From Garbage Can to Cloud (Meta)Governance:

New action perspectives for information providers and public decision makers

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Central question:
How to improve capacity for delivery & uptake of geo-spatial information in (environmental) decision making?

Content:

1. **Some features of science-policy relations**
2. **Capacity building in the policy world:**
   2.1 Dealing with organised anarchy: managing the 'Garbage Can' ?
   2.2 Garbage Cans and Governance
   2.3 Increase capacity of policy makers
3. **Capacity building in the geo-spatial information world**
   3.1 How to influence the uptake of spatial information?
   3.2 Increase capacity of spatial information providers

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Spatial info providers ⟹ Info system/ study/research ⟹ **Politicians**

Could you be more specific?

Is TTIP good or bad?

Where? Which parts of environment?

Is TTIP good for the environment?

(1) Yes I'll do it; (2) No, I'll pass

Do you want the project or not? I need the answer NOW

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Different rationalities:

Spatial info providers

Provide the best possible information

- Methodology
- Modelling
- Networks
- Mono/Multi/ Inter disciplinarity
- Transdisciplinarity

Politicians

Take the best possible decision

- Appropriateness
- Feasibility
- Short-term success
- Postpone until approapriate decision is feasible

Political decision making is:

- Usualy not 'rational' and not linear in time
- Often better described as 'organised anarchy':

`Decision`

problem	agents	opportunity	solution

Garbage Can Model
(Cohen, March & Olsen 1972)
- Problems, solutions and actors moving from one choice opportunity to another
- 4 classes of objects
- Collissions of objects generate events called 'decisions'
- From rational perspective, this is 'messy', 'untidy' -> therefore the 'garbage can'
- 'Cloud' a better metaphor? [digital, invisible, location vague)

2.1 Dealing with organized anarchy: the 'Garbage Can'

Three approaches (Cohen, March & Olsen 2012):

1. GCM helps understand messy decision making world;
2. Create purposeful adatations to a garbage can world;
3. Try reducing/eliminating GC processes: restore order!

1st approach is useful but does'nt give any 'steer';
3rd approach is impossible (unless you replace decision makers with computers)

2nd approach is most promising: brings in some intentions/steer
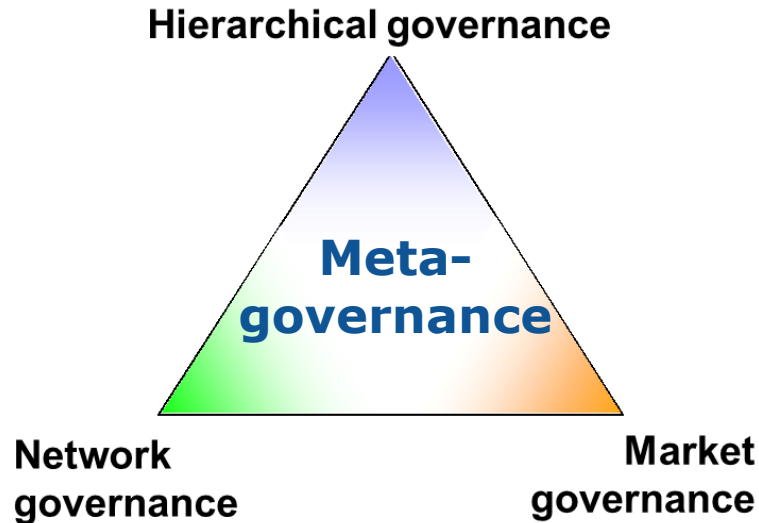-> how? Through **dedicated governance frameworks**

2.2 Garbage Cans and Governance

Governance = HOW (instit./instrum/processes/actors) to achieve objectives
3 basic governance styles with different normative assumptions about the meaning of life, role of government etc

Hierarchical governance

Meta-governance

Network governance

Market governance

Governance frameworks are combinations of the 3 styles, designed for specific challenges

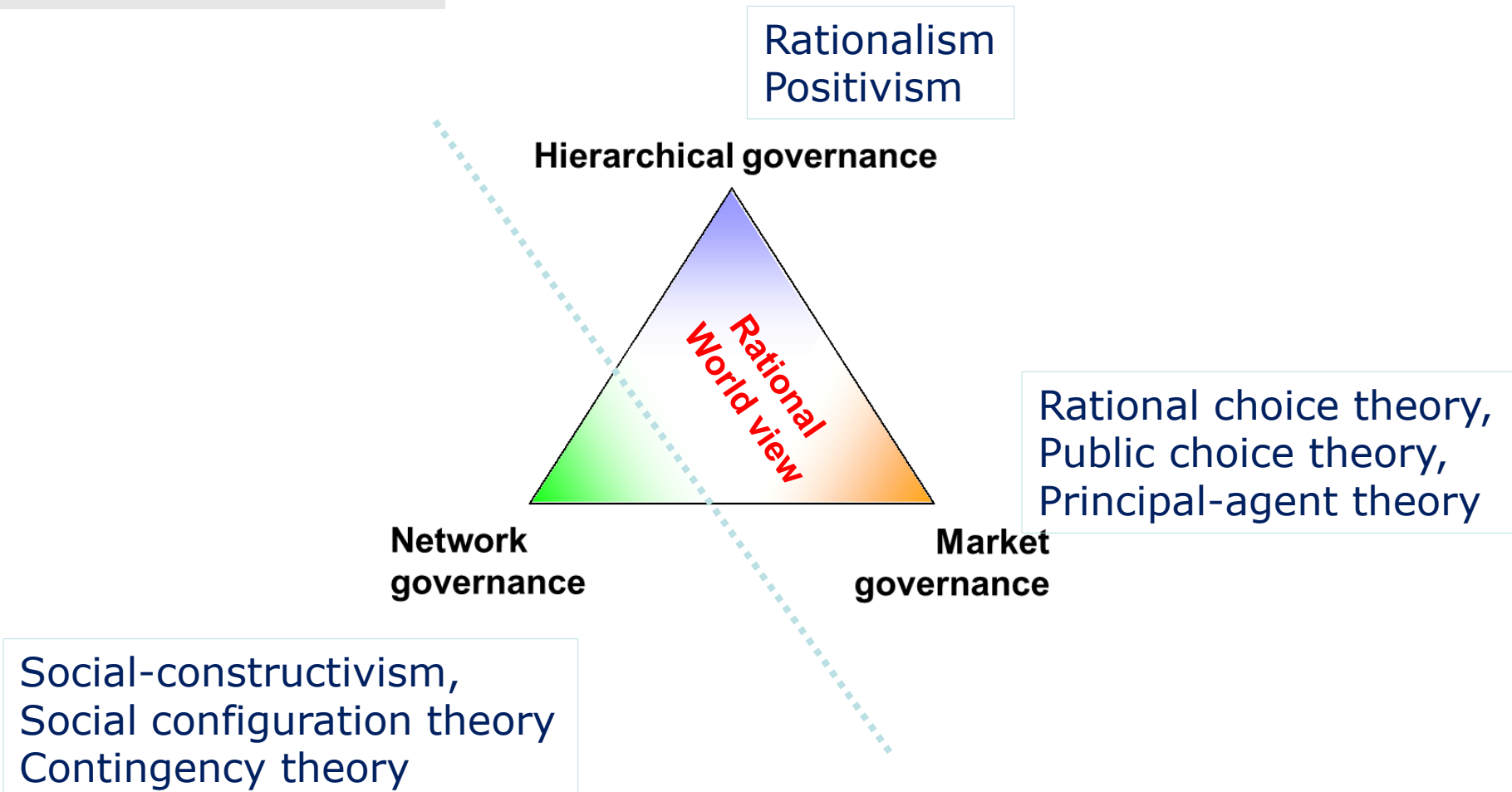**Metagovernance** is the 'art' of situationally combining the 3 styles into specific frameworks, and managing these

Theoretical background

Rationalism
Positivism

Hierarchical governance

Rational World view

Rational choice theory,
Public choice theory,
Principal-agent theory

Network governance

Market governance

Social-constructivism,
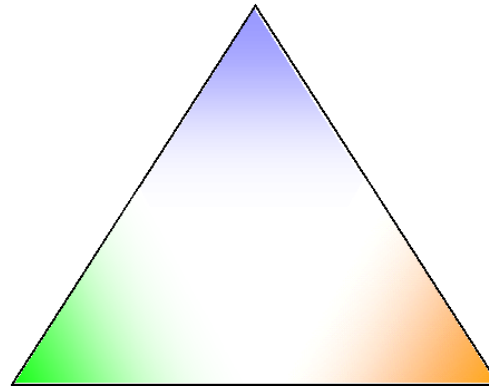Social configuration theory
Contingency theory

2.2 Garbage Cans and Governance

Roles of knowledge

Not welcome/convenient? Undermine authority

"Usable knowledge is authoritative"

Hierarchical governance

Not welcome/ convenient? Undermine trust

Not welcome/ convenient? Undermine price/quality ratio

Network governance

Market governance

"Usable knowledge is broadly accepted

"Usable knowledge is cost-effective

Example: How to discredit the narratives and data on green growth?

"Yes, Minister" (The Greasy Pole) method to discredit any study/data in four steps:

1. Give reasons of public interest (e.g. economic growth first, 'greening' is a luxury)

2. Discredit the evidence that is not published

3. Undermine the recommendations

4. Discredit the persons/consultancies who wrote the studies (tree huggers, fundamentalists, publicity seekers)

2.2 Garbage Cans and Governance

Typical hierarchical instrument

2.2 Garbage Cans and Governance

Problem with hierarchical thinking....

"If you only have a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail"

Abraham Maslow

'Fragile' by bb_matt (via Flickr). CC BY licence

2.2 Garbage Cans and Governance

Typical market instrument

2.2 Garbage Cans and Governance

Problem with market thinking...

"If you only have money, you tend to see every problem as a financial/monetary problem"

2.2 Garbage Cans and Governance

Typical network instrument

2.2 Garbage Cans and Governance

Problem with network thinking...

"If you only have trust, you tend to see every problem as a relational problem"

2.3 Increase capacity of policy makers

- Think longer about the relevant knowledge questions

- Be aware of knowledge questions in each phase of decision making

- Understand better the character/constraints of knowledge providion

- Invest in integrity regarding using knowledge products

- Metagovernance is a powerful approach: breaking blockades made of value conflicts, by making different views transparent and acknowledging each view as relevant

3.1 How to influence the uptake of spatial information?

Understand the 'rationale' of the political decision makers:

European Commission: <u>Hierarchical</u> organisation structure + professional <u>network</u> culture and extensive stakeholder involvement, + general preference for <u>legal</u> and <u>market</u>-based solutions

Knowledge preferences within the European Commission:

- Info provision should be <u>fast</u> (-> studies instead of research)
- Info should be <u>timely</u> (-> deadlines! -> consult or universities?
- Data must be '<u>fresh</u>'
- Information must be '<u>authoratitive</u>' (e.g. OECD)
- Knowledge should be <u>transdisciplinary</u> (include lay/stakeholder experience)

3.2 Increase capacity of spatial information providers

- Try to understand the governance environment/constraints of politicians/policy makers
  [Similar: relations between Impact Assessment and governance. Article: 'Owl meets Beehive': Meuleman, L. (2015), **Owl meets Beehive: How Impact Assessment and Governance relate**. In: *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, 33:1, 4-15, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2014.956436]

- Know the topical policy agenda: EU 2015: Better Regulation Package, new Circular Economy Package, implementation in EU of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- Connect to policy makers (also informal contacts)

- Help policy makers to formulate the appropriate knowledge questions

- See if you can influence/use the Garbage Can / Governance Cloud in which decisions emerge (-> actors, problems, solutions, choice opportunities)

- Politicial decision making is messy, untidy -> not 'rational'

- This makes uptake of spatial information suboptimal

- Decision makers could bring some more intentional thinking in the 'Garbage Can' or 'Cloud' -> cloud metagovernance

- Spatial information providers should see if they can adapt better to to governance reality of decision makers

Thank you for your attention!

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Further reading / sources:

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