Appendix

LUCID focus group discussions on reflexivity

Thursday 23 March, 10.15-12

As you are aware, we are studying reflexivity in sustainability research. The core of reflexivity is often seen as "research that turns back upon and takes account of itself" (Alvesson et al 2008). As we have discussed, reflexivity is a broad concept with different definitions. Therefore, we are interested in the different "types" of reflexivity that researchers find important and how they translate that into research practice (i.e. methods and research design). Below you will find a short text that discusses different understandings of reflexivity.

Based on the above, we would like to invite you to *focus group* discussions on the topic. The focus groups will constitute an important part of our material for this study and we hope that you will be interested in actively participating. Participants will be divided into groups following research seniority. The discussions will be recorded.

In preparation of the session, we ask you to read the short introduction to reflexivity included in this mail and reflect over the questions below (further preparation is not necessary):

- What are you reflexive about as researcher? Specifically, are there examples in your role as researcher *vis-à-vis* the object of study / research subjects or participants / interpretation / larger research tradition / changing the world
- How do you translate reflexivity about these issues into practice in your research?
- What are your motivations for being reflexive when carrying out research? Is it necessary (or not) and if so why?

We appreciate your participation and look forward to the discussions!

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Reflexivity in research is often seen as "research that turns back upon and takes account of itself" (Alvesson et al 2008), or "where researchers turn a critical gaze upon themselves" (Finlay 2008). Even if most researchers agree on this type of core definition, there is no agreement on a more specific definition. Rather, many chose to use the plural reflexiv*ies*, to indicate that it can consist of many different things (Finlay 2008; Gough 2008). Many different typologies exist (e.g. Finlay 2008; Alvesson et al 2008; Lynch 2000; Wilkinson 1988). Most of these typologies include some form of "personal" reflexivity (Wilkinson 1988), or introspection (Finlay 2008). This implies that the reflexive gaze is turned towards how the researcher's own experiences can be used as either entry point to research or as material in a study. Another aspect of reflexivity is how the situatedness of the researcher, for example in terms of gender, race and class, but also disciplinary belonging, impacts on the research, including choice of study object, methods, interpretation, and relations to the study subjects (MacBeth 2001; Wilkinson 1988). Some of the typologies include reflexivity as collaboration, were research is seen as a processes that is shared among several researchers, but also with other participants (Alvesson et al 2008; Finlay 2008). A further way to understand reflexivity is in terms of understanding a study's relation to the wider academic field or societal processes (Alvesson et al 2008; Wilkinson 1988). Often the authority of the researcher is held forth as problematic and an effort is made to enable multiple voices to be heard. Another type of reflexivity that is often listed concerns the text and how it is both contestable and constructive. A further aspect of reflexivity is discussed by Kuehner et al (2016). They differentiate between weak and strong reflexivity, where the aim of the first is to use reflexivity to decrease the influence of researcher and context on the study, whereas the situatedness and experience of the researcher in the second is seen as strength.

Given this, the meaning of reflexivity is highly context dependent and varies with the interest and focus of the authors. In the context of sustainability research, we believe that specific types of reflexivity are important, that might be less so in studies with other focus. There might also be important differences in terms of the study object as well as the theoretical perspective used. We wish to explore these types of reflexivities.

References

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