

Informational governance in marine spatial conflicts at the North Sea

IPOP Informational governance

Lunch meeting 14-11-2013

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Contents

- Theoretical foundation: informational governance
- Objective and research questions
- Conceptual tool: marine scaping
- Case studies
- Conclusions, discussion, questions



Informational governance

- Mol's paper (2006) in *Environment and Planning C* and book (2008)
- Ideas taken up and further developed by researchers from ENP (Oosterveer, Bush, Gupta) and by others from Wageningen UR and beyond
- ENP PhD students working on this theme: Van den Burg (2006), De Vos (2011) and Toonen (December 2013)
- Wageningen IPOP on Informational governance



Informational governance

Key quotes (1)

- Informational governance refers to: 'institutions and practices of – in our case, environmental-governance that are to a significant extent structured and 'ruled' by information, informational processes, informational technologies, and struggles around access to, control over, and production and use of (environmental) information' (Mol 2008: 80-81)



Informational governance

Key quotes (2)

- Information is not just: 'becoming a crucial, casual and formative resource, but also a battlefield for new modes of environmental governance' (Mol 2008: 19)

Information has a centripetal force: it "attracts" people who want to affect environmental decision-making



Informational governance

Marine environmental protection and use

- Wageningen IPOP Coasts and seas (2008-2012)
- Site selection processes for Marine Protected Areas at the North Sea
- EU roadmap for Marine Spatial Planning
- Ecosystem-based fisheries management

A 'spatial turn' in North Sea governance



Informational governance

Theoretical foundation: five angles



Anatomy of informational governance on marine ecosystem protection and use

Multi-actor and multi-level governance



- Horizontal and vertical shifts in governance
 - Steering by public and/or private actors (governments, market parties and civil society organisations)
 - Steering at different levels
- Different actors have...
 - different roles
 - different interests
 - different competences

Steering through information



- Associated with so-called "soft law", or the "third mode", that is communicative policy instruments (next to legal power and economic instruments)
- Informational governance arrangements could have "hard-law-like" structures
- Information not necessarily instead of other instruments, but becomes more crucial

Good governance?



- Normative connotations: emancipatory side
e.g. Aarhus convention, freedom of press, call for transparency and accountability
- Informational governance is not automatically "good"...
green washing, enhancing power of informational elites

Information Age



- ICT revolution
- Disenchantment of science
- Globalisation



Whereabouts of the marine world



- Complexity of sovereignty issues at sea
- Many users and competing spatial claims
- Limited understanding of marine ecosystems

Whereabouts of the marine world

- Complexity of sovereignty issues at sea

The diagram illustrates the various maritime zones extending from a state's baseline. Key zones include the Territorial Sea (up to 12 nautical miles), the Contiguous Zone (up to 24 nautical miles), the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (up to 200 nautical miles), and the High Seas. Text boxes provide details on state rights, such as the right to regulate foreign ships, and international agreements like UNCLOS.

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Whereabouts of the marine world

- Complexity of sovereignty issues at sea
- Many users and competing spatial claims
- Limited understanding of marine ecosystems
 - Especially relevant if linked to scientific disenchantment

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Definition

- Informational governance on marine ecosystem protection and use:

A multi-actor and multi-level steering through information aimed to improve marine environmental protection and reform that is yet not inherently "good" (or "bad")
- State-led and non-state examples: national working groups, NSRAC, seafood wallet card arrangements, Marine Stewardship Council, Blue flag label for sustainable beaches, coasts and (whale-watching) boats

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Objective

- The aim of my PhD research is:
 - to analyse how public and private actors through informational governance (try to) resolve spatial conflicts between economic activities and nature conservation at the North Sea

WAGENINGEN UR For quality of life Objective and research questions

Research questions

- How can the centrality of information in the spatial turn in marine governance be conceptualized and analyzed?
- Which actors are involved in informational governance on marine ecosystem protection and use at the North Sea, and how do they (inter-) act in informational processes?
- How does informational governance contribute to the solving of spatial conflicts between economic activities and nature conservation at the North Sea?

WAGENINGEN UR For quality of life Objective and research questions

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One of the key quotes again...

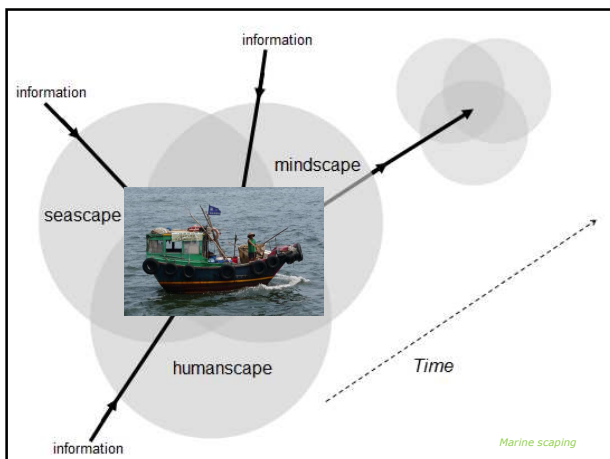
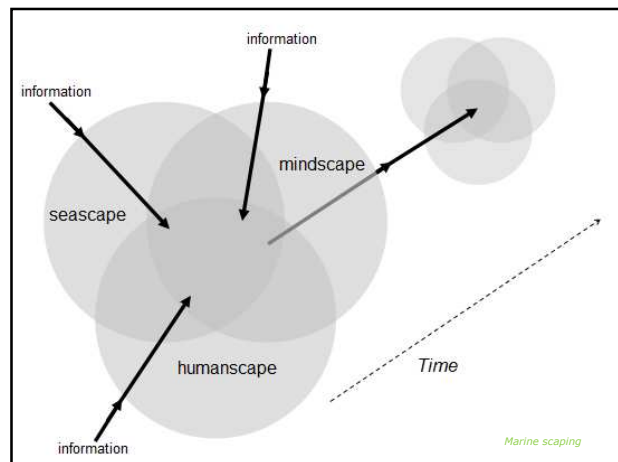
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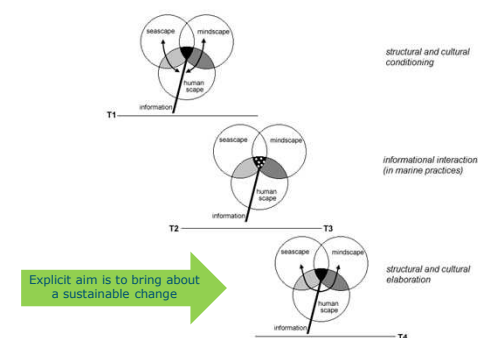
How does information relate to human agency?

Marine scaping: the staging of practices

- Scaping: a process wherein actors and coalitions try to (re-) organize their activities in space and time, depending on and defined by information
- Building on structuration theory (Archer, 2010 [1982])
- Structure/conditions are captured by the concept of scapes (Appadurai, 1996; Verrips, 1988)




A step-by-step approach




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Case study design



- Appropriate when studying current events in a real-life context
- Data collection: document review, interviews, participant observation
- Data analysis: iterative, based on theoretical propositions



Case studies

Case selection

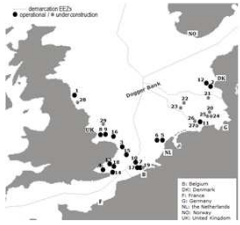

- Focus on informational (inter-) actions of three actor groups: eNGOs, scientists and policy makers (2 cases)
- Focus on arrangements related to an economic activity with a spatial impact on the North Sea ecosystem
 - Habitat impact of MSC certified plaice fisheries
 - **Ecological benefits of offshore wind farms**

Case studies

Offshore wind energy developments at the North Sea

- First large OWF in the world built at the North Sea, operational in 2002 (Horns Rev, Denmark)
- EU growth rate offshore wind energy over 2008-2012: 6% (compared to -5,6% onshore)
- In 2012, 80% of newly installed offshore turbines at the North Sea

Favourable seascape characteristics

- Ecological benefits for some sea life
- OWFs could be seen as having a "double dividend" (or generating "dark green electricity")




Case studies

Derived from Han Lindeboom, WUR/IMARES

Energy differentiation in the EU

Time	Level	Differentiation in energy sources						Debate	
		Fossil fuels	Renewable sources			Other renewable sources			
↓	I	Fossil fuels	Renewable sources						GHG reduction, energy security
	II	Fossil fuels	Wind, Solar, Hydro			Other renewable sources		Proven technologies, costs	
	III	Fossil fuels	Wind	Solar	Hydro	Biofuels	Others...	Environmental impacts	
	IV	Fossil fuels	Off-shore	On-shore	Others...			Double dividend?	

- Differentiation accounted for by EU scheme on Guarantees of Origin



Case studies

Capitalization on double dividend?



- Attention for favourable ecological impacts limited
- One possible way is through existing certification schemes
 - WindMade
 - EKOenergy



Why do eNGOs, market parties and governments not exploit the dark green message?

Explaining obstructions



- Non-explanations
- Competing discourses (mindscape constraints):
 - Onshore-versus-offshore" triggers "green-versus-green" debate
 - Out of sight...
- Other claims

Conclusions



- All actors, including large eNGOs and developers, are involved in ecological research programs
- No communication of the dark green message leads to missed ecological opportunities
- Informational governance design is promising, and two labels may provide a suitable starting point

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Overall conclusions (1)

- Centrality of information:
 - Strongly connected to conditions at different governmental levels
 - Stated-induced principle of using science-based information important
 - At the same time, non-scientific information also plays a key role
 - Institutional ambiguity: room for other forms of governance

Overall conclusions (2)

- Actors and interactions:
 - Context can be:
 - governance-by-government
 - shared public-private governance
 - non-state-market-based governance (Cashore, 2002)
 - Five different actor roles derived from empirical work

Overall conclusions (3)

■ Contributions:

- Environmental effectiveness?
- Stakeholders happy with trend towards transparency
- Actors building up informational capital

Discussion

Main contribution of this study is that it brings in a spatially distinctive context (the sea)

Because of invisibility, informational processes are **always** mediated.

Thank you for
your attention!

Your questions and
comments are very
welcome!

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