Between authority and argumentation: facilitators' use of power in collaborative governance

Martin Westin, Lars Hallgren & Emily Montgomerie

Published online: 09 Feb 2023.

Submit your article to this journal ↗

View related articles ↗

View Crossmark data ↗

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Between authority and argumentation: facilitators' use of power in collaborative governance

Martin Westin* , Lars Hallgren   and Emily Montgomerie

Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden

Facilitators of collaborative governance structure communication between stakeholders. They influence the process and, in some instances, also the outcome of collaborative governance. Even so, facilitators are, in the literature and in practice, most often reduced to being neutral or seen merely as power sharers. This reductive understanding obscures facilititators' use of power. The purpose of this paper is to outline a nuanced understanding of authority in facilitation practice. We analyse a Swedish collaborative governance process where a governmental agency facilitates collaboration between actors with conflicting interests. We combine the work of Hannah Arendt and Mark Warren to study authority as relationally performed. We find that facilitators' use of power takes the form of a pendulum movement between authority and argumentation. Hence, authority and argumentation are linked, rather than incompatible, in facilitation practice. This paper sheds new light on the unrecognised, and yet influential, leadership role that facilitators play.

Keywords: authority; facilitation; collaborative governance; natural resource management; dialogue; power

1.   Introduction

Professional facilitators play influential roles in environmental collaborative governance. Their task is to enable communication about the environment and the impact human activities have on ecosystems, places and societies. The need for facilitation has grown as collaborative governance requires conducive conditions for communication between stakeholders with conflicting interests and understandings. The practice of facilitation includes the making of process design choices and the structuring of communication between citizens, stakeholders, politicians and activists. Facilitators make small and large choices that include and exclude actors and issues and thereby set the boundaries for environmental governing and planning (Calderon 2020; Connelly and Richardson 2004; Westin 2019). Facilitators influence who is included and which topics are communicated, and they take part in structuring communication during online and face-to-face communication. Due to limitations in time, and attention, facilitators make many of these choices without explaining and discussing the reasons with participants. When facilitators make such choices, without meeting

*Corresponding author. Email: martin.westin@slu.se

resistance from participants, they exercise authority: they use power that participants in collaborative governance consent to without asking for explanations (Haugaard 2018; Weber 1978).

Even if authority is inevitable in facilitation practice, the concept is not well understood in theories of environmental communication and collaborative governance. Authority is mainly critiqued as an impediment to realising the egalitarian ideals of collaborative governance, or treated as a necessary evil. When facilitators are discussed in the environmental communication and collaborative governance literature, they are mainly conceptualised as power sharers who work to empower other actors, especially marginalised groups (see, Brisbois and de Loë 2016; Förster, Downsborough, and Chomba 2017; Innes and Booher 2018). Even so, facilitators cannot perform their leadership role of structuring communication without authority. The reductive treatment of facilitators' authority provides an incomplete picture of the role that facilitators play in collaborative governance. Without recognising the subtle ways that facilitators exercise authority, their influence over collaborative governance processes cannot be understood and managed. Hence, the influential idea that facilitators' performance of authority is undesirable, or a necessary evil, needs to be modified.

The purpose of this paper is to outline a nuanced understanding of facilitators' performance of authority in collaborative governance. We analyse a collaborative governance process facilitated by a Swedish government agency within forest policy. In the analysis, we consider authority as relationally performed. Focus is not only on the actor in a position of authority, but on the social interplay through which authority is negotiated (Haugaard 2018; Mik-Meyer and Haugaard 2019). The question guiding the research is *how do facilitators perform authority in collaborative governance?* We investigate attempts by facilitators to assume positions of authority and other actors' reactions to such attempts. Of special interest are situations where the participants in collaborative governance call facilitators' authority into question. It is in these situations that the characteristics of authority becomes accessible for analysis (Bourgoin, Bencherki, and Faraj 2020). Our interest is to understand authority: we want to *describe* how social actors negotiate authority. Hence, we do not aspire to develop normative theory in order to *prescribe* how facilitators ought to perform authority (see, Haugaard [2018] on the importance of distinguishing between normative and sociological analysis of power).

First, we discuss the uneasy relationship between authority and facilitation. We explain how the reductive treatment of authority might obscure the facilitators' role in collaborative governance. We discuss how we combine Arendt's (2006) work on authority and Mark Warren's (1996) rethinking of the concept within deliberative democracy to guide our analysis. Next, we explain the methodology: participant observation of a collaborative governance process. Thereafter, we present the findings in the form of an episode where the facilitators' performance of authority was called into question by one of the participating organisations. Finally, we close the paper by outlining how facilitators perform authority in collaborative governance. We find that facilitators vacillate between facilitating through authority and through argumentation.

2. Collaborative governance, facilitation and authority: an uneasy relationship

2.1. *The misleading treatment of authority in facilitation practice*

Collaborative governance is a form of governing that brings together stakeholders across sectors and professions. This form of governing has become increasingly

important for dealing collectively with environmental issues (Ansell and Gash 2007; Brown, Langridge, and Rudestam 2016; Boschet and Rambonilaza 2018). Collaborative governance is most often conceptualised as horizontal and consensus-oriented processes, for example as expressed in the influential paper by Ansell and Gash (2007, 544).

> A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets.

Facilitator is a relatively new category of practitioner in collaborative governance (Innes and Booher 2018; Walker, Daniels, and Cheng 2006; Westin *et al.* 2021). The difficulties in communicating across differences of professions, organisational belonging and world views have resulted in the need for a practitioner with a specific standing: enter the facilitator. Facilitators are an emerging, heterogonous and loosely coupled group. They do their work from positions within the public sector, private sector, academia and civil society. The task of the facilitator is to structure communication between actors in collaborative governance.

Scholars of environmental communication have a long and intimate relationship with facilitation techniques and procedures. Brulle (2010) emphasizes that instead of relying on "information campaigns" to initiate mitigation of climate change, society should be facilitating a public dialogue about the common interest. Senecah (2004) suggests, in a much cited paper, that collaborative governance needs to consider the "trinity of voice": access, standing and influence. With "standing" Senecah means every participant's opportunity to represent their own stake in the collaborative governance process. Senecah also shows, through a number of examples, that if stakeholders are provided with access, their influence is constrained due to absence of standing; hence, the facilitation does not enable them to represent their stake. The trinity of voice model and its usefulness for shaping innovative practices in environmental communication and collaborative governance is revisited in Hunt, Walker, and Depoe (2019, 6) who find that in order for environmental communication to be more than "traditional participation requirements" which can be "met with passive methods" there is a need for "shifts in public participation frameworks" and "breaking boundaries." While "breaking boundaries" obviously demands that communication is reorganized in different ways than implied by social norms, these researchers do not discuss the role of the facilitator in leading that reorganization. Sprain (2022) also recognizes the importance of breaking the everyday communicative norms of environmental communication and is explicit in suggesting that it is a task for facilitators to lead communication. Even so, she does not elaborate on the authority of the facilitator. In sum, despite the focus on facilitation procedures, the environmental communication literature does not provide a nuanced understanding of how facilitators perform authority when structuring communication.

Furthermore, the collaborative governance literature lacks an elaborated account of facilitators' authority. Even if some scholars acknowledge that authority is not, by definition, objectionable (e.g. Purdy [2012]), the bulk of the work in this literature treats hierarchical forms of power as illegitimate and instead conceptualises collaborative governance as horizontal processes of power sharing (see for example, Brisbois and de Loë [2016]; Förster, Downsborough, and Chomba [2017]; Innes and Booher [2018]). While we acknowledge the value of this empirical focus, we argue that we must also

pay attention to understanding hierarchical forms of power that actors in collaborative governance accept as legitimate (Westin 2019). The reductive treatment of hierarchical power in the collaborative governance literature is problematic, since it obscures that this way of governing – as all governance arrangements – requires the use of legitimate hierarchical power; i.e. the use of authority.

The lack of clarity regarding authority in the collaborative governance literature is reflected in the more specific discussions about facilitation. In practical guidance, as well as in theory, the facilitator is most frequently described as a practitioner who works to level power asymmetries between participants (e.g. Forester 1999; Innes and Booher 2018; Reed and Abernethy 2018). Facilitation is mainly understood as "a skill needed to flatten power hierarchies" (Reed and Abernethy 2018, 44). When authority and power are described more generally, it is largely in negative terms, as an impediment to open communication. The main interest is "to explain how authority can be overcome in practical processes of dialogue" (Maia, Laranjeira, and Mundim 2017, 3), rather than developing understanding of how facilitators use authority. Even if facilitators can influence the process, as well as the outcome of collaborative governance, they are mainly conceptualised as being neutral in relation to the issue at hand. It is understandable that the idea of neutrality is strong in facilition practice, as taking sides in controversies could break the necessary trust with stakeholders (e.g. Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000; Mayer 2011). Even so, facilitators who have a leading role in governance of environmental issues will inevitably influence the process, as well as the outcome of governing. Hence, a neutral, power-free, position is not available for a facilitator to assume (Westin 2022; Moore 2012; Mayer 2011).

We argue that, in order to understand the role of facilitators, we must pay attention to how authority is negotiated, rather than trying to do away with facilitators' use of power through concepts such as neutrality and power sharers. Even if facilitators are by no means all-mighty, they occupy leadership positions and can, thereby, influence which actors and topics to include and omit in governance processes, as well as steer communication between participants (Hallgren, Bergeå, and Westberg 2018; Westin *et al.* 2021). One of the paradoxes of facilitation practice is that facilitators, who are tasked with enabling communication, frequently structure communication without openly explaining and discussing the reasons for the choices they make. As such, facilitators assume authority positions: they influence, or even direct, the thoughts and actions of other(s) in ways that the other actor(s) consent to without asking for reasons (see, Forst [2015]; Haugaard [2018]; Weber [1978] on authority). In order to progress facilitation practice and enable critical scrutiny of this growing field of practice, there is a need to develop a nuanced understanding of how facilitators perform authority.

In sum, while some accounts of facilitation acknowledge that authority is not merely an evil and that certain forms of authority might actually enable communication (Heron 1993; Moore 2012; Westin, Calderon, and Hellquist 2014), the meaning of authority is negatively loaded in the literature on facilitators, as well as in the broader literature on collaborative governance and environmental communication. This negative view stands in the way of a more nuanced understanding of authority.

2.2.   *Facilitators and authority: a conceptual framework*

In order to understand authority in facilitation practice we must clarify the relationship between authority and argumentation. At the core of collaborative governance is the

idea of creating conducive conditions for a mutual exchange of ideas concerning preferences, values and interests, in order to reach a shared practical judgement concerning the environmental issue at hand (Ansell and Gash 2007). Arguably, the tendency in the collaborative governance literature to view authority as undesirable has to do with a conception that hierarchical power stands in opposition to this preference for argumentation. It is this mistaken assumption we wish to critique and replace in this paper.

In order to do so, we combine Hannah Arendt's conception of authority with Mark Warren's work on deliberative authority. Arendt defines authority as standing between violence and argumentation on a continuum (Haugaard 2018). In her view, authority is a relationship where subjects to authority surrender their judgement to those who are in positions of authority, not because they are forced to do so or persuaded through arguments.

> Against the egalitarian order of persuasion stands the authoritarian order, which is always hierarchical. If authority is to be defined at all, then, it must be in contradistinction to both coercion by force and persuasion through arguments. (Arendt 2006, 91)

Arendt suggests that authority is based on deeply held beliefs, which are not readily accessible to reflection and open argumentation. Authorities are trusted because they perform in social positions, which are considered, by members of society, to stand above critical scrutiny. Hence, argumentation is not necessary for authorities. Clearly, Arendt's conception of authority also has explanatory value in the context of collaborative governance, since it emphasises how participants must most often recognise facilitators as authorities and accept the choices they make to structure communication without asking for arguments. Even so, in the practice of collaborative governance, which holds argumentation high, Arendt's conception needs to be amended.

In order to amend Arendt's conception, we turn to the literature on deliberative democracy. Even if the bulk of this literature shares the suspicion of authority, a stream of scholarly work deals with enabling, or non-coercive, forms of power (Bagg 2018; Mansbridge *et al.* 2010; Holdo 2019). In this stream, Mark Warren's work is particularly useful for our purpose. Warren (1996, 56) suggests that, in modern democratic societies, authority and argumentation are linked phenomena since "[O]ngoing critical challenge is essential to maintaining an authority as an authority." In democracies, authority is conditioned by the possibility for subjects to, through open scrutiny and argumentation, call into question decisions made by authority. Accordingly, if an authority, when challenged, is unable to provide arguments that are accepted by subjects, their long-term standing as authority is undermined, and vice versa. Emphasising this relationship between authority, consent and argumentation seems promising given collaborative governance's preference for argumentation between equals.

In Warren's view, authority depends on the judgement of those under it. The point of having a facilitator who structures communication is, in this understanding, that governance actors can avoid the 'chaos of conflicting views' by accepting that the facilitator is conditionally empowered to exercise authority over the communicative process on their behalf (see Moore 2017, 61). Importantly, facilitators can only perform as authorities if other actors recognise them as authorities (see Moore 2017). Recognition of an authority is a process whereby a certain set of actors, often intuitively, sees another actor(s) as worthy of being an authority according to their deeply held values and beliefs.

Actors take into account organisational belonging and expertise as sources of authority when they accept or reject an attempt by another actor(s) to perform authority (Mik-Meyer and Haugaard 2019; Moore 2017). Organisational authority is when a facilitator is seen as representing an organisation that is considered to hold legitimate power over a certain domain. This kind of authority depends on the perception that the procedure by which a social actor is commissioned to act as a representative of that organisation is considered as legitimate. In expert authority, in contrast, a facilitator is recognised as an authority due to their being a member of a community of experts who are considered to hold knowledge within a certain domain that is of importance for collaborative governance and not readily available to others (see Moore [2017] on expert authority). In addition to organisation and expertise, personal characteristics and behaviour are of importance for the performance of authority. These sources of authority are at play when the facilitator is judged based on belonging to certain social categories and when they engage in certain behaviour through speech and body language (see Weber [1978] on 'charismatic' authority). Of importance is also the scope of authority. In collaborative governance, facilitators are mainly considered to be entitled to authority over the process of communication, whereas the outcome of governing is frequently seen as being outside the scope of a facilitator's authority (Mayer 2011). In practice, the sources of authority (organisational belonging, expertise, and personal characteristics and behaviour) and scope of authority (process and outcome) are usually conflated when participants, often intuitively, recognise facilitators and accept or reject them as authorities (Bourgoin, Bencherki, and Faraj 2020; Moore 2017).

In line with the reasoning above, we employ a relational view of authority. Authority is enacted and performed between individuals, and between those individuals and elements of their environment (Bartesaghi 2009; Mik-Meyer 2021). In collaborative governance, actors perform authority by assuming positions such as 'facilitators', 'experts', 'citizens' and 'civil servants'. Attempts to perform in positions of authority can, generally, be accepted or rejected by other actors. When a person is seen to perform correctly in an authority position, their action is accepted as valid and vice versa. Whether an attempt to assume an authority position is considered as successful by other actors depends on how well accepted the justification of the action, the sources and scope of authority for the position are, in the eyes of the involved actors in a specific situation (see Haugaard 2018).

Table 1 includes key concepts and definitions.

Table 1. Key concepts.

Concept	Definition
Authority	When facilitators in collaborative governance influence, or even direct, the thoughts and actions of other(s) in ways that the other actor(s) consent to without asking for arguments.
Argumentation	Communication that, in an open and comprehensive manner, clarifies differences in perspectives in order to reach a shared understanding of how collaborative governance ought to be facilitated.
Source of authority	A socially accepted origin of authority such as organisational belonging, personal experience and behaviour.
Scope of authority	The domain(s) that facilitators aspire to have authority over, e.g. over the process and outcome of collaborative governance.

3. Analysing authority in facilitation practice

In Swedish environmental planning, collaborative governance is becoming more common. These processes are typically initiated and facilitated by a national or regional governmental agency, often one that is also responsible for the governance and management of the natural resource in question. In this study, we observed a process consisting of a series of around 25 meetings (around 35 h in total) concerning the management and environmental status of the Swedish forest. The process was initiated and facilitated by the governmental agency that is responsible for the national management of the Swedish forest. Around 15 stakeholders representing both industrial and environmental interests took part in the meetings (25% from the public sector, 40–50% from the private sector, 15% from academia and 15% from nature protection organisations). In the reports produced in preparation for and during the process, it was explicitly described as a collaborative governance process. The aim of the process was to jointly develop a policy plan which all participants could accept. During the meetings, the participants worked together to come up with suggestions, and to write the policy document. Two desk officers at the governmental agency facilitated the process, while also representing the agency. The facilitators prepared and suggested an agenda, both for each meeting and for the process as a whole, but opened up for deliberation about the suggested agenda at each meeting. We focused on a series of events when the facilitators were called into question by one of the participating organisations. It is this series of events in the larger collaborative governance process that is our case. We have chosen to focus on this series of events as it offers illustrative examples of interactions where the facilitators' attempts to perform authority are challenged by one of the participants.

We conducted an interpretive research process to study this case in pursuit of the question *how do facilitators perform authority in collaborative governance?* Interpretive research focuses on specific, situated meanings and meaning-making practices of actors in a given context (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2013). Hence, we were interested in analysing how actors in collaborative governance understand situations where facilitators use authority. We collected the data through passive participant observation of meetings in a collaborative governance process. All subjects provided informed consent to our study. Observing interactions between actors in collaborative governance provided opportunities to understand authority in context (see Jerolmack and Khan 2017). By being there as the daily interactions unfold in a collaborative governance process, we saw what was going on between actors as they were engaged in co-construction of meaning. The observations and the analysis not only focused on the facilitator in a position of authority, but also on the social interplay through which authority was relationally performed (Haugaard 2018; Mik-Meyer and Haugaard 2019). We paid attention to attempts by facilitators to assume positions of authority and other actors' reactions to such attempts. We were especially interested in situations where governance actors challenged facilitators who sought to assume authority positions. Such instances of contestation are particularly useful for our purposes, since the characteristics of authority in facilitation practice become accessible for observation when authority is questioned (Bourgoin, Bencherki, and Faraj 2020).

In step 1 of the research process, the research team observed interactions and discussed impressions within the team. The second and third author observed the meetings, which were later summarized and discussed together with the first author. The third author was included in the send list for e-mails to all participants in the process.

During the meetings, after presenting themselves, the researcher(s) aimed to keep a low profile, affecting the meeting as little as possible, but without being secretive or refusing to answer when spoken to. All meetings took place online. The third author recorded and transcribed the meetings. Throughout this step, which involved regular observations, the research team discussed their observations and impressions continuously. At this stage, the team sensed that authority was a concept that could be used to explain the interactions between the participants and the facilitators in the meetings and identified a series of events in which participants questioned the authority of the facilitators. To conclude step 1, the team brought together the parts of the transcripts that had to do with this episode of contested authority to form a coherent written narrative of the communication over emails and meetings.

In step 2, the first author coded the narrative text through an abductive process (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2013), moving back and forth between the text and the concepts and theories of authority described in Section 2.2. During this step, the research team critically reviewed, validated, and evaluated preliminary coding and interpretations and proceeded with writing the paper. This part of the research included a continuous questioning and replacement of preliminary coding themes. For example, in the initial stages of coding we employed the theme "deliberative authority" (Warren 1996) to capture instances of communication where the facilitators explained the choices they made. As we noticed in the material that the facilitators moved back and forth between acting in authority and explaining their reasons, we turned to the literature to find theoretical concepts that could explain this movement. Inspired by the work of Moore (2017) and Warren (1996) we then decided to employ the themes "authority" and "argumentation" as two separate themes.

Through the abductive process, the following analytical questions were generated.

- How are the participants articulating questions about the facilitators' authority?
- How are the facilitators responding when participants articulate questions about their authority?
- What kind of communication takes place when facilitators' authority is questioned?

With these questions in mind, we interpreted the episode of contested authority as described in Section 4.

Table 2 shows a list of the cited participants involved in the episode of contested authority, and their respective roles in the process. Please note that all personal names are fictitious. All quotations have been translated from the original Swedish by the research team consisting of native Swedish speakers and thereafter validated and, in some instances, modified by a professional language reviewer.

Table 2. Characters in the dialogue exerpts.

Fictious name	Role
Magnus	Facilitator, representing the governmental agency
Lina	Facilitator, representing the governmental agency
Carl	Participant, representing a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)
Rickard	Participant, representing a NGO

4.   The case: authority contested

We analyse an episode of collaborative governance where participants from a nature protection organisation questioned the way the facilitators from the governmental agency structured communication. The episode starts with an email in which Carl and Rickard, from the nature protection organisation, question how the governmental agency perform their role in the collaborative process.

> Hi Magnus and Lina,
>
> […] We do not think that working group 2 has come far enough regarding the total list of indicators. […] Additionally, we do not see clearly the [governmental agency's] role and responsibility in the continuing process. It is not sufficient that the [governmental agency] merely invites to and attends meetings. Instead, we believe that the governmental agency, to a greater extent, should prepare and balance the work between the meetings, based on what has been agreed at the meetings. […] There is a risk for growing frustration in the process if opinions are not sufficiently taken into account. Our view is that the [governmental agency], to a larger extent, should play a balancing role between the interests […] All in all, this means that we are not willing to make a decision about joining working group 3, instead we will wait and see. […]

While it is clear that Carl and Rickard question the role and the actions of the governmental agency, it is not self-evident what is at stake in terms of authority. First, we note that the NGO representatives want the facilitators to assume a more active leadership role. Hence, they are no longer recognising the facilitators as authorities entitled to structure communication without providing arguments. Instead, the NGO representatives are calling the facilitators' authority into question by providing arguments for an alternative, more active, facilitation. We see that while the email is addressed to the facilitators by name, the critique is directed towards the "governmental agency." This distinction suggests that organisation, expert, and personal authority are all under scrutiny by the participants. Even so, in the email it is not clarified which source of authority is the target for the critique. What we can see is that there are two aspects of the governmental agency's and its facilitators' performance of authority that the NGO is critical towards and wishes to explicitly discuss: first, the governmental agency's performance in terms of preparing the meetings; and, second, the handling of the goal conflict between development and nature protection. The metaphor of balancing is important, but ambiguous. Given the underlying conflict between industry and nature protection in this case, we intrepret the use of balancing as implying that the NGO sees itself as the weaker party and the industry as the stronger party; on a metaphorical scale the industry weighs heavily and the NGO lightly. The governmental agency and its facilitators should, to a greater extent, balance this scale by adding weight to the NGO's side of the scale. Hence, it is not clear to what extent the NGO's challenge is directed towards the governmental agency as the norm-giving authority and/or the facilitators' authority over the process of collaboration. Even if the email does not elaborate on how the NGO would like the agency and the facilitators to balance, it appears as though the NGO argues that the agency should take actions to balance both the process and outcome of collaboration. The mention of meeting "preparations" suggests a concern regarding the lack of authoritative facilitation of the process, while the less clear formulation regarding "balancing of interest" might refer to the outcome in terms of indicators for the environmental objectives. But, at this stage it is difficult to

know more precisely what aspects of the agency and the facilitators' authority the NGO is questioning. To what extent is the questioning about the facilitators' expert authority over the process and to what extent about the governmental agency's authority over the domain of Swedish forest policy? What is clear at this stage is that the NGO wants to stress the seriousness of their critique by pointing out that they are reluctant to make a decision to join working group 3.

The facilitators respond promptly in an email to the NGO:

> Hi […] We will, here, respond briefly to the points you raised over mail yesterday since they concern principle questions about the process and the role of the [governmental agency]. […] We agree that there is still a lot of work to be done. […] We understand your wish that we clarify the role of the [governmental agency] in this process. We think that the role is already now roughly as you describe it, to balance, but we are willing to clarify that at the next meeting. […] We share the view that the [governmental agency] needs to contribute with grounds regarding the different indicators to the total list. […]

The swiftness and content of the response suggest that the facilitators see the email as a significant communicative move by the NGO. The facilitators' response signals that they recognise that something important is at stake. Even so, what precisely is at stake remains unclear. In terms of authority, we first note that the way that the email is written implies that the facilitators understand the email from the NGO as a challenge to their authority. The use of "principle questions," the "role of the governmental agency" and "clarify" indicates that the facilitators are changing how they facilitate. They are starting to move from facilitating through authority towards facilitating through argument. Regarding the critique towards the lack of leadership, the facilitators convey that they have understood the critique by using the same metaphor of balancing. Even so, the facilitators do not explain the meaning of the ambiguous metaphor; hence, the lack of clarity about why the facilitators are called into question remains. The email does not clarify whether what is at stake is the sources (expertise, organisation and person) and/or scope (process and/or outcome) of authority. Instead, the email signals humbleness, understanding of the NGO's concerns and confirmation. The facilitators are communicating that the NGO should trust them to lead the process with authority. The facilitators provide arguments for their choices and, thereby, seek to re-establish themselves as authorities. Indicative of this intention is the authoritative move the facilitators make when stating that they will "clarify" their role further at the next meeting. The use of 'clarify' sets part of the agenda for the next meeting and suggests that this item will not be about a discussion, but about information from facilitators in authority. At this point, the NGO has critiqued the manner in which the facilitators are performing authority and the facilitators have moved towards facilitating through argument as a response. Ambiguity and uncertainty about the reasons for the questioning of authority remain.

At the next meeting, where representatives from different stakeholders are present, the following interactions transpire. The facilitator, Magnus, introduces the mail conversation, with its questioning of authority, into the discussion. He explains how he understands the mail conversation and asks the NGO to elaborate. Notably, the facilitator does not clarify how he/they understand the key metaphor of balancing. Even so, the facilitator provides space for the NGO representatives to add to and elaborate on the metaphor and their critique.

Carl from the NGO responds:

> […] it is actually two questions. One is about participation in the working groups: it requires that we dedicate time and I think we will have scarce resources for this. […] working group two shows that we are not reaching the end of the road within the time frame […] therefore it would be good if the [governmental agency] could have a preparatory role in-between the meetings. […] The other point […] is about how we provide opinions. […] It is important, we think, that the [governmental agency] has some kind of… I mean it is after all production and environment that should be fused here, so to speak. So the [governmental agency] should actually have this balancing role, in part, and assume that role so that we end up reasonably balanced when we discuss these issues, so that no single one of the interest groups' opinions get to govern.

Carl repeats and elaborates on the two items of critique. One is portrayed as being technical: since resources are scarce, the governmental agency must be more active in preparing the meetings so that they become efficient and meaningful. It seems as if Carl considers the other item to be more value-laden, since he draws attention to the controversy between nature protection and industry. Notably, Carl employs the metaphor of balancing to both clarify that he represents the weaker party, who should be supported by the agency, and to explain how he sees the process as being about establishing equilibrium/consensus. The balancing metaphor is used both to describe a preferred process and a preferred outcome. Notably, the exchange of arguments has not clarified the extent to which the NGO's challenge concerns the process, organisational, expert and/or personal authority of the facilitators.

Another representative from the nature protection organisation, Rickard, fills in:

> […] so I think that there must be many experts at the [governmental agency] who know about data […] it would be very good with experts who could kind of do this kind of work and help out.

Rickard's intervention relates to item one of the critique: about the rationality of the process and how the governmental agency can make the process more efficient and meaningful. If experts could assist more, it would make it easier for the NGO to participate. Notably, what he calls for is an increased involvement of experts on the substantive issue regarding the state of Swedish forest and not the kind of process expertise that the facilitators' authority hangs on. Rickard's statement is a request for an increased presence of expert authority on the substantive issue at hand.

Magnus confirms that he has understood the concerns (even if ambiguity actually remains) and that he welcomes the NGO's critique.

> […] it is really good that you raise these questions, obviously if it is unclear it is important that it becomes clearer. […] We see our role as, above all, to lead the collaborative process, including the work in the working groups. Even so, when we talk about the working group, we still see that […] the working group has a preparatory role. […] another step is to, as we see it, reach a decision […] then we have two ways of doing that. Either that the participants agree and there is acceptance in the group, and if that does not work, we, the [governmental agency], will seek support for revised proposals before reaching a decision […] even if there is not full acceptance, one should then obviously try to listen to the opinions that exist and do that so that there is, search for support for that […] so these are two roles in a process.

Regarding item one in the critique, the efficiency of the process, Magnus explains that the role of the governmental agency and the facilitators is to lead the work. Even so, he seems to be unwilling to take sole responsibility for the preparatory work. It seems as though he is both agreeing and disagreeing with the wishes from the NGO. Regarding the second item, the suggestion that the agency should balance, Magnus is, rather than balancing, introducing the concept "decision." He portrays two kinds of situation: in the first, there is acceptance of a decision among all group members; in the second, there is no consensus. Magnus begins by describing the first kind of situation as one where the governmental agency has to take a stand, but his reasoning then becomes ambiguous when explaining how the agency, again, will try to listen and "search for support for." This seems to imply that decisions can only be taken if there is consensus/agreement. Notably, this reasoning does not answer the NGO's concern about balancing asymmetric relationships between nature protection and industry, both in the process, as well as in the outcome. It is notable that, in spite of the exchange of arguments, ambiguity remains about what has been challenged – organisational authority over the domain of Swedish forestry and/or the facilitators' expert authority over the process of collaboration.

The facilitator Lina goes on to elaborate further:

> We additionally think that we have an important role in making sure that this process and its results stay within the environmental policy and forestry frames and the existing conditions as we at the [governmental agency] have interpreted them. With respect to the balance, we like to take care that it does not run away in any direction, we have a responsibility to, like, hold the balance and the process within these frames. And we also see, as we mentioned previously, that we have many experts who can contribute, with know-how and quality assurance. […] But, we can, if we see that this is not working out, stop the process, yes.

In contrast to Magnus, Lina is here explicitly addressing the issue in terms of balancing. She confirms the critique from the NGO, but she is not explicit about how she understands the balancing metaphor. She is not confirming the NGO's view that the governmental agency should support the weaker party. She also introduces two other metaphors: 'frame' and 'run away'. The frame metaphor implies that there is a delineated area, decided by politicians, within which the group's decisions must be located. Linked to the frame metaphor is the run away metaphor that refers to situations where the process is moving outside of the delineated frame. She says that the governmental agency should intervene if the process moves in "any direction" outside of the frame. This seems to imply that she is not confirming the position of the NGO, which believes that the agency should intervene if the process runs away in a direction which they would consider to be unbalanced in favour of the interest of the stronger party. Regarding the critique towards the facilitation of the process, she is more clearly signalling that the agency is willing to facilitate more actively in line with what the NGO wants. Finally, she reminds the group about the authority of the agency and the facilitators: they can, if they want to, simply stop the process. In this way, she takes a more authoritative stance, and shifts the quality of the communication from argumentation towards authority.

Magnus thereafter invites Carl and Rickard to respond.

[…] this is how we see the role in broad strokes […] you are welcome to, if you want, ask more questions, think about it or comment on it. [Carl and Rickard] is this answering your questions, or?

Rickard responds by only discussing the efficiency of the process. He does not touch upon the more value-laden topics implied by the metaphors 'balancing', 'frame' and 'run away'. Notably, Carl does not say anything at this point. Instead, a more technical discussion follows with some interventions from different participants.
Then Carl enters into the conversation again:

[…] I think it would be good […] if it became clear when there are differences in opinions and standpoints. […] It is better to take the bull by the horns and talk it through, rather than avoiding the kind of differences in opinions that will come back and haunt us instead. […] My request is for all to be clear when one thinks that something is not good or not correct. […] here is where the [governmental agency] has a role to, according to me, to balance this issue.

Here, Carl brings the interactions back from an authoritative relationship to argumentation. He puts emphasis on the value-laden nature of this governance process. He points out that differences will exist and must be clearly articulated. He uses the metaphor "take the bull by the horns," thereby implying that stating your opinion clearly and deliberating with others who hold different opinions will be difficult and require courage. He also reiterates his view that the governmental agency ought to balance, i.e. support, the weaker party.
Next, Magnus responds:

No, that's good. Good that you put emphasis on this. It is this, I guess, that we want to be our ambition. But, then, at the same time, there are so many issues where we can …
that we would need to discuss, so to speak, so there is also a trade-off here, in terms of also moving forward. But, it is really good that it is clear if there are differences in views […]

The facilitator is ambiguous in his response: yes we should clarify differences but, no, we cannot do that because it takes too much time. His answer can be interpreted as a request to let him and his fellow facilitator assume positions of authority when it comes to deciding whether the facilitation should be about claryifing difference or "moving forward."
Carl continues:

Because, can I just say that, finally it is like this: there has to be an added value attached to participating in this group. All must feel that, it is hard enough in any case.

Carl repeats the message from the email: if this is not working out as we want, we are willing to leave the process. This utterance implies that the facilitators have not, so far, been entirely successful in their attempts to restore their authority by providing arguments for how they facilitate the process.
Later in the discussions, Carl suggests that proposals developed by the collaborative group should be sent out for a formal round of opinions from experts who have not participated in the collaborative governance process. Magnus responds:

> We have not discussed any round of opinions […] the ambition is to work with fact checking and anchoring and work with that throughout the process. That is how it is thought to be anyway.

Notably, here Magnus takes a more authoritative stance by rejecting Carl's proposal for structured expert inputs, without providing his arguments for doing so. Instead, he evokes an unnamed higher authority with the phrase "how it is thought to be." This way of expressing it implies that the higher authority (possibly the government or the governmental agency) have made a decision about not opening a structured round with expert inputs on the groups' proposals. Carl is unconvinced by this answer and points out that a process for expert inputs must be defined.

After a few more interventions along the same lines, Magnus summarises:

> But, we, let's do like this [Carl], we bring this question with us. Because we might not solve it now, but we bring it with us […] to a later stage.

Again, the facilitator moves towards facilitating through authority. He decides to pause the argumentation without clarifying what the controversy is about and without suggesting a process for sorting out how expert inputs should be organised. The exchange ends with Carl agreeing to Magnus' suggestion to pause the issue about how to structure expert inputs. Even so, since the questioning from the NGO also continues in the following interactions it seems unlikely that this attempt by the facilitator to perform authority is considered to be successful by the NGO.

Thereafter follows a conversation about the content of the document, which is supposed to be the concrete outcome of the collaborative process. Carl expresses frustration with the conversation and perhaps with the facilitation. After further interactions, he says:

> You are not listening to what we are saying.

In sum, this episode of collaborative governance includes negotiations of facilitators' authority to structure communication. Over a series of communicative events, participants from an NGO pose critique towards the facilitation, and facilitators from a Swedish governmental agency respond. The communication remains blurred and ambiguous throughout these interactions. The participants want the facilitators to be more active in designing and facilitating the process and they want the facilitators to balance the process so as to strengthen the position of the NGO. In their responses, the facilitators move along a continuum between facilitating through authority and facilitating through argument. When moving towards argumentation they: welcome the critique; outline how they see the items of critique; and explain what kind of authority they possess and how they are entitled to use it. When they move towards authority they: refrain from giving reasons for their actions; do not clarify differences in views; pause difficult and conflictual topics; refer to a higher unnamed authority; and do not clarify the meaning of ambiguous metaphors.

5.   A nuanced understanding of authority in facilitation practice

In this closing discussion, we combine a relational understanding of authority (Bourgoin, Bencherki, and Faraj 2020; Mik-Meyer and Haugaard 2019) with Arendt's

(2006) observation that authority is distinctive from argumentation and Warren's (1996) emphasis on the links between authority and deliberation. Using our findings we, thereby, illustrate how facilitators vaccilate between authority and argumentation when structuring communication in collaborative governance.

Our analysis showed how participants from a nature protection organisation critiqued the way that the facilitators from a national governmental agency performed authority. The participants no longer accepted that the facilitators were entitled to structure communication without providing arguments for the choices they made. Instead, the participants initiated argumentative discourse on the actions the facilitators had taken to facilitate the process. The facilitators acknowledged the participants' concerns as a critique of their role in the process and as a request for exchanging arguments about how to facilitate the communication.

> Authority […] is incompatible with persuasion, which presupposes equality and works through a process of argumentation. (Arendt 2006, 92)

Our findings illustrate that even if authority in facilitation practice, as Arendt (2006) argues, is distinctive from argumentation, the two concepts do not stand in opposition. Rather, as in Warren's (1996) conception, authority involves a temporary suspension of participants' judgements, conditioned by the possibility that participants can open up the facilitators' authority for critical scrutiny through exchange of arguments. Authority in facilitation practice is "a relationship that operates when the possibility of discursive challenge exists but is not taken up by agents" (Warren 1996, 47). At the point when the NGO participants challenged the choices the facilitators had made and called for open communication on their role and actions, the facilitators were no longer able to perform authority. Consequently, they adopted another way of facilitating. They moved towards facilitating through argumentation and, to some extent, discussed the reasons for their choices, the sources and the scope of their authority. As such, the relational conception of authority, with its shift in focus from the actor in authority to how authority is relationally constituted, is useful for understanding the characteristics of authority in facilitation practice (see Bourgoin, Bencherki, and Faraj 2020; Mik-Meyer and Haugaard 2019).

Our analysis illustrates how, in interactions with participants, facilitators move back and forth along a continuum between facilitating through authority and through argumentation. Importantly, we also see how facilitators tend to gravitate back towards authority after having discussed their role and decisions. In the analysed episode, the facilitators engaged in argumentation, i.e. they provided their reasons and listened to the participants' reasons with the view of arriving at a shared understanding of how the process ought to be facilitated. Even so, after such instances of argumentation the facilitators argued that the participants should again accept them as being entitled to facilitate through authority: the facilitators pointed to the norm-giving function of their governmental agency and referred to time constraints as a reason for not providing arguments for all facilitation choices. This illustrates how facilitators, after having been challenged, need to again be accepted as authorities in order to fulfil their role of structuring communication. Facilitators are governance practitioners and, like all practitioners, they are commissioned to fulfil objectives and meet deadlines. Hence, even if facilitators must be open for critical scrutiny through argumentation in order to maintain their authority in the eyes of the participants, they will gravitate back towards facilitating through authority.

Our analysis confirms that the meaning of authority in facilitation practice is uncertain and contested (Moore 2012; Westin *et al.* 2021). Even if the facilitators and the participants exchanged arguments, their different interpretations of the role and actions of the facilitators were never clarified and they did not arrive at a shared understanding of their respective roles in the process, with differences remaining regarding how the process ought to be facilitated. The NGO participants rearticulated their critique at several points during the interactions; they expressed frustration; they said that they might opt out of the process and they implied that they would not accept that the facilitators had authority to continue facilitating the process along the same lines. The facilitators conveyed that they had the same view about the process and their role and they engaged in argumentation with the participants, but they were, throughout the episode, unable to clarify what was at stake in this challenge of their authority. At the end of our analysis, it was still unclear to the involved actors why the NGO participants were reluctant to accept the authority of the facilitators.

In order to disentangle the confusion surounding facilitators' authority, it is helpful to consider the source and scope of authority. The NGO participants' questioning was concerned with the *scope* of the governmental agency's norm-giving authority and the facilitators' scope of authority over the collaborative process. The participants indicated that they wanted the facilitators to use their authority to balance the process, as well as the outcome of the interactions, in order to strengthen the nature protection interest. Further, this challenge of authority was concerned with the contested and ambiguous sources of the facilitators' authority. The forestry agency's facilitators performed authority based on *organisational belonging, expertise* and *personal behaviour and characteristics*. Their organisational authority was unclear due to the dual mandate of representing an organisation with authority over forest policy as well as over the process of collaborative governance. Previous studies have shown how it is difficult for facilitators with this dual organisational mandate to be accepted by participants, since they might be perceived as not being neutral in the conflict between nature protection and development (Forester 2013). Facilitation being a young and emergent field of practice, which is yet to be more broadly accepted as a source of authority, adds to the ambiguity (Bherer, Gauthier, and Simard 2017; Westin, Hellquist, and Johansson 2020; Westin *et al.* 2021; Sprain 2022). Illustrating this interpretation is the fact that facilitation expertise was not explicitly referred to during the interactions in our case; expertise was merely discussed in terms of substantive knowing about forest policy and not in terms of knowing about process design and facilitation. In this manner, the confusion regarding facilitators' authority might be disentangled by introducing the distinctions of sources and scope of authority.

Figure 1 sums up the reasoning so far. Facilitators' use of power takes shape as a pendulum movement along a continuum between authority and argumentation. When facilitating through authority, the facilitator structures communication in a manner that the involved participants consent to without asking for arguments. Their consent is not based on a surrendering of judgement though, but on an active acceptance of the facilitator's authority, conditioned by the possibility for participants to critically scrutinize the facilitator's position and actions by exchanging arguments on the sources and scope of authority.

Authority ⟵―――――――――――――――――⟶ Argumentation

Figure 1.   The continuum of authority and argumentation.

By outlining a nuanced understanding of authority in facilitation practice, this paper contributes to the diverse literature on collaborative governance and, more specifically, to the literature about the role of facilitators. In this literature, collaborative governance is mainly conceptualised as a horizontal and consensual process of power-sharing and the facilitator is most frequently described as a neutral practitioner, or as a practitioner who works to level power asymmetries between participants (see e.g. Forester 1999; Innes and Booher 2018; Reed and Abernethy 2018). We have, instead, provided an understanding which shows how authority is necessary in facilitation practice and how this form of power is linked to, rather than incompatible with, argumentation. The value of this contribution is that it offers a language for describing facilitators in a manner that provides a more nuanced understanding of their role in collaborative governance.

Even so, our study has its limitations. We have mainly considered authority as a cognitive phenomenon having to do with the "realm of reason" (Forst 2015). As previous studies show, authority is more than cognitive. It is a social phenomenon constituted through a complex interplay between bodies, things and ideas in a specific practice (Bourgoin, Bencherki, and Faraj 2020; Reckwitz 2002). In these terms, our study focused on the exchange of 'ideas', but did not look at the bodily movements and did not pay attention to how body language was part of the interactions. Our focus also excluded analysis of how facilitators and participants used materials (such as computers and documents) to create meaning and negotiate authority.

Even so, the understanding of authority we have outlined provides opportunites for both theoretical and practical future developments. Areas for future research building on our findings include: (i) better understanding the sources and scope of facilitators' authority; (ii) exploring how authority is negotiated through communicative moves in the micro practices of facilitation; (iii) exploring how facilitators' authority is constituted through interplay between institutions and agency and (iv) developing normative frameworks for the practice of facilitation. In practice, our findings can be used to better understand the role of facilitators within programmes for facilitator training and facilitation handbooks. The idea that facilitators move between facilitating through authority and through argumentation might not provide these practitioners with ready-made answers, but can work as a heuristic to interpret the complex situations they confront.

Disclosure statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

Ethical approval

The research reported upon in this paper was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines issued by Swedish research councils.

Funding

ORCID

Martin Westin http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3887-1517
Lars Hallgren http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0430-682X

References

Ansell, Chris, and Alison Gash. 2007. "Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18 (4): 543–571. doi:10.1093/jopart/mum032.

Arendt, Hannah. 2006. *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought. Penguin Classics*. New York: Penguin Books.

Bagg, Samuel. 2018. "Can Deliberation Neutralise Power?" *European Journal of Political Theory* 17 (3): 257–279. doi:10.1177/1474885115610542.

Bartesaghi, Mariaelena. 2009. "How the Therapist Does Authority: Six Strategies for Substituting Client Accounts in the Session." *Communication & Medicine* 6 (1): 15–25. doi:10.1558/cam.v6i1.15.

Bherer, Laurence, Mario Gauthier, and Louis Simard, eds. 2017. *The Professionalization of Public Participation*. New York: Routledge.

Boschet, Christophe, and Tina Rambonilaza. 2018. "Collaborative Environmental Governance and Transaction Costs in Partnerships: Evidence from a Social Network Approach to Water Management in France." *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 61 (1): 105–123. doi:10.1080/09640568.2017.1290589.

Bourgoin, Alaric, Nicolas Bencherki, and Samer Faraj. 2020. "'And Who Are You?': A Performative Perspective on Authority in Organizations." *Academy of Management Journal* 63 (4): 1134–1165. doi:10.5465/amj.2017.1335.

Brisbois, Marie Claire, and Rob C. de Loë. 2016. "Power in Collaborative Approaches to Governance for Water: A Systematic Review." *Society & Natural Resources* 29 (7): 775–790. doi:10.1080/08941920.2015.1080339.

Brown, Abigail, Ruth Langridge, and Kirsten Rudestam. 2016. "Coming to the Table: Collaborative Governance and Groundwater Decision-Making in Coastal California." *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 59 (12): 2163–2178. doi:10.1080/09640568.2015.1130690.

Brulle, Robert J. 2010. "From Environmental Campaigns to Advancing the Public Dialog: Environmental Communication for Civic Engagement." *Environmental Communication* 4 (1): 82–98. doi:10.1080/17524030903522397.

Calderon, Camilo. 2020. "Unearthing the Political: Differences, Conflicts and Power in Participatory Urban Design." *Journal of Urban Design* 25 (1): 50–64. doi:10.1080/13574809.2019.1677146.

Connelly, Stephen, and Tim Richardson. 2004. "Exclusion: The Necessary Difference between Ideal and Practical Consensus." *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 47 (1): 3–17. doi:10.1080/0964056042000189772.

Forester, John. 1999. *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Forester, John. 2013. *Planning in the Face of Conflict: The Surprising Possibilities of Facilitative Leadership*. Chicago, IL: American Planning Association.

Forst, Rainer. 2015. "Noumenal Power." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 23 (2): 111–127. doi:10.1111/jopp.12046.

Förster, Jan Janosch, Linda Downsborough, and Machaya Jeff Chomba. 2017. "When Policy Hits Practice: Structure, Agency, and Power in South African Water Governance." *Society & Natural Resources* 30 (4): 521–536. doi:10.1080/08941920.2016.1268658.

Hallgren, Lars, Hanna Bergeå, and Lotten Westberg. 2018. "Communication Problems When Participants Disagree (or Avoid Disagreeing) in Dialogues in Swedish Natural Resource Management: Challenges to Agonism in Practice." *Frontiers in Communication* 3. doi:10.3389/fcomm.2018.00056.

Haugaard, Mark. 2018. "What Is Authority?" *Journal of Classical Sociology* 18 (2): 104–132. doi:10.1177/1468795X17723737.

Heron, John. 1993. *Group Facilitation: Theories and Models for Practice*. East Brunswick, NJ: Nichols Publishing.

Holdo, Markus. 2019. "Power and Citizen Deliberation: The Contingent Impacts of Interests, Ideology, and Status Differences." *Journal of Public Deliberation* 15 (3). https://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol15/iss3/art2

Hunt, Kathleen P., Gregg B. Walker, and Stephen P. Depoe, eds. 2019. *Breaking Boundaries: Innovative Practices in Environmental Communication and Public Participation*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Innes, Judith E., and David E. Booher. 2018. *Planning with Complexity: An Introduction to Collaborative Rationality for Public Policy*. London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781315147949.

Jerolmack, Colin, and Shamus Khan. 2017. *Approaches to Ethnography: Analysis and Representation in Participant Observation*. New York: Oxford University Press. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uu/detail.action?docID=5103623

Maia, Rousiley C. M., Marcela D. Laranjeira, and Pedro S. Mundim. 2017. "The Role of Experts across Two Different Arenas in a Deliberative System." *Journal of Deliberative Democracy* 13 (1): 2. doi:10.16997/jdd.268.

Mansbridge, Jane, James Bohman, Simone Chambers, David Estlund, Andreas Føl[esdal, Archon Fung, Cristina Lafont, Bernard Manin, and José Luis Martí. 2010. "The Place of Self-Interest and the Role of Power in Deliberative Democracy." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 18 (1): 64–100. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9760.2009.00344.x.

Mayer, Bernard. 2011. "What We Talk about When We Talk about Neutrality: A Commentary on the Susskind-Stulberg Debate, 2011 Edition The Future of Court ADR: Mediation and Beyond." *Marquette Law Review* 95 (3): 859–872.

Mik-Meyer, Nanna. 2021. "Sensitizing Concepts in Studies of Homelessness and Disability." In *Doing Human Service Ethnography*, edited by Katarina Jacobsson and Jaber F. Gubrium, 1st ed., 67–82. Bristol: Policy Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctv1sfsdm3.9.

Mik-Meyer, Nanna, and Mark Haugaard. 2019. "The Performance of Citizen's and Organisational Authority." *Journal of Classical Sociology* 20 (4): 309–334. doi:10.1177/1468795X19860111.

Moore, Alfred. 2012. "Following from the Front: Theorizing Deliberative Facilitation." *Critical Policy Studies* 6 (2): 146–162. doi:10.1080/19460171.2012.689735.

Moore, Alfred. 2017. *Critical Elitism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Purdy, Jill M. 2012. "A Framework for Assessing Power in Collaborative Governance Processes." *Public Administration Review* 72 (3): 409–417. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6210.2011.02525.x.

Reckwitz, Andreas. 2002. "Toward a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Culturalist Theorizing." *European Journal of Social Theory* 5 (2): 243–263. doi:10.1177/13684310222225432.

Reed, Maureen G., and Paivi Abernethy. 2018. "Facilitating Co-Production of Transdisciplinary Knowledge for Sustainability: Working with Canadian Biosphere Reserve Practitioners." *Society & Natural Resources* 31 (1): 39–56. doi:10.1080/08941920.2017.1383545.

Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, and Dvora Yanow. 2013. *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Senecah, Susan. 2004. "The Trinity of Voice: The Role of Practical Theory in Planning and Evaluating the Effectiveness of Environmental Participatory Processes." In *Communication and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making*, edited by Stephen P. Depoe, John W. Delicath, and Marie-France Aepli Elsenbeer, 13–33. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Sprain, Leah. 2022. "Facilitating Deliberative Play." *American Behavioral Scientist*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/00027642221093590.

Walker, Gregg B., Steven E. Daniels, and Antony S. Cheng. 2006. "Facilitating Dialogue and Deliberation in Environmental Conflict: The Use of Groups in Collaborative Learning." In *Facilitating Group Communication in Context: Innovations and Applications with Natural Groups*, edited by Lawrence R. Frey, 205–238. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press. doi:10.13140/2.1.4841.3124.

Warren, Mark E. 1996. "Deliberative Democracy and Authority." *The American Political Science Review* 90 (1): 46–60. doi:10.2307/2082797.

Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Westin, Martin. 2019. "Rethinking Power in Participatory Planning: Towards Reflective Practice." Dissertation, Uppsala: SLU.

Westin, Martin. 2022. "The Framing of Power in Communicative Planning Theory: Analysing the Work of John Forester, Patsy Healey and Judith Innes." *Planning Theory* 21 (2): 132–154. doi:10.1177/14730952211043219.

Westin, Martin, Camilo Calderon, and Alexander Hellquist. 2014. *The Inquiry Based Approach – A Facilitator's Handbook*. Vol. 2014. Stockholm: Elanders.

Westin, Martin, Alexander Hellquist, and Lena Johansson. 2020. "Att utveckla samverkanskompetens genom utbildning – Praktisk klokhet och reflekterande praktik." *Socialmedicinsk tidskrift* 97 (4): 640–650.

Westin, Martin, Amelia Mutter, Camilo Calderon, and Alexander Hellquist. 2021. ""Let Us Be Led by the Residents": Swedish Dialogue Experts' Stories about Power, Justification and Ambivalence." *Nordic Journal of Urban Studies* 1 (2): 113–130. doi:10.18261/issn.2703-8866-2021-02-02.

Wondolleck, Julia M., and Steven Lewis Yaffee. 2000. *Making Collaboration Work: Lessons From Innovation In Natural Resource Management*. Washington, DC: Island Press.