

What do we have in common? Collective action among heterogeneous actors in a meta-organization

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ABSTRACT

We study the development process of common resources in Helix Nebula. Helix Nebula is a meta-organization of highly heterogeneous collaborating actors, including scientific organizations like CERN, EMBL, and ESA, commercial cloud providers and public infrastructure organizations. The actors in Helix Nebula collaborate to establish a European open science cloud that can be used by scientific institutes to flexibly buy cloud computing resources from different commercial organizations. This requires the development of common resources to allow demand and supply actors to use the cloud computing infrastructure effectively. We study the process of development of common resources in Helix Nebula as an exemplary meta-organization. Our study illuminates that in the crystallizing process of common resources different development options emerge that trigger the surfacing of differences and dependencies. This leads to a reconfiguration of the development options, around which clusters of decision-making actors and clusters of legitimating actors shape emerging micro-alliances. Thus, our study explains that the development of common resources in meta-organizations of highly heterogeneous actors without hierarchical means is an organizing process that includes a continuous reconfiguration of crystallizing development options and respective micro-alliances of decision-making and legitimating actors.