

First informal consultation session of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG
Hamburg, 6 October 2022

Social justice in marine spatial planning: Stakeholder perspectives and experiences in the Baltic Sea Region

Ignė Stalmokaitė, Ralph Tafon, Fred Saunders, Kira Gee*, Michael Gilek, Aurelija Armoškaitė,
Anda Ikauniece, Jacek Zaucha, Magdalena Maczak, Jakub Turski

*Helmholtz Zentrum Hereon Institute of Coastal Systems - Analysis and Modeling Human Dimensions of Coastal Areas, Germany

Justification of the study

Social justice in MSP:

- Strong focus on environmental and economic sustainability in MSP research
- Scholarship on participation, knowledge and power - the most readily used dimensions of the 'social' pillar in MSP (e.g., Jentoft, 2017; Tafon, 2019)
- More general blue justice scholarship is emerging... (Bennett et al 2019; Saunders et al, 2019, 2020; Grimm et al 2019,)
- ... but lack of empirically informed knowledge on social justice in MSP practice



Source: <https://www.wwfbaltic.org>

Practical considerations:

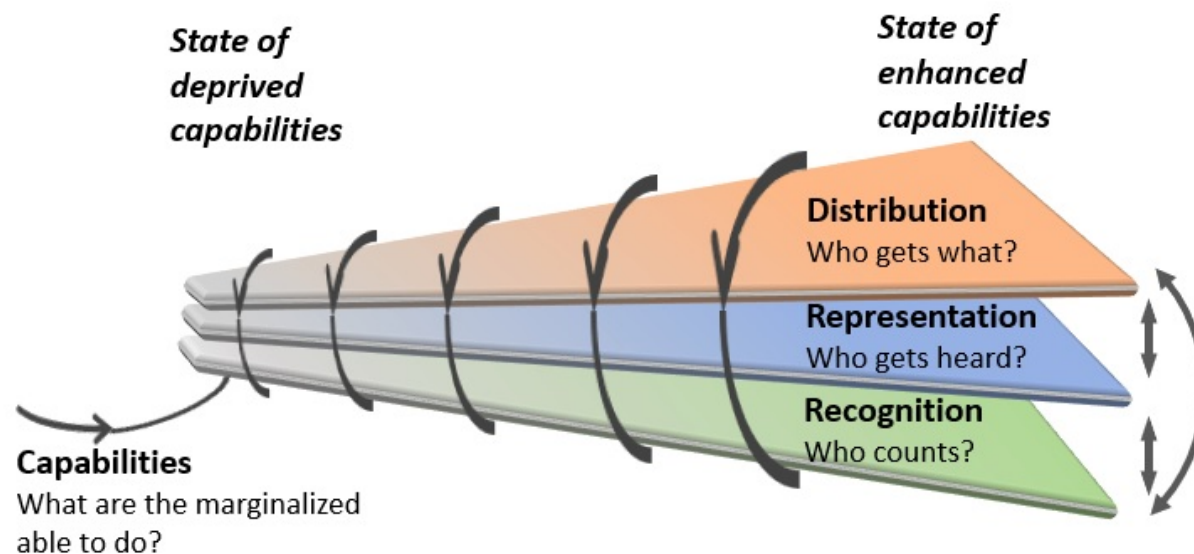
- Justice concerns are common on land (e.g., the EU Green Deal, the US Green New Deal)
- Lack of commitment to justice concerns in marine policy (Bennett 2018, Axon et al. 2022)

Aim:

To provide an empirical account of how social justice concerns are expressed and experienced by MSP stakeholders and planners in the Baltic Sea Region

Theoretical framework

4D model of social justice in MSP



Four-dimensional social justice in MSP. Adapted from Tafon et al. (forthcoming)

Procedural justice - who gets heard?

How, where and when decisions are made, who is included and who has influence over the outcome

Distributional justice – who gets what?

Equity of distribution of benefits and burdens, how actors perceive the distribution of costs and risks

Recognitional justice – who counts?

Focus on plurality of values, identities, cultures, knowledges, rights, institutions as well as structural forces that define the terms of stakeholder engagement

Capabilities – what are the marginalised able to do?

People's capacity, or lack thereof, to present their interests in MSP

Methodology

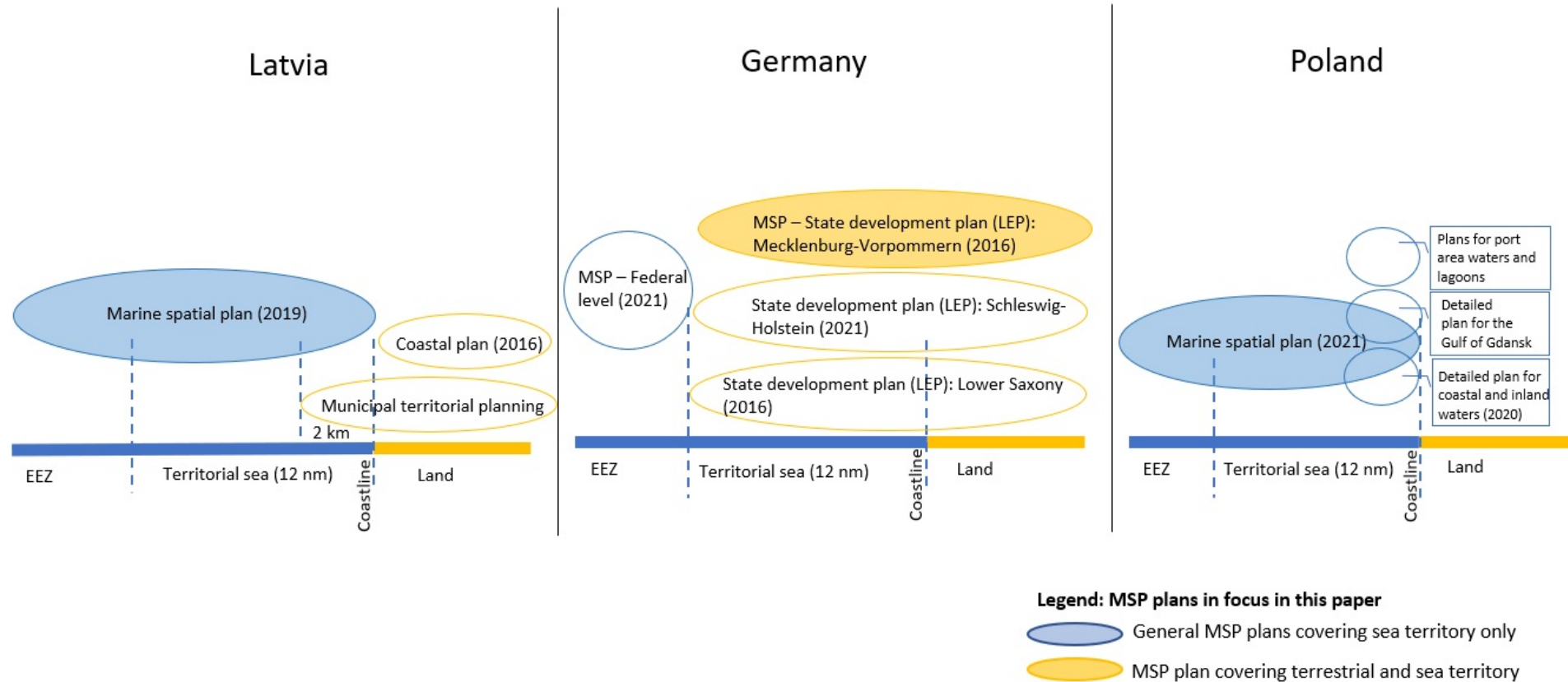
- Three case countries: Latvia, Poland and Germany
- A mix of empirical data: semi-structured interviews, legal documents, reports, previous literature
- Semi-structured interviews (n=51) across three countries (conducted from June 2020 to March 2022)
- Material analysed following the thematic qualitative content analysis research method (NVivo software) (Kuckartz 2014)

Case country	Public authorities / Planners	Sector organisations	Science	Residents	Local entrepreneurs, fishers etc	Total
Latvia	4 + 2 (BaltSpace)	4	2	1	1	14
Germany	3 + 1 (BaltSpace)	1 + 2 (BaltSpace)	3		1	11
Poland	9	2	4	8	3	26



Source: <https://www.baltspace.eu/>

MSP planning systems in case study countries

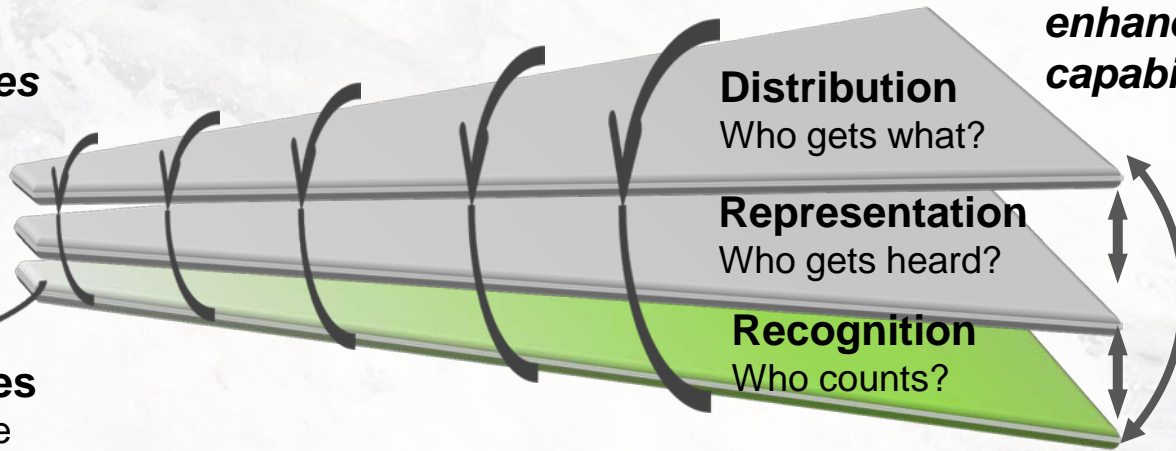


Key insights (I)

**State of
deprived
capabilities**

Capabilities

What are the
marginalized able to do?



**State of
enhanced
capabilities**

Recognition in Polish MSP

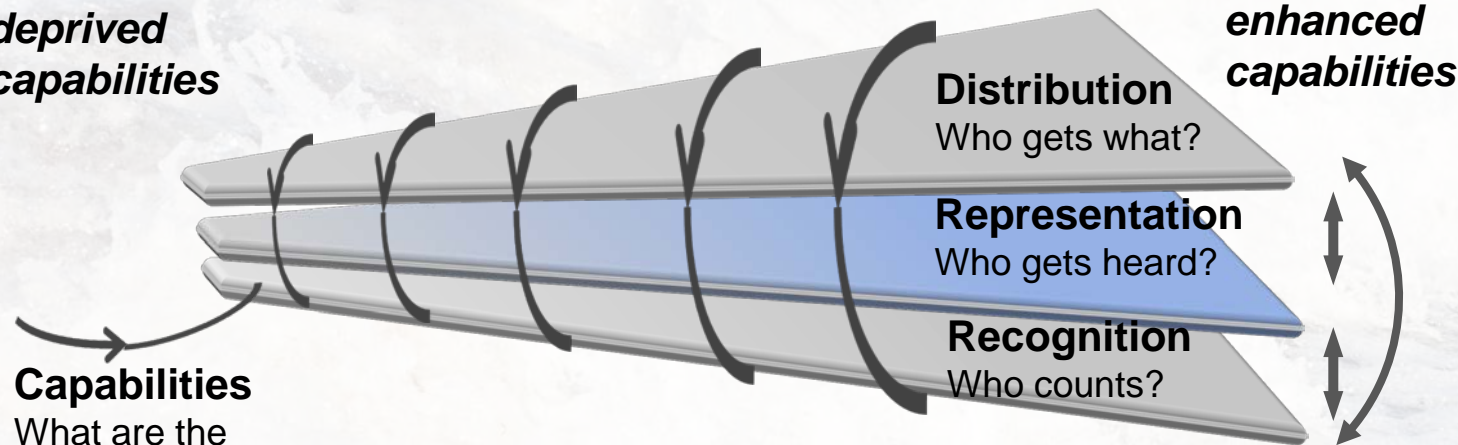
- MSP legislation – a structural source leading to misrecognition of vulnerable and less organised actor groups
- Public authorities and strategic national sectors legally distinguished stakeholder groups
- SSFs perspective: larger sectors dominate the use of sea space in Poland

Key insights (II)

**State of
deprived
capabilities**

Capabilities

What are the
marginalized able to do?



**State of
enhanced
capabilities**

Distribution

Who gets what?

Representation

Who gets heard?

Recognition

Who counts?

Representation in Latvian MSP

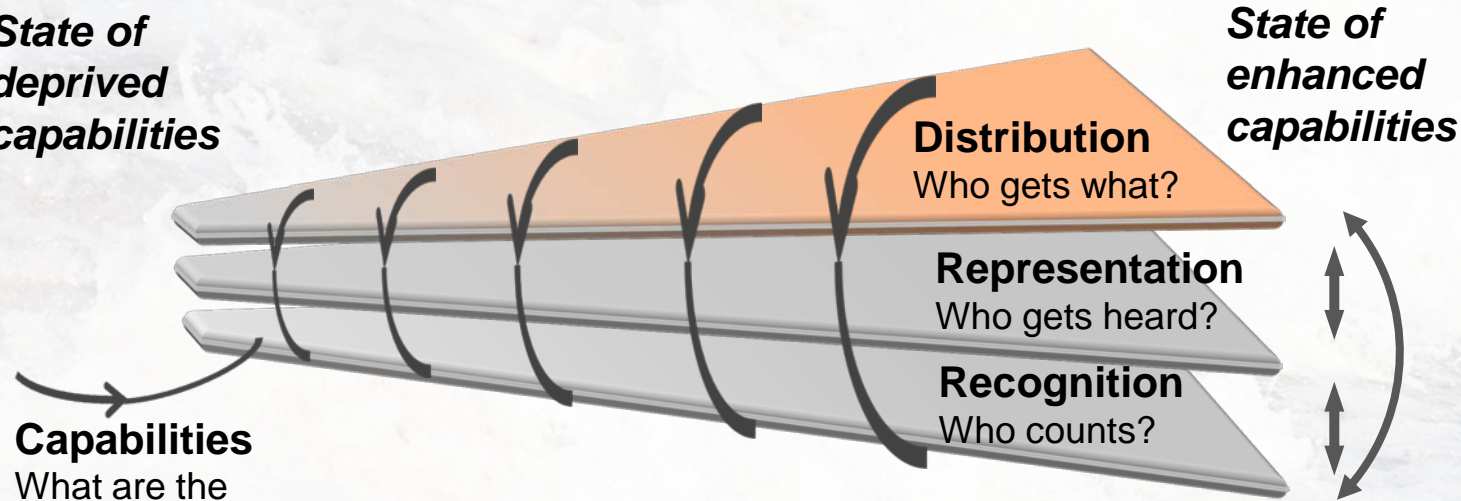
- National authorities used targeted communication to *actively involve* self-excluded stakeholders (i.e., OWE developers and smaller ports)
- Misrepresentation of the public: Coastal municipalities attending MSP process as passive participants and not active developers of the plan

Key insights (III)

**State of
deprived
capabilities**

Capabilities

What are the
marginalized able to do?



**State of
enhanced
capabilities**

Distribution

Who gets what?

Representation

Who gets heard?

Recognition

Who counts?

Distribution in German MSP

- MSP legislation – very general (planning principles): Planners have some room to design MSP in response to changing needs/demands
- International and national policies put pressure on prioritizing particular sectors (e.g., OWE) with effects for MSP process
- Planning system responsive to public demands (when they emerge): OWE vs. local tourism; integration of SSFs demands

Towards socially just and sustainable MSP: Implications in practice

Policy-relevant observations:

- **Structural misrecognition is a barrier** to the equal participation of vulnerable /'weak' coastal and marine actors (e.g., MSP legislation distinguishing between rights and obligations among different actor groups)
- It is important to explicitly elevate coastal populations (in their diversity) to equal formal recognitional status with other strategic interests.
- More emphasis should be given to **recognition on an institutional level** (who counts rather than who is invited). Awareness is needed of the differences between institutionally excluded and self-excluded stakeholder groups.
- The development of a framework and approach for mapping vulnerable actor groups would be beneficial to facilitate their engagement in MSP

Towards socially just and sustainable MSP: Implications in practice

Practitioner-relevant observations:

- Planners have some space to self-reflect (which they may or may not exercise) and adopt 'workaround strategies' to mitigate the effects of differentiated formal recognition of vulnerable social groups.
- Planners can use more targeted communication to facilitate social inclusion of marginalized groups in MSP.
- Awareness-raising and learning spaces are needed for planners to build reflective capacities.



Thank you!

Photo credit: Joanna Bodzek

SÖDERTÖRN UNIVERSITY | STOCKHOLM
sh.se

References

- AXON, S., BERTANA, A., GRAZIANO, M., CROSS, E., SMITH, A., AXON, K. & WAKEFIELD, A. 2021. The US Blue New Deal: What does it mean for just transitions, sustainability, and resilience of the blue economy? *The Geographical Journal*, n/a, 1-12.
- BENNETT, N. J. 2018. Navigating a just and inclusive path towards sustainable oceans. *Marine Policy*, 97, 139-146.
- BENNETT, N. J., JESSICA BLYTHE, ANDRÉS M. CISNEROS-MONTEMAYOR, GERALD G. SINGH & SUMAILA, U. R. 2019. Just Transformations to Sustainability. *Sustainability*, 11.
- GRIMMEL, H., CALADO, H., FONSECA, C. & SUÁREZ DE VIVERO, J. L. 2019. Integration of the social dimension into marine spatial planning – Theoretical aspects and recommendations. *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 173, 139-147.
- JENTOFT, S. 2017. Small-scale fisheries within maritime spatial planning: knowledge integration and power. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 19, 266-278.
- SAUNDERS, F., GILEK, M. & TAFON, R. 2019. Adding People to the Sea: Conceptualizing Social Sustainability in Maritime Spatial Planning. In: ZAUCHA, J. & GEE, K. (eds.) *Maritime Spatial Planning: Past, Present, Future*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- SAUNDERS, F., GILEK, M., IKAUNIECE, A., TAFON, R. V., GEE, K. & ZAUCHA, J. 2020. Theorizing Social Sustainability and Justice in Marine Spatial Planning: Democracy, Diversity, and Equity. *Sustainability*, 12, 2560.
- Tafon, R., Saunders, F., Zaucha, J., Matczak, M., Stalmokaitė, I., Gilek, M., & Turski, J. (forthcoming). Blue justice through and beyond equity and participation: a critical reading of capability-based recognitional justice in Poland's marine spatial planning.

Additional slides

Policy implications

- Formal MSP processes should be more receptive and seek to integrate the insights of informal MSP stakeholder engagement, especially in terms of inclusion of local, place-based knowledge of different social groups (who may have low status or find the formal MSP process inaccessible).
- Distributive effects of MSP are not considered within MSP leading to a risk that the costs and benefits of using marine resources becomes unevenly distributed across diverse social groups and scales.
- Building capabilities of weaker stakeholders to meaningfully engage in MSP is critical to enhance its democratic potential. This may include ocean literacy, awareness raising and targeted information sharing about issues at stake.
- Using targeted communication modes/channels to engender widespread participation is key to increasing social inclusion in MSP (especially in relation to vulnerable social groups).
- The development of an assessment framework and criteria would be beneficial for evaluating social justice (recognitional, participatory and distributional) of MSP planning process and outcomes.

Recognitional justice in Polish MSP

Polish planning law – a structural source of (mis)recognition

- Status inequalities in the formative stages of the MSP process
- Public authorities - legally distinguished stakeholder groups with different degrees of influence: (i) the *right to agree/disagree* with MSP decisions, and (ii) *the right to submit an opinion* on draft plan
- International climate agreements and national sectoral policies conditioning prioritization of some sectors (i.e. defence and energy)
- MSP legislation denies the requisite standing for some groups of actors and in turn an opportunity to participate in MSP process on a par with others

Misrecognizing the public and small scale fishers (SSF)

- Polish planners demonstrated self-reflectivity by recognising and reporting the vulnerabilities of SSFs during the preplanning stage of MSP, this faded away during the course of planning
- SSFs perspective: larger sectors dominate the use of sea space in Poland

“

As **I am not an official**, I did not receive any notification that such planning was taking place. Thus, it required additional effort from my side to find this out (citizen)

Certainly, state-owned companies related to the fuel and **energy sector** [were privileged]. Perhaps there were not many of their suggestions, **but they were accepted almost automatically**. (Planner, local government)

Stakeholders related to national defence, that is the **army, also had a slightly privileged position**. There, I did not notice a tendency to dialogue, but rather communicating their requirements that should be taken into account. (Planner, national authority)

We know that there are some priorities, and energy is the strategic one. And **fishing, which produces little GDP, is doomed to failure** in this context. We realize how strategic energy independence is, but it hurts us that it is being done this way and not otherwise. (fisherman)

They [inhabitants of coastal municipalities] are more neglected than they even think. The plan took into account the needs and interests of a large lobby, a strong stakeholder, and **the weak, because they are dispersed, remained uninformed** (tourism representative)

One specific set of interest groups which was **not included were people living in the area** not connected with the use of the sea. And [they] are very diverse. (planner)

Now we feel like small, **irrelevant users of the Baltic Sea** who simply have to remove themselves and make room for huge amounts of money (fisherman)

”



Narrow approach to procedural justice in Latvian MSP

Maybe we didn't involve society as such, although representatives of society were present at the meetings we organised in the coastal areas at various locations. But **we didn't have a strong emphasis on society** [as a stakeholder]. (MSPlan developers)

Latvian MSP plan (2019)

- Legal frameworks distinguishing who should be *informed*, *consulted* and *actively involved* in Latvian MSP
- Institutionally recognised stakeholders (OWEs, defence, shipping sectors) *actively involved* meanwhile the general public *informed* and *consulted*
- Public meetings attracted mostly those who are familiar with MSP (MSP working group experts and targeted sectors)
- National authorities used targeted communication to *actively involve* OWE developers in MSP
- Participation of coastal municipalities – the illusion of equal partnership

The military was probably the only one who could say – **you know, that's how it's going to be**. You can plan things, but they need things a certain way (Scientist)

We, as a ministry, took their [energy sector] role and get into a fight for their place. They even didn't have any proposals until we involved them in scenario seminars (MSP national authority)

We were invited to separate working group meetings as representatives of local government. But **we couldn't take part actively**, there was not such option (Coastal government)



Distributional justice in German MSP plans



Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV) MSP plan (2016)

- Balancing wider societal benefits (e.g., OWE) against local community concerns (e.g., coastal tourism)
- In practice, local community interests and possibility to impact distribution of risks and benefits get “lost” in representational State planning system
- Yet, planning system responsive to public demands (when they emerge)
- Planners perspective: limited capacity of MV MSP to influence distributional impacts

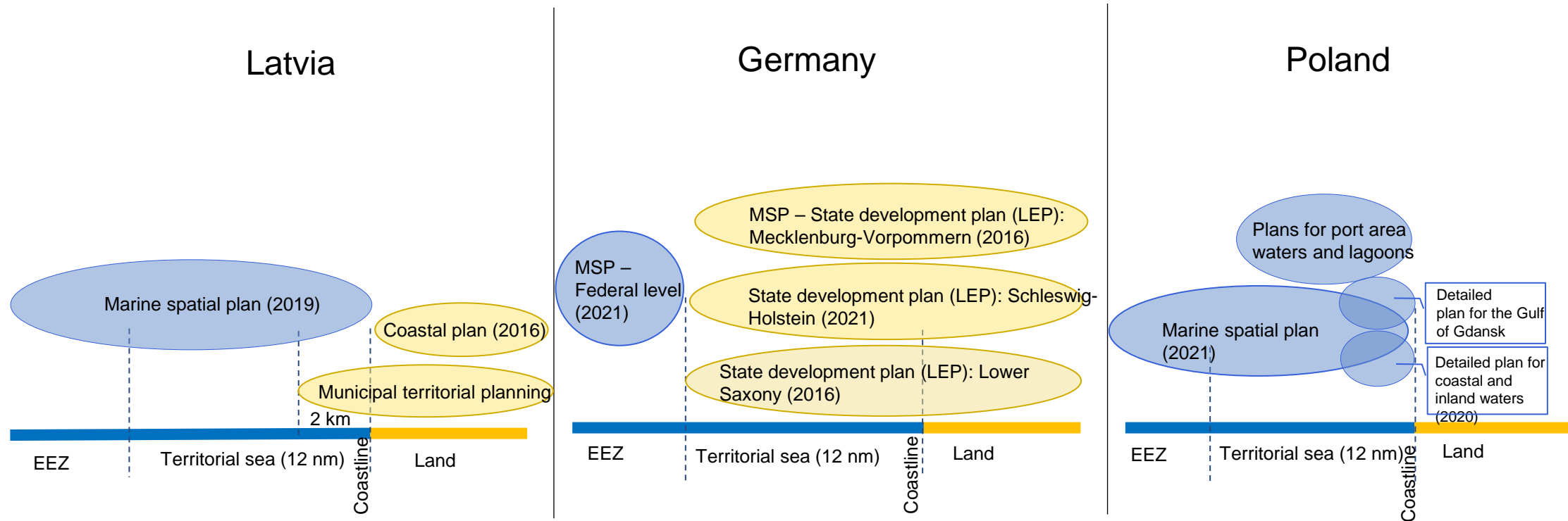
...here in MV we have the State Planning Advisory Board. This would be the exact level where you could articulate the demands of the various fields... And this is not currently happening, because it is merely **a body that the Minister responsible for spatial planning reports to...** (MV, member of State planning advisory board)

The first draft of the LEP contained a lot more areas for **offshore wind**. **They were then taken out as a result of protests**. It was a real movement that arose. Tourism people and FREIER HORIZONT [a campaign]. FREIER HORIZONT then mobilised coastal tourism (MV, fisheries representative)

The LEP is a strategic document for the longer term. **What will happen in practice depends on the respective sectoral planning** (MV State planner)



Background: MSP planning systems in case study countries



- ‘Nested system’ of marine plans sets a structural context for understanding and delivering social justice