

# Power-full Reflexivity

Unveiling Power Dynamics to Foster Participatory Decision-Making in Organizations

## ABSTRACT

Academically, the application of participatory practices has become widely recognized and essential. However, many organizations struggle with its implementation, particularly when it comes to decision-making. This project, conducted in collaboration with CGI Netherlands GTO, aims to bridge the gap between the theoretical emphasis on participatory value and its practical application in organizations. Two research questions are formulated to guide the investigation: "How can participatory decision-making be integrated into GTO?" and "How can hierarchical structures and power imbalances in decision-making be overcome to embrace participatory decision-making?" To address these questions, a proposed reflexivity exercise, known as Power-full Reflexivity, is introduced. It is believed that the use of Power-full Reflexivity by decision-makers will enhance the participatory value in their decision-making practices, benefiting individuals through increased agency and fostering a collaborative and participatory environment within the organization.

## FINAL DESIGN

Power-full Reflexivity has been made into a website containing two pages: an understanding page and a reflexivity exercise page.

In the understanding page, knowledge of the three forms of power is illustrated through which the need for participatory decision-making in an organization is supported. The reflexivity exercise page contains questions as shown in Tables 1.

These include four closed-ended and six open-ended questions.

Finally, based on the answers from the close-ended questions, two kinds of visualizations could be created which give insight into the organizations' decision-making process.

1. A Sankey Diagram (See Figure 1, 2)
2. A dot chart (See Figure 3, 4)

Equation 1 in Table 2 describes the individual power during the decision-making process in order to gain an overview of the power dynamics among stakeholders. Using equation 1, a dot chart was created.

### Close-ended questions

- 1 Mapping the stakeholders: who are the people relevant to the decision?
- 2 Assessing the level of influence: Looking at the people you've named, what do you perceive their level of influence in the organization to be?
- 3 Level of participation: Looking at the people you've named, what was the level of their participation in the decision-making?
- 4 Understanding the impact: For the people named, to what extent did the decision impact their day-to-day work?

### Open-ended questions

- 1 What is the reason for not involving people that are labeled as "not involved" even though they are considered relevant to the decision?
- 2 Do you think all the relevant people to the discussion were counted in the decision-making process?
- 3 Acknowledging power-from-within: What are each individual's unique strengths and power specific to the issue?
- 4 Based on the recognized strengths, how did those who participated and were involved contribute to the decision-making? How could those who were not involved contribute to the decision-making?
- 5 What are ways to acknowledge, respect, and maximize individuals' strengths in the decision-making process?
- 6 What alternative measures could be taken to ensure that the concerns and perspectives of individuals who were not involved are heard and considered?

$$P = (Par - Imp) \times Inf$$

Description(range)

**P:** Power of the individual in regard to the other stakeholders (-9 to 9)

**Par:** The level of participation of the individual in the decision-making process (1 to 4)

**Imp:** The degree to which the decision impacts the individual (1 to 4)

**Inf:** Their organizational influence as an individual (1 to 3)

Table 1: Questions in the reflexivity exercise

Table 2: Description of the equation 1

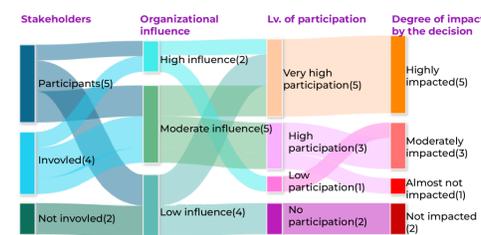


Figure 1: An example of the result that reflects participatory practice

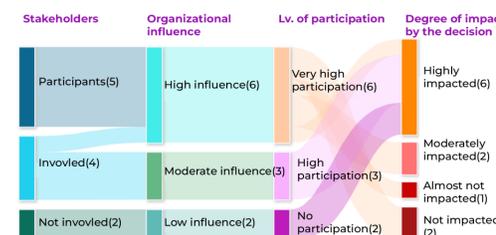


Figure 2: An example of the result that does not reflect participatory practice

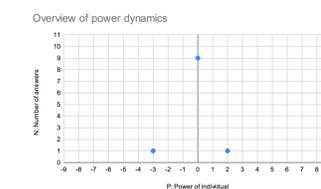


Figure 3: An example of the result that does not reflect participatory practice

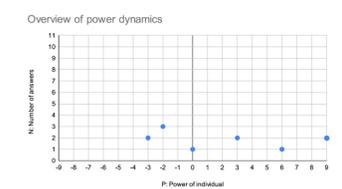


Figure 4: An example of the result that does reflect participatory practice

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