



Integration process and stakeholders' interactions analysis around a protection project: Case of the National park of Gouraya, Algeria (South-western Mediterranean)



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ABSTRACT

Among the most important instruments used for the protection of the Mediterranean marine environment, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) have demonstrated their efficiency in the preservation of sensitive marine ecosystems and the sustainable management of their resources. In Algeria, only two sites are officially classified as “Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance” and six others are in project, including the extension of the coastal National Park of Gouraya (NPG) to the marine area. This paper addresses the issue of stakeholder involvement in the governance process of high ecological coastal protected areas, highly coveted and exposed to the constraints related to the multiplicity of actors. This study is considered as an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) mini-project based on the steps set out in the ICZM Mediterranean Protocol and inspired by the concept founded on ecosystem approach of problems by associating multiple stakeholders around a common project. The management process of the NPG and the involvement of actors were evaluated through direct interviews and a stakeholder analysis using the “MACTOR” method. Results indicate that the current management and the local context are not mature regarding the involvement of the actors. The challenge around issues of sustainable development, especially for civil society, is a relatively new and demanding matter. The human dimension is a top-priority aspect that the sustainable management of the Park and the marine area should be based upon.

1. Introduction

Mediterranean coastal areas are facing significant human pressures that threaten their unique ecosystems which are already under high stresses (Benoit and Comeau, 2005; Cuttelod et al., 2008; Gabrié et al., 2012; UNEP/MAP, 2012). In order to face these constraints and to ensure sustainable development, reconciling economic growth and integrated resource management, several initiatives have been implemented at international and regional levels. One shall quote the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), a paradigm appeared in the 1970's, with the objective of meeting the need to sustainably conserve marine and coastal areas (Lefebvre, 2011; Peyron and Blanchard, 2011) as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for which the Aichi target 11 stipulates that “By 2020, at least 10% of marine areas are included in MPAs or other effective management measures” (UNEP, 2010). In the Mediterranean, the different aspects of conservation are addressed by the Barcelona Convention for “marine

environment and the coast Protection” and its seven protocols, including the protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) along with the ICZM protocol (UNEP/MAP, 2017).

In Algeria, the Mediterranean protection strategy comes through the ratification of numerous international conventions and protocols and the establishment of several legal regulations (Boubekri and Djebar, 2016). A national strategy for Integrated Coastal Zone Management has been also implemented in 2015 with the support of the Mediterranean Action Plan.

Among the most important instruments used for the protection of the Mediterranean marine environment, MPAs constitute a tool that demonstrated its efficiency in the preservation of the sensitive marine ecosystems and the sustainable management of their resources, particularly fisheries (García-Charton et al., 2008; Rioja-Nieto and Sheppard, 2008; Batista et al., 2011; Montbrison et al., 2012; D'Anna et al., 2015; Pascual et al., 2016). Covering 7.14% of the Mediterranean surface, 1,231 MPAs are identified and 100 other sites are planned in 12

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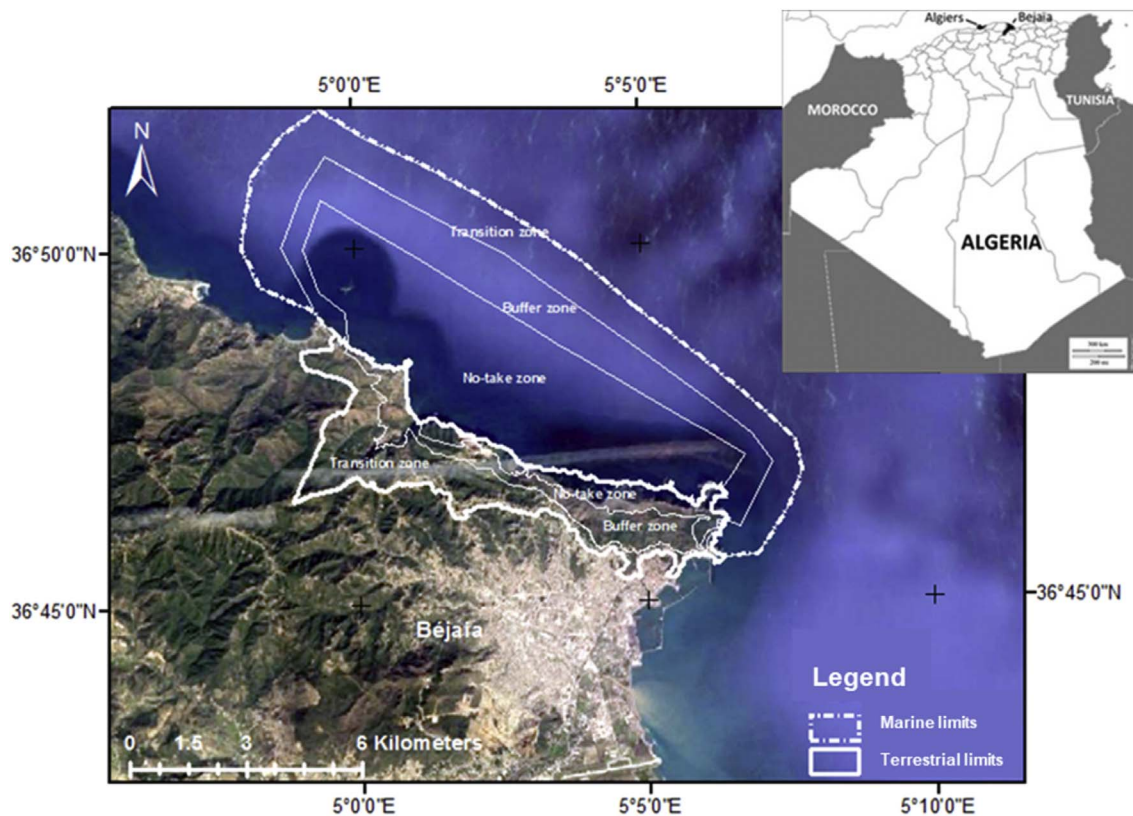


Fig. 1. Localisation of the National Park of Gouraya.

countries. These MPAs are mainly located in the northern Mediterranean (90.05%) and 25.36% are coastal (MedPAN; PNUE/PAM-CAR/ASP, 2016). However, numerous studies have highlighted the importance of improving the MPA management to enable them achieving their goals of protecting the natural environment and reconciling conservation issues with the sustainable development of activities. (MedPAN; PNUE/PAM-CAR/ASP, 2016; PISCO, 2016; Islam et al., 2016; Havard et al., 2015; Gabrié et al., 2012; Batista and Cabral, 2016).

In Algeria, Marine Reserve of Habibas Islands and the “Banc des Kabyles” reserve are the only two sites officially classified since 2005 as “Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance” (SPAMI). Six other sites are proposed for classification, including the extension project of the Coastal National Park of Gouraya to the marine area (Gabrié et al., 2012; MedPAN, 2016). The future MPA of Gouraya to which our study relates is characterized by the presence of a remarkable and representative biodiversity of the Mediterranean Sea (ISMAL, 2003). This natural heritage is subjected to the threats of anthropogenic activities which risk to destroy the ecosystem and jeopardize the good progress of the classification process and in the future the integrated management of the MPA. The objectives of the future AMP of Gouraya consist in maintaining the remarkable biodiversity, preserving artisanal activities such as fishing, ensuring the sustainable development of activities related to the marine area and promoting environmental education.

The present study addresses the issue of stakeholder involvement in the governance of coastal protected areas with high ecological value, highly coveted and exposed to the constraints related to the multiplicity of actors.

The objectives of the present study are to: i) make a diagnosis of the current situation and describe the management process of the NPG; ii) characterize and analyse the implication of stakeholders in the management using the MACTOR method (Godet, 2007) through the identification of their influence, their role, the relationships between them,

the balance of power and the position of the actors in relation to the objectives set; iii) learn about the assets and constraints of a participatory management from the experience of the NPG and finally, iv) propose an approach to promote the integration of stakeholders and thereby ensure an integrated management of the future MPA. Based on the experiences and the expectations of the national and international stakeholders from various spheres (decision-makers, managers, experts and citizens), this paper will allow, through a systematic analysis, to highlight the management of coastal parks and protected areas in Algeria taking into account the local context. This analysis will identify the key elements to enable a participatory approach involving the NPG stakeholders and its marine area while helping managers to achieve the objective of integrated management.

1.1. Context and study area

1.1.1. Classification and management of protected areas in Algeria

Algeria has a coastline of 1622 km with a strip that represents 1.9% of the national territory and concentrates 37% of the population (SNGIZC, 2015). Faced with this situation, many measures have been taken to protect the environment from the pressures undergone. It is in this context that three national coastal parks have been created and a legislative framework established; i.e., the law n° 02-02 on the protection and the promotion of the coastline and the law n° 03-10 on the protection of the environment within the framework of sustainable development. Furthermore, the National Commission of the Littoral (CNL) was created in 2004 in order to ensure the implementation of the national policy for the protection and development of the coastline and the coastal zone.

Protected areas in Algeria are created and managed by the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture (Forests Directorate). The law n° 11-02 has provided dispositions in order to succeed the process of classification and management of protected areas. The latter are entrusted to a public administrative institution (EPA) including an

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