



MAKING MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING MATTER

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OUTLINE

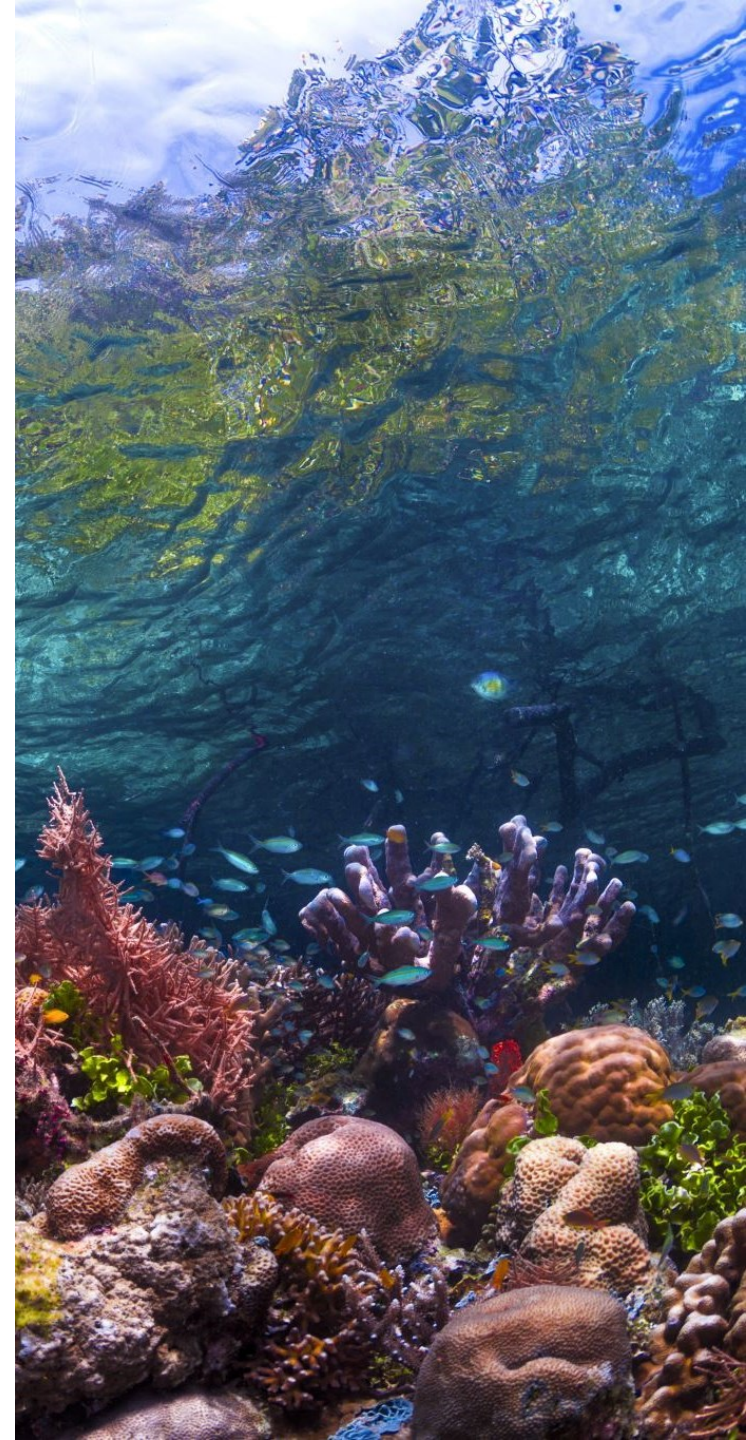
1. Marine Management as a Spatial Planning Problem.
2. MSP as a Solution?
3. Stakeholder participation and MSP.
4. Five tensions within MSP Practice.



MARINE MANAGEMENT: A SPATIAL ISSUE

Three interrelated issues:

1. Increasing industrialisation of marine areas.
2. Increasing conflict among marine users
3. Fragmented and sectoral governance.



1.1 INCREASING INDUSTRIALISATION



Photo by [Lucut Razvan](#) on [Unsplash](#)



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INCREASED CONFLICT

Fishermen unite to resist vast windfarm

A licence application to survey the Waterford coastline for the world's largest offshore windfarm has caused fears among fishing and tourism sectors, writes **Ellie O'Byrne**.



MON, 11 NOV, 2019 - 00:00

ELLIE O'BYRNE

The Observer
Food & drink industry

Offshore wind could blow us out of the water, say Cornish fishers



Joanna Partridge

Sat 3 Sep 2022 16:00 BST



HUMAN V NATURE CONFLICT IN MARINE ENVIRONMENT



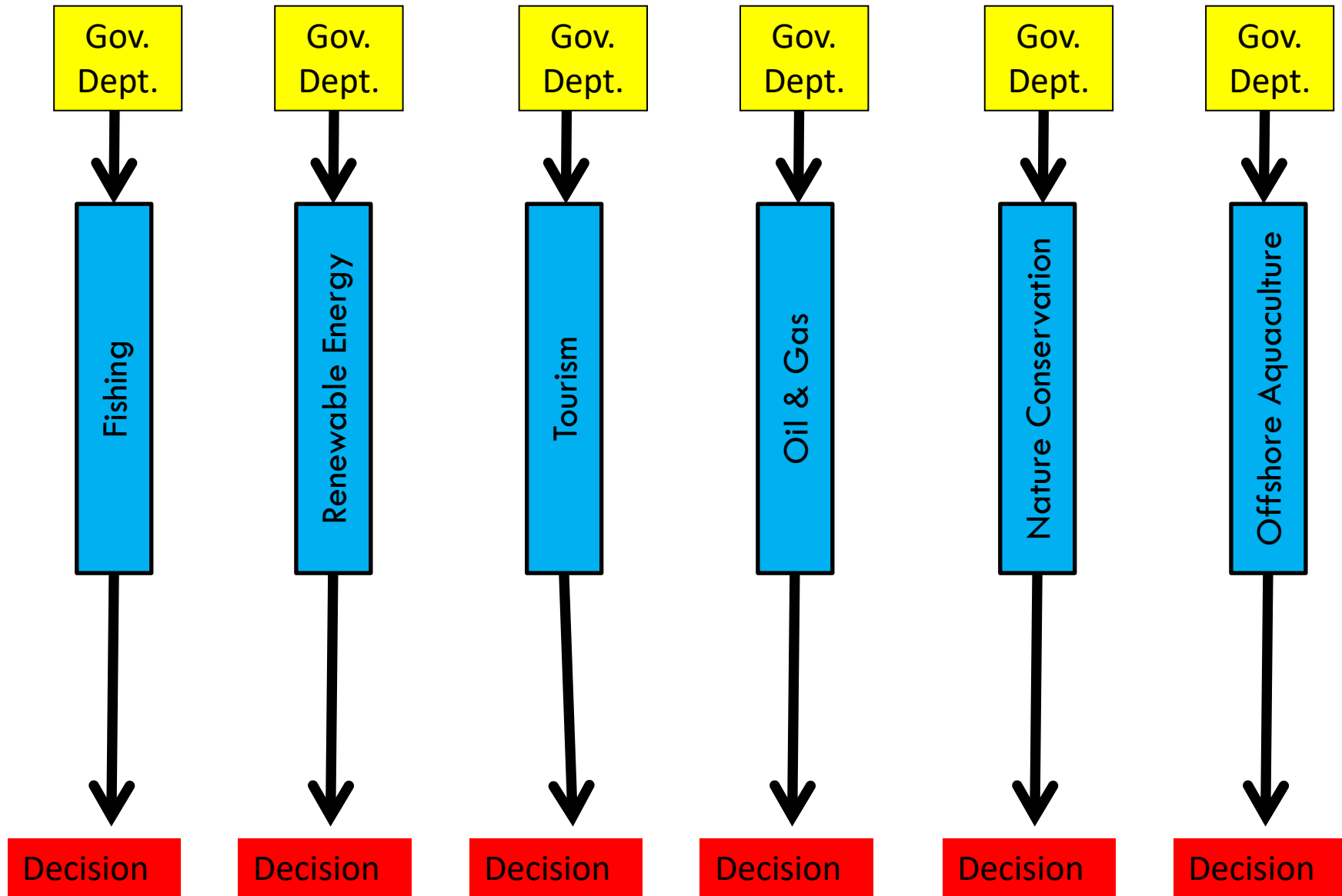
Source: Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

The Irish Sea

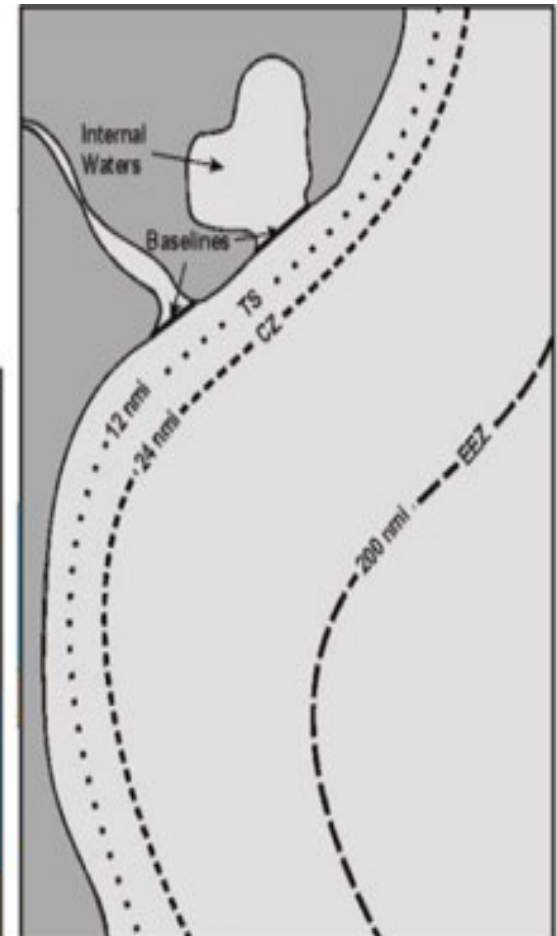
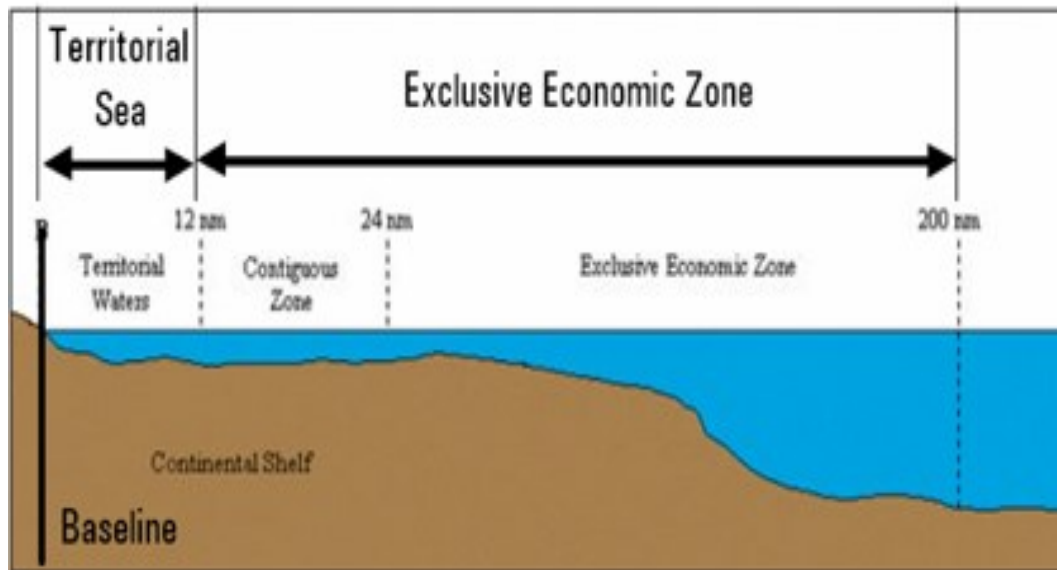


Source: Flood of Sea Project

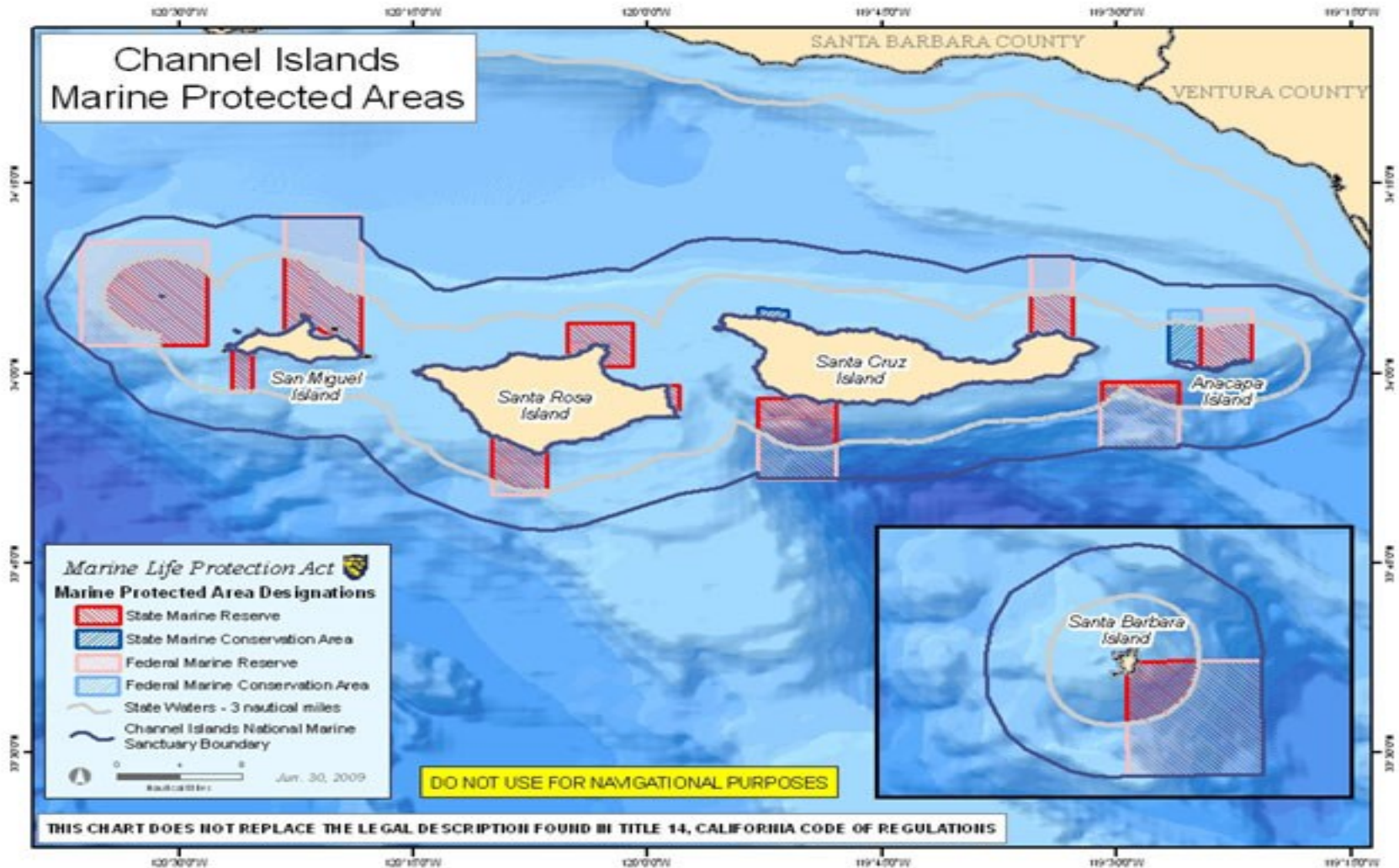
Sectoral Management



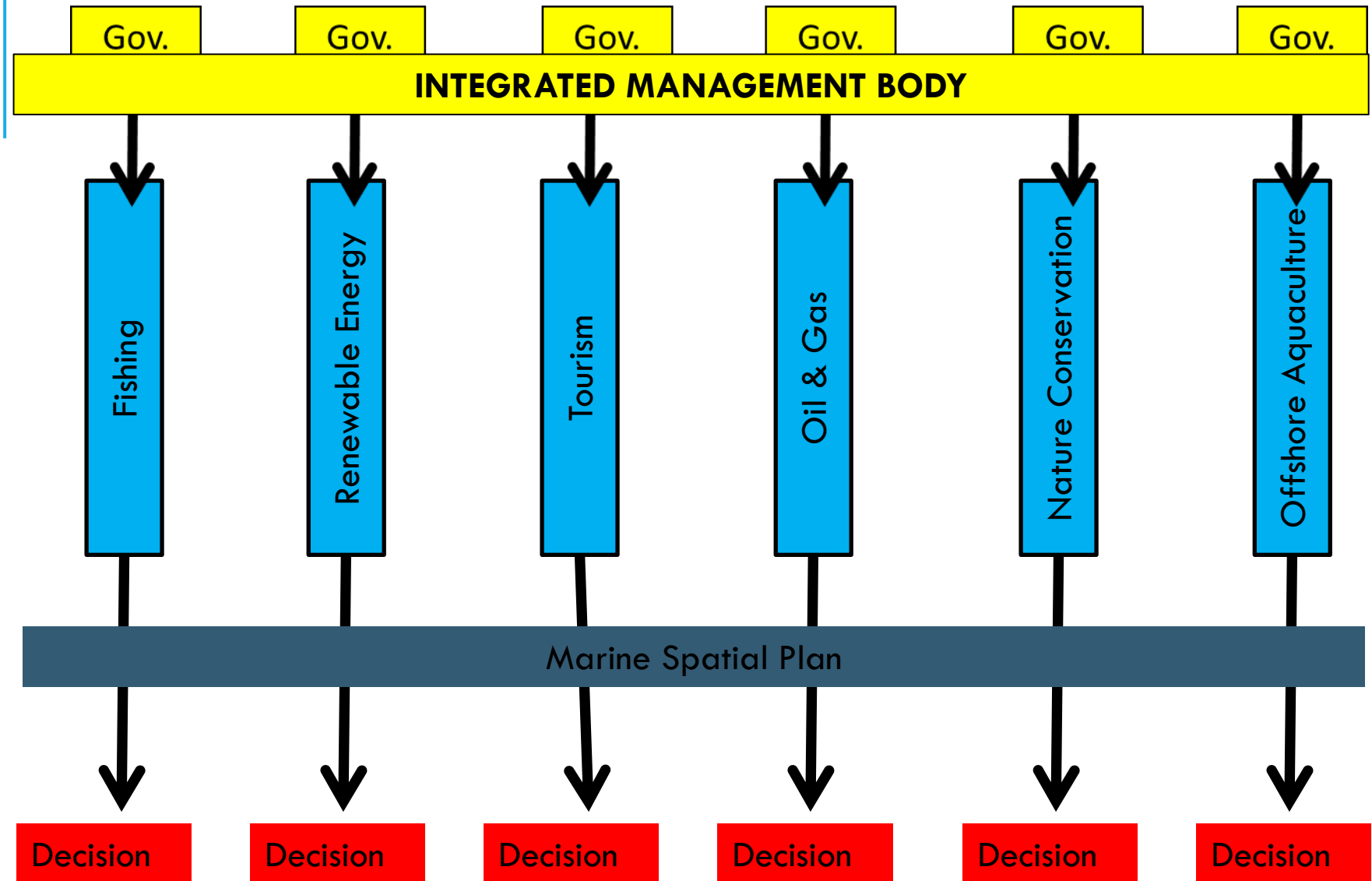
SPATIAL FRAGMENTATION



FRAGMENTED GOVERNANCE



MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING



STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND MSP

In theory:

1. Democratised marine governance
2. Minimise user conflict.
3. Account for cumulative impacts.
4. Increase knowledge of the ecosystems.
5. Include local knowledge.
6. Enhanced trust in planning process.
7. Promotes acceptance of plans.
8. Leads to greater implementation.





FIVE TENSIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

1. Participation Vs Legitimation
2. Rationality Vs Partiality
3. Socio-Political Issues Vs Technological Solutions
4. Future-Orientated Vs Path-Dependent
5. Conflict Management Vs Silencing

PARTICIPATION VS LEGITIMISATION

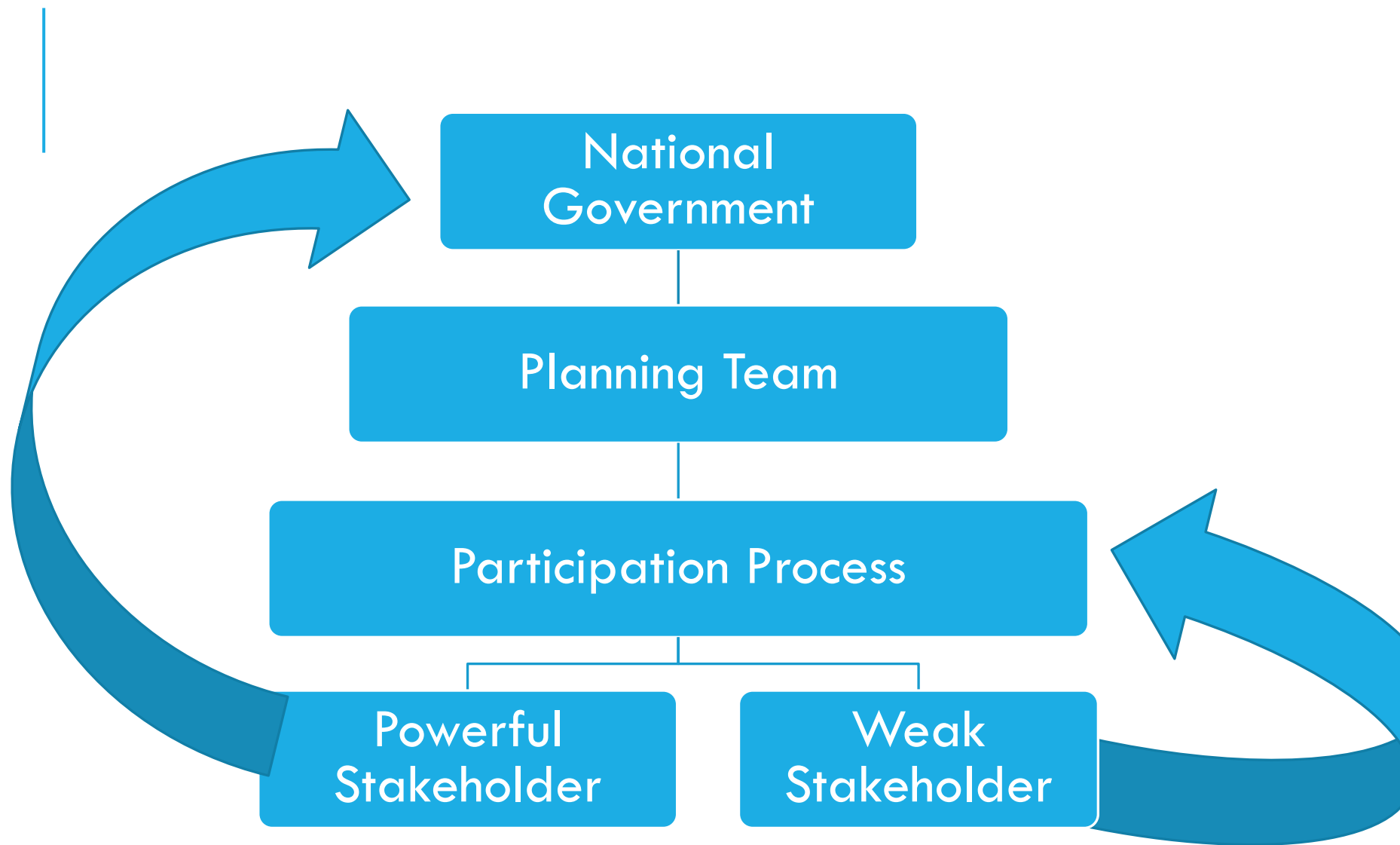


PARTICIPATION VS LEGITIMISATION

How governments have implemented MSP appears, in many cases to fall short of core participatory planning principles.

MSP initiatives have been evaluated as being top-down, centralised processes (Scarff et al. 2015; Jones et al. 2016), that reassert rather than address longstanding community power dynamics (Flannery et al. 2018).

Local and less powerful actors are reported as being engaged in tokenistic ways (Jones et al. 2016; Smith and Jentoft 2017).



NORTH SEA PLAN

Central North Sea
Dogger Bank
Southern Siltbank
Nature Reserve 'Eastern German Bight'
Central Elbe Glacial Valley
Silt Outer Reef
Borkum Reefground

DENMARK
GERMANY

Source: Nautical Chart 2025
Author: Seegesellschaft, Deutsche Hydrographische Dienstleistung (Sevidator)
Editor: Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH)
Scale: 1:100,000
Projection: Mercator
Datum: WGS 84
Units: Nautical Miles
1 NM = 1,852 m

Boundary of the German EEZ
Boundary of the German Territorial Waters (12 nm Zone) including Rostock
Bathymetry (m, relative to the mean water level)
Land (Blue)
Sea (Green)

Areas with special importance
Areas outside Natura 2000 with special importance for marine communities
Areas with special importance for the migration of birds (light = low intensity, dark = high intensity)

UNEP 2000
List of Community Importance (CICs) according to the Helsinki Directive in the German EEZ (date: May 2004)
Nature Reserve Eastern German Bight

Source: BSH
Date: December 2005



Biodiversity Network
 National Alliance for
 Nature Conservation

PARTICIPATION VS LEGITIMISATION



PARTICIPATION VS LEGITIMISATION

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Planning phases	Normative	Strategic	Operational	Monitoring
Primary focus of phase	Define desired ends	Choose the instruments to achieve ends	Develop implementing instruments	Assess progress

RATIONALITY VS PARTIALITY

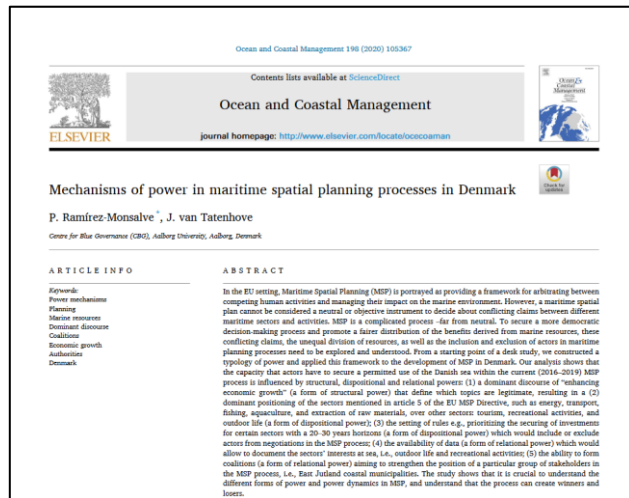
The adoption of space as a governance mechanism is a way of making *rational* decisions about how and where development should occur (Douvere 2008).

Reinforces the perception that there is an unproblematic spatial configuration.

A highly asocial and apolitical conceptualization of spatial planning.

Rational MSP is framed in a way that is distant from power and as having the capacity to produce broadly accepted outcomes.

RATIONALITY VS PARTIALITY



SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES VS TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS

MSP is seen as a way of addressing the democratic deficit in marine governance and as a way of addressing issues such as coastal poverty.

In practice, they have tended to be pushed aside in favour of less complex issues.

This may be because the spatial turn in marine governance has been accompanied by a rise in the use of geo-technologies.

SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES VS TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS



SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES VS TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS

They create problematic conceptualisations of relationships as being fixed and two-dimensional (Steinberg and Peters 2015).

These GIS databases are analysed by technical experts to make 'rational' decisions about marine issues that have been disembodied from their social contexts.

MSP has been reduced to a mere technocratic exercise of allocating space efficiently, dulling its potential for envisaging alternative marine futures.



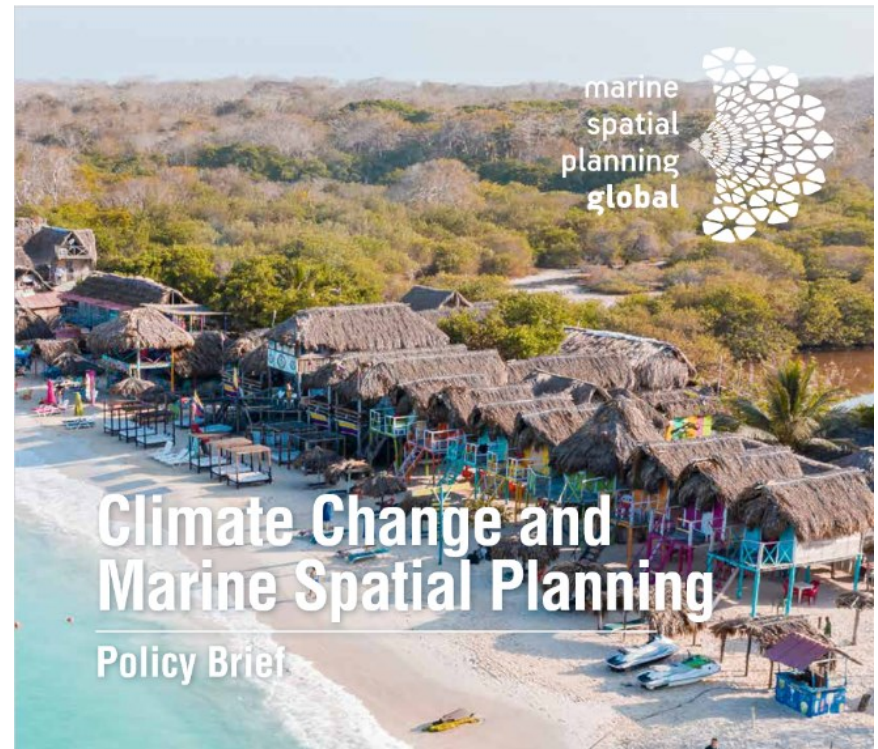
FUTURE-ORIENTATED VS PATH-DEPENDENT

MSP is considered to be a future-oriented process.

What the future is to be for a particular marine area is likely to be highly contested.

Should include issues such as climate change (Santos et al. 2020, 2022).

Path-dependent rather than future-oriented approaches to plan development (Jones et al. 2016; Kelly et al. 2019; Clarke and Flannery 2020).



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT VS SILENCING

MSP is seen as a way to avoid or minimize conflicts and maximize synergies across interests (Douvere and Ehler 2009).

MSP initiatives can do this by:

examining potential future scenarios to identify who benefits and who loses from planning potential decisions (von Thenen et al. 2021);

developing actions to resolve potential conflicts (de Koning et al. 2021; Steins et al. 2021).



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT VS SILENCING

This approach to understanding conflict is very limited.

Conceives of 'conflict' in *spatial* terms.

Focusing on *spatial competition* avoids acknowledging more challenging forms of conflicts such as those concerned with the distribution of costs, benefits, rights, and obligations.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT VS SILENCING

Focus on *spatial* conflict:

- Prevents important discussions about other issues that should feature in plans (e.g. poverty alleviation, equity, justice, climate change adaptation, etc.);
- perpetuates marine governance that has created specific winners and losers in terms of the benefits and costs of management decisions; and
- Silences debates about how the benefits MSP should be realised and by whom.

SUMMARY

The concept of MSP holds considerable transformative potential.

Academic evaluations indicate that the translation of the MSP concept into practice fails to realise this potential.

MSP in practice leans towards preserving the status quo.

More than likely producing the same winners and losers as the previous fragmented and sectoral regime.

The challenge for planners is to address these 5 tensions and make MSP matter.

THANKS FOR LISTENING



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