

## Governance of Marine Protected Areas in Costa Rica



Institutional Change in Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Institutioneller Wandel der Landwirtschaft und Ressourcennutzung

edited by/herausgegeben von  
Volker Beckmann & Konrad Hagedorn

Volume/Band 67

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**Governance of Marine Protected Areas  
in Costa Rica**

Stability and Change of Institutions

Shaker Verlag  
Aachen 2017

**Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Zugl.: Jacobs University Bremen, Diss., 2016

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Printed in Germany.

ISBN 978-3-8440-5253-4

ISSN 1617-4828

Shaker Verlag GmbH • P.O. BOX 101818 • D-52018 Aachen

Phone: 0049/2407/9596-0 • Telefax: 0049/2407/9596-9

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## Aim and Scope of the Series

*„Nothing endures but change“*. Heraclitus the Ephesian (ca. 535–475 BC)

Institutions, defined as “the rules of the game”, are a key factor to the sustainable development of societies. They structure not only the multitude of human-human interactions of modern societies, but also most of the human-nature interactions. Poverty, famine, civil war, degradation of natural resources and even the collapse of ecosystems and societies often have institutional causes, likewise social and economic prosperity, sustainable use of resources and the resilience of socio-ecological systems. Agriculture, forestry and fisheries are those human activities where the interdependencies between human-human and human-nature interactions are perhaps most pronounced, and diverse institutions have been developed in history to govern them.

Social and ecological conditions are, however, ever changing, which continuously challenge the existing institutional structure at a given point in time. Those changes may be long-term, like population growth or climate change, medium-term, such as new technologies or changing price relations, or short-term, like floods or bankruptcies, but all of them pose the question whether the rules of the game need to be adapted. Failures to adapt timely and effectively may come at a high social cost. Institutional change, however, face a principal dilemma: on the one hand, institutions need to be stable to structure expectations and effectively influence human behaviors; on the other hand, they need to be adaptive to respond to the ever changing circumstance mentioned above. Understanding stability and change as well as developing adaptive institutions and effective, efficient and fair mechanisms of change are, therefore, of central importance for societies and an ongoing research challenge for social scientists.

If we want to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and adaptability of institutions, it stands to reason that we have to develop a good understanding of the causes, effects, processes and mechanism of stability and change. This is the aim of the series “Institutional Change in Agriculture and Natural Resources,” which attempts to answer the questions “How do processes and mechanism of institutional change actually work? What and who are the main determinants and actors driving, governing and influencing these processes? What are the economic, political, social and ecological consequences? How can adaptive institutions be designed and developed, and what governance structures are required to make them effective?” These are the questions at the heart of the series. The works published in this series seek to provide answers to these questions in different economic, social, political and historical contexts.

Volker Beckmann and Konrad Hagedorn

Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald und Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin



## Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank all my interviewees. Without their time, availability and willingness to share their views on MPA governance in Costa Rica, it would not have been possible to carry out this research project as it was originally conceived. Second, I also owe a great deal to the families that hosted me and other friends that I made during the seven months of fieldwork. They have not only been patient, both listening to me and advising me during those demanding days, but also warmly welcomed me into the social life of Costa Rica. I will definitely be back to catch up over an afternoon cup of coffee, expand my knowledge of ‘*Tico*’ sayings, and eat delicious ‘*gallo pinto*’ and ‘rice and beans’.

I would like to say a special thanks to Marlene Noguera Ruiz who undertook the daunting task of transcribing more than a hundred interviews. Her effort and commitment is greatly respected. The same is true for Merce Sánchez at the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Ecology (ZMT), and Carmen Murken at MARUM – the Centre for Marine Environmental Sciences at the University of Bremen, who offered a great deal of help with financial matters. In the same way, I would like to acknowledge the IT and the library teams at the ZMT for getting my computer in shape and helping me gain access to articles and books. I am also indebted to MARUM and ZMT for providing the financial means to conduct this PhD project.

In relation to the scientific guidance, I would like to express my gratitude to Achim Schlüter and Marco Verweij, my first and second supervisors. They gave me space to work independently from the very beginning and at the same time were always readily available to comment on my work and advise me in many respects. It was indeed a great pleasure and rewarding experience to work with and learn from both of them. I am also thankful to the members of my thesis committee, Michael Flitner and Bevis Fedder, for supporting me with their expertise whenever needed. Equally important in this trajectory has been GLOMAR, the graduate school from MARUM to which I belong, for allowing me to attend a key summer school course on the method of Process Tracing taught by Derek Beach, and offering several academic exchange opportunities in Bremen. I also want to take the opportunity to thank Derek Beach for clarifying my doubts about the application of the method of Process Tracing and taking his time to comment on my data analysis.

Last but not least, I want to say how grateful I am to my family and close friends. They have encouraged me throughout this PhD project and cheered me up whenever I was going through difficult times. Their support in the form of ‘Kaffee und Kuchen’, sharing music to listen to while working, taking a quick

look on my writings, engaging in countless online conversations, and so forth, was simply invaluable and, therefore, this dissertation is dedicated to them.

Bremen, March 2017

Gabriela Weber de Moraes

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