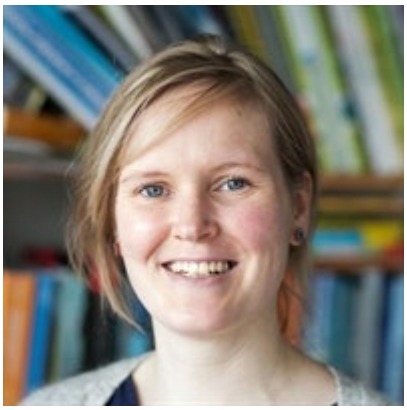
ENP supervisor profiles

Are you looking for a thesis topic and supervisor at the Environmental Policy (ENP) group? Take a look at the profile of our supervisors and projects they currently work on. Names are in alphabetical order (by last name). Tip: use Control(Command)+ F, to search relevant keywords.

- Ingrid Boas: Climate change, human im/mobility, and adaptation
- Simon Bush: Sustainable transformation of global (sea)food systems through governance, markets, and digital tools
- Eira Carballo Cárdenas: Marine conservation and restoration through knowledge co-production, indigenous perspectives, and science–policy collaboration
- Mary Greene: Everyday consumption practices and social inequalities shaping sustainability transitions in households, cities, and the Global South
- Aarti Gupta: Transparency, accountability, and anticipatory governance shaping power, equity, and responsibility in global climate politics
- Paulan Korenhof: Digital technologies (e.g., AI and Digital Twins) for environmental governance, digital sufficiency and 'green IT'
- Sanneke Kloppenburg: Digital technologies, social practices, and citizen participation shaping just and sustainable energy and consumption futures
- Kris van Koppen: Human–nature relationships, social learning, and municipal policies shaping democratic and sustainable societies
- Machiel Lamers: Sustainable tourism, nature conservation, and governance in coastal, marine, and polar regions
- Judith van Leeuwen: Reflexive governance, circular plastics, and blue economy shaping sustainable marine and industrial transformations
- Sean Low: Anticipatory assessment and knowledge politics of frontier technologies in climate governance
- Arthur Mol: Shaping global and local sustainability in extraction and production: politics, economics and protests
- Ina Möller: Climate change, carbon removal, and geoengineering shaping global governance and climate–food policy
- Annet Pauwelussen: Marine restoration, ocean justice, and plural ways of knowing shaping inclusive marine biodiversity governance
- Daniel Scholten: Energy transition, climate policy, and geopolitics shaping global energy systems and governance
- Glen Smith: Marine spatial planning, governance, and coastal adaptation emphasizing participation, transparency, and power dynamics
- Mattijs Smits: Renewable energy transitions, carbon markets, and environmental practices shaping sustainable energy landscapes
- Hilde Toonen: Information and governance shaping sustainable aquaculture, fisheries, and Blue Food transformations
- Bas van Vliet: Urban infrastructures, social practices, and participation shaping sustainable water, energy, and food systems.
- Sigrid Wertheim-Heck: Food practices, governance, and sustainability shaping inclusive and transformative global food systems
- Annah Zhu: Globalization, political ecology, and China’s environmental interventions in forestry, wildlife, and climate governance

Ingrid Boas: Climate change, human im/mobility, and adaptation



Keywords

Climate/environmental-change related im/mobility (migration/displacement), adaptation, loss and damage

About

Ingrid does research into the relations between climate/environmental change and human im/mobility, exploring the diverse ways in which people move (or may not want to, or may not be able to) in the context of growing climate risks. Her background is in international relations and human geography, and she uses mobile and interdisciplinary ethnography as a course method of research.

Thesis topics & projects

Climate change and im/mobility in Europe/US/Australia

Most research on climate mobility is done in the Global South. This leaves underexplored how climate change is impacting on people's mobility in Europe, Australia or the US for example (in the form of displacement, rural-urban mobility, etc.). The thesis could either focus on the policy side or on the perceptions and mobilities of citizens, or on a combination of both; also paying attention to uneven mobilities when comparing movements by the rich elite and those with lesser resources.

Climate mobilities and geopolitics

Questions about climate change and human im/mobility increasingly intersect with geopolitical questions about borders, territory and associated rights. Think of climate change shifting borders, how this impacts the interest of states but also the rights of communities connected to these shifting territories. Think of cases like the island states (and their shifting sea and land territories) but also the Artic or other mountainous or river areas.

Postcolonial perspectives on climate mobilities

There has been critique about the ways in which the relation between climate change and migration is being framed, especially in media (e.g. as a threat). As a response, there is a growing call from indigenous groups and populations about their perspectives on these relations and their visions of climate futures. This thesis project would engage with these debates, and from this perspective critically review the role of international donors and climate policies (e.g. in the context of climate adaptation and loss and damage) and how these are viewed and are possibly contested on the ground.

Simon Bush: Sustainable transformation of global (sea)food systems through governance, markets, and digital tools

Keywords

Market-based governance, global value chains, digitalisation, global enviromental flows, social practices, (sea)food systems

About

Simon's research focuses on the sustainable transformation of global (sea)food systems. His recent work spans various dimensions related to the effectiveness of market and/or digitally based sustainability interventions by states, NGOs and private companies. Theoretically he focuses on environmental flows and networks, practices and value chains.

Thesis topics & projects

Circular aquaculture governance

Aquaculture is one of the fastest expanding food sectors in the world. At the same time the sector has come under considerable pressure to improve the efficiency and sustainability of resource use. In other words, how can the sector become more circular? Students taking up this topic will research governance approaches with ambitions to steer towards circular aquaculture systems. Opportunities for fieldwork are global, most likely working through the Global Seafood Alliance or the Monterrey Bay Seafood Watch Programme.

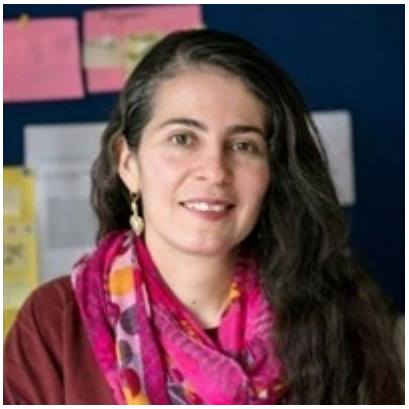
Regional (sea)food governance

Sustainable food is commonly governed at the farm scale. However, sustainability requires the management of resources nearly always at spatial scales far greater than the farm. At the same time, production requires collaboration from both (sea)food and non (sea)food producers. And it requires support and collaboration with market actors buying, financing and assuring sustainable production. Students taking up this project will work on both marine and aquatic food systems in Europe and Asia to explore novel ways of bringing these actors together in the joint assessment of sustainability.

Capabilities for food system transformation

Food systems require transformations in the way a wider range of actors perform production, trade and consumption. We increasingly recognise that the practices of these actors combine in different ways to either block of support sustainability. However, we are less clear on the capability of these actors to change their practices. This line of research builds on the Blue Food Assessment carried out in 2021 to explore the effect finance, regulation and market standards have on the capability of actors in the food system to adopt sustainable practices.

Eira Carballo Cárdenas: Marine conservation and restoration through knowledge co-production, indigenous perspectives, and science–policy collaboration



Keywords

Marine protected areas, coral reefs, conservation & restoration, fisheries, aquaculture, citizen science, knowledge co-production, indigenous knowledge, legitimacy, interdisciplinarity

About

Eira has a background in the natural sciences (marine biology, fisheries and aquaculture) and a passion for marine governance issues. She is interested in a wide range of research methods and is keen to learn new theories to expand her understanding of human-nature interactions, with a focus on knowledge co-production in the context of marine governance.

Thesis topics

Coastal/marine ecosystem restoration

Students may explore topics ranging from i) how marine ecological restoration is defined and restoration goals are implemented in a specific case; ii) development of evaluation frameworks for ecological restoration; iii) the role of citizen science in restoration; iv) participatory approaches; v) or the science-policy interface in restoration governance of various ecosystem types in diverse geographical locations.

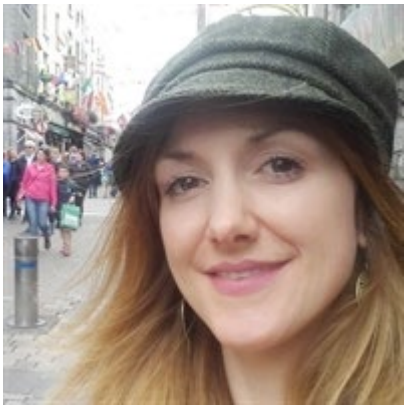
Coastal/marine local & indigenous knowledge in biodiversity governance

Local and indigenous knowledge is often relegated or ignored in (global) biodiversity assessments and negotiations. Students are invited to investigate one of the following lines of enquiry: i) a case study examining how the participatory processes within IPBES that encourage more inclusive knowledge production for global assessments have played out in practice, or ii) how has local and indigenous knowledge being used in defining the CBD's agenda to 2050, in particular regarding coastal or marine issues. Other topics are also possible, based on students' own interests.

Colonial legacies in marine conservation/restoration, fisheries or aquaculture governance

Topics depending on students' own interests.

Mary Greene: Everyday consumption practices and social inequalities shaping sustainability transitions in households, cities, and the Global South



Keywords

Consumption; social practices; everyday life; urban initiatives; social practices

About

Mary Greene is a critical geographer and sociologist specialising in the sociological study of (un)sustainable consumption. With a passion for understanding the intricate interplay between everyday life and social systems, she employs theories of social practice and deep qualitative methods to analyse the evolution of consumption practices over time. Mary's research explores consumption practices across time and space, including across temporal scales of generations, historical periods, daily life schedules, and biographic life courses, as well as across societal spaces, encompassing various social groups and cultural contexts. Currently, Mary is involved in several research projects that encompass the following themes.

Thesis topics

Consumption in the Circular Society

This research area critically examines the transition from linear 'take-make-waste' economies to circular economies. While circular economy (CE) agendas have primarily focused on technical and production aspects, Mary's work fills a critical gap by investigating the social dynamics of circular consumption. Her ongoing research explores how circular consumption practices (e.g., reducing, reusing, repairing, sharing) emerge and are supported within households and society.

Changing Consumption Practices

This research theme delves into the transformation of everyday consumption practices. Mary investigates how consumption practices evolve due to life course transitions, social change, and disruptive events.

Consumption Transformations in the Global South

Against the backdrop of rapid urbanisation and profound political-economic changes in the Global South, this research theme centres on understanding everyday dynamics of consumption transformations in developing settings. Mary's research in this area analyses changing consumption practices in domains such as food, energy, and mobility among emerging middle-class and urban poor consumers in African and Asian contexts.

Aarti Gupta: Transparency, accountability, and anticipatory governance shaping power, equity, and responsibility in global climate politics

Keywords

Global environmental and climate governance, anticipatory governance of novel technologies, transparency and accountability

About

Aarti's research focuses on the international politics of global environmental and climate governance, including the role of science, knowledge, and transparency. She is also interested in the challenges of anticipatory governance of novel technologies, such as solar geoengineering. Her background is in international relations, political science and science & technology studies.

Thesis topics & projects

Transparency, accountability and equity in global sustainability and climate governance

Transparency is increasingly seen as key to global environmental and climate governance and politics. Transparency, understood as information disclosure, is assumed to be essential to more accountable and effective governance. Yet does transparency fulfil this promise? My research examines whether and how transparency is a transformative force in global environmental governance: whether it furthers accountability of powerful actors and enhances trust? Or rather, whether it might it also become a form of surveillance and control, and disempowerment of the already vulnerable. MSc thesis projects on this topic can focus on: (a) the ever-growing role for 'enhanced' transparency in the 2015 Paris climate agreement, and whether transparency stimulates more ambitious climate action as widely assumed; (b) the role for digitally enabled 'radical transparency' generated through satellites, and its role in politics and governance; and (c) mandatory versus voluntary transparency in global governance, and the diverse consequences for equitable and effective outcomes. *See the* TRANSGOV *project.*

Anticipatory governance of solar geoengineering and other risky technologies and activities: Key challenges and ways forward

Solar geoengineering refers to a set of speculative technologies that have the potential to reflect some incoming sunlight back out into space, as a way to counteract the adverse effects of anthropogenic climate change. How are such speculative and potentially highly risky technologies being governed, in an anticipatory manner? MSc thesis projects on this topic can focus on: (a) the geopolitics of anticipatory governance of solar geoengineering, including the (minimal) involvement of developing countries; (b) the role of scientific experts in shaping the solar geoengineering governance debate and directions; (c) restrictive versus enabling governance mechanisms that are or should be in place to shape decision making in this area; and (d) lessons learned for solar geoengineering governance from already existing precedents in international law, relating to global governance regimes that prohibit, for e.g., transboundary trade in hazardous substances, use of chemical or biological weapons, mining in Antarctica, deep sea bed mining, human cloning or use of anti-personal land mines. *See the* Solar geoengineering Non-Use Agreement *project.*

Paulan Korenhof: Digital technologies (e.g., AI and Digital Twins) for environmental governance, digital sufficiency and 'green IT'

Keywords

Digital technologies, digitalised environmental governance, justice, socio-material approaches, infrastructures, data assemblages

About

Paulan Korenhof has an interdisciplinary background in philosophy of technology, law, and art. Her research focuses on the intersection of digital technology and sustainability, and in particular on studying how the material design of complex technological systems like Digital Twins and Artificial Intelligence applications affect problem framing and potential intervention choices in the environmental governance of climate change and biodiversity challenges. Additionally, she works on principles for the design, implementation, and use of 'green' digital technology.

Thesis topics & projects

Digital Twins and AI in environmental governance

Digital Twins and AI are expected to play increasingly leading roles in environmental governance, and in particular for the reaching of sustainable development goals. You will be looking through a critical lens at the design, implementation or use of these technologies. You can for example explore the values and view of nature or sustainabilty built into Digital Twins that focus on urban development or on addressing biodiversity loss, or explore how these digital systems support or hamper participatory governance.

Sustainable Digital technology

The intersection of between digital technology and sustainability is challenging: the material and energy costs of producing and using digital technology is commonly high. Yet, different ideas and narratives exists surrounding ‘sustainable’ or ‘green’ digital technology. One the one hand, actors like the European Commission argue for a Twin transition of ‘green’ ‘high tech’ and environmental sustainability. On the other hand, we can find ‘low tech’ approaches like permacomputing initiatives and digital resistance and degrowth collectives. You will be exploring the different views of what a ‘green’ digital future can mean through a socio-material lens.

Data centres in transition(s)

The resource consumption of data centres puts pressure on local infrastructures. Many data centres therefore seek synergies with renewable energy and water transitions by supplying residual heat or becoming ‘water positive’. Using a socio-material lens, you will examine cases of ‘sustainable’ data centres to identify how data centres realign relations between energy, water, and data and the justice concerns that arise around access, ownership and benefits

Sanneke Kloppenburg: Digital technologies, social practices, and citizen participation shaping just and sustainable energy and consumption futures

Keywords

Digital technologies, social practices, citizen participation, sustainable consumption, infrastructures, justice, socio-material approaches

About

Sanneke is an environmental sociologist interested in digital infrastructures and their implications for sustainability in everyday practices. Thematically, her work focuses on the domains of energy, circularity, and digital data. Theoretically, her work builds on practice theory, digital sociology, and science and technology studies

Thesis topics & projects

Sharing in the circular society

Sharing and renting things is important for combating overconsumption, but our everyday urban environment wasn't designed for it. In this project, you explore how sharing and renting can find a place in everyday life in the city. You examine forms of sharing such as digital platforms, sharing communities in neighborhoods, or "library of things." How can we make sharing and renting accessible to everyone? (this topic is connected to ShaRepairPractices)

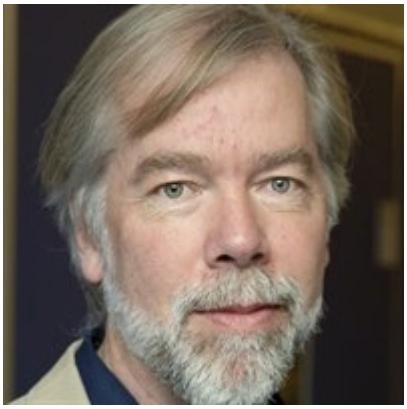
Data centers in transition(s)

As the everyday use of AI is growing, new data centers are planned and built everywhere, but their environmental impact is a problem. Many data centres therefore seek synergies with renewable energy and water transitions by supplying residual heat or becoming 'water positive'. Using a socio-material lens, you will examine cases of 'sustainable' data centres to identify justice concerns around data centers and their resource use.

Digital sufficiency: practices and politics

It is increasingly recognised that our everyday digital practices have a huge environmental impact. In this project you look at how notions of digital sufficiency emerge in everyday life when people refuse digital consumption, or reuse and repair their digital devices. Another option is to examine how activist groups and NGOs challenge and address the resource consumption of digitalised social life through campaigns and alternative technologies and infrastructures.

Kris van Koppen: Human–nature relationships, social learning, and municipal policies shaping democratic and sustainable societies.



Keywords

Nature & agriculture, nature in cities, communication and municipal policies, human-nature relationships and nature policy, social learning and education, Dutch municipal policy making

About

As emeritus fellow of the ENP group, I am engaged in teaching, research, and thesis supervision. My main sociological work explores the relationships between nature and society and between natural and social sciences. In addition, I have a deep interest in social learning as foundation of a democratic and sustainable society.

Thesis topics & projects

The projects below are personal research projects that I pursue for reasons of scientific interest and societal engagement. If you are interested, I can provide literature references. The projects below are formulated in broad and general terms and would need a specific focus to be researchable in a thesis project. Such specification will be based on students' specific interests.

Nature perceptions and values

Human-nature relationships are a most fascinating topic, not only in ecology, but perhaps even more from a social science angle. Why do people appreciate and care for nature? How do natural science, ethics, and aesthetics mix in the ecological movement? What are pathways towards a more consequential and socially inclusive engagement with nature?

Social learning, sustainability, democracy

The quality of a democratic society hinges on the capacities of its citizens. Education and social learning are pivotal in this respect. How can we gear education and learning to democratic environmental action, for example with regard to the climate crisis?

Municipal policies

Municipalities are places where environmental policies touch the ground, and generic principles meet concrete practices. How can municipalities improve in achieving sustainability and citizen engagement?

Machiel Lamers: Sustainable tourism, nature conservation, and governance in coastal, marine, and polar regions

Keywords

Sustainable tourism, nature conservation, coastal and marine, polar regions,

About

Machiel's research focuses on sustainable tourism, and in particular the governance of tourism, natural resource use and environmental change in remote and marine destinations, like the Arctic and Antarctic region, the Caribbean and Indonesia. Theoretically he aims to apply and build the sociology of environmental mobilities and flows, as well as practice theory approaches

Thesis topics & projects

Environmental stewardship in Antarctic tourism

The development of tourism in the Antarctic has seen both rapid growth and diversification. Enhancements in environmental standards and performance rely to a large extent on the goodwill and efforts of operators and other actors. I invite students to analyse cutting edge environmental challenges and analyse discourses, actions and policies from the lens of environmental stewardship, such as waste (water treatment), and pollution in cruise tourism. The results can help inform policy makers who are currently negotiating a comprehensive framework for Antarctic tourism.

Assessing the impact of environmental forecasting services in the polar regions

The warming of the polar regions attract new maritime sectors in the polar regions, such as cruise tourism, fishing and freight transport and major changes for communities, and investments in environmental information and prediction systems. However, the social, environmental and economic impacts of these forecasts and services are not well understood nor systematically investigated. I invite students to develop impact case studies that help us understand these developments, for example around extreme weather conditions (polar lows, icing), critical logistical operations (aviation, reaching remote communities), discourses of safety and sustainability, and the expectations of AI.

Governing tourism in tropical marine protected areas (MPAs)

Worldwide, there are societal and political calls and plans for combatting biodiversity loss by drastically extending (marine) protected areas, oftentimes with high and largely unsupported expectations of tourism as a stable source of conservation finance and alternative livelihood for coastal communities. I invite student projects focusing on the governance of MPAs (entrance fees, zoning, restrictions); community benefits and costs; urban planning and development of environmental infrastructures in Indonesia and the Caribbean.

Judith van Leeuwen: Reflexive governance, circular plastics, and blue economy shaping sustainable marine and industrial transformations

Keywords

Plastic pollution and circularity, producer stewardship, plastic flows and networks, reflexivity and learning, blue economy, social license to operate, (deep) sea mining

About

My research focuses on how policy concepts and instruments stimulate both public and corporate actors to become more reflexive in governing marine pollutants and activities and how this leads to transformative change. I study how environmental information disclosure mechanisms, social license to operate, blue economy, product stewardship and circular economy reduce plastic pollution, change the shipping and resource extractive industry.

Thesis topics & projects

Reflexive marine governance for the blue economy

Blue economy and increase of resource extraction activities are contested, because they result in unsustainable economic development and resource use. Reorientated and redirected marine governance through reflexive learning processes could help deal with the environmental effects of economic exploitation of marine resources and space. Research into how reflexivity comes about and how this changes marine governance and capabilities of actors is, however, scare. Student can study processes of reflexive marine governance within the blue economy, for sand and deep sea mining and pollutants like (micro)plastics and PFAS.

Governing circular plastic transitions

Circular plastic economy refers to closing plastic loops and is framed as a solution for the growing use and pollution from plastic. Across the globe, both companies and policy makers seek ways to enable circular ways of production, use and disposal. However circular transformations are shaped by socio-political dynamics and is daunting as it requires change throughout both production, use and end-of-life networks. Students can contribute to scrutinizing how such systemic change is governed and influenced by differing socio-political (power) dynamics in e.g. the EU and South-east Asia.

Governing decarbonisation of shipping

The need to decarbonize is putting unprecedented pressure onto the shipping industry and its main regulator, the International Maritime Organization. Climate change decision-making for shipping is known to be slow, technocratic and focused on energy-efficiency rather than decarbonization. New private standards, market and information-based initiatives have emerged to stimulate decarbonization. How these will foster decarbonization of a competitive, fragmented and reactive sector remains to be seen. Students can evaluate how new initiatives foster reflexivity and change within the industry and regulatory institutions involved in decarbonizing shipping.

Sean Low: Anticipatory assessment and knowledge politics of frontier technologies in climate governance

Keywords

Climate governance, anticipatory governance, frontier climate technologies (carbon removal, solar geoengineering, artificial intelligence)

About

Sean is interested in how frontier technologies impact global climate governance in a technology-focused and multi-polar age, with an eye to first-movers in scientific, innovation, and civic spaces. He draws upon qualitative research of knowledge politics in global environmental governance, and mixed practices of anticipation and imagination (modelling, qualitative scenarios, stakeholder engagement).

Thesis topics & projects

Frontier climate technologies

In the face of barriers to reducing GHG emissions at source, increasing attention is paid to potentially game-changing but immature propositions for carbon sinks, solar geoengineering, artificial intelligence, and other transboundary techno-environmental interventions that pose deep uncertainties for global governance. What are the key actors, venues, and narratives that are setting the bounds for incoming policy and governance? How are emerging technologies marketed as climate solutions? Can they aid a green transition, or might they turn out to be 'technofixes' that delay decarbonization?

Global assessments and new solution spaces

In an era of polycrisis, global assessments (e.g. at the IPCC and other global environmental governance technical and scientific advisory bodies) and the research fields that underpin them (modeling, qualitative, and mixed-methods assessments) construct 'solution spaces' for addressing climate change. What kinds of expertise, actors, and solutions are privileged or marginalized in assessments? How can assessments become less siloed by issue domain or method, and become more systemic and action-oriented? Is there evidence of 'techno-solutionism'?

Techno-polar politics

Climate governance will be shaped by an incoming era of economic nationalism and securing strategic sectors. How might industries to develop (shared) tactics and technologies that forestall pressure and scrutiny to decarbonize? How are Big Tech and governmental priorities coming together in terms of resource demand, strategic sector development and protection, and technological development? Where is climate governance steered as a result?

Arthur Mol: Shaping global and local sustainability in extraction and production: politics, economics and protests

Keywords

Global mining and extraction, China, international and EU environmental policies and politics, geopolitics, sustainable production, circularity

About

Arthur is interested in global (un)sustainability related to productive sectors, both between the major power blocks (China, the US, EU, Russia) as well as towards and in the global south. What is the role of international and domestic politics and policies, where and how does sustainability become institutionalized in economic sectors, networks and practices, how effective are sustainability politics, how are countervailing powers organized and effective. Specific interests are in the crucial sectors and value chains around mining/extraction, the energy transition, digitalisation and high-tech.

Ina Möller: Climate change, carbon removal, and geoengineering shaping global governance and climate–food policy

Keywords

Climate change, international relations, carbon removal, climate engineering, climate-food policy nexus

About

Ina is interested in global governance and policy making in the area of climate change mitigation, adaptation and remediation. Her background is in political science and international relations, and includes an interest in the science-policy interface. Theoretically, her work engages with authority, legitimacy, norm emergence and political agency in complex institutional systems.

Thesis topics & projects

The politics of 'climate engineering'

As the impacts of climate change are worsening, methods of large-scale climate intervention to actively control regional or global temperature are being suggested. This project aims to better understand how concepts like 'climate engineering' or 'geoengineering' are affecting politics and decision making in real-world settings. How do different actors engage with these concepts? In which societal arenas are they becoming relevant? How do they interact with other forms of climate policy, including emissions reductions or climate adaptation?

Governance implications of 'net zero' and negative emissions technologies

The Paris Agreement and the latest reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change highlight the need to reach 'net zero' emissions by 2050. Many actors are naming the possibility of atmospheric carbon dioxide removal as a component of their individual climate strategy. Cumulatively, this reliance on 'negative emissions technologies' could have serious social and environmental impacts. How are public and private actors envisioning the use of NETs, and how do they account for potential environmental, social and political side-effects?

The climate-food policy nexus

Climate and food policy are becoming increasingly interdependent. Food production needs to reduce its impact on the climate and needs to adapt to a changing environment. Meanwhile, climate policy requires resources for renewable energy and carbon removal, which will in turn affect possibilities for food production. How do these two policy areas interact in current decision making? What are the institutional dynamics at play? What can we learn from pioneering examples of policy integration at the climate-food nexus?

Annet Pauwelussen: Marine restoration, ocean justice, and plural ways of knowing shaping inclusive marine biodiversity governance

Keywords

Marine restoration, politics of care, knowledge pluralism, ocean justice, worldviews, ethnography, mobile methods

About

Annet is interested in marine conservation and restoration, focusing on contestation and collaboration between different ways of knowing, valuing and caring for marine nature, particularly coral and oyster reefs. Her background is in environmental anthropology and science & technology studies, combining mobile and visual ethnography with feminist and posthuman theory.

Thesis topics & projects

Communities and environmental justice in marine restoration

Restoration initiatives are surging globally to reverse the on-going decline of ocean health. This comes with a range of innovative approaches to scale up restoration efforts, e.g. biotech interventions to breed 'super corals', artificial reefs, voluntourism networks to re-plant mangroves or rehabilitate sea turtles. Yet restoration interventions also risk perpetuating deep-seated inequalities and colonial relations, especially in the Global South. High-tech solutions may displace/disrupt local livelihoods or indigenous ways of knowing and relating to the sea. Thesis projects could investigate power relations involved in restoration interventions, their implications for local communities, or the conditions for just and community-based (upscaling of) marine restoration. Geographical focus: established network in Indonesia, Cape Verde

The future of past reefs: politics of care in oyster restoration

There is increasing interest in bringing back oyster reefs that once covered large stretches of the temperate zone. Reef restoration involves practices of caring and repairing, assuming human intervention to design and re-store nature. This raises the political question: what is a good reef to restore for the future, and for whom? Thesis projects may investigate the different values, world views and/or knowledge that come together in restoration and which ones are included or excluded in the process, thereby generating new insights in how to restore reefs in ways that are inclusive and based on co-productive processes. Field work could be done in oyster restoration initiatives in the United States, Europe, United Kingdom, and/or Australia.

Plural visions of nature in the North Sea food/energy transition

The North Sea is undergoing a (sea)food and energy (windmills parks) transition, while there are also increasing calls to protect and restore marine biodiversity. Nature inclusive aquaculture development and wind park design, supported by new digital and bio-technologies are promising integrative approaches. Yet what biodiversity is desired, according to what principles, for what purposes and how to measure it, often remains implicit. Thesis projects could explore the different visions of nature that underpin nature-inclusive approaches, the science-policy relations involved, and mechanisms for inclusive multi-stakeholder involvement in North Sea biodiversity governance. The topic links to BeWild, ECOAMARE & CIRCAQUA projects.

Daniel Scholten: Energy transition, climate policy, and geopolitics shaping global energy systems and governance

Keywords

Energy, climate, economics, security, policy, transitions, geopolitics, governance

About

Dr. Daniel Scholten is a lecturer at the Environmental Policy Group of Wageningen University & Research. He specializes in the geopolitics and governance of the energy transition whilst having a broader interest in energy and climate systems, economics, security, policy, and transitions. He aims to contribute to a smooth energy transition, both domestically and globally, through his research, teaching, and policy advice.He is also a research associate at Clingendael's EU & Global Affairs Unit, the Netherlands, and regular guest lecturer at a variety of universities.

Previously, Dr. Scholten was a visiting assistant professorat theCenter forScience, Technology, and Environmental Policy at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs,University of Minnesota, a senior strategic advisor on energy and sustainability at the Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets,and assistant professor at Delft University of Technology. He was also part of the expert panel of the IRENA global commission on the geopolitics of energy transformation in 2018.

His educational background combines degrees in political science (Radboud University) and international & European relations (University of Amsterdam, with distinction) with a PhD in the economic organization of future energy systems (Delft University of Technology).

Thesis topics and projects

Students can approach me for anything related to the topics below.

Energy and climate policy

- Fossil fuels, renewable energy, other methods of decarbonization
- Mitigation, adaptation, compensation
- Sector specific policies, sustainable development, transition governance
- National, EU or global challenges, policy and governance

Geopolitics of the energy transition

- How the energy transition reshapes global politics: technologies and systems, markets and trade flows, energy and climate security, opportunities and risks
- How global politics influences the energy transition: energy and climate amid great power rivalry, strategic scenarios, weaponization of energy and climate
- Energy and climate policy making in turbulent times: balancing national and collective interests, facilitating a smooth global transition, global governance

Glen Smith: Marine spatial planning, governance, and coastal adaptation emphasizing participation, transparency, and power dynamics

Keywords

Marine spatial planning (MSP), governance and management, coastal climate adaptation, power dynamics, process transparency, participation.

About

Glen is a social scientist who specialises in the governance of various natural resource management systems, with a particular focus on planning. This includes marine spatial planning, the planning of coastal climate change adaptation (land-sea interface), and planning as a tool to help manage flood risk (from all sources). From a theoretical perspective he is interested in the governance of sustainability transitions, notions of space and the creation of space, and political ecology. Geographically he has experience with cases in Scotland, Ireland, England, Norway, and Canada.

Thesis topics & projects

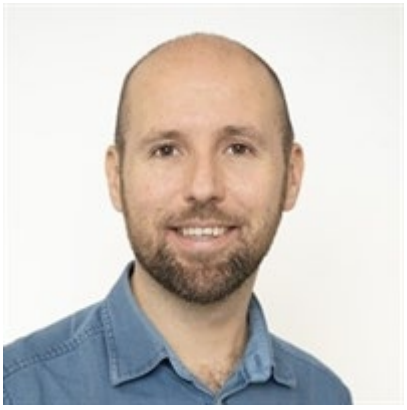
Thinking the unthinkable

In the context of climate change, it has been said in England that "very few coastal local planning authorities seem prepared to 'think the unthinkable' and limit new development in the already developed coastal zone" (The Planner). This problem extends to other countries and their planning authorities. Often systems do not allow for the kind of adaptive thinking that the pace of climate change demands. How do we think the unthinkable in planning? What are the governance requirements for this? How do we incorporate the views of those who have experience with coastal change, or who have novel ideas? How might we better integrate marine and land use planning systems?

Radical marine spatial planning

When compared to land use planning (LUP), marine spatial planning (MSP) is relatively young. Over the decades LUP systems have been reformed and improved. Common themes are the involvement of communities, participatory processes, the transparency of decision-making processes, and the consideration of the wider benefits (or disbenefits) of the use and access to space and resources. Recent research suggests that these considerations did not play a big role in the design of MSP systems. Path-dependency, overly technocratic thinking, and a lack of understanding of the causes of spatial or resource conflicts have resulted in some less-than-ideal outcomes for MSP. Radical MSP considers how this might be improved. For example, how can processes be more democratic and how can (coastal) communities benefit more from MSP?

Mattijs Smits: Renewable energy transitions, carbon markets, and environmental practices shaping sustainable energy landscapes



Keywords

(Renewable) energy transition, energy policy, wind energy, practices, carbon markets

About

Mattijs is interested in (renewable) energy policy and politics, environment, sustainability, (rural) development and carbon markets. His background is in human geography, development and science and technology studies. Theoretically his work engages with political ecology, practice theory, transition theory, and related approaches.

Thesis topics & projects

Engaging with renewable energy technology and landscapes

To reach the Paris climate agreement and national sustainability targets, more and more people will be confronted with solar panels, wind turbines and other technologies in their 'back yard' in rural and urban areas. To address possible concerns and facilitate co-production of renewable energy projects, there is a need to go beyond 'organised participation' (informing local stakeholders about renewable energy projects to gain acceptance). This shift will require (new) forms of engagement with renewable energy projects at various stages of development.

This topic is linked to the work of the Helena Solman (Post-doc) and Iryna Lunevich (PhD)

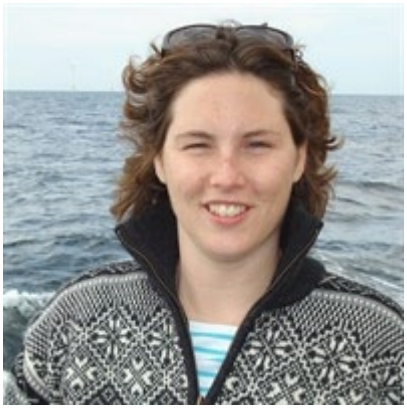
The politics and practices of carbon market mechanisms in a post-Paris world

Market-based mechanisms have taken up a prominent role in the mitigation of climate change. An increasing number of these carbon markets are emerging at global, regional, national, and even local scales worldwide, including in the Global South. However, their function, mutual interaction, and contribution to sustainable energy development remain poorly understood. What is their role in the broader context of climate (and energy) policies and politics? What is their relation to sustainable development (goals)? How do they influence local practices?

NGOs and environmental movements in climate and energy transitions

Climate and energy issues increasingly become the site of heated controversies, e.g. climate policies and projects, the siting of coal-fired or nuclear power stations, and renewable energy projects. In these controversies, environmental movements can play a central role, highlighting what is at stake in these developments. How can we study these environmental movements and their practices? How do they transform something into a 'matter of concern'? What is the influence of movements on local, national and global climate and energy policy and vice versa?

Hilde Toonen: Information and governance shaping sustainable aquaculture, fisheries, and Blue Food transformations



Keywords

information, informational processes/systems, aquaculture, fisheries, governance indicators, mixed methods

About

Hilde's research focuses on the ways in which information shapes governance to enable sustainable transformations in the Blue Food domain (marine fisheries and aquaculture). She studies innovative, non-state-market-based arrangements. Her theoretical interests are informational governance theory and capabilities thinking. Hilde likes to apply, and experiment with, mixed method approaches.

Thesis Topics & Projects

Blue Food Governance in the Information Age

Blue Food is a relatively new term to refer to all captured and farmed marine and freshwater animals, plants and algae used for consumption, fundamental for the needs of a growing human population. Blue food production (fisheries, aquaculture) demand space yet marine space is increasingly put under pressure, ecologically and through increase of other uses. Information plays a key role in negotiations and decisions over space. While this is not new in itself, there is a shift in both means and ways by which information shape marine environmental governance, particularly connected to (joint) actions by non-state actors, such as NGOs, seafood certification organizations, and technology and information providers. Students can contribute by analysing how capabilities and collaborations affect informational processes in addressing spatial-environmental challenges in the Blue Food domain.

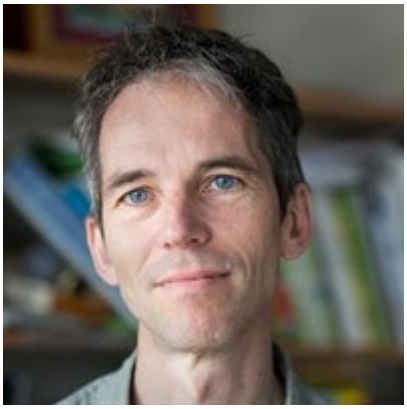
Aquaculture Governance Indicators (AGI)

The Aquaculture Governance Indicators project is developed around a set of 26 indicators across four governance dimensions that form the basis of assessing aquaculture performance with a focus on understanding the underlying social processes, practices, and interactions among civil, public, and private actors. Assessing aquaculture governance is about analysing the ways in which regulatory systems, voluntary codes and standards, and joint projects and activities are organized around the identification of environmental issues and response to solving problems. Students can choose to use (a selected set) of AGIs to dive into questions around legitimacy, effectuation, collaboration, coordination, learning, science-policy interface, for a specific species in a specific countries (thesis project). Students can also work within the project, supporting the assessment work and engagement with industry, government and societal actors (internship). More info: www.aquaculturegovernance.org

OR ELSE

OR ELSE (Operational Recommendations for Ecosystem-based Large-scale Sand Extraction) is a NWO-funded, interdisciplinary project which centres around the implications of increased sand extraction for fisheries in the Dutch North Sea. Focus is the development of a digital twin, a real-time data system, representing large-scale sand extraction, accompanied by a serious game, serving as an information-based governance tool to support dialogue and decision-making.

Bas van Vliet: Urban infrastructures, social practices, and participation shaping sustainable water, energy, and food systems.



Keywords

Urban Infrastructures, (water, energy, sanitation and waste), social practice; participation, urban governance, sustainability transitions

About

I have always been intrigued by the impact of sustainability efforts on the relationship between users and urban infrastructures. My research interests include socio-technical analysis of urban infrastructure design, management and consumption in Europe, Africa and Asia, with a particular focus on energy, drinking water, waste and sanitation. I have employed and developed theories of governance, participation and social practice in this respect.

Thesis topics & projects

Governing the Urban Water-Energy-Food Nexus

Sustainability in the production and consumption of food, water and energy would require an integrated approach to governance where synergies and trade-offs between them are appropriately dealt with. The water-energy-food nexus can be located at various levels along the chain of production and consumption and likewise at different levels of governance. Thesis research may be focussed on studying the WEF nexus at consumption levels (employing a social practice theory lens) or higher up in the systems of provision (from a governance perspective) in any part of the world. Project Governing SDG Interactions

Participation in design of multi-purpose solar energy fields

WUR has been commissioned by the province of Gelderland to investigate ways to combine solar energy plants with agriculture and nature functions (AgriPhotoVoltaics) in a number of pilot solar plants in Gelderland. WUR researchers study ecological, agricultural and energy impacts of various combinations and new modes of participation of stakeholders in/around solar fields. Thesis research may join forces with the PhD candidate to study participation in decision making about siting, implementation and operation of solar plants. GAZO

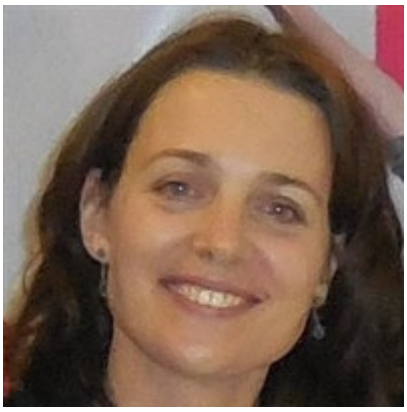
Circularity in hospitals

The multi-disciplinary ESCH-R project provides knowledge and action perspectives that promote circularity in hospitals. At ENP we investigate the current material use practices on the hospital floor and aim to arrive at workable solutions for a circular hospital through co-creation with employees and other actors. We investigate current protocols and professional practices and develop strategies (or so-called interventions) towards circular practices involving the most impactful medical consumables used in three clinical departments in Utrecht and Rotterdam. The aim is to remove current barriers, adopt (new) practices, and facilitate a behavioural change of healthcare professionals towards a circular way of working. ESCH-R

Amsterdam Metropolitan Solutions

As a Principle Investigator at the AMS-Institute I may supervise your thesis connected to running research projects in the fields of Climate Resilient Cities, Urban Energy, Circularity, Urban Transport and Metropolitan Food Systems in Amsterdam. www.ams-institute.org

Sigrid Wertheim-Heck: Food practices, governance, and sustainability shaping inclusive and transformative global food systems



Keywords

Food, practices, governance, sustainability

Thesis topics & projects

Feeding the city of the future

Cities face the pressing issue of creating a sustainable and healthy food system. An important strategy is the creation of 'city-region-food-systems' by shortening food supply chains. However, ideas on how to realise this are divergent, ranging from community gardens to vertical farms. This raises various questions e.g.: Who decides on the urban transformation pathways? What are the future imaginaries and underlying assumptions that drive the emergent initiatives? To what extend are novel arrangements able to transform food production-consumption practices?

Inclusive governance of food system transformations

How to achieve an inclusive food system that ensures healthy, sustainable food options are available, accessible and affordable for all citizens? This question regards bottom-up approaches and the inclusion of lived experiences in food system transformations. The topic focuses on how to engage with a diversity of citizens and stakeholders in co-creating a food environment that facilitates healthy and sustainable food behaviour for all.

Changing food consumption practices

This topic concerns the question on how to bring about changes in food consumption practices for advancing food system sustainability, from a social practices theoretical perspective. Allowing for various research angles, e.g.: assessing the role of (i) culture and tradition, (ii) future imaginaries, and (iii) disruptive events in practice de-and re-routinization. Suggestion: understanding student food practices: how students develop food practices when leaving home and engaging in a multi-cultural student environment.

Digitization and trust in transforming food systems

Eroding confidence in the dominant food system is attributed to the complexity of the global food system and the distance between production and consumption. Food regulation has become less unequivocal and articulate citizens demand a greater. Parallel, more localised food systems emerge in which the degree of citizen participation and the way in which trust is organised, are set-up differently. There is a distinction between consumer trust based on personalised information, that is facilitated by closer relationships between a producer and consumer, and trust in supply chains that do not use face-to-face channels. To what extend and in what way may digital technologies proof instrumental to improve information flows and reinforce credibility and integrity-based trust in food networks?

Annah Zhu: Globalization, political ecology, and China's environmental interventions in forestry, wildlife, and climate governance

Keywords

Globalization, political ecology, forestry, wildlife, ethnography, China, Africa

About

Annah studies globalization and the environment with a specific focus on global China and China in Africa. Her background is in political ecology and human geography. Theoretically, her work engages with critical political economy and post-structural critiques in the qualitative social sciences.

Thesis topics & projects

Reforestation/afforestation in China and abroad

China plants more trees than the rest of the world combined. Massive reforestation projects have made the country the leading contributor to "global greening" trends, leaving China with far more planted forests than any other country in the world. This type of large-scale tree planting has recently been said to have "mind-blowing potential" to tackle climate change and is, according to models, "overwhelmingly more powerful than all other climate change solutions proposed." China is steadily planting billions of trees, domestically and now abroad. This research explores China's large-scale global reforestation investments in order to better understand the unique role China will play in forestry and climate governance in the 21st Century.

Great Green Walls in China and Africa

China and Africa both have massive projects to combat desertification and adapt to climate change, referred to as "Great Green Walls." In China, the project runs across the entire northern region of the country to serve as a buffer against the encroaching Gobi and Taklamakan Deserts. In Africa, the project runs across the entire Sahel region from Senegal to Djibouti. This research examines the governance and implementation of these massive projects.

Wildlife management in China post COVID-19

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, wildlife management has become a global priority for both health and conservation reasons. China has enacted a number of new regulations to safeguard the trade in wild animals, including bans and restrictions. Wildlife trade for food consumption, however, continues with certain species, especially amphibians and aquatic reptiles. This research examines ongoing developments in China's wildlife policies in order to secure better health and conservation outcomes.

The topic is linked to the work of PhD student, Jin Qian.