Strange Encounter: An Inquiry into the Popularity of Participation in Organizations

Ralf Wetzel

1 The Problem

1.1 The Momentum of Participation

Almost no attempt to grasp the link between the human being and organizational change can miss one fancy, fashionable and moralized key word. It is not only one of the silver bullets in organizational change, it *the* silver bullet of the modern world as such. With its lustre, mystified and mystifying, without alternative, it is one of the last quasi-mystical agents that modernity can still accept as such: Participation, or in other opalescent covers, known as involvement or even empowerment. Modernity seems imbued with a desire for participation. It almost appears as something good in itself, as a value that—once uttered—leaves only one option: Expansion. Be it in politics, education, business, law, mass media, or in protest movements, participation has spread to every facet of modern life. It can be tacitly taken for granted or vociferously campaigned for. It is obviously one of the primary desires of today's human beings, the wish of the individual to be included, the expectation of being relevantly perceived by communication. In other words, *it stands for a semantic of inclusion in communication*. The impetus for participation has arrived in diverse, functionally specific codes across society, communicated equally by politics, mass media, and public protest, and aimed more and more not only at individuals, but at organizations. Governments, political parties, businesses, schools, educational authorities, the bureaucracies of the welfare state (job centres), municipal or state authorities, universities, even armies are faced with a call for participation or indeed raising that call themselves. It has become the "new conventional wisdom" (Osterman 1994). The momentum of participation thus

R. Wetzel (✉)

Vlerick Business School, Leuven, Belgium

e-mail: ralf.wetzel@vlerick.com

seems to refer both to a quantitative explosion and qualitative diversification in diverse functional contexts and diverse systemic levels like society or organization. It is not only an imposing presence in itself, it is even more imposing in its effects. A look at the careful attention paid to participation in legal texts (laws), political programmes, product marketing strategies, or mass media websites alone shows that participation is not an outgrowth of rhetoric, but a force with real structural impact.

The ubiquity of the term comes along with an astonishing lack of awareness for the complexity and multiplicity of the states of inclusion in the modern world. The call for participation does not heed e.g. the extreme decelerating effect that mass participation has in political decision-making processes nor the exclusion (non-participatory decisions) it necessarily produces (Luhmann 1981b: 401). Neither does it take into account that the practical inclusion of disabled children in regular education can cause major isolation experiences for those same children (Fuchs 1995b) or that many companies' direct participation concepts actually limit or even undermine its continuation (Kühl 1998). These limits of practical participation are not included in the semantics. The impetus of the call for participation is weighed up by a surprising amount of ignorance about the conditions and restrictions affecting structural inclusion in practice.

Two aspects of modern participation have been named that will be essential for the remainder of this paper: On the one side, participation is a common stand-in term for inclusion; on the other, it points to the problems that are covered by it. The term offers a semantic simplification (Markowitz 1986) for a highly contingent and complex process which does not express how inclusion actually happens, which whitewashes the requirements of different types of systems (functional systems/society, organizations) concerning inclusion in their communication, and which often hides the only limited effectiveness of participatory techniques (Heller 2003; Wagner 1994; Cotton 1993; Yukl 1989). In view of these problems, this paper will fundamentally explore the purpose of such a masquerading, stand-in term in modern inclusion. In essence, it asks about the relationship between the semantics of participation and its socio-cultural foundations. The assumption is that the shifting essence of society's *structure* has led to dramatic changes in the modes of inclusion for individuals, while the *semantics* of participation have not kept up fully with those changes. However, the outmoded semantics of participation astonishingly help by offering a simplistic description of the states of inclusion in their modern contexts. At the same time, the traditional subtext of a stratified society obscures the fundamental differences in functional inclusion and thus forces the semantics of participation themselves into contradiction and paradox. The meanings that the term participation had taken on in the time of stratified societies has been kept alive and even popularized further through the rise of societal functional differentiation, although the old socio-structural conditions have lost their relevance. This leads automatically to ambiguities and contradictions when dealing with participation in a modern context, going even to the belief that factual participation is extremely difficult or even outright impossible (McCaffrey

et al. 1995; Heller 2003). This leads us to explore the nature of the term and the fault lines affecting participation today.

1.2 Theoretical Access

To present and explain the assumption, I will apply the tenets of sociology's systems theory as proposed by Luhmann (1995c, 2012, 2013), but consider only a limited set of phenomena, namely *organized* inclusion, that is, participation in the decisions of organizations. The choice to go with this theoretical basis was motivated by the shallow draught of the alternative options, action theory and structuralist theories, in this area. Especially approaches favoured by action theory usually lead to "questions of who" (Luhmann 1988: 335) that either ignore the paradoxes, fault lines, and consequences inherent in the call for participation (Wehner and Rauch 1994; Askenazy et al. 2001; Yates et al. 2001) or flag these as repressive forces that work against the essentially desirable autonomy of the actors (Uehlinger 1988; Strauss 2004a, 2004b; Edwards and Wajcman 2005). Even when making explicit reference to the social framework, the exploration tends to only focus on how capitalist society constructs participation in microcontexts such as organizations as a form of managerial and therefore capitalist control, in which participation is part of an on-going-power game between management and workers (Edwards and Wajcman 2005). It typically ignores the fact that participation is in itself is an outcome of a shift in societal differentiation and goes further than a reflexive mode of exploitation only . Additionally, 25 years of organizational participation research have not overcome a certain feeling of disillusionment and disbelief at the fact that organizations might be using many participatory techniques, but to very uncertain effect in terms of enforcing or improving states of participation or inclusion (Poutsma et al. 2003, 2006; Heller 2003; McCaffrey et al. 1995; Cotton 1993; Wagner 1994; Yukl 1989; Wagner and Gooding 1987; on a broader scope: Alvesson 1982). This is the point where systems theory can open up new vistas. It can apply the insights of evolution theory (via the distinction between society's structure and semantics) and organizational theory (via the distinction of membership and premises for decisions) to learn much more about the basic functions of participation, the role of its inherent ambiguity when dealing with failed participation (Kühl 1998), and the origin of the prevalent feeling of disillusionment.

1.3 The Phenomena in Question: Organizations

By choosing to explore the topic of the organization, this paper concentrates on a phenomenon that began as a product of the call for participation and has increasingly become its addressee. Organizations immediately show the consequences of structural changes in society for the inclusion of its members. They themselves play

a vital, if paradoxical role in these changes (Luhmann 1994): Organizations provide forms of inclusion that match both traditional and new semantics of participation. Both semantics are brought into focus in them, making *both* the structural changes *and* the subsequent adjustment in the semantics plain to sight.

Selecting this research object has meant concentrating on a specific aspect of participation semantics, that is, the difference between inclusion *into* (formal membership) and participation *inside* of organizations (in decisions etc.) (Heller et al. 2004; Sisson 2000; Alvesson 1991; Marchington and Wilkinson 2000). Aspects of financial participation (Poutsma et al. 2003, 2006) are deliberately ignored here in favour of a focus on participation in decisions, be it direct (Marchington and Wilkinson 2000) or indirect (Minssen 1999; Kühl 1998; Regalia and Gill 1995; Cotton et al. 1988). Such a limitation of the scope of this paper is mainly due to simple reasons of clarity and brevity.

This paper aims to show that organizations have gained their current presence in the wake of the polarization of participation semantics and their loading with the concepts of equality. Both of these developments led to functional differentiation, and both play their part in reconciling individuals with their experience of the functionally differentiated social structures around them. This will be explored in three steps: Part 2 considers the relationship between the semantics of participation and the structure of society in more detail and tracks the development of these semantics from their origin in stratified society to the functionally differentiated present. Part 3 considers three dimensions in which participation becomes relevant for organizations and the ambiguities that this creates. These distinctions reveal the essential opaqueness of the current semantics and their implications. The final part 4 will revisit the findings of the previous chapters and cast a look ahead at new avenues for further research.

2 The Career of Participation Semantics

2.1 The Semantic and Structural Origins: Part and Whole

Etymologically speaking, *pars* means a part in the sense of a whole made up of individual parts. *Participere,* translated literally, means 'taking a part', that is, "being able to be of the whole" (Luhmann 2009: 297ff.). In organic metaphors, 'taking part' means fulfilling a role as part of a greater whole. Both antiquity and the Middle Ages read this distinction of part and whole in terms of a distinction between top and bottom (lord and subject, a deity and its believers). The parts had to be able to survive and sustain themselves, but only gained their raison d'être from the whole. *Participere* here suggests both referring to oneself and to something other (Luhmann 2009: 300), crucially in the form of the primacy of religion and its ability to manage the economy of grace. In the relationship between the

whole and its parts (Luhmann 2013: 202f.) is gives the parts both rights (protection, sustenance) and duties (service) to demand and to deliver.

These two distinctions can suffice for now to understand the social frame of reference, as they appear as the essential distinctions in medieval or pre-modern semantics. Participation as social semantics reflects the structure of medieval society,[1] with its dominant notion of a top-bottom hierarchy. The estates (serfs, trades, burghers, and nobility) formed a clear secular hierarchy, paralleled by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. God alone stood above Pope and Emperor as the foundations and telos of either pyramid. This social structure is a direct reflection of the premodern distinctions at work in participation: Every estate has both subsistence rights and the duty to provide service to its 'betters'. The same pattern is found not only in the estates, but also in the actual social venues of inclusion, i.e. households or corporations like monasteries. Participating here has a double meaning of being-in-something and contributing-to-something-greater. In short: Being destined for a certain place and occupying that place. This meaning corresponds well with the concept of inclusion in a layered society built around the idea of 'being born into something' (Fuchs 2005b: 108). The unity of person (Luhmann 1995a) and addressee (Fuchs 2005a, 2005d) was therefore readily visible and determined: All individuals had their social address and a set of expectations placed on them.[2] The semantics of participation thus allowed the hierarchical polity to observe and describe itself, as it equipped that observation process with the necessary distinctions of top-bottom and part-whole that were matched by the structural state of society (Luhmann 2013: 196ff.). At the same time, the term 'participation' did not enjoy much popularity. It is one of the ironies of history that this changed right at the time when the former match between self-description and actual structure fell apart.

2.2 Socio-Structural Upheavals

Beginning in the eighteenth century, the structural distinctions in society shifted from a hierarchical to a functional basis (Luhmann 1980, 1981a, 2012). The end of the old order also meant the end of the whole that was made up of the parts. Modern society has become polycontextual to the degree that individual functional areas that used to work across all layers and estates have emerged from that hierarchical

---

[1] This uses Luhmann's (Luhmann 1980: 19) notion of semantics as "forms of a society" contrasting with incidents of perception or action. Semantics provide forms that can be employed in perception and action: "There is a . . . mediating need – a type of store of possible topics that is at hand for immediate and immediately clear inclusion in specific communication processes. We call this store of topics or, if it is stored specifically for communication, semantics." Luhmann (1995c: 224). On other uses of the term 'semantics' in Luhmann cf. Stichweh (2006).

[2] Put differently: The person *reflected* the individual (cf. Luhmann 2000: 89, Fn 24).

order and 'enclosed' themselves within themselves. Politics and business, followed by science and law, emancipated themselves from the primacy of religion and now stand as its equals. The old vertical order is replaced by a horizontal order that has lost its common denominator and that does not fit a single continuum anymore. The structure parallelism between different functional frames of reference undermines the idea of a greater whole that one can contribute to (Luhmann 2013: 95ff.).

This has far-reaching consequences for people's social belonging in the sense of changing the modes of inclusion in society. The feeling of being born into one's station has slowly given way to a sense of being initially excluded from social relations. A person will only feel embedded in his or her place if the social environment recognizes him or her as an addressee to relate to. This needs an effort on the part of that individual and, which is even more difficult, the individual's social registering. People are expulsed from the social 'birthplace' they had in the Middle Ages[3] and find themselves in a world of enclosed and enclosing functional relations. There are only functional milieus that do not accept any birth right to belonging-by-birth. The hierarchical mode of full inclusion has been turned upside down into a primary exclusion from all functional contexts; the original state is now one of excluded individuality.

The changes at work in the primary structures of society did not leave its semantics untouched either: A new store of themes was needed to define, above all, the limits of the new functional systems and make them manageable for everyday life. This has created the semantics of statehood as a means of delimiting politics from other types of communication (Stichweh 2006: 3). At the same time, new semantics were needed to reflect the new context of the individual. This has become the semantics of humanity, which defines the individual's new position in society and its various functional areas and, again, makes them accessible for everyday practice. People are given a set of attributes that place them in their social environment; the social environment becomes readable with these semantics. "The totality of the social was discerned in the human being as member of a particular species and was anchored in the specificity of the human way of life." (Luhmann 2013: 210f.). This has lit the fuse for one of the most explosive careers of modernity's semantics: The semantics of individuality, of the in-divisible. However, the individual is not indivisible in the social sphere anymore, but has rather becomes a '*dividual*', a highly specialized fragment of a social observer that is not identical with its other appearances in the eyes of other observers.

Even when new semantic patterns arise, the old semantics with their grounding in a stratified world remain in use. The distinction between the whole and its parts remains relevant and continues to describe how we relate to society. Even today, society is envisioned as a whole that is made up of people as its parts (Luhmann 2013: 209). Participation has become part of the wider semantic store, even though

---

[3] This state of expulsion was a known and demonized fate; it was the rarely seen, but soon ubiquitous mode of exclusion known to and feared by medieval man (Fuchs 2005c). It is now the de facto fate of every person.

it has virtually lost its structural meaning (Luhmann 1987: 162): The rise of heterarchical and autonomous functional systems has supplanted the idea of the whole and its parts and introduced the simultaneity of multiple codes and spheres of communication, which cannot be reconciled, balanced out, or joint up again. Each individual now also faces the problem of needing access to all functional sub-systems of society. The key is to be *socially recognized*. However, this inclusion does not lie within the power of individuals themselves alone; it is, as much or even more so, a social effort. Functional systems determine the conditions for when and how individuals become socially relevant (socially recognizable) by acquiring social addresses and bundling expectations in the form of a social persona (Luhmann 1995a). Individuals can decide to invest an effort into acquiring their addresses and engaging in address management. The key term for inclusion in this sense is the acquisition of relevance. Participation now has a twofold purpose: Sustaining a structurally out-dated distinction (part-whole) and developing new distinctions (relevance-irrelevant).

2.3   Old Semantics and New Structures

The link between structural heterarchy and individual exclusion implies a substantial boost to efforts to reduce exclusion on the part of politics, education, media, or protest movements. It has become an amplifier for modern participation semantics. However, the rise of these semantics is not dependent on referencing stratified structures anymore; it now concerns the socially meaningful acquisition of *relevance* for individuals dealing with functionally differentiated forms of communication. Functional systems are in themselves disinterested in individuals, although they assume the presence of fully excluded individuals around them who are looking for access and, above all, for social recognition in the sense of attaining social addresses and becoming social persons.[4]

Participation then moves away from the idea of *having access* a priori towards the idea of *getting access*, which is not a one-time achievement, but a recurrent pursuit. At the same time, the end purpose of participation still lies in the *taking part* or *being part* of the greater social whole. The state of belonging in the sense of a normally assumed access to functionally coded communication shifts in its meaning, which will need to be discussed later on. It reveals one of the modern structural components of participation: The distinction that fuels the call for participation, now lies between socially relevant and socially irrelevant, with a definite preference for social relevance.

---

[4] It would go too far to discuss why this could not inspire hope for further intensification (the more inclusion, the more relevance, the better); it suffices to think of prisons or institutions for people with disabilities (Wetzel 2004; Fuchs 1995a), which exhibit states of full inclusion, but who give the term of relevance a unique connotation.

This is a case of a term with formerly hierarchical meaning gaining a new semantic load. It is used first to describe social contexts and make them more practically manageable when the structural conditions have changed at their core. At the same time, it pays heed to the new structural requirements and acknowledges the relevance of individual inclusion. The term 'participation' therefore represents the relationship between social structure and semantics in normal balance. Again, the semantics take longer to change, but this lag follows its own pace. It has an impact on the continued validity of functional heterarchy. In order to pursue this further, another semantic trait of modern society needs to be discussed: the semantics of equality.

2.4 The Emergence of Equality: Amplifying the Semantics of Participation

The loss of socio-structural plausibility of a hierarchy of estates has created another phenomenon that is essential for our notion of the link between the structure of society and semantics: The visibility of social inequality and the need for its legitimation. What used to gain its structural legitimation from religious tenets now becomes a skandalon. At the point when the heterarchy of the functional systems becomes evident and individuals that used to be fully included, caught up in defined classes or households discover their theoretical access to unlimited means of communication, any limits to that access become visible and, above all, revealed in their contingent nature. All of a sudden, the traditional inequalities in access and relevance lose their semantic legitimation and plausibility. They become seemingly random and scandalous. Inequalities in the access to politics, education, commerce, or legal rights become the focal point of social unrest. This is where modernity discovers the essential inequality in the top-bottom distinction. More than that: It discovers its variable nature. Inequality is no more an experience to be suffered; it can be influenced by one's own or other people's actions. The contingent nature of where people are placed on the top-or-bottom scale is not the only thing to become visible and scandalized. The modern world also discovers states of inequality in terms of poverty, disability, or gender; these inequalities are the seedbed for the growth of new functional systems like education, social work, or protest movements. Their essential problem is not so much the former top-bottom distinction, but rather the problem of heterarchy. Inequalities in access to the social relations of everyday life (and thus to the products of different functional systems) become visible. There are obvious differences in the quality and quantity of access to commerce, education, law, medical support, or truth and in the involvement in collectively binding decisions. These differences are then experienced as faults (Fuchs 1996: 962), and the new forms of distinction soon lead to a forceful semantic call for equal inclusion opportunities, countered by a multitude of structural inequalities in just these opportunities. The states of inequality lack the inherent

plausibility that they had possessed by power of the primary religious coding of the traditional stratified world (Luhmann 2002: 357). The lack of equal opportunities is a focal point for social problems with new universal and lasting relevance. Society has become semantically "irritable by inequality" (Fuchs 1996: 963). Distinguishing between equal and unequal has also brought more and more groups of disenfranchised out into the open that are able to demand participation (or have others demand it on their behalf) in the sense of reducing the inequality that afflicts them. Structural exclusion has become semantically translatable as restricted or suppressed participation.[5]

The connotations of the ideas of participation are shaped by this socio-structural settlement. At stake is not only the social relevance or irrelevance of individuals, but their relevance under the premise of the equality of *all individuals understood as principally equal parts of society*. On this basis, states of exclusion can immediately be semantically rewrought as a normative demand for inclusion (Luhmann 1995b). This adds moral value to the distinction; it politicizes it and embeds it in the possibility of a permanent semantic discourse, since there are always states of exclusion that can be translated as problems of inclusion.

The postulate of equality then makes the semantics of participation—despite all of their limitations—effective for the assertion of the functional distinctions. The modern term of participation, combining the part-whole distinction with the issue of relevance, can be extremely simplistic. People want to be equal parts of society, but they are also faced with structural states of inequality. At the same time, the relevance of every individual needs to be asserted in the face of these inequalities, across the whole of society, reaching from politics to education, commerce, or society. This means that the term participation promotes the universal enforcement of the functional heterarchy and the pressure for the pluralist inclusion of individuals across all of society. Still grounded in the notion of stratification, the semantics seem to aid the assertion of a heterarchical structuring principle, without being able to state exactly what would need to be done to do so or when it would be achieved. In this sense, the semantics of participation are an example of inherited semantics whose modernization will benefit the modern world.

2.5 A Summary

Participation is a term used in people's life-world experience to express the general demand for inclusion in functional systems in 'practicable' terms. The claims expressed by its semantics, however, obscure the practical reality of inclusion, that is, not as part of the old predefined distinction between the whole and its parts, but as the social performance of diverse, heterarchical functions. In other words:

---

[5] The heterarchy of functional systems must not obscure the fact that functional systems are themselves the producers of inequality, cf. Stichweh (2005: 163ff.).

Participation is communication self-simplified (Markowitz 1986) to make its social structural preconditions, specifically the principle of inclusion, generally viable. It is not true to its function: It overshadows, rather than mirroring the functional conditions that are in place. On the one side, it assumes that inclusion is not to be taken for granted, but that something needs to be done about it. It does so by imbuing it with relevance. On the other side, it does not instruct people enough about what actually needs to be done. Rather, it meshes together different systemic references and sustains the world's ontic part-and-whole presence. It simplifies this to a level that individuals can mentally sustain in their everyday world, but keeps its appellatory nature to the extent that it expresses the social demand for inclusion within certain (contingent) boundaries. This simplification is unavoidable and has a functional and a dysfunctional side: It is dysfunctional in particular in that participation works with the fiction of equality and 'wholeness' being possible despite both being structurally impossible. In this sense, it does not imply a normative answer for modernity's inequality challenge. It is an answer, first and foremost, in the sense of its semantic obfuscation (Markowitz 1986, 2003, 2006; Kranz 2009a). This is a first hint at the purpose of participation.

3   Participation and Decisions: Three Dimensions

The following part will consider three distinct levels on which participation becomes relevant for organizations. For this purpose, organizations will be defined as social systems that delimit themselves by way of decisions (Luhmann 2000, 2003, 2006). They produce decisions that are derived from previous decisions and that use previous paths to structure their route towards new decisions. The term decision alone hints at the affinity that exists between the political system and organizations, which does not only imply that political action is necessarily reliant on organizations, but also that politics and power as 'its' symbolically generalized currency of communication play a major role in organizations (Heller 2003). In essence, both meanings of participation that have gained impetus—that is, inclusion and relevance—are again present, joined by a third facet that now needs to be defined. Before we explore these different meansings and layers, we need to point out the general role of organizations in modernity.

3.1   Organizations as Inclusion Mechanisms into Functional Milieus and into 'Lebenswelt'

Organizations are engaged with the fundamental structural fault line of modernity. They balance the de facto inequality of people with the semantic demand for equality. They provide an accessible pattern for regulating the pressure for

participation in the form of bureaucratic processes, while maintaining the aware-ness of functionally specialized organizations like mass media, political bodies, or protest movements. Both factors allow them to stimulate the call for participation. At the same time, such specialist organizations are a vivid example of how organizations cope with the paradox of equality and inequality: On the outside, the fuel the demand for participation; on the inside, they undermine its essence.

When organizations begin to respond more to the call for participation, they reveal another facet of participation. The semantics of participation whitewash the endemic differences in systems. These semantics are specific enough to flag social circumstances, but also so unspecific that they hide the inability to access the actually responsible (functional) systems. They redirect attention to those systems' more accessible stand-ins, namely: organizations.

The problem that more and more organizations are facing lies in the accelerating erosion of their own plausibility in the face of environments that are socialized for equality. Their inherent inequality, their hierarchies' affront to the maxim of equality becomes a problem (Fuchs 2009) that needs a response. This explains why organizations have, over the course of the twentieth century, been forced to deal more and more—almost cyclically as an effect of other factors (Ramsay 1977; Ackers et al. 2001)—with the challenge of participation. Hierarchy has become visible and addressable as a point of inequality. The increased use of participatory organization and management concepts (Haas 2012) can be considered a semantic reaction to this problem.

After this short characterization, we now turn to three different dimensions in the relation between participation and organization.

3.2   Inclusion as Membership

Even a cursory look at the evolution of the phenomenon 'organization' will show that organizations still show a number of facets that had long been lost in the changing primary distinctions in society's structure and the loss of the hierarchical order: Organizations' organization as hierarchy, the representative habitus of lead-ership (which again implies hierarchy), and the expression of inclusion as mem-bership (Luhmann 2000: 112; Luhmann 1996). This suggests that the Middle Ages have found a back door into modernity where they can hibernate in thousands of temporal forms (Fuchs 2009). This should not make it surprising that certain medieval social patterns can be found alive and well in and with organizations, if sometimes hidden behind a different semantic mask. Suffice it to mention the astonishing survival of gender differences, expressed in the modern form of the glass ceiling effect.

In organizations, we again encounter the old distinction of the whole and 'its' parts. This is relevant in terms of how people are treated, that is, in the shape of their states of inclusion. Organizations reconcile the top-bottom and end-means distinc-tions (Luhmann 2009: 300ff.), with the distinction between managers or

entrepreneurs and their employees as the expression of the top-bottom distinction. Participation recovers its old connotations in the sense of a focus on a universal goal for which people contribute themselves and their actions in a bigger whole to deliver a specifically conditioned performance. Formal membership lets people 'be part', with the concomitant rights (remuneration, evaluation, career, and protection) and duties. Organizations also offer a related simplifying mechanism in the form of hierarchy. The top-bottom distinction makes the channels of communication and the decision-making processes simpler on the social, chronological, and factual level. Participation and organization here meet in their simplifying effect to give people a simple-to-understand notion of membership not unlike a feudal household of the Middle Ages. However, organizational membership as a social address is based on roles and not, as in such household, related to persons. The guarantee of the person's subsistence promised—ideally—in the premodern household is lost in organizations. The gap left by it is filled by participation which stabilizes the need for participation on a semantic level that society at large only covers in the form of familial ties (to an ever lesser degree, it would seem). An award of membership (that is, a decision to that effect) gives the member an opportunity to act not only under his or her own name and social address, but also under the address of the organization. We encounter the representative potential (and sometimes specific expectations of representation) in the form of the 'greater whole' without every member having to have access to the representative presence of the organization's management. The address of the organization has become an important source for identification that contributes to the mental orientation of its members even in the world outside of the organization. On a social level, organizational inclusion as membership produces a basis for inclusion semantics that are reflected in the semantic call for participation. However, this potential for identification seems ambiguous: With the decision in favour of membership, the individual agrees to submit to a certain degree to the regime of the organization in exchange for certain incentives and even accepts sanctions in the case of ending that agreement (Luhmann 2000). In this sense, membership even allows a certain distance from the purpose of the organization: It is comparatively easy to use the interactional repertoire in one's role to show that one does not, in fact, belong (cf. Goffman 1973). Identification is therefore not an automatism; rather, it is dependent on stimulation and incentives and always latently under threat. Participation *in* organizations is therefore a simplification of inclusion and participation in society, although this is not exclusive. Organizations produce the instruments with which to confirm this state of participation.

3.3   Relevance Influencing Decisions

The aspect of participating in decisions also concerns the field of participation in commercial operations (Poutsma et al. 2003, 2006). This touches on participation *within* organization. Since the pioneering research of Coch and French (1948), this

has been taken to refer to financial, direct, and representative participation, of which financial participation is left out of this paper for reasons of simplicity. Representative or indirect participation can mean works councils or other formally designated representatives of employees who can influence managerial decision-making processes in hearings, joint consultation, vetoes, or direct decision-making powers (Hucker 2008; Cotton 1993). Direct participation, in turn, refers to the immediate influencing of decisions by being able to shape one's immediate work environment (processes, division of labour, job profiles, other terms and conditions like working hours) (Haas 2012; Heller et al. 2004; Minssen 1999).

The readiness to participate within organizations necessarily refers back to the need for relevance, the establishment of individual decision-making powers in the face of functional mechanisms, albeit in a specific shape and form. The key is that members become socially accessible in their form and expression of their membership role. Initially, joining an organization only allows fragmentary relevance: the relevance of a closely defined fragment of behaviour and not of the individual as a whole. The individual is recognized as a socially relevant and attributable addressee—this in itself is one of the foremost functions of participation *in* organizations—but the fact of membership also reduces this relevance back down to a minimum, i.e. the behaviours that the employee is expect to show when contributing to the whole. The 'entire rest' immediately disappears in a zone of indifference (first identified by Barnard 1938), that is, in the zone in which self-determination is handed over to the formal authority of a superior. Organizational participation in this sense is primarily a declaration and simultaneous denial of relevance, as it indeed does not mean contributing individuality or internal motivation, but primarily the fulfilment of 'dividual' expectations that side-line any personal uniqueness.

However, membership defines these 'dividual' expectations initially in the very generic terms of a general store of motivation that can be actuated in the system (Luhmann 2000: 84). Membership gives the organization and its individual members a means of entering actuations and thereby also re-actuating the question of relevance. In this re-actuation, relevance can reassert itself in the forms of 'personality', creativity, or commitment, all of which are usually hidden in the zone of indifference (Baecker 1994). In this sense, membership produces "double framing" (Luhmann 2000: 112f.): It delimits the outside (first framing) and produces—as already discussed—the distinction between inclusion and exclusion. Internally, it creates a medium that allows and demands re-actuation, that is, creates a framework for a certain degree of autonomy. Relevance can be renegotiated in this framework, which also touches on mutual behavioural expectations and duties, the expectations of the organization and the fact whether the member can and wishes to actuate these. The relevant people present certain descriptions of themselves and/or their specific, visible behaviour that can be interpreted as the actuation, acceptance, or indeed refusal of such expectations.[6] The personal touch in how they fulfil their roles is essential in this regard (cf. in particular Luhmann 1964: 268ff.).

---

[6] This closely follows Markowitz (1988).

These medial negotiations and re-actuations are a constant occurrence. They are the means by which it is constantly re-decided which specific and actual opportunities for participation and states of inclusion in organizational communication are available to its members. It is a silent and generally invisible process, with the negotiations and their effects typically only becoming visible in crises (deviation from the formal expectations, resistance against organization change etc.).

At the same time, 'dividualization' and the declaration of irrelevance also creates new problems. In an equality-biased, democratically governed society, delimiting and 'fractalizing' individuals (even though it is the normal order in the everyday creation and use of social addresses) is an easy source for outrage. Even in the early evolution of modernity, the new old hierarchy, the new old patriarchate, and the new old forms of limited subjection in organizations have been an obvious skandalon. Ever since that time, efforts have been under way to civilize or 'modernize' organizations and give them a democratic, morally acceptable face. Above all, this concerns the processes of indirect or representative participation (Poutsma et al. 2006; Cotton et al. 1988) which usually operate with the tools of delegation. The political and moralizing effect of participation is particularly obvious in this area: The organization's members one-sided *affectability* by management decisions and his or her one-sided state of dependence. Affectability works to reinforce the demands: The member of the organization is *affected* by certain decisions, but is also *enabled* for the counter-observation of the facts at stake (the effectiveness and efficiency of processes, strategies, products etc.).[7] This places pressure on managers to let the people affected by their decisions influence them in the decision-making process or indeed to relinquish or share their decision-making authority. The call for participation thus reinforces the relevance of the members of the organization and directly affects the social and factual state of the organization.

The extent to which the member of the organization—who has become relevant by the mere fulfilment of a formal role—actually influences decisions depends less on the wider social semantics than on the state and situation in the organization. The autopoiesis, the inherent rationality of the organization slips in between the social demands and the factual influence of individuals. It is practically closed to the outside and only responds to external challenges if they resonate in the organization itself. One has to distinguish between political demands placed on the organization, which can have a legal expression (such as equal opportunities, job protection etc.) and what the organization makes of them (fight for resources, attention, influence). This relates to the use of power as a currency in organizations: It is available as the threat of formal authority and as informal micropolitics. Micropolitics are especially effective in allocating influence on decision-making processes on premises other than formal concerns or, even less, external demands. When the semantics of participation stimulate the internal micropolitics of the organization, the end product is not necessarily a more democratic organization or indeed the disappearance of inequality, e.g. in the destruction or weakening of the hierarchical order. Instead,

---

[7] This concerns the distinction between taking decisions and being affected (Luhmann 1990: 158f.)

the organization adjusts to these semantics e.g. by means of micropolitical communication, which can often reach an organizationally illegal, but 'usefully illegal' (cf. Luhmann 1964: 304ff.) nature (Dachler and Wilpert 1978). The organization responds to the challenge of participation with more organization,[8] which undermines the idea of democratization in general (the intensive, but micropolitical preparation of decisions undermines the principles of democracy) and the idea of participation itself (the more people participate in decisions, the weaker their actual influence). The original aim of a democratization of organizations produces "structural problems not democratized at the same time" (Luhmann 1981b: 402). The establishment of the relevance of individuals, which was the original intention, generally fails as a result. Either the organization 'hits back' with the means of participation—think of the phenomena of self-exploitation and subjection in group work (cf. Kühl 2001; Moldaschl 1993; Kanter 1982)—or the individual gives up and withdraws from the informal expression and actuation of his or her role (cynicism, 'working by the book' etc., cf. Dickson 1981; Dean et al. 1998). Anders suggests: "The principle of equality is (. . .) not yet a conditional programme" (Luhmann 2000: 393). In essence, the politically motivated call for participation mistook organizations for a functional system in a heterarchical society (cf. Heller et al. 2004). The idea was that one could 'protest' one's way into organizations as one did in functional, political decisions and forgot that the hierarchy in organizations fulfils certain functions for them that are not easily replaced. Above all, it was forgotten that it is not based on democratic legitimation. The call for participation, taken up and amplified by politics and mass media, washes up against the internal autonomy of the organization. This becomes evident in the micropolitical turn of the political call for participation and in the organization's semantic response. Obviously, participation techniques are not only used to actually comply with the call for participation on a factual and social level, but indeed to protect the organization's public presence pre-emptively from being discredited, thus safeguarding the organization's social address and access to public communication. Using such techniques like quality circles, semi-autonomous work groups, guided team sessions, or ideas management help organizations polish their 'shop windows' (Kühl 2014 following Brunsson 1989), mimicking their environment in their structure and avoiding problems of legitimation (Meyer and Scott 1994). Politics, protest, and mass media and the two-way observation of organizations have helped the spread of normative demands along, but they have not achieved an actual improvement of the states of inclusion for the members of organizations (Heller 2003; Wagner 1994; Cotton 1993; Yukl 1989: 86).[9] The organizations' use of the concepts of participation (aided and abetted by politics and, above all, science) should not be understood only as a response to the demands raised against them, but

---

[8] The point is that the number of decisions will increase when decisions are the final elements, and the higher standards for decisions will make them increasingly less likely.

[9] An impressive example of the use of group work in the automotive industry and its consequences can be found in Kühl (1998).

also as a rhetorical response to the normative pressure of the semantics of participation. Used internally, the relevant techniques now act on a micropolitical, not social level.

In effect, more influence on decisions leads to an increase in the number of decisions. Participation becomes relevant for decisions, not only as their object, but rather as their stimulator, as a social 'amplifier'. The challenge received from the outside is translated depending on the sensitivity and irritability of the organization's system. The challenge might influence later decisions by determining the premise of who is to be involved in decisions. The social semantics of participation ignore the organizations' members different expressions of their roles and the problem of the allowance of society's external expectations and the inherent option of rejecting these. Instead, semantics are the plaster that hides the cracks and fault lines.

3.4   Contact in the Interactive Shaping of Organizational Realities

Another aspect deserves to be mentioned that is too easily forgotten and that still holds much promise for further research, that is, the contact with microdiversity that is essential for the self-organization of organizations (Luhmann 1997, 2000: p. 255f., Fuchs 2004c). The organization needs another social system to provide certain "material" (Luhmann 2000: p. 255) from which it can distil its self-organized decisions by means of structural coupling. This microdiversity is made available by interaction (Kieserling 2000). However, this insight draws attention to something that it usually neglected in communicational relationships, but that is always at work: Reflexive perception. Perceptions are clearly not relevant only for mental systemic references, but also for the interaction processes that help form social structures, specifically as the "behavioural component" that runs in parallel to communication (Kranz 2009b: 79f.). Put in very blunt terms: What is at stake is that the boundaries that delineate simple social systems depend on *both* communication *and* perception. Any act of inclusion works by means of the socially constitutive double distinction of information / expression / comprehension and the mentally grounded process of perception in its relevant form of not only a passive registry, but an active selection in the form of reaching out or investing attention.[10] For an organization to continue, it needs interactive attention and engagement under a condition of mutual perceptibility.

---

[10] This refers to new developments in system theoretical interaction theory whose rationale cannot be explained in further detail at this point and that have to be presented in a highly simplistic form. For further details, please refer to Markowitz (1979, 1986, 2006), Aderhold and Kranz (2007), and Kranz (2009a).

These essential preconditions become particularly salient in times of crisis, as research on disasters (Perrow 1984; Shrivastava 1992) and high-reliability organizations (Weick and Sutcliffe 2007) has revealed. It has been noticed that full-scale disasters tend to happen in particular in organizational contexts that fail to perceive minor errors soon enough, that have a tendency towards oversimplification, and that give hierarchical authority the precedence before functional expertise in those critical instances (Weick and Sutcliffe 2007: 9ff.). In all of these points, the specification and qualification of interaction becomes essential (Weick 1993). Researchers have coined certain terms to express the central premises: 'Collective Mindfulness' (Weick et al. 2005), 'Heedful Interrelating' (Weick and Roberts 1993), or 'Respectful Interaction' (Weick 1993), all of which apparently take place at the place where organization and interaction meet.

Organizations have only limited means of influencing how attention is allocated or perceptions are focused. This happens within the scope of interaction and will only be passed on to organizations as interactively determined conditions for decisions or, indeed, material that feeds into a decision if certain premises are in place. Here, participation gains double relevance: First, inclusion in organizational interaction is a type of participation, specifically *on top of* its relevance as an informal reaffirmation of membership (see above). Occupational work is usually a form of interaction, even if organizations are often seen as a way of sharing the burden of having to be personally present. Inclusion in interaction here means being included in processes of reflexive perception and in the communication of perceptions. This introduces a certain form of *awareness* in organizations and decouples organizational units, e.g. by the specific quality of the interaction between their members. Participation refers to how individuals are included in processes of perception and communication to ensure a certain quality of interaction. Such interaction can only be influenced to a limited degree by formal job descriptions or defined channels of communication. Only parts of this can be 'transferrable' as explicit knowledge. It appears as a specific new shape of the zone of indifference (see above and Steger and Kranz 2013). In interaction, something resurfaces as a difference that the organization had been systematically indifferent about in its members' behaviour. This makes the success of such participation a particularly relevant condition. Managers who are aware of this will do well to prefer such operational participation to institutional participation structures. This has indeed become a managerial strategy, as can be seen in new changes in the work context in the wake of a rethinking of the distinction between decision and execution: Today's organizations care about making all changes to the immediate work environment or the general strategic situation immediately perceivable from the perspective of their members and making these perceptions reflexively available to the organization. In essence, this concerns a different form of delegation and self-management of employees, a different organization of attention and perception. People are now encouraged not only to execute their assignments reliably, but to contribute improvements and innovations by themselves. This is affecting the entire shape of membership and makes behaviour in organizational interaction much more demanding. It is again evident that society's semantic notion of participation does

not account for these intricacies of running a different type of social system, in this case: running social interactions in the context of organized social systems and coping with the potential for surprise and opposition these create.

4 Conclusion: Function and Consequences of Participation

A closer look at all of these dimensions reveals many fault lines and breaks that are not covered by society's semantics of participation. The option to maintain distance despite formal membership, the micropolitical decoupling in processes of participating in decisions, and the many forms and shapes of participation in organized interaction show how the challenge of common participation semantics can be undermined and contained. Participation in organizations can take the form of rejection in individuals' role performance despite their option of belonging; the ambitions of participation can become the pawns in the micropolitical wrangling for resources; and public disengagement in times of crisis can have a major impact on the organization's ability to master the crisis. The slow build-up of frustration about the poor or even absent effect of participative techniques (Heller 2003; Wagner 1994; Cotton 1993; Yukl 1989: 86) can be blamed on organizations' internal regulatory mechanisms that have undermined and disappointed the general hope for a more inclusive world of organizations. The blanket and diffuse nature of society's participation semantics and the highly complex self-regulation capacities of organizations made for easy pickings in this regard and left enough room for the public proclamation of the call for participation without drawing attention to its limited feasibility.

The arguments put forward in this paper now need to be consolidated and summarized. The term participation can be a semantic shortcut for describing modern states of inclusion that are easily moralized and politicized. It can be an amplified expression of modernity's equality motif. Participation implies stratified and modern elements alike that have taken shape in a belated response to changes in the make-up of modern society. Above all, it applies the traditional 'part-whole' distinction onto modern functional contexts and thus helps sustain an excessively simplistic notion of the relationship between individual and society. It gives plausibility to the still common notion that society is made up of individual parts (people) and helps align everyday practice accordingly. At the same time, it is a reflection of modern claims and expectations in how it expresses the need for the social 'recognition' of individuals in communication. Individuals need to be seen to be relevant. In this sense, its claim is also to be recognized as a relevant addressee for society. The purpose of participation therefore lies in the simplification and diffusion of modernity's complex states of inclusion. This diffusion is not merely a semantic screen of the facts and conditions of modern society; in particular by sustaining stratifying elements, it produces distinctions that go towards the functional differentiation of society. This in turn contains new problems, targets for subliminal opposition, and contradictions, all of which need to be recognized and

responded to. It has fallen to organizations to act as the media of social inclusion and be the object of the demands for participation and to respond to the inherent contradictions and paradoxes of these demands. Participation touches organizations on three levels, on each of which unique facets of individual inclusion become relevant:

- Participation considered in terms of *membership* gives the people of an organization a modicum of a sense of *belonging* to society, a referential form of affirmation outside of the more proximate ties of family or intimate relationships.
- Participation seen in terms of *relevance* presents impressive proof of the increasing need for hierarchical systems to safeguard their semantic plausibility in environments defined by social heterarchy. Inequality in the form of hierarchical distance is increasingly becoming a skandalon for organizations. It translates the democratic challenge of participation into its own operational context and thus detaches it from its social subtext.
- Finally, participation understood in terms of *contact* points to the microdiversity that exists in organizational practice and the need to find and maintain properly defined access to interactive communication. For the organized social system, there is only the option to condition the specific embodiment of that access and the shape of this level of participation (Kieserling 2000).

The organizational response to the impetus for participation reveals some contradictory notes. Participative elements might be espoused on the public face of an organization, but undermined or restricted on the level of micropolitics without any obvious injury to the operational realization of society's expectation of participation. In many cases, when that impetus for participation enters the organization, its contextual rationality will shift and the nature of participation will be converted—an effect that regularly stays out of public sight. The micropolitics in organizations have great resources for cushioning the impact of society's demands without affecting their visible presence. The organizational attempts at participation, so often seen in ambivalent terms by participation researchers, are merely a reflection of this effect. The extreme simplicity and inherent plausibility of participation encounters the fine mechanics of organizational inclusion which can take in and accommodate the demand for participation on its semantic level. They do so, primarily, by means of simplification: The world of the organization accommodates the complexity of its own conditions and the challenges of modern inclusion. Without taking these levels and the related paradoxes into account, change management will always struggle to disentangle modern participation and to understand omnipresent failure in daily desire to move organizations.

References

Ackers, P., Marchington, M., Wilkinson, A., & Goodman, J. (2001). The use of cycles? Explaining employee involvement in the 1990s. *Industrial Relations Journal, 23*(4), 268–283.

Aderhold, J., & Kranz, O. (2007). *Intention und Funktion. Probleme der Vermittlung psychischer und sozialer Systeme*. VS Verlag: Opladen.

Alvesson, M. (1982). The limits and shortcomings of humanistic organization theory. *Acta Sociologica, 25*(2), 117–131.

Alvesson, M. (1991). Corporate culture, participation and pseudo-participation in a high-tech company. In W. M. Lafferty & E. Rosenstein (Eds.), *International handbook of participation in organizations* (Vol. 3). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Askenazy, P., Caroli, E., Marcus, V. (2001, May). New organizational practices and working conditions: Evidence from France in the 1990s (*Couverture Orange CEPREMAP*), Vol. 01(6).

Baecker, D. (1994). Durch diesen schönen Fehler mit sich selbst bekannt gemacht. *Lettre International*, 24, pp. 22–26.

Barnard, C. (1938). *The functions of executives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brunsson, N. (1989). *The organization of hypocrisy: Talk, decisions and actions in organizations*. Copenhagen: Business School Press.

Coch, L., & French, J. R. P., Jr. (1948). Overcoming resistance to change. *Human Relations, 1*, 512–532.

Cotton, J. L. (1993). *Employee involvement: Methods for improving performance and work attitudes*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cotton, J. L., Vollrath, D. A., Froggatt, K. L., Lengnick-Hall, M. L., & Jennings, K. R. (1988). Employee participation: Diverse forms and different outcomes. *Academy of Management Review, 1*(13), 8–22.

Dachler, H. P., & Wilpert, B. (1978). Conceptual dimensions and boundaries of participation in organizations: A critical evaluation. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 23*, 1–39.

Dean, J. W. J. R., Brandes, P., & Dharwadkar, R. (1998). Organizational Cynism. *Academy of Management Review, 23*(2), 341–352.

Dickson, J. W. (1981). Participation as Means of Organizational Control. *Journal of Management Studies, 8*(2), 159–176.

Edwards, P., & Wajcman, J. (2005). *The Politics of Working Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fuchs, P. (1995a). *Die Umschrift. Zwei kommunikationstheoretische Studien: Japanische Kommunikation und Autismus*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Fuchs, P. (1995b). Behinderung von Kommunikation durch Behinderung. In W. Strubel & H. Weichselgartner (Eds.), *Behindert & verhaltensauffällig. Zur Wirkung von Systemen und Strukturen* (pp. 9–18). Freiburg: Lambertus.

Fuchs, P. (1996). Das Phantasma der Gleichheit. Merkur 570/571, pp. 959–964.

Fuchs, P. (2004c): Autopoiesis, Mikrodiversität, Interaktion. In M. -C. Fuchs (Ed.): *Theorie als Lehrgedicht. Systemtheoretische Essays I* (pp. 73–94). Bielefeld: Transcript.

Fuchs, P. (2005a). *Konturen der Modernität. Systemtheoretische Essays II*, Bielefeld: Transcript, hrsg. non Marie-Christin Fuchs.

Fuchs, P. (2005b). Von Jaunern und Vaganten—Das Inklusions-/Exklusionsschema der A-Sozialität unter frühneuzeitlichen Bedingungen und im Dritten Reich. In C.-H. Fuchs (Ed.), *Konturen der Modernität* (pp. 105–128). Systemtheoretische Essays II, Bielefeld: Transcript.

Fuchs, P. (2005c). Weder Herd noch Heimstatt, weder Fall noch Nicht-Fall. Doppelte Differenzierung im Mittelalter und supplementäre Inklusion in der Moderne. In C.-H. Fuchs (Ed.), *Konturen der Modernität* (pp. 129–152). Systemtheoretische Essays II, Bielefeld: Transcript.

Fuchs, P. (2005d). Adressabilität als Grundbegriff der soziologischen Systemtheorie. In M.C. Fuchs (Ed.), *Konturen der Modernität. Systemtheoretische Essays II* (pp. 37–62). Bielefeld: Transcript.

Fuchs, P. (2009). Hierarchien unter Druck—Ein Blick auf ihre Funktion und ihren Wandel. In R. Wetzel, J. Aderhold, & J. Rückert-John, (Hg.), *Die Organisation in unruhigen Zeiten. Über die Folgen von Strukturwandel, Veränderungsdruck und Funktionsverschiebung* (pp. 53–72). Heidelberg: Carl-Auer.

Goffman, E. (1973). *Encounters. Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction.* Indeanapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

Haas, M. (2012). *Direkte Partizipation abhängig Beschäftigter - Konzept, organisatorische Realisierung und die Wirkung auf Arbeitszufriedenheit und Gesundheitsressourcen* (WZB Discussion Paper No. 2012–302). Berlin: WZB.

Heller, F. (2003). Participation and power: A critical assessment. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 52*(1), 144–163.

Heller, F., Pusic, E., Strauss, G., & Wilpert, B. (2004). *Organizational participation: Myth and reality.* Oxford: Oxford Press.

Hucker, T. (2008). *Betriebliche Partizipation und gesellschaftlicher Wandel.* München/Mering: Hampp.

Kanter, R. M. (1982). Dilemmas of managing participation. *Organization Dynamics, 11*, 5–29.

Kieserling, A. (2000). *Kommunikation unter Anwesenden. Studien über Interaktionssysteme.* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Kranz, O. (2009a). *Interaktion und Organisationsberatung. Interaktionstheoretische Beiträge zu Profession, Organisation und Beratung.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

Kranz, O. (2009b). Organisationen als historisch kontingente Vermittlungsinstanz von System und Lebenswelt—Skizze eines interaktionstheoretischen Ergänzungsvorschlags der Organisationssoziologie. In R. Wetzel, J. Aderhold, & J. Rückert-John (Eds.), *Die Organisation in unruhigen Zeiten* (pp. 73–104). Heidelberg: Carl Auer.

Kühl, S. (1998). The flaws of decentralized organizations: Why reengineering and reducing hierarchy fail. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal, 19*, 216–219.

Kühl, S. (2001). Über das erfolgreiche Scheitern von Gruppenarbeitsprojekten. Rezentralisierung und Rehierarchisierung in Vorreiterunternehmen der Dezentralisierung. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie, 30*(3), 199–222.

Kühl, S. (2014). *Organizations. A systemic perspective.* Farnham: Gower.

Luhmann, N. (1964). *Form und Funktion formaler Organisationen.* Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.

Luhmann, N. (1980). *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik. Studien zur Wissenssoziologie der modernen Gesellschaft* (Band 1). Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Luhmann, N. (1981a). *Soziologische Aufklärung 3: Soziales system, gesellschaft, organisation.* Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Luhmann, N. (1981b). Organisation und Entscheidung. In N. Luhmann (Ed.), *Soziologische Aufklärung 3: Soziales system, gesellschaft, organisation* (pp. 389–450). Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Luhmann, N. (1987). *Soziologische Aufklärung 4: Beiträge zur funktionalen Differenzierung der Gesellschaft.* Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Luhmann, N. (1988). *Die Wirtschaft der Gesellschaft.* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Luhmann, N. (1990). *Soziologische Aufklärung 5.* Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Luhmann, N. (1994). Die Gesellschaft und ihre Organisationen. In H. -U. Derlien, U. Gerhard & F. Scharpf (Eds.), *Systemrationalität und Systeminteresse. Festschrift für Renate Mayntz* (pp. 189–201). Baden Baden: Nomos.

Luhmann, N. (1995a). Die Form "Person". In N. Luhmann (Ed.), *Soziologische Aufklärung 6, Die Soziologie und der Mensch* (pp. 137–149). Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Luhmann, N. (1995b). Gesellschaftliche Differenzierung und das Individuum. In N. Luhmann (Ed.), *Soziologische Aufklärung 6, Die Soziologie und der Mensch* (pp. 121–136). Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Luhmann, N. (1995c). *Social systems*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Luhmann, N. (1996). Membership and motives in social systems. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 13*(3), 341–348.

Luhmann, N. (1997). Selbstorganisation und Mikrodiversität. Zur Wissenssoziologie des neuzeitlichen Individuums. *Soziale Systeme, 3*(1), 23–32.

Luhmann, N. (2000). *Organisation und Entscheidung*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Luhmann, N. (2002). In A. Kieserling (Ed.), *Die Politik der Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Luhmann, N. (2003). Organization. In T. Bakken & T. Hernes (Eds.), *Autopoietic organization theory* (pp. 31–52). Copenhagen: Liber.

Luhmann, N. (2006). System as difference. *Organization, 13*(1), 37–57.

Luhmann, N. (2009). *Einführung in die Theorie der Gesellschaft*. Heidelberg: Car Auer.

Luhmann, N. (2012). *The theory of society* (Vol. 1). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Luhmann, N. (2013). *Theory of society* (Vol. 2). Stanford: Stanford Univeryity Press.

Marchington, M., & Wilkinson, A. (2000). Direct participation. In S. Bach & K. Sisson (Eds.), *Personnel management. A comprehensive guide to theory and practice* (Vol. 3, pp. 340–364). Oxford: Wiley.

Markowitz, J. (1979). *Die soziale Situation. Entwurf eines Modells zur Analyse des Verhältnisses zwischen personalen Systemen und ihrer Umwelt*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Markowitz, J. (1986). *Verhalten im Systemkontext. Zum Begriff des sozialen Epigramms. Diskutiert am Beispiel des Schulunterrichts*. Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main.

Markowitz, J. (1988). "Seele" in der Defensive. Anmerkungen zum Problem der Partizipation. In *Kulturrevolution. Zeitschrift für angewandte Diskurstheorie, H. 3*/88, S. 38–40.

Markowitz, J. (2003). (Nicht) Ganz Einfach. Von den Schwierigkeiten des Phänomens Vereinfachung. *Scientia halensis Wissenschaftsjournal der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 2*(3), 29–30.

Markowitz, J. (2006). Funktionale Differenzierung und strukturelle Folgen. In Y. Ehrenspeck und D. Lenzen (Eds.), *Beobachtungen des Erziehungssystems* (pp. 67–75). Berlin: VS Verlag.

McCaffrey, D. P., Faerman, S. R., & Hart, D. W. (1995). The appeal and difficulties of participative systems. *Organization Science, 6*(6), 603–627.

Meyer, J. W., & Scott, W. R. (1994). *Institutional environments and organizations. Structural complexity and individualism*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Minssen, H. (1999). Direkte Partizipation contra Mitbestimmung? Herausforderung durch diskursive Koordinierung. In W. Müller-Jentsch (Ed.), *Konfliktpartnerschaft—Akteure und Institutionen der industriellen Beziehungen* (3rd ed., pp. 129–156). München & Mering: Hampp.

Moldaschl, M. (1993). Die werden zur Hyäne. Erfahrungen und Belastungen in neuen Arbeitsformen. In R. Schulz-Wild & M. Moldaschl (Eds.), *Arbeitsorientierte Rationalisierung* (pp. 105–149). Frankfurt u. a.: Campus.

Osterman, P. (1994). How common is workplace transformation and who adopts it? *Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 47*(2), 173–188.

Perrow, C. (1984). *Normal accidents: living with high-risk technologies*. New York: Basic Books.

Poutsma, E., Hendrickx, J., & Huijgen, F. (2003). Workplace employee participation in Europe: In search of the participative workplace. *Economic and Industrial Democracy, 24*, 45–76.

Poutsma, E., Kalmi, P., & Pendleton, A. D. (2006). The relationship between financial participation and other forms of employee participation: new survey evidence from Europe. *Economic and Industrial Democracy, 27*(4), 637–667.

Ramsay, H. (1977). *Cycles of control: Worker participation in sociological and historical perspective* (pp. 482–506). In: Sociology.

Regalia, I., & Gill, C. (1995). *Direct participation: how the social partners view it—A comparative study of 15 countries (WP/1995/73)*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Shrivastava, P. (1992). *Bhopal: Anatomy of a crisis*. London: Chapman.

Sisson, K. (2000). *Direct participation and the modernisation of work organisation*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Steger, T., & Kranz, O. (2013). The impact of the Global Financial Crisis on employee participation—Two German case studies. *International Journal of Manpower, 34*(3), 252–270.

Stichweh, R. (2005). *Inklusion und Exklusion. Studien zur Gesellschaftstheorie*. Bielefeld: Transkript.

Stichweh, R. (2006). Sozialstruktur und Semantik. zur Logik einer systemtheoretischen Unterscheidung. In D. Tänzler, H. Knoblauch, & H. G. Soeffner (Eds.), *Neue Perspektiven der Wissenssoziologie* (pp. 157–171). Konstanz: UVK.

Strauss, G. (2004a). Overview. In: F. Heller, E. Pusic, G. Strauss & B. Wilpert (Eds.), *Organizational participation. Myth and reality* (pp. 8–39). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Strauss, G. (2004b). Participation works—if conditions are apperopriate. In F. Heller, E. Pusic, G. Strauss & B. Wilpert (Eds.), *Organizational participation. Myth and reality* (pp. 190–219). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Uehlinger, H.-M. (1988). *Politische Partizipation in der Bundesrepublik*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Wagner, J., III. (1994). Participation's effects on performance and satisfaction: a reconsideration of research evidence. *Academy of Management Review, 19*(2), 312–330.

Wagner, J. A., III, & Gooding, R. (1987). Effects of societal trends on participation research. *Administrative Science Quaterly, 32*, 241–262.

Wehner, T., & Rauch, K. P. (1994). Evaluation von Gruppenarbeit in der Automobilindustrie. Quantitative Befunde zu Reaktionen und Meinungen. *Arbeit, 3*(2), 132–149.

Weick, K. E. (1993). The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organizations: The Man Gulch Desaster. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 38*, 628–652.

Weick, K. E., & Roberts, K. H. (1993). Collective mind in organizations: Heedful interrelating on flight decks. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 38*(3), 357–381.

Weick, K. E., & Sutcliffe, K. (2007). *Managing the unexpected. Resilient performance in an age of uncertainty* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science, 16*(4), 409–421.

Wetzel, R. (2004). *Eine Widerspenstige und keine Zähmung. Systemtheoretische Beiträge zu einer Theorie der Behinderung*. Heidelberg: Carl Auer Systeme.

Yates, C., Lewchuk, W., & Stewart, P. (2001). Organization in the North American automobile industry. Empowerment as a Trojan horse: new systems of work. *Economic and Industrial Democracy, 22*, 517–541.

Yukl, G. (1989). *Leadership in organisations* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs: Prentis Hall.