Subjective Theories about Participation at School[1]

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Abstract

Participation in decision-making in school is an essential issue of an implementation process in respect to socio-moral and democratic values. The teachers' perspectives, perceptions of all the different facets of participation in everyday life in school, are reconstructed via working out different features of participation, namely participation as handing over responsibility, enhancing and trigging conditions for participation, forms of participation, and finally consequences of participation. These central constructs are investigated in actualizing the subjective theories of four primary school teachers. The dialogue-consensus-technique is applied which consists in a reconstruction process performed in several steps: in a semi-structured interview (first measurement) and a structure-laying-technique with the essential elements (second measurement) following the guidelines of the science program of subjective theories, especially in respect to the epistemological subject model. The data analysis follows the principles of categorizing qualitative data material which is finally transformed into quantitative data. This procedure follows the methodical requirement of using mixed methods in the whole investigation.

The results show that the teachers' concepts concerning participation are quite differentiated and clearly separate between different individual concepts. The persons deem aspects linked to participation to be largely desirable. Further, the results show a positive correlation between the desirability of the elements and their necessity for success through participation. If conflicts – particularly with respect to time constraints – arise in the context of participation, teachers prefer to solve them independently. The results will be discussed and also elated to teacher training.

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1. Introduction

Traditional teaching makes students passive and is in no relation to the individual, democratic and societal needs. Such are teachers' typical answers in interviews to questions about traditional teaching in secondary school. Here are some prototypical answers (see Gastager 2003, Appendix B1B1; our translation):

- *Traditional teaching is enhancing passivity of students, that's sure, yes very sure. And the individual needs are satisfied by saying: „Wait, I'll help you and show you the way (for problem-solving, AG) once again".*
- *Yes, that's in fact clear for me, really very clear, yes it is like that: The dictator in front, who demands and wants the same from everyone. The students' tendency to escape is very, very high.*
- *The disturbances get higher and higher. Sometimes it is a power struggle between teachers and students. Learning seems to be not as important as it is intended to be.*
- *I am not convinced in that way, because in society forming from outside is strongly available. Students mention that the first time when they have the profession practical days outside. They see that from outside there are very fixed systems. And if they are not used to that and accept that, they will have big problems. If ever it is possible to have freedom, they will have difficulties in arranging in the difficulties of the society. I think both is important, the liberal and free as well as the connected things with guidelines. There is also a tendency going apart from exact laws and rules, and orders, which are also important for the (students', AG) later life.*

These examples show very well the low importance of values concerning participation like democratic understanding of designing a learning environment, of values like self-determination, autonomy of students, etc. Self-determination and self-regulated learning processes seem to be neglected in the teachers' subjective concepts, and they seem to be not so important for their teaching. One of the teachers was really convinced that an autocratic style of guidance in school is more effective than granting the learners more degrees of freedom, autonomy and open learning situations.

How do teachers really think about participation and the elements within this construct? Are there values conflicts in this regard? In the present study the values about participation are discussed. The main interest is to uncover discrepancies and imaginations about values and the maybe unclear or lower selective guiding metaphors in the head of teachers concerning participation. The teachers' values system, it is assumed, offers them a frame for orientation, so that it will be possible to find ones way in a society, in which the diverse existing possibilities are sometimes perceived like the slogan "anything goes" (cf. Oerter & Höfling, 2001, p. 27).

The following research questions will be pursued: From the point of view of the teachers,
- which kinds of positive and negative effects of participation play an important rule for teachers as well as for students?;
- which kinds of participation are desirable in primary school?;
- which strategies for solutions are used in conflict situations?

2. Participation

It is important to differentiate between social and political participation (Grasy, 2003). *Social* participation means primarily co-determining relevant issues in the closer social field; for this, developing social learning and abilities, like responsibility taking, self-consciousness, tolerance and empathy, are required. Political participation requires these competencies as well, but these are then used for issues of takeover power, political learning, and community decision making.

Participation is always some kind of a process (see Brückner, 2003, p. 94) which starts by thinking about others and being responsible for the wellbeing of others. According to Böhm (2006, 52) it is necessary for teachers that they become informed about the adequate methods and possibilities for support and not to avoid them. Because of the variety of different aspects and facets of participation it is not surprising that the subjective theories of teachers about participation are also pluralistic. For the present study we have to focus on special aspects within this plurality which is labeled by diversity.

2.1. Different facets of participation in everyday life in schooling

There is a great variety of ideas and suggestions for practicing participation in everyday life in school. Following Blanke, Madlmayr (1999, p. 43f.) distinguishes open forms, parliamentary forms and project-oriented forms of participation. Some steps on a higher level of participation which imply the aspect of co- and self-determination may be mentioned (ibid, 46f.):
- Participation designed by adults – co-determination: A lot of information is given and children take part also in the decision-making. But the base structure is designed by adults, e.g. „Kindergipfel" – a meeting of children.
- Participation designed and directed by children – self-determination: There are projects initiated and put into action by children. But adults take responsibility for the outcome.
- Self-administration: Everything is done by children in an autonomous way.

Examples might be implemented in different forms in the different countries. In any case, it is important that the children and young people practice the principles of role-taking, which is strengthening and enforcing a democratic attitude in growing children and adolescents (ibid).

In regard to the research of the present study it is necessary to distinguish prescriptive and descriptive elements of participation at primary school (see table 1 according to Wiedemair 2009, p. 43, which follows Madlmayr 1999, pp. 45-48) that are applied in the mentioned concrete forms of participation. The former address issues of what is required, what education *should* do, while the latter address what are the conditions for implementation of participation.

Table 1 about here

2.2. Participation as handing over responsibility, social perspective taking

Selman (see 1980, p. 22f.) has distinguished three parameters of social perspective taking that are important when applying participation strategies:
1. Social perspective taking includes a developing understanding of how human's points of view are related and coordinated with one another and not simply what social or psycho-

logical information may appear to be like from an alternative individual's perspective as in the construct of role taking.

2. Social perspective taking also involves a developing understanding of the intrinsic psychological characteristics and capacities of individuals. So it has an intrinsically social component.

3. Because it describes a basic understanding the self-other relationship as it develops, social perspective taking provides a theoretical infrastructure upon which the child's understanding of a significant number of social and psychological relationships can be organized; social perspective taking can be viewed as an analytic tool for the researcher as well as a key developing social-cognitive skill or ability in the child.

Hence in the context of the subjective views of the teachers about participation the handing over of responsibility is highly relevant. What does that imply at school? Depending on the situation and the competencies of the children, the teacher will hand over some fields of responsibility in the classroom. With regard to other didactic principles this methodic procedure will be a basis for common discourse: If teachers want to enhance participation, they must have a discourse oriented attitude. Examples are projects for developing new schools in which architects and students work together to find common solutions and strategies to put innovative ideas into practice. This requires discussions and decisions about values, setting priorities and adapting them to the concrete requirements of the specific school situation. The descriptive sentences are formulated in respect to the subjective opinion of a person. A discourse attitude is an adequate mean for realizing co-determination. The value decisions belonging to participation will also pick out prescriptive sentences, which are connected with societal norms and justification of values.

2.3. Constructs of participation, enhancing and trigging conditions for participation

Participation is a complex construct. In the presented study it will be separated into four fields, which are described shortly as follows:

C1: Participation as handing over responsibility: We distinguish different degrees of involvement (see Abs 2006, p. 1):
    level 1: to be informed,
    level 2: working together,
    level 3: co-designing,
    level 4: co-counseling,
    level 5: co-deciding,
    level 6: co-represent.
    The involvement with the different levels and degrees of participation corresponds with the ability and competence of the teacher to hand over responsibility, so that authentic participation may be prepared.

C2: Enhancing and trigging conditions of participation: Structural and systemic factors influence the concrete demands of daily school life, especially for the daily demands of teachers and heads.

C3: Concrete realization and forms of participation: According to the degrees of structuring we distinguish different forms which depend on the degree of open mindedness that is put into practice in the particular school. The teacher shows the disposition for handing over power to others, in our case to students.

C4: Effects of participation: The impact on all people involved in the participation process is of interest. For example the growth of autonomy and self-consciousness are positive effects, while more effort for working and the risk of mobbing may be negative aspects to be taken into account.

Overall participation implies a variety of demanding aspects and values. It is important to underline that the socio-moral values are significant to different degrees and occurrence; sometimes they are in conflict, sometimes they are put into practice in a harmonious way. The different forms of value conflict based on the distinction by Patry (1997) between intra- and interpersonal values conflicts and between goals versus means conflicts are discussed by Wiedemair (2009).

3. Subjective theories and participation

We are not going here to discuss here the concept of subjective theories in general (for details with particular concern of the approach used here see Gastager, 2003; Patry & Gastager, 2002). Instead we focus directly on the application of subjective theories to participation.

3.1. What are subjective theories with respect to participation?

Following Groeben et al. (1987) and Scheele (1990, p. 7) as well as our own approach alluded to above, the definition of subjective theory needs to take into account the general features which have been conceived for the construct of interest, participation. Using the four elements discussed in section 2.3 (C1 through C4), the definition can proceed as follows:

- Subjective theories are cognitions of a persons' view of the self and the world with respect to C1 (handing over responsibility), C2 (conditions of participation), C3 (implementation of participation), and C4 (effects of participation).
- They can be reconstructed with the dialogue-consensus-technique. The base is Habermas' (1984) requirement of an ideal speaking situation, a discourse between equal partners is practiced that puts into consideration the following principles: (a) Equal rights for the partners: The persons have to be equal partners of communication and should be able to discuss in a cooperative way. (b) Interest in the debate: The partners have to be interested in an argumentative discussion. (c) Respect for the decisions of the participants of the debate. The decisions of the participants have to be respected. (d) Consideration of the arguments of the participants: They have to speak about the arguments of the respective partner. (e) Action corresponding to their own belief systems (not religious): Participants have to undertake actions according to their conviction. The steps will be described below in the methods section.
- Subjective Theories are complex aggregates with (at least implicit) structures of argumentation. An example for such a structure is given in figure 1 (from Wiedemair, 2009, Appendix D).

Figure 1 about here.

- They are supposed to fulfill the functions of explanation, prediction and technology. This feature or demand is very similar to the functions of objective theories. The four features C1 through C4 have the respective roles of explanans and explanandum, depending on the relationship that is established.

- The acceptance of subjective theories as objective findings needs to be checked. One form of validation – the so called communicative validation, i.e., asking the subjects whether the interpretation is appropriate – has become a regular approach in research on subjective theories.

According to König and Zedler (1998, pp. 155f.) the following issues are essential:
- Subjective constructs are relevant for the respective person. This means that the subjective theories are the person's conviction and express what the person believes, not what is actually an appropriate description of the phenomena under consideration.
- Subjective data are explanations of situations based on the special constructs (here: C1 through C4). Whether these constructs are appropriate is a question of the theoretical base, and it might well be that other issues are relevant to the subjects that have not been addressed in the interview.
- Subjective goals are goals, which for a person seem to be very important.
- Subjective explanations of hypotheses express what someone assumes to account for a phenomenon in a certain situation.
- Subjective strategies are assumptions about means for reaching goals.

3.2. Meta-theoretical frame of reference

In order to understand in theoretical and methodological regard it is important to explain the meta-theoretical frame of reference in which the theoretical concept of the subjective theories is situated (see fig. 2).

Figure 2 about here.

First, we distinguish two protagonists: scientists and practitioners (teachers). Scientists deal with theories on two levels: meta-theory (epistemology, theory of science, etc.) and object theory; the latter refers to theories about education and related issues. Here we can distinguish three types of theories: background theories, nomological theories, and practical theories. Background theories are theories that are of general concern and underlying reflection for the other domains; a typical background theory (that has been used, for instance, in Gastager, 2003) is constructivism, another is Habermas' concept of an ideal communication situation presented above. A nomological theory is a theory of the type "if x, then y" that can be used to explain phenomena. A practical theory is of the type "in order to achieve y, one can do x*". Although it seems to contain the same elements as the nomological theories (x and y), it is not just a reformulation of the latter because the x component is an action (therefore called "x*" here) while in a nomological theory it is a theoretical term. Some issues of the relationship between the two types of theories have been discussed by Patry and Perrez (1982).

With respect to the practitioners one can distinguish subjective theories which, as mentioned above, have the same structure and functions as scientific theories although their status of confirmation is completely different (Perrez, 1991). Based on these subjective theories, we assume, the subject will decide how he or she will act in a concrete situation.

3.3. Coherence and contrast: Hypotheses

The argumentation patterns contain positive and negative relations between the elements (see fig. 1 for an example). We assume that subjective theories have some kind of internal consis-

tency, i.e., that there are few contradictions. One reason to assume this is Festinger's (1957) theory that people have the tendency to avoid cognitive dissonance. This means that elements that are close to participation have little contradictions – in other words, they have more positive than negative relationships. On the other hand, contradicting concepts should also be reflected in the subjective theories.

On the other hand, however, teaching situations are too complex to be completely free of contradictions. Many things are desirable that cannot be achieved. In particular, Patry and Hofmann (1998) found that teachers often would like to give autonomy to their students (which would include participation) but that they actually do not do it – there is a gap between what they think (subjective theory, E in fig. 2) and what they do (action, F in fig. 2), and this gap is much larger with regard to autonomy than to content education and disciplinary actions. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H1: The relationship between the elements which belong to the aggregate „desirability” shows counterparts as well as antagonism.

H2: Between desirable and non-desirable elements contrasts dominate.

One particular contrast is between participation and desirability. The research mentioned in the introduction as well as Patry and Hofmann suggest that teachers have difficulties practicing participation, and there are several reasons for that (see also Hofmann & Patry, 1999). Hence we assume a special contrast in this regard.

H3: There is a negative correlation between the rating for participation and the rating for desirability.

Finally, contrasts of the different kinds need solutions so that the subject can avoid cognitive dissonance. Given the supposed priority of non-participation on the practical level, we assume that the teachers' preferred solutions are to favor the latter possibility.

H4: If there emerge conflicts or contrasts, then they are solved in favor of non-participation.

4. Methods

To test these hypotheses the subjective theories of four primary school teachers were reconstructed and analyzed (see Wiedemair, 2009). The data analysis follows the principles of categorizing qualitative data material which is finally transformed into quantitative data. This procedure follows the methodical requirement of using mixed methods in the whole investigation.

In figure 3 the different steps are presented; we distinguish between the reconstruction phases (data collection) and analyzing phases (data analysis):

(1) The subjects have a concrete educational practice on which they draw for their subjective theories.

(2) In a semi-structured interview, the central subjective concepts with respect to the constructs on interest (here: C1 through C4) are asked for. The concept for the interview follows the principles according to Scheele and Groeben (1988). Concerning each interesting construct (C1 through C4), three types of questions are asked:

    a. Neutral questions are formulated, in which the interviewed person gets the possibility to express the actual and possible knowledge. These questions are open and demand

definitions, variables, effects, etc. Example: What do you understand by concept x, concept y? What are the effects of x and y?

    b. Hypothesis orientated questions: They contain possibilities of dimensions, which are connected with the object theory (C or D in fig. 3). The interviewed person is free to take this offer or to refuse them. Example: … If yes, why? If no, why?

    c. Disturbing Questions: The interviewing person offers explanations and alternative-hypotheses (or optional hypotheses) that are in contrast to the respective object theories. So the interviewed person has to look at his or her thesis via alternative hypotheses. Resistance is caused concerning different and certain elements.

(3) The interviews are recorded (transcripts).

(4) The crucial elements of the subject are identified and written on cards, and the subjects are informed about the further procedure. The basic records of the interviews are pre-structured by two independent researchers with focus on importance concerning the theoretical background and the subjective estimation for importance. The researchers discuss the pre-structured elements until they achieve consensus in dialogue about the elements to be used.

(5) In the second session, the subject have three tasks:

    a. They acknowledge or reject the elements identified in 4.

    b. They rate the elements with regard to the degree they deal with participation and to desirability.

    c. They lay the structure network. This is the central step in the assessment: the laying of the structure to achieve a network of elements in a picture (see fig. 2). Elements with which the subject does not agree might be eliminated.

(6) The structure is recorded.

(7) The structure is translated in an analysis matrix (Patry & Gastager, 2002). For this an Excel program has been developed. The rating values and all the different possibilities for argumentation expressed in four forms of operators (connecting the elements, argumentation-patterns) are counted and finally expressed in relative frequencies, which are basis for confirming (strengthening) or refuting (weakening) the hypotheses.

(8) The subject is shown the recorded structure and is asked whether this represents his or her subjective theory adequately in the sense of communicative validation.

5. Results
5.1. Representative statements

First we want to give some representative statements of teachers with respect to different issues mentioned in section 3 (comments when laying the structures, step 5 in fig. 3). The teachers' statements are in italics; the statements were in German and are translated according to the sense, not to the exact wording.

Definition of participation: For a primary-school-teacher the construct participation is related to *codetermination,* for another to *co-designing the lectures for the students*, for still another it is related to *opening the classroom* and finally for the fourth investigated teacher it might be related to *granting liberty in the classroom as well as among the teaching staff of the school.*

Different ways of solving conflicts: After subject has laid an opposition between „*free-work and chaos",* the interviewer asks for an explanation. *Well, too much free-work I wouldn't like to have in my lectures: If the children are working freely, then it is important that it is tidy. I*

mean that I don't accept any chaos when we do the free work. The chaos is inhibited, because I establish a clear framework. Everything is clear, the children know the rules very well, they know where the learning material can be found, how they have to behave during the free work and so on. I formulated the rules without asking the students. The rules are very important, otherwise it does not work.

Another teacher argues with respect to his contrast between "*guidelines vs. being to be able to articulate*": *I think the parents have to be informed when school starts about the goals of this level/class and the goals of the different subjects. Also the students should be informed through an overview like that. So they can see what has to be done and what they need, so that they can go to the secondary school. The children realize that this is important and they articulate that. (...) Reading is important because often it is neglected, so we have events like reading-nights, letter-events and things like that. The children have possibilities to commit on the different stages and to design the stages as they like. For me it is important that they learn to read in a playing manner o that they don't have the feeling to be constrained for all the learning, but they like and appreciate doings things and perform achievements.*

Effects of participation: The results of open teaching, where students could decide between different topics and material according to their interest, are to the opinion of one teacher *integration of the students and on the other hand an adaption of the topics to the interest of the students,* for a second teacher it *includes a high degree of participation such as: for a teacher it is easier to teach, for the students/pupils learning includes more pleasure, that means more motivation.* For a third teacher the results of open teaching with a high level of participation are that *the students develop more independence in learning and the students will be more conscientious in their behavior.*

Subjective goals: *For me an important goal in the context of participation in knowledge acquisition is that I as a teacher think that the students are capable of creating new steps in the knowledge acquisition-process.* For another teacher an important goal in participation in knowledge acquisition is that *the students may use different offers in the learning process, e.g. in solving a certain mathematical problem, but relevant is when maybe a tandem of two students work on a certain project (example of the queried teacher: south Africa), that to the teacher it is understandable that they are working really in serious on the part-topics of the project.*

Subjective explanations of hypotheses: The question arises whether it is possible that democratic patterns of participation in our society are transferred to lecturing in primary school. One teacher means that *children want to take responsibility, they want to co-determine and stick to their decisions.* Another teacher means that *democratic patterns of participation may be used automatically by the students without practicing any co-determining in the classroom, which means that children elect a leader without any discussion of elections.*

Subjective strategies: *Participation is facilitated by means of self organization of the students in the learning process. Parents play an important role in that kind of endeavor. If children have practiced co-determination in their family-life, when living together at home, it is very positive to use methods with a high degree of participation at school. For instance parents*

support the teacher in practicing town-rallies or town-games. Parents work in different stations / places of the project, the take photos and organize some exhibitions.

These possibilities prefer reaching the goal in learning as well as in social – and adaptive – competence (learning principle of the OECD/CERI for designing an innovative learning environment, see Boekaerts 2008/2009) of participation.

5.2. General result

Table 2 shows the relations between elements that the four subjects used in their structure. As can be seen, the number is quite different, between 85 and 124. The positive relations (a: unidirectional, x is positive for y; c: bidirectional, x and y are mutually positive on each other) are clearly more frequent than the negative ones (b: unidirectional; d: bidirectional); bidirectional negative relations are least frequent, for two teachers there are no such relationships at all.

With regard to the hypotheses the results are as follows:

H1: The relationship between the elements which belong to the aggregate „desirability" shows counterparts as well as antagonism. The ratings for „desirability" by the four teachers (ratings in step 5b) show for all teachers that most of the elements are judged as desirable. Between the desirable elements, the number of relationships is between 42 and 103. The majority is positive (a or c); the number of negative relationships is between 1% and 17% of all relationships between desirable elements.

While the hypotheses postulated that there are also negative relationships, only teacher 3 had a substantial yet still very small percentage, the others had between 1% and 8%. This means that the hypothesis is confirmed and that the inclusion of negative relations might not be necessary for all teachers.

H2: Between desirable and non-desirable elements contrasts dominate. Overall, the number of relationships between elements that were rated as desirable and elements that were rated as not desirable is much smaller than the number of relationships between desirable elements (between 6 and 19), and the majority is negative (between 46% and 100%). Again, one teacher shows a slightly different pattern than the other ones (this time it is teacher 4), but in general the hypothesis can be considered as tentatively confirmed. It can be said that a similar pattern applies for the relationships between elements that were rated as "high in participation" and elements that were rated "low in participation"; again teacher 4 had the highest percentage of positive relationships (39%).

H3: There is a negative correlation between the rating for participation and the rating for desirability. Spearman correlations were calculated for each teacher individually; the correlations were between the rating of desirability of the elements and rating of closeness to participation for the same elements. The results show that the correlations are highly significant:
Person 1: r=.81
Person 2: r=.83
Person 3: r=.48
Person 4: r=.76

However, in contrast to the hypothesis, the correlations are positive, which means that the higher an element's closeness to participation, the higher its desirability. Therefore the hypothesis is clearly refuted.

H4: If there emerge conflicts or contrasts, then they are solved in favor of non-participation. To test this hypothesis a qualitative content analysis is done. The different possibilities for solving a problem are allocated to a certain category. Basis for this process are the transcripts. In table 3 an overview of the analysis is presented. The different conflicts with the corresponding strategies for solutions are presented. In the column 'example' a summarized statement is presented. E.g. it is shown that the strategies for solutions which are in the category "teacher's decision" are mentioned by the teachers themselves; only one of the persons mentioned that for itself it is the best to ask for help and support from outside.

The results show that all four teachers practice both types of solutions, sometimes for conflicts that are put under the same label (e.g., boundaries vs. motivation: teacher's decision with respect to subject matter, discourse for social issues). There seems to be a certain tendency to non-participatory decision making when subject matter issues are at stake (including time pressure, discipline, etc.) while in domains where the teachers have more freedom (less pressure from the curriculum etc.) they are more willing to practice participation. This indicates that it is not appropriate to say, simply, "this teacher support participation", "this teacher does not", but rather one must consider the situation in which this decision is taken.

6. Conclusions

In sum we can say that the hypotheses are confirmed for H1 (tendency), H2 and H4 (partly), while H3 is clearly refuted. Obviously the teachers who participated in the study are more positively inclined in favor of participation than we anticipated (hypothesis 3). However, it seems that they still have problems putting participation into work, particularly when external strains become important. This confirms the results of Hofmann and Patry (1999) about autonomy: The teachers would like to do it, but they think they cannot, for several reasons which were not addressed in this study. It seems also that the teachers recognize the importance of participation for motivation, interest in the subject matter, etc., and for social learning etc.

Looking at table 3 one can assume that it is not appropriate to foster participation under all conditions. There are domains where clearly the teacher should decide, such as to avoid endless discussions etc. Nevertheless one can imagine procedures that are less teacher-determined for solving such problems. It might well be necessary to do more specific research on participation, not only with respect to general issues like in Abs' (2006) participation cube (forms, modi, and social groups), but particularly with respect to decision situations in which participation are appropriate and when it is not.

From this one can ask two questions. The first deals with whether the conditions in school are such that participation is possible in all domains where it is appropriate. The results allude to the possibility that the teachers do not think that they can practice participation in the present classrooms. Maybe to foster participation it would be important to make evident what options they have to have to do so – it is likely that they have more possibilities than they think.

Maybe life becomes more complicated if they do so – they may be confronted with the opposition of parents, fellow teachers, principals, and school administrator, but still the effort might be worth it.

The second issue is whether the teachers know what possibilities they have to practice participation. It would be the task of teacher training or teacher continuing education to provide them with the necessary tools to grant autonomy to the students. We have no doubt that such participation is beneficial for the students. The question, then, becomes how to implement an appropriate participation.

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Wiedemair, A. 2009: Partizipation in der Volksschule. Eine Analyse Subjektiver Theorien von Lehrern. Masterarbeit zur Erlangung des Mastergrades an der Kultur- und Geisteswissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Salzburg.

Tables

Prescriptive elements of participation	Descriptive elements of participation
At primary school a consciousness for responsibility should be established (curriculum).	Changed childhood
Children have the right for participation in each kind of issues that concerns them (UNCRC, 1990, article 12.1).	Co-determination of children
Children should be encouraged and promoted according to their developing stage (curriculum).	Cognitive development Development of perspective taking Moral development
Children should have the opportunity for co-determining according to their age and to their development (Curriculum).	Different degrees of involvement
Plurality instead of oafishness (general axiom of education).	Diverse forms of participation
The teacher has the duty to stimulate social learning (curriculum; UNCRC, 1990, article 29).	Emerging of different social abilities for acting like autonomy, responsibility taking, conflict-culture, identification with rules
The personal point of view of children has to be considered (cf. UNCRC, 1990, article 12.2).	Discussing attitude of the teacher

Table 1: Prescriptive and descriptive elements of participation at primary school (adapted from Wiedemair, 2009, p.43)

Relations	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4
a	42 (38%)	19 (17%)	41 (48%)	64 (52%)
b	20 (18%)	9 (8%)	16 (19%)	26 (21%)
c	38 (35%)	86 (75%)	28 (33%)	30 (24%)
d	10 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (3%)
Total	**110 (100%)**	**114 (100%)**	**85 (100%)**	**124 (100%)**

Table 2: Absolute and relative frequencies of the relations expressed in operators;
Operators:
a: unidirectional positive
b: unidirectional negative
c: bidirectional positive
d: bidirectional negative

	Conflict	Category of solution	Example
Teacher 1	Free work vs. chaos	Teacher's decision	Teacher defines rules
	Curricular pressure vs. motivation	Discourse	Taking up students' ideas (deepening concepts)
	Strict guidance vs. autonomy	Teacher's decision	Teacher determines the steps to be performed
Teacher 2	Endless discussions vs. Time constraints	Teacher's decision Discourse	Teacher defines constraints Children intervene
	Rooms vs. doing oneself	Discourse	Finding solution for the room problem together
	Autonomy vs. exact guidelines	Teacher's decision	Teacher defines the tasks
Teacher 3	Expenditure vs. projects	Delegation	Teachers asks for help for the project
	Guidance vs. diligent working	Teacher's decision	Teacher decides when what has to be done
	Boundaries vs. motivation	Teacher's decision Discourse	Little discussion (subject matter) Joint finding of boundaries (social domain)
Teacher 4	Keeping in the background vs. guidance	Teacher's decision	Restricting the children's tasks through weekly or daily plans (subject matter)
	Time pressure vs. students' interests	Teacher's decision Discourse	Choosing subject matters Considering the children (teaching of specific subjects)
	Guidance vs. being able to articulare oneself	Discourse	Children can play a part in the stations

Table 3: Strategies for solutions of teachers in conflict-situations (Wiedemair 2009, 106)
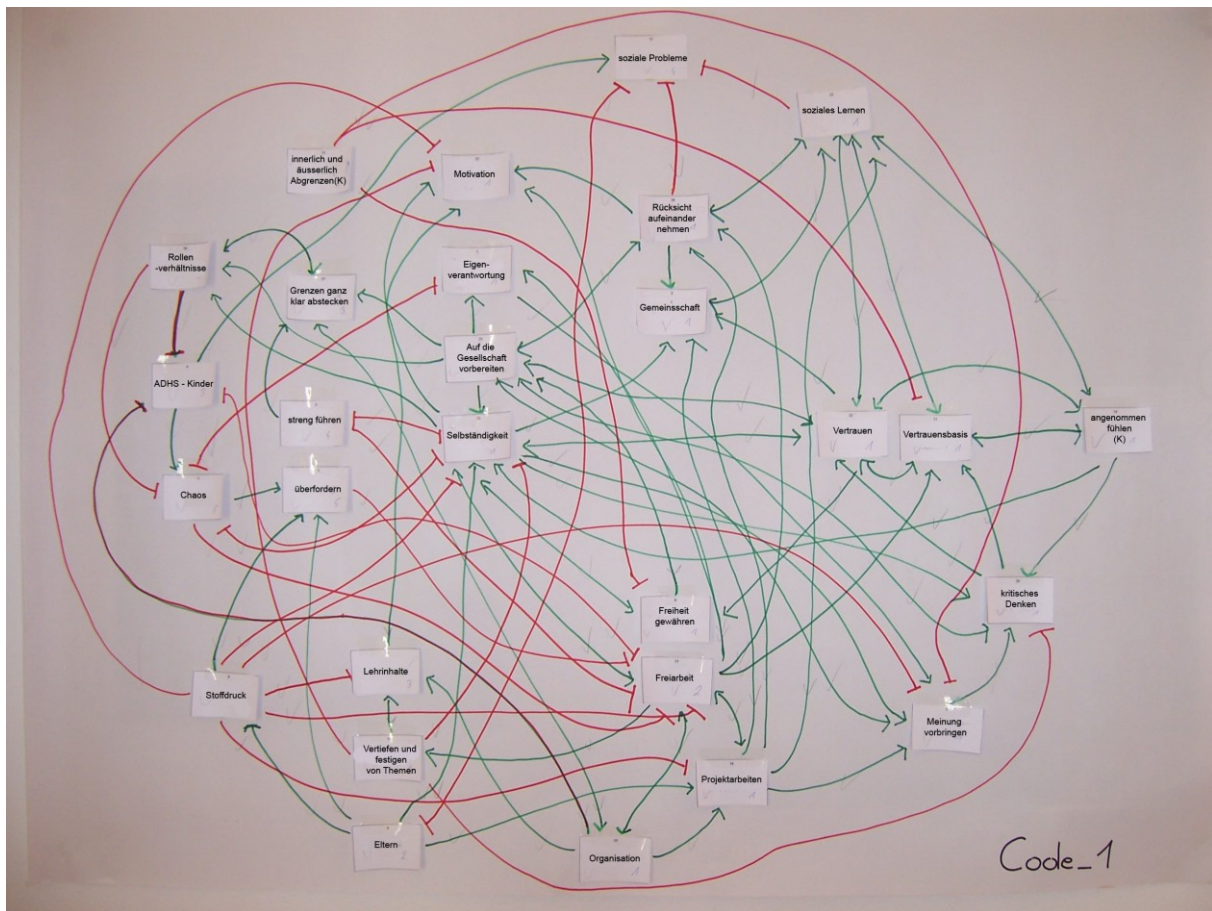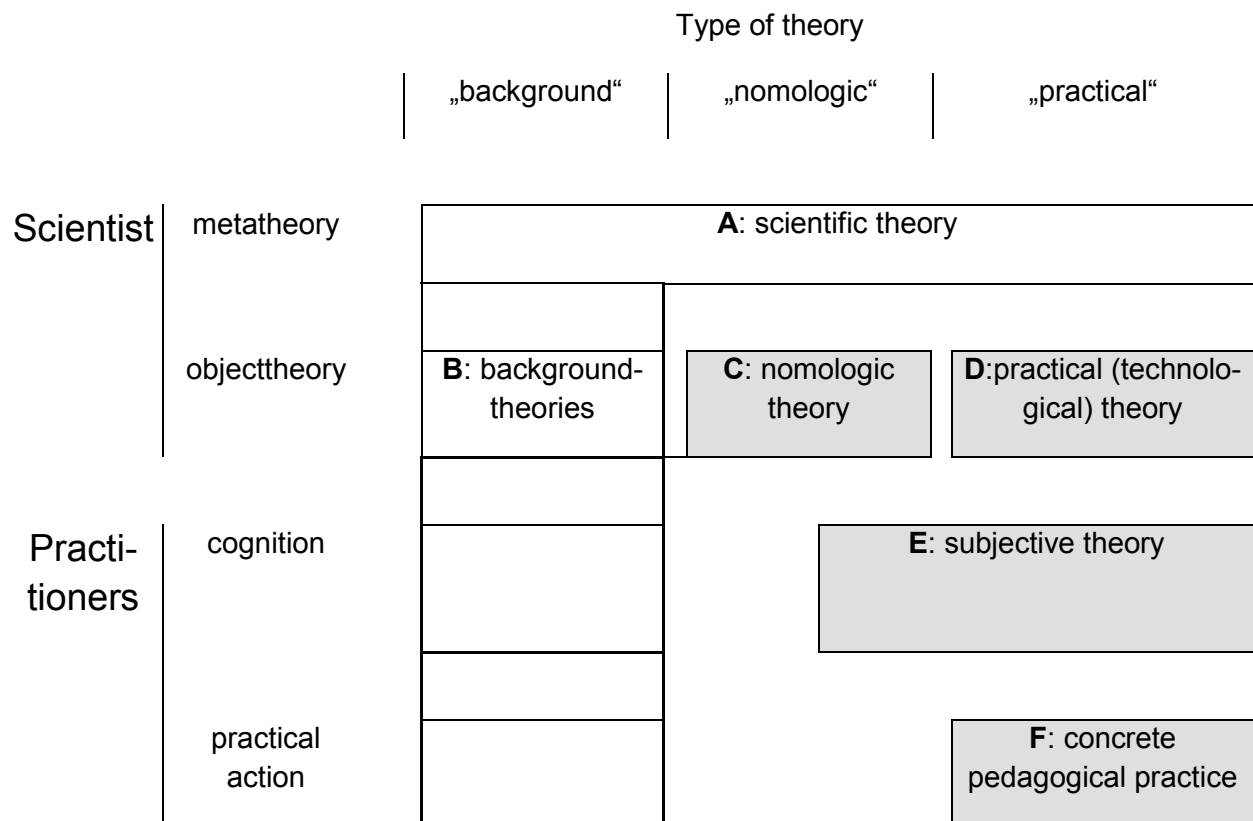
Figures:

Figure 1: Structure by Subject 1

Figure 2: The different scientific-theoretical and subjective-theoretical levels and their connection (see Gastager & Patry, 2000, p. 7)

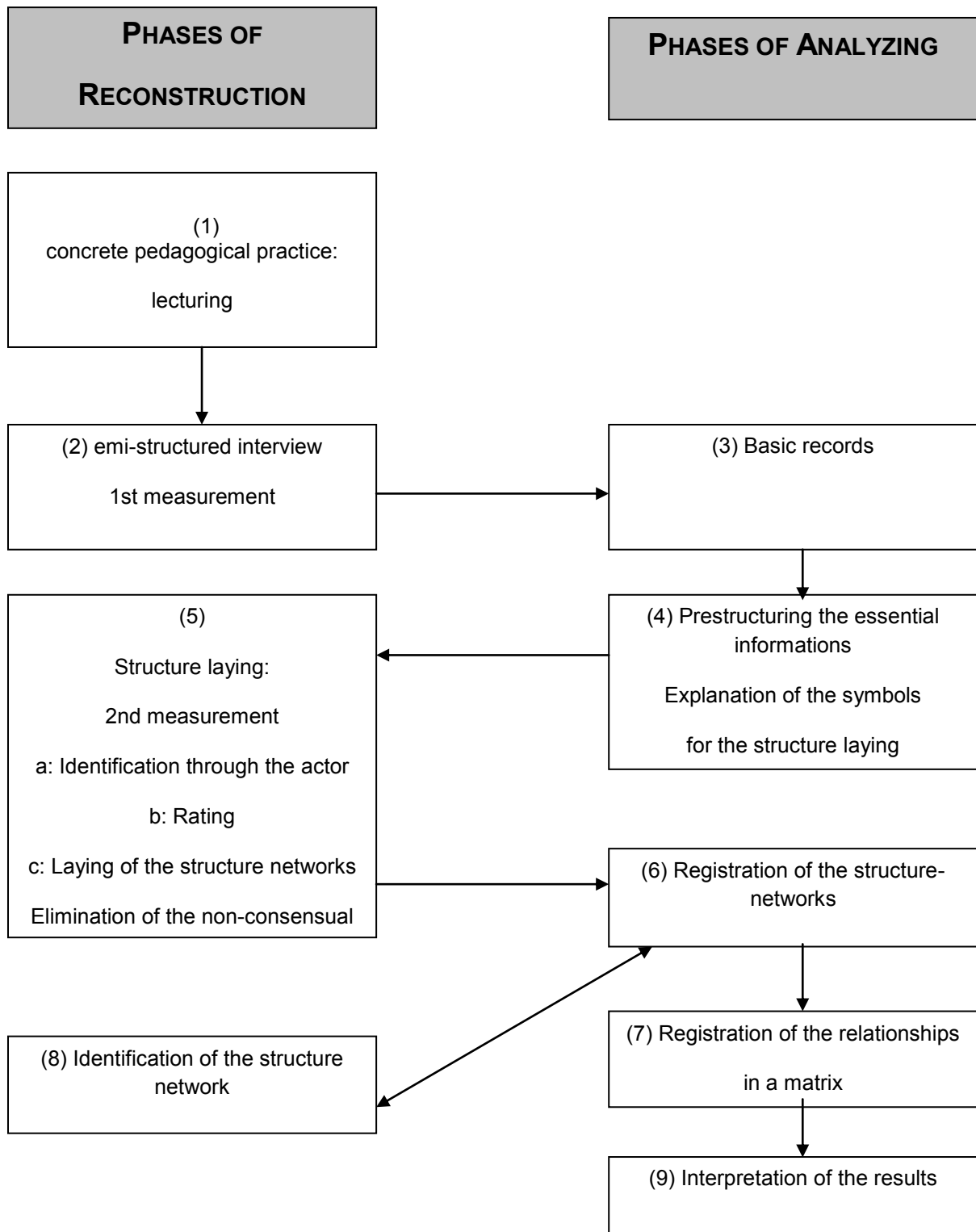| PHASES OF RECONSTRUCTION	PHASES OF ANALYZING
(1) concrete pedagogical practice: lecturing	
(2) emi-structured interview 1st measurement	**(3)** Basic records
(5) Structure laying: 2nd measurement a: Identification through the actor b: Rating c: Laying of the structure networks Elimination of the non-consensual	**(4)** Prestructuring the essential informations Explanation of the symbols for the structure laying
(8) Identification of the structure network	**(6)** Registration of the structure-networks
	(7) Registration of the relationships in a matrix
	(9) Interpretation of the results

Figure 3: Procedure of the investigation with the dialogue-consensus-technique (see Gastager, 2003, Gastager, 2007)