Aalborg Universitet

Participation and power. Between constraint and empowerment in organizational action research

Kristiansen, Marianne; Bloch-Poulsen, Jørgen

Publication date:
2011

Document Version
Early version, also known as pre-print

Link to publication from Aalborg University

Citation for published version (APA):
Kristiansen, M., & Bloch-Poulsen, J. (2011). *Participation and power. Between constraint and empowerment in organizational action research.*

Participation as power
- **Between constraint and empowerment in organizational action research**

Marianne Kristiansen & Jørgen Bloch-Poulsen

Abstract

The paper presents some critical reflections on participation in relation to three dialogic action research projects in Danish organizations: Bang& Olufsen, 1995-1999; The Faculty of Science and Engineering, Aalborg University, 2004-2008; Danfoss Solar Inverters, Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC), and Citizen Service, the Municipality of Silkeborg, 2008-2009. These reflections are based on an understanding of participation as power.

Firstly, the paper presents different ways of understanding participation in organizational (action) research. They include participatory learning theory, action science, critical utopian action research, and dialogic action research to which we have contributed.

Secondly, it discusses four questions focusing on different power structures and power mechanisms.

We call these questions power questions. We do not only understand power as a possession in a hierarchical structure, but also as different kinds of mechanisms contributing to expanding or constraining the scope of action in organizations, i.e. to empowerment or to constraint.

The article points at the importance of developing a participatory epistemology which critically reflects on participation as power in concrete organizational action research projects.

Purpose: some power questions

This article deals with action research in organizations (Reason & Bradbury, 2008; Nielsen & Svensson, 2006; Gunnarsson, Johannisson & Stjernberg, 2008; Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2005). Even though there is a particular participatory action research approach (PAR), several newer approaches to action research understand themselves as participatory (Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Svensson, Ellström & Brulin, 2007). The purpose of this paper is to discuss and reflect on participation in organizational action research from a power perspective. In particular, we inquire into the following power questions:

Is it possible to become a participant in a process presented as a managerial mafia offer which employees cannot decline?

Is it possible for critical utopian action researchers to enter into a dialogue with participants whom they understand as alienated?

Can you be a participant in a process in which researcher interpretations work hierarchically positioning researchers as uppers and participants as lowers?

Has the concept of participation been usurped by repressive tolerance?

Having worked as action researchers for several years, we think it is a challenge to address the fields of power indicated in the questions above   between the managers and employees with whom we collaborate in organizations and us as action researchers, between main stream research and action research etc. We call the above questions power questions, because we do not only understand power as a possession in a hierarchical structure, but also as various discursive power mechanisms contributing to expanding or confining the scope of action in organizations, i.e. to empowerment or constraint (Foucault, 2000; Gøhler, 2009).

The article has to purposes:

Firstly, it presents different ways of understanding power in organizational (action) research. They include participatory learning theory, action science, critical utopian action research and dialogic action research, to which we have contributed.

Secondly, it reflects on the above mentioned questions which focus on power structures and mechanisms in different ways.

The first and the second purpose share an understanding of participation as power.

Different ways of understanding of participation

Initially, we present four different ways of understanding the concept of participation which might create different results in concrete projects. They are participatory learning theory, action science, critical utopian action research and dialogic action research.

Within learning theory, it seems that two paradigms are fighting against each other (Fenwick, 2008; Huzzard, 2004). A classical teaching paradigm understands the learner as a passive recipient, audience or object; a more participatory one understands the learner as a subject participating in joint meaning making processes. This is expressed in theories of workplace learning (Evans et al., 2006), situational learning (Wenger, 2000), organizational learning (Rothmann & Friedman, 2001), practice-based innovation as learning (Ellström, 2010), and practice-based theorizing of learning in general (Gherardi, 2000). We wonder if participation understood as joint learning means something different or more than the antithesis of a passive, recipient audience? Does it imply questioning of constraining power mechanisms (Chambers, 1995)?

In action science (Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985), it is basic hypothesis that there is a difference between what the participants, the so-called client system, says and does. The espoused value of the client system is model II (*very learning*?), their theory-in-use is model II (limited learning). They make "fancy footwork" and practice different organizational defence mechanisms. Action science researchers try to convince their partners that they do and help them to break this pattern (Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Schön, 1996). The purpose of participation in action science seems to be a changed mindset among the participants to improve congruence between their espoused values and theories-in-use.

In Danish, critical-utopian action research (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2006), the hypothesis seems to be that the participants are alienated, i.e. influenced by a false, materially based consciousness. Action researchers and participants cooperate to emancipate them from alienation in order to promote empowerment to a larger extent.

We ask critically if the concept of participation can be applied to action science and critical-utopian action research, because these approaches seem to have a hierarchical hypothesis which apriori endow the researchers with the power to interpret the participants as either defensive or alienated. By doing so the researchers might be said to act as uppers and the participants as lowers (Chambers, 1997).

In our dialogic, organizational action research projects, we have developed an understanding of participation based on differences and joint project work (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2010; Bloch-Poulsen, 2010). We understand all participants as different groups of professionals: employees, mangers, and action researchers. As professionals, we have different, but compatible as well as shared goals. We produce three kinds of results: concrete improvements or practical results, a better way of organizing processes and improving conversations, and co-creation of new conceptual understanding. In practice, these three kinds of results or goals are not separated, but integrated as well as equally important.

By using the concept of professionals, we hope to avoid the hierarchy implied in the distinction between researchers and practitioners and to question the concept of joint learning in this distinction. Later examples will show that changing words does not change practice.

In our projects, we have co-developed of a concept of dialogue, which we define as special qualities in conversations when professionals meet characterized by share, dare and care (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2005). The participants do not in advance make a decision. Through a dissensus approach, we initiate an inquiry and sometimes reach a joint decision (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2010).
Due to this, we define participation as a combination of dialogic inquiry and co-determination, meaning participating in joint decisions.

We think power mechanisms will always be active between action researchers and our partners. If we use Bohm´s (1996) asymmetrical distinction between dialogue (joint inquiry) and discussion (persuasion based on decisions already made), we think all action researchers are situated within a changing field of tensions between dialogue and

discussion in relation to their partners. Do we enter into a dialogue or a discussion? Do we participate in their project, do they participate in our project, or do different professionals participate in joint projects? The answers to these questions are not simple, because they depend, too, on changing contexts and processes. Thus, we understand participation as power in a field of tension between empowerment and constraint.

Is it possible to become a participant in a process presented as a managerial mafia offer employees cannot decline?

As mentioned above, we define participation as dialogic co-determination. In our projects, we have experienced it to be difficult to walk the talk.

In 2004-2006, we carried through an action research project on colleague coaching with 8 teams at the Science and Engineering Faculty of Aalborg University. The project was financed by the Danish State Center of Quality and Competence Development (SCKK).

A new project with the same teams, financed, too, by SCKK, was launched in 2006-2008. When initiating the project in 2006, one team did not want to participate. They had learned from the former project that it meant extra meetings in spite of the fact that they had benefited from the project. Now, they faced a heavy work load and did not have time to participate. The tension between the logic of production and development (Ellström, 2002) characterizing many organizational action research projects became very obvious. As action researchers, we understood their decision and did not want the project to become ours or the managers. The team decision was logical: we are said to be self-managing, so we must decide if we want to participate or not. However, the senior director decided that they should ´participate´. We organized a meeting with the team and the senior director. He did not change his decision, but it was decided that the relationship between the teams and management were to be prioritized in the new project.

In retrospect 5 years later, we think we made a principal mistake as action researchers. In the first project from 2004-2006, we had criticized the concept of self-managing teams, because it reduces management to dialogue. We thought the concept of co-managing team would be more adequate, because it emphasizes that teams must test their degree of participation continuously. In this situation, we gave way to our theoretical and practical point of view meaning that participation only made sense if employees co-determined project goals and participation in the project. By doing so, the action research project became an organizational development project. We think participation gave way to involvement understood as a managerial tool (Nielsen, 2004).

As organizational action researchers, we face these kinds of tensions systematically. They deal with power structures and power mechanisms. The manager used his structural power to enforce his decision of involving the team in the project. As action researchers, we became part of a power mechanism in relation to the manger and the team. This meant that the managerial point of view was included, while the team´s own point of view was excluded. We tried to practice joint learning with the manager and the team, but this did not make the project participatory.

Is it possible for critical utopian action researchers to enter into a dialogue with participants whom they understand as alienated? Can an alienated person be a participant?

We agree with Nielsen & Nielsen (2006) when they write that the following challenge is critical:

> The general question is how Action Research – and research as such – can practice a necessary *critique of authoritarian or technocratic elements in society of today and tomorrow?* (p. 65)

However, we are concerned about the concept of participation when critical utopian action researchers understand ´the others´ as alienated in a Marxist sense (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2006, p. 71).

To what an extent is it possible to understand partners as participants if they are described as alienated? How do action researchers avoid Marx´s (1968) authoritarian idea of the philosophers as the head of the revolution and the working class as its heart, whose naivety must be enlightened by philosophical thinking, if this thinking is applied to the relationship between action researchers and practitioners:

> Wie die Philosophie im Proletariat ihre *materiellen*, so findet das Proletariat in der Philosophie seine *geistigen* Waffen, und sobald der Blitz des Gedankens gründlich in diesen naiven Volksboden eingeschlagen ist, wird sich die Emanzipation der *Deutschen* zu *Menschen* vollziehen (p. 223).

Deetz (2001) argues that critical theory can be understood as an elite/apriori approach compared to a local/emergent approach. We think the concept of alienation works as a power mechanism positioning some points of view as legitimate and superior while others, i.e. the alienated ones, per become false.

Future labs are the preferred working method of critical utopian action research. It seems to claim that power relations can be removed by making rules of the game that contribute to make participants equal (Nielsen, 2006):

> … the workshop is facilitated by specific rules of communication in order to create communication on an equal base and eliminate the influence of power relations in the communication between the participants (p. 103).

We understand this point of view as a power mechanism and will give an example from an action research project on Employee Driven Innovation in Teams (EDIT) where we cooperated with 18 teams at Danfoss Solar Inverters, Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC), and Citizen Service, The Municipality of Silkeborg during 2008-2009 (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2010). It was our hypothesis that employees in the teams have an innovative potential, because they know where the shoe pinches; this potential might be released in dialogues if the team and we cooperated with our different

competences. These dialogues took places at Dialogic Helicopter Team Meetings where we focused on improving work routines in teams.

The example below is from a meeting in Team Children, Citizens Service, The Municipality of Silkeborg. The team is co-producing a new work routine in cooperation with us as action researchers. The team consists of two subgroups working with two different fields of expertise: maternity and family benefits. It is their goal that the experts within maternity will be able to serve citizens within family benefits at a simple level (level 1), too, before September, and vice versa. Hanne is worried if this implies that they are supposed to be experts within both fields and to serve citizens at the highest level (level 3) within maternity as well as family benefits (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2010):

> Marianne: Are there any reservations about the proposal?
> Hanne: I am wondering if our goal is that we shall reach level 1 before September [on the other professional discipline]. I think it is okay to talk about serving in both disciplines, but if we are going to do that, then we shall very rapidly jump to level 3.
> Some colleagues: No
> Hanne: You will very rapidly risk getting those questions where you'll become a nincompoop.
> Lone: I do not think so. Our goal is level 1 by September [for everybody in the other professional discipline]. What we are trying to solve now is that we do not tie up two persons at the front desk.
> Hanne: Okay, yes.
> Jørgen: Were you persuaded by what Lone said? I did not understand it completely myself …
> Lone: I understood you thought we might be speeding up the process?
> Hanne: I did.
> Lone: I do not think we are going to do that and I do not think we should. One needs time to read the templates and to adjust them. So, I still think our goal is level 1 by September [not level 3].
> Hanne: Okay.

Is Hanne convinced? Classical phenomenologists would answer the question with a yes: she is convinced, because she says so. Yet, several social psychological research studies on groups point towards group think (Janis, 1982), authoritarian relationships (Milgram, 1974), conformity towards group consensus (Asch, 1952), etc. It is our point of view that you cannot know with certainty. You cannot be sure if Hanne does not comply with a power mechanism being created in this context to establish team consensus excluding her original point of view. Accordingly, we consider the belief in the possibility of agreeing on a guideline to suspend power relations in itself a power mechanism potentially constraining alternative point of views.

Our research results indicate that you cannot eliminate organizational power relations or power mechanisms in the cooperation between researchers, managers, and employees. At most, action research can try to make these power relations and mechanisms transparent. This can be difficult, though, because they might not be clear to you while engaging in the process. One way of coping with this challenge is to practice first person

action research, self critically inquiring into your own authoritarian and technocratic tendencies unfolding in your practice (Arieli, Friedman & Agbaria, 2009; Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2004). It is our experience that power mechanisms cannot be suspended by guidelines, but must be reflected on in concrete ways in specific projects.

Can an employee or a manager be a participant in a process in which researcher interpretations work hierarchically positioning researchers as uppers and participants as lowers?

In Scandinavian interactive research, Argyris, Putnam & Smith (1985), among others, are referred to as an example of collaborative inquiry characterized by "equitable and mutual relationships" between researchers and their partners(Svensson, Ellström & Brulin, 2007, p. 238). We, too, find a dialogic intention in Argyris, Putnam & Smith (1985). Nevertheless, a closer reading of the sequences of the conversations between the action scientist, characterized as "the instructor", and the participants seems to indicate that these conversations are closer to a discussion than a dialogue. It is our interpretation that the action scientists discuss with the participants trying as instructors to convince them about problems and inadequacies in their mindsets. This is the case in this description of the participant, George:

> In response to the instructor's critique, George mobilized several lines of defense, each one deflecting his responsibility for the actions and outcomes that the instructor had described. Yet each time George brought forth a new line of defense, the instructor rendered his new position unacceptable by George's own standards (Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985, p.128)

Thus, there seems to be a difference between Argyris et al.'s espoused value of co-inquiring into the different points of view on an equal footing and their actual theory-in-use. This is characterized by a discussion oriented, Socratic practice of pointing at inconsistencies between espoused values and theories-in-use in the client system.

Generally speaking, it seems as if the action science approach of Argyris, Putnam & Smiths (1985) is characterized by a classical researcher-practitioner-hierarchy. They use a doctor-patient-metaphor to describe the relation between researcher and practitioner. Moreover, the practitioners are described as practicing "organizational defence mechanisms". This includes anti-learning "fancy footwork" (Argyris, 1998). Alternatively, the practitioners are presented as co-learners and co-researchers (Argyris & Schön, 1996). Thus, it seems as if participation and collaborative inquiry is their espoused value, while the expert-, instructor-, or doctor metaphor is their theory in-use. We understand this discrepancy as a power mechanism.

From1995-1999, we carried through an action research process with the R&D department at Bang & Olufsen (B&O), DK. En route, we agreed to videotape and give feedback to a series of live employee appraisal interviews. Our feedback conversations were videotaped, too. As mentioned elsewhere (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2004), we were appalled to observe how we interpreted a young employee as dependent, lacking

initiative, because his communication in the employee appraisal interview was not in line with a theory with we were developing at that time.

Based on analyses of this and other conversations, we coined the concept of self referentiality (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2004, 2005). It refers to how action researchers and participants seem to translate the different perspectives of their conversational partners into their own apriori categories and ways of relating, apparently without knowing it. Using Chamber's (1997) concepts, we positioned ourselves as uppers in the feedback conversation. We practiced restricted empathy with the young employee who was in doubts about the rules of the game at his first employee appraisal interview. It was not until later, that we questioned our interpretations of him thus positioning him as a lower. We think we treated him the way George was treated in Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985). Our espoused values of emergent, mutual involvement, joint learning, and research with (and not on) were contradicted by our theory-in-use in this situation. We should have suspended our new theory and stepped down from our position as the more knowledgeable researchers, if we wanted to meet him on an equal footing. Instead, we used our knowledge as a restricting power mechanism.

In their courageous article, Arieli, Friedman & Agbaria (2009) disclose how they let participation function as a patronizing device. The experienced action researcher, Friedman, systematically chose to neglect the expectations of the participating communities, represented by Agbaria. These dealt with action and practical results here and now. Friedman´s first priority was to involve the practitioners as co-researchers before they collaboratively produced practical results. Before the reflection process, his espoused value is described in this way:

  Participation is essential for action research: the more the better (p. 276)

In this example, participation means that the practitioners cooperate as co-researchers. In the learning process presented in the article, participation is maintained as a critical value, but the authors conclude that it is necessary to inquire into whether participation is in line with the expectations of the practitioners:

  Testing the assumption that community members are willing and able to participate as researcher … Being prepared to place action before research (p. 284).

The researchers conclude by proposing that participation is made a subject of negation::

  In any case, the level of participation ought to be freely and openly negotiated between action researchers and community members (p. 283).

The paradox of participation is the focus of the article. It is described this way:

  … 'the paradox of participation' which we define as *a situation in which action researchers, acting to actualize participatory and democratic values, unintentionally impose participatory methods upon partners who are either unwilling or unable to acts as researchers* (p. 275).

We think this paradox pertains to a broader context. As far as we can see the following statement made by Hall (2001) is relevant for all organizational action researchers whether they consider the others as co-researchers or co-learners:

> The case study points to the real danger that the use of concepts like 'participatory' may mask the influence of power relations on what people think, hear, and do …..Thus the researchers and the community produced the kind of dominant-submissive, powerful-powerless relationship that they wanted to change (pp. 281, 283).

Accordingly, a reflexive-critical inquiry into the concepts of action research is important. Are spoken or unspoken interpretations, e.g., power mechanisms? Why do some action researchers use words like 'data' and 'facts' which do not indicate preliminary ideas or questions presented for further dialogue? Why are some participants described as informants? Why do some action researchers write about giving back their analyses to the informants as if action researchers were monopolizing analysis and interpretation (Schrijvers (2001)?

Maybe, it is time to reconsider concepts like communicative space (Kemmis, 2008) and caring container (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2005) as possible participatory relationship building?

We think it is necessary to co-create a participatory epistemology to shed light on how different groups of professionals (employees, managers, and action researchers) contribute to different result- and knowledge production, as well as to self critically inquire into how participation functions as power mechanisms in a spectrum between empowerment and constraint. We think this must be done in concrete ways in concrete projects.

Has the concept of participation been usurped by repressive tolerance?

Based on our research results and experience, we only think that action research endeavors characterized by dialogue and co-determination can be defined as participatory. There is a danger if we broaden the concept. If it is enlarged to become the antithesis to a passive audience, to mean partaking in any kind of activity where the purpose is decided by somebody else, or to join researchers' projects, then it is our claim that we open the gate letting mode-II research pervade and encapsulate action research, eliminating its critical potency in the name of participation. In this case, participation will work as a buzz word meaning either branding or misuse (Nielsen & Svensson, 2006, p. 25). This might be called "functional participation" (Baker Collins, 2005) indicating partaking in processes where the objectives is given in advance, or "participatory conformity" suppressing itself to the demands of the systems world for efficiency, predictability and control (Wicks & Reason, 2009). Jørgensen (2008) poses the question this way:

Are we able to avoid that research will be subsumed to interests it is not able to control if you accept the demands from the knowledge society about closer and interdependent relations between research and society … Will the ambition about society relevant research and social change end up in "consultancy" at the cost of theory development and philosophical reflections? … Knowledge production in "the participatory turn" addresses another risk that the brilliant ideals of participation, dialogue, and democracy will deteriorate into empty rhetoric disguising a continued researcher monopoly of truth as well as other existing power imbalances (p. 363 [our translation from Swedish]).

References

Argyris, C. (1998). Crafting a theory of practice. The case of organisational paradoxes. In: R.E. Quinn & K. S. Cameron: *Paradox and transformation. Toward a theory of change in organization and management*. Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Company.

Argyris, C. (1990). *Overcoming Organizational Defenses. Facilitating Organizational Learning*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Argyris, C., Putnam, R. & Smith, D.M. (1985). *Action Science. Concepts, Methods, and Skills for Research and Intervention*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Argyris, C. & Schön, D. (1996). *Organizational Learning II. Theory, Method, and Practice*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Arieli, D., Friedman, V.J. & Agbaria, K. (2009). The paradox of participation in action research. *Action Research*, 7 (3), 262-290.

Asch, S. E. (1952). Effects of group pressure upon modification and distortion of judgements. In: G.E. Swanson, T. M. Newcomb & E. L. Hartley (Eds.). *Readings in Social Psychology*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Baker Collins, S. (2005). An understanding of poverty from those who are poor. *Action Research*, 3 (1), 9-32.

Bloch-Poulsen, J (2010). *A contribution to the concept of dialogue in Scandinavian organizational action research - dialogue as multiple tensionality* (ph.d. preamble; can be downloaded from www.dialog-mj.dk).

Bohm, D. (1996). *On dialogue*. London: Routledge.

Chambers, R. (1995). Paradigm shifts and the practice of participatory research and development. In N. Nelson & S. Wright (Eds.). *Power and Partipatory Development. Theory and Practice*. London: Intermediate Technology Publication.

Chambers, R. (1997). *Whose Reality Counts. Putting the First Last*. London: ITDG Publishing.

Deetz, S. (2001). Conceptual foundations. In F.M. Jablin, F.M. & L. L. Putnam, L.L (Eds.). *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Ellström, P-E. (2002). Lärende – i spänningsfeltet mellem produktionens och utvecklingens logik. In: K. Abrahamsson, L. Abrahamsson, T. Björkman, P-E. Ellström and J. Johansson (Eds.). *Utbildning, kompetens och arbete*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Ellström, P-E. (2010). Practice-based innovation: a learning perspective. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 22 (1/2), 27-40.

Evans, K., Hodkinsson, P., Rainbird, H. & Unwin, L. (Eds.) (2006). *Improving Workplace Learning*. London: Routledge.

Fenwick, T. (2008). Understanding Relations of Individual – Collective Learning in Work: A Review of Research. *Management Learning*, 39 (3), 227-243.

Foucault, M. (2000). In: J. D. Faubion (Ed.). *Power. Essential works of Foucault, 1954-1983*, vol. 3. London: Penguin books.

Gherardi, S. (2000). Practice-Based Theorizing on Learning and Knowing in Organizations. *Organization*, 7 (2), 211-223.

Greenwood, D.J. & Levin, M. (1998). *Introduction to Action Research. Social research for Social Change*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Gunnarsson, E., Johannisson, B. & Stjernberg, T. (Eds.) (2008). *Gemensamt kunskapande – den interaktive forskningens praktik*. Växjö: Växjö University Press.

Göhler, G. (2009). The 'Power to' and 'power over' distinction and its limits. In S. R. Clegg & M. Haugaard (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Power*. London: Sage.

Hall, B. (2001). I wish I were a poem of practices of participatory research. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.). *Handbook of Action Research: Participative inquiry and practice*. London: Sage.

Huzzard, T. (2004). Communities of domination? Reconceptualising organizational learning and power. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 16 (6), 350-361.

Janis, I. (1982). *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Jørgensen, M. W. (2008). På framkant: Interaktiv forskning och vetenskapens palts i samhället. In: E. Gunnarsson, B. Johannisson & T. Stjernberg,. (Eds.). *Gemensamt kunskapande – den interaktive forskningens praktik*. Växjö: Växjö University Press.

Kemmis, S. (2001). Critical Theory and Participatory Action Research. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.) *Handbook of Action Research. Participative Inquiry and Practice*. London: Sage.

Kristiansen, M. & Bloch-Poulsen, J. (2004). Self-referentiality as a power mechanism. Towards dialogic action research. *Action Research*, 2 (4), 371-388.

Kristiansen, M. & Bloch-Poulsen, J. (2005). *Midwifery and dialogue in organizations. Emergent, mutual involvement in action research*. München: Rainer Hampp Verlag.

Kristiansen, M. & Bloch-Poulsen, J. (2006). Involvement as a Dilemma. Between Dialogue and Discussion in Team Based Organizations. *International Journal of Action Research*, 2 (2), 163-197.

Kristiansen, M. & Bloch-Poulsen, J. (2010). Employee Driven Innovation in Team (EDIT) - innovative potential, dialogue, and dissensus. *International Journal of Action Research*, 6 (2-3), 155-195.

Marx, K. (1968). Kritik der hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. In: S. Landshut (Ed.).*Die Frühschriften*. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag (opr. 1845/46).

Milgram, S. (1974). *Obedience to Authority*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Nielsen, L.D. (2006). The Methods and Implications of Action Research. In. Nielsen, K. Aa. & L. Svensson (Eds.). *Action Research and Interactive Research*. Maastricht: Shaker Publishing.

Nielsen, P. (2004). *Personale i Vidensøkonomien - Innovation, vidensorganisationer og kompetenceudvikling i det nye årtusinde*. Aalborg: Aalborg Universitetsforlag.

Nielsen, K. Aa. & Nielsen, B.S. (2006). Methodologies in Action Research. In. Nielsen, K. Aa. & L. Svensson (Eds.). *Action Research and Interactive Research*. Maastricht: Shaker Publishing.

Nielsen, K. Aa. & Svensson, L. (Eds.) (2006). *Action research and interactive research. Beyond practice and theory*. Maastricht: Shaker publishing.

Reason, P. & Bradbury, H. (Eds.). (2008). *The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative inquiry and practice*. London: Sage.

Rothmann, J. & Friedman, V. J. (2001). Identity, Conflict, and Organizational Learning. In: M. Dierkes, A.B. Antal, J. Child & I. Nonaka: *Handbook of Organizational Learning and Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schrijvers. J. (2001). Participation and Power. A transformative feminist research perspective. In N. Nelson & S. Wright (Eds.). *Power and Partipatory Development. Theory and Practice.* London: Intermediate Technology Publication.

Svensson, L., Ellström, P-E, & Brulin, G. (2007). Introduction – on Interactive Research. *International Journal of Action Research*, 3 (3), 233-249.

Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and Social Learning Systems. *Organization*, 7 (2), 225-246.

Wicks, P. G. & Reason, P. (2009). Initiating action research: Challenges and paradoxes of opening communicative space. *Action Research*, 7 (3), 243-261.