



Facilitation and evaluation of participation: the role of social science methods

27 January 2010, Institute for Environmental Studies,
VU University Amsterdam

The importance of stakeholder participation for dealing with unstructured policy issues, for instance sustainable production and consumption or the transition to a sustainable energy supply, is widely recognized. A common notion is that the involvement of diverse perspectives on the problem at hand is necessary for learning about the problem and to develop new insights for dealing with the problem. A stakeholder dialogue does however not automatically include and benefit from the broad range of stakeholder perspectives. This has implications for the way participatory processes are designed, documented and evaluated. Firstly, this concerns implications for stakeholder sampling: how to select stakeholders in such a way that the diversity of viewpoints, knowledge and ideas is covered in a dialogue? Secondly, this concerns implications for the design and facilitation of a participatory process. All kinds of mechanisms exist that hamper an open exploration of divergent viewpoints and knowledge claims. How to make sure that, once a diversity of viewpoints is included in the process, these have an equal opportunity to play a role in the dialogue? Thirdly, this concerns implications for the evaluation of participatory processes: how to assess the quality and effect of participatory processes and methodologies?

In this symposium, we would like to explore the role of social science methods in designing, facilitating and evaluating participatory processes. Questions that will be covered are: Why are social science methods important for participatory processes? What kind of social science methods are relevant in this regard? What does this mean for the role of the social scientist? What kind of empirical applications are there, and what can we learn from them? The symposium will precede the public defense of the dissertation of Eefje Cuppen.

Registration

Please send an email with subject "symposium participation" to e.h.w.j.cuppen@tudelft.nl before 11 January 2010.





Program

- 10:00 Opening by Frans Berkhout (chair, IVM)
- 10:05 Introduction by Matthijs Hisschemöller (IVM)
Stakeholder dialogue as a social experiment
- 10:25 Andy Stirling (University of Sussex – SPRU) – *to be confirmed*
- 10:45 Jacquelin Burgess (University of East Anglia) – *to be confirmed*
- 11:05 Bill Dunn (University of Pittsburgh)
Asymptotic Participatory Methods: A Solution to the Missing Variable (Endogeneity) Problem.
- 11:25 Round table discussion:
- Lynn Frewer (Wageningen University)
Frans Stokman (Groningen University)
Joske Bunders (VU University) – *to be confirmed*
Andy Stirling (SPRU) – *to be confirmed*
Jacquelin Burgess (University of East Anglia) – *to be confirmed*
Bill Dunn (University of Pittsburgh)
- 12:30 Lunch
- 13:45 Public defense dissertation Eefje Cuppen: “Putting perspectives into participation: Constructive Conflict Methodology for problem structuring in stakeholder dialogues” (VU Main building, Aula)

Route

Institute for Environmental Studies
VU University Amsterdam
De Boelelaan 1085
1081 HV Amsterdam
Room C 501/503

From Amsterdam Central Station

- Express tram 51 (16 minutes), in the underground station, alight: at the VU tram stop
- Tram 5 (25 minutes), on the station square, alight: at the VU tram stop
- Tram 16 (35 minutes), on the station square, alight: at the VU medisch centrum tram stop

From Station Amsterdam Zuid WTC

- Walking (6 minutes), leave the train platform at the Schiphol side (West: called 'VU / Parnassusweg'), go to the left (direction 'Buitenveldert'). After 300 m cross the De Boelelaan and turn right. IVM is situated behind the main building (1105) as can be seen on the figure.
- Express tram 51 (1 minute), direction Amstelveen, alight: at the VU tram stop
- Tram 5 (1 minute), direction Amstelveen, alight: at the VU tram stop

