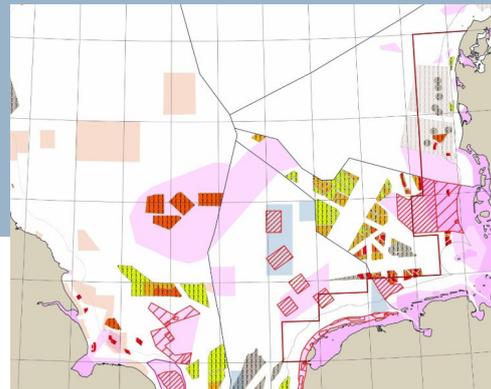


# Fishing for Influence: Power and Participation in Dutch Fisheries and Maritime Spatial Planning

A study towards the effect of perceived  
power asymmetries on political participation



Master Thesis Environmental and  
Infrastructure Planning  
Double Degree Water & Coastal Management

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## Abstract

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) was introduced as a tool to derive at ecologically, socially and economically balanced solutions for spatial conflicts resulting from a global shift towards the “Blue Economy“. Its stakeholder landscape sees traditional as well as emerging users which are marked by different cultural, economic and political backgrounds; giving rise to power asymmetries. This study investigated how power dynamics operate in the context of fisheries and MSP and how this, via perceived power asymmetry, translates to individual participation of Dutch fishermen. By the means of a quantitative online-survey combined with qualitative interviews this study identified that a high perceived power asymmetry has, paired with sectoral pressures, led to an increased political activity within the Dutch fishing sector. Together with an intense threat perception in economic, ecological and cultural terms and a dissatisfaction with invited participatory pathways this increased political activity has especially manifested within unconventional channels of participation such as protest. Via the concept of intra-sectoral power asymmetry, the study has demonstrated power differentials within the sector itself and build the case for a new perspective with which to look at the multi-layered nature of fisheries within MSP. The study recommends MSP to progress substantially in order to reach its ambitious goals and to evolve towards a power-sensitive and collaborative approach that goes beyond consensus forming around empty signifiers and engages with the diverse social, cultural and economic backgrounds of its stakeholders.

### Key topics:

Maritime Spatial Planning; Fisheries; Power; Participation; Social Identity

### Abbreviations:

CFP: Common Fisheries Policy

EEZ: Exclusive Economic Zone

MSP: Maritime Spatial Planning

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Approximately 400 years ago the Dutch philosopher and jurist Hugo Grotius published the first work on marine legislation in its broadest sense, he advocated the free use of the sea for all parties arguing with the sheer size and wealth of the oceans in his book "Mare Liberum". Grotius compared the sea with air, as another infinite resource, and stated that: "*...because it is so limitless that it cannot become a possession of anyone, and because it is adapted for the use of all, whether we consider it from the point of view of navigation or of fisheries*" (Grotius, 1609, p.28)

While the idea of the inexhaustible and resource wealthy ocean might persist, it becomes evident that anthropogenic influence has taken a toll on virtually every marine ecosystem on the globe (Hughes, et al., 2005; Halpern et al., 2008). While in the 17th century only two major marine activities existed, namely fisheries and transport, the "modern" oceans face an incredible variety of impacts and activities. Modern activities at sea range from traditional ones such as fisheries and shipping over interests such as oil & gas exploration or mining to comparably new and emerging utilizations such as wind energy, aquaculture and tidal energy production (Ehler & Douvère, 2009).

Opposed to the ideas of Grotius in 1609 we have now, in the 21st century, finally reached a point where not only resource conflicts are an issue but even marine space as a resource itself is subject to competition (Ehler & Douvère, 2009). In Europe's industrialised seas complex interactions and the growing demand for space result in conflicts (Degnbol & Wilson, 2008). Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) was introduced as a tool to derive ecologically, socially and economically balanced solutions for these spatial conflicts and balance stakeholder interests (Ehler & Douvère, 2009). In implementation it however revealed a lacking consideration of power dynamics (Flannery et al., 2019).

Power, as the basis for governance, is present in all forms of rule and all management endeavours. While the last decennia have seen an increasing adoption of participatory and collaborative procedures, of which MSP certainly is part of, a variety of scholars have criticized these approaches for lacking "true" participation and for being vulnerable to power

asymmetries (Gaventa, 2006; Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2004). Dividing marine space is an enormous task that is undoubtedly subject to challenges arising out of the different economic, political and cultural backgrounds of the increasing stakeholder landscape as well as out of their different spatial demands and utilizations. Some stakeholders rely on a productive and healthy ecosystem, others do not, and while size, power and political background of each stakeholder impact the influence on the process there are stakeholders that have naturally higher stakes than others (Jentoft & Knol, 2014).

Fisheries do belong to this category and show to be problematic from a planning perspective. The basis for fishing activity, marine ecosystems, are a paragon of complexity. They are systems which we do not understand to their full extent, consisting of sets of interdependent, dynamic and inherently complex variables stretching over national-boundaries and so situated in various governance contexts. From a planning perspective this translates to marine ecosystems having nebulous boundaries, large spatial as well as fine temporal scales, unstructured food webs and non-linear system dynamics (Agardy, 2000). Depending on these variables while also having to deal with socio-economic aspects as well as power dynamics puts fisheries in a difficult position.

Also in terms of stakes and user-user conflicts fisheries occupy a unique position; while sectors such as wind energy, oil & gas exploitation and other spatially fixed industries can hardly be impacted in their activity by the fisheries sector, fisheries on the other hand, relying on a complex socio-ecological system are vulnerable to anthropogenic impacts of other industries. Offshore development might obstruct a valuable fishing ground, might deter marine life during the construction phase, change fish communities and their behavior and impact spawning areas as well as increase the distance to fishing grounds, directly resulting in economic losses to the sector. Climate change and long-term distribution changes in marine species further complicate the issue and outline the challenge to represent the dynamic nature of fisheries in static spatial plans (Jentoft & Knol, 2014; Janßen et al., 2018). With new studies regarding the ecological impact of large-scale offshore development published recently, especially ecological concern is rising drastically within the fishing sector (Boon et al., 2018; EMK, 2019).

In the Netherlands especially offshore wind energy projects were realized at a fast pace in the recent years and the national government announced ambitious plans to develop more offshore wind parks at sea, not only increasingly consuming and privatizing space but also leading to constant pressures on the North Sea environment that stem from the construction (Boon et al., 2018; Brent et al., 2018).

These aspects, together with the possibility of unforeseen cumulative impacts to the ecosystem, and other practical limitations might help to understand the strong urge for appropriate participation of fisheries in the MSP context.

## 1.2 Social & Scientific Relevance

On a global scale the “Blue Economy” is recognized as a new economic frontier, driven by initiatives such as “Blue Growth” (Brent et al., 2018). In the accompanying transition towards renewable energy and the large spatial demands of new stakeholders entering the scene, traditional users of marine space worldwide are fearing displacement (Brent et al., 2018; Jentoft & Knol, 2014). The topic touches on fundamental questions such as where to allocate industries with a large spatial footprint and is connected to general societal challenges concerning food security and energy demand in the light of climate change. Next to the obvious relevance of the subject for fishing and coastal communities in general it can serve as an example for issues surrounding stakeholder engagement in terrestrial planning projects that do adopt collaborative management schemes while embedded in a complex stakeholder landscape marked by power differences.

MSP, being a rather new concept, has sparked an increasing academic interest in recent years (Flannery et al., 2019). While it has been much heralded prior to its widespread implementation for its theoretical roots in adaptive, inclusive and collaborative management practices, critical voices were increasingly heard after its implementation (Flannery et al., 2019; Brent et al., 2018). Due to its global implementation scholars worldwide are publishing on the subject and as the majority of countries is in the planning process or has recently implemented its first plans, it is vital to address possible participatory challenges as early as possible. Besides the practical aspects surfacing within the academic debate around MSP, such

as the lack of addressing and balancing power dynamics, the difficult position of fisheries or the privatization of marine space it rejuvenated broader academic discussions concerning power, participation and social justice in planning (Brent et al., 2018).

## 1.2 Aim & Questions

The topic which is addressed in this study aims to contribute to the knowledge basis needed for successful and just MSP initiatives as well as to general aspects of participation, power and governance that can find applicability in terrestrial planning. It responds to the call of a variety of scholars to address fisheries, power relations and participatory issues in MSP and by using the fisheries sector as a research subject adds to the body of literature that concerns social science aspects within fisheries research (Jentoft, 2007; Kaplan & McCay, 2004).

In order to do so, this study wants to investigate how power dynamics operate in the MSP context and how this, via perceived power asymmetry, translates to individual participation. The study employs a quantitative survey that aims at measuring perceived power asymmetry, as a subjective translation of power asymmetry, and individual participation while also collecting qualitative data for an in-depth discussion of the subject. It is important to keep in mind that this study does thus not strive to quantify power in its original sense but will inevitably have to investigate underlying aspects of power.

By investigating these issues, the study thus strives to contribute to the foundation needed to develop the MSP system towards a direction that enables the concept to come closer to its much-heralded theoretical objective: an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable way of planning the marine realm. To structure this study the following questions have been designed:

“How do perceived power asymmetries in Dutch MSP decision-making influence the form and extent of individual participation of fishermen?”

- How do perceived power asymmetries impact political participation in public decision-making?
- How can these concepts be operationalised in the context of MSP and fisheries?
- What are the differences in perceived power asymmetries among the different sub-sectors of the Dutch fisheries?
- What are the consequences of the perceived power asymmetries on participation among the different sub-sectors of the Dutch fisheries?
- Which lessons for MSP processes can be drawn from the relationship between power asymmetry and participation?

## 1.4 Reader Guide

This document is structured in 8 chapters. While chapter 1 introduced background, relevance and the research questions, chapter 2 continues with the theoretical framework. Within this chapter the basic theoretical concepts surrounding power and participation are outlined and subsequently organised into the powercube model. The powercube is then, after its application to the MSP context, modified to serve as the theoretical and methodological backbone of the study. This central model can be found in chapter 2.5. Chapter 3 concerns itself with the methodology of this study and the techniques used for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the results of this study. Finally, chapter 5 concludes on the outcomes of this study and answers the main research question. The Appendix contains the translated version of the quantitative survey (Appendix I), the raw results (Appendix III & IV) and other supplementary information.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 An Introduction to the History of Power

Power is unarguably one of the most central concepts to social sciences and the strive to understand society (Jentoft, 2007). However, it is also described as an “*essentially contested concept*” and is consequently difficult to work with (Gallie, 1955, p.1). It is multi-faceted and has been discussed since the ancient Greek empire.

Aristotle built on the conceptualization of power as either legitimate or illegitimate in his work on the classification of governments, in which he defined six forms. Monarchic, aristocratic and constitutional governments representing legitimate power, striving for a representation of the interests of all by one up to many individuals. And government forms harnessing illegitimate power such as tyranny, oligarchy and democracy in which only one, a few or the majority shape governance according to their interest while disregarding the interests of all. The description of Aristotle’s understanding of power illustrates the departure point of the concept and its historic presence in social sciences. (Sidgwick, 1892)

Continuing in the 16th century, in Machiavelli’s book “The Prince”, mainly coercive component of power and power *over* is paid attention to. Interesting to note is that at this point already a departure can be observed from the tangible and visible components of power, such as forceful domination, towards the hidden and subtle ways in which power can work. Relating to manipulation, diplomacy and “managing” society. (Machiavelli & Wooton, 1995)

In Machiavelli’s work there is a focus on power being exerted by some part of a society over others, power *over*. In Thomas Hobbes writing “Leviathan”, which concerns itself with the structure of society and legitimacy in governance, power is conceptualized as being socially constituted (Field, 2014). This means that power flows from society to the individual. He argues that society is the sum of individuals that carry and constitute power (Field, 2014). The state thus has the monopoly on coercive power and violence, still one of the main building blocks of modern western societies. This is also an important notion in the fisheries context, while this study addresses power asymmetry it must kept in mind that power is necessary for governance to “*decide, enforce and implement management decisions*” (Jentoft, 2007, p.1). Especially in the case of managing fish stocks and marine ecosystems where the tragedy of

the commons is a central theme that cannot be addressed without the exertion of power. Coercive power is thus not to be considered necessarily negative or evil. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that while this study will, later on, focus on possible negative externalities of unbalanced power dynamics it does not criticize the exertion of power itself, it is a question of balance rather than a question of presence.

However, as discussed above even before the 19th century power was already conceptualized in different ways and with different focus areas, shaped by their cultural and historic contexts. It already hints towards the idea that the concept of power cannot be pressed into a single, universally applicable definition of power and shows the many faces that power can have. Power can be legitimate or illegitimate, visible or secretive, possessed by the individual as an attribute or deliberately given to it by society.

Elaborating on legitimacy it is interesting to take Nietzsche into account, especially on the idea that reality, or rather what is accepted as “real”, influences the legitimacy and so the foundation of power in its coercive sense. Nietzsche saw power as one’s capacity to define reality (Salter, 1915). It builds on the notion that the individual or party that is able to define what is perceived as “real” and “morally acceptable” can shape the conditions for legitimacy (Salter, 1915). Nietzsche’s argumentation includes the idea that people have an inherent “desire” for power and stated that *“Life is to me instinct for growth, for permanence, for the amassing of force, for power”* (Salter, 1915, p. 377).

Max Weber understood power to be comprised of two aspects, namely *“Herrschaft”* (formal authority, rule) and *“Macht”* (might, power, coercion). Wallimann et al., who published on a proper translation of Webers definition in 1980, translated and re-phrased his definition of power into the following: *„Within a social relationship, power means every chance (no matter whereon this chance is based) to carry through the own will (even against resistance)”* (Wallimann et al., 1980, p. 263)

The discussion on legitimacy and forms of power, the drivers for power and the debate on the definition itself are still present in post-WWII social sciences. Here, contributors to the debate can be seen to refine, reject or build upon definitions of power as put forward by thinkers such as Hobbes, Nietzsche or Weber.

Haugaard & Clegg do for example see Foucault as the *“prime rejuvenator of the Machiavellian and Nietzschean view of power as a systemic phenomenon which is constitutive of social reality”* (Haugaard & Clegg, 2009, p.4). According to Haugaard & Clegg (2009) distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate power is still a central aspect in the debate on the concept of power and can be found in the writings of Habermas or Lukes.

Foucault is by some scholars seen as the most influential theorist of power of the late 20th century (Gaventa, 2003). He introduced a view on power that is differing from a lot of earlier work on the subject, and certainly marks a departure from the conceptualizations of power that emphasize the negative, repressive and concentrated nature of power. According to Gaventa, he theorizes power as being: *“...diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them.”* (Gaventa, 2003, p.1)

As the quote above indicates Foucault has introduced a number of ideas that influenced the power debate immensely. Power is not reduced to coercion and domination on a societal scale nor is it a concept which has its basis in governance or state theory, power is rather an ever-present system that is spanning over all scales of social interaction, be it in the context of individuals, families and their relationship or within governance arrangements. In Foucault's view power is not exerted by classes, institutions or individuals as they are rather discursively created by power, their actions and activities however can contribute to the operation of power (Foucault & Gordon, 1980). Drawing on the earlier discussed perspective of reality and how it is shaped by Nietzsche, the probably most famous catch-phrase by Foucault is formed: *“Power/knowledge”* (Foucault & Gordon, 1980). Power can thus shape and produce reality, also in a positive sense. Foucault also included the resistance component in his conceptualization of power and stated that: *„We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby a discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy.”* (Foucault, 1998, p.100).

Another important contributor to what Haugaard & Clegg (2009, p. 3) coined the *“seventies power debate”* was by the writings of Steve Lukes. Lukes, and his 1974 book: *“A radical view on Power”* shifted the debate by acknowledging that there is no universal concept of power. He differentiated between various strands of thought in power related literature.

Lukes main contribution to the debate might be the third dimension within his dimensional view of power. He conceptualized classic coercive power which is sourced via transparent policy arenas as the first face of power, the secretive dynamics of power that Machiavelli and others already touched on as the second one, relating to agenda-setting “behind closed doors”. His main contribution, the third dimension, is the face of power that concerns itself with inclusion or exclusion of issues from the public mind via ideological pathways (Lukes, 1974). This relates to more subtle psychological aspects and can be compared to “ideological power” in the Marxist perspectives on power (Donham, 1999). He argued that there are invisible ways in which issues are excluded from politics or kept from debate and that these ways are therefore not to be grasped within the one- or two-dimensional account of power (Lukes, 1974).

This chapter briefly touched on the history of power and outlined that there are numerous accounts of power rather than one universally accepted view of power. It is important to note that the purpose of this chapter was not to “cherry-pick” on different and sometimes contradicting views of the concept to work towards a definition that suits the cause, but that the aim was to illustrate the development of the debate as well as the plurality of the concept and its complex nature.

### 2.1.1 Towards a Model of Power

Power and the accompanying concepts which were discussed can be seen as a product of their contexts and therefore as a consequence of the specific perspective employed. Power and its dynamics can and have been studied in a wealth of social contexts. Therefore, the perspective and the focus dictate, to a certain extent, which conceptualization of power is most suitable for the object under study. For the model guiding this study a number of concepts are needed which are a flowing from the previously outlined academic debate and which allow this study to structure and organise this complex and interrelated realm as far as possible.

This study therefore employs the three-dimensional view by Lukes (1974) as a basis for the conceptualization since it is able to address various kinds of power while maintaining structure. More specifically, the conceptualization of power in this study is grounded in the

work of John Gaventa who further refined the three-dimensional view by Lukes (1974) and put great effort in operationalising the concept for analytical and capacity building purposes. He defined the dimensions as: visible power, similar to Lukes first dimension concerning observable power dynamics, hidden power that is found in the second dimension of Lukes and deals with secretive components and finally invisible power that relates to ideological and psychological aspects (Gaventa, 2006).

However, to work with these rather abstract dimensions of power the often used concept of the “expressions of power“ by Veneklasen & Miller (2002) are employed to exemplify these dimensions. These expressions of power feature and merge some of the mentioned authors perspectives; such as power *over*, as focused on by Machiavelli, Weber and the majority of scholars, or power *to*, power *within* and power *with* which are more related to Foucauldian thinking. A brief discussion of these expressions will clarify the link between the already discussed concepts and illustrate how the dimensions of power might manifest on an individual scale.

First of all, there is the classic expression of power that has received a lot of attention in the history of power research and might be the most commonly recognized: power *over*, associated with negative terms such as repression, coercion and domination (Veneklasen & Miller, 2002). It can be seen as the outcome of the first and second dimension of power in Lukes conceptualization and is connected to control, regardless the source, relating to power inequality in the classic sense. However, as Foucault pointed out power is not necessarily negative (Foucault, 1998).

The expressions of power that connect with the concept of resistance are power *with*, power *to* and power *within*. Power *with* refers to the idea of finding common ground, employing consensus and mutual support to build power in a collective sense (Veneklasen & Miller, 2002). Power *to* refers to the individual and its potential to affect the world around it (Veneklasen & Miller, 2002). Power *to* and power *with* are often referred to as agency in literature, describing the ability to take action to influence and change the dominant discourse (Veneklasen & Miller, 2002). They can be conceptualized as the classic expressions of power that connect to self-organisation, oppositional force and resistance.

Finally, power *within* relates to individual identity, self-worth and attitude (Veneklasen & Miller, 2002). It could be described as the capacity to hope, imagine and subsequently act, forming the basis for agency (power *to*, power *with*). Power *within* would therefore be highly susceptible to aspects of invisible power such as stereotyping or dominant societal values. This possibly also one of the reasons why Lukes termed this dimension the most insidious of all due to its subtle and possibly devastating effects on the very basis for resistance and counterpower.

However, it is important to reiterate that working with power in an academic setting always suffers from a great complexity and blurred boundaries, power *within* for example might in the same way be impacted by invisible power as it might be impacted by visible power. In practice that means that whether a change in attitude and motivation for resistance is initiated by manipulation and psychological aspects or by a sheer mass of rules & legislation is nearly impossible to pinpoint.

To still be able to work with concepts of power within a decision-making context in a meaningful way, a concept is needed that incorporates the dimensions of power as well as participatory spaces but does instead of striving for structural division and clean boundaries acknowledge and emphasize the interrelated nature and complexity of the subject.

The powercube approach by John Gaventa (2006), satisfying the requirements above, is therefore chosen as the basic model for this study which will, in chapter 2.3 and 2.4, be developed into the "MSP-Powercube". Chapter 2.1 outlined the multi-faceted nature of power, introduced the employed conceptualization of power as the first main component of the relationship under investigation and arrived at the powercube approach. However, before this study can apply the approach to the context it is vital to operationalise its second main component: participation.

## 2.2 Participation

Similar to power, even though probably not to the same extent, participation is also a broad concept that has seen various definitions and conceptualizations. While some authors restrict the term political participation to formal efforts to change the political landscape, such as elections and referenda, others also include demonstrations, boycotts and other informal forms of influence-taking on decision-making processes (Conge et al., 1988)

This chapter therefore aims to discuss political participation and define a view that is employed in this study. Conge et al. (1988) stated that a definition of participation is difficult since it has to comply with two competing requirements. First of all generality, meaning that the definition must be broad enough to include a wide range of behavior across various cultural contexts. Some countries might for example have a “culture“ of protesting, where demonstrations and protests are accepted and tolerated throughout society, while the most extreme form of participation might refer to publicly voicing a regime critical opinion in other cultural contexts. Second is precision, the definition must be limited in scope and so some behavior must be excluded in order to increase the explanatory power of the variable. It might for example be beneficial to one’s interest to only include elections and formal participation in the definition but it would not do justice to the various forms of participation that are possible. While the one extreme is the stretching of the concept the other is the tendency to limit it and define it narrowly in order to fit one’s research interest (Conge et al., 1988). The difficulty therefore lies in navigating these two extremes. Since the purpose of this study is to investigate how power asymmetry influences participation a quite broad definition will be handled that includes political violence, demonstrations and protests, as well as written and spoken forms of action and virtually any behavior that is directed at influencing the political process.

This study will therefore use the definition of Nelson, which is also deemed the most appropriate one by Conge et al. (1988). Nelson defined political participation as „*action by private citizens intended to influence the actions or the composition of national or local governments*“ (Nelson, 1979 in Conge et al., 1988) However, since the studies setting is embedded in the policy context of the European Union it is necessary to add this dimension to the definition.

Participation, in this study, is thus defined as „*action by private citizens intended to influence the actions or the composition of supra-national, national or local governments*“.

The definition does therefore include quite a broad range of possible action. To operationalise the concept and enable a quantification of participatory pathways used by the fishermen the framework of Makarovič & Rek (2014) is used (figure 1). The two authors conceptualize and structure political participation along the lines of power and influence. Their view of power and influence differs somewhat from the discussed powercube approach that will be elaborated on in the next chapter. Power, in their work, is referring to directly binding decisions that must be implemented and are heavily formalised through the legal system. The power component in their work refers to state power that is upheld by the nation-states repressive apparatus. Due to their conceptualization of power as state-held and heavily formalized it might correspond roughly to what Gaventa (2006) defined as visible power together with invited spaces. Influence however, as defined by Makarovič & Rek (2014) is a vague and informal medium that employs persuasion and manipulation to make ends meet. In Gaventa’s (2006) terms this would most likely correspond to claimed/created spaces with a focus on a mix of hidden and invisible power.

	<b>Types of political participation</b>	<b>Forms of political participation</b>
<b>Making power based binding decisions</b>	Individual – direct	Elections, referenda, holding public office
	Organised – mediated	Membership in political parties
<b>Influencing decision making</b>	Individual – direct	Signing petitions, staging demonstrations, supporting boycotts, civil disobedience
	Organised – mediated (inclusion)	Membership in civic organisations
	Organised – mediated (representation)	Lobbying, advocacy, providing expertise

Figure 1: Classification of political participation (Makarovič & Rek, 2014)

## 2.3 The Powercube Approach to MSP

After defining the employed view of power in chapter 2.1 and defining our conceptualization of participation in the previous chapter the two main ingredients for the powercube are established. The cube (figure 2) as introduced by Gaventa forms the basis for the conceptual model of this study and will be modified towards the “MSP-Powercube” over the course of the following sub-chapters, resulting in the finalized model within chapter 2.5. This chapter therefore, after an introduction to the approach, addresses each dimension of the powercube separately and provides examples of how power could work in the context of fisheries and MSP.

As briefly touched on earlier, the powercube is an approach to visualize and conceptualize power in a participatory context, it is based on the work of Lukes (1974) and is described by its author as an complex approach that uses the three dimensions, or faces, of power alongside levels and spaces of power (Gaventa, 2006). Gaventa conceptualizes forms, spaces and levels of power as dimensions that interact with each other and if visually presented result in the power cube (see figure 2). The powercube approach is used in this study as it adds a participatory dimension to the concept of power by incorporating spaces for participation and so fits well to the purpose of analysing the effect of power asymmetry on participation.

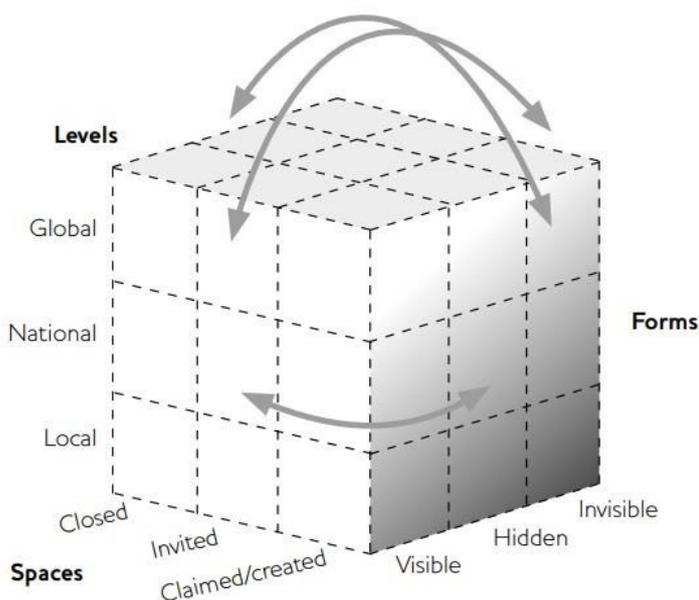


Figure 2: The powercube model: levels, spaces and forms of power (Gaventa, 2006)

Finally, before outlining the dimensions, spaces and levels of power it is important to emphasize that the cube model, rather than seen as entailing static dimensions, has a strong focus on interaction and should be understood as “Rubik’s cube” (Gaventa, 2005). Interaction is of major importance and spaces, levels and forms of power are highly interdependent, dynamic and shape each other continuously. Also, within the dimensions, or sides, featured in the cube model interaction is a key issue. Closed spaces for example could strongly structure the way in which invited spaces will behave, hidden and invisible power have implications on how visible power will manifest and levels of power have blurred boundaries and are interdependent as well.

### 2.3.1 Dimension 1: Types of Power

**Visible power** refers to observable decision-making processes, meaning that it includes the “*visible and definable aspects of political power*” (Gaventa, 2006,p.7). Visible power has a focus on power *over* as discussed by Machiavelli and others, it is the visible manifestation of coercive power. In Weber’s terms however, who further defined power *over*, it would refer to “*Herrschaft*” meaning formal authority rather than purely coercive and dominating might (Wallimann et al., 1980). Visible power in a political setting entails formal rules and structures, institutions, authorities and procedures of decision-making (Gaventa, 2006).

Visible power, in the fisheries context, is everywhere. The general policy landscape for Dutch fisheries is highly influenced by European legislation that is translated to national legislation. In general, the visible power that is exerted by policy discourses such as the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is perceived negatively by the sector and studies all over Europe revealed that the increasing regulatory pressure is seen as a serious problem within fishing communities (Pita et al., 2012, Khalilian, et al. 2010).

In the MSP context, visible power is for example found in binding decisions made at ministerial level, decisions on the moment and nature of participatory practices, marine zoning legislation, permits and licenses, etc.

The first points where visible power manifests are found in the translation of supra-national legislation to national spatial legislation. Within the supra-national legislation on MSP the minimum requirements as well as the objectives of MSP are outlined and explained. Theoretically, the whole process of deriving at the overarching policy document and the subsequent translation to national legislation is taking place in the realm of visible power, being democratic, transparent, definable and in thus visible.

Within article 5 of the DIRECTIVE 2014/89/EU, also known as the MSP-directive, the objectives of MSP are characterized as follows (EU, 2014):

*„Member States shall aim to contribute to the sustainable development of energy sectors at sea, of maritime transport, and of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and to the preservation, protection and improvement of the environment, including resilience to climate change impacts“*

While fisheries and aquaculture are explicitly mentioned, the directive also states that it is:

*„without prejudice to the competence of Member States to determine how the different objectives are reflected and weighted in their maritime spatial plan or plans.“*

This means that there are visible and pre-determined lines to which MSP initiatives are to adhere but that within these confines member states are free to specify their national focus. In the Dutch EEZ these so-called “priority activities of national interest“ include: oil & gas, shipping, mineral extraction, offshore renewables, military and nature protection (EC & EUMSPP, 2018). One could therefore say that the Netherlands do have established a focus that is to a large extent in line with the Blue Growth Initiative of the FAO, also adopted by the European Union.

The observable focus on economic growth in the marine industry while also safeguarding the environment is on the first sight part of visible power. It is the outcome of visible ways of political participation, the outcome of elections and transfer of societal perceptions, opinions and goals into European legislation that subsequently trickles down into national legislation. While there is nothing wrong with the exertion of power by legitimate state authorities to push through democratically formed goals against resistance, academics working with power have pointed out that power has dynamics which cannot be understood when only employing the lens of visible power.

In a growing body of literature MSP is criticised and accused to ignore power dynamics and to appear progressive and equal in theory while failing in implementation (Jentoft & Knol, 2014; Flannery et al. 2019; Tafon, 2018). This leads towards the notion of hidden power. Visible power can have a very close and interdependent relationship with hidden power (Gaventa, 2005). This is obviously quite difficult to pinpoint, taking place in unobservable arenas and being connected to topics such as lobbying, informal relationships and manipulation. In the case of MSP however literature points towards the existence of such a relationship and criticizes MSP processes as showing signs of the post-political condition. Flannery et al. (2019, p.203) summarize this as follows: *“In essence, post-political processes describe a society in which the space of contest or struggle (the political) is increasingly overrun by the promotion of free-market economics and the uncritical adoption of consensual procedures.”*

This points towards a connection between visible and hidden power and indicates that the mentioned “space of contest“, which shapes the realm of visible power, is impacted by aspects that are part of, or vulnerable to, hidden power.

**Hidden power** is concerned with the political agenda, with the issues that are featured on this agenda and the issues that are deliberately excluded (Gaventa, 2006). Referring to the way in which powerful people and institutions maintain their position by deciding who is participating, who is excluded and what is featured on the agenda. In terms of the expressions of power it corresponds to power *over* as well, but rather to its hidden component that was already discussed by Machiavelli and relates to manipulation and steering society. This form of power, also known as the *“mobilization of bias“* is more difficult to investigate and has been described as a process *“where issues are organized into politics while others are organized out“* (Schattschneider 1960, p.71).

According to the advocates for MSP, and to a certain degree the founders, (Ehler & Douvere (2009, p. 18) MSP is a *“...rational organisation of the use of marine space...“*. While sounding just and positive on the first sight the question that comes to mind is: whose rationality is employed? The uncritical understanding of rationality in the MSP context sees rationality as something that is situated above power, a logical process which can, in the long-run, reach a perfectly organised marine space where all actors are united in consensus and harmony. As Bent Flyvbjerg however argued in his book *“Rationality and Power“*, rationality is context-

dependent, intertwined with power, and therefore by no means neutral (Flyvbjerg, 2003). Taking into account that rationality is a product of existing power dynamics and cannot be seen as independent from power it is important to look at the effects of this narrow rationality on MSP.

As mentioned before the MSP system has been criticized to follow a strong neoliberal capitalist rationality while showing symptoms of the post-political condition (Flannery et al., 2019; Tafon, 2018), such as tokenistic participation, the promise of equality and a fusion of economic and political power (Swyngedouw, 2011). Critical voices argue that MSP consequently fails to produce the synergies, progression and win-win outcomes it initially promised and serves the interest of elite actors while displacing and neglecting others (Flannery et al. 2019; Tafon, 2018).

A post-political planning process therefore formulates problems, and most importantly also their solutions, in a narrow way and does not allow for alternatives (Swyngedouw, 2011). The solution to the contemporary problems is, according to the EU, found in continued economic growth as choreographed by the Blue Growth Initiative that strongly focuses on five main pillars: renewable energy, aquaculture, marine biotechnology, coastal tourism and seabed mining (Brent et al., 2018).

While minor issues and local implementation might be contestable up to a tolerable degree, the overall discourse is not. From a critical perspective Blue Growth could therefore be perceived as the visible outcome of hidden power relations as agenda setting is limited to elite actors within predominantly closed spaces. Thus, one could see visible power as being, to a certain extent, a manifestation of hidden power, becoming visible through formal rules, structures and institutions.

These power dynamics are creating conditions that allow for the rapid expansion of certain industries while legitimising the action through collaborative procedures which only have minor influence on the actual discourse. MSP is reduced to a mechanism ensuring that there is no conflict between the parties and that the most valuable industries receive their sites for accumulation (Brent et al., 2018). In implementation the initial objective of considering and balancing economic, social and environmental aspects is lost and MSP, in practice, is hardly more than “ocean zoning” (Flannery et al., 2019). In this process, also described as “ocean grabbing”, powerful industries are given priority and are, through formal procedures, able to

acquire marine space, effectively pushing fishermen out (Brent et al., 2018; Levine et al. 2015). Following this notion while keeping the absence of real influence on the discourse in mind one sees that, as Lefebvre conceptualized in his theory on the social production of space, two groups emerge. The “users” of space which are subject to displacement and have to more or less passively deal with the consequences of the “producers” actions (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 2009). The “producers” of space are thus the ones which are able to privatize areas of marine space to accommodate their spatially fixed industries.

Hidden power is also present in more nuanced and low-level issues such as the schedule of public hearings and discussions where fishermen often have a hard time participating due to the nature of their business (Johnson & Rodmell, 2009).

However, the study wants to focus on hidden power on a larger scale that is more concerned with politics and agenda setting rather than with the numerous small manifestations of power in a individual context.

**Invisible power** is shaping what is acceptable to the individual. It is considered the most insidious form of the three dimensions of power and relates to the notion that power shapes psychological and ideological boundaries of participation (Gaventa, 2006; Lukes, 1974). It means that important issues might not only be excluded by not being addressed in the decision-making process as in hidden power but rather that it is kept from the minds and consciousness of the actors involved (Gaventa, 2006). Invisible power has an influence on how people think about their role and place in the world by shaping beliefs, self-identity and acceptance. Here also socialisation, culture, ideology and social identity do play a role in defining the “normal” or status-quo (Lukes, 1974).

Invisible power could be characterized as a subtle and deeply-rooted form of power *over*. With its impact on social identity and perception it also has strong relations to power *within*. It is therefore also related to Foucault’s idea of resistance and can be a starting point of such. Invisible power shapes beliefs, identity and acceptance and can therefore also be rejected, encountered or harnessed by a strong social identity and a rigid belief system and can lead to a manifestation of power *within*, as a prerequisite for power *with*, in the form of claimed and created spaces. If for example certain aspects are excluded or manipulated in the public

perception, a strong social identity and culture might harness this as a starting point for resistance.

However, it is important to note that the exertion of invisible power, in a lot of cases, is a result of complex social processes that are not necessarily intentionally deployed and cannot always be attributed to deliberate manipulation. It is present in dominant stereotypes and cultures and can be also seen as an "*internalisation of powerlessness*", with the affected and powerless group thinking that certain circumstances (e.g. poverty or absence of influence) are natural, unchangeable and therefore are left unaddressed (Gaventa, 2005, p.14).

Especially in the context of marine governance and the fishing industry invisible power is difficult to grasp, present in multiple forms and mixed with elements of the other dimensions of power. The preceding pages established the idea of a skewed agenda and an unchallengeable dominant discourse flowing from a rationality that favours economic growth and only allows minor deviations from the predetermined path. These aspects can be seen as a mix of visible and hidden power, but there are also notions of invisible power present. The central question if we, as society, want to allocate large amounts of wind energy at sea is not only closed to discussion by excluding it from the agenda but also hidden behind a moral rhetoric of sustainable growth. Therefore, from a societal perspective it is not only a matter of personal interest or opinion but rather includes moral values and an ideology which is difficult to encounter.

If one for example argues against offshore wind energy, one would be faced by a wealth of arguments that depict the critical voice as being against nature protection, against renewable energies and, in the end, against the sustainable development of society. The idea that the development of renewable energy is necessary and that it comes at a certain spatial and thus societal cost, is internalised by society and is shielded by an umbrella of moral protection that makes it difficult to engage with it objectively.

It has ties to a wider, very emotional and polarising debate. Invisible power, in this case, can also not be attributed to steering or manipulation. It is rather the result of an ideology and belief system of our modern times that sees sustainability as a key point for future development, shaped by the recent history that saw a large variety of anthropogenic impacts.

For fishermen this might not necessarily lead to an adoption of the same values as the rest of society as in the classic example of invisible power, but might lead to the internalisation of powerlessness, accepting that they do have little influence on these values and their results.

Another aspect where invisible power is present is the overall position of fisheries in society. Fishing, as a business, has qualities that distinguish it from most other economic sectors of a country, it exploits a common resource, therefore related to the tragedy of the commons, and it takes place in a realm that is unknown to large parts of society. Fishing itself has, in a planning context, been referred to as an “invisible” business (Johnson & Rodmell, 2009). It is a complex and challenging activity that to a large extent depends on aspects that are unknown and difficult to grasp for people outside the industry. This leads to problems in planning and governance but also gives rise to “mainstream” misconceptions, stereotyping and the framing of issues within media coverage in general.

The global decline of commercial fish stocks and the multiple effects of industrial fisheries are topics that have trickled into the public consciousness throughout the last decennia. This is a very sensitive topic and it is important to note that this study does not aim at criticizing the media for reporting on these issues, the opposite is true. It is necessary and highly welcomed that the public is informed and interested in issues that are part of their nutrition and in the end also their lives. Society, as a whole, has the task to ensure and work towards a sustainable relationship between mankind and the world’s oceans, a relationship that is based on respect and not on blind exploitation.

Part of the problem is however that media, NGOs and the business of journalism are not free of politics and are not economically independent entities (Entman, 2007; Curran, 2012). Complex issues and multi-faceted and nuanced topics, such as the complex socio-ecological system of the world’s oceans, do not qualify for a best-selling story. News are often simplified and distorted to be interesting, captivating and in the end, marketable. In research referred to as “distortion bias” (Entman, 2007). However, headlines such as „*All fish extinct by 2048*“ or „*Oceans without fish in 2050*“, based on a study by fisheries scientists, are a prime example of media coverage that does put a lot of strain on the relationship between fisheries and society (Roach, 2018). When looking closer the issue becomes more and more nuanced. It is the classic case of a translation of scientifically valid information into a generalized, simplified but shocking “fact” that serves a journalistic purpose. Citing from another newspaper article

that was based on a personal interview with the lead author of the study, Boris Worm, the problematic nature of such translations becomes apparent:

*„We never said that,“ explained Boris Worm.....“We never talked about extinction. We talked about collapse of the commercial catches.“ (EcoWatch,p.1, 2017)*

From a fisheries science perspective a tremendous difference. This case also illustrates the earlier mentioned notion that invisible power and the shaping of opinion and belief is not necessarily a purposeful endeavour. Most likely the authors of the newspapers article claiming an extinction of fish by 2050 did not publish their articles with the purpose to condemn the fishing industry. It is more likely that the reason for the invalidity is to be found in a mixture of misunderstanding, absence of scientific knowledge or “purposeful misinterpretation“ for the sake of readership. This can lead to a simplified generalization and to a mix of opinion and facts about the oceans, about the business of fishing, and in the end about “the fisherman“.

Such information and their use by media and NGO’s puts fisheries and subsequently fishermen, in a societal position that is quite difficult and leads to stereotyping as well as to a strong boundary between the in- and the out-group in terms of social identity, an issue that will be touched on in chapter 2.4.

In terms of power and participation the above discussed aspects are quite important, they do determine the perspective with which society looks at the business of fishing and can result in entrenched values and ideas that are left unquestioned by society (Entman, 2007). On the side of the fishermen it could lead to inaction, frustration or retreat from politics due to the conception that society is “against“ them and does not understand their cause and their business. On the other hand, it could also lead to increased political activity to encounter the entrenched values and ideas. For the fishermen it therefore has implications for power *within* and consequently for power *within*, power *to* and power *with*. Power *to* and power *with* could for example be restricted if the rest of society would perceive fisheries in a negative way and oppose their initiatives. Power *within*, as the basis for action, could either be impaired by the internalisation of powerlessness or it could be enhanced due to resistance to dominant values and stereotypes.

### 2.3.2 Dimension 2: Spaces of Power

The term “space” is widely used in works on power, democracy and political change. It is referred to as a institutional channel, political discourse but also as policy space, referring to moments in which civil society gets an opportunity to meet and discuss issues with policy-makers. In the power cube approach “spaces” are taking citizen action and participation as a starting point and the author defines spaces in this approach as *“opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interest”* (Gaventa, 2006, p.5).

A general theoretical question, that can only be answered in the specific context, is whether power asymmetry, most prominently addressed in the form of economic power, increases participation and political action or whether it acts as an inhibiting agent due to frustration and the acceptance that change is impossible (Verba et al., 2002; Runciman, 1980). How the extent and form of political action can vary within the context of fisheries and MSP will be explained along the lines of the three “policy spaces” used in this study: closed, invited and claimed spaces.

**Closed spaces** refer to decision-making moments that are closed to the public. Decisions in this category are taken behind closed doors by elite actors (bureaucrats, experts or elected representatives) without broader involvement of the public (Gaventa, 2006). Even though many societies take efforts to open such spaces through accountability or transparency they often remain closed and are inaccessible to the public. (Gaventa, 2006). Examples would be decisions made at EU or nation state level, in the MSP context this could be ministerial conferences or similar occasions.

From a fisheries perspective closed spaces are only accessible via elections, or via claimed spaces that try to influence closed spaces. Closed spaces in their classic sense are therefore influenced by fishermen through participating in European or Dutch elections. However, as mentioned before there are very blurred boundaries in this conceptualization (Gaventa, 2005), closed spaces are also interrelated with invited spaces and elected officials that are part of fishing associations might in some cases also have an influence on closed spaces. This study does conceptualize fishing associations as belonging to invited spaces as the

participation of representatives within closed spaces still has more of an invited character rather than them being a full member of closed policy spaces. Unorthodox ways to influence closed spaces are also present, do however fall under the categorization of claimed ones: protests, personal letters to ministers and petitions (Gaventa, 2006). In general, closed spaces are quite difficult to influence but do have a high influence in terms of hidden and visible power as they are the ones largely determining the agenda, national priorities and general legislation.

**Invited spaces** refer to spaces that are deliberately opened up by governing authorities to involve the public (Gaventa, 2006). There is a variety of forms present, ranging from a one-time consultation event where stakeholders might be invited to more institutionalized and ongoing forms of participation such as evaluation workshops or similar that take place on a regular basis. These spaces are found on all levels, from local stakeholder meetings up to global policy fora, especially since participatory governance approaches have been increasingly employed in the last decade (Gaventa, 2006). For MSP this would translate to workshops, discussions or stakeholder meetings where the governing authorities invite actors to participate (Ehler & Douvere, 2009).

While the involvement or consultation of individual fishermen might be practiced in local MSP-related projects (Johnson & Rodmell, 2009), it would be difficult to invite individual fishermen to discussions and stakeholder meetings that concern the whole EEZ outside of public consultation events, therefore the main pathway over which the individual fishermen can participate in invited spaces is via fishing associations. This form of mediated participation is here referred to as “organised (mediated)” involvement.

Next to this participatory pathway also individual action is possible. Governing authorities do for example present draft spatial plans in an online environment where fishermen can directly take position and comment on the plans (OFL, 2019). In this study referred to as “individual (direct)” participation.

As discussed within the dimensions of power there are voices that heavily criticize the setup of participatory processes, and therefore invited channels, within MSP. While these issues of tokenistic and choreographed processes are general issues in participatory practices in a post-political or “governance-beyond-the-state” situation (Swyngedouw, 2011), scholars have identified exactly these notions in the participatory arenas of MSP (Flannery et al., 2019). In (international) cases collaborative processes in MSP where perceived as showing top-down management, centralised decision-making and repackaging of historic power dynamics and asymmetries (Flannery et al., 2018). In other cases fisheries were often seen to have a hard time participating and felt to be an “unwelcomed” stakeholder, encountering aspects of invisible power (Johnson, 2009; Naarat, 2018).

**Claimed spaces** are spaces that are claimed by, usually less powerful actors, to counteract power inequalities and initiate action. Such spaces can be seen as organic spaces that emerge from shared ideas, values and identifications, or as self-organised spaces (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). Also here a wide range of activities and forms is possible that include spaces created in the context of social movements, interest groups, associations or debate fora (Gaventa, 2006). The main aspect that groups these spaces is the shared feature that they take place outside of institutionalized policy arenas. (Gaventa, 2006). It can be seen, as discussed earlier, as a manifestation of resistance in the Foucauldian sense and as the use of power *within* and power *with* to resist different aspects of power over, such as visible rules, hidden rationales behind the dominant discourse or even invisible aspects such as stereotyping and media influence on the public perception. In the MSP context there are several forms of claimed spaces present, for example protests, open letters to planners and politicians, public events, education or similar. In the Netherlands action groups emerged such as “Eendracht Maakt Kracht” (EMK) that specifically address the pressures on the sector by organising protests, educating and lobbying (EMK,2019).

This study conceptualized the options for the individual fishermen that are addressing claimed/created spaces within the framework as “individual (direct)”, referring to participation in protests and as “organised (mediated)”, referring to a membership in an organisation that specifically acts on the pressures of the sector. The main difference between the fishing associations and interest organisations is that associations do have the task of

representing fisheries in general and while also addressing the specific problems, they do have a much broader focus. The civic interest organisations can however be seen as a direct reaction on the pressures that the sector is facing at the moment.

### 2.3.3 Dimension 3: Levels of Power

**Levels of power** used in the power cube are rather self-explanatory. Local, national and global levels are present and each form and space of power is situated at each level (Gaventa, 2006). It is important to note that while a lot of literature has been dealing with social, economic or political power at the local, national level or individual level some scholars suggest that, in a more and more globalised world power, as well as the allocation of oppositional effort, is increasingly shifting to globalised actors (Gaventa & Martorano, 2016). Also, the interdependency between the levels is important to note as for example the local levels and spaces created for participation strongly depend on the national or global level of power and on the extent in which they shape arenas.

The notion of a strong connection between global, national and local levels is strongly reflected in the European MSP context, here the global (or supra-national) level structures the national level of the member countries. An example would be earlier discussed MSP-directive that requires member countries to implement a maritime spatial plan for their EEZ (EU, 2014). While the implementation and the national priorities are up to the member states to decide the minimum requirements and the general framework is provided by the EU. Keeping this shift in mind, the “global” level is in the conceptual model of this study adapted to “European Union” however considering that economic discourses such as the Blue Economy do have a strong global dimension.

## 2.4 Understanding Fisheries: Threat perception & Social Identity

In the prior chapters the powercube was introduced and subsequently applied to the context of MSP and fisheries, discussing dimensions, participatory spaces and levels of power. However, since the purpose of this study is the investigation of a relationship embedded in a social context it is necessary to explore the absent link between the dimensions of power and the participatory spaces. This link, that in itself has the potential to amplify the participatory response, can be found in social identity theory, threat perception and perception of place and in the end in the complex socio-cultural systems that lie beneath the surface of the simple term “fisheries”.

### ***Diversity & Identity:***

As already outlined in the previous chapters, the Dutch fishing industry is a diverse industry and cannot be characterized as a uniform stakeholder. Especially in the light of power and participation it is vital to look more closely at social groups within the sector. A social group is defined by its shared norms, values and in the end their identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). One could argue that fishermen identify themselves as such, meaning that there is one social group within the Dutch fishing sector that identifies as fishermen. Certainly, fishermen will identify themselves as being fishermen, taking part in an activity that has strong cultural and historical bonds and distinguishes the individual from the rest. In social identity theory called the “ingroup” and the “outgroup”(Turner et al., 1979).

Social identity theory states that social groups support institutions that resemble their norms and values (Turner et al., 1979). From a theoretical perspective there should therefore, from an institutional lens, only be a few fishing associations. In reality however, there are diverse fishing associations that stand for different values and represent different interests within the sector. Consequently, one could argue that there must be diverse social groups present within the sector. And while all fishermen most likely identify as fishermen, the different social groups organise themselves in order to represent their varying interests and values. These varying interests and values are to a large extent based on the fishing methods, the vessels that are used and the relationship with the sea (Jentoft, 2017; O’Driscoll-Adam, 2014). When looking at figure 3, it becomes obvious that the fishing industry is a diverse group of people

that also sparks the creation of various identities, it spans from large pelagic fisheries (left), over demersal trawl fisheries (middle) to small-scale fishing operations (right).



*Figure 3: Diversity in the Dutch Fishing sector*

Fisheries are undoubtedly a sector that is laden with emotion, conflicting interests and values. The relationships between the sub-sectors of the Dutch fishing fleet are not without strain and one can easily imagine when considering figure 3, that for example small-scale fishermen feel that their representation and influence is lacking when compared to economically more powerful types of fisheries. While for one part of the fishery a certain type of gear might be seen as a sustainable solution, it is perceived as a threat to the livelihood and as a classic example of unsustainable and industrial fishing by others (Hakkenes, 2018). There are numerous and complex sectoral aspects that contribute to what this study introduces as (perceived) “intra-sectoral” power asymmetry such as distribution of quota shares, fishing areas, market issues and different perspectives and values on fishing in general.

While visualizing power dynamics in MSP on a larger scale within the previous chapters (2.3.1), one could conceptualize similar processes to take place within the sector itself. However, focussed more on aspects of power such as economic inequality, marginalization and underrepresentation in decision-making processes (Jentoft, 2017; Cohen et al., 2019). It is important to keep in mind that therefore one part of the fleet might perceive “inter-sectoral” asymmetry while other parts might additionally or instead perceive an “intra-sectoral” asymmetry.

### ***Culture & Perception of place:***

Fishing in general, from a social identity point of view, is a quite unique activity and scholars described that within fishing families a strong identity and place attachment has always been present (Ross, 2013; Urquhart et al., 2013). Fishing communities have a strong and historically rooted sense of identity that is formed by their shore communities as well as by the sea itself. Due to the nature of the work a considerably long time is spent at sea, contributing to the identity of the communities, not only in an individual sense but also in terms of collective identity, resilience and cultural heritage (Ross, 2013; O'Driscool-Adam, 2014).

For outsiders the sea may appear as a large homogenous body of water and experiences from average citizens that are connected to the sea are shaped from a terrestrial perspective. Vacations at the beach, a boat trip during childhood or similar. From the perspective of fishing communities however the sea is incredibly nuanced, there are historical fishing grounds, good as well as bad ones, places of fortune and places of misfortune, places where members of the community or even family have lost their lives, stories connected to certain places at sea, traditions and rituals and a lot of similar issues that make the sea a source of identity. The type of fishery practiced also has consequences for the perception of place, while for example larger trawlers operate throughout the whole North Sea, small vessels are only able to operate close to the coastline and therefore attribute a greater importance to the areas directly surrounding them (Johnson & Rodmell, 2009).

This translates to problems for planning as the blank space on the map which planners perceive might be a multi-layered place that is a source of identity for fishing communities (Johnson & Rodmell, 2009)

This is not to argue that social identity and perception of space is the sole source of resistance against MSP or marine governance. While socio-economic and ecological concerns as well as cumulative impacts of regulatory frameworks are an often-mentioned reason for rejection of MSP in fishing communities this study wants to emphasize that one must not underestimate the socio-cultural realm and its effects on threat perception, resistance and consequently participation.

The threat that is perceived by different fishing communities can therefore be characterized as a complex mix of socio-economic and socio-cultural components that influence each other. Perceived socio-economic threats (such as inaccessible fishing grounds) might for example also translate to socio-cultural threats if a community loses income and therefore fears for their culture to decline. In the same way might a socio-cultural threat also influence or translate to a socio-economic one.

The threat that fishing communities perceive from MSP initiatives might therefore be felt in a more differentiated way than one would initially expect. MSP does thus not only tap into economic aspects but in essence threatens a set of complex socio-cultural systems of which some have a strong internal focus and well-defined boundaries. Power asymmetry (both intra- and inter-sectoral), if conceptualized as a condition that prevents fishermen from meaningful participation, is influencing the threat perception of the various individual and collective identities. These identities subsequently play a role in the form of organisation that is deployed against this threat and ultimately influence the participatory pathways that are chosen to encounter the threat.

These notions allow to finalize the conceptual model as well as the theoretical framework by incorporating the MSP context, threat perception and social identity into the concept put forward by Gaventa (2006). This is done in chapter 2.5, which introduces the “MSP-Powercube” as the theoretical foundation of this study.

## 2.5 Conceptual Model: The MSP Powercube

Figure 4 shows the powercube based on Gaventa (2006) after its application to the MSP context. The preceding chapters elaborated on the dimensions, spaces and levels of power and chapter 2.4 added the socio-cultural dimension that links these features.

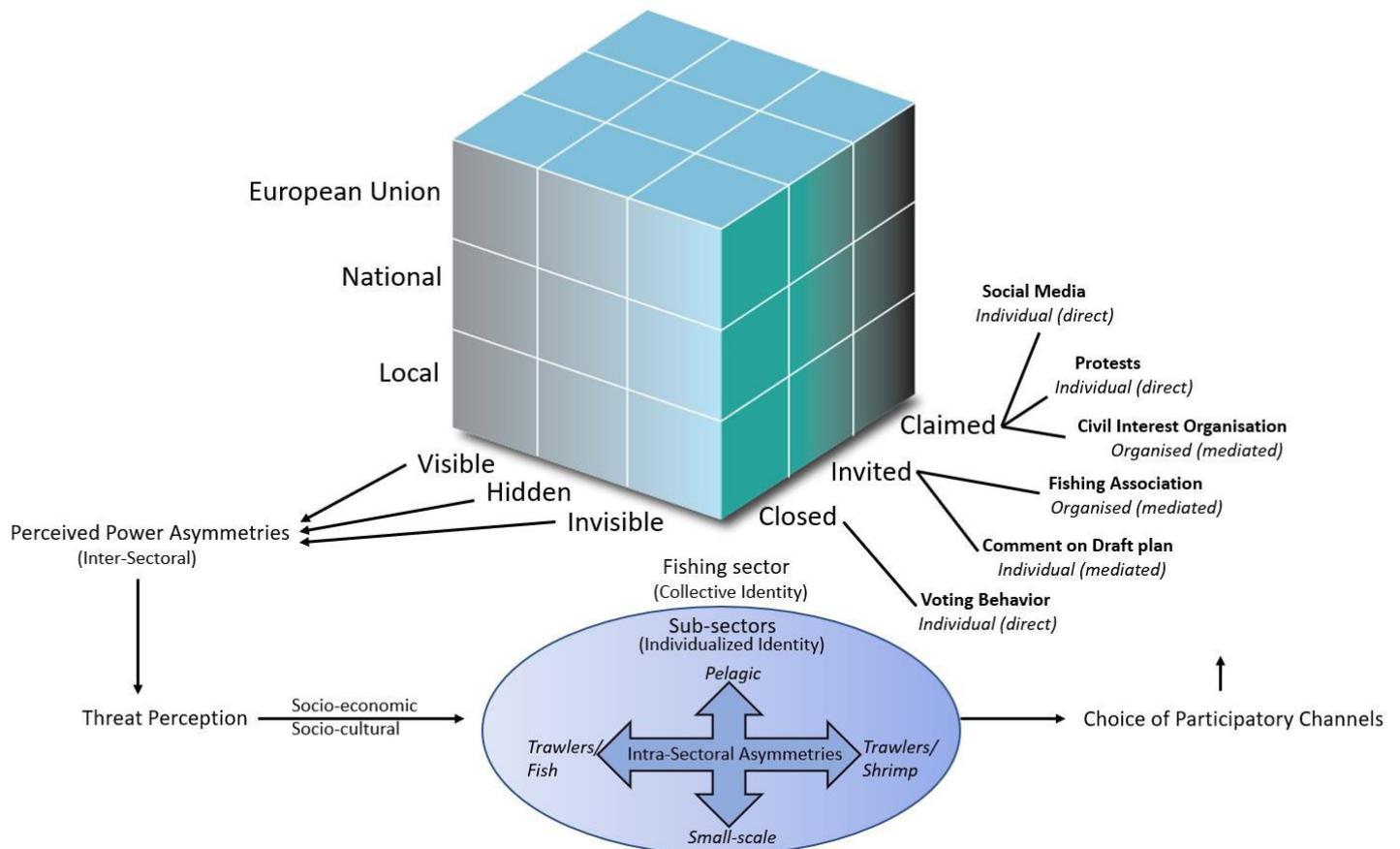


Figure 4: "MSP-Powercube", based on Gaventa (2006) and Makarovic & Rek (2014)

The left side of the cube indicates the different dimensions of power which were discussed in depth in chapter 2.3.1. Perceived power asymmetries are conceptualized in this modified model as the subjective outcome of power relations between different sectors. Being a subjective perception, perceived power asymmetries are conceptualized as a variable that consists of a complex mix of visible, hidden and invisible power in individually different intensities.

The classifications based on Makarovič & Rek (2014) are found on the right side below the participatory pathways and are based on the discussion of participatory pathways in the MSP context (chapter 2.3.2). Ranging from social media activity to membership in associations the political options that are available to the individual fishermen are included. Since a certain degree of simplification is inevitable, not all options were included and the model is restricted to measurable pathways. For the same reason also sectoral pressures such as the CFP, or Brexit are excluded which in practice also contribute to threat perception.

Perceived power asymmetries, as indicated in chapter 2.4, affect the social identity of sub-sectors and the collective identity of the whole sector via threat perception (socio-economic and socio-cultural). It is important to note that the arrows representing intra-sectoral asymmetry were chosen for reasons of visualization and do not aim to depict intensity or structure of this power asymmetry between the sectors.

The finalized model that incorporates all dimensions, pathways and linking features which were discussed in the theoretical framework is, within the next chapter, used to structure the methodology of this study.

## 3. Methodology

This chapter will elaborate on the methods employed in this study to answer the research questions that were introduced in chapter 1.2.

### 3.1 Research Design

In this study individual fishermen, their communities and sub-sectors as well as their perceptions towards power and participation were handled as research units. While the social group of fishermen were the main unit, the spatially fragmented fishing population of the Netherlands made it impossible to define a specific spatial scope. Since the Dutch North Sea and perceptions towards power and participation in terms of spatial development were the focus of this study the spatial scope can be conceptualized as the Dutch EEZ being the spatial context in which the investigated relationship is embedded.

The difficult accessibility of fishermen and the complex and relevant character of the topic as well as its connections to wider social debates made it necessary to employ a mixed method design. It was chosen for a mixed method design since it was vital to simultaneously investigate and quantify the relationship between power asymmetry and participation.

Within the classification of Johnson et al. (2007) the employed method corresponds to a quantitative mixed study, describing a study in which the quantitative component dominates but which is supported by qualitative elements.

The main method used was a quantitative online-survey to collect data on perception and attitude towards power in the fisheries context and towards the Dutch MSP process. Besides that, a literature study was employed that explored literature available in the fields of social fisheries research, participation, MSP and power. Informal conversational interviews with fishermen and experts were conducted to gather background information only available within the fishing community that aided the understanding of the quantitative data.

In order to provide an overview on the employed methods and illustrate their connection to the research questions table 1 provides an overview of the methodology. The sets which were

used in the survey have not been introduced yet but are included to provide a complete overview, they can be found in chapter 3.2.1.

<b>Sub-Question:</b>	<b>Main Method:</b>	<b>Sets within Survey:</b>	<b>Outcome found in:</b>
How do perceived power asymmetries impact political participation in public decision-making?	Literature Review	Not applicable	Theoretical Framework
How can these concepts be operationalised in the context of MSP and fisheries?	Literature Review	Not applicable	Theoretical Framework
What are the differences in perceived power asymmetries among the different sub-sectors of the Dutch fisheries?	Literature Review, Survey, Qualitative	Set 1: Power Asymmetry Set 2: Power and MSP in practice	Results & Discussion
What are the consequences of the perceived power asymmetries on participation among the different sub-sectors of the Dutch fisheries?	Literature Review, Survey, Qualitative	Set 3: Participatory Channels Set 4: Political Context & Control Set 5: Threat Perception	Results & Discussion, Conclusion
Which lessons for MSP processes can be drawn from the relationship between power asymmetry and participation?	Literature Review, Survey, Qualitative	All	Conclusion

*Table 1: Link between sub-questions and employed methods (please note: the main question, as a product of the sub-questions was not included)*

## 3.2 Data collection methods

This chapter will concern itself with the methods that were used to collect data, discussing the collection of qualitative and quantitative data.

### 3.2.1 Quantitative Data Collection

#### ***Online-survey***

In order to gather quantitative data an online-survey was set up with “google-survey”, topics addressed included power and power asymmetry, choice of participatory channels, threat perception as well as political context. A total of 27 questions was used to gather information from the individual fishermen and several answering schemes were used. Ranging from “yes/no” to likert-scale perception scales. The questions were either closed questions with predetermined answer schemes or consisted of statements to which the respondent had to take position. In order to prevent steering and suggestive asking schemes options for “other” were accompanied by the possibility to specify an own response. Additionally, the survey included an endnote with a qualitative component

Since the survey was sampling industry specific aspects that needed to be fine-tuned to the context not only from a methodological but also from a “practical” perspective, effort was taken to double check and discuss the survey with industry professionals. A fisheries scientist from Wageningen Marine Research, Dr. Kraan, was asked to take position on the survey from a fisheries science perspective. Additionally, Mr. Koffeman, a well-connected fisherman and fisheries consultant was also approached. Dr. Walker was asked for advice on possible contacts within the fishing industry was approached to guarantee that all relevant organisations were addressed. Based on the discussions with these experts the survey was further refined to fit the context. The first respondents were also asked personally in a face-to-face situation to enable feedback and test if the questions were well understood by the respondents.

The survey was set up in English and was subsequently translated to Dutch to increase the response and to ensure comprehension by the targeted respondents. The Dutch version of the survey can be found in Appendix I.

### ***Operationalisation***

In the following, it is elaborated on the employed questions within the online-survey were designed and what they seek to measure. Each topic and dimension of the MSP power cube is explained separately by discussing “sets” of questions that are thematically similar. The numeration of the questions within these sets differs from the order of the questions within the online-survey itself, a different structure was handled to increase respondent satisfaction and provide an easy entry to the survey. The sets are organised as follows:

*Set 1: Power Asymmetry*

*Set 2: Power & MSP in Practice*

*Set 3: Participatory Channels*

*Set 4: Political Context*

*Set 5: Threat Perception*

For the connection between the sets of questions, which will be discussed in detail shortly, please consider figure 5 which illustrates which part of the conceptual model, and thus the relationship, the sets aim to quantify.

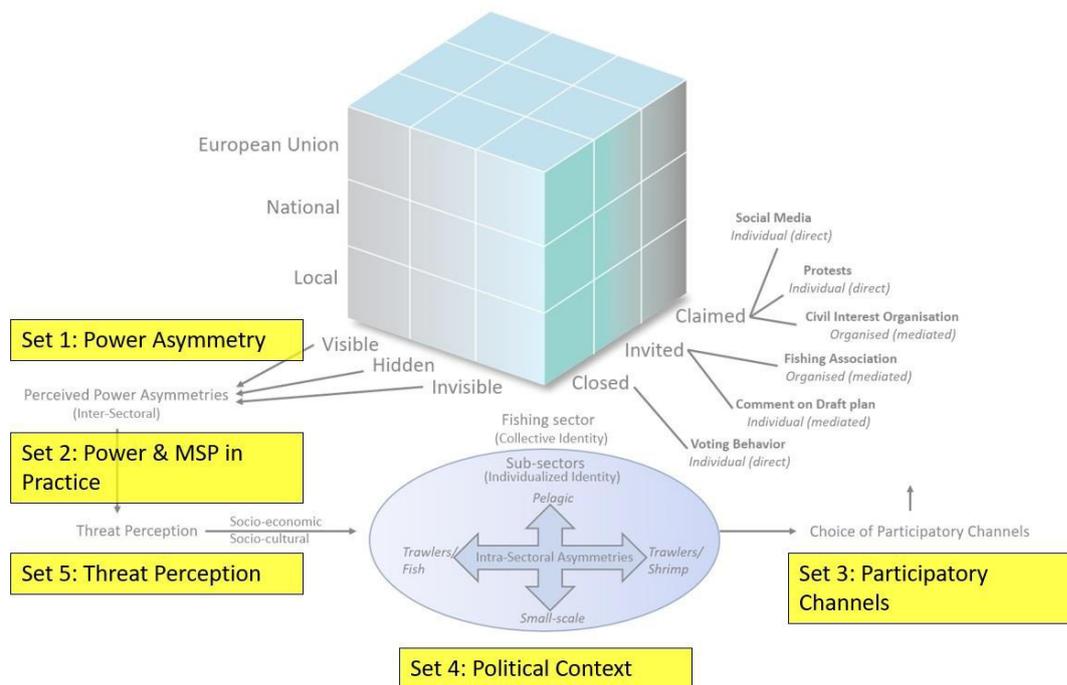


Figure 5: Connection between MSP-Powercube and question sets

The tables containing function, operationalisation and the questions are found at the beginning of each set discussed, subsequently elaborated on in the explanation text. Together with the answer scheme the coding used in the analysis is mentioned.

### Set 1: Power Asymmetry

Question Number	Function	Operationalisation	Question/Statement	Scale/answer scheme
1 & 2	Visible Power	Perceived influence on rules & legislation versus perceived influence of other sectors	How would you rate the influence of the fishing sector on rules & legislation in terms of MSP?  How would you rate the influence of other sectors on rules & legislation in terms of MSP?	5-point likert: Very big (1) Big (2) Medium (3) Low (4) Very low (5)

3 & 4	Hidden Power	Perceived influence on agenda & priority forming versus perceived influence of other sectors	<p>How would you rate the influence of the fishing sector on priority forming &amp; agenda in terms of MSP?</p> <p>How would you rate the influence of other sectors on priority forming &amp; agenda in terms of MSP</p>	5-point likert: Very big (1) Big (2) Medium (3) Low (4) Very low (5)
5, 6 & 7	Invisible Power	<p>Perceived influence on societal attitude towards fisheries versus perceived inhibitors</p> <p>Perception on how justified societal attitude towards fisheries is within society</p>	<p>How would you rate the influence of the fishing sector on the “image” and “picture” of fisheries in society</p> <p>Which factor inhibits this influence the most</p> <p>Generally speaking, society has a correct and justified image of fisheries</p>	<p>5-point likert: Very big (1) Big (2) Medium (3) Low (4) Very low (5)</p> <p>Multiple choice: None (1) Media &amp; journalism (2) Nature protection (NGOs) (0) Lacking interest of society (3) Lacking interest of fisheries (4) Other: (own answer)</p> <p>5-point likert: Strongly agree (1) Agree (2) Neutral (3) Disagree (4) Strongly disagree (5)</p>

Table 2: Question set 1: Power Asymmetry

### *Explanation of Set 1: Power Asymmetry*

**Question 1 and 2** were aimed at quantifying the perception of power asymmetry in the dimension of visible power. For this purpose, a simple and workable estimate of power asymmetry was needed that enabled a categorization of the respondents perception. Measuring or defining power is an incredibly difficult endeavor, especially in a quantitative context. In the context of MSP, being a collaborative process, it seemed possible to measure the perceived influence of the fishing sector on the process relative to the perceived influence that other sectors have on the process. This measure was designed following one of the definitions of power in the political context. Robert Dahl defined power as: *“A has power of B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would otherwise not do”* (Dahl, 2007, p.3). Keeping in mind the differing spatial goals in the MSP context one could consequently use the perceived influence on the process of A, versus the perceived influence on the process of B as an estimate for perceived power asymmetry. This scheme was applied for visible and hidden power, looking at the perceived influence on the result of the process (in visible power) and the perceived influence on the agenda (in hidden power). Power asymmetry, in different intensities, would therefore be present if the influence of the own sector, thus the fisheries sector, was perceived as being less than the influence of other sectors. As the specific sector is not of major importance for power asymmetry itself and to prevent suggesting an answer or directing towards a certain sector the question focused on the perceived magnitude of influence. The same scheme was also applied to the influence on agenda forming and the setting of priorities to measure asymmetry in the dimension of hidden power with **questions 3 and 4**.

Invisible power was measured by **questions 5, 6 and 7** in a similar fashion even though the relative influence was exchanged for “the most influential inhibiting factor”. This was done in order to collect perceptions on the perceived barrier which limits the own influence (question 6) and to include the option that the fisheries sector itself was a contributor to the lacking influence on the societal image of the sector that could possibly be perceived. Invisible power asymmetry could however be estimated by the combination of the questions 6 and 7, with questions 7 asking how correct and justified society’s image of fisheries is perceived.

## Set 2: Power & MSP in Practice

Question Number	Function	Operationalisation	Question/Statement	Scale/answer scheme
8	Practical manifestation of power  Respondent satisfaction	Perceived influence of different sectors on MSP in total	Could you choose a “top 3” in terms of total influence on MSP from the following sectors	Rating 1 to 3, out of:  Nature protection (0) Wind energy (1) Sand extraction (2) Fisheries (3) Oil & Gas (4) Shipping (5) Other:( own answer) None
9	Equality in MSP  Respondent satisfaction	Degree in which MSP is perceived to be a fair and equal process	MSP is an equal process that includes all sectors in the same way	5-point likert:  Strongly agree (1) Agree (2) Neutral (3) Disagree (4) Strongly disagree (5)

Table 3: Set2: Power & MSP in Practice

### Explanation of Set 2: Power & MSP in Practice

**Question 8** was aimed at collecting perceptions towards the practical implications of MSP and derive at an understanding on which sectors interests are perceived to dominate the process.

**Question 9** was directed at the perceived equality of the process. Even though the information (question 8 & 9) could also indirectly be derived from the first set of questions it was important to include these, first of all to get a direct response on which sectors interest are perceived to prevail in practice to test whether this aligns with international literature on the subject and to connect the theory with the actual situation. And second to increase respondent satisfaction. The debate around MSP is such a present and emotional topic that it would have been insensitive to ask for a variety of more or less theoretical aspects (such as relative influence) without giving the respondents the opportunity to point out the practical spatial adversaries or to voice their attitude towards the process in general.

**Set 3: Participatory Channels**

Question Number	Function	Operationalisation	Question/Statement	Scale/answer scheme
10	Participation within closed space	Degree in which MSP related issues influence voting behavior	Topics around MSP influence my voting behavior at national or European elections	5-point likert: Strongly agree (1) Agree (2) Neutral (3) Disagree (4) Strongly disagree (5)
11,12, 13, 14 & 15	Participation within invited spaces	Participation within fishing associations, level of activity, main motivation for membership and willingness to have "active function"	<p>I am member of a fishing association</p> <p>I am mainly member for:</p> <p>I am regularly going to events and discussions</p> <p>I do have, or would like to have, an active function within the association</p> <p>I have individually reacted on draft spatial plans that were up for discussion (online)</p>	<p>Yes (1) No (0) Yes, more than one (2)</p> <p>Choice: Networking (1) Interest representation (2) Quota (3) Not applicable (4) Other: (own answer)</p> <p>5-point likert: Strongly agree (1) Agree (2) Neutral (3) Disagree (4) Strongly disagree (5)</p> <p>Yes (1) No (0) Not applicable (2)</p> <p>Yes/No (1/0)</p>

16,17 & 18	Participation within claimed spaces	Individual participation, Participation in interest groups & protests, social media activity	I am member of an interest organisation that also focuses on MSP	Yes/No (1/0)
			I take part in protests that also focus on MSP	Yes/No (1/0)
			I share my opinion via social media	5-point likert: Very often (1) Often (2) Sometimes (3) Rarely (4) Never (5)

Table 4: Set 3: Participatory Channels

#### *Explanation of Set 3: Participatory Channels*

All questions in this set (10 to 18) were aimed at quantifying the form and extent of the participatory channels and their accompanying spaces of participation as set out in the conceptual model. While most aspects are resulting from the connection between the theoretical framework and are rather self-explanatory a number of questions need further elaboration. **Question 11** for example where the answer option “yes, more than one” was included, this was practiced since a number of fishermen (especially small-scale) are member in more than one association (VisNed, 2018). Since quota shares are easier to obtain when one holds a membership in one of the larger fishing associations (VisNed or Nederlandse Vissersbond) some fishermen are member in those for getting their quota share while also being member in a small-scale fishing association to achieve better representation of their interest. Membership in more than one organisation would thus indicate a higher level of political activity as extra effort is taken to have one’s specific interest represented. **Question 12**, asking for the main motivation behind the membership was included to measure whether the membership is mainly for quota and practical aspects like networking or others, or if political representation is the main driver. **Question 14** was designed to investigate the extent of the membership however also including the formulation “would like to” since only a certain amount of members can have an active function. But also the willingness to have an active function would indicate a higher extent of this form of participation and illustrate a higher involvement. **Question 15** aimed to quantify the individual direct participation within invited

spaces where the government provides opportunity for public comment and individual commentary. **Questions 16, 17 and 18** were used to quantify the use of claimed participatory channels as described in the theoretical framework. A distinction was handled between membership in interest groups and actual protest activity as membership does not necessarily need to be connected with protest action and since the individual could also visit and organise protests outside of interest groups.

**Set 4: Political Context**

Question Number	Function	Operationalisation	Question/Statement	Scale/answer scheme
19	Development of political activity over time	Present total political activity versus 15 years ago (before the introduction of MSP)	When I compare my political activity with 15 years ago I am now:	More active (1) Same (2) Less active (3)
20	Barriers to political activity	Factor that is perceived to limit political activity the most	Which factor limits your political activity the most?	Choice: None (1) Time (2) Money (3) Interest (4) Frustration (the feeling of not being able to have real influence) (5) Other: (own answer)
21	Influence of other sectoral issues on political activity  controlling for context	Degree in which other sectoral issues (discard ban, pulse discussion etc.) influence political activity	Next to MSP other topics (such as: discard ban, pulse discussion etc.) influence my political activity	5-point likert:  Strongly agree (1) Agree (2) Neutral (3) Disagree (4) Strongly disagree (5)
22	General satisfaction with (formal) participatory channels available	satisfaction with formal and state given participatory channels	I am satisfied with the options the government provides to take part in the MSP process	5-point likert:  Strongly agree (1) Agree (2) Neutral (3) Disagree (4) Strongly disagree (5)

23	Collaboration within fishing sector due to MSP implementation	Degree in which the implementation of MSP has influenced collaboration in the sector	The implementation of MSP has led to a better collaboration within the fishing sector	5-point likert: Strongly agree (1) Agree (2) Neutral (3) Disagree (4) Strongly disagree (5)
24	Categorization in sub-sectors	Part of the fleet or sub-sector which individual belongs to	Categorized roughly, which sort of fishery do you practice?	Choice: Demersal trawlers/Fish (1) Demersal trawlers/Shrimp (2) Pelagic (3) Small-scale fisheries (4) Other: (own answer)

Table 5: Set 4: Political Context

#### *Explanation of Set 4: Political Context*

Questions within set 4 were aimed at investigating the political context and control for other influences on power perception and participation. **Question 19** was included to quantify the development of the total political activity over time. Here, 15 years was chosen as timeframe as MSP was not yet implemented and even though sectoral regulation was present it can be considered less restrictive. Within this study the sectoral pressures/regulations of the Dutch fishing industry were often mentioned but could not be elaborated on unfortunately, however since MSP is part of a cumulative governance pressure it was important to investigate how other issues influence political activity. This was done through **question 21**.

**Question 20** was central for testing theoretical assumptions on the relationship between power asymmetry and participation; relating to the internalisation of powerlessness, power *within* and consequences of invisible power while also carrying practical value. **Question 22**, referring to satisfaction with the government given channels of participation, was also especially vital in a practical sense and since it referred to individual participation, and not to mediated forms of participation, it was important in order to determine whether there is an urge for more direct participation. **Question 23**, taking position towards the statement that the implementation of MSP led to a better collaboration within the sector was used since it could reveal information on self-organisation and on processes within the sector to increase

influence as well as on aspects of social identity. It would have been favourable to include questions that specifically focus on aspects of individualized social identity, due to the survey design which already contains questions that correspond to a time of 10 minutes for the completion of survey this was unfortunately not possible. **Question 24** was important to be able to divide the respondents into the sub-sectors, this was done on a rough basis as there was no scope, in the MSP context, to break the sector down into fleet-segments as handled by the EU. These are based on specific gears, ship length and engine size and are handled in an fisheries management context, not necessarily being applicable for this study.

### Set 5: Threat perception

Question Number	Function	Operationalisation	Question/Statement	Scale/answer scheme
25	Socio-economic and ecological threat perception	Degree in which MSP is perceived to threaten daily business (which is based on economic and ecological variables)	How would you rate the impact of MSP on your daily business?	5-point likert: Very positive (1) Positive (2) Neutral (3) Negative (4) Very negative (5)
26	Socio-cultural threat perception	Degree in which MSP is perceived to threaten socio-cultural aspects	How would you rate the impact of MSP on the culture and identity of fisheries?	5-point likert: Very positive (1) Positive (2) Neutral (3) Negative (4) Very negative (5)
27	End of survey, collecting qualitative data and/or feedback	Open question aimed at additional information	Thanks again for your time and your collaboration! Is there anything you want to add or to mention?	Textbox for written answer

Table 6: Set 5: Threat Perception

#### Explanation of Set 5: Threat Perception

Set 5 was designed to quantify the link between the participatory and power dimension of the MSP-power cube via threat perception and identity, as discussed in chapter 2.4. **Question 25** therefore aims to measure the risk that MSP holds for their daily work at sea. It was formulated in this way as it acts as a proxy for economic risk and ecological risk that is perceived, both influencing the daily business. **Question 26** asked for the impact of MSP on culture and identity, measuring the perceived socio-cultural threat perception. Quantifying threat perception was important since perceived power asymmetry alone might not be able to explain participation. For example, if the implications for daily life might be absent or not severe, non-participation or less political activity could be recorded, despite power asymmetry being perceived. **Question 27** was included to enable qualitative data collection and feedback as well as to give the respondents the feeling that their input is valued.

## *Distribution*

Distributing the survey and getting response was one of the main obstacles in this study. Fishermen are, due to the nature of their business, extremely difficult to reach. Next to that, there is a historically grown distrust within fishing communities towards filling in surveys that might, in the end, be used to support research that puts them at a disadvantage. Even though this attitude is changing at present it is still difficult to engage with the fishing community.

In order to distribute the survey an entry point into the community was needed. Mr. Koffemann and I therefore visited fisheries events in the fishing village of Urk in order to meet with the community and “prepare” the distribution of the survey by engaging with the community and introducing the research. By doing so support was gained within the community which helped in the subsequent distribution within online platforms. During the event several pilot interviews were done in a face-to-face setting in order to test the survey, to see whether the questions were well understood and to conduct additional qualitative interviews.

Receiving sufficient response on online-surveys in the fisheries sector is, as personal communication revealed, a difficult task (pers. com. Walker & Holierhoek, 2019), however an online-survey was the only viable option for this study as personal quantitative interviews were well beyond the scope and timeframe of the study and nearly impossible to conduct at large numbers in the given context. Fishermen work at sea during the whole week and the majority returns Friday evening, leaving only the weekend as a possible option for personal interviews.

Distribution took place via a range of online and social media resources (see table 7). Contact with experts showed that all relevant organisations were included (pers. com. Walker, 2019). These organisations were contacted via Twitter, Facebook, email and Whatsapp groups. Twitter has been identified as the most effective medium to reach the fishing community due to their high activity on this platform. Preparing the distribution or getting people and organisations to participate in the distribution was done via telephone, email and personal contact. It has to be noted that especially VisNed was open and collaborative, “re-tweeted” the posts on twitter on a regular basis and even published the survey within their official newsletter (see Appendix II). Also, EMK proved to be helpful and frequently “re-tweeted” and shared the posts that were asking for the participation of fishermen.

<b>Contact/Organisation:</b>	<b>Sub-sector:</b>	<b>Method:</b>	<b>Status:</b>
P. Visser (CEO)/ <b>VisNed</b>	All (mainly dem. Trawlers)	Mail, Phone	distributed survey via mail, facebook and twitter
Secretary/ <b>Nederlandse Vissersbond</b>	All (mainly dem. Trawlers)	Mail, Phone	distributed survey via mail and via official newsletter (see Appendix II)
A. Heinen/ <b>NetVISwerk</b>	Small-scale fisheries	Mail	distributed survey via mail
J. Vegter/ <b>Stichting Geïntegreerde Visserij</b>	Small-scale fisheries	Mail, Phone	Forwarded to A. Heinen
M. Pastoors/ <b>Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association</b>	Pelagic fisheries	Mail	distributed survey via mail
<b>Eendracht Maakt Kracht</b>	All (mainly dem. Trawlers)	Mail, meeting	distributed survey via facebook and twitter, whatsapp
<b>Traditionele Visserij IJmuiden</b>	Small-scale fisheries	Facebook, mail	No response
B. Holierhoek/ <b>Ons Belang, Hulp in Nood</b>	Shrimp fisheries	Mail, phone	distributed survey via mail, personal contacts and twitter
W. de Waal/ <b>LIFE (Low Impact Fishermen of Europe), Dutch part</b>	Small-scale fisheries	Mail	distributed survey via mail
K. Koffemann/ <b>Pensi pri solvo Consultancy</b>	All	Mail, phone, meeting	distributed survey via mail, facebook and twitter
<b>Goede Vissers</b>	Small-scale fisheries	Phone, mail	No response

Table 7: Organisations contacted for distribution of the quantitative survey

### 3.2.2 Qualitative Data

This chapter elaborates on the qualitative data collection which took place in the form of literature and social media review as well as informal conversational interviews.

#### ***Literature Review***

The literature review was carried out to develop a theoretical understanding of the, derive at a method that fitted the purpose and to subsequently construct the theoretical framework. For the literature review google scholar was used as search engine.

Due to the different topics which this thesis is addressing a threefold investigation was necessary. First of all general keywords such as “power in social sciences“, “power asymmetry“, “power inequality“, “concept of power“, and “power and/in spatial planning“ were used to find literature on the concepts of power and their history.

Second, participation was investigated by general search terms such as: “participation“, “participatory governance“, “collaborative approach“ or “stakeholder engagement“.

After deriving at a thorough understanding of the basic concepts the specific context of MSP and fisheries was explored. This was done by search terms such as: “fisheries and MSP“, “power in fisheries“, “power in marine governance“, “fisheries management and power“. Search terms such as “Dutch” or “Netherlands” were included with each search in order to investigate the national context. However, studies on power in the marine governance context, be it MSP or fisheries, stated that the subject is understudied and that only little work has been done on this subject. Social science in marine governance, and especially in fisheries, is an understudied field and on an international scale, fisheries scientists are only beginning to increasingly engage with such topics (Jentoft, 2007; O’Driscoll-Adam, 2014). One of the reasons is that fisheries science has its roots in the biological and mathematical realm and has always been mainly concerned with the resource of fish as the main subject of research. With the increasing regulatory pressures on fisheries and the connected debates around tragedy of the commons and complex socio-ecological systems, part of the focus is shifted, and fisheries research begins to recognize the fishermen as an important subject of research. Based on the notion that not the fish stocks have to be managed but the people who interact with it.

Social fisheries research being such a small field of research “snowball” sampling techniques were used to explore the field. Additionally, secondary literature such as websites of relevant organisations or newspaper articles were used to get an impression on the present situation and to connect theoretical and subjects with the context. Other non-academic sources were also used in the manual social media review. For the distribution of the survey facebook and twitter accounts were set up and subsequently also used for investigation of the social media landscape. This was done by “liking/following” the relevant organisations or persons (table 7). Social media was an important source for qualitative data since the topic is of such present relevance to the community that related news were often posted that could not be accessed otherwise. The platforms were monitored daily during the whole research period. The data derived from social media was used in the same fashion as literature, there was no scope within this study to employ an automatic social media analysis which would have involved programming and access to background data of the platforms (enabling keyword analysis and posting statistics etc.).

### ***Informal Conversational Interviews***

Interviews were conducted on the “Urker Vis food festival” in the Dutch village of Urk on the 15th of June 2019. The interviews with the two fishermen lasted about 15-20 minutes each, including the time to fill in the survey and subsequent conversation. While they gave permission to publish the content of the interviews this study will not publish their names.

While the respondents filled in the survey by hand they elaborated on certain questions, adding a qualitative component. Within the qualitative interview classification by Gray (2009) the interviews conducted are part of the informal conversational interview regime. Especially since the interviewees were approached spontaneously and since one did not know in advance who to expect a open design was chosen and not a semi-structured interview which would have required a more formal approach. The informal conversational interviews continued five to ten minutes after the completion of the survey and touched on general fisheries related topics as well as on MSP, participation and fisheries. While being of a conversational nature the interviews were still a “controlled conversation“, meaning that it was openly asked for certain topics but it was essentially skewed towards the interest of the

interviewer (Gray, 2009). However, while occasionally controlling or redirecting the interviewee towards a certain topic I, as the researcher, adopted a neutral and rather passive position in the conversation to avoid excessive steering since it was important that the respondents were able to express their concerns freely and elaborate on the aspects that they deemed important.

In contrast to the short interviews with the fishermen the interview with Mr. Koffemann, being one of my contacts and entry point into the community, was not limited to a usual timeframe but lasted about 7 to 8 hours as we spent the day at the festival and at his place. Topics varied from fisheries in general, over MSP related pressures to background information on Dutch fisheries that are only available from industry insiders. The qualitative data that was noted by hand during the interviews was written out in summarized form directly afterwards. It was then used in this research to illustrate certain notions and to enrich the quantitative results putting them into perspective. Mr. Koffemann gave permission to use the content of the conversation as well as his positions and his quotes in this research.

While one might criticize the study for not audio-recording and not structuring the interviews with the respondents I can only emphasize the difficulty of getting into direct conversation with fishermen and the importance of conducting an ethically responsible interviewing technique in this context (Alshenqeeti, 2015). One has to keep in mind that the interviews were conducted following an informal introduction to the fishermen by Mr. Koffemann with the spontaneous request to fill in the survey and have a conversation. The circumstances were very informal and that I, as the researcher, was sitting at a table together with fishermen and their families on a highly valued Saturday afternoon. Interviews therefore took place on an uninvited and spontaneous basis, effectively disturbing a family outing. Drifting from an informal conversation into the setting of a formal interview with an additional list of questions to complete and a recording device would have been very insensitive and was therefore not practiced. Not only the informal setting and the spontaneous nature of the interviews inhibited formal technique but also technical aspects such as high background noise and loud music. Due to the practical and ethical aspects that ruled out an audio recording notes were taken during the interviews by hand. It also has to be kept in mind that within an informal conversational interview the likelihood that true concerns and actual “unmediated” opinions are voiced is far greater compared to a highly formalized and structured interview (Gray, 2009)

### ***Qualitative data within online-survey***

As mentioned in the quantitative data collection chapter also the online-survey contained a qualitative component. It was included at the end of the survey and the nature of the question was deliberately held open, asking if the respondents had any additional commentary. This was done to meet a number of requirements. First of all to allow for qualitative input on the undoubtedly emotional subject, it was planned that the respondents would mention issues or elaborate on aspects that they perceived as most important and therefore a specific and steering question was avoided. Second, due to the “distance” and impersonal character of the online survey it was necessary to include a feedback mechanism that would allow the respondents to react on the survey in case they felt the survey was not fitting the subject or wanted to voice their opinion. The qualitative survey data was translated and transcribed.

### 3.3 Ethical concerns

The preceding chapter already touched on some aspects of ethical concern in connection with qualitative interviews. As mentioned earlier the relationship between fisheries and scientists, even though improving, has seen some strain in the last decennia. Therefore, it was especially important to assure the interviewees that no harm was intended and to inform them prior to the conversation about the purpose of the research. As Qu & Dumay (2011) suggested a balance has to be found between giving sufficient information to the interviewee to conform with ethical requirements but to not disclose too much information on the purpose of the study in order to receive un-biased answers. It was therefore chosen for a brief introduction to the purpose.

The names of the respondents that were approached for conversational interviews were also not published since they would not significantly contribute to the study (Qu & Dumay, 2011). For the interview with Mr. Koffemann however the name was included, after receiving his permission, as his role as an expert and the amount of data gathered during the 7-8 hours made it necessary to do so.

Another ethical concern that also affected the online-survey was language. As Jentoft & McCay (1995) argued language can act as a barrier to participation and can consequently also have effects in terms of methodology. They stated that: *“Scientists can speak with an aura of authority and objectivity, and their words tend to count more than those of others”* (Jentoft & McCay, 1995, p.240). While stemming from an fisheries management context and not from a methodological one, this quote illustrates the problem at hand. Conducting research within or around fisheries one has to be very sensitive to language and behavior and keep in mind that one is entering a field which is, given the relationship between science and fisheries, not among the easiest to conduct research in and thus needs an ethically aware approach (Kaplan & McCay, 2004). Consequently, a neutral and rather passive attitude was taken during all interviews in order to not interfere with the respondent’s answers or values. Similar to the approach taken within “participant-as-observer” techniques behavior, attitude and language during the interviews were kept as neutral as possible and it was aimed for an equal relationship with all respondents. This means that, as in research towards local ecological knowledge, the fishermen were essentially treated as experts that were consulted rather than as respondents. It was essential to keep the interviews informal and, while steering minimally, also allow deviation from the main subject. This was practiced for respondent satisfaction as well as since the research purpose allowed or even required to do so. It has to be kept in mind that the qualitative interviews were conducted to give an in-depth perspective of the issues and to enrich the quantitative data. It was not aimed for arriving at objective truth but rather at understanding the subjective reality in which aspects such as power asymmetry are embedded.

Language was also a main concern for the online-survey as a balance had to be found between asking precise and nuanced questions and between respondent comprehension. It was thus important to translate terms used in scientific and political context into questions that could measure them without requiring prior experience with the topic.

## 3.4 Data analysis

This chapter provides an overview on the methods that were used to analyse the data collected within survey and interviews.

### 3.4.1 Quantitative Analysis

#### **Sample size**

To calculate the sample size needed for the quantitative survey the formula below was handled (Georgii, 2004).

$$n = \frac{\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + (z^2 \times \frac{p(1-p)}{e^2 N})}$$

- $N$  represents the whole population, oriented on individuals employed full-time in Dutch fisheries, thus set at 1773 (EMFF, 2019).
- The margin of error ( $e$ ) was defined at 10% commonly used within quantitative studies in spatial and social sciences (Kalton, 2007)
- For the confidence level 95% was chosen as a widely accepted threshold translating to a z-value of 1.96.
- $p$ , as the sample proportion was set at 50% given the exploratory character of the study (Georgii, 2004).

Including these values in the formula above corresponds to a needed sample size of 91 respondents. However, since only 53 respondents were reached the quantitative results cannot be considered significant for the whole population.

### **Power score**

The differences in perceived influence of the fisheries sector versus perceived influence of other sectors, based on the definition by Dahl (2007), were used to visualize possible perceived power asymmetry. To calculate the individual perception of differences within visible, hidden and combined power the following equations were used:

$$P_v = I_{O1} - I_{F1}$$

$$P_h = I_{O2} - I_{F2}$$

$$P_c = P_v + P_h$$

Where  $P_v$  is the perceived visible power score, generated by the subtraction of  $I_{F1}$ , the perceived influence the fishing sector (Question 1) from  $I_{O1}$ , the perceived influence of other sectors on rules & regulations (Question 2) within the MSP process.

$P_h$ , the perceived hidden power score is here defined as the difference between  $I_{O2}$ , the perceived influence of other sectors (Question 4) and of  $I_{F2}$ , the perceived influence of the fisheries sector (Question 3) on agenda & priority forming within MSP.

The resulting power scores are added up for each respondent to generate a combined individual power asymmetry score  $P_c$ . This means that rather than adding up the counts of each category an individual score was employed. The combined power score was used since, as indicated in chapter 2.3, visible and hidden power can be seen as interrelated, in a social context thus contributing to the total power asymmetry that is perceived. For invisible power such an incorporation was not practiced due to the different measuring scheme that was employed.

## ***Statistics***

The descriptive statistics, data manipulation and analysis were conducted with Rstudio. Here, the tidyverse packages, the dplyr package for descriptive statistics and corrr package for computing the correlation coefficient were used. All graphs were plotted with the ggplot2 package.

Due to the categorized answers in the survey, data was analysed with methods for ordinal and discrete variables. Therefore, only means and standard deviation was reported and skewness, kurtosis and variance were not included. Despite the academic community being divided over the meaningfulness of using means for ordinal data they were used in this study as a measure of central tendency. While acknowledging their little explanatory power and not overstating their importance, mean and standard deviation were used to detect larger differences which were subsequently investigated (Marcus-Roberts & Roberts, 1987). The sub-sector defined as “other” yielded only 2 respondents and was therefore excluded from sub-sector analysis.

In order to identify the assumption of non-normal distribution and determine further methods to be used, the normality was tested using the Shapiro Wilk normality test. Since data was seen to require non-parametric tests a correlation matrix using spearman’s rho was created. A relationship was categorized as positive correlation with a rho of  $\geq 0.3$  and negatively correlated with rho  $\leq -0.3$ . Values between -0.3 and 0.3 were not considered to indicate meaningful correlations. If variables correlated following the matrix and were logical in the given context, another correlation test following spearman’s rho was conducted. Only correlations with a p-value of  $\leq 0.05$  were considered significant and taken into account.

### 3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

Due to the supporting nature of the interviews in this study, the low number of interviewees and the lacking comparability, coding or similar analysis techniques could not be employed. Therefore, a thematic analysis was conducted that focussed on the narrative as a whole and structured it into themes. Considering the qualitative data as a narrative was practiced since the interviews dealt with community perceptions and subjective personal experiences of the interviewees. In deriving at the themes an inductive approach was employed meaning that the assigning of themes was strongly oriented on the data (Clark & Braun, 2014). This approach, besides the low number and different nature of the interviews, explains why little overlap in the themes was observed. For the qualitative part of the survey no thematic analysis was possible due to the brief nature of contributions. However, quotes and phrases, outlining essential elements of the interview were used from both sources of qualitative data to illustrate and support the specific notions throughout the analysis.

## 4. Results & Discussion

This chapter presents the results of this study and analyses them within themes based on the sets of questions introduced in chapter 3.2. In order to be able to incorporate the qualitative data and to indicate interactions and relationships the rigid structure of these sets is lifted. The main themes of this study are addressed in the following order: power asymmetry, participatory pathways and threat, diversity & identity as linking features.

In terms of structure this means that rather than chronologically following the pathway between power asymmetry and participation, which was established in the MSP-Powercube, the two opposing dimensions featured in the original powercube (power and participatory dimension) are focussed on before addressing the contextualized elements which this study added to the concept. However, before these central themes of this study can be addressed an overview of the collected data has to be presented.

The quantitative component of this study managed to receive 53 respondents, of which eight made qualitative contributions via the commentary question. Three unstructured conversational interviews were additionally conducted, also flowing into the analysis. The raw results of the survey can be found in Appendix III, the transcribed/summarized and translated qualitative results in Appendix IV. When referring to quantitative results the question number is indicated in brackets at the end of the sentence.

Of the 53 respondents 57% were associated with demersal trawlers targeting fish, referred to as Trawlers/Fish, 23% were part of shrimp fisheries, referred to as Trawlers/Shrimp, while small-scale fisheries accounted for 11% (Q. 24). From the sector of large pelagics as well as from sectors identified as “other”, 6% and 4% respectively, participated in the online-survey (Q. 24). The distribution of the participants in figure 6 is not entirely surprising as demersal trawl fishermen targeting fish are the largest group within Netherlands, followed by trawlers targeting shrimp. In 2017 the Dutch fleet included 286 cutters (shrimp and fish roughly 50% each), eight large pelagic vessels and 225 small-scale vessels (of which a high percentage is listed as inactive) (Mol, 2018).

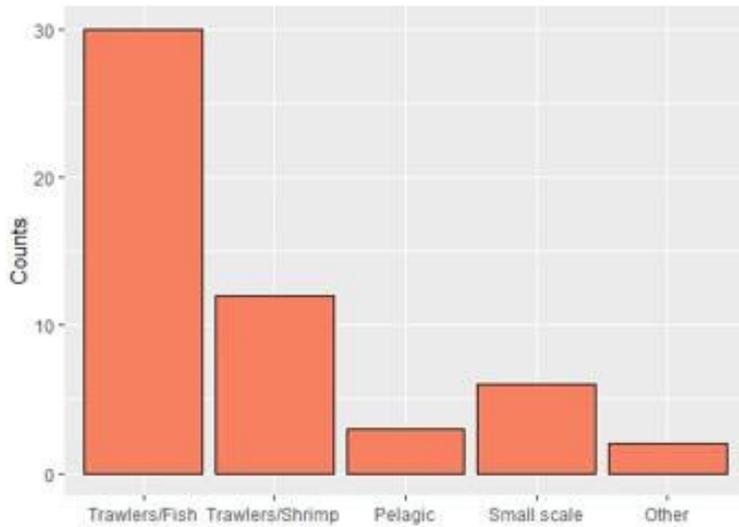


Figure 6: Distribution of respondents within online-survey (Q. 24)

The main reason for the high participation of respondents associated with Trawlers/Fish (relative to shrimp) can be found in the fact that these vessels usually carry more individuals, translating to a larger fishing population that is associated with Trawlers/Fish, as well as by their strong representation in fishing associations over which a lot of the response was derived in this study. The low response of the pelagic sector is likely to be attributed to practical methodological reasons of difficult “accessibility” and possibly also to a lack of interest in the issue, a notion which is addressed later on in this chapter and requires a preceding discussion of power asymmetry and participatory pathways.

## 4.1 Power Asymmetry

The power score which was introduced in this study to visualize power asymmetries shows that 36% of the respondents perceived a very high asymmetry (8 or 7 of 8 total) in both dimensions while 32% perceived a high asymmetry (6 or 5 of 8 total) and 21% a medium asymmetry (4 or 3 of 8 total) (Q. 1,2,3,4). To put it differently and show the perceived “severity” of the situation from the fisheries perspective: 96% of the respondents felt (in different magnitudes) that the influence of fisheries on agenda as well as on legislation within MSP was inferior to the influence of other sectors. Figure 7 visualizes this high perceived power asymmetry. It is important to reiterate that this result addresses perceived power asymmetry and does not aim at quantifying actual power dynamics.

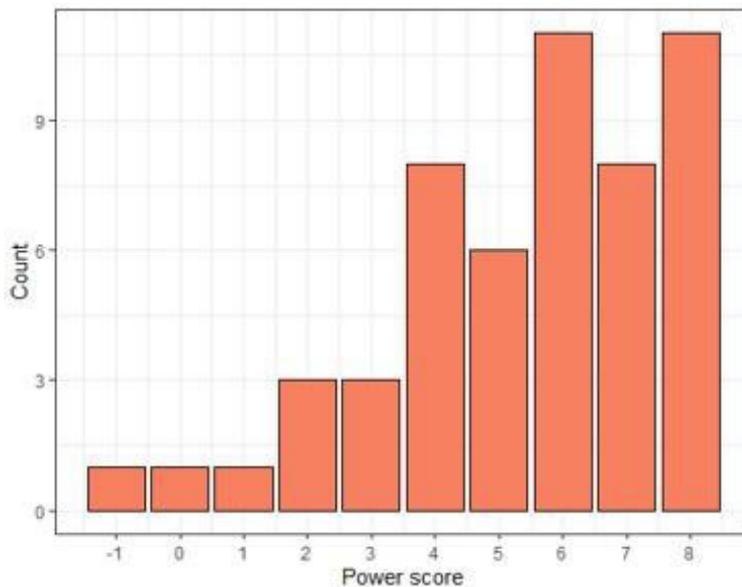


Figure 7: Combined power score (visible & hidden), the higher the score the higher the perceived asymmetry

Be that as it may, qualitative results as well as literature do clearly show that the concern of the fishing sector observed in this study is not unjustified, stemming purely from emotion and from a reluctance to share the sea with others. It becomes more and more evident with MSP procedures being implemented worldwide that fisheries do have a difficult position in the MSP context in terms of power, that the nature of fisheries is difficult to integrate in static plans and that fisheries do, depending on implementation, encounter serious risks while being faced with difficult to encounter power dynamics (Janßen et al., 2018; Jentoft & Knol, 2014). Cohen et al. (2019) compare the present global efforts to privatize and develop marine space for the sake of the Blue Economy to historic colonization efforts and among critics MSP has long been

identified as a method to satisfy the spatial demand of this new economic frontier (Brent et al., 2018; Flannery et al., 2018). Kidd and Ellis (2012) stated that there is a political dimension to MSP at different scales which is largely hidden and show that MSP is, in the same way as terrestrial spatial planning, very susceptible to the intransparent and complex effects of power. This notion illustrates the strong relationship between visible and hidden power in MSP practice that is mentioned in theoretical contributions (Gaventa, 2006). The results of the survey show a significant correlation between perceived visible and perceived hidden power asymmetry ( $\rho= 0.358$ ,  $p= 0.008$ ). However, since the developed power score is a measure of perception it can only point towards a connection between these two types of power.

The qualitative data collected as well as the quantitative results do show that the high perceived power asymmetry rests mostly on the wind energy sector (72% voted on Nr. 1 position) as well as on nature protection initiatives (15% on Nr. 1 and 58% on Nr.2) (Q. 8).

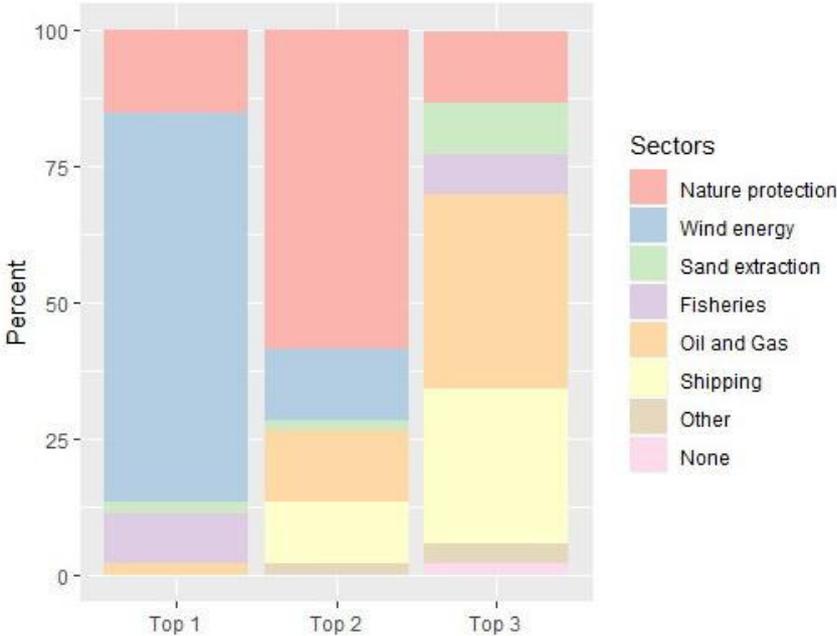


Figure 8: "Top 3" ranking of the sectors perceived to have the highest total influence on Dutch MSP (Q. 8)

The distribution seen in figure 8 is not surprising as respondent 6, media as well as international academic literature indicated wind energy to be the main interest clashing with fisheries. Interesting to note is that fisherman 1 (qualitative interview) saw this conflict between wind energy and fisheries, along with other aspects, to be the same in the UK. Literature shows that in other EU countries as well as in the United States the main conflicting spatial interests in the marine realm concerned fisheries, wind energy and nature protection

often with fisheries perceiving and stating to claim the weakest position and being marginalized by powerful and politically backed interests (Flannery et al., 2018; Johnson & Rodmell, 2009; Brent et al., 2018). Respondent 30 perceived wind energy as backed by climate goals and nature protection always receiving very high media attention supporting their goals, also contributing to the explanation of figure 8.

Wind energy and nature protection are, as respondent 7 stated, not entirely disconnected since wind energy developments require spatial compensation. Other nature protection regimes do exist that are independent from compensatory measures (e.g. Natura 2000) and it is likely that when talking about wind energy as number one sector in terms of influence the respondents also kept the twofold loss of space in mind that is connected to it. Within social media platforms an often voiced concern, that was also mentioned by respondent 7, is that the two sectors are, in terms of power dynamics, highly connected and that certain NGO's do "*turn a blind eye*" on the multitude of adverse ecological effects of offshore wind energy, since it is an industry which they supported and advocated for since years. Respondent 47 additionally perceived that the adverse ecological effects of wind farms are largely ignored by national research institutes since there would be little interest and funding available to investigate these.

The above discussed relates to the perception of visible and hidden power and therefore the total influence of maritime sector on legislation and agenda forming in general. In terms of the most abstract form of power, invisible power, which is related to the individual basis for participation and the overall position of fisheries within society, also perceived asymmetry was identified. With 17% of the respondents seeing a very low influence of the sector on the image of fisheries in society and 34% seeing a low influence it seems as if the sector feels that they do only have a rather small impact on their own image within society (Q. 5). However, compared to visible and hidden power there is a more nuanced picture with 36% of the respondents perceiving a medium influence of the sector on its own image while in terms of influence on regulation only 17% indicated to perceive a medium influence and on agenda setting only 13% respectively (Q. 5,1,3).

The relative influence on its societal image for the whole sector, together with the fact that 43% perceived nature protection NGO's to inhibit this influence the most and 28% perceiving a lack of interest by society as the main limitation, shows that one can speak of a high perceived asymmetry in terms of invisible power as well, especially since 83% of the fishermen felt that society does not have a justified and correct image of the sector (Q. 6,7).

Contrary to the low positive influence which the sector seems to perceive in terms of societal image, respondent 30 claimed that the sector underestimates its own negative impact on the perception within society. However, stereotyping and negative societal attitudes towards fisheries are also reflected in the qualitative data collected by this study and in current developments in the sector that aim at encountering framing as well as outdated and misleading facts present in popular culture and education (EMK, 2019). Invisible power perception is thus highly present in the fishing industry and as mentioned by fishermen 1 (qualitative interview) not only in the Netherlands but also in the UK and most likely in a lot of other international cases. Also Mr. Koffemann touched on the unsustainable heritage of fisheries and how it still impacts the public image of the sector together with international media and NGO's but also mentioned the fact that while the fishing sector has begun to engage with society to educate and encounter the entrenched views more could be done to do so.

Generally speaking, there is a feeling present within fishing communities that society does not have a positive attitude towards them and does not understand and value their work, this notion is described by a marine scientist from the UK in a short text that has found appeal within the Dutch fishing community (translated and published on websites and social media) (F4F, 2019). Because it exclusively deals with aspects of invisible and hidden power it was included in Appendix V. It provides a good overview of how some fishermen perceive their position in society and illustrates briefly why one can speak of strong social boundaries in a social identity context, also contributing to the explanation of the very high percentage (83%) of respondents which perceived an unjust and incorrect societal image of their sector (Q. 7). One might argue that the negative image which seems to prevail in society is justified as especially demersal trawl fisheries are connected to a long list of externalities that span from discard issues to bottom disturbance.

However, from a (trawl) fishermen's perspective it does not seem so and there is reason to believe that the effort reduction of the recent years and the activities of the sector to innovate, improve and rid itself of its undoubtedly unsustainable heritage are not yet able to superimpose prevailing societal attitudes and entrenched stereotypes.

Total perceived power asymmetry being a subjective, complex and quite heterogenous mix of the various perceptions of all types of power, can best be described as a feeling, an opinion or a certainty that was found by this study to be very present in the context of fisheries and MSP in the Netherlands. The next chapter wants to focus on the effects of this high perceived asymmetry on participation by discussing the results of the participatory component of this study.

## 4.2 Participatory Pathways

Beginning with the general perceptions towards the MSP process in the Dutch context this study identified an exceptionally high dissatisfaction with the process from the fisheries perspective, with 91% of the respondents stating that they do not perceive MSP as an equal process that features all sectors in the same way (Q. 9). Given the high perceived power asymmetry this result is, even though quite extreme, not surprising. The already discussed rationality backing MSP and its power-insensitive approach lead to essentially skewed participatory processes. Symptoms unique to such post-political approaches are also found in Dutch newspapers, indicating that MSP in the Netherlands is not immune to the critique the approach receives on international scale. Here, fisheries representatives claimed that after negotiations the outcome was communicated to the public as having been produced in collaboration with the fishing sector while there was actually no real influence or collaboration present (Naaraat, 2018). This notion as well as the high dissatisfaction with the process itself are also illustrated by 81% of the respondents which are either highly unsatisfied or unsatisfied with the options that they are given by the government to take part in the planning process (Q. 22).

These options provided by the government can be considered as invited spaces, be it in direct or mediated form. In terms of mediated invited spaces the survey showed that 79% of the respondents are organised in fishing associations with the main motivation to do so being interest representation with 64% (Q. 11, 12). It is important to consider here that the high percentage is not directly connected to MSP-related pressures and that MSP is merely one of the topics being addressed by associations. 75% of the respondents stated that they would participate in events and discussions within the organisation regularly (64%) or very regularly (11%), from a theoretical perspective taking part in the translation of individual interest to a mediated form of their collective interest that could be communicated via the representatives (Q. 13).

However, the nature of fishing with fishermen usually being at sea for longer periods poses serious challenges to all forms of political activity and a lack of time was with 58% seen as the main inhibitor to political activity in general (Q. 20). That was also reflected in qualitative data as for example fisherman 1 stated that time was the main inhibitor and that even the discussions and meetings of the fishing associations usually take place on Tuesdays, making it impossible for him to participate. It is therefore likely that the percentage of fishermen contributing to the collective interest that representatives can put forward within invited spaces would be significantly higher if it was not for their time at sea. This could also explain why 47% of the respondents did not indicate to have an active function within the fishing associations they were part of and also did not have interest in such a position (Q. 14). Still, 43% of the respondents stated that they either occupied an active function or would have interest to do so which indicates a comparably high interest in representation in itself (Q. 14).

Seen time as a central inhibiting factor to political activity and looking at the participatory process within MSP from a fisherman's perspective it becomes clear that the invited spaces (direct as well as mediated) such as stakeholder meetings, workshops and discussions can be considered closed spaces for many fishermen. Besides contributing to the internal focus of fishing associations by taking part in meetings or occupying an active role there is only little option for invited participation. However, there are options present for public commentary as a form of individual and direct invited participation.

Public commentary, that for example takes place via only resources such as the “Overlegorgaan Fysieke Leefomgeving”, was utilized by 55% of the respondents (Q. 15). Given the high interest which fishermen have in MSP, its consequences and the advertisements by the association to also participate in this public commentary the high percentage is not surprising. On the other hand, it is difficult to estimate why 45% of the respondents did not participate in these initiatives (Q. 15). Practical reasons such as not being informed, forgetting about it or lacking the time are all realistic but one should, especially seen the high dissatisfaction and the high perceived power asymmetry, also think of frustration and a lack of expected influence. As Flannery et al. (2018) described, it can be very difficult for MSP processes to address stakeholders in such engagement initiatives when it becomes evident that the process is of top-down nature and only provides little chance for actual influence.

Overall, these results already indicate that alternative ways have to be found to structure invited spaces in MSP decision-making in a way that navigates challenges such as a lack of time and accommodates and values the input of individual fishermen rather than, as Johnson & Rodmell (2009, p.2) put it, serve as a “*last-minute box ticking exercise*”. Next to these direct and mediated invited pathways other options for influence exist within the bigger picture of political participation that are however less directly connected to MSP.

Closed spaces, which can in a formal way only be influenced through the choice of political representatives via elections at national and European level, are such a less direct way of participation. The degree in which topics such as MSP impact voting behavior can serve to illustrate the high status the topic has on the agenda of the communities. With 81% Most respondents claimed that MSP-related topics had an influence (or a high influence) on their voting behavior (Q. 10). This not only indicates the urge for influencing MSP decision-making, but it also serves as an indicator for the importance which the topic has for the community. Impacts on fisheries can have implications for land-based employment in the maritime and processing industry as well, which is often based in the same area. Mr. Koffemann estimated that one job at sea translates to five or six land-based jobs, in the UK estimates are even higher with one job at sea translating to seven jobs on land (Johnson & Rodmell, 2009). The high status of the occupation or rather the deeply-rooted “*lifestyle of fishing*” within the communities has been mentioned by Mr. Koffemann as well as it is widely acknowledged in literature (Ross, 2013; Urquhart et al., 2013). Another interesting aspect to note in this context

is the, generally speaking, strong connection of fishing communities to Christianity which was illustrated by respondent 8. Especially the village of Urk, as the main home-port of the Dutch trawler fleet, is widely known throughout the Netherlands as the most religious village of the country. Undoubtedly also a major contributor to political views and formal political participation.

Next to formal ways of participation, closed spaces can also be affected by public pressure as a consequence of protests and other events which create societal support and are conceptualized in this study as claimed spaces. According to Mr. Koffemann the recent years saw an increase in political activity that would fall into the category of claimed spaces. The survey suggests that this development can be attributed to the high perceived power asymmetry, and Mr. Koffemann also mentioned the fact that fishermen felt that the representatives of the fishing associations did not represent the sectors interest “hard” enough. Meaning that the development of own organisations and essentially self-organisation can, to a certain extent, be seen as a notion of distrust against the established associations. However, the representatives of the fishing associations can most likely not be accused of showing a lack of dedication to represent the sectors interest but for the individual fishermen it might have appeared so as the results of the MSP process were perceived to be negative. It is very likely that the participation of representatives simply ran against the power dynamics that are present in such government-led spaces and that they did everything in their power to argue for the sector, however with limited results. Being bound to formal ways of participation obviously puts constraints on the political playing field and as Mr. Koffemann argued interest groups that are stemming from civil engagement rather than institutionalized associations have a wider choice of “*political tools*” available.

Memberships in such interest groups, counting towards claimed channels, were utilized by 32% of the respondents (Q. 16). EMK, as one of the examples for such organisations, has seen an immense growth in recent years and claims that 75% of the Dutch and Belgian fleet are part of their organisation (EMK, 2019). Working together with longstanding institutions such as VisNed they focus on three main aspects: the CFP, closed areas and wind energy (EMK, 2019). By organising protests and petitions as well as being present on events and conducting educational projects they are highly active in promoting the sector and in creating societal support. The high percentage of the Dutch and Belgian fleet that is part of the organisation

supports the idea of a lacking performance of invited channels and indicates the perceived need to influence the status quo via unconventional means. It illustrates an effort to, in Gaventa's terms, link across levels and spaces of the powercube to situate activity where it is expected to have the highest influence (Gaventa & Martorano, 2016).

It is interesting to note that protests, in most cases organised by such groups, were utilized by 55% of the respondents (Q. 17). This means that fishermen who were not part of a civic interest group did also take part in protests. The fact that 55% of the respondents participated in protests is undoubtedly a high proportion. Compared to virtually any other occupation this percentage is extraordinarily high. It means that while 58% of the fishermen saw time as the main constraint to political activity, still 55% participated in protests (Q. 20, 17). This allows for conclusions on the willingness to protest which is consequently significantly higher than 55%.

Another form of political activity which is to be seen as less time intensive than protests or other events is the use of social media. 47 % of the respondents stated that they either utilized social media often or very often to voice concerns about MSP while 28% claimed that they occasionally used social media for this purpose (Q. 18). However, also 24% of the respondents indicated that they would never or rarely use social media to voice their concerns over MSP (Q. 18). Yet this percentage is probably higher in the whole population as distribution via online channels most definitely leads to an oversampling of younger, digitally literate and politically active individuals (Couper, 2000). While applying to the whole study it is especially important to note at this point as it puts the quantitative findings of protest and social media activity into perspective. Still, social media, general news and qualitative results indicate a high activity in terms of claimed channels and illustrate the shift towards unconventional methods of participation. An important aspect to note here is the role of social media in the light of resistance and harnessing power *with* and power *to*. In an increasingly digitalized world social media plays a key role in communication, networking and in forming and organising oppositional power (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013).

While it is questionable whether a high utilization of claimed channels can serve as sole argument to claim a positive relationship between power asymmetry and participation the fact that 64% of the fishermen stated that their total political activity increased within the last

15 years contributes to point towards a relationship (Q. 19). The importance of the fact that 64% of the respondents stated to be more active is underpinned by 34% of the respondents that claimed their political activity to be the same than 15 years ago (Q. 19). Only one of the 53 respondents indicated to be less active (Q. 19). When tested for correlation a significant relationship was found between the change in political activity and the combined power score that included visible and hidden power ( $\rho = 0.312$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ). This means that a higher perceived (visible & hidden) power asymmetry translates to an individual increase in political activity.

It has to be kept in mind that, while significant for the respondents of this study, it cannot be considered significant for the whole fishing population of the Netherlands which would have required at least 91 respondents. Moreover, the bias of online sampling as discussed above, also applies here. With trends as clear as in this survey it is however to be expected that with a larger sample, correlations significant for the whole population would emerge. Looking at the identified relationship it is also vital to reiterate that MSP is a pressure that is embedded in the wider context of marine governance and can therefore not be conceptualized as the only reason leading to higher political activity.

84% stated that sectoral aspects, next to MSP, have a big or very big impact on their political activity (Q. 21). While sectoral regulations and challenges are institutionally independent from MSP, they all seem to accumulate from a fishermen's perspective as for example outlined by fisherman 1 in the qualitative interviews. Topics pointing towards interrelatedness of the multiple pressures were for example "*piles of regulation*", economic path dependency and a high economic uncertainty.

Interesting to note is that also in the realm of sectoral regulation and the fundamental transformation which the CFP caused, power asymmetry as well as a lacking influence paired with little utilization of fishermen's knowledge have been identified (Pita et al., 2012). While this study can unfortunately not elaborate on aspects such as the discard ban, Brexit or the moratorium on pulse fishing, one needs to take their impact on the investigated relationship into account and keep in mind that MSP is not embedded in a vacuum but in a complex social context.

The findings on the components of power and participation do have implications for the theoretical debate around their relationship. The effect of power asymmetry on participation, which has in literature mostly been addressed with a focus on economic inequality, sees two contrasting hypotheses. The first, arguing that economic inequalities translate to uneven participation in politics and unequal involvement in decision-making processes, resulting in a sense of powerlessness that is causing a retreat from politics and non-participation (Verba et al., 2002). The contrasting argument stating that inequality after, in line with the first argument, leading to a lacking participation in general, actually leads to anger and a subsequent rejection via resistance (Runciman, 1980). Meaning that there would be a shift away from formal participatory channels towards alternative channels such as protests in order to counterbalance the asymmetry present (Filetti, 2016).

These notions, relating to the effects of what was described as the internalisation of powerlessness (Gaventa, 2005) within invisible power, are however context-dependent and this study identifies elements of both arguments. The internalisation of powerlessness is illustrated by 34% of the respondents stating that the feeling of not being able to change the *status quo* is the main inhibitor to their political activity (Q. 20). However, since 64% of the respondents indicated to be more active than 15 years ago and since a dissatisfaction with formal channels, a strong perception of invisible power and a very high willingness to protest is also present there is reason to believe that power asymmetry, in this case, led to an increased level of participation that especially manifested within claimed spaces (Q. 19). This illustrates that both aspects can be present, an internalisation of powerlessness that does however not prevent the formation of resistance.

### 4.3 Threat, Diversity & Identity

The preceding chapters identified a relationship between high perceived power asymmetry and an increased political activity paired with a shift towards claimed channels of participation, that is however also influenced by a complex mix of sectoral pressures. The question why a high perceived power asymmetry translates to high political activity must be explored via the concepts of threat, diversity and identity as linking features.

The high influence fishing, and a lacking influence on MSP decision-making, has on political activity in total can be explained by the high threat that is perceived by the sector in socio-economic/ecological as well as in socio-cultural terms. 43% of the respondents perceived MSP as having very negative consequences for their work (socio-economic/ecological), 45% perceived negative consequences and 7% a neutral effect (Q. 25). The high perceived threat in ecological and economic terms was also reflected in the qualitative data, mentioned by respondent 7 who emphasized on negative ecological effects and by respondent 47, who specifically mentioned his experience with adverse effects on fish stocks.

For the culture and identity of fisheries 24% perceived a very negative consequence and 55% perceived a negative consequence, 19% stating to expect neutral consequences (Q. 26). While one can undoubtedly speak of a negative perception of MSP consequences, and therefore a high threat perception, it is interesting to note that the perceived impact on cultural terms was more mediated, while only 7% saw a neutral effect on economic and ecological aspects, 19% perceived neutral effects on culture and identity (Q. 25,26). The shift from very negative and negative to negative and neutral is also illustrated by figure 9.

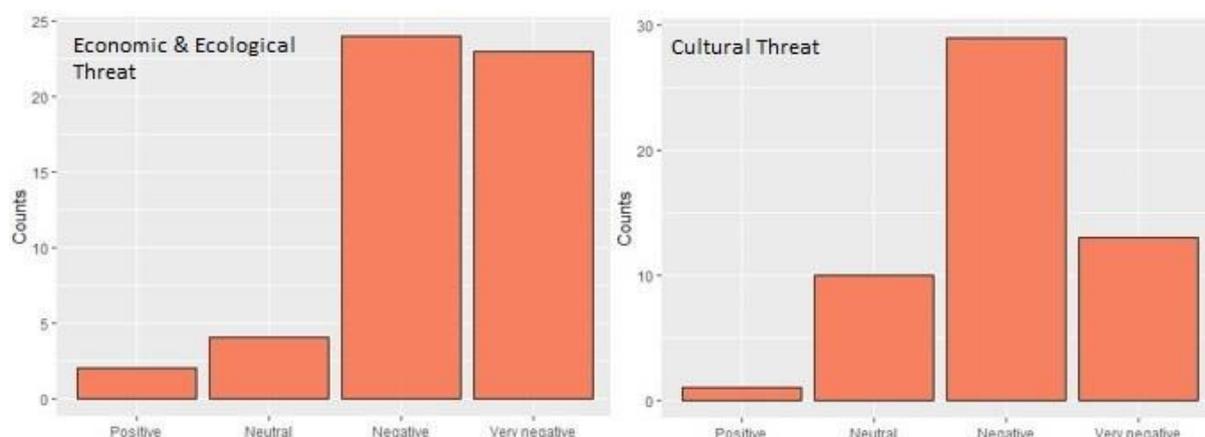


Figure 9: Threat Perception in economic & ecological (left) as well as cultural terms (right)

This could hint towards the high cultural resilience communities experience that are as traditionally grounded and tight-knit as western fishing communities (Ross, 2013; Urquhart et al., 2013). While the results in terms of threat perception on identity and culture are more tending towards a negative than very negative perception one can still speak of a high threat perception in socio-cultural terms. As elaborated on in chapter 2.4, this is most likely to be attributed to the importance the “*lifestyle of fishing*” has for the communities. Especially the fact that fishermen, as fisherman 2 and Mr. Koffemann pointed out, do adopt a long-term perspective on developments in the North Sea as they want their children to have the opportunity to continue the family business.

Studies within Dutch agricultural communities have found that a strong collective identity can enhance the willingness to protest, as a prerequisite to power *with*, and therefore the willingness to harness power *within* to utilize alternative channels of participation (Klandermans et al., 2002). The collective and cultural identity of fishing communities, often compared to agricultural ones, is without a doubt equal if not higher.

Threat perception paired with a strong identity might therefore be a key factor in the relationship between power asymmetry and participation in the given context. The presence or absence of a strong and deeply-rooted identity together with the exposure to severe and actual threats resulting from various forms of power asymmetry could consequently be considered a key turning point between acceptance of the status quo or resistance to it in a more general sense.

When talking about threat and cultural aspects it is vital to address the diversity within the Dutch fishing sector. This diversity is adding a lot of complex nuances to the relationship and is illustrated by the different sub-sectors and social identities that are present within the industry. While the analysis focussed, up to this point, on all respondents and their collective identity the following pages elaborate on the individualized identities of the sub-sectors and their importance for aspects of power asymmetry and participation. While differences among all sub-sectors are observable in the quantitative data (Appendix III) the strong variation in observations per sub-sector must be acknowledged (compare figure 6). This means that only differences that can point towards a connection to the context are presented and discussed in the following pages.

Demersal trawlers targeting fish or shrimp are a common sight in the Dutch, German and Belgian coastal and harbour areas. They could be seen as the “classic” representatives of the fishing sector in the public perception and within the survey their answers did not differ remarkably from each other in most cases. Exceptions are the participation in protests where the group belonging to trawlers targeting fish saw a higher protest activity (63%) than shrimp trawlers (41%) as well as the membership in interest groups were trawlers targeting fish also showed a higher activity (40%) than shrimp fishermen (25%) (Q. 17,16). This notion illustrates the connection between membership in interest groups and participation in protests but data quality is, as mentioned, not sufficient to speak of less political activity in the shrimp sector.

However, while in practice conflicts and differing identities, values etc. exist between these two sub-sectors this study has to focus on more general aspects and larger differences in order to outline the context. A comprehensive discussion of power, threat and identity from a sub-sectoral perspective can thus not be provided and the following pages are restricted to indicate the role of diversity based on the two “extremes” within the industry.

Generally speaking, the trawler fleet (shrimp as well as fish) can be considered the backbone of the Dutch fishing industry and can be conceptualized to form the middle of the spectrum of diversity. Large pelagic as well as small-scale fisheries can be seen as the two extremes of this spectrum, differing fundamentally in size, technology and operation radius but also in terms of power and participation.

Beginning with large pelagic fisheries, here, even though only three respondents participated in the study, answers differed remarkably on a number of important aspects. While also perceiving power asymmetry they all indicated that their political activity did not change within the last 15 years (Q. 19). Furthermore, they all indicated that they were not taking part in protests and only one of the three participants was part of a fishing association (Q. 17,11).

There are several reasons that can explain these contrasting results. The large pelagic fisheries are organised in a different way and most fishermen who take part in this fishery are not connected to small-businesses but rather work at larger companies. Ten of these companies (of which four are Dutch) have set up an EU-level association for political representation (PFA, 2019). Interest representation within large pelagics is thus not a task for the individual

fishermen but is accounted for by the companies. Contrasting to this notion is however the result that two of the three respondents indicated frustration to limit their political activity the most (Q. 20).

While two of the three fishermen also indicated a perceived threat of MSP in economic and ecological terms these threats might not translate into political action as severity and individual threat is not given in the same intensity (Q. 25). For the threat in terms of culture only one of the participants indicated a negative effect (Q. 26). They could consequently be considered as being less worried about the companies fate in terms of MSP. This is however also related to practical issues within the fisheries context and to the perception of space. Large pelagic fisheries do usually operate further offshore and target pelagic stocks in the Northern North Sea, North East Atlantic, off Mauretania and even in the Pacific Ocean (PFA, 2019). Being able to operate virtually anywhere on the world's oceans leads to less attachment to the direct coastal environment and to less vulnerable stakes in the MSP process.

While the former paragraph essentially dealt with fishermen using vessels that might exceed the 100m mark, the focus is shifted towards the other end of the spectrum, dealing with fishermen working aboard vessels often with a length below 12m. Fishermen belonging to this group accounted for 11% of the total response and did, while underrepresented in this study, also show differences that are important to discuss (Q. 24). Even though only six respondents took part in total, three made rather long qualitative contributions which indicates a high level of involvement and interest in the issue (see Appendix IV). In this study several remarkably differing results were stemming from respondents associated with this sub-sector.

Three of the six respondents perceived the fisheries sector to have the most influence on MSP in total and two six indicated that fisheries would have a very high influence on the MSP agenda (Q. 8, 3). This stems from the fact that the power asymmetry component of the survey was, in a methodological sense, not suited to measure what was coined as intra-sectoral power asymmetry. The respondents were most definitely not referring to "their" type of fishing having the most influence but pointing towards the high impact the "bigger" associations have from their perspective. The qualitative results of this sub-sector quite uniformly point towards an intense perception of intra-sectoral power asymmetry, adding to

the inter-sectoral power asymmetry. Respondent 44 stated that there is a very low influence on MSP from the small-scale sector and that (demersal trawl) fishing associations oppose or trivialize their interests. According to respondent 44 there is a “*one-sided lobby*” that is skewed towards the interest of trawl fisheries and there is very little recognition of interests and ideas that do not conform with the “*established class system*” of the fisheries sector. Respondent 45 stated that politicians and policymakers have a skewed picture of the situation due to the financially powerful lobby of the demersal trawl fisheries. While talking about perceptions, consequently containing a subjective dimension, literature strongly suggests the presence of intra-sectoral power asymmetries within fisheries and a marginalized position of small-scale sectors which has strong ties to economic dimensions of power (Jentoft, 2017; Cohen et al., 2019; Brent et al. 2018).

These aspects furthermore show that while trawl fishermen perceived themselves as being impacted by power asymmetry, small-scale fishermen in turn perceived them as very powerful, pointing towards the relative nature of power perception and its high context-dependency.

The qualitative results solidify the notion of intra-sectoral power asymmetry, illustrate the different social identities within the sector and show that, as Jentoft (2007) suggested, fisheries must not be seen as a stakeholder having only one collective interest. Diversity and differing identities are also supported by the fact that of all 53 respondents 45% perceived no effect of MSP on collaboration within the sector while 17 % agreed that MSP has led to a better collaboration, 30% disagreed and only 7% strongly disagreed (Q. 23). Of the four individuals strongly disagreeing with the statement, three were small-scale fishermen (Q. 23).

While the individual perceptions on collaboration, especially from the small-scale sector, might be influenced by “day to day” conflicts and differing interests, values and identities the situation looks differently from an institutional perspective. The threat that MSP poses to fisheries and the limited options within invited spaces have led to the collaboration of ten different fishing associations in the Netherlands which produced a shared vision on North Sea development that should serve to inform MSP decision-making (VisNed, 2018). This is a vital aspect and shows that, despite conflicts and sometimes differing interests, the associations which represent different sub-sectors identified that they will only be able to have an impact if they join forces and present one coherent vision.

The sector is thus harnessing power *with* to overcome participatory barriers despite differences. While illustrating positive aspects of collaboration, consensus forming as well as a strong collective identity in the face of outward threat this notion carries more weight, especially from a power-sensitive perspective. It indicates that Dutch MSP practice fails to acknowledge and value the diversity and complexity of fisheries and indirectly requires them, for participation within invited spaces, to act as a uniform stakeholder. Especially in the light of intra-sectoral power asymmetry and the “*one-sided lobby*” that was mentioned, it raises the question if such development is leading to an empowerment of the small-scale sector or to marginalization of their interest within invited channels (Jentoft & McCay, 1995).

Focussing on claimed spaces of participation, here, the shift towards unconventional channels that was seen for the whole sector was also identified for the small-scale fisheries. Protest action was utilized by five of the six respondents while the major inhibitor to political activity was frustration (four of six) (Q. 17,20). Interestingly they were also the only ones indicating money as a limiting factor and three of six indicated to have increased their political activity within the last 15 years (Q. 20, 19). Five of six individuals participating in protests and only three having increased their activity within the last 15 years also points towards a historically high political activity within the sector that could be explained by resistance to the intra-sectoral asymmetry (Q. 17, 19). These results can only hint towards increased participation since a solid argument cannot be developed due to the quantitative results only being based on six responses.

Qualitative data, secondary literature and documents by the organisation LIFE, do however all illustrate the relationship between a high perceived power asymmetry (intra- & inter-sectoral) that translates to a high threat perception and consequently to a utilization of unconventional channels of participation (Rucinski, 2019; Hakkenes, 2018). The LIFE platform has the aim to: „[...] *provide a clear and coherent voice at EU level for the previously mainly silent majority of European (small-scale) fishers [...], (which) have historically lacked effective representation [...].*“ (LIFE, 2015). The mission statement of the LIFE platform illustrates the upward shift of resistance in terms of the powercube (Gaventa & Martorano, 2016). It furthermore shows the shift from a claimed space towards an invited space, as it started out as a community action of active fishermen and has developed into an established organisation.

While not small-scale fishermen, EMK sees a similar development. Members have announced that they, as active fishermen, were for the first time able to take part in strategic discussions concerning the future of fisheries on European level (EMK, 2019b). While not solely concerning MSP processes this illustrates the blurred boundaries of the powercube model and shows that spaces which started out in the realm of claimed spaces can transform towards invited spaces as they grow, increase their influence and consequently are institutionalized. Essentially moving from self-organised, and thus claimed action, towards organisations that are addressed within invited spaces.

Finally, it seems as if the high collective political activity of the fishing sector has seen effects. Respondent 30 for example stated that while fisheries were not properly considered in terms of MSP-priorities they are increasingly listened to and incorporated since a few months. While it is impossible to point towards the direct relationship between certain channels and an perception of increased influence, the recent shift of claimed channels towards invited channels is likely to play a role. Even though on a smaller societal scale, claimed spaces such as EMK or LIFE show signs of departing on their evolution through what Christiansen (2009) termed the “four stages of social movements”. This shift is undoubtedly a notion of empowerment and a positive development. In terrestrial planning Boonstra & Boelens (2011) described that planning can only overcome participatory challenges when government-led spaces open up and allow for the inclusion of self-organised spaces. As a final consideration it is however vital to, while acknowledging the political success, consider the risks which such evolution carries such as the loss of “*political tools*” associated with claimed and unconventional spaces and the loss of their transformative potential when incorporated in established political spaces.

## 5. Conclusion

The central aim of this study was to investigate how power dynamics operate in the MSP context and how this, via perceived power asymmetry, translates to individual participation. Based on quantitative and qualitative data this study can state that there is a high perceived power asymmetry present in the context of fisheries and MSP which spans over visible, hidden and invisible dimensions of power. There is evidence that this perception is not to be considered unjustified and stemming purely from emotion. However, it was found that the high perceived power asymmetry has, paired with sectoral pressures, led to an increased political activity within the Dutch fishing sector. Together with an intense threat perception in economic, ecological and cultural terms and a dissatisfaction with invited participatory pathways political participation especially manifested within unconventional channels such as protests.

The shift towards claimed channels of participation was identified within trawl fisheries (fish and shrimp) and was especially observed in small-scale fisheries while not being present within pelagic fisheries. While also perceiving power asymmetry, fishermen connected to pelagic fisheries did not show an increased political activity or participation in protests, indicating an absence of severe threat due to a different spatial focus on offshore areas and the attachment to larger companies. The concept of intra-sectoral power asymmetry as an additional pressure for small-scale fisheries demonstrated how this type of power asymmetry was perceived as an inhibitor for meaningful participation of small-scale fisheries. The contrasting results of the different sub-sectors (pelagic and small-scale) do stress the importance of identity and threat perception as a linking feature between power asymmetry and participation from a theoretical perspective.

This study contextualized the powercube concept by Gaventa (2006) and added the role of threat perception and identity. The resulting MSP-Powercube which was used as methodological backbone of this study proved to be a valid tool for the investigation of power. However, the way in which it was used in this study has the drawbacks that it simplifies an inherently complex context into easy to grasp categories and isolates the investigated relationship from the wider context. This notion, applicable to all model-like representations, was seen in this study especially in terms of sectoral pressures. While survey questions were

employed to control for this bias the conceptual model does, on the first sight, provide a simplified and clear pathway which is misleading, especially in the context of power. While interaction between levels, spaces and dimensions of power was often emphasized it could be helpful for future representations of relationships surrounding the dynamics of power to embed the cube in a frame that visualizes the complex nature of the wider context.

Critically reflecting on the data collection methods used one can identify that online methods and little response were the main challenges in this study. Next to the earlier discussed sampling bias of online surveys it is important to mention that individual fishermen can, via online platforms, only be reached via organisations which introduces a certain unwanted pre-selection of respondents. However, the bias of online methods and the lacking response that inhibits generalizations based on statistics (53 of 91 needed) are only to be avoided by studies that are not bound to the confines of an academic thesis and can employ data collection schemes which ideally include face-to-face interviews, a longer data collection period and incentives for participation in quantitative surveys. However, even though statistical generalization is not possible, qualitative data as well as the clearly observable trends do indicate that with a larger sample, relationships with explaining power for the whole population would emerge.

In the wider theoretical debate the effect of inequality on participation is still unsettled and is seen to largely depend on the context. The findings of this study contain notions of two contrasting theoretical arguments and thus hint towards a new perspective. Verba et al. (2002) argued that economic inequalities translate to unequal involvement in decision-making processes and consequently, in Gaventa's (2005) terms, to an internalisation of powerlessness leading to a retreat from politics and an acceptance of the *status quo*. Runciman (1980) provided the contrasting argument with inequality leading, after unequal involvement, to anger and rejection of the *status quo* subsequently initiating resistance, that according to Filetti (2016) would try to balance power relations outside of formal channels.

In the context of fisheries this study identified that, while anger certainly also being present, the internalisation of powerlessness (here quantified as: "the feeling of not being able to change anything") was, after a lack of time, perceived as the main limiting factor to political activity. Especially so within small-scale fisheries, which, through being affected by intra-

sectoral power asymmetries, also come closest to the concept of “pure” economic inequality. Findings do show that, despite seeing themselves faced with difficult or impossible to change power relations, which would not be engaged in the absence of threat, the sector actively self-organises participatory spaces that seek to challenge power. Following this notion power asymmetry (as a form of inequality) can thus, despite the internalisation of powerlessness, translate into resistance if threat perception is intense enough and if a strong social identity, as precondition for power *with*, is present. This resistance will naturally, as put forward by Filetti (2016), focus on claimed spaces outside of the channels which it tries to change. Considering the wider context it becomes evident that the participatory developments observed around MSP are signs of a more general pattern. Gaventa & Martorano (2016) consider Europe as an emblematic case where people have shifted their political effort towards claimed channels of participation. This notion implies that governance processes have to be adapted in order to regain trust and legitimacy, not only within MSP.

As seen in this study such claimed channels might become institutionalized and evolve into the dimension of invited spaces. However, while increasing influence they might encounter the, for them, “new” power landscape of the political. Institutionalization and being able to voice concerns within invited spaces are undoubtedly a political success but the question persists whether they have moved closer to true participation or merely closer to the power dynamics which they set out to change.

It does not deserve further explanation that the results of this study imply a more power-sensitive approach to MSP as already argued for by many scholars (Jentoft, 2017; Flannery et al., 2018; Tafon, 2018). Gaffikin & Brand (2007) pointed out that the focus on consensus present in participatory planning inevitably leads to non-commitment and consensus around empty signifiers. It relates to a general concern on the role of communication in collaborative planning and whether it is a tool for consensus-building or a mere exercise of power and rhetoric (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2004). The communicative rationality, with its emphasis on the Habermasian “*better argument*”, as sculptor of validity and truth, consequently reveals itself as an “*empirically empty*” concept in the face of power (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2004, p. 50).

In more practical terms, MSP practice needs to acknowledge the diversity of the fishing sector and the complex socio-ecological system it is based on and must not continue to conceptualize fisheries as “one” stakeholder. The feeling present in the fishermen’s perspective that “they”, the managers and policy makers, have little understanding of the dynamics and the nature of the business is only endorsed by such practice, consequently undermining credibility. MSP initiatives should try to rid themselves from the post-political condition and allow meaningful debate around the new marine reality it is serving to facilitate.

However, science is not able to eradicate the “dark side” of planning, it can only strive to pull complex power dynamics and their underlying rationales into the light of attention and work on subjects which support and advance planning practice. In the given context one of these would certainly be communication. The industries competing for space at sea could not be more different and the conflicts between and within fisheries and other sectors are embedded in wider societal debates which all rely on mutual understanding and communication to be resolved. I therefore suggest applied and pure sciences to address communicative as well as practical barriers in MSP in an inter-disciplinary setting in order to support the creation of spaces for constructive dialogue which are oriented along the lines of Flyvbjerg’s (2003) “*real-life rationality*” and do not continue to romanticize consensus and stakeholder involvement. These spaces should value the stakes and concerns of fisheries and facilitate direct participation of active fishermen, marking a departure from participation towards collaboration. Regaining trust and legitimacy. Be that as it may, the last words should be given to a fisherman.

*“De zee is groot genoeg voor ons allemaal als je de dialoog met elkaar blijft aangaan op de goede manier en niet elkaar zwart blijft maken.*

*Want dat voegt niks toe... “*

## 6. References

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**Images used:**

Offshore wind energy (Title Page)

<https://www.curbed.com/2018/3/28/17170762/dutch-wind-farm-privately-funded-vattenfall>

Small-scale vessel (Title Page)

<https://www.schuttevaer.nl/nieuws/dossiers/vistechniek/2019/06/12/staandwantvisserij-decimeert/>

Dutch demersal trawler (Title Page)

<https://www.rd.nl/meer-rd/groen-duurzaamheid/flying-focus-brengt-schepen-in-storm-spectaculair-in-beeld-1.700165>

North Sea MSP map (Title Page)

<https://www.vissersvoorvrijezee.nl/kaarten-2/>

Figure 4: Diversity in the Dutch fishing sector

<https://www.schuttevaer.nl/nieuws/dossiers/vistechniek/2019/06/12/staandwantvisserij-decimeert/>

<http://maritime-connector.com/ship/maartje-theodora-9182801/>

<https://i0.wp.com/deschrijvendevisser.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/arm-15-digi-van-negatief.jpg.jpeg?ssl=1>

## 7. Appendix

### Appendix I: Survey in Dutch language

1. Ruimtelijke ordening op zee is een gelijkwaardig proces die alle sectoren op dezelfde manier meeneemt.
  - Sterk mee eens
  - Mee eens
  - Neutraal
  - Oneens
  - Sterk mee oneens
  
2. Zou u uit de volgende sectoren een „Top 3“ willen kiezen qua totale invloed op de ruimtelijke ordening op zee?
  - Olie en gas
  - Natuurbescherming
  - Zandwinning
  - Windenergie
  - Visserij
  - Scheepvaart
  - Geen
  - Andere
  
3. Hoe zou u de politieke invloed van de visserijsector op wet & regelgeving qua ruimtelijke ordening op zee inschatten?
  - Zeer groot
  - Groot
  - Matig
  - Klein
  - Heel klein
  - Anders:
  
4. Hoe zou u de politieke invloed van andere sectoren op wet & regelgeving qua ruimtelijke ordening op zee inschatten?
  - Zeer groot
  - Groot
  - Matig
  - Klein
  - Heel klein
  - Anders:

5. Hoe zou u de politieke invloed van de visserijsector op het vormen van prioriteiten en agenda binnen ruimtelijke ordening op zee inschatten?
  - Zeer groot
  - Groot
  - Matig
  - Klein
  - Heel klein
  - Anders:
  
6. Hoe zou u de politieke invloed van andere sectoren op het vormen van prioriteiten en agenda binnen ruimtelijke ordening op zee inschatten?
  - Zeer groot
  - Groot
  - Matig
  - Klein
  - Heel klein
  - Anders:
  
7. Hoe zou u de invloed van de visserijsector op het „beeld“ of „imago“ van de visserij binnen de maatschappij inschatten?
  - Zeer groot
  - Groot
  - Matig
  - Klein
  - Heel klein
  - Anders:
  
8. Welke factor beperkt deze invloed het meest?
  - Geen
  - Media & Journalistiek
  - Natuurbescherming
  - Gebrek aan interesse zijdens maatschappij
  - Gebrek aan interesse zijdens visserij
  - Anders:
  
9. Over het algemeen heeft de maatschappij een juist en gerechtvaardigd "beeld" of "imago" van de visserij.
  - Sterk mee eens
  - Mee eens
  - Neutraal
  - Oneens
  - Sterk mee oneens

10. Onderwerpen zoals ruimtelijke ordening op zee hebben invloed op mijn stemgedrag bij nationale of Europese verkiezingen.

- Sterk mee eens
- Mee eens
- Neutraal
- Oneens
- Sterk mee oneens

11. Ik ben lid van een visserijorganisatie (VisNed, Vissersbond, etc.).

- Ja
- Nee
- Ja, meer dan een

12. Ik ben vooral lid van een visserijorganisatie voor:

- Netwerken
- Quota
- Belangenbehartiging
- Niet van toepassing
- Anders:

13. Ik ga regelmatig naar evenementen van de organisatie (discussies, verkiezingen, etc.).

- Sterk mee eens
- Mee eens
- Neutraal
- Oneens
- Sterk mee oneens
- Niet van toepassing

14. Ik heb een actieve functie in de organisatie of heb interesse om een functie te hebben (vertegenwoordiger, bestuur, etc.).

- Ja
- Nee
- Niet van toepassing

15. Ik heb individueel gereageerd op ruimtelijke plannen die online ter discussie staan (bij voorbeeld: overleg fysieke leefomgeving).

- Ja
- Nee

16. Ik ben lid van een interesse-organisatie die zich ook specifiek richt op ruimtelijke ordening (bij voorbeeld: Eendracht Maakt Kracht).

- Ja
- Nee

17. Ik neem deel aan protesten die zich ook richten op ruimtelijke ordening.

- Ja
- Nee

18. Ik deel mijn mening over ruimtelijke ordening op zee via social media.

- Nooit
- Heel soms
- Soms
- Vaak
- Heel vaak

19. Ik ben tevreden met de opties die mij door de overheid worden gegeven om mee te werken aan de ruimtelijke plannen voor de Noordzee.

- Sterk mee eens
- Mee eens
- Neutraal
- Oneens
- Sterk mee oneens

20. De implementatie van ruimtelijke ordening op zee heeft tot een betere samenwerking binnen de visserij geleid.

- Sterk mee eens
- Mee eens
- Neutraal
- Oneens
- Sterk mee oneens

21. Naast ruimtelijke ordening op zee hebben andere onderwerpen (zoals de discard ban, pulskor discussie, etc.) invloed op mijn politieke activiteit.

- Sterk mee eens
- Mee eens
- Neutraal
- Oneens
- Sterk mee oneens

22. Als ik mijn politieke activiteit van nu vergelijk met 15 jaar geleden, ben ik nu:

- Actiever
- Gelijk
- Minder actief

23. Welke factor beperkt uw politieke activiteit het meest?

- Geen
- Tijd
- Geld
- Interesse
- Het gevoel niks te kunnen veranderen
- Anders:

24. Hoe zou u de gevolgen van ruimtelijke ordening op zee op uw dagelijkse werk inschatten?

- Heel positief
- Positief
- Neutraal
- Negatief
- Heel negatief

25. Hoe zou u de gevolgen van ruimtelijke ordening op zee op de cultuur en de identiteit van de visserij inschatten?

- Heel positief
- Positief
- Neutraal
- Negatief
- Heel negatief

26. Grof ingedeeld, tot welke soort van visserij behoort u?

- Kotters/Vis
- Kotters/Garnaal
- Pelagisch
- Kleinschalig
- Anders:

27. Nogmaals bedankt voor uw tijd en medewerking! Zijn er nog andere dingen die u wilt aangeven?

## Appendix II: VisNed Newsletter

### **Enquête verzoek visserij en Ruimtelijke Ordening Noordzee**

**Vanuit de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG) is student Felix Zundel bezig met een afstudeeronderzoek naar de wijze waarop visserij betrokken wordt in Ruimtelijke Ordeningsvraagstukken en hoe de persoonlijke beleving hieromtrent is.**

Het invullen van de enquête door betrokkenen in de visserijsector wordt op prijs gesteld. De enquête duurt 10 minuten en antwoorden worden anoniem verwerkt. De enquête vindt u [hier](#).

Vragen gaan onder meer over de invloed van de sector op de plannen voor wind op zee, natuurgebieden en ander gebruik, waardering voor de sector vanuit de maatschappij en politieke invloed van de sector.

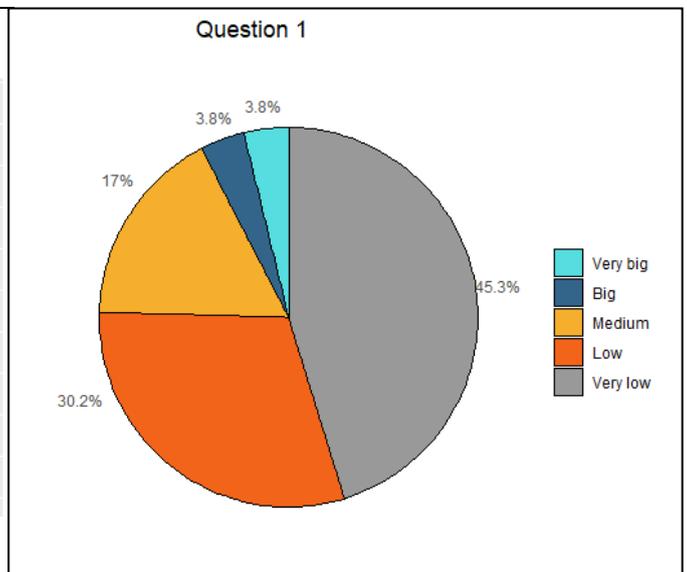
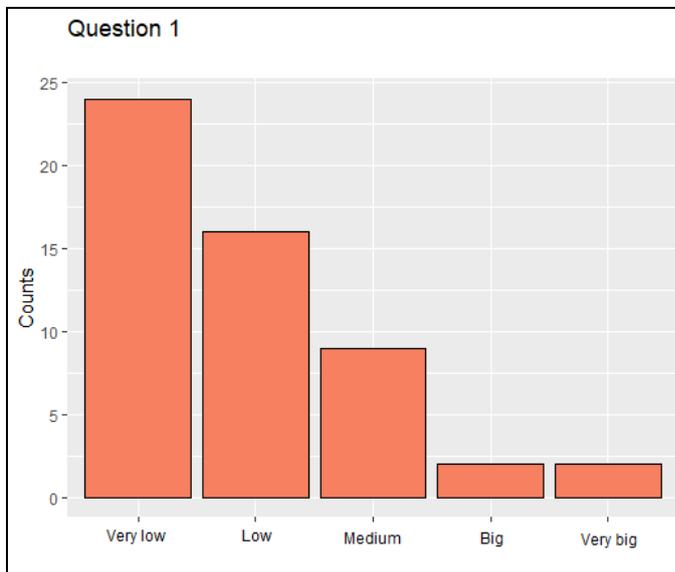
## Appendix III: Quantitative Results

(Please note that percentages, means and standard deviation where rounded for reporting purposes in order to not overemphasize data precision and to provide easier overview. Means, range and standard deviation for non-likert scale data such as “yes/no” or “sector” was not included)

**Question 1: How would you rate the influence of the fishing sector on rules & legislation in terms of MSP?**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Very Low	24	45	14	47	7	58	2	33		
Low	9	17	10	33	4	33			1	33
Medium	16	30	5	17	1	8	1	17	2	67
Big	2	4					1	17		
Very Big	2	3	1	3						

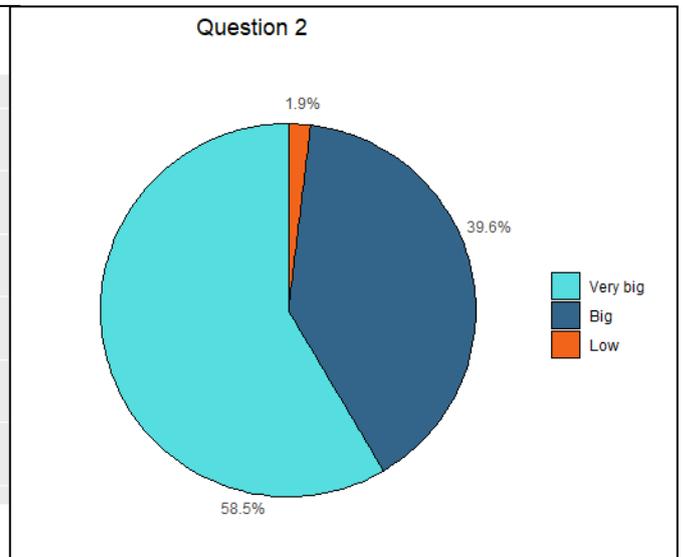
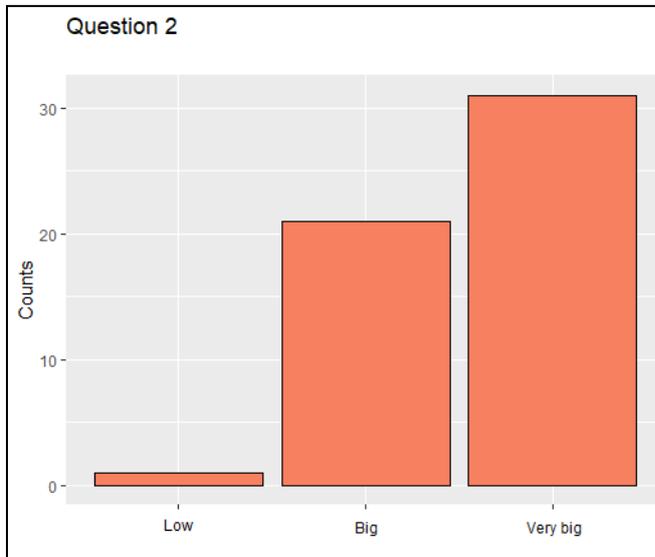
Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	1.9	1.1	5	1	4
Trawlers/Fish	30	1.8	1	5	1	4
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	1.5	0.7	3	1	2
Small-scale	6	3	1.7	5	1	4
Pelagic	3	2.6	0.6	3	2	1



**Question 2: How would you rate the influence of other sectors on rules & legislation in terms of MSP?**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Very Low										
Low	1	2	1	3						
Medium										
Big	21	40	23	43	5	42	1	17	1	33
Very Big	31	56	16	53	7	58	5	83	2	67

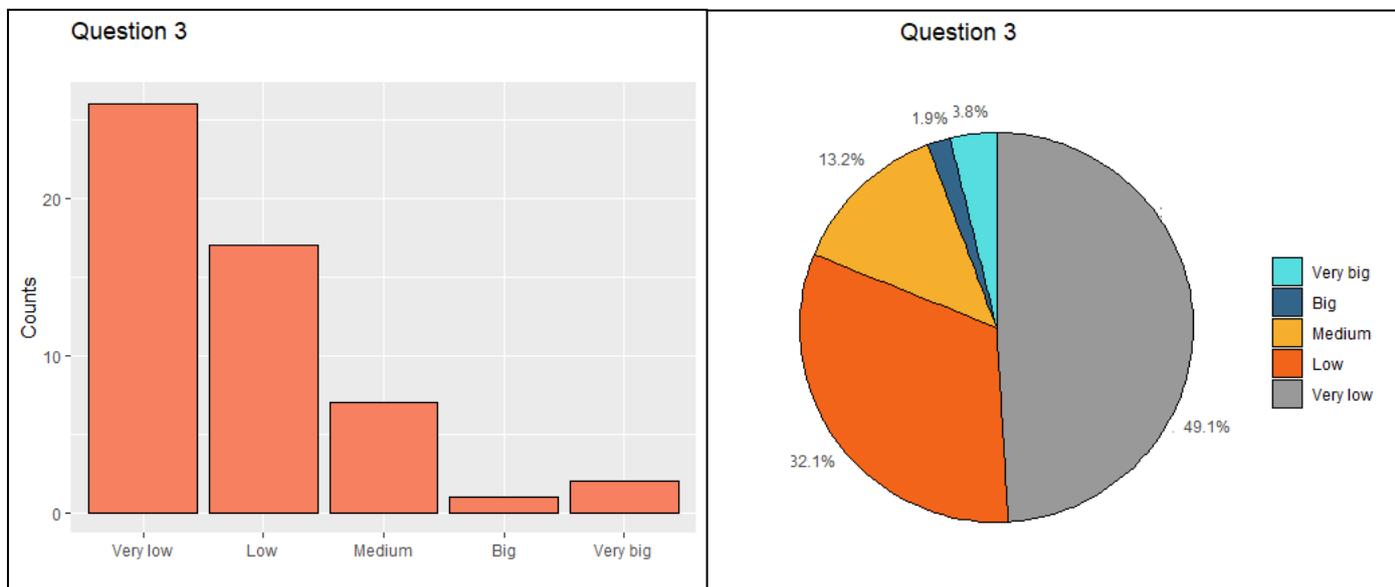
Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	4.5	0.6	5	2	3
Trawlers/Fish	30	4.5	0.7	5	2	3
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	4.6	0.5	5	4	1
Small-scale	6	4.8	0.4	5	4	1
Pelagic	3	4.7	0.6	5	4	1



**Question 3: How would you rate the influence of the fishing sector on agenda & priority setting in terms of MSP?**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Very Low	26	49	14	47	9	75	2	33		
Low	17	32	13	43	2	17			2	67
Medium	7	13	3	10			2	33	1	33
Big	1	2			1	8				
Very Big	2	4					2	33		

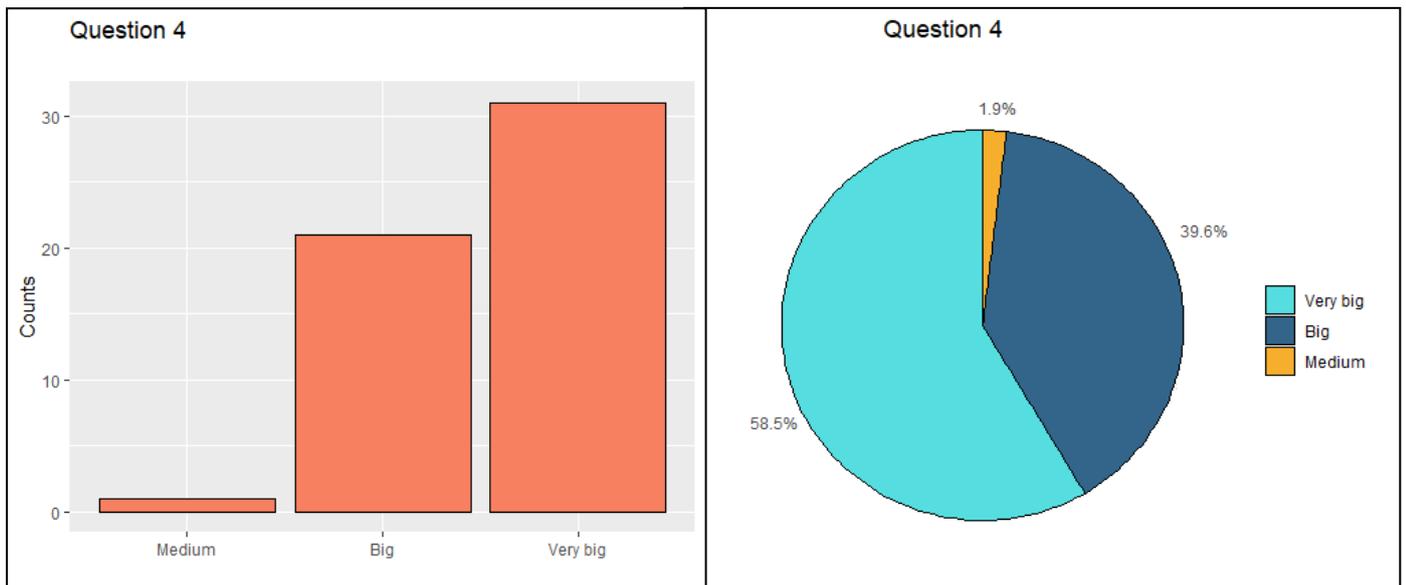
Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	1.8	1	5	1	4
Trawlers/Fish	30	1.6	0.7	3	1	2
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	1.4	0.9	4	1	3
Small-scale	6	3	1.8	5	1	4
Pelagic	3	2.3	0.6	3	2	1



**Question 4: How would you rate the influence of other sectors on agenda & priority setting in terms of MSP?**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Very Low										
Low										
Medium	1	2					1	17		
Big	21	40	12	40	3	25	3	50	2	67
Very Big	31	58	18	60	9	75	2	33	1	33

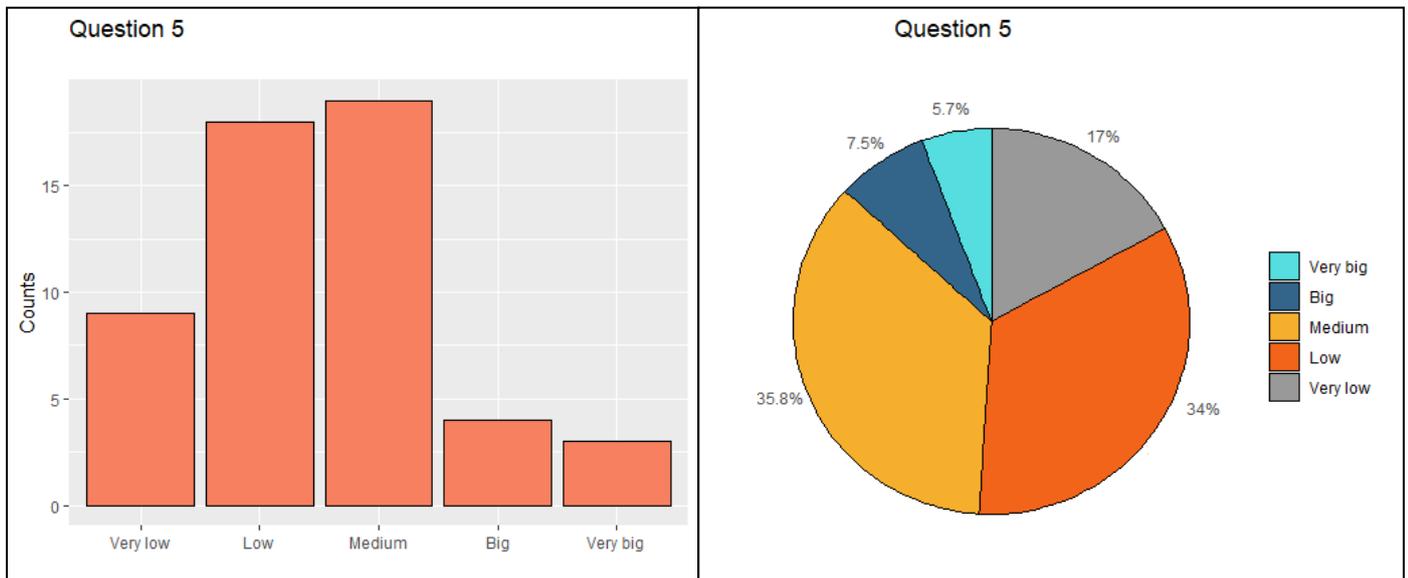
Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	4.6	0.5	5	3	2
Trawlers/Fish	30	4.6	0.5	5	4	1
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	4.7	0.4	5	4	1
Small-scale	6	4.2	0.7	5	3	2
Pelagic	3	4.3	0.8	5	4	1



**Question 5: How would you rate the influence of the fishing sector on the “image” and “picture” of fisheries in society**

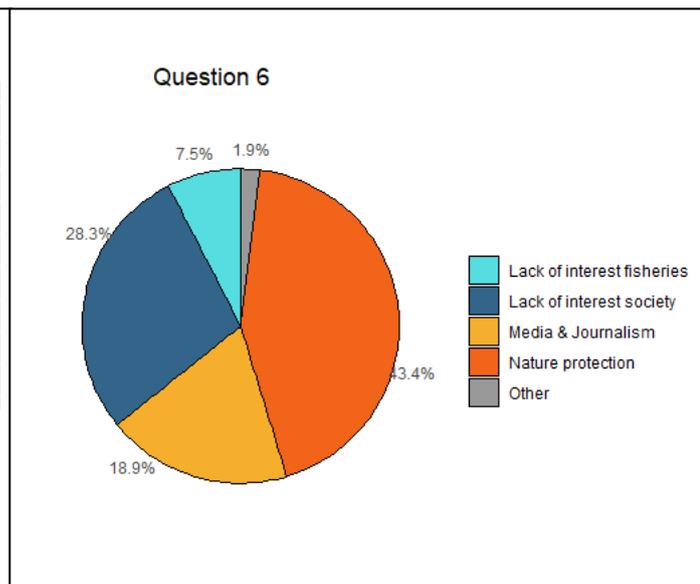
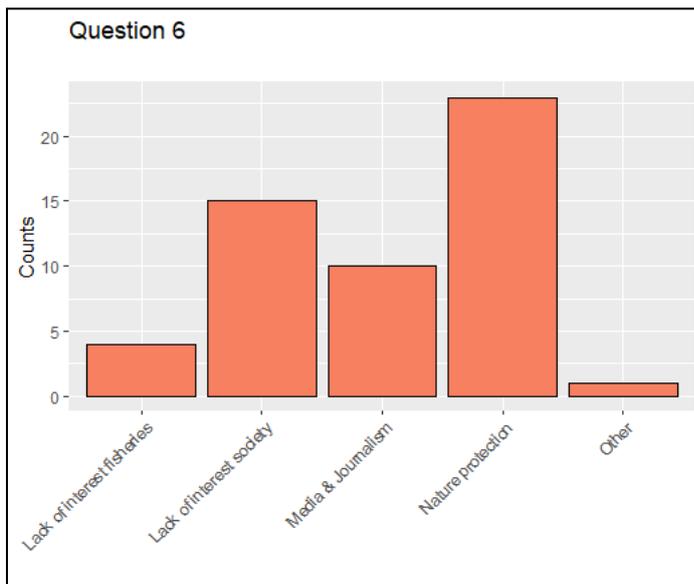
	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Very Low	9	17	6	20	2	17				
Low	18	34	9	30	7	58	1	17	1	33
Medium	19	36	12	40	3	25	2	33	2	67
Big	4	7	1	3			2	33		
Very Big	3	6	2	7			1	17		

Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	2.5	1	5	1	4
Trawlers/Fish	30	2.5	1.1	5	1	4
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	2.1	0.7	3	1	2
Small-scale	6	3.5	1	5	2	3
Pelagic	3	2.7	0.6	3	2	1



**Question 6- Which factor inhibits this influence the most?**

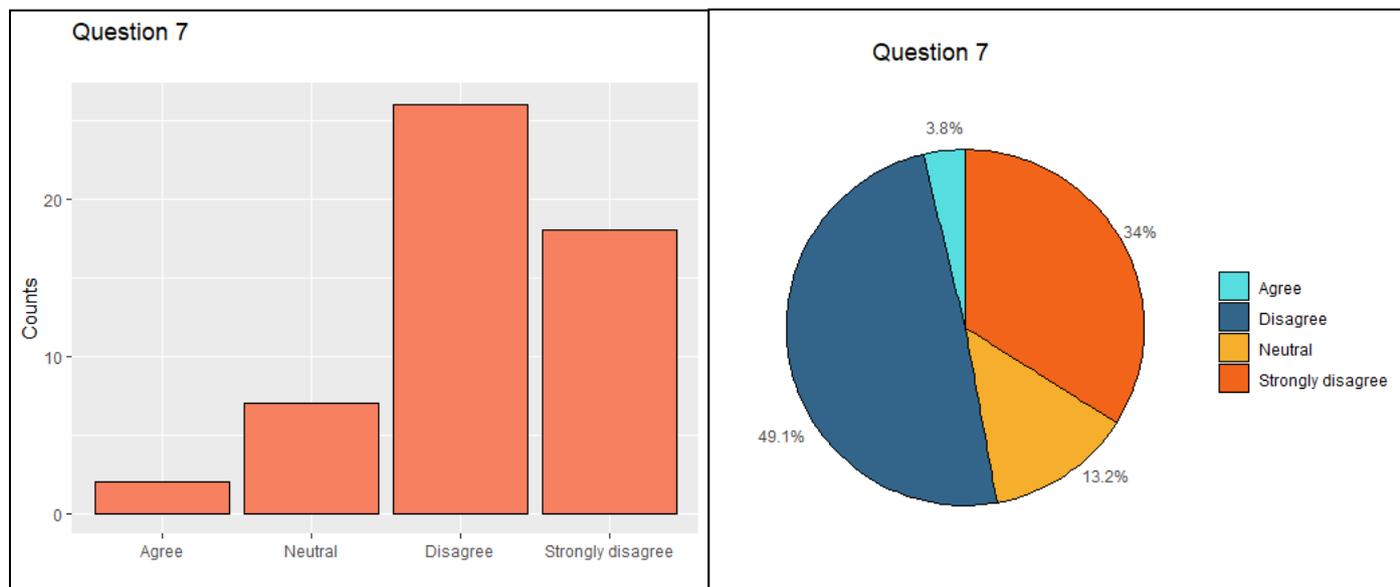
	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Lack of interest fisheries	4	7	3	10						
Lack of interest society	15	28	8	27	4	33	2	33	1	33
Media & Journalism	10	19	3	10	3	25	3	50		
Nature protection	23	43	15	50	5	42	1	17	2	67
other	1	2	1	3						
none										



**Question 7- Generally speaking, society has a correct and justified image of fisheries**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Strongly Disagree	18	34	8	27	7	58	2	33	1	33
Disagree	26	49	17	57	4	33	2	33	2	67
Neutral	7	13	2	10	1	8	2	33		
Agree	2	4	2	7						
Strongly Agree										

Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	1.9	0.8	4	1	3
Trawlers/Fish	30	2	0.8	4	1	3
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	1.5	0.7	3	1	2
Small-scale	6	2	0.9	3	1	2
Pelagic	3	1.7	0.6	2	1	1



**Question 8 - Could you choose a “top 3” in terms of total influence on MSP from the following sectors?**

***Nr. 1 out of 3; total influence of sectors***

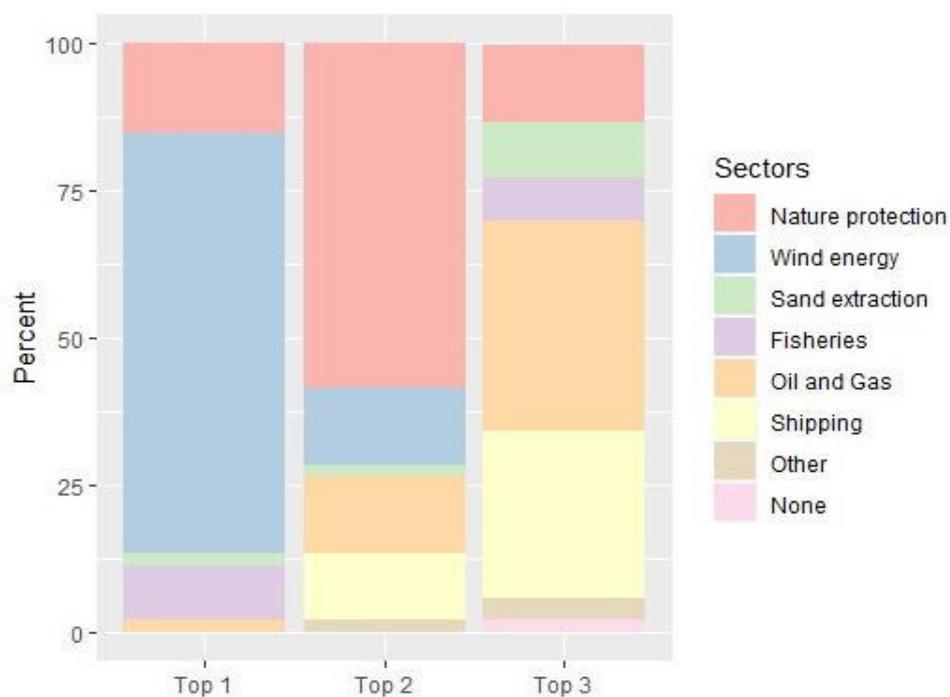
	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Nature Protection	8	15	6	20			1	17		
Wind energy	38	72	22	70	10	83	2	33	3	100
Sand extraction	1	2	1	3	1	8				
Fisheries	5	10	1	3	1	8	3	50		
Oil & Gas	1	2								
Shipping										
Other										
None										

***Nr. 2 out of 3; total influence of sectors***

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Nature Protection	31	58	17	57	11	92	1	17	1	33
Wind energy	7	13	5	17			1	17		
Sand extraction	1	2			1	8	1	17		
Fisheries										
Oil & Gas	7	13	6	20					1	33
Shipping	6	11	2	7			3	33	1	33
Other										
None	1	2					1	17		

**Nr. 3 out of 3; total influence of sectors**

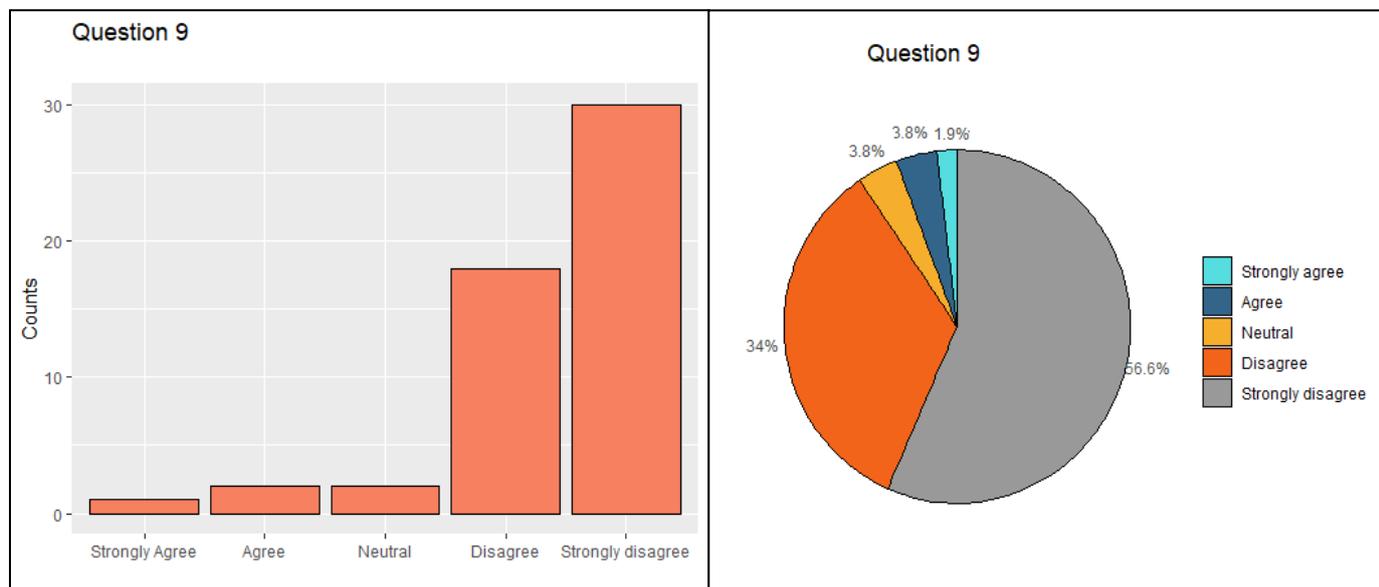
	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Nature Protection	7	13	3	10			3	50	1	33
Wind energy										
Sand extraction	5	9	2	7	3	25				
Fisheries	4	7	3	10	1	8				
Oil & Gas	19	36	12	40	5	42			2	67
Shipping	15	28	10	33	3	25	1	17		
Other	1	2					1	17		
None	2	4					1	17		



**Question 9: MSP is an equal process that includes all sectors in the same way**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Strongly disagree	30	57	19	63	7	58	3	50		
Disagree	18	34	9	30	4	33	2	33	2	67
Neutral	2	4	1	3			1	17		
Agree	2	4	1	3					1	33
Strongly agree	1	12			1	8				

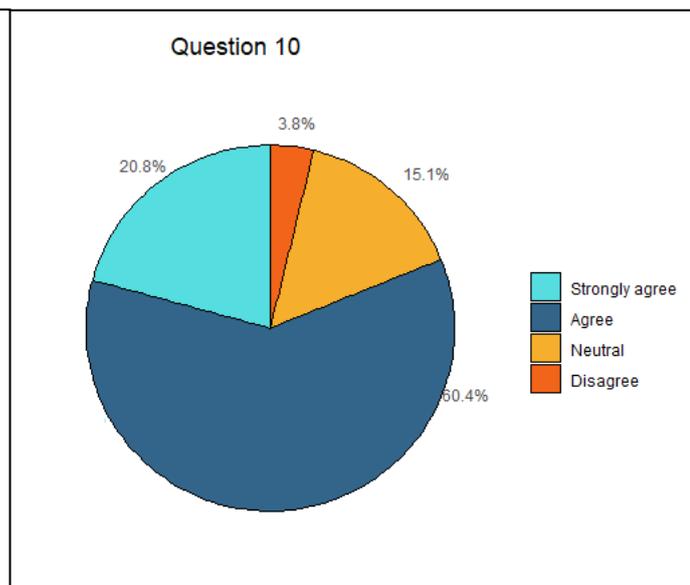
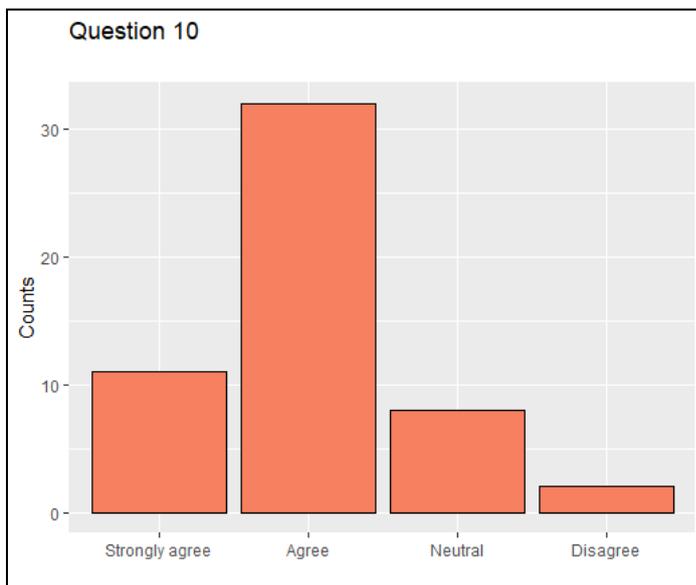
Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	1.6	0.8	5	1	4
Trawlers/Fish	30	1.5	0.7	4	1	3
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	1.7	1.1	5	1	4
Small-scale	6	1.7	0.8	3	1	2
Pelagic	3	2.7	1.1	4	2	2



**Question 10: Topics around MSP influence my voting behavior at national or European elections**

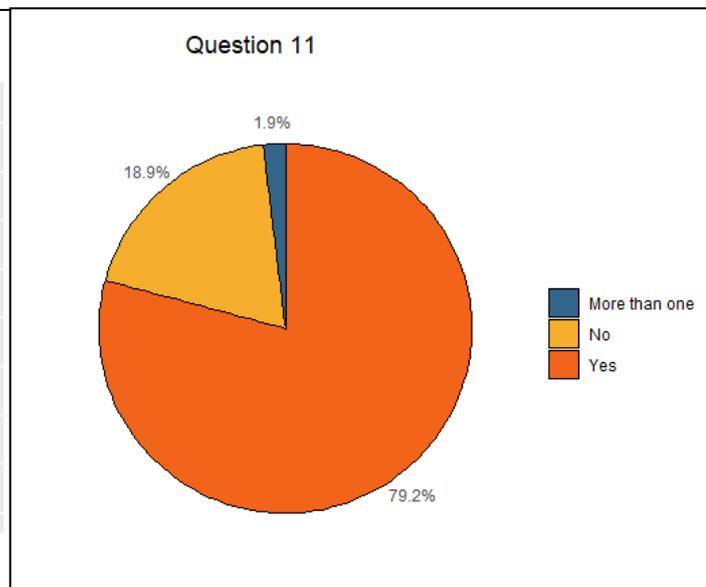
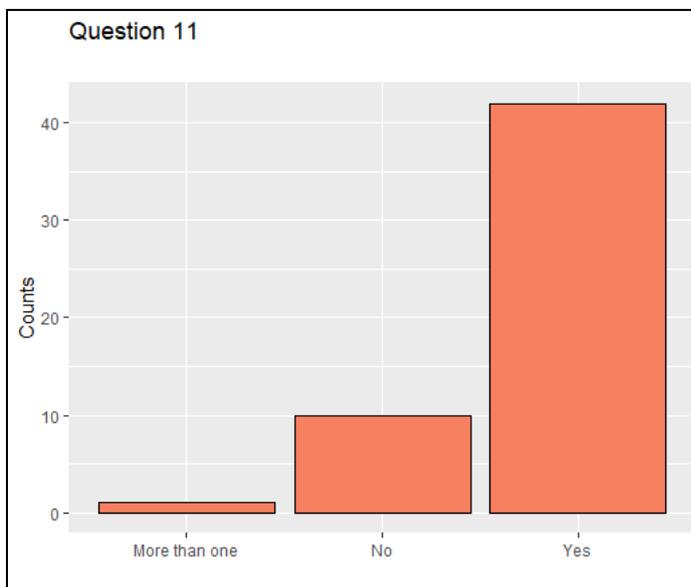
	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Strongly disagree										
Disagree	2	4	2	7						
Neutral	8	15	2	7			2	33	3	100
Agree	32	60	20	67	8	67	4	67		
Strongly agree	11	21	6	20	4	33				

Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	4	0.7	5	2	3
Trawlers/Fish	30	4	0.7	5	2	3
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	4	0.5	5	4	1
Small-scale	6	4	0.5	4	3	1
Pelagic	3	3	0	3	3	0



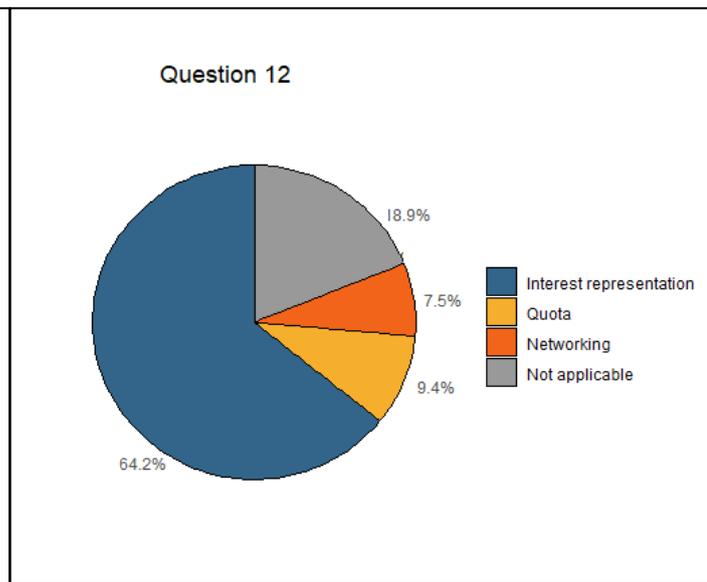
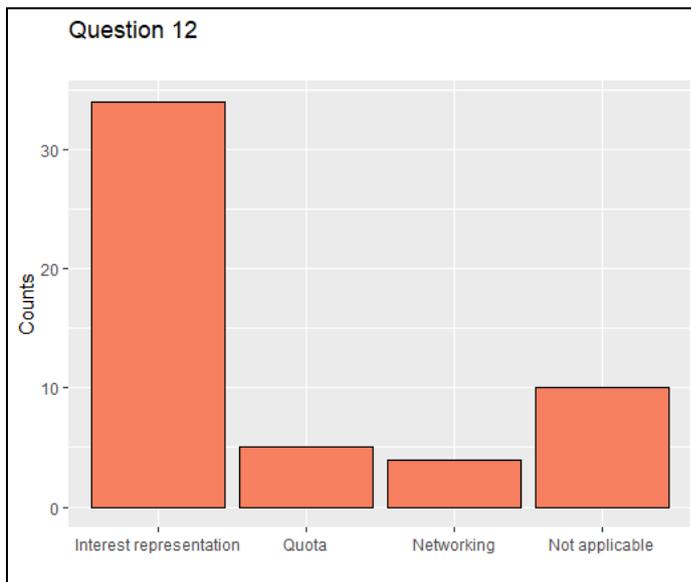
**Question 11: I am member of a fishing association**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
No	10	19	4	13	2	17	2	33	2	67
Yes	42	80	25	83	10	84	4	67	1	33
Yes, more than one	1	2	1	3						



**Question 12: I am mainly member for:**

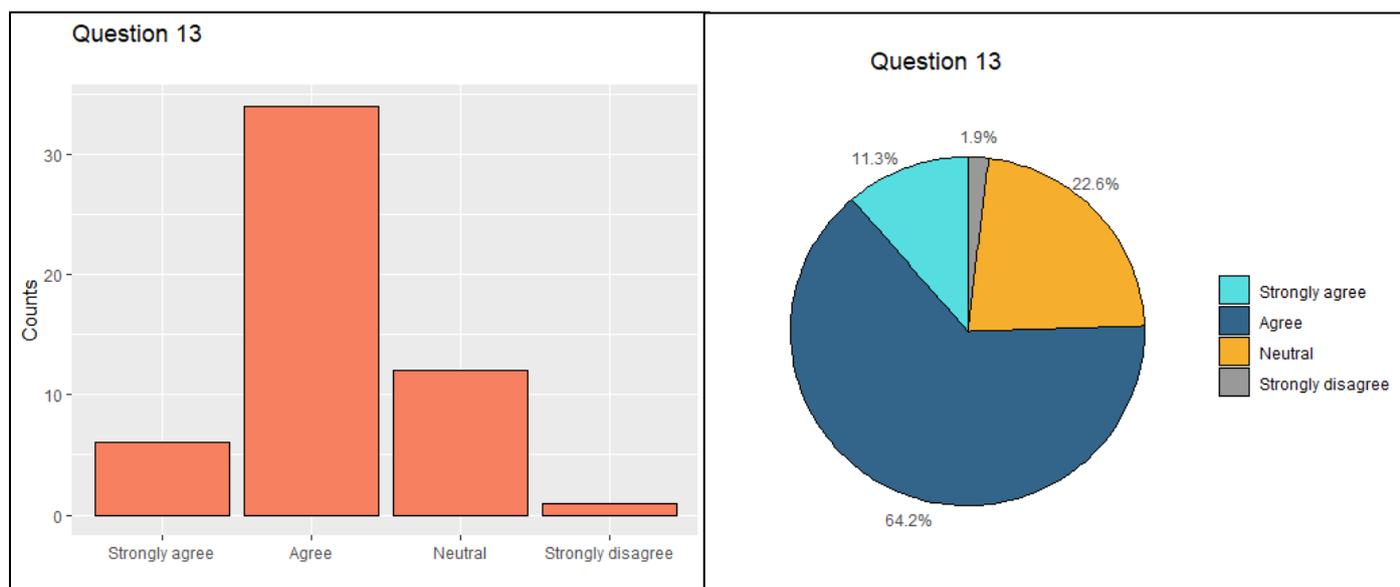
	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Quota	5	9	5	17						
Interest representation	34	64	18	60	9	75	5	83	1	33
Networking	4	7	3	10			1	17		
Not applicable	10	19	4	13	3	25			2	67
Quota										



**Question 13: I am regularly going to events and discussions.**

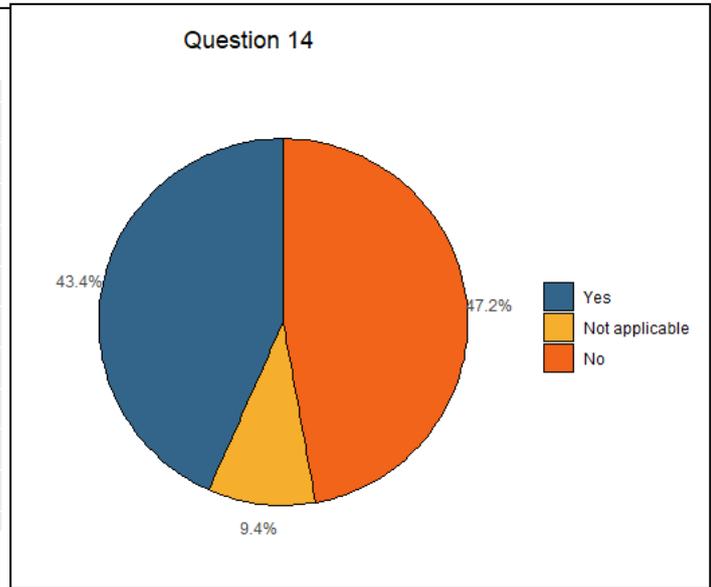
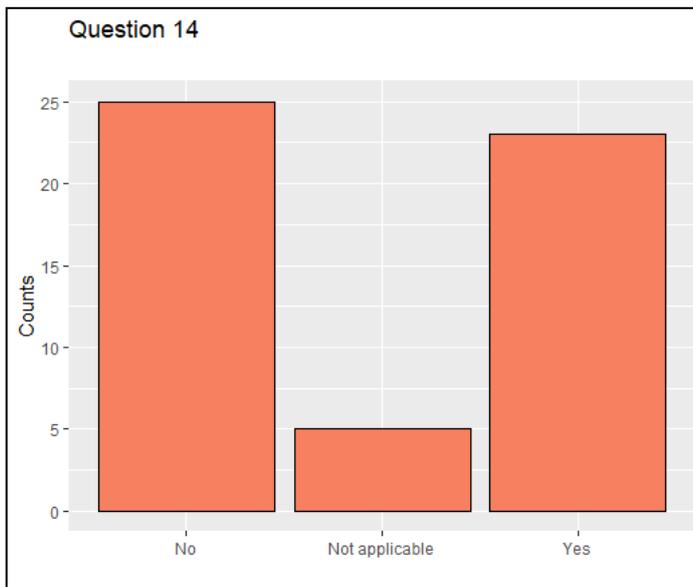
	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Strongly Disagree	1	2					1	17		
Disagree										
Neutral	12	23	6	20	2	17	2	33	2	67
Agree	34	64	21	70	9	75	2	33	1	33
Strongly Agree	6	11	3	10	1	8	1	17		

Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	3.8	0.7	5	1	4
Trawlers/Fish	30	4	0.5	5	3	2
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	3.9	0.5	5	3	2
Small-scale	6	3.3	1.4	5	1	4
Pelagic	3	3.3	0.6	4	3	1



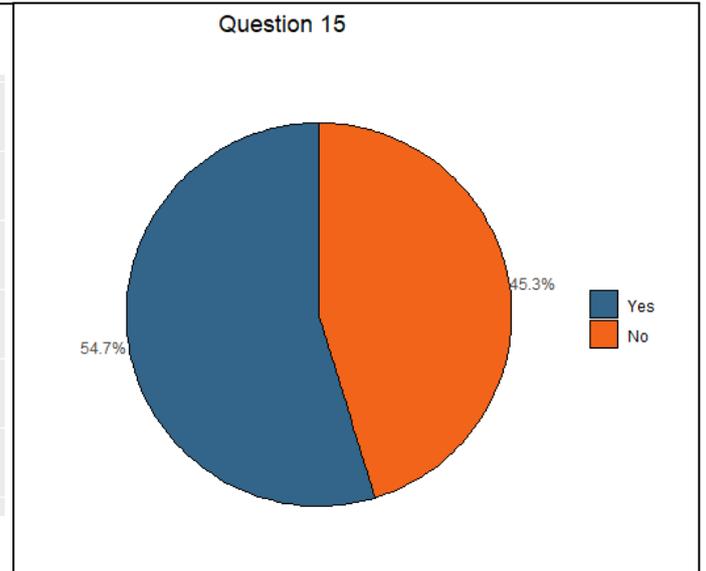
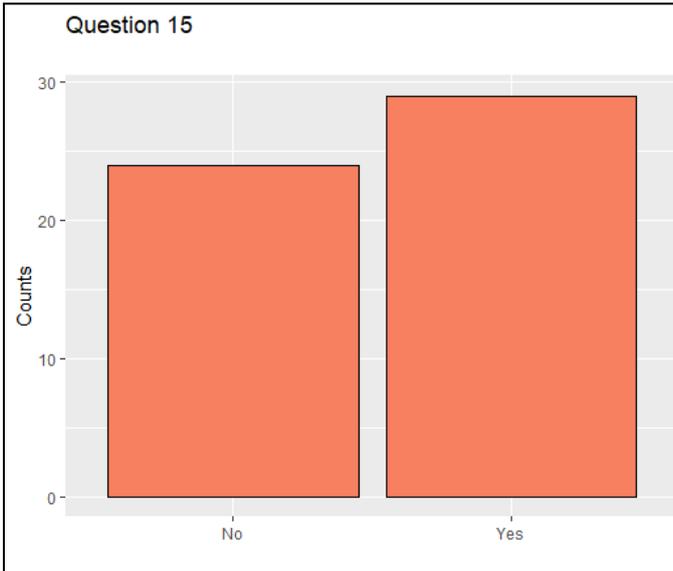
**Question 14: I do have, or would like to have, an active function within the association.**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
No	25	47	17	57	3	25	3	50	2	67
Yes	23	43	12	40	6	50	3	50		
Not applicable	5	9	1	3	3	25			1	33



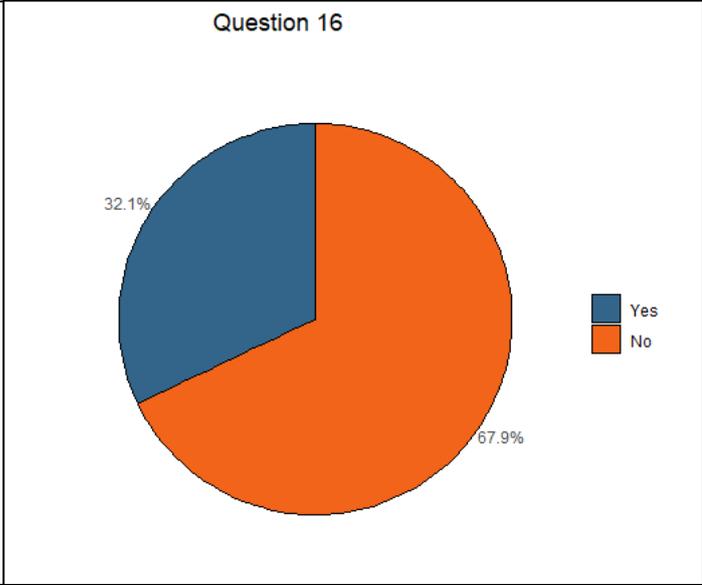
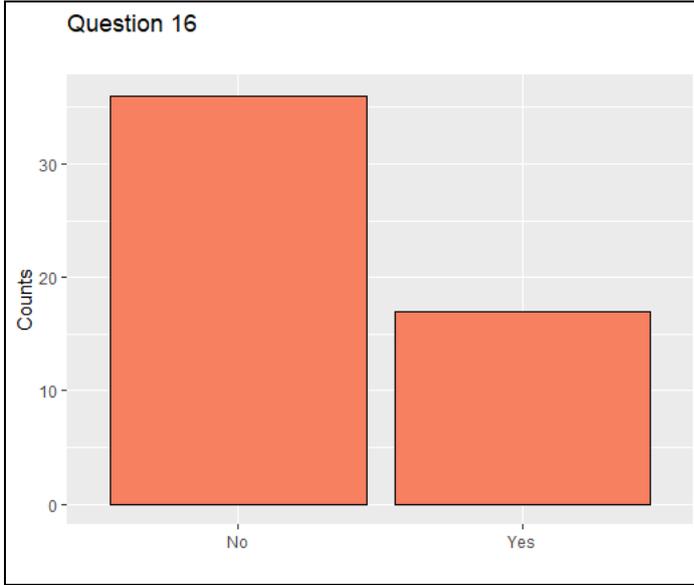
**Question 15: I have individually reacted on draft spatial plans that were up for discussion (online).**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
No	24	45	13	43	6	50	2	33	2	67
Yes	29	55	17	57	6	50	4	67	1	33



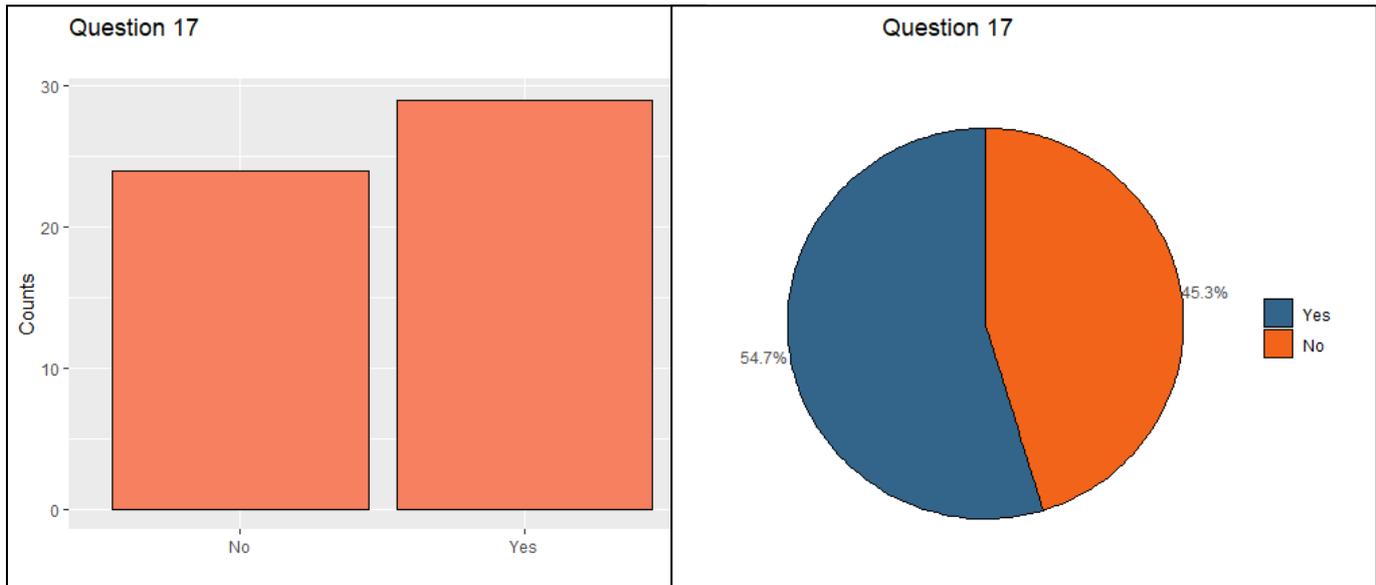
**Question 16: I am member of an interest organisation that also focuses on MSP.**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
No	36	68	18	60	9	75	4	67	3	100
Yes	17	32	12	40	3	25	2	33		



**Question 17: I take part in protests that also focus on MSP.**

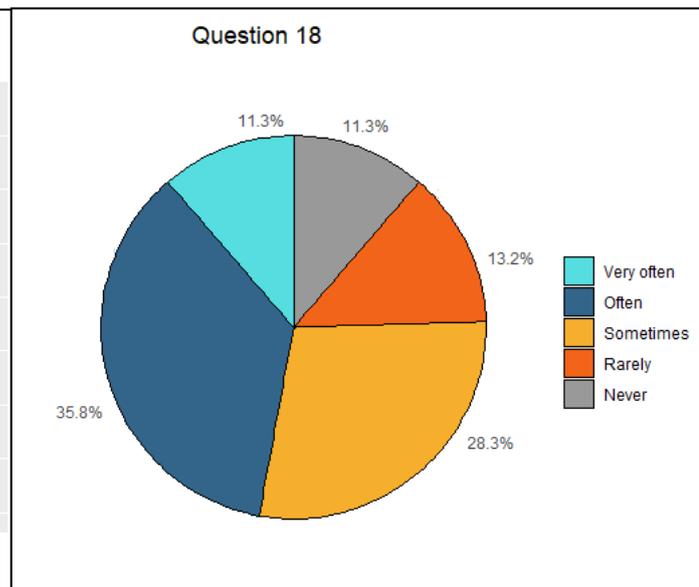
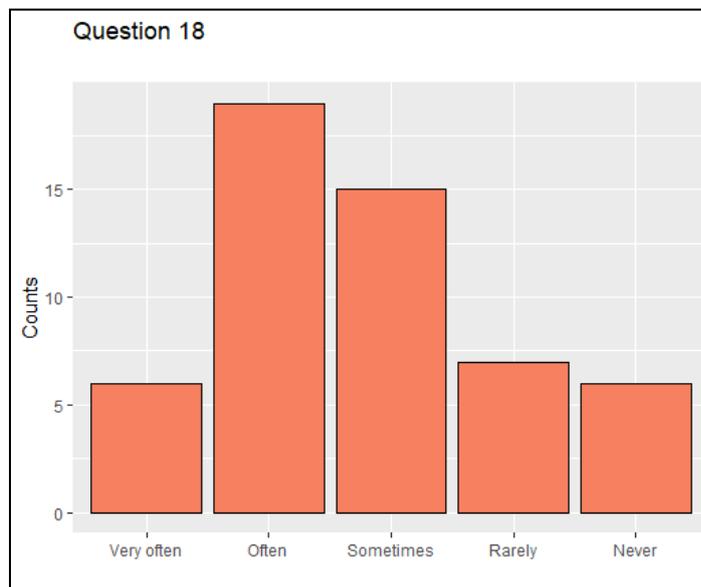
	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
No	24	45	11	37	7	58	1	17	3	100
Yes	29	55	19	63	5	41	5	83		



**Question 18: I share my opinion on MSP via social media:**

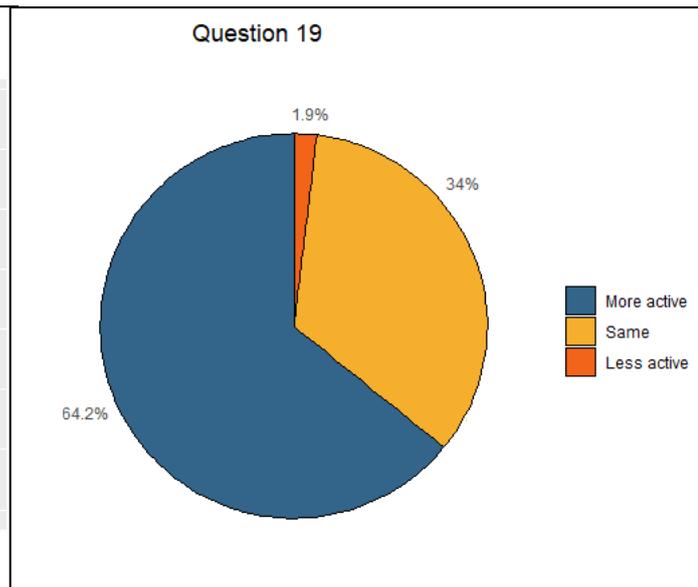
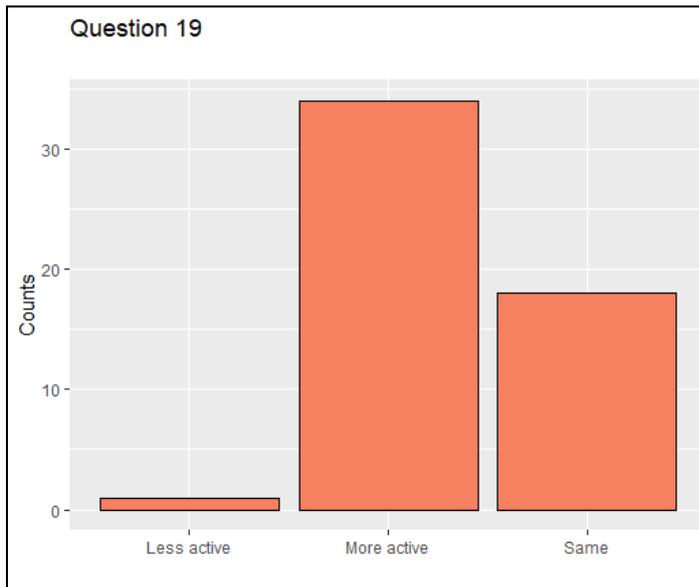
	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Very Often	6	11	6	20						
Often	19	36	12	40	7	58				
Sometimes	15	28	7	23	3	25	5	83		
Rarely	7	13	2	7	1	8	1	17	1	33
Never	6	11	3	10	1	8			2	67

Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	3.2	1.2	5	1	4
Trawlers/Fish	30	3.5	1.2	5	1	4
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	3.3	1	4	1	3
Small-scale	6	2.8	0.4	3	2	1
Pelagic	3	1.3	0.6	2	1	1



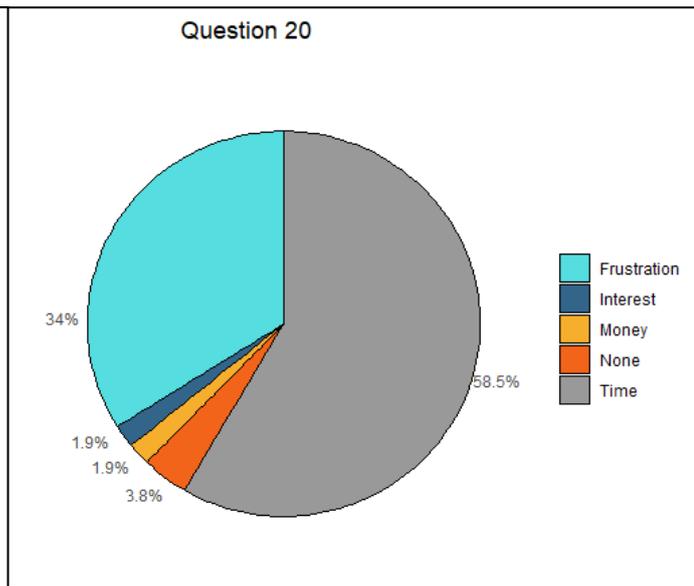
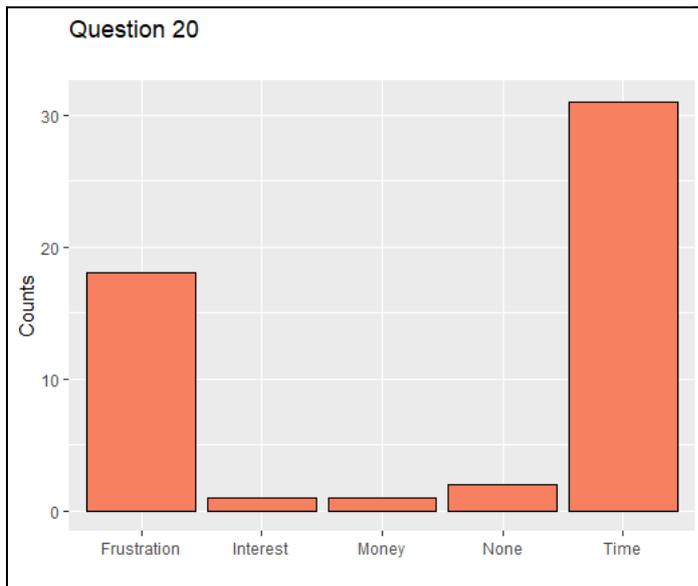
**Question 19: When I compare my political activity with 15 years ago I am now:**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
More active	34	64	23	77	8	67	3	50		
Same	18	34	6	20	4	33	3	50	3	100
Less active	1	2	1	3						



**Question 20: Which factor limits your political activity the most?**

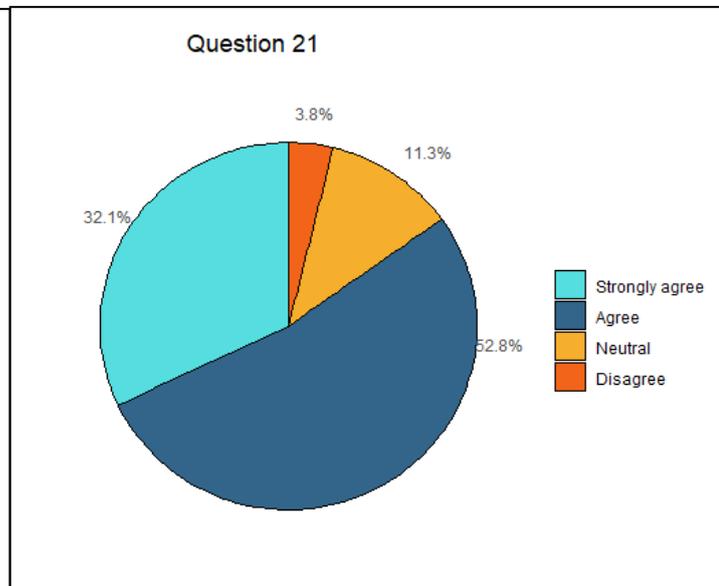
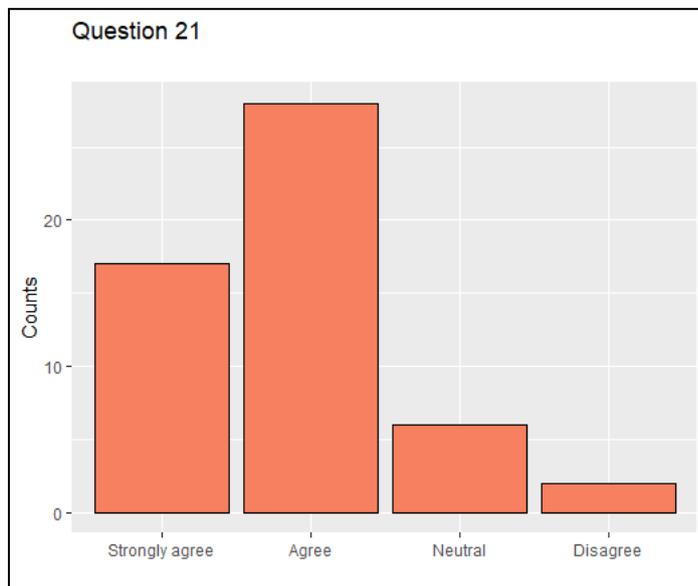
	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Time	31	58	18	60	9	75	1	17	1	33
Frustration	18	34	9	30	3	25	4	67	2	67
Interest	1	2	1	3						
Money	1	2					1	17		
None	2	4	2	7						



**Question 21: Next to MSP other topics (such as: discard ban, pulse discussion etc.) influence my political activity**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Strongly agree	17	32	10	33	5	40	2	33		
Agree	28	53	19	63	6	50	2	33		
Neutral	6	11			1	8	1	17	3	100
Disagree	2	4	1	3			1	17		
Strongly disagree										

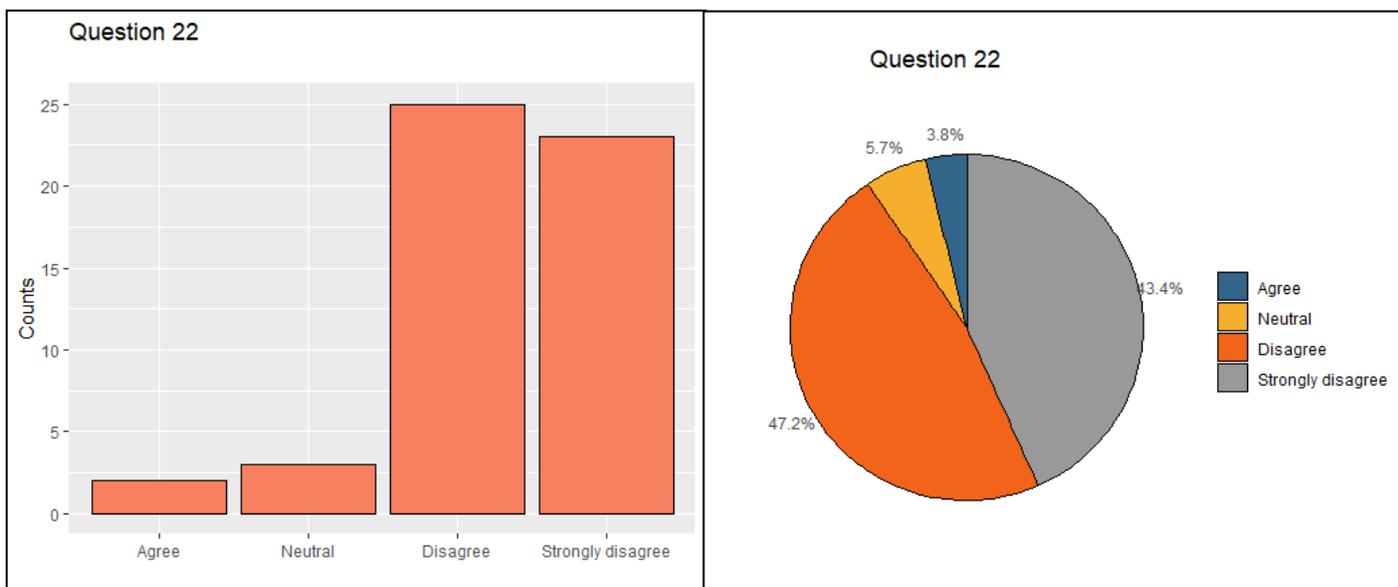
Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	4.1	0.8	5	2	3
Trawlers/Fish	30	4.3	0.6	5	2	3
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	4.3	0.6	5	3	2
Small-scale	6	3.8	1.2	5	2	3
Pelagic	3	3	0	3	3	0



**Question 22: I am satisfied with the options the government provides to take part in the MSP process**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Strongly agree										
Agree	2	4	2	7						
Neutral	3	6	1	3	1	8	1	17		
Disagree	25	47	15	50	6	50			3	100
Strongly disagree	23	43	12	40	5	42	5	83		

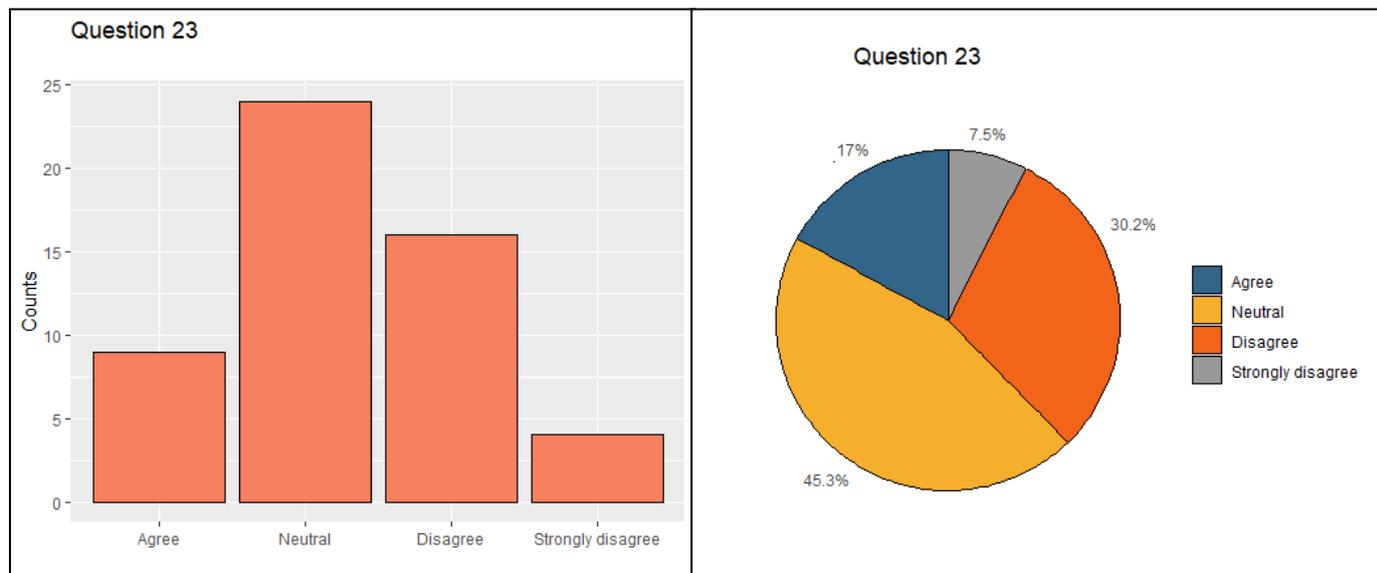
Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	1.7	0.7	4	1	3
Trawlers/Fish	30	1.8	0.8	4	1	3
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	1.7	0.6	3	1	2
Small-scale	6	1.3	0.8	3	1	2
Pelagic	3	2	0	2	2	0



**Question 23: The implementation of MSP has led to a better collaboration within the fishing sector.**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Strongly agree										
Agree	9	17	7	23	1	8				
Neutral	24	45	11	37	8	67	1	17	3	100
Disagree	16	30	12	40	2	17	2	33		
Strongly disagree	4	7			1	8	3	50		

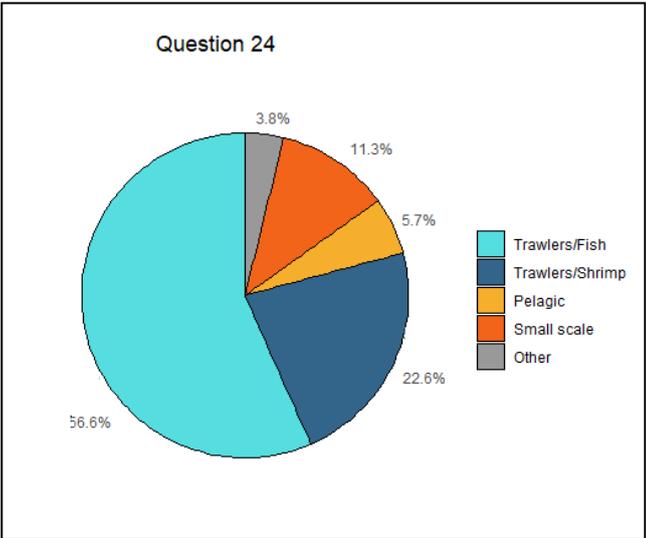
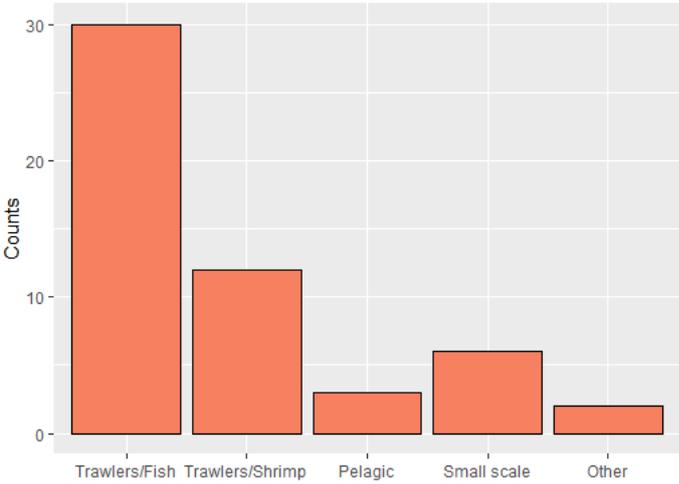
Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	2.7	0.8	4	1	3
Trawlers/Fish	30	2.8	0.8	4	2	2
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	2.7	0.7	4	1	3
Small-scale	6	1.6	0.8	3	1	2
Pelagic	3	3	0	3	3	0



**Question 24: Categorized roughly, which sort of fishery do you practice?**

	n (all)	% (all)
Trawlers /Fish	30	57
Trawlers /Shrimp	12	23
Pelagic	3	6
Small-scale	6	11
other	2	4

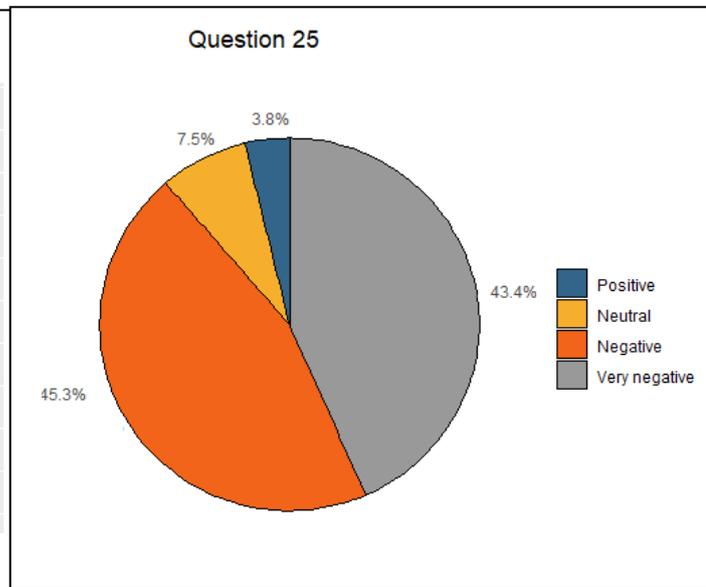
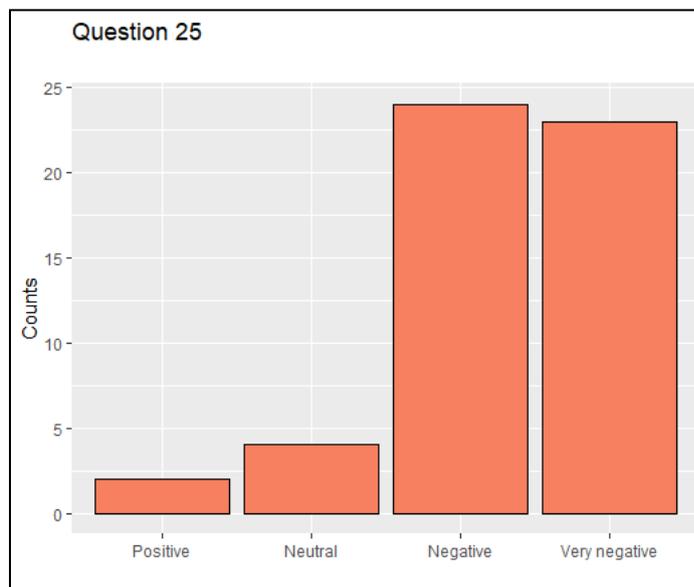
Question 24



**Question 25: How would you rate the impact of MSP on your daily business?**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Very Negative	23	43	16	53	4	33	3	50		
Negative	24	45	12	40	7	58	1	17	2	67
Neutral	4	7			1	8	3	50	1	33
Positive	2	4	2	7						
Very Positive										

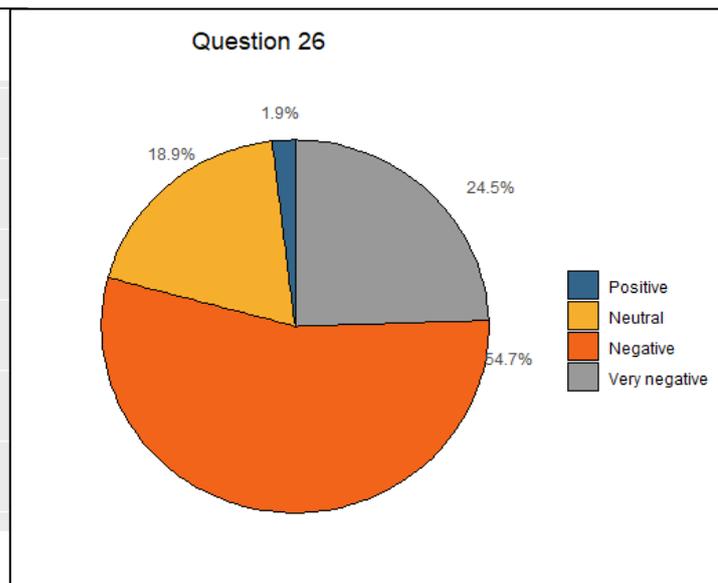
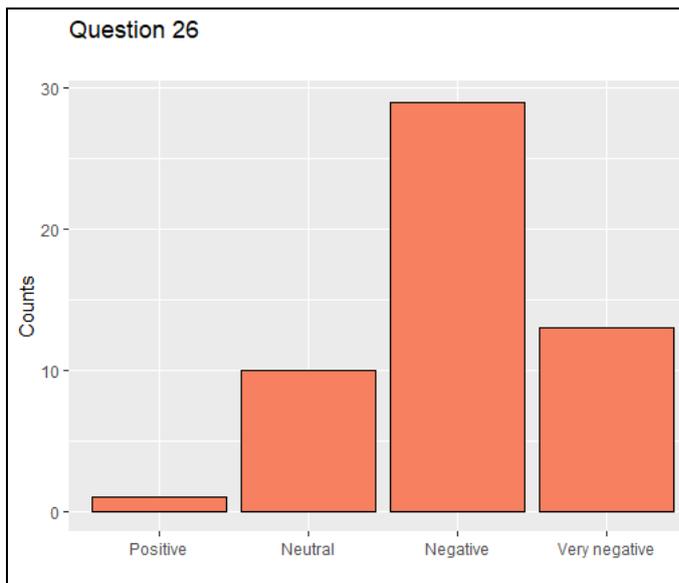
Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	1.7	0.8	4	1	3
Trawlers/Fish	30	1.6	0.8	4	1	3
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	1.7	0.6	3	1	2
Small-scale	6	1.8	1	3	1	2
Pelagic	3	2.3	0.6	3	2	1



**Question 26: How would you rate the impact of MSP on the culture and identity of fisheries?**

	n (all)	% (all)	n (fish)	% (fish)	n (shrimp)	% (shrimp)	n (small-scale)	% (small-scale)	n (pelagic)	% (pelagic)
Very Negative	13	24	5	17	2	17	5	83		
Negative	29	55	18	60	9	75	1	17	1	33
Neutral	10	19	6	20	1	8			2	67
Positive	1	2	1	3						
Very Positive										

Sector	n	Mean	Sd	Maximum	Minimum	Range
All	53	2	0.7	4	1	3
Trawlers/Fish	30	2.1	0.7	4	1	3
Trawlers/Shrimp	12	2	0.5	3	1	2
Small-scale	6	1.2	0.4	2	1	1
Pelagic	3	0.6	0.6	3	2	1



**Power score**

Visible Power Score  $P_v$

$P_v$	All sectors n	All sectors %
4	20	28
3	9	17
2	15	28
1	6	11
0	2	4
-1		
-2		
-3	1	2
-4		

$P_v$	Trawlers/Fish n	Trawlers/Fish %
4	12	40
3	4	13
2	10	33
1	3	10
0		
-1		
-2		
-3	1	3
-4		

$P_v$	Trawlers/Shrimp n	Trawlers/Shrimp %
4	5	42
3	4	33
2	2	17
1	1	8
0		
-1		
-2		
-3		
-4		

$P_v$	Small-scale n	Small-scale %
4	2	33
3		
2	1	17
1	1	17
0	2	33
-1		
-2		
-3		
-4		

$P_v$	Pelagic n	Pelagic %
4		
3	1	33
2	1	33
1	1	33
0		
-1		
-2		
-3		
-4		

Hidden Power Score  $P_h$

$P_h$	All sectors n	All sectors %
4	21	40
3	12	23
2	11	21
1	7	13
0	1	2
-1		
-2	1	2
-3		
-4		

$P_h$	Trawlers/Fish n	Trawlers/Fish %
4	11	37
3	9	30
2	8	27
1	2	7
0		
-1		
-2		
-3		
-4		

$P_h$	Trawlers/Shrimp n	Trawlers/Shrimp %
4	8	67
3	1	8
2	2	17
1	1	8
0		
-1		
-2		
-3		
-4		

$P_h$	Small-scale n	Small-scale %
4	1	17
3	1	17
2		
1	2	33
0	1	17
-1		
-2	1	17
-3		
-4		

$P_h$	Pelagic n	Pelagic %
4		
3	1	33
2	1	33
1	1	33
0		
-1		
-2		
-3		
-4		

Combined Power Score  $P_c$

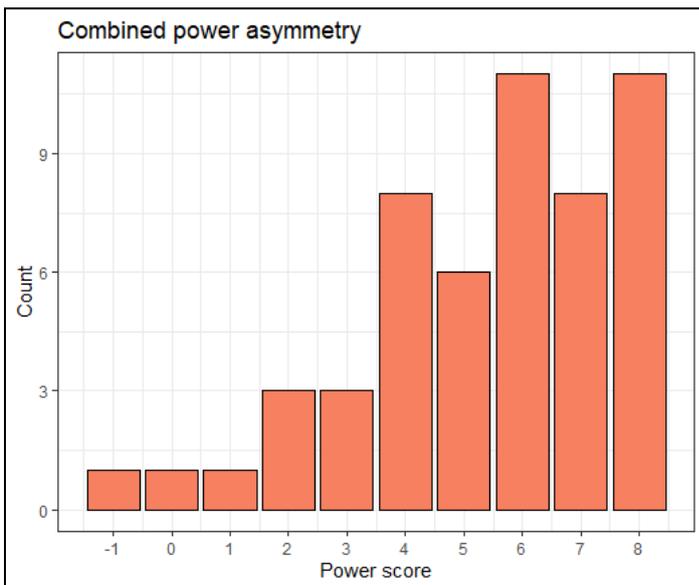
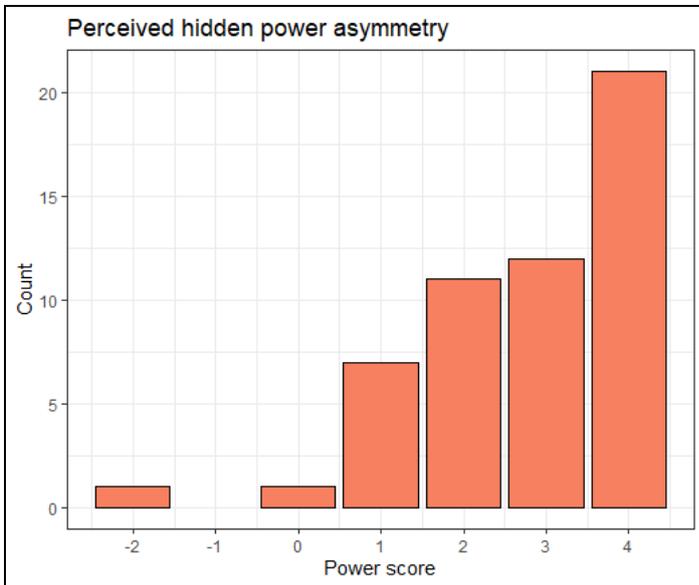
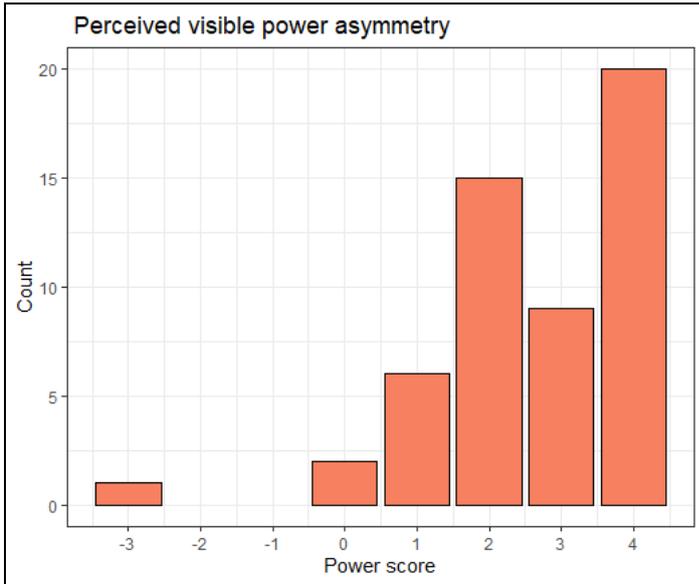
$P_c$	All sectors n	All sectors %
8	11	21
7	8	15
6	11	21
5	6	11
4	8	15
3	3	6
2	3	6
1	1	2
0	1	2
-1	1	2

$P_c$	Trawlers/Fish n	Trawlers/Fish %
8	5	17
7	5	17
6	8	27
5	6	20
4	3	10
3	1	3
2	1	3
1		
0		
-1	1	3

$P_c$	Trawlers/Shrimp n	Trawlers/Shrimp %
8	5	42
7	2	17
6	2	17
5		
4	2	17
3	1	8
2		
1		
0		

$P_c$	Small-scale n	Small-scale %
8		
7	1	17
6	1	17
5		
4		
3		
2	2	33
1	1	17
0	1	17

$P_c$	Pelagic n	Pelagic %
8		
7		
6		
5		
4	3	100
3		
2		
1		



## Correlations

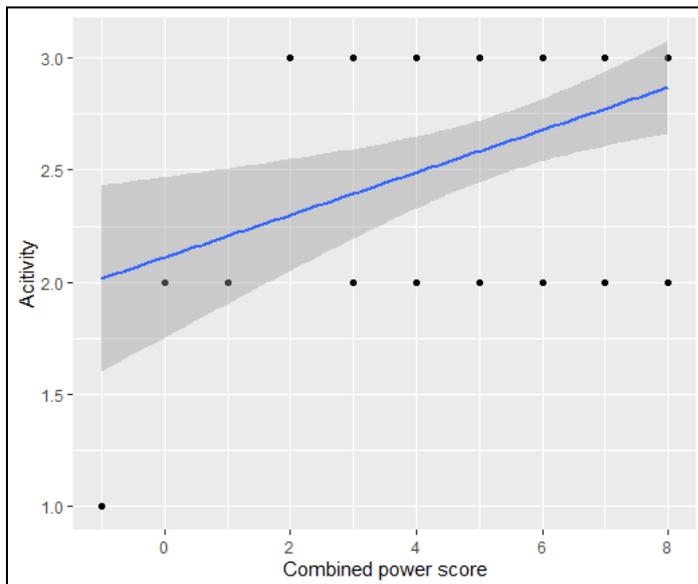
Combined Power Score ( $P_c$ ) & Political Activity (Q. 19)

### Normality

	Shapiro Wilk normality test (p-value)
$P_c$	0.0008036
Q. 19	5.426e-10

### Correlation

$P_c$ & Q. 19	
Spearman's rho	0.3117141
p-value	0.02308



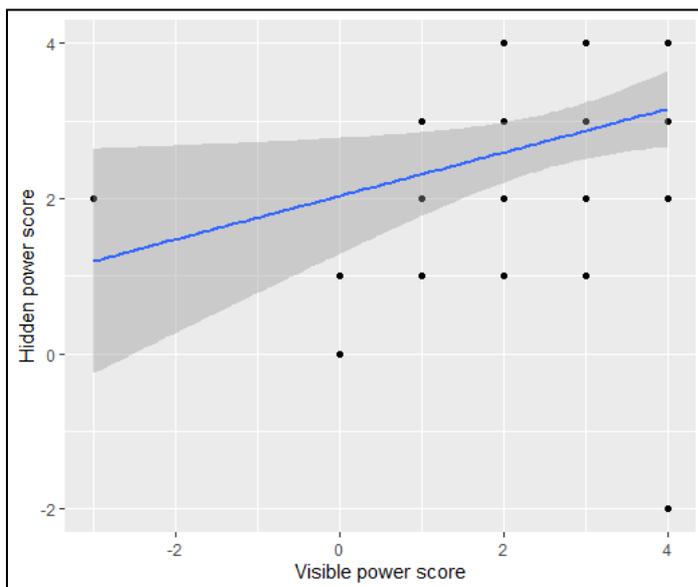
## Visible Power Score ( $P_v$ ) & Hidden Power Score ( $P_h$ )

### Normality

	Shapiro Wilk normality test (p-value)
$P_v$	1.961e-06
$P_h$	2.8e-06

### Correlation

$P_v$ & $P_h$	
Spearman's rho	0.3585133
p-value	0.008388



## Appendix IV: Qualitative Results

### *Qualitative Survey Results*

The survey provided options for qualitative data collection within the questions (choosing “other“ and entering information in text form) and within the final question as explained in the methodology. The answers that were given are presented in this chapter in their translated form while mentioning the respondent number. The entries that were not necessarily connected to the topic were not included.

#### ***Respondent 1, Trawler/Fish:***

„The Sea is big enough for everyone if we go into dialogue in a constructive way and do not blacken each other continuously. Because that adds nothing...“

#### ***Respondent 6, Trawler/Fish:***

„Compare the map of the VMS data of the Dutch fleet with the planned offshore wind areas and nature protection areas.“

(note: VMS means Vessel Monitoring System, a system which records spatial data of fishing vessels. The respondent refers to the fact that these areas often coincide since shallow banks are generally speaking valuable fishing grounds as well as they are prime areas for offshore construction.)

#### ***Respondent 7, Trawler/Fish:***

„As fisherman you are displaced the most for climate protection without any appreciation or thanks. The negative [ecological] impact of wind energy is accepted and not talked about. Compensation areas for wind farms means for the fishing sector to be displaced twice. Indians of the Sea in a small reservation. The North Sea where we fished and cared for generation after generation is transformed into an industrial site.“

***Respondent 8, Trawler/Fish:***

„Maybe it appears from my answers that I am not interested in politics or that my occupation does not influence my voting behaviour. That is also partly true since I am, as a Christian, always voting from a Christian perspective, while also taking economic aspects into account.“

***Respondent 30, Trawler/Fish:***

„There was zero influence of the fishing sector on agenda setting, until a few months ago. The situation is improving. The other sectors still have a very big influence especially nature protection, always having the media on their side, and wind energy which has the climate goals on their side. I think that the fishing sector itself very much underestimates the negative effects it has on the societal perception. “

***Respondent 44, Small-scale fishing:***

„There is a very low influence of the small-scale fishing sector on the agenda within MSP. This is due to a very big lobby of the demersal trawl sector, its associations and production organisations which dismiss the interests of the small-scale fisheries. There is a very high economic power concentrated in the trawl fishing sector and a very one-sided lobby which means that there is no balanced or nuanced policy. There is very little recognition of interests or ideas that fall outside of the established class system of the fisheries world. Changes and transformations do go very slow and are often opposed or trivialized by the bigger associations. “

***Respondent 45, Small-scale fishing:***

„We as LIFE (Low Impact Fishermen of Europe/NL) advocate for just and balanced rights of small-scale fisheries and protection of fishing grounds for everyone. Due to the financially

very powerful lobby of the production organisations politicians and policy makers have a skewed picture of the situation. The economic interest of a small group of small-scale fishermen is not accounted for. “

***Respondent 47, Small-scale fishing:***

„I think that it is important to consider why pelagic species such as cod, sea-bass, pollock and ling are not found between the Dutch and the UK coastline anymore. Since the construction of the first wind farms, namely Thornton Bank and Blighbank, we constant a significant decline in these fish stocks, except for very few small stocks that migrate along the coast. The national research institutes remain silent on the effects of high-voltage subsea cables because there is no client that wants to finance such research. In practice however it shows that earlier mentioned species cannot cross such high-voltages cables. If you overlay the maps of cetacean strandings and these cables you will see remarkable similarities. Also, the earth’s magnetic field on the migration routes (Vlammse banken for example) is significantly distorted so that no fish can uses these routes can find its way. “

### *Informal Conversational Interviews*

As already discussed in the methodology chapter the interviews were carried out in an informal setting so that audio recording and subsequent transcription was not feasible. Therefore the interviews were summarized based on notes taken during the conversations. The summaries are structured along the main themes that were discussed during the interviews.

#### **Fisherman 1:**

*Fisherman 1, is from the Dutch village of Urk. He is part of a fishing family and captain of a flyshooter while also being member of the interest group EMK (Eendracht Maakt Kracht). He was interviewed after the completion of the survey.*

#### *Invisible power and participation in MSP*

Fisherman 1 elaborated a lot on aspects of communication, framing and wrong information that is used by NGO's to depict fisheries in a bad way. He feels a very strong negative attitude towards fisheries in general and perceives that „*everyone is against the fishing sector*“. He also stated that the voice of fisheries is not heard at all and that fishermen, apart for the representatives of the associations, are not involved or approached at all within the MSP process. He furthermore stated that society and especially policy makers do not have a thorough understanding of fisheries and that this is causing a variety of problems. In terms of possibilities for political activity he stated that he is definitely more active because of all the severe pressures that the sector is facing but that he is very limited in his options due to the nature of fishing and the connected lack of time. When asked if he often attends meetings within the association he is part of he stated that the meetings are on Tuesday making it impossible for him, and many others, to attend. He explained that the weekend is basically the only option for political activity but that the weekend is definitely his „*family time*“ which is very valuable to him.

*MSP and the position of fisheries:*

Fisherman 1 was especially negative about nature protection and also elaborated on the fact that with the nature compensation areas for wind energy sites there is a twofold loss of space for the fishing community and that these areas are often the same as valuable fishing grounds. When asked if he fishes outside the Dutch EEZ he replied that he often fishes in UK, Danish or French waters. He added that he often had contact with UK fishermen and that the problems which they encounter (sectoral, perception of society, MSP) are exactly the same in the UK. In terms of future perspectives he stated that the fishing sector has huge challenges due to the uncertainties that are connected to policy (spatial as well as sectoral) and that it is difficult to plan ahead. He made the example that there are „*piles of regulation*“ from different sources to which the fisherman has to adhere to. Economic path-dependency also was a topic we talked about and developed the metaphorical example of „*hammers and screws*“ during the dialogue. This means that the fishermen has to invest in a certain vessel to be able to use certain gear types and catch certain species. He expects to work with *nails* in the future and therefore invests in a *hammer*. However, policy changes, new regulations and market developments might make it necessary to suddenly work with *screws*, meaning that the *hammer* he invested in is basically rendered useless. He ended the conversation with stating what he had also commented on the survey, that there needs to be more dialogue and that the sea is big enough for everyone if there is constructive interaction and not constant blackening and framing between the parties.

## **Fisherman 2**

*With fisherman 2 also a short interview was conducted after the completion of the survey. Fisherman 2 was also member of a fishing family and captain of a trawler using beam trawl gear.*

*MSP and the position of fisheries:*

Fisherman 2 stated that he is highly unsatisfied with the situation and that he sees wind energy developments very critical and as the main problem in terms of spatial planning (next to nature protection). He stated that other industries seem to have very simple pathways via which they can place structures and privatize areas and that the fisheries interest is not taken into consideration seriously. For example shipping lanes are placed without any consultation and that the North Sea in general is getting more and more crowded. He stated that the people who are responsible for planning have no idea about fishing and how it works. Furthermore, he explained that if a fisherman goes into any of the other users area by accident he is directly faced with serious financial consequences. Everyone seems to have own areas while fishermen are always moved around and have to find their way between the other users. He also stated that he is very worried about the future as he wants his sons to continue the family business and only sees increasing amounts of challenges and problems.

**Mr. Koffemann:**

*Mr. Koffemann was born into a fishing family in the Dutch fishing village of Urk and worked as captain of one of the family owned trawlers for approximately 30 years. He then left the active fishing business and is now working as self-employed consultant. He is well connected within the fishing community and is active on various boards of fishing associations and event committees. He is often featured in news and media and can be considered a spokesperson for the Dutch fishing sector.*

*Social identity, community aspects and traditions:*

Mr. Koffemann stated that there is a strong collective identity within the fishing sector and that there is also an individualized identity present that is partly defined via the employed fishing method. Specifically the vessel used, according to him this is especially true for the family owned businesses where in a lot of cases the families are owning the vessel and do not simply “work” aboard the vessel. A huge part of the fisherman’s life takes place at sea, together with the vessel, meaning that there is more attachment present than in other jobs. The same is true for fishing in general. It is more than a job or an occupation but rather a way of life that is closely interwoven with cultural and traditional aspects that span over basically all realms of life. Furthermore, if a fisherman is forced to stop with fishing (due to economic or ecological reasons) it is not easy for him to adapt to life on “dry land” and there is no such thing such as “simply” adopting another career path. While a banker that leaves his job might relatively easy be able to switch and adapt to a job at for example an insurance company, a fisherman loses more than his job when switching careers. The same notion relates to future and job security for the next generation. Within a normal office job the person might not be worried whether his children will adopt the same career, within fishing families however that is an important aspect which increases uncertainty for the future and makes threats more severe due to the long-term perspective with which fishermen look at developments. He also elaborated on the high socio-economic importance of fisheries for coastal areas and stated that one job at sea relates to five or six land-based jobs.

### *Perception of space:*

Also connected to the former, perception and meaning of space was mentioned during the conversation. Mr. Koffemann stated that there are different perspectives on space at sea and that there is a cultural component involved in the fisherman's perspective. What for outsiders or other industries might appear as blank space on the map might be a valuable fishing ground that has been fished for centuries by members of the community. Furthermore, there might be even a deeper connection to the locality if members of the fishing community have lost their vessels or even their lives in these areas. He also elaborated on the mobility aspect and that especially in the uncertain present times (various regulations, changing target species, natural fluctuation in species and market, etc.) mobility is needed to operate successfully.

We also talked about the perception of space in more practical terms and Mr. Koffemann mentioned that while for outsiders the sector is often perceived to be able to „fish anywhere“ while in practical terms the space is often already scarce. He mentioned that during his active career as trawler captain he mapped more than 200.000 areas which were inaccessible to fishing (due to numerous aspects such as: wrecks, ammunition, old drilling wells, etc.).

### *Fisheries and societal perception:*

When talking about aspects that related to invisible power, such as stereotyping and the image of fisheries in society, Mr. Koffemann stated that he also felt a negative attitude. However he also mentioned that in the past, especially during the 1980s, overfishing was a major concern and that all fleets (also the Dutch) have contributed to the problem in the North Sea. He said that a mentality shift has taken place and with the new regulations overfishing and exceeding the TAC is basically not happening anymore. However, he also stated that some fishermen still have a mindset that is focused on catching as much fish as possible even though this mindset is slowly decreasing in the sector. In terms of societal perception he pointed out that this „unsustainable heritage“ still contributes greatly to the difficult position of fisheries in the public perception. Mr. Koffemann also stated that media and journalism as well as framing by NGOs contributes greatly to the dominant stereotypes of fisheries but also mentioned that there was a historic lack of action and interest by the sector itself. He for example stated that media workshops and trainings were held recently (in associations and interest groups) to improve outreach and to improve the influence of the sector on its societal

perception. This should have been done ten years ago according to him. We also talked about missed chances to inform and educate society about fisheries. For example at the food-festival we visited, there were only food stands present and no representatives of associations or interest groups that could have utilized the occasion.

### *Political activity*

Mr. Koffeman stated that due to the pressures at the moment there is definitely an increased political activity to be seen in the sector. Especially in terms of unconventional channels and protests. For example the founding of interest groups such as EMK that can to a certain extent also be seen as a notion of distrust against the „traditional“ associations which were perceived as not defending the fisheries interest hard enough. Another aspect he mentioned is that interest groups, as essentially private activities, do have a wider set of „*political tools*“ available and do therefore offer more options for political activity.

### *General and contextual topics*

We talked about the general political context of Dutch fisheries and the pressures that were present at the moment, Mr. Koffemann stated that the pulse-debate that is going on at the moment and which resulted in a total ban on pulse fishing is a very emotional topic. He explained that it mostly was a socio-economic and political issue. The Dutch, with their innovative and effective gear, often fished in French waters and the French, mostly having vessels that are unable to make as much profit as pulse trawlers had difficulties with the Dutch fishing and making profit of their waters while they would fish at an „*economic minimum*“. This is also partly the case for other methods such as flyshooters he mentioned. The problem is complex since from a legal perspective there is nothing wrong with Dutch vessels operating in the waters of other member states, from a social perspective however difficulties arise and Mr. Koffeman stated that it would have been favourable to „*give something back*“ as a sign of good will by for example financing projects in French coastal areas or helping communities.

Further elaborating on the international aspects of fisheries we talked about the fact that the Dutch fleet is highly dependent on other member states waters, making also Brexit a major concern for the community.

## Appendix V: Opinion text by Dr. Johnson

### **The most abhorrent occupation in the world?**

Imagine you have a business.

You're not breaking any laws and its something your family have been doing for hundreds of years. Your whole community has been doing it and whole cultures, traditions, music, stories and clothes have evolved around it. Industries have thrived on your products. Your product is gluten free, contains no additives, has a low carbon cost, doesn't involve ploughing and transforming the land and gives us beautiful food that kings and commoners alike adore.

Your industry is one where workers can do well just by dint of tenacity and hard work. The aristocracy and powerbrokers don't go near it. Your activity is the source of identity for coastal communities. At work you are free.

Now imagine, having been bombarded with insultingly simplistic hyperbole about the impacts of your industry, that the middle classes decide not to like you. They view your job as one for greedy, good for nothing skivers, folk that take something for nothing. These people are more articulate than you, better off, better connected, more numerous and have no economic link to your business. If you fail it has no impact on them. In fact, they earn more money the more despicable they can make you appear. Casting aspersions on your character and industry is a multi-million pound business. Not only that but their success in vilifying you makes them feel smug. These people make such a good job of making you look bad because that is what they are paid to do, they can afford good lawyers and bad politicians.

You, on the other hand, are paid to work. Not to wear a suit and sit in an office wearing a shirt and tie in meeting after meeting, discussing the nuances of situations over canapes.

You find yourself and your industry being eroded. Not by fact-based evidence but by the wild ramblings of people who are ideologically driven to persecute those that make a living from a common resource.

If this is you my friend, you are a fisherman. Be proud. Be strong. Be safe.

Dr. Magnus Johnson is a lecturer in Environmental Marine Science at the Centre for Environmental and Marine Sciences, University of Hull. His views are his own.

(found at: <https://fisherynation.com/archives/tag/dr-magnus-johnson>)