

Relational Fluidity in Collaborative Governance

Unveiling stakeholders' relating dynamics and their connection to issue framing dynamics in collaborative governance processes.

Lieselot Vandenbussche

Propositions

1. The dynamic nature of stakeholders' interpersonal relations follows from the continuous interplay between two opposing, yet interdependent relational value-clusters: one that values autonomy and the preservation of own identity (self-orientation), and one that values sharing and commonality (other-orientation) (this thesis).
2. While the usual response to deal with this paradoxical situation is to pursue or choose to focus on one of both value clusters at a time (i.e. cyclic alternation over time), it is through the acceptance and simultaneous engagement with both value clusters that a collaborative can reach its full potential (this thesis).
3. Focusing on pursuing single normative ideals of collaboration obscures the paradoxical and dynamic nature of collaboration, and as a consequence, may hamper the collaborative process instead of facilitating it (this thesis).
4. The concept of paradox affords us a fuller comprehension of the complex context of collaborative work (this thesis).
5. Establishing a common frame in collaborative processes contains the risk that it creates the false impression that a collaborative can reach an agreement that lasts (this thesis).
6. In Western educational systems too much emphasis is placed on human individuality and autonomy. This is to the detriment of the development of a relational understanding of our being with others and in the world. This, in turn, hampers our abilities to meaningfully collaborate.
7. Contemporary university is so strongly guided by market-oriented and economic principles (cf. the quest for efficiency, evaluation of teaching 'outcomes' and research 'outputs') that self-inquiry on what a university is, could and should be, is all too often lost out.
8. The adherence to the genre that is scientific writing poses limits to our possibilities to convey the complexity of the real phenomena we study.
9. Works of literary narrative fiction may serve as important sources of knowledge (they have epistemic value), but are often not acknowledged as such.
10. If scientists could engage in a dialogue, that would be a radical revolution in science, in the very nature of science (Bohm and Nichol 2004).
11. Claiming, consistency and certainty are overrated values/virtues both in science and in political and societal life. Caution, nuance and humility are at least equally important virtues in all these areas of life.