Origins of Participatory Research and Ongoing Issues in its Application to Natural Resource Management

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1. Why take a participatory approach to Research in Natural Resources?
   - Development of participatory approaches is tied to the history of economic development, conservation of natural resources, improving industrial production, and education.

2. Economic Development In the 1950s
   - Centrally planned
   - Capital intensive
   - “Top down”

3. In the 1960s and 70s
   - Failure of these approaches to alleviate poverty and income disparity.
   - Some development practitioners began to question whether a more “bottom-up” approach would be more appropriate.

4. Conservation in the Post War Period
   - “Top down”
   - Conservation and wildlife preservation efforts in Africa and elsewhere were designed by biologists and conservationists in urban centers.

5. Effect on Local People
   - Cut off access to resources of local people
   - Interfered with their ability to earn a living
   - Changed local economies and lifeways in ways that often benefited only community elites or outsiders.
• Generated resentment.

7. Conservation concerns parallel Economic Development
• Economic development is based on the use of natural resources.
• Conservationists began to wonder if working with communities could yield conservation programs that protected wildlife and other natural resources while simultaneously meeting the livelihood needs of local peoples.

8. Participatory Development Emerges
• Instead of outside experts, ordinary people from within the community envision, design, plan and carry out development projects.
• Outside “experts” are facilitators, rather than directors of development.

9. Goals of Participatory Development
• Tailor development to the actual needs of community residents so that they can actually benefit.
• Build on the strengths and assets already in the community, and use them effectively in addressing issues, needs and problems that the community identifies.
• Protect the environment.

10. The Need for Participatory Research
• Involving ordinary people in development meant that better ways of learning about the everyday realities of people and the conditions under which they work and live were needed.
• People know what their problems and assets are, so why PR?

11. The Role of PR
• a way to organize local knowledge
• a way to combine that knowledge with outside knowledge
• a way to investigate more thoroughly the root causes of problems
• People need the best information they can get to effectively achieve their goals.

12. Many Different Kinds of PR
TABLE

13. Industrial Democracy
• 1940s – Kurt Lewin
  o technological and social systems are interlinked and interdependent
  o knowledge is produced through action
  o workers are knowledgeable
  o workers should be involved in planning and decision making
• Democratization of workforce
• Democratization of society
14. Popular Education
- Based on Marx
- Make a more democratic society through educating workers, minorities, and indigenous people about the underlying causes of their oppression.

15. “Conscientization”
- Consciousness raising
- The key to liberation is education.
- But traditional education is part of the process of oppression.
- A truly liberatory education, is one in which the teacher and the students engage in a dialogue, do joint analyses of the conditions of oppression, and learn together.

16. Common Elements of Types of PR
- Knowledge is gained through action
- Workers, indigenous, and other people have intimate, detailed knowledge of their everyday realities.
- There is no hard and fast determinant of the truth, but rather methods and debates for people to achieve some clarity about the world together.

17. Implications
- A New Epistemology
- Participation to what purpose?
- Issues in involving ordinary people, or the Questions that Won’t Go Away (QTWGAs)

18. A New Epistemology
- Conventional science
  - there is an objective reality independent of human thought
  - scientists can determine the truth through rigorous application of the scientific method.
- Participatory Research
  - there is an objective reality independent of human thought, but our knowledge of it is always filtered through cultural lens.
  - all science produces collective social judgements about the phenomenon under study
  - this does not mean that all knowledge is equally flawed or that all points of view are valid.

19. Key Principles of PR
- Respect for all knowledge systems
- Reciprocity
- Building a better account of the world
- Capacity building
- Utility of outcomes
## 20. Participation to What Purpose?
- Radical vs. reform social change agenda
- Co-optation of Participation


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Characteristics of Each Type of Participation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Passive Participation</td>
<td>People participate by receiving information from agencies about what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by agencies without public input.</td>
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<td>2. Participation in giving information</td>
<td>People participate by answering questions posed by researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings.</td>
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<td>3. Participation by consultation</td>
<td>People participate by being consulted, and external agents listen to views. This process does not necessarily concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people’s views.</td>
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<td>4. Participation for Material Incentives</td>
<td>People participate by providing resources for material incentives. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end unless the activity makes economic sense or meets other landowner needs. Cost-sharing may improve prolonged activity because of personal investment.</td>
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<td>5. Functional Participation</td>
<td>People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but many become self-reliant.</td>
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<td>6. Interactive Participation</td>
<td>People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. These groups take control over local decisions, thus people have a stake in maintaining initiatives, structures and practices.</td>
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7. Self-mobilization

People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contracts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how the resources are used.

22. The Participatory Research Continuum

23. Questions That Won’t Go Away - QTWGAs
- Questions arise in the course of research.
- Many need to be negotiated anew in every PR project.
- We call these the Questions the Won’t Go Away, or QTWGAs.

24. Questions that Won’t Go Away
- What constitutes participation?
- Who is the community?
- What is the researcher’s role in the community?
- What are the ethical duties of researchers?
- What are the researcher’s responsibilities in helping the community address its problems?

25. Questions that Won’t Go Away
- Navigating between what the academy and the community wants.
  - What are the implications for research in situations of conflict?
  - What are the implications when participatory research affects relationships of power?

26. Conclusion
- Participatory Research emerged in response to failures of “top down” approaches.
- PR is an approach to producing knowledge through reciprocal exchange of information, dialogue, and joint analysis between a professional researcher, or research team, and the people affected by the situation under study for the purpose of effecting positive social change.
- PR entails respect for all knowledge systems.
- It is based on a new epistemology from which it asserts that science produces collective social judgements.
- It entails different political projects.
- There are many QTWGAs that need to be addressed in every PR project.

27. What is Participatory Research?
- Action Research is “social research carried out by a team encompassing a professional action researcher and members of an organization or community seeking to improve their situation. AR promotes broad participation in the
research process and supports action leading to a more just or satisfying situation for the stakeholders.” (Greenwood and Levin, 1998).

- “like participatory action research and action research, [community-based participatory research] takes the perspective that ‘participatory’ research involves three interconnected goals: research, action, and education. As part of collaborative democratic processes, shared principles include a negotiation of information and capacities in both directions: researchers transferring tools for community members to analyze conditions and make informed decisions on actions to improve their lives, and community members transferring their expert content and meaning to researchers in the pursuit of mutual knowledge and application of the knowledge to their communities.” (Wallerstein and Duran, 2003)

28. Three Key Elements of PR
- Systematic investigation for the production of knowledge
- Participation by people who are directly engaged with the situation under study
- Goal of social change

29. Comparison of Key principles of Community Forestry and PAR

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<th>Participatory Research</th>
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<tr>
<td>Access to resources</td>
<td>Production of knowledge (includes access to knowledge through knowledge sharing as well as access to information such as government databases)</td>
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<td>Participation in planning, decision-making, and project implementation</td>
<td>Participation as equal partners in the research</td>
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<td>Social change – to bring about more satisfying social, economic, political, and environmental conditions in forest communities</td>
<td>Social change – to bring about a more satisfying situation for the people co-conducting the research</td>
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30. How are PR and Conventional Research Different?
- It’s the approach, not the method.
- Methods – many are the same
- Ontology – different
- Epistemology – different
- PR assumes that all science produces collective social judgements about the phenomenon under study
- PR is self-reflexive
It raises issues of power relations that form the context of the research that conventional science does not

31. Questions that Won’t Go Away

- What constitutes participation?

32. Conclusion

- PR is an approach, not a method
- In PR, the process is as important as the results
- Permitting people to choose the level of participation they desire is as important as actual participation