



Stakeholder participation and satisfaction in the process of developing management plans: The case of Scottish Inshore Fisheries Groups



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ABSTRACT

There is a growing interest in engaging stakeholders in the management of fisheries. In Scotland, the form of stakeholder involvement ranges from consultation, with an advisory function, to involvement in planning and decision-making processes. Using two Inshore Fisheries Groups (IFGs) as case studies, the present paper assesses the association between participation and satisfaction of stakeholders in the decision-making process for the development and implementation of their management plans. A survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews with the stakeholders. Spearman's correlation analysis, multiple linear regression and ordered logistic regression models were used to assess and explore the associations between stakeholders' participation and satisfaction perceptions towards the process of developing and implementing fisheries plans. The results suggest a statistically significant positive relationship between stakeholders' participation and satisfaction levels. The relationship can be affected by demographic and business characteristics, and the study revealed differences in the level of satisfaction between the two IFGs investigated. Results indicate that increasing stakeholders' satisfaction in the management process plays a key role in the success of increasing stakeholders' participation in decision-making process for the management of the Scottish IFGs and EU fisheries as a whole. Such an assessment provides a better understanding of the motives that may increase the chance of successful stakeholder' participation in fisheries management.

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1. Introduction

There is a growing interest in engaging stakeholders in the management of fisheries (Aanesen et al., 2014; Cochrane, 1999; Jentoft, 1989; Pita et al., 2010). Stakeholder participation in decision-making, from the management plan to its implementation, has been recognised in Europe's recently reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), as a key ingredient of good governance (Coffey, 2005; Nielsen et al., 2015; European Union, 2002). Stakeholder involvement in fisheries management facilitates the infiltration of local ecological knowledge (local interests or opinions), which can complement scientific information and thus help to improve the knowledge base for decision-making (Berkes et al., 2000; Davis and Wagner, 2003; Gasalla and Diegues, 2011; Haapasaari et al., 2013; Linke et al., 2011; Röckmann et al., 2012; Wiber et al., 2004) and revelation of new information to the regulators (Aanesen et al., 2014). It also increases the legitimacy and

acceptance of management policies and decisions by creating understanding and support amongst the stakeholders for the management measures and thus contributes to a more effective enforcement of rules and regulations. Likelihood of compliance may be increased as well (De Vos and Van Tatenhove, 2011; Degnbol et al., 2006; Haapasaari et al., 2013; Pita et al., 2010). Again, it enhances the inclusion of diverse stakeholder interests about the managed resources and hence stakeholder participation in decision-making processes, which is a precondition for maximizing social welfare and thereby strengthening the public support from different stakeholders (Aanesen et al., 2014; Pita et al., 2010). Stakeholders in this paper included people with an economic, social and ecological interest in fisheries activities and their management (Aanesen et al., 2014).

Engaging stakeholders in the fisheries management processes is not a new strategy within the European Union (EU) (Pita et al., 2010). Apparently, EU common fisheries policy (CFP) suggest a paradigm shift in fisheries governance that entails a turnaround in management responsibilities between the authorities and the resource users i.e. often associated with the term "co-management"

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and more recently “results-based management” (RBM), where “an acceptable impact [is defined], and then leaving it to those concerned to identify the means to meet the requirements and to document the effectiveness of the means” (Nielsen et al., 2015). This shift has been emphasised in various policy and academic circles as a promising way forward (Aanesen et al., 2014; Nielsen et al., 2015; Pita et al., 2010). With RBM-based fisheries management, the local stakeholders are left with considerable discretion about how they conduct the fishing, as long as they achieve the targets specified for the fishery in question (Nielsen et al., 2015). The government, however, has to complement by providing enabling legislation, enforcement and conflict resolution mechanisms, and other assistance required. In spite of that, little is understood about how to best increase stakeholder participation in decision-making processes.

As indicated in the last two reforms of the CFP (in 2002 and 2013), lack of stakeholder participation in EU fisheries governance has contributed to undermining the legitimacy of the CFP (Azeiteiro et al., 2012). To amend this, Regional Management Councils (RACs) based on the five large EU sea areas were established (European Union, 2004). But, due to the most recent reform of the CFP (STECF, 2013), put into force in January 2014, RACs are now called Advisory Councils (ACs). With the ACs forum, the fisheries management system in Europe involves a wider Stakeholder participation beyond just scientists and policy-makers. In line with this, Scotland, amongst other countries, has put in place several measures, aiming to enable a wider stakeholder participation in the decision-making process of its fishery (Table 1). Under the Inshore Fishing (Scotland) Act, which was adopted in 1984, Scotland introduced a number of local and national measures for the purpose of allowing more stakeholder participation that allows meaningful decisions for the management of its fishery (Jentoft and McCay, 1995). Nevertheless, an interesting question here is: are the stakeholders in Scotland satisfied with their role in participation?

According to Pita et al. (2010), fisheries stakeholders in Scotland expressed a significantly positive attitude towards the implementation of the new management measures, i.e., the Inshore Fisheries Groups (IFGs)¹ in the local areas (Pita et al., 2010). However, the attitude (satisfaction) was assessed before the Inshore Fisheries Groups management plans (IFGMPs) were developed and approved by the government authorities. This implies that the assessed stakeholders' satisfaction did not relate to their actual participation in the development of the plan, but rather based onto the agreed and intended process involving the IFGs in the planning. Stakeholders' satisfaction with their involvement depends on the extent to which they are consulted and informed about new management measures and on the extent to which they are involved in the whole process of decision-making and implementation (Pita et al., 2010). Further, stakeholders' perceptions of participation processes are influenced by their experience with government interactions, for instance with regard to how the government has supported them and have considered their local interests (Jentoft and McCay, 1995). Finally, the leadership of the stakeholder organisation and the extent to which the proposed management measures are regarded useful, can influence stakeholders' perceptions of the quality of their participation (Hoggarth et al., 1999; Ostrom, 1990; Pita et al., 2010; Yandle, 2003).

In the present paper, the main objective is to explore the

association between stakeholder levels of participation and satisfaction in the decision-making process for the development and implementation of the fisheries MP, using two IFGs in Scotland as case studies. Various conditions and experiences of participation in the decision-making process may impact the satisfaction of stakeholder participation in development and implementation of the IFGMP. Hence, the current paper deals specifically with the relationship between stakeholder participation and satisfaction perceptions towards the decision-making process. In addition, possible factors that may further explain the hypothesised relationship were assessed.

2. Methodology

2.1. The study site

This paper is a case study, based on the two out of six Scottish IFGs, called North West Inshore Fishery Group (NWIFG) and Outer Hebrides Inshore Fisheries Group (OHIFG) in the North West Coast of Scotland (Fig. 1). The fishery in this area is executed entirely by UK (Scottish) vessels (Röckmann et al., 2012). About 68% of the Scottish fishing fleet is ≤ 10 m in length, operating in inshore waters (Pita et al., 2010). The Scottish inshore waters almost entirely depend on shellfish fisheries, with *Nephrops norvegicus* (Norway lobsters) as a key species, caught mostly by trawlers and creels. However, *Cancer pagurus* (brown crabs, also known as edible crabs), *Pecten maximus* (scallops) and *Homarus gammarus* (lobsters) are also important in the area. Based on the 2013 data from Marine Scotland (MS), the total estimated landing value from NWIFG and OHIFG, where the interviews of this study took place, accounted for over £31 million (about 7.2% of the Scottish total landing value, £430 million).

The Scottish IFGs, i.e., NWIFG and OHIFG, were chosen as case studies because they are amongst the few existing examples in Europe with the newly suggested fisheries management approach, where stakeholder participation in managing the fisheries is reported to have already been implemented (Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, 2012). Besides, it is the IFG stakeholders who have developed the recently approved MP for the key fished stocks relevant to the area, which are currently in the implementation phase. The study area location in the Scottish West Coast inshore fisheries is comprised of single country fisheries, where ample data for many possible indicators useful for the management of the fishery is available (NWIFG Executive Committee, 2011; Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, 2012; The Scottish Government, 2010; Ungfors et al., 2013). The ease of access by the researcher in terms of communication and language, including all the above reasons, make the NWIFG and OHIFG case studies (Fig. 1) represent an important opportunity to assess stakeholder participation in the development and implementation of a fisheries MP in EU waters, under the suggested RBM.

2.2. Survey design and data collection

A survey was conducted to assess the stakeholders' participation and satisfaction perceptions towards their involvement in the decision-making process for the development and implementations of their approved MP. A sample of 50 stakeholders from NWIFG ($n = 27$) and OHIFG ($n = 23$) were randomly selected from a complete list of the IFG members that were pre-identified based on the purposive sampling method (selecting a simple random sample from each IFG's sampling frame pre-identified) (Agresti and Finlay, 2014; Marshall, 1996; Small, 2009), to respond to a set of eight statements regarding the topics under investigation using a 5-point

¹ IFG membership is voluntary with no financial incentives, but the IFG chair and secretariat are compensated for their work. See details of the IFGs on e.g. Scottish Inshore Fisheries Groups Website: <http://ifgs.org.uk/> and from A Strategic Framework for Inshore Fisheries in Scotland by Scottish Executive, 2005: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/149129/0039637.pdf>.

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