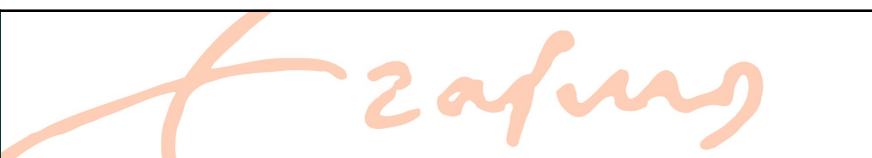



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Adaptive Governance: from tight to permeable boundary judgments

The Dutch case 'Haringvliet sluices'


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Introduction

- Complex social-ecological issues cross all kinds of boundaries, e.g. governmental layers, jurisdictions, functional domains.
- There is no optimal system level that matches the issue at stake
- Involved actors in governance processes make different boundary judgments (what belongs to the system and what does not?)








Boundary judgments

“Through so-called boundary judgments, actors draw boundaries between what they consider to be relevant and what they do not” (Flood, 1999: 92)

Value systems influence the drawing of boundaries (Ulrich, 1983; Midgeley et al., 1998)




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Four types of boundary judgments


Public managers make different kinds of boundary judgments (b.j.):

- Substantial b.j. (content, scope);
- Structural b.j. (authority, legitimacy and power);
- Process b.j. (management, involvement of actors)
- Contextual b.j. (relationship external dynamics and issue/project at stake)




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Case: Haringvliet sluices

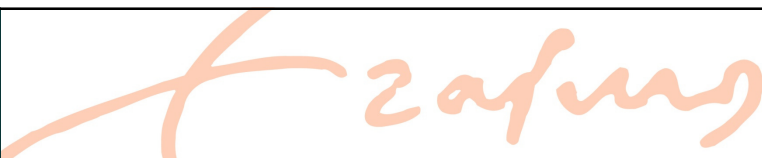


Decision to leave the Haringvliet sluices partially open ('Sluices Ajar'; *Kierbesluit*) in order to restore the estuary function of the Haringvliet

Whole governance process took more than 20 years and is still running...







Haringvliet sluices (2): background


Sluices are one of the famous Delta Works


Very huge effects on the estuary and its (social-ecological) functions:


- Substantive increase of agriculture, because of the availability of fresh water; Water for drink-water companies; Increase of water recreation

But at the same time...


- Tides disappeared; Fish migration disabled; Fresh water fish washed out; Bank erosion







Case description



Plans from ministry to change the management of the sluices


1994-1998 EIA


Regional actors very skeptical

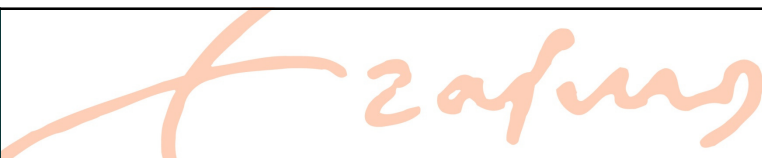
Decision in 2000

Leading parties highly dependent on regional actors for implementation

Implementation was planned to be finished in 2005, but at this moment still running...










Case Analysis




- Domination by a small amount of parties; tight boundary judgments regarding *substance* and *process*
 - Due to their expertise and their formal responsibilities RWS focused mainly on the water system
 - Due to *structural* b.j. regarding authority and policy process
 - Leading parties focused mainly on the values 'ecology' and 'nature' (strong partnership with 'nature pillar' of the province): tight *substantial* b.j.




Case Analysis (2)

- Ambiguous relation between 'Sluices Ajar' and another project, Delta Nature. Delta nature is about nature development and estuarial restoration in the same area, but administratively totally separated (tight *structural* b.j.). However there are not separated in the perception of the regional stakeholders which led to increasing resistance.
- Ambiguous external developments (*contextual* b.j.), like climate change and blue-green algae in a connected fresh water basin (Volkerak Zoommeer)

Preliminary Conclusions

- Boundary judgments have direct consequences for governance processes;
- Tight boundary judgments do not match the complexity inherent to complex spatial-water issues; could lead to inert processes;
- In the case we saw that different b.j. influence and reinforce each other;
- B.j. of different actors influence each other





Discussion

- Adaptive governance is dependent on evolving (adapting) b.j.
'Permeable b.j.' are able to absorb and adapt to new developments;
- More complexity embracing strategies could lead to more fruitful interactions between different b.j., in which initial tight b.j. could become more permeable;
- Difficult challenge for public organizations, e.g. due to political pressures, distrust and political fight;
- Factors influencing tightness or openness of b.j.:
 - Trust/distrust;
 - Presence of so-called boundary spanners (Williams, 2002; Van Meerkerk & Edelenbos, 2010)
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