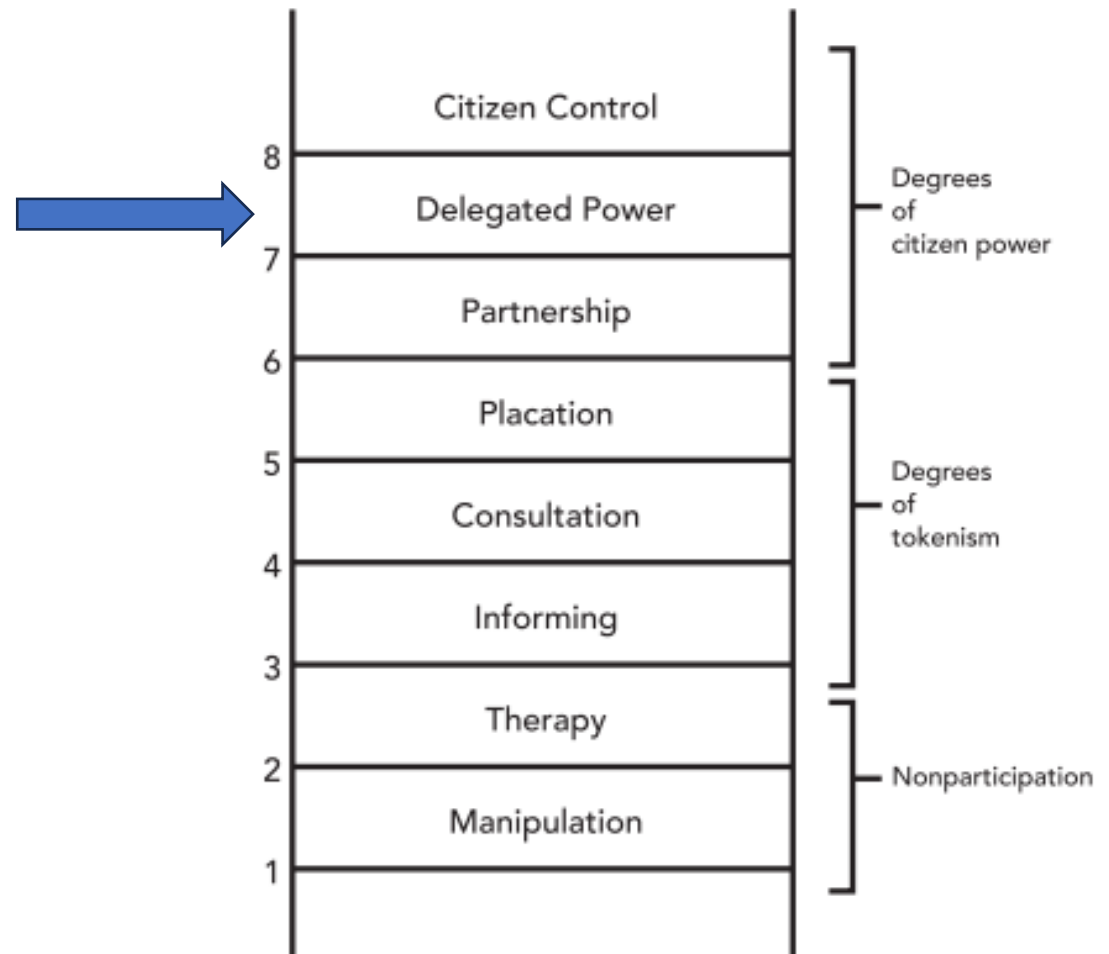


Figure 2. Eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation.

Ladder of Citizen Participation

7. Delegated Power (degrees of citizen power)

- This rung of the ladder is where the 'citizens' achieve 'dominant decision-making authority' as a result of their negotiations with the powerholders (Arnstein, 2019, p. 31)
- An example of this type of participation is giving the 'citizens' the majority of seats on the decision-making body so that they have the casting vote
- Another example is where there are 'parallel groups of citizens and powerholders, with provision for 'citizen veto' if differences of opinion cannot be resolved through negotiation'. (ibid, p.32)
- As the 'powerholders' give the control to the citizens this can be seen as an example of ***exogenous empowerment***

Ladder of Citizen Participation

8. Citizen Control (degrees of citizen power)

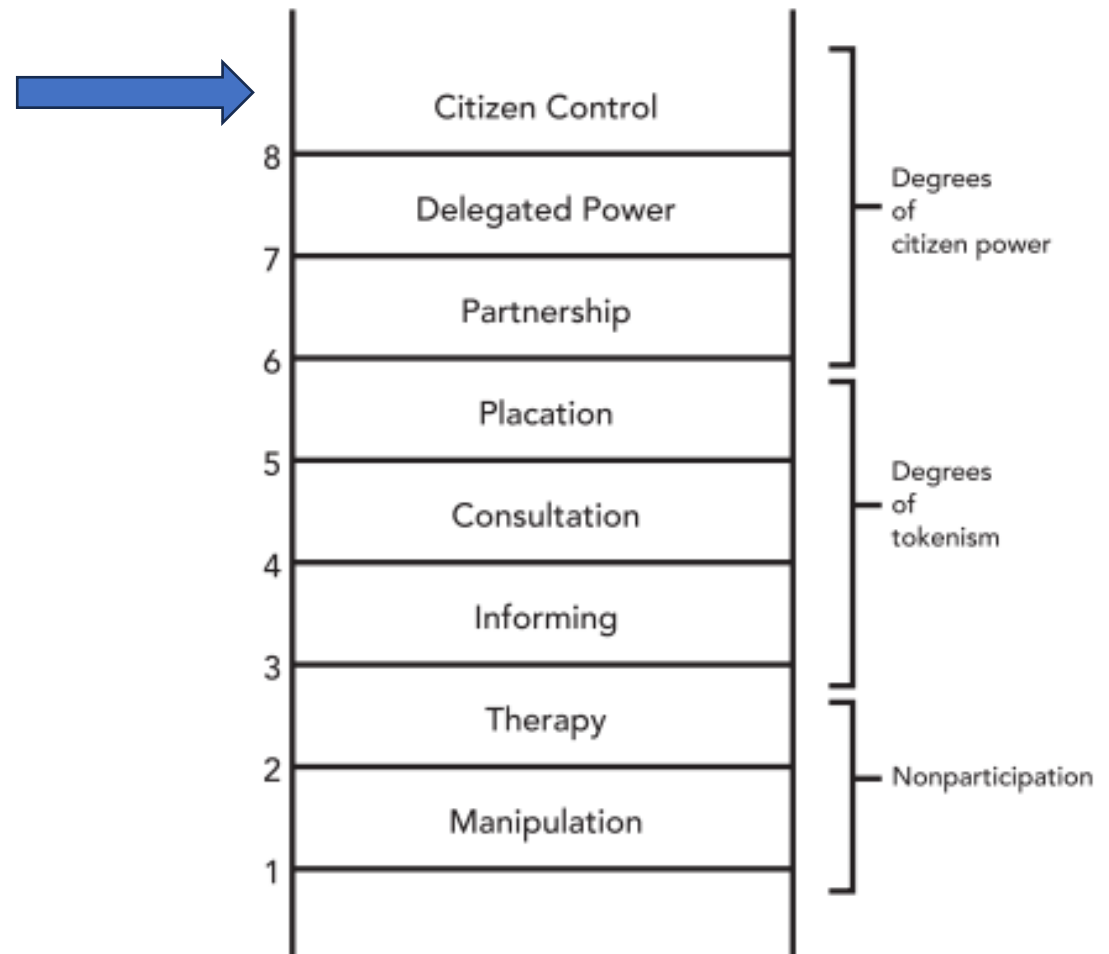


Figure 2. Eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation.

Ladder of Citizen Participation

8. Citizen Control (degrees of citizen power)

- This is the gold standard of participation and as such is extremely rare.
- It effectively means that the project is controlled by the community involved (e.g. community controlled schools)
- In advocating for this type of participation, Arnstein argues that 'People are simply demanding that degree of power (or control) which guarantees that participants or residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which "outsiders" may change them'. (Arnstein, 2019, p.32)
- 'A neighborhood corporation with no intermediaries between it and the source of funds is the model most frequently advocated' (ibid)

If Participation is Restricted



- It can be seen that rungs 1 to 5 on the ladder either **deny** or **restrict** participation in decision making in some way

How can communities or groups respond to this restriction?

Take a moment to think about this

Share your thoughts with the group.

If Participation is Restricted

- In order, for a community or group to respond to these restrictions on participation they need to become aware of the restrictions
- This requires the actions of individuals who can identify the issue and promote a response
- For example, feminist geographers, Martin, Hanson & Fontaine (2007, no page) identify this in the work of female social entrepreneurs in the U.S.A. which; ‘creates an alternative space of trust and embeddedness for them and a new set of **social relations (networks)**’.
- In one particular instance they state that ‘This woman's activism, therefore, fosters **reconfigured social and power-relations**’. (Ibid)
- This leads us to look at the concepts of liberation and social capital in the context of activism

Liberation

- In the context of empowerment, the ‘philosophy of liberation’ was developed in Latin-America as the result of struggles against **totalitarian** and **oppressive** regimes
- Mendieta (2020, no page) argues that it now includes critiques of ‘colonialism, imperialism, globalization, racism, and sexism, which is articulated from out of the experience of exploitation, destitution, alienation and reification’
- The concept also has links with liberation theology (Tombs, 2002) and liberation social psychology (Burton & Kagan, 2005), both of which also developed in Latin-America

Liberation Social Psychology

- (Burton & Kagan, 2005, p. 71), argue that liberation social psychology, in which the psychologist works to understand and overcome the mental damage caused by inequalities, can be seen in operation in the fields of:
 - health promotion,
 - economic development and anti-poverty programmes,
 - housing,
 - community development,
 - as well as the development of community intervention and support in the fields of:
 - disability,
 - domestic violence,
 - mental health, and
 - drug use.

How does this relate to the concept of empowerment?



Social Capital

- Bourdieu (1992 *cited in* Giddens, 2013, p.508) defines Social Capital as:

‘The resources that individuals or groups gain through their long-lasting networks of relationships with friends, mutual acquaintances and other contacts’

- In terms of empowerment, the key is who an individual has as ‘mutual acquaintances and other contacts’ that is important.

Social Capital

- Putnam (1993a, p. 169 *cited in* Field, 2012, p. 4)

*‘features of social organisation,
such as trust, norms, and
networks, that can improve the
efficiency of society by
facilitating coordinated actions’.*

Social Capital

Think about this important concept.

What does it mean?

Read through Section 1 of the document Social Capital and Social Wellbeing making a note of any key points or questions that you have



Handout: Social Capital and Social Wellbeing

Feedback to your Tutor

Social Capital

- Social networks contain value for individuals
- Relationships between individuals form social networks, norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness
- Allow participants to act together more effectively to reach collective goals
- May have links to civic virtue and political participation
- Social networks can be connected in different ways, depending on the **type** of social network which we will now explore

Social Capital: Networks

- We have seen that researchers such as Martin, Hanson & Fontaine (2007) discuss the concept of social networks
- As Social Scientists, there are two ways of describing social networks
- The first, is to look at the **hierarchies of power** that exist in a network (horizontal and vertical)
- The second, is to study how the networks are created and for what purpose (bonded networks, bridged networks & linked networks)
- We will now look at these in turn

Social Capital: Networks

In terms of social capital there are two types of network recognised by social scientists, namely;

Horizontal Networks

- Bring together people of the same status and power
- Facilitate communication and improved distribution of information about trustworthiness of individuals
- Improvement of reputation is directly linked to trust

Vertical Networks

- Join individuals that are different and located in asymmetric relations of hierarchy and dependency
- Vertical networks are not able to sustain social trust and cooperation
- Information flows are generally less reliable
- Subordinates hold information back as protection from exploitation

What examples of Vertical Networks can you think of?

Both Horizontal and Vertical networks work alongside each other in society.

Bonding

- **Bonded Social capital** can be seen as the relationship experienced among family members, close friends, and neighbours
(Putnam, 1995; Woolcock, 2001).
- These networks are often less diverse and often not as open to the views of “others” outside of the network
(Dale & Sparkes, 2010).
- The ‘closed’ nature of these close personal relationships is also known as **bonding**
- **Bonding** is a term used in theories of child development to describe the formation of an effective ‘mutual identification’ between mother and child but is also used to describe other strong personal links

Bonding

- The 'glue' within these networks is a sense of deep trust held among the members of the group.
- This trust is often highly personalized and therefore there is a possibility of conflict when either trust or commonly held values or 'norms' break down.
- However, if trust is built between individuals over time, it is possible to engage in less personal exchanges based on 'reciprocity' (a mutual exchange of advantages and privileges – OED).
- This reciprocity creates social obligations between individuals and networks

(Dale & Sparkes, 2010).

Bridging

- **Bridging** is distinguished by its horizontally linked relationships between groups held together by bonding & social capital.
- These relationships tend to be more impersonal as the linkages are established for strategic reasons, (often to accomplish a task).
- **Bridging** occurs when one member of one network connects with a member of another network.
- Often, these bridges link networks within one community to more diverse resources normally unavailable (Woolcock, 2001).
- This often means that the trust between the bridging networks is often thinly held (Dales & Sparkes, 2010).

Linking

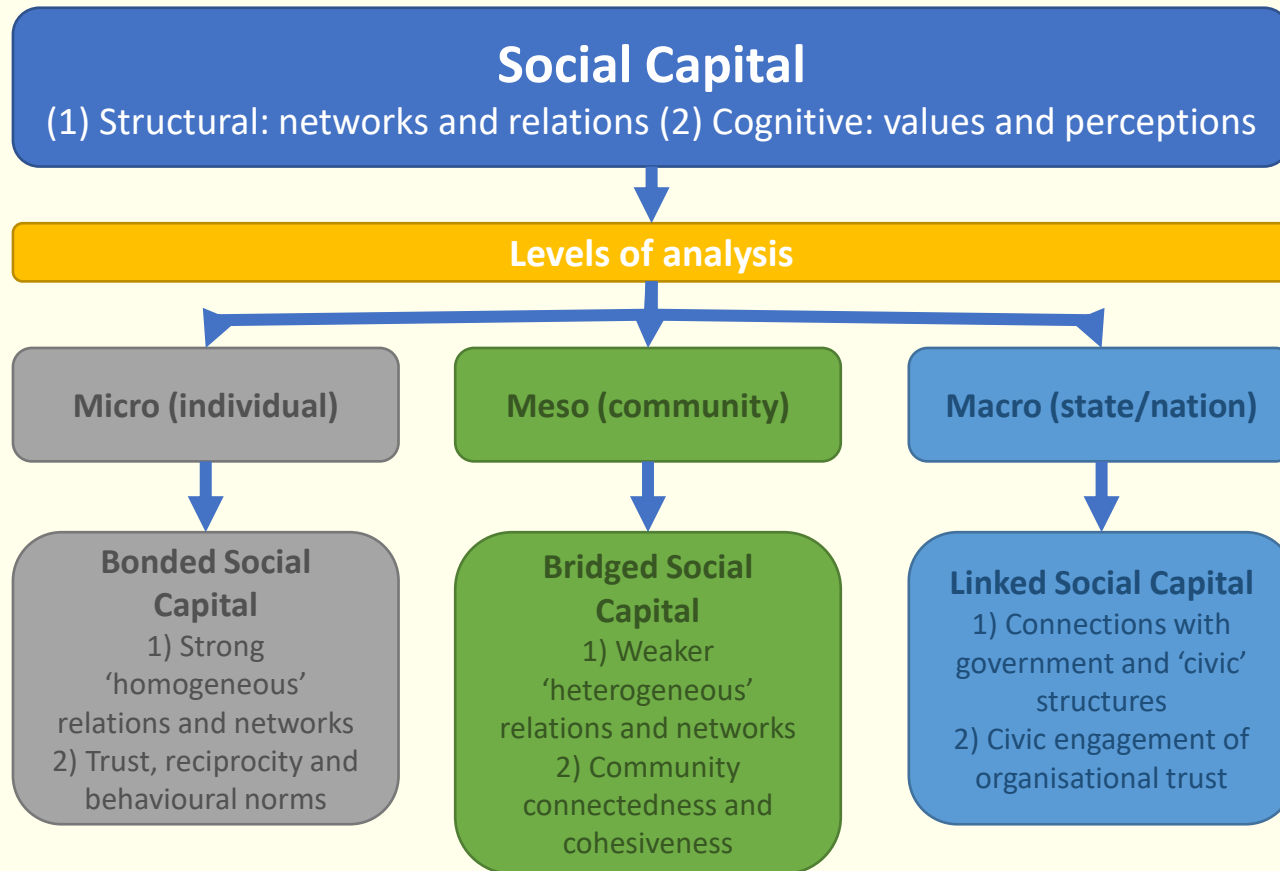
- **Linking** is defined as the connection between a community and the political and financial decision-makers.
- Linking social capital is also defined by weak and opportunistic ties (often communities do not have links to those with financial and political power)
- Effective **linking** is viewed as the capacity for a community to lever resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community

(Woolcock, 2001).

How does this relate to the concept of empowerment?



Bonding / Bridging / Linking



(based on Lewis *et al*, 2011)

Bonding / Bridging / Linking

An example

- 1. A group of people living in the same neighbourhood meet to discuss their opposition to a planned new factory – what is this an example of?*
- 2. They join forces with other local groups to campaign against the factory – what is this an example of?*
- 3. They attend a meeting with the local Council members to voice their concerns. – what is this an example of?*

Bonding / Bridging / Linking

Group Discussion

How do the concepts of bonding, bridging and linking relate to the theories of empowerment and participation that we explored earlier.

Discuss this with your group.

References

- Abercrombie A, and Warde A (2000) *Contemporary British Society* (3rd ed), Oxford: Blackwell.
- Arnstein, S. R. (2019) 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' in *Journal of the American Planning Association* 85(1) pp. 24-34 Available at: [Full article: A Ladder of Citizen Participation](#) [Accessed 05/12/2024]
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002) *Social Capital and Social Wellbeing* Commonwealth of Australia Available at: [Social Capital and Social Wellbeing \(Discussion Paper\)](#) [Accessed 06/12/2024]
- Burton, M. and Kagan, C. (2005) 'Liberation social psychology: learning from Latin America' *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 15(1), pp. 63–78 Available at: <https://research-ebsco-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/c/onvpsy/viewer/pdf/spzrkeldmr?route=details> [Accessed 05/12/2024]
- Centre for European Policy Analysis (2022) *Russia: A State of Homophobia* Available at: <https://cepa.org/article/russia-a-state-of-homophobia/> [Accessed 12/12/2024]
- Christens, B.D. (2019) *Community power and empowerment*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Available at: [Community Power and Empowerment | Oxford Academic](#) [Accessed 09/12/2024]
- Cohen, Stanley. (1985) *Visions of social control crime punishment and classification*. Polity.
- Dale, A. & Sparks, J. (2010) 'The 'agency' of sustainable community development' in *Community Development Journal* 46(4): pp. 476-492 Available at: [\(PDF\) The 'agency' of sustainable community development](#) [Accessed 09/12/2024]
- Dalrymple J, and Burke B (2001) *Anti Oppressive Practice: Social Care and the Law*, Buckingham: OUP.
- Easton, M. (2013) *Consulting ... and ignoring* Available at: [Consulting... and ignoring - BBC News](#) [Accessed 12/12/2024]

References

- Field J (2012) *Social Capital*, London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1984) 'The Subject and Power' in *Critical Enquiry* Vol 8, No 4 pp. 777-795 Available at: [The Subject and Power on JSTOR](#) [Accessed 08/12/2024]
- Foucault, M (b) (2002) *Power: Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, Vol 3, Faubion, J, D, (ed.) London: Penguin.
- Giddens A (2013) *Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Glasgow Disability Alliance (2017) *Empowerment in Action* Available at: <https://gda.scot/2019/05/10/empowerment-in-action/> [Accessed 09/12/2024]
- Gitten, D. & Gozzi, L. (2023) *Iran's morality police to resume headscarf patrols* Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-66218318> [Accessed 12/12/2024]
- Home Office, The (2024) *New protest laws on face coverings and pyrotechnics* Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-protest-laws-on-face-coverings-and-pyrotechnics> [Accessed 12/12/2024]
- Human Rights Watch (2021) "Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots": China's Crimes against Humanity Targeting Uyghurs and Other Turkic Muslims Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/19/break-their-lineage-break-their-roots/chinas-crimes-against-humanity-targeting> [Accessed 12/12/2024]
- Kamruzzaman, P. (2020). Exploring the Nexus Between Participation and Empowerment. *Journal of Development Policy and Practice*, 5(1), pp.32-53. [Exploring the Nexus Between Participation and Empowerment - Palash Kamruzzaman, 2020](#) [Accessed 12/12/2024]

References

- Lewis JM, DiGiacomo M, Lockett T, Davidson PM & Currow DC (2011) 'A Social Capital Framework for Palliative Care: Supporting Health and Well-Being for People With Life-Limiting Illness and Their Carers Through Social Relations and Networks' *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* Volume 45, Issue 1, Pages 92-103 Available at: [A Social Capital Framework for Palliative Care: Supporting Health and Well-Being for People With Life-Limiting Illness and Their Carers Through Social Relations and Networks - ScienceDirect](#) [Accessed 09/12/2024]
- Liu, E. (2014) *How to understand power*. Available at: https://www.ted.com/talks/eric_liu_how_to_understand_power#t-154666 [Accessed 09/12/2024]
- Martin, D.G., Hanson, S. And Fontaine, D., (2007) 'What Counts As Activism?: The Role Of Individuals In Creating Change'. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 35(3), pp. 78-94. Available at: [WHAT COUNTS AS ACTIVISM?: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUALS IN CREATING CHANGE – ProQuest](#) [Accessed 06/12/2024]
- Mendieta, E. (2020) 'Philosophy of Liberation' in Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman (eds.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberation/> [Accessed 09/12/2024]
- Middleton, J. (2007) *Beyond Authority: Leadership in a Changing World* (1st ed.) Palgrave Macmillan UK. [Beyond Authority: Leadership in a Changing World | SpringerLink](#) [Accessed 25/12/2024]
- Muschert, G. W. & Budd, K.M (2020) 'Editorial Introduction' in Muschert, G. W., Budd, K. M., Christian, M., & Perrucci, R. (Eds.) *Agenda For Social Justice 2020: Solutions For 2020* (1st ed.). Bristol University Press. Available at: [Agenda For Social Justice 2020: Solutions For 2020 on JSTOR](#) [Accessed 08/12/2024]
- Narayanan, P. (2003). Empowerment through Participation: How Effective Is This Approach? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(25), pp. 2484–2486. [Empowerment through Participation: How Effective Is This Approach? on JSTOR](#) [Accessed 12/12/2024]

References

- National Museum of African American History & Culture (No Date) *Social Identities and Systems of Oppression* USA: Smithsonian Institute Available at: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/social-identities-and-systems-oppression> [Accessed 09/12/2024]
- Orrante, J. (2008) 'Religion and Social Control' in *California Sociology Journal* Vol. 1 pp.40-43 Available at: <https://journals.calstate.edu/csf/article/download/3713/3222#:~:text=It%20is%20argued%20that%20religion,%2C%20morals%2C%20sex%20and%20marriage.&text=good%2C%20and%20the%20truth%20in,values%20for%20society%20to%20follow>. [Accessed 12/12/2024]
- Parkin C, Using Social Theory, (2010) in Buchroth I, and Parkin C, *Using Theory Youth and Community Work Practice*. Exeter: Learning Matters. Available at: [Using Theory in Youth and Community Work Practice - Record details - EBSCOhost Research Databases](#) [Accessed 09/12/2024]
- Pedro-Carañana, J., Broudy, D., & Klaehn, J. (Eds.). (2018). *THE PROPAGANDA MODEL TODAY: Filtering Perception and Awareness (Vol. 8)*. University of Westminster Press. Available at: [THE PROPAGANDA MODEL TODAY: Filtering Perception and Awareness on JSTOR](#) [Accessed 12/12/2024]
- Porsani, J. and Lalander, R. (2018) 'Why Does Deliberative Community Consultation in Large-Scale Land Acquisitions Fail?: A Critical Analysis of Mozambican Experiences', *Revista iberoamericana de estudios de desarrollo*, 7(2), pp. 164–193. Available at: [Libro RIED 7.2.indb](#) [Accessed 06/12/2024]
- *Public Health Network Cymru (2024) Social Justice and Human Rights* Available at: [Social justice and human rights - Public Health Network Cymru](#) . [Accessed 08/12/2024]
- Pyper, D & Tyler-Todd, J (2023) *The 20th anniversary of the repeal of section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988* Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2023-0213/> [Accessed 12/12/2024]

References

- Schmidt, A. T. & Engelen, B. (2020) 'The ethics of nudging: An Overview in *Philosophy Compass* Vol 15, Issue 4 Available at: [The ethics of nudging: An overview - Schmidt - 2020 - Philosophy Compass - Wiley Online Library](#) [Accessed 12/12/2024]
- Scott, J (2015) *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* Available at [Power - Oxford Reference](#) [Accessed 07/12/2024]
- Thompson, N, (2007) *Power and Empowerment* Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing.
- Tombs, D. (2002) *Latin American liberation theology*. Boston, Massachusetts: Brill Academic Publishers. Available at: [Latin American Liberation Theology on JSTOR](#) [Accessed 09/12/2024]
- UK Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004) *cited in* United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2016) *Leaving No-one Behind: The Imperative of Inclusive Development* Available at: [full-report.pdf](#) [Accessed 07/12/2024]
- UK Parliament (2024) *Legislative scrutiny highlights human rights failings of Rwanda Bill* Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/93/human-rights-joint-committee/news/199840/legislative-scrutiny-highlights-human-rights-failings-of-rwanda-bill/> [Accessed 12/12/2024]

References

- Virginia Commonwealth University (2021) *Empowerment Theory in Social Work* Available at: [Empowerment Theory in Social Work | VCU Online Social Work](#) [Accessed 08/02/2024]
- Williams F, (2010) Group Work, in Buchroth I, and Parkin C, *Using Theory in Youth and Community Work Practice*. Exeter: Learning Matters. Available at: [Using Theory in Youth and Community Work Practice - Record details - EBSCOhost Research Databases](#) [Accessed 09/12/2024]
- Williams, R. (1976) *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* London: Fontana
- Woolcock, M. (2001) 'The Place of Social Capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcome' Available at: [\(PDF\) The Place of Social Capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcome](#) [Accessed 09/12/2024]