



MASTER STUDENTS AT THE DIVISION OF
RESOURCE ECONOMICS – LGF
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Call for Master Dissertations

Re-scaling of natural resource governance: the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Background

In 2008 The European Union adopted the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (CEC, 2008). Similar to the European Water Framework Directive it makes specific prescriptions for the institutional set-up of marine governance in Europe. It calls for the establishment of marine protected areas and advocates an “ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities while enabling a sustainable use of marine goods and services” (CEC, 2008). Integration with European Common Fisheries Policy, Common Agricultural Policy and other relevant policies is sought for (also e.g. Water Framework Directive and Urban Wastewater Directive). Until 2013 spatial protection measures and special areas of conservation should be published and effects on other than marine waters, i.e. coastal waters and human activities more in general are to be identified. The administration of marine regions or subregions may vary between one competent authority, one authority for several districts or several authorities for one district. These are to be named by July 2010. Thus, similar to the Water Framework Directive in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive marine waters and their interdependence with other natural resources are governed at different scales and may in certain cases/ countries imply re-scaling (see also background section in the above call for research on the Water Framework Directive). The question from which scale a natural resource is managed has profound implications for the way it is managed.

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Aims of the call for research:

First, the call for research aims at a clearer picture of the situation in different European member states. Second, it is interested in two dimensions of research concerning (re-) scaling of marine governance in Europe or its absence: a) its explanation, with specific reference to national dynamics; path dependence and changes in characteristics of transactions (e.g. the perceptions of rivalry, excludability, complexity, variability etc.). For this purpose we conceptualise re-scaling as a phenomenon of institutional change and emergence (North 1990). Questions may include: was water governance formally re-scaled and why or why not. What role do transaction costs of resource governance, mental models of key actors, struggle over competencies and influence, path dependence, changes in characteristics of transactions and external institutional developments and political dynamics play. b) its evaluation with specific reference to changes in actor constellations and perceptions of social ecological systems. Governance is viewed as performed by a network of actors that are related through formal/informal institutions and physical interdependence. Questions concern two intimately intertwined dimensions of collaborative action. How did the governance network change as a consequence of formal or informal re-scaling/ changes in transactions; how are mental models and problem solving heuristics of resource managers changing as a consequence of the introduction of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive?

What is being offered by the Division of Resource Economics?

The described research agenda requires detailed concretization concerning: explanation or evaluation of (re-)scaling, explanatory dimension to focus upon, concretization of research questions, case study or transaction selection, country selection, research design and methodology. While interested Master Students will need to be in charge of all major decisions throughout their research, close collaborative assistance on all stages of the research is offered. In addition, support in finding financial means, contacts during the research and publishing the results of the study, if results are of sufficient quality, will be provided. Specifically, good contacts within Germany, and research institutes and cases in Portugal, Spain and the UK can be offered.

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