



Marine Governance in a European context: Regionalization, integration and cooperation for ecosystem-based management



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ABSTRACT

New EU policy initiatives within the Maritime Strategy Framework Directive, the Integrated Maritime Policy, the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, the offshore Energy policy and the Blue Growth Strategy, are in different manners aiming at implementing Ecosystem Based Management (EBM). EBM focuses on regional areas, as opposed to traditional sectoral driven policy approaches, aiming for integrated planning and coherent management. Understanding how regionalization processes work to enhance legitimate and responsible governance leading to improved sustainability persists one of the main challenges to Marine Governance. Marine Governance involves processes of interaction between state actors, market parties, supranational organizations and civil society in a multi-level and multi-layered institutional setting. We argue that processes of integration and cooperation are core drivers to regionalize previous European – state based institutions. Accordingly, the main aim of this article is to provide a framework to unravel the challenges of integration and cooperation in Marine Governance. Particularly through processes of regionalization, i.e. when redefining territorial spaces and recomposing political spaces at the regional sea level, this framework is used to assess how integration and cooperation perform in EU marine governance. Specifically, four modes of regionalization in Marine Governance have been identified depending on the level of cooperation and integration, referred to as: territorial synchrony, territorial anarchy, sectoral anarchy and sectoral synchrony. While some developments towards more territorial synchrony for EU Marine Governance is observed, more cooperative and integrated efforts will be needed to eventually become successful in moving from sectoral anarchy to the desired territorial synergy expressed in EU marine regulation.

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1. Introduction

European seas are confronted with a diversity of environmental and spatial challenges caused by different maritime activities, such as fisheries, oil and gas drilling, offshore windmill parks, navigation (shipping, cruise tourism) and dredging. The transboundary nature of these problems and the specific dynamics of these activities are currently encouraging governments and non-governmental actors to find solutions at the sea basin level and to adopt an ecosystem based management approach (EBM) (Gascuel et al., 2012; van Hoof et al., 2012; van Tatenhove, 2013). EBM focuses on location and areas instead of the traditional sector driven policy approach for

coastal and marine areas (Douvere, 2008), often with borders of policy problems around a commonly defined ecosystem-based area (Giebels et al., 2013). EBM recognises that human and ecological well-being are tightly coupled and that sustainability only occurs when pursuing these two arenas as one (Garcia and Cochrane, 2005; Tallis et al., 2010). Area, or location, is only one of the possible EBM dimensions, as it can also be linked to other dimensions such as single vs multispecies management (e.g. Browman and Stergiou, 2004). Using location as EBM dimension in European seas, locations of marine ecosystems would be used to determine borders, going beyond national- and sectorial borders.

A sustainable use of the coast and seas is a core aim of EBM in terms of acknowledging that high quality marine ecosystems is a requirement for sustainable management, and that ensuring the profitability of economic activities and increasing the quality of life of people will depend on such qualities. Still, the sustainable use of seas and coast depends on peoples' abilities to deal with marine

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areas crossing country borders and involving multiple sectors, interests and values. An EBM approach presupposes integrated planning and coherent management at the regional sea level, involving littoral states and multiple sectors.

In practice sustainable use and management for the European seas is still hampered by a patchwork of conflicting, sectoral policies and a diversity of authorities with their own rules and policies (van Hoof et al., 2012; van Leeuwen et al., 2014). It thus remains unclear how to implement EBM successfully at the regional level.

Whereas most of the EBM literature discusses the principles of EBM (Arkema et al., 2006; Leslie and McLeod, 2007), the importance of defining shared policy goals and objectives (e.g. Espinosa-Romero et al., 2011; Leslie and McLeod, 2007) and different tools or 'to do' lists (Katsanevakis et al., 2011; Pitcher Kalikoski et al., 2009; Tallis et al., 2010), the aim of this article is to develop a Marine Governance framework to analyse institutional, territorial and political consequences of realizing EBM at the level of regional seas. In this sense Marine Governance is about processes of regionalization.

Against this background, in Section 2, we introduce a Marine Governance Framework, based on the core principles of EBM; *cooperation* between state actors, market parties, supranational organizations and civil society (2.2), and *integration* across sectors, interests and policies (2.3). Different levels of cooperation and integration results in different modes of regionalization (2.4). In Section 2.5, we discuss five *Marine Governance principles*, which are required to achieve EBM in the different modes of regionalization. This theoretical framework contributes to improve our understanding of which strategies and governance arrangements are appropriate for achieving EBM at the regional sea level. In Section 3, we apply this framework in a brief assessment of EU Marine Governance initiatives for integration and cooperation. Finally, we provide some concluding remarks in Section 4.

2. A theoretical Marine Governance framework

2.1. Briefing a new Marine Governance Framework

In this section, we introduce a theoretical Marine Governance framework developed to analyse institutional, territorial as well as political consequences of EBM processes at the regional sea level. A core premise of this framework is the focus on processes of regionalization within a) a spatial/territorial perspective (defining territorial spaces) and b) an institutional/political perspective (contestation and composition of political spaces).

Regionalization refers to processes of spatial ordering and organization of activities within certain areas (regions) and to developments of specific governance arrangements needed to accompany regionalization. The *redefinition of territorial spaces* refers to the recognition of the borders of marine ecosystems and the spatial patterns of maritime activities. This territorial nature of regionalization through EBM brings with it spatial and territorial challenges (Gualini, 2004), such as defining the borders of ecosystems, determining how to develop ecosystem based marine management for that territory, as well as exploring and defining the spatial patterns of maritime activities and the (spatial) conflicts between these activities.

Regionalization processes are also concerned with the *contestation and (re)composition of political spaces* referring to the changing institutional and political rationale of Marine Governance. This concerns patterns of access to decision-making, participation, cooperation and integration within governance settings. Challenges of this mode of regionalization include finding appropriate ways of organizing regional cooperation and coordination, empowering non-governmental actors and organizing and integrating maritime activities at the regional level (van Tatenhove

and van Leeuwen, 2015).

At the regional level different governance levels (local, national and international), sectors, actors and states come together to co-ordinate their tasks and strategies in developing a new governance setting. Regionalization is shaped by processes of *cooperation* and *integration* in which territorial spaces are (re)defined and political spaces are contested and (re)composed at the regional level. Throughout these processes, power relations are influential, referring to the organisational and discursive capacity of actors, either in competition with one another or jointly, to achieve outcomes at the level of the regional sea. The power capacity is co-determined by the structural power of the institutions in which these actors are embedded (Arts and Tatenhove, 2005).

The integration of sectoral policies and cooperation between governmental institutions and stakeholders at different levels are needed to evolve from a sectoral system of governing to an integrated EBM governance system (Raakjaer et al., 2014). Fig. 1 summarizes the theoretical Marine Governance framework based on the process of regionalization (Section 2.4) through cooperation (Section 2.2) and integration (Section 2.3). It demonstrates that the quality of regionalization through more cooperation and integration can be assessed by the principles of good governance (Section 2.5). When also considering the aim and vision in terms of EBM aiming for sustainability, the context is extended from dynamics of regionalization to Marine Governance (Fig. 1).

In brief, Marine Governance involves interaction between, on the one hand, institutions operating at several levels, and on the other hand, state actors, market parties, supranational organizations and civil society. Marine Governance arrangements at different levels (local national, regional, EU) become increasingly integrated when jointly aiming for achieving EBM at the regional level. Processes of increased interaction and integration lead to a sharing of competences among different and new actors. When ideas and aims are shared, this is expected to have a positive influence on cooperation, which is needed for policymaking to govern activities at sea and to control their consequences (van Leeuwen and van Tatenhove, 2010; van Tatenhove, 2013).

2.2. Cooperation in Marine Governance

In general, *cooperation* refers to the working or operating together of actors, sectors and/or policy domains to aim for defining collective goals as well as mutual benefits. Actors are willing to cooperate when the outcome suits the self-interests of all actors involved, i.e. when collective goals indeed bring mutual benefits (Bosch-Sijtsema and Postma, 2009), but also in situations with no direct impacts on actors' benefits, when compromises are accepted due to positive expectation to future developments of the society where one belongs (Soma and Vatn, 2014). Cooperation among heterogeneous actors necessitates the pooling of resources of multiple stakeholders to solve problems (Varjopuro et al., 2008). We see cooperation as a necessary strategy for integration and regionalization in Marine Governance to obtain mutual benefits.

More specifically, cooperation in Marine Governance is dependent on: a) interactivity among different actors, b) reciprocity in people's behaviour linked with social norms, c) leadership and communication skills, and d) developments of partnerships and shared visions. These are further explained in what follows.

First, cooperation among different actors refers to interactivity between EU institutions, Member States, Regional Sea Conventions, and stakeholders. Through cooperation, public (national, supranational and international) and private (representatives of the marine sectors, citizens and NGOs) actors at different levels of governance come together and interact at the regional sea level.

Interaction can take different forms, for instance, as negotiation

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