

Namur Workshop 1: Theoretical Approaches to the Problems and Limits of Governance defined in Terms of Ethical Normativity and the Elaboration of a Common Good

A Pragmatic Approach to Polynormative Governance

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On the very idea of Governance: Levels

Is there something like a general depth-grammar underlying all particular projects of governance?

On the very idea of Governance: Ontology

What is the real unit of governance?

What are the candidates for such a unit?

On the very idea of Governance: Practices

"A norm is not just a form of action. It is a form of appropriate action, of appropriate response; and this appropriateness is something that is determined in its relations with, among other things, other norms: by the role which this or that mode of action or response plays in the constitution of individual and communal life"

(Frederick Will, *Beyond Deduction*, 1988:93f)

Norms = guides to what is reasonable procedure.

Practices = concrete normative compositions.

On the very idea of Governance: Reflexivity

Is all governance the governance of norms? And therefore „normative governance“ in a dual sense?

(„normatively governing the normative texture of some practice P“)

Towards a general concept of normative governance: Abductive reasoning

1. We surprisingly observe undesirable results R in the performance of some generally accepted practice P , where P is textured by the norms $N_1, N_2 \dots N_n$?
2. If some norm N_x (within the normative texture of P) were to be followed routinely, R would be a matter of course.
3. Therefore, it is desirable that we **ampliatively** govern P concerning N_x .

Towards a general concept of normative governance: Four assumptions

1. We have some sense of the range of possible surrogates, successors, or alternatives to N_x in P
2. We have some idea of the extent to which P allows for change in its normative composition while remaining recognizably (though perhaps unexpectedly) a composition of *that* practice P
3. P is important enough for us to desire to go on with P
4. It is not equally important for us to go on with N_x

Towards a general concept of normative governance: More abductive reasoning

1. We (surprisingly) recognize P as similar when oriented by $N_1, N_2 \dots N?$ **and also** when oriented by $N_3, N_4 \dots N?$
2. If some norm N_y (of those belonging to $N_3, N_4 \dots N?$) were to succeed N_x in P, and were to be followed routinely, R would [probably] **not** occur in P
3. Therefore, we should change P so that N_y succeeds N_x

Towards a general concept of normative governance: Reflective governance

$G_1(P)$ is **better** governance than $G_2(P)$
iff the recomposition of P
that is effected by G_1
remedies more “deficiencies” in P while
creating fewer new “deficiencies” in P
and in any other associated practice P'
than does G_2

Towards a general concept of normative
governance: Reflective governance

“Deficiencies” in which respect(s)?
By what kind(s) of standard(s)?

Towards a general concept of normative governance: How to govern governance?

Markets

Democracy

Discourse

>>Some major structures
of **poly**normative governance

Democracy as polynormative governance

For any public use of any publicly known reason R,

if a determinate subset S of citizens share a determinate interpretation of R's political significance because **qua members of subset S they recognize some concern as their common concern,**

then R is a **res publica reason** relative to the subset S of citizens

Democracy as polynormative governance

For any action A that is intended to have differential political consequences, A is **legitimate for the subset** of citizens who can recognize in A , on the basis of appropriate public uses of relevant and undefeated *res publica* reasons, **their** “*res publica*”, i.e. **their** common-wealth or common well-being.

Democracy as polynormative governance

Political deliberation is democratic,
iff its main aim is extending or restricting,
promoting or withdrawing the recognition
of reasons as res publica reasons
that certain reasons enjoy in **some** subsets of
citizens
across **as many** subsets of citizens **as**
possible