

THE FIELDS PROJECT

Experiencing Nature and Society. A Multi-sited Inquiry into Marine and Ethnographic Field Sciences

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Aims

The FIELDS-project attempts to assess and re-think different modes of approaching and exploring "fields" as generators of experience-based knowledge. The project explores practices and understandings of ethnographic and marine biological field research through an experimental framework in which nature and society, humans and non-humans meet.

Our **objectives** are three-folded:

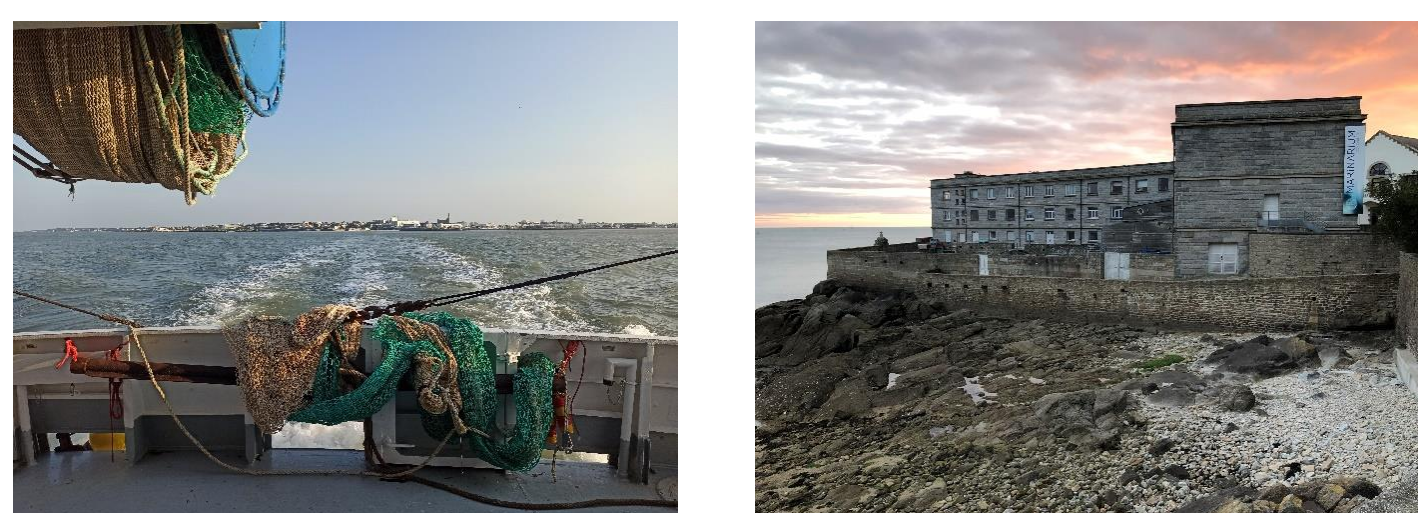
- (1) To explore current ethnographic and marine biological "field" conceptions (phase I);
- (2) to systematize and map these disciplinary heterogeneous field approaches and their epistemic and methodological commonalities (phase II);
- (3) and to develop a "third knowledge space" to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration (phase III).



Methods

We combine a variety of **methods**:

- participant observations in different marine research institutions & locations (Europe and overseas)



- qualitative interviews and group discussions
- short surveys
- literature and document analyses
- analysis of quantitative metadata
- Interdisciplinary cross-site workshops
- development of co-laborative formats, as, for instance, interdisciplinary learning cabinets

Preliminary Results

Marine Social Sciences: Research landscape and fieldwork methodologies show

- Rapid development of Marine Social Sciences research (figure 1) reflects the call for societal ocean knowledge
- "Marine Empiricism" and the need to integrate theory and praxis
- The importance of fostering cross-country collaboration to address cross-country oceanic concerns
- The desirability of conducting research with social relevance concerning climate and biodiversity crises

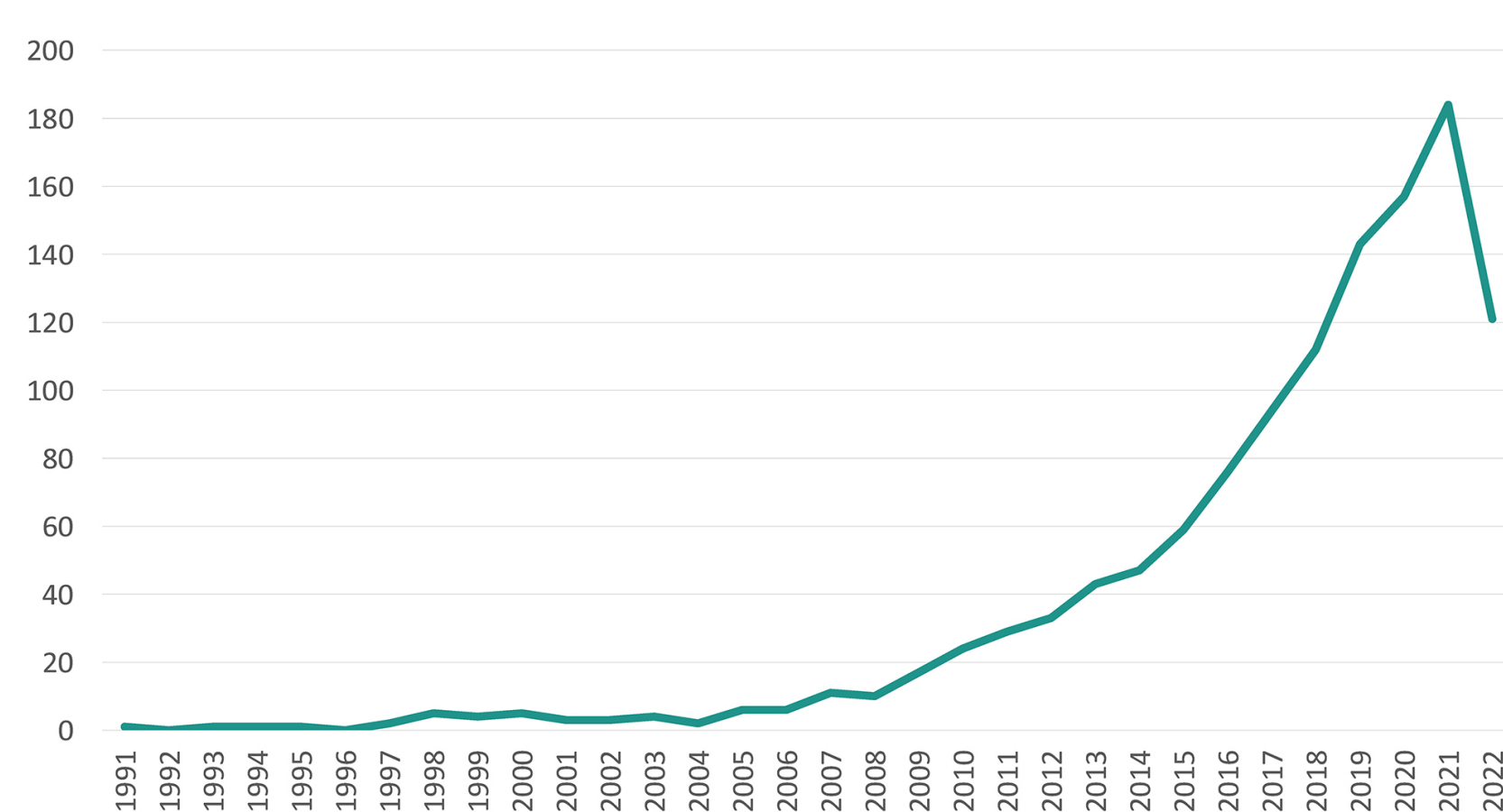


Figure 1. Annual Scientific Production of MSS Articles

Marine Natural Sciences: Fieldwork methodologies enacted at Marine Stations, Expeditions, and Observatories show four key components:

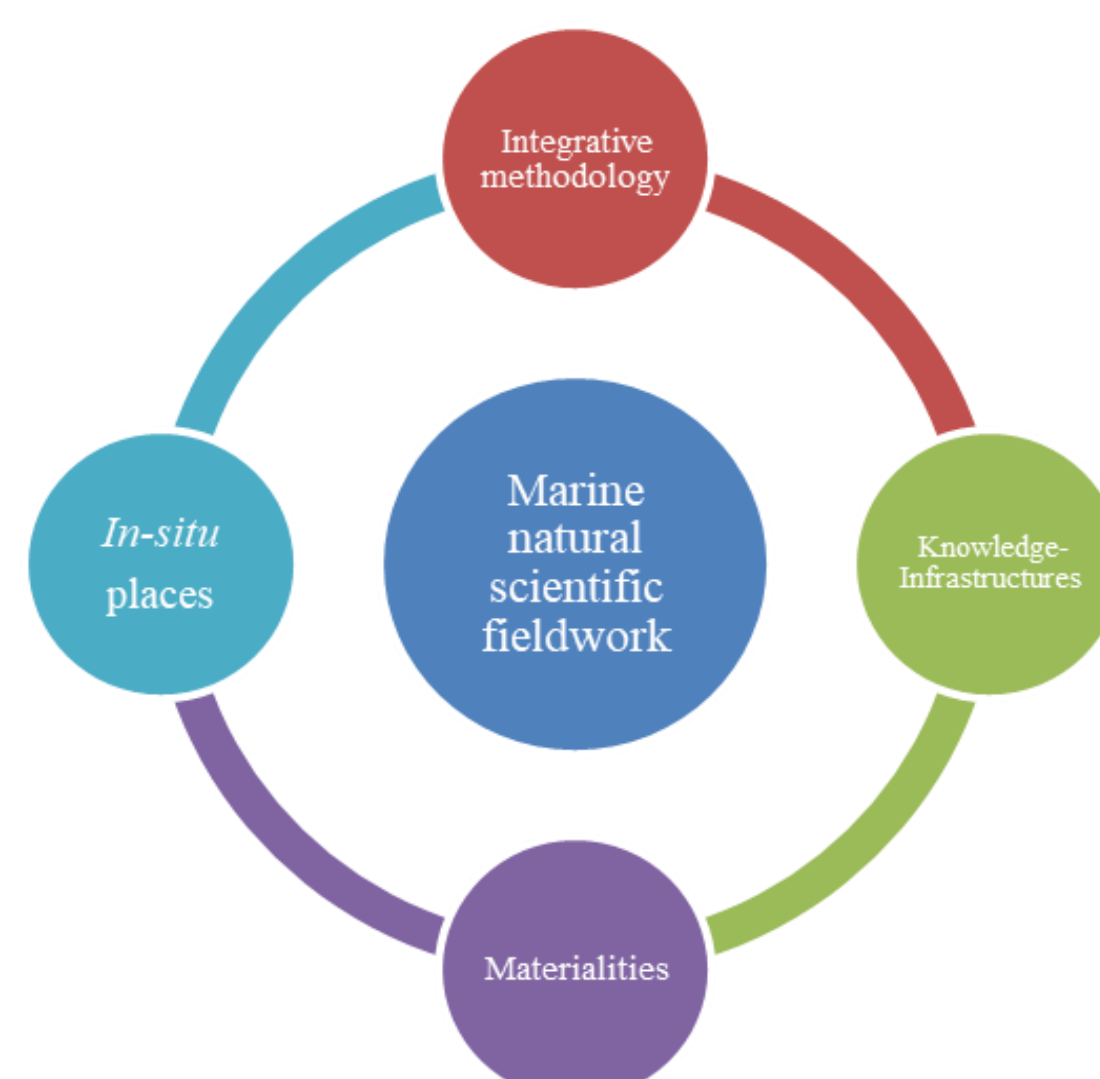


Figure 2. Four key components of NSc fieldwork

- These elements are compatible with social-scientific fieldwork methodologies, BUT
- Marine stations provide multiple modes of exploring & valuating the sea-society-relation through fieldwork (figure 3)

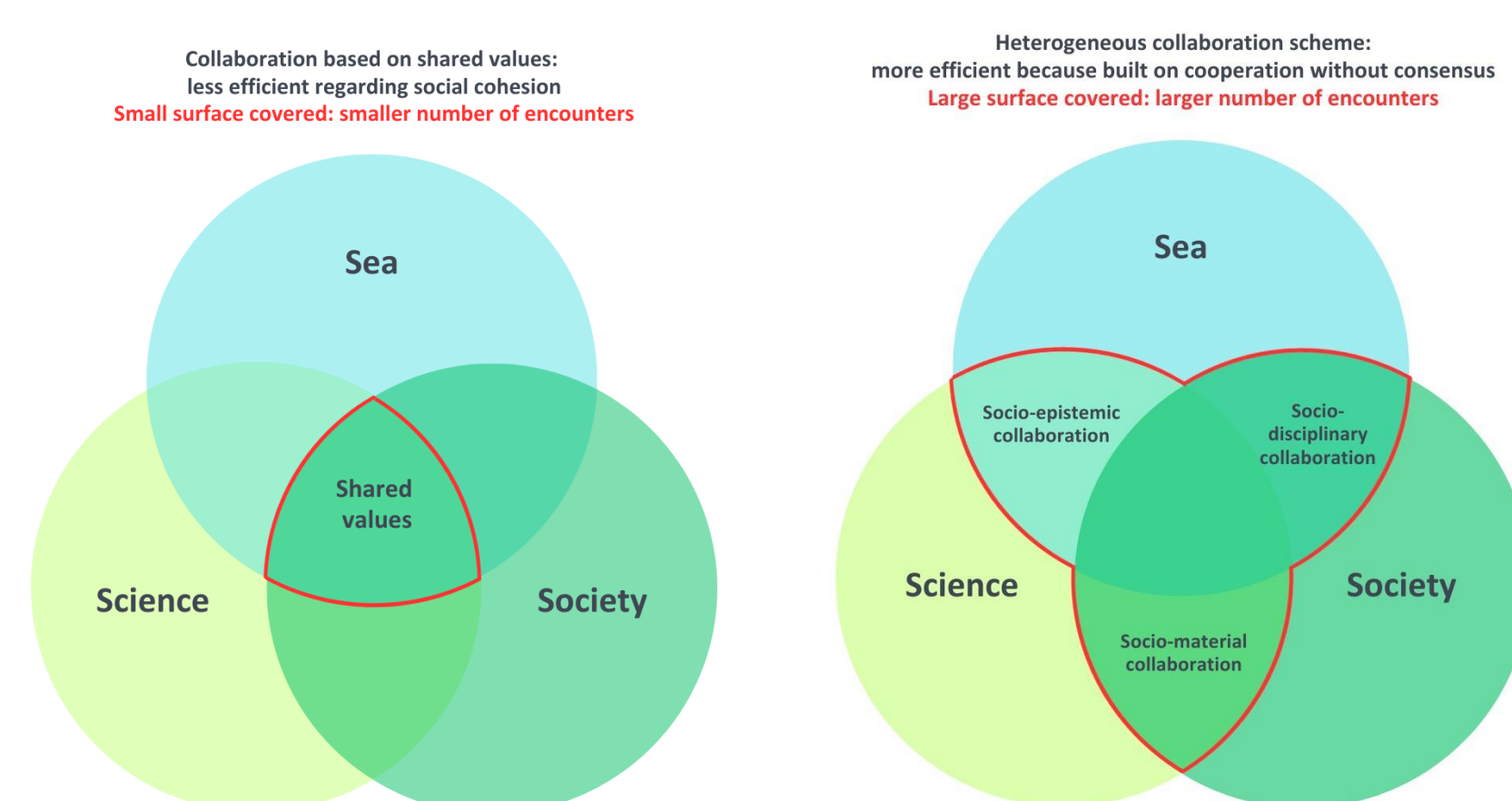


Figure 3. Contrasted modes of valuating marine knowledge

Fieldwork analogies between NSc & SoSc:

- integrate laypersons and certified expertise (co-laborative approaches)
- face justification and recognition challenges of field research
- observation & exploration is key during fieldwork, causality has another time and place
- Significant material, logistical and physical effort
- Comprise hypothetico-deductive, as well as an explorative-inductive approaches
- Fieldwork is potentially integrative, but undervalued for its contribution to scientific knowledge

Methodological differences between NSc & SoSc:

- invisibility of fieldwork methodologies in natural marine sciences discussions and outputs in opposition to everlasting reflection in social sciences
- Fieldwork as teamwork in natural marine sciences vs. fieldwork as individual work in marine social sciences
- Different time horizons; different infrastructures; different instruments

Take-home-message: Altogether, an interdisciplinary field sciences framework reveals more commonalities than differences. It creates promising pathways for future co-laborative inquiries.

Output

Bogusz, T. 2022. Fieldwork in the Anthropocene. On the Possibilities of Analogical Thinking Between Nature and Society. In: Science and Technology Studies.

Bogusz, T. 2023. Valuating Marine Knowledge: Heterogeneous Collaborations at the Concarneau Marine Station. In: SocArXiv. Oct 20.

Pelke, N. and Simonn FC. 2023. Ocean-human relations in the Anthropocene: mapping trends in sustainability-related marine social sciences articles. In: Front.Mar.Sci.

Project Presentations: MARE-conference, Amsterdam, ENS Paris, MNHN Paris, KDM Bremen

Network activities in



Outlook

- Systematizing and mapping results and their epistemic and methodological commonalities (phase II)
- Development of a "third knowledge space" to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration (phase III)
- Preparation of follow-up research-project "Experimenting the sea" based on multi-sited European marine station-comparison

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