Franco & Rouwette (2011): "Decision Development in Facilitated Modeling Workshops"

Franco & Rouwette are capturing the status quo that very little research is focusing on who particular facilitated modeling (FM) workshop designs are affecting the way group decisions are developed and how FM workshop designs affects the development of group decisions. Wrapping up the enormous information in this paper on and between the lines, the three main important questions this paper is addressing to – regarding the dynamic nature of facilitated modeling (=FM) – are the following:

1. **What patters of decision development characterize FM workshops?**
2. **What is the relationship between these decision development patterns and FM workshop inputs and outputs?**
3. **How can decision development in FM workshops be empirically discussed?**

Conceptualizations of decision development in the FM tradition

- Decision support design based on descriptive conceptualization of group decision-making; instead of normative models (avoid starting from idealized world assumptions).
- Decision making as continuous interactions (spanning together different decision paths).
- Group decision development as a dual process, pointing to: "Understanding the emotional life of the group is the key to working effectively in the group".

Theoretical models of decision development in the group communication field

- Phase models: Decision development as passing through series of identifiable phases (defined as a set of coherent activities that serve some decision-related function).
- Social construction models: Group decisions depending from their constitution and their interactions ("contingency factors mediated by member reactions").
- Group model building as socially constructed activity.

Studying decision development in FM workshops

Identification of four important areas for examining FM workshops from a decision development perspective:

1. Decision paths: Decisions can follow unitary, multiple or more complex sequences (=decision paths).
2. Contingency factors influencing decision paths: e.g. group and task characteristics, degree of conflict in the decision, degree of uncertainty about the decision.
3. Social construction processes influencing decision paths: Social construction models can investigate for example who group members develop shared representations of a situated problem of interest.
4. Link between decision paths and group outcomes: Normative phase sequences were leading to more successful outcomes.

Furthermore some methodological considerations (research design, coding scheme development, coding data and data analysis) are imparted in the paper.