

Social representations of nature as resource in framing

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Social representations in conflict management – local community

- Active framing of conflict (Lewicki & Gray, 2003)
- Different representations of nature
- Connecting 2 theories:
 - Social representations as resource in framing
- Protest group more successful than managing agency
- Dynamics in framing, not in representations

National Park “Drents Friese Wold”

▶ 6100 ha

▶ NP (2000)

▶ National Forest Service (NFS)

▶ Advisory board

▶ Management targets:

- ▶ Diversification of forest
- ▶ Ecological restoration
- ▶ Expanding drift sand area
- ▶ Invasive species management
- ▶ Limited access regulation

▶ App. 1 mill. visitors

▶ 50k residents

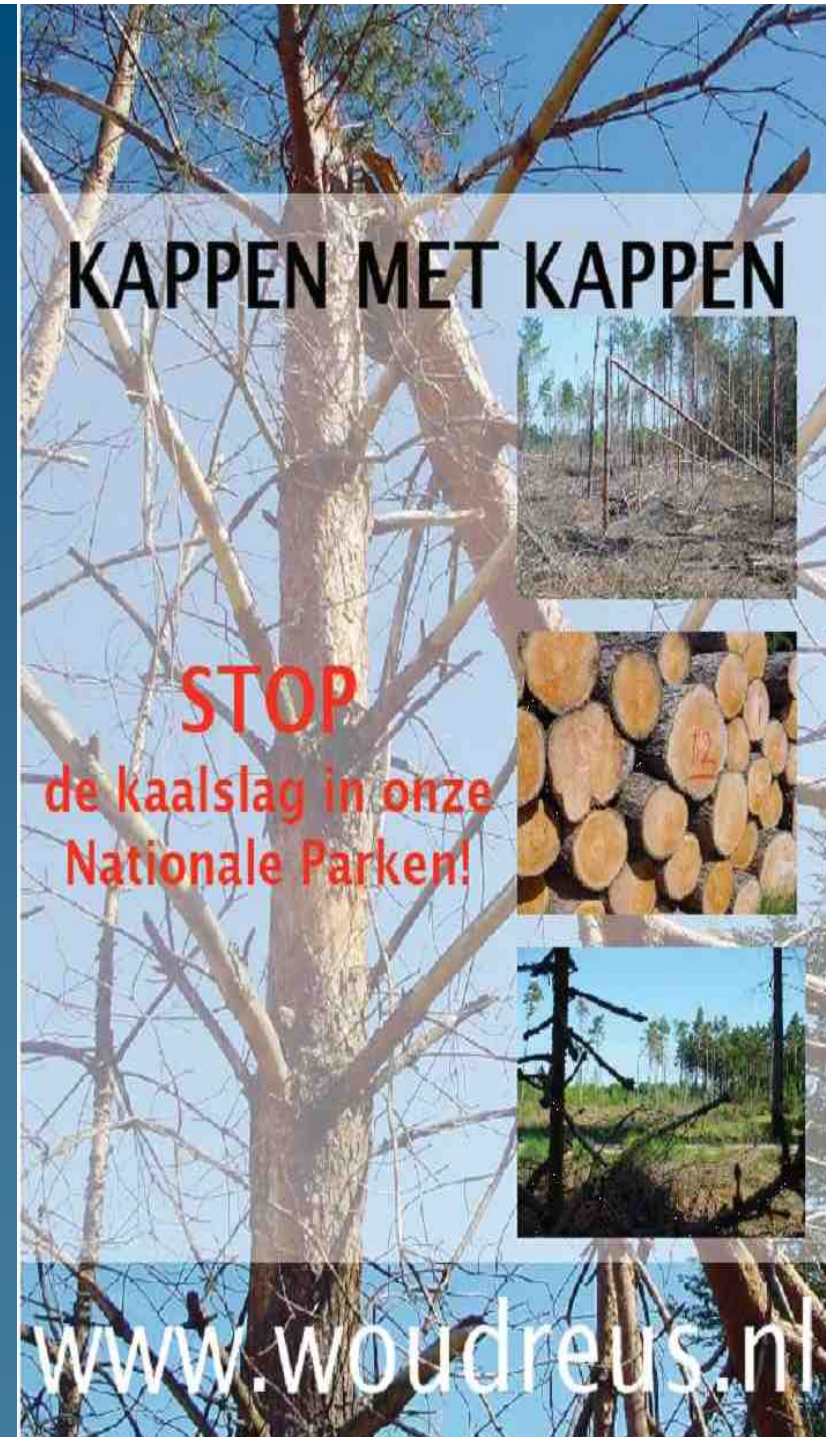
Methods

A group of people, including several older adults, are sitting around a table outdoors. They appear to be in a meeting or discussion. The setting is a paved area with a red car and a building in the background. The people are dressed in casual to semi-formal attire. One person in the foreground is wearing a blue shirt and brown pants, and another is wearing a purple shirt. There are papers and a blue folder on the table.

- **Focus groups**
 - (residents + protest group): 30
- **Interviews (NFS+) (8)**
- **Document analysis (127)**
- **Longitudinal: 2005 + 2008**

Conflict NFS – “Woodland Giant”

- 2004: protest group:
 - Cut of trees for expansion drift sand area
 - Invasive species management
 - Ecological restoration
- Active framing in media
- 9000 signatures
- Dutch Parliament



Proces

- 2004. Introduction management plan, first negative reactions
- 2005. Protest group “Woodland Giant”
- 2006. Participation process
Signing of covenant
- 2007. New conflicts

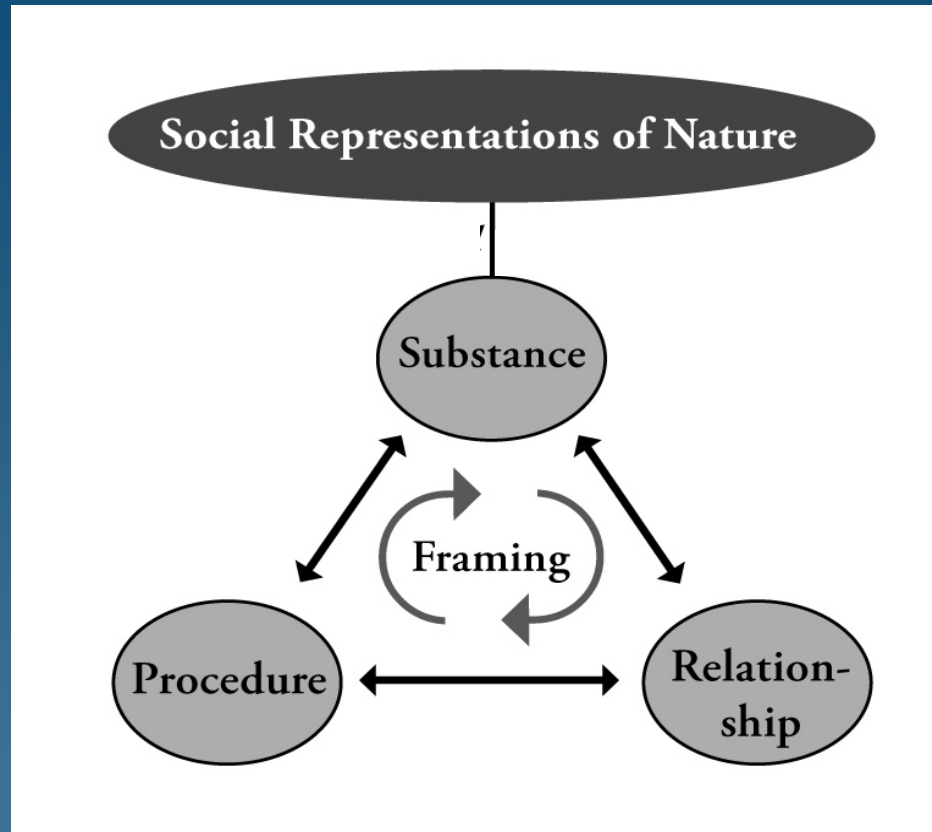


Framing and
social representations of nature

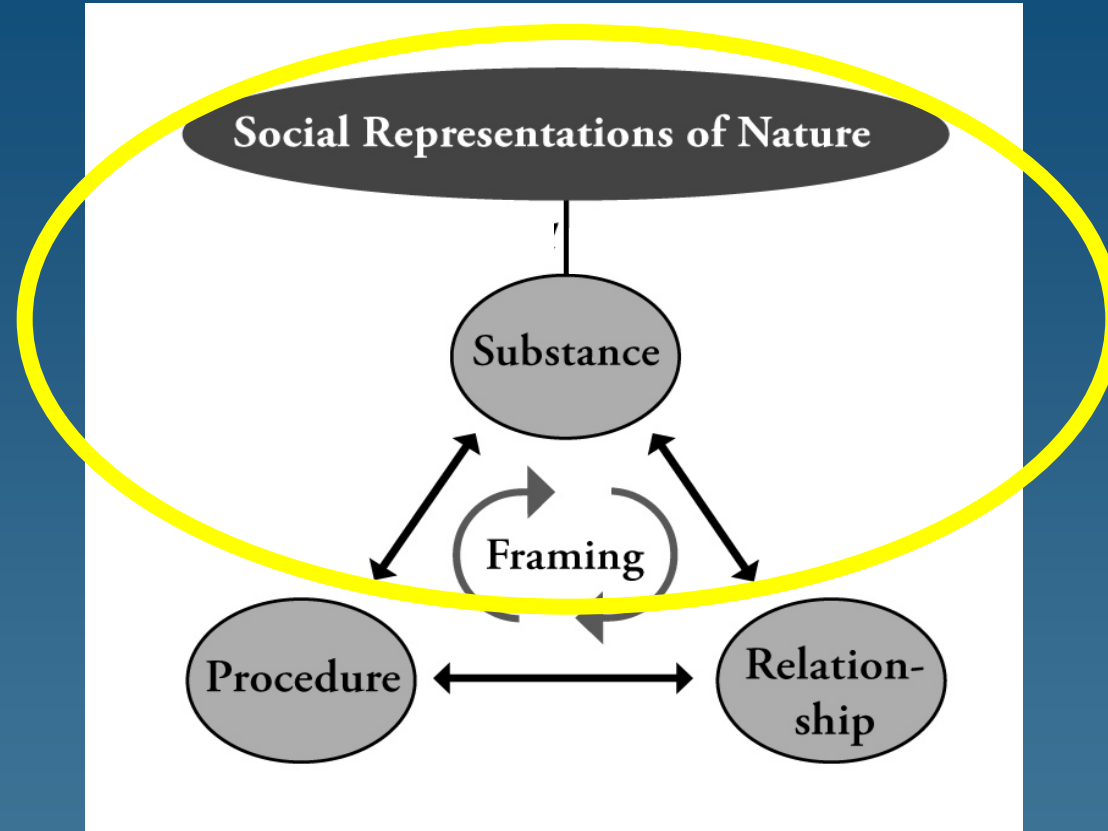
Social representations - framing

- **Social representations:** “socially elaborated systems of values, ideas and practices used for understanding and behaving”
- **Framing:** Discursive process in which actors try to influence the interpretation of an issue by assigning specific meanings to that issue (Lewicki & Gray, 2003)
 - Define the issue
 - Suggest solutions
 - Mobilize support

Conceptual model



Conflict: Framing and social representations of nature



Social representations of nature (Buijs 2009)

	Normative elements		Cognitive elements		Expressive elements
	Values of nature	Views on management	Boundary of nature	Dominant beliefs	Emotions evoked by nature

Social representations of nature in local community

Representation	Normative elements		Cognitive elements		Expressive elements
	Values of nature	Views on management	Boundary of nature	Dominant beliefs	Emotions evoked by nature
Wilderness					
Inclusive					
Aesthetic					

Social representations of nature in local community

Representation	Normative elements		Cognitive elements		Expressive elements
	Values of nature	Views on management	Boundary of nature	Dominant beliefs	Emotions evoked by nature
Wilderness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic: Ecocentric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature fragile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty: <i>uncultivated</i> • Fascination
Inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic: Biocentric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited management (nature) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature unpredictable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty: <i>Unc well-groomed</i> • Vitality
Aesthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antropocentric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderately wide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance of nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty: <i>well groomed</i> • Diversity

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Social representations as resource for framing

1) Woodland Giant:

- Very active framing
- Strategic use of SR (conflicting!)
- Embedded in community
- Resonance high -> mobilization

Framing by Woodland Giant (content)

- References to wide variety of elements from 2 representations
 - **Inclusive representation:**
 - Biocentric: no logging for ecosystems
 - Wide definition: not only BD
 - Nature unpredictable: role of science?
 - **Aesthetic representation:**
 - (Weak) anthropocentric: farmers, tourism
 - Balance of nature: no large herbivores
 - Beauty: well groomed: no drift sand expansion

Social representations as resource for framing

2) National Forest Service:

- Less active framing
- Education, explanation
- Resonance low

Framing by National Forest Service (content)

- References to elements from 1 representations
 - **wilderness representation:**
 - **Ecocentric:** holistic, ecosystems
 - **Narrow definition:** BD
 - **Priority on scientific knowledge**
 - **Beauty:** uncultivated

Conclusions



Effects of the use of SR in framing

Woodland Giant

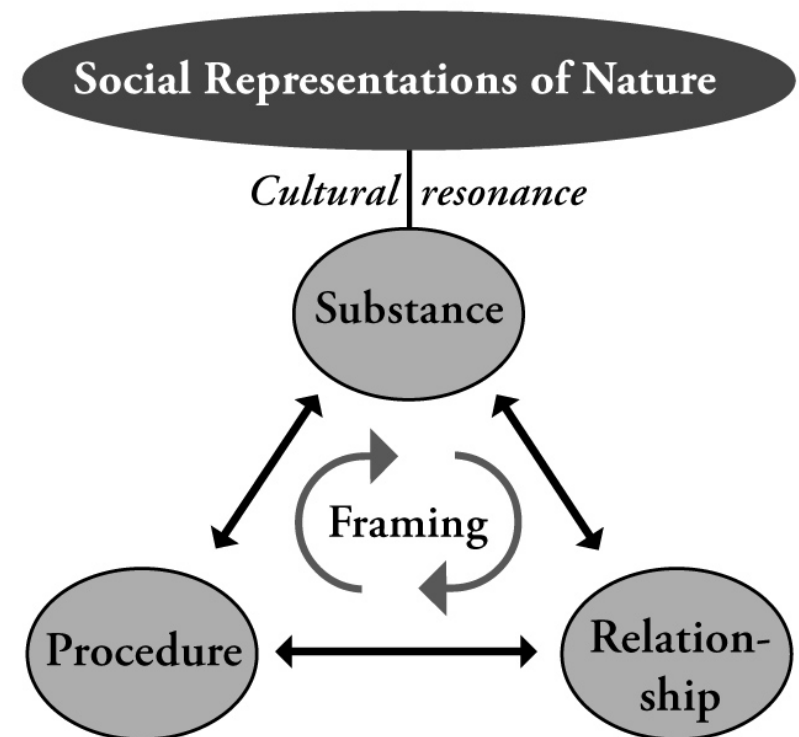
- Well embedded in community
- References to variety of SR's
- Resonance high in community
- Very effective in mobilizing support (9000)

National Forest Service

- Weakly embedded in community
- Reference to 1 SR
- Resonance limited to group of nature lovers
- Support limited to already supportive groups

Lack of participation:

- No exchange of views / SR
- Active framing to mobilize support
- Dynamics:
 1. Substance
 2. Relationship/identity:
 - Arrogant, outsider
 3. Procedure:
 - Top-down, Undemocratic
- Participation to **resolve**???



Framing $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ Social representations

- Framing: dynamic
 - Before participation: arrogant, outsiders
 - After: focus on content
- Social representations: more stable
 - No differences before and after participation
 - NFS: wilderness
 - Woodland Giant: Inclusive & aesthetic

Final conclusions: Social representations of nature

- 3 Diverging representations in community
- Content – Construction – Use
- Discursive and strategic use in framing
- Social representations as resource
- Use of multiple, conflicting representations
- Resonance SR ↑ → Support framing ↑



Thank you Questions / Discussion

Buijs, Arts, Elands, Lengkeek, (subm.) Geoforum

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Discussion: Social representations of nature and the environment





