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A31

An examination of a reciprocal relationship between network governance and network structure

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Abstract

In the present contribution the focus is on the network structure and governance of inter-organisational innovation networks. Within the field of network theory there has been a vast focus on network structure and how the network mode of governance can be a fruitful way of exploring and exploiting (March, 1991) business opportunities. Additionally, a major part of this literature has focused on alliances, joint ventures and different kinds of dyadic relations. When it comes to a loosely coupled (Orton & Weick, 1990) network perspective that goes beyond the mere dyadic relations (Mitchell, 1969) and explicitly focuses on the processes of network governance in an inter-organisational network, the literature is scarce (Dhanaraj & Parkhe, 2006; Provan, Fish & Sydow, 2007). The processes of network governance refer to the issues of how to manage and coordinate the relational activities and processes between the network partners. This stream of literature does contain references to discussions on network structure but mostly relies on a static conception of the relationship between network structure and the applied network governance.

The paper is based on a case study of a Danish inter-organisational innovation network. The research design follows the guidelines set forth in (Eisenhardt, 1989) and involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The main data sources are a survey, observations, interviews and archival data.

The research question of this paper is: Does network structure influence network governance, and vice versa, does network governance influence network structure? The proposition is that a reciprocal relation exists and network governance processes can have a significant impact on the relational embeddedness of a given company. In this way the paper contributes to the literature on network governance of inter-organisational networks and has managerial implications for how to frame the processes of network governance, bearing in mind that the network structure is affected by these managerial governance decisions.

Keywords: Network governance; network structure; interorganizational networks

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Adaptive and future-proof? A critical examination of the twinning between two Dutch governmental agencies

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Abstract

Interorganizational collaboration is a high on the agenda of many enterprises and public agencies. More and more of them use (temporary) alliances with one or more other organizations to stimulate innovation or to deliver a project (see for example Doz & Hamel, 1998; Child, Faulkner & Tallman, 2005).

Alliances can take many forms. One of them is that of a twinning, which can be defined as a collaboration with the main aim of stimulating organizational change and learning (cp. Ouchi, 2004). It mostly is used as a tool in development aid and also in the process of European integration. Western organizations often twin with their counterparts from the Third World or Eastern Europe with the aim to help them professionalise their staff and work processes.

We examine another form of twinning, that between two national governmental agencies, which has so far only occurred once in the Dutch public sector. In 2005 the Dutch Court of Audit (ARK) issued a damning report on the Immigration- and Naturalization Agency (IND), stating that it failed to deliver its services in an efficient and effective manner. Many expected the Court of Audit to advise politics to tackle these problems head on by taking a closer interest in the work of the IND. The ARK chose a more innovative approach instead, which focussed more on giving the IND opportunity to learn from its mistakes than to punish the organization.

The Court of Audit advised the IND to enter into a twinning with the Social Insurance Bank (SVB), which also has to deal with a large number of clients but whose service provision is commonly seen in The Netherlands as a resounding success. This twinning ran between 2004 and 2008. We conducted an evaluation of the twinning between IND and SVB (see also Van Twist & Karré, 2008) by using action research (Lewin, 1946; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985). We aimed to answer the following research questions: 1) Has the twinning between IND and SVB been successful and what is the character of its success? 2) What are the lessons of this alliance and can it be reproduced in another setting?

We are looking forward to learn about the experiences in other countries concerning the twinning of two national governmental agencies and the possibilities such forms of interorganizational collaboration form for increasing the quality of an organization's service delivery.

Keywords: Twinning, alliances, interorganizational collaboration, success factors, public sector, governmental agencies.

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Network and governance behaviours’ of senior public sector managers in a period of rationalisation: a case study

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Abstract

Public sector reforms increasingly emphasise the need for ‘networking behaviours’ and collaboration with a range of actors, while at the same demanding greater efficiencies, effectiveness and ‘value for money’, to achieve solutions to persistent social problems. These complex and often competing dynamics present considerable challenges for senior managers, many of whom may be resistant to such reforms, lack the managerial skills or knowledge to deal with these challenges, and/or face organisational/institutional resistance to change. This paper examines a recent (and ongoing) case study of public sector rationalisation and the interplay of organisational settings and cultures, managerial styles and personal characteristics that create or constrain the possibilities for leading collaborative change by senior managers. It explores the actions of senior managers tasked with the rationalisation of two very different bodies into a single entity within a Government department, in engaging and collaborating with others and in providing a leadership role for successful change. Through these actions the managers illustrate the very different opportunities and constraints they are – or believe they are – operating under and how these affect their behaviours, their attitudes towards networking and collaboration, and their perception of their (collective and individual) leadership roles. The paper concludes with some reflections on the impact these have may have on the long-term possibilities for successful collaboration and positive and productive outcomes in a period of fiscal retrenchment and socio-economic crisis.

Key words: Public sector reforms; collaborative leadership; public sector management

Developing collaborative relationships in a traditionally non-collaborative sector: a case from the Dutch building industry

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Abstract

The realization of large infrastructural projects in The Netherlands are historically characterized by distrust and conflict between governmental bodies on the one hand and building companies on the other. Recently, a large project regarding the reconstruction of a main highway in The Netherlands has sought to realize its project aims through developing a more collaborative spirit among the main protagonists. In this paper I will describe this project, its aims and structure and its innovative features regarding the interorganizational relationships and working practices between the actors from the public and private worlds, in more detail. I will then report on the outcomes of a series of interviews among key persons in this project, twenty in total, regarding the experienced gains and difficulties in collaborating across organizational boundaries. Also I have observed a few meetings where the main protagonists came together to discuss the project's progress. Furthermore, I consulted various formal evaluations of some of its innovative practices that have been conducted by other parties. The findings indicate that while some collaborative success has been achieved as a result of the innovations, social psychological dynamics are at work that hinder or could even jeopardize the project's success. I will illustrate these dynamics, attempt to understand these taking a psychological perspective and point at contributing structural and cultural factors that are characteristic of the Dutch building sector. In a final section I will describe what has been done and what could be done to counter the negative effects of these social psychological dynamics, given the existing structural and cultural context.

Keywords: infrastructural projects, interorganizational relationships, organizational boundaries, social psychological dynamics, Dutch building sector

A16

Private actors in global governance for sustainable development

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Abstract

The number of books and papers bearing the term ‘global private governance’ has grown vastly in the last decade. The main purpose of this paper is to explore what meanings have been attached to this relatively new form of governance, particularly related to issues of sustainable development. Private forms of governance can be initiated by businesses, NGOs or collaborations between them. They often have the character of a code of conduct or a certification scheme. After the Introduction, the discussion is divided in four parts. The first explores the characteristics of global private governance, and discusses how global private governance should be understood within the context of recent interest in new patterns of governance in a globalized world. The second and third examine the potential advantages and disadvantages as recognized in recent literatures. Some issues are both interpreted as an advantage and a disadvantage. Advantages include compensation for the loss of state authority and capacity; opening of new effective channels of participation; broadening the scope of decision-making; and creating regulatory diversity which increases innovation. Disadvantages are: the argument of erosion of state authority; the argument of segmentation; the argument of legality and transparency; the argument of power differentials; and the argument of credibility of the actors involved. Each of the positions will be illustrated with empirical cases. The fourth and final section draws together the strands of the discussion. It will be discussed that global private governance itself is not the problem but the ad hoc and accidental development of governance systems as a whole. Because of the lack of overall guiding principles for key global issue areas, the author considers meta-governance to be the most important current challenge.

Keywords: Sustainable development, private governance, global governance

Interactions between indigenous peoples and multinational corporations: strategies and outcomes

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Abstract

The following abstract describes the objectives of a recently initiated project. The purpose of this particular submission is to discuss the design and framing of the study, rather than its results.

Objectives: The project's primary objective is to study strategies and outcomes associated with and following from interactions between multinational corporations and indigenous peoples. The secondary objective is to further the understanding of how identities on an organizational level of analysis can both hinder and facilitate value creation between diverse exchange partners. Specifically, the project will contribute by increasing knowledge about (i) how and why both resistance-based and collaborative strategies emerge (ii) how multinational corporations may influence the nature of indigenous resource generation and business practices and (iii), how indigenous knowledge may influence multinational corporation resource development and practices. Implications regarding indigenous economic development, poverty, and self-determination, as well as multinational firm operative sustainability will be given.

Project summary: Multinational corporations global search for natural resources, knowledge and more recently experiences, often take them to indigenous land. The encounters between what is the world's most wealthy and 'modern' organizational entity, with one, if not the most, marginalized, poor and 'traditional' groups, frequently result in uncooperative and conflict based interactions. Although many companies claim to consider triple bottom lines (i.e. economic, social and environmental aspects), respect for indigenous issues and how to successfully engage with indigenous peoples is less understood. Likewise, it is not well understood within indigenous communities how to interact with companies. Indigenous peoples have been repositioning themselves strategically around new forms of alliances, including coalitions with non indigenous groups, to deal with what some describe as 'the final invasion' of indigenous land. Yet, in some cases firms and indigenous peoples collaborate and create new forms of alliances. Whereas some insights exist regarding the reasons behind indigenous resistance, much less is known regarding the motives behind cooperation, and what results are due to collaboration between multinationals and indigenous peoples. Moreover, little is known about the nature of indigenous business practices and how 'traditional' and 'modern' knowledge is combined. Our project is multidisciplinary, drawing on insights from theories on organizational theory, entrepreneurship, sociology and development studies. Using an exploratory case study approach, we will study the energy, aquaculture, mining and entertainment industries in Latin America. Specific areas of interest include reasons for resistance or acceptance of multinationals in indigenous land, the potential merger of indigenous and firm knowledge, community development (in terms of economy, identity and self-determination) and the influence of indigenous knowledge and practices with respect to firm operations.

Partnerships for sustainable development: how effective are they?

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Abstract

At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, it was encouraged to launch new partnerships between governments, civil society organisations and businesses. These voluntary agreements aim to reach a common objective or carry out a specific task, in which parties share risks, responsibilities, means, competences and profits. The underlying idea of partnerships is that by generating additional knowledge and resources, results can be achieved that benefit all parties and which they could not have achieved on an individual basis (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Kolk et al., 2008). Moreover, partnerships are not just looked as innovative ways to deliver positive development outcomes, but also as new governance mechanism (Rochlin et al., 2008; Glasbergen et al., 2007). It is thought that the distinctive institutional form of partnerships – inclusiveness of stakeholders and governance arrangements – affects the effectiveness of partnerships. In theory and practice, however, little is known about the functioning, governance mechanisms and impact of such partnerships. Empirical evidence for the effectiveness of partnerships in the field of development is still required.

This paper will address this issue by asking if partnerships for sustainable development have indeed successfully reached their goals and have added value to the partners involved and to development. The paper will be based on a review of a public-private partnership programme by the Dutch government to address bottlenecks in the export-oriented horticulture sector in selected East African countries through capacity building for market access. The review conducted a qualitative comparative performance analysis of three selected partnerships in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania, using data from around 70 respondents, to explore the effectiveness of partnerships for sustainable development. An analytical framework on the effectiveness of partnerships, which addressed the challenge of integrating collaborative processes into performance measurement systems, built the methodological basis of the assessment of the three selected cases (Van Tulder and Kostwinder, 2007). The aim of the study was twofold: first, to evaluate the degree of effectiveness of selected partnerships; and second, to identify explanatory factors for possible differences in the degree of effectiveness across the reviewed cases.

Overall, the research assessed that the partnership approach under review had the potential to increase the likelihood of innovation and change in the export-oriented horticulture sector in the reviewed countries through building local capacity and stimulating public-private dialogue. Key findings of the reviewed partnership cases demonstrated, however, different degrees of upgrading of the export-oriented horticulture sector in the respective countries; of capacity built up to facilitate policy reforms; and of spinoff on social and economic development. It showed that factors that affect the effectiveness of partnerships highly

depend on governance mechanisms underlying the work of each partnership (i.e. level of ownership, level of transparency, vertical and horizontal accountability) and on the situational context of the partnership (i.e. willingness to participate, degree of enabling environment for public-private dialogue and sector specific characteristics). The review demonstrated that an active facilitation role by the development partner (Dutch government) was of benefit for the process of this novel approach in emerging economies.

The research provides those charged with partnership design, facilitation and administration with an expanded understanding of the opportunities and constraints offered by this new instrument in development cooperation. It offers also implications for further research in the area of effectiveness of partnerships for development. The paper to be presented will address the nexus of collaboration between public and private actors and competitiveness. It provides interesting lessons learned for participants of the 16th annual MOPAN conference in sessions falling under the strand Economy/Business.

Keywords: public-private partnership; sustainable development; effectiveness; inter-organisational governance.

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