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The Social Acceptability of aquaculture. Emergence, utility and amalgams of a new framework to address an old social issue in policy making

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Mediterranean marine fish farming. Main issues and general context



Fish farming production in the Mediterranean (Source : FAO)

- European Mediterranean marine fish aquaculture, mainly for seabass and seabream, shows stagnation (FAO Global Aquaculture Production 1950-2016)
- Limited competitiveness of the sector linked to several factors (STECF, 2014)
- Need to Simplify administrative procedures & New governance to support EU aquaculture (Strategic Guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture -COM/2013/229)
- Many factors in the whole production cycle and value chain are the base of inefficiencies (EAS-EATiP, 2014, The Future of European Aquaculture - EATiP 2012, AQUAMED project, COFASP Workshop 07/2015)

Introduction: Specific issue addressed in this talk

- The history of aquaculture is driven by the development of new technology (it's an art of progressively substituting natural by controlled processes)
- Aquaculture development is not only a technical issue
- The complexity of these Social Ecological Systems requires to enlarge the vision under an Ecosystem Approach (Soto et al., 2008)
- Social dimensions (acceptability) appears as one of the main challenges in

Aquaculture Development

aquaculture, etc.)

 (The Future of European Aquaculture - EATiP 2012, Aquamed project, COFASP Workshop 07/2015, Regional Conference "Blue Growth in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: developing sustainable aquaculture for food security" 9–11 December 2014, EU, COM(2013) 229 final, Hichmmaunda, Blue Growth conf. 2014), etc.

• Aquaculture development is also a SOCIAL CONCERN (use of collective resources, competition for resources and space, environmental and socioeconomic responsibility of producers, food safety, social objectives of

Social dimensions are addressed in different management frameworks

- ✓ Sustainability (ecological, economic and social components)
- ✓ Integrated coastal zone management
- ✓ Ecosystem approach
- ✓ Maritime spatial planning

Social acceptability (framework, tool, process, ?)



. . .

But how social dimensions are addressed in practice ?

Recent evolution in policy making frameworks

- ICZM-EA, main policy frameworks of sustainability
- <u>Conceptually too abstract and complex</u> for resource managers to enable effective implementation
- A feasible method for <u>translating</u> this attractive concept <u>into operational</u> <u>management practice has not emerged</u> to date (e.g. Arkema, 2006; Young, 2010).
- MSP emerged as a more practical tool for achieving EA (Douvere, 2008)

Recent works in the context of the MSP highly critics with the <u>efficiency</u> of this policy

framework and the <u>involvement of stakeholders</u> in the management processes (e.g.: Flannery et al., 2012; de Vivero et al. 2012; Kyriazi et al., 2013; Jones et al, 2016)

- $\checkmark\,$ Bad understanding of how to proceed
- ✓ Lack of integration in planning
- ✓ Prevalence of top-down processes (consultation rather than true negotiation)
- Dominance of objectives based on the development of the maritime economy geopolitical factors. The blue growth strategy becomes the main objective taking into account some environmental constraints and social dimension are generally neglected
- ✓ Its ability to tackle increasingly complex governance issues is limited

(Brugere, C., Aguilar-Manjarrez, P., Beveridge, M. and Soto, D. (2018) The Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture ten years on (EAA+10): stocktaking and way forward. Reviews in Aquaculture, 0: 1-22)

Maybe a too optimistic role of MSP (Sofia, FAO 2018) ??

Aquaculture spatial planning offers many specific opportunities, including:

- mapping the presence, absence and distribution of aquatic animal disease to support disease surveillance, zoning and risk assessment of disease spread disease risk prevention and management);
- ensuring that aquaculture operations stay within the ecosystem's carrying capacity;
- reducing conflicts;
- improving public perceptions of aquaculture;
- promoting the creation of management areas to facilitate certification (Kassam, Subasinghe and Phillips, 2011);
- enabling access to finance
- improving management practices;
- creating a <u>resilient sector that is better adapted to climate change and other</u> threats;
- improving market linkages (e.g. proximity to transport and markets).



Stakeholder's involvement remains a key issue Social acceptability (NEW GRAL ?)

✓ SA is not SLO

- SLO focus on business (recommendations and good practices with local communities) ≠ SA focus on the society
- SLO is implicit et reactions of social regulators are difficult (Owen and) Kemp, 2013
- Rhetoric effect of SLO based on the concept of "license" which is not a real one (Batellier, 2015)
- SLO is related to communication (\neq SA)
- SLO is a result and SA is a process, hence its direct relation with governance
- \checkmark SA is "conditional" (possibility to accept) :
 - This is not a binary question for/ against but a discussion about the conditions of its development (NIMBY or BABANA are often exaggerate clichés (ex. Tunisian case study MedAID project)

What's behind Social acceptability?

- ✓ Large and abstract concept that encompasses different dimensions
 - To make policies/projects acceptable
 - Acceptability of the sector, of the aquaculture products
 - ... sometimes linked to the behaviour of the actors ... notion of responsibility
 - Distortion of perception related to poor communication
- \checkmark But within the SA there are factors of different dimensions
 - Ecological (pollution, change of landscapes, etc.)
 - Economic (economic impact to local territories)
 - Social (rent distribution of collective resources, quality of employment, ...)
- Policy making encounters many obstacles in modern liberal democracies
 This erosion of legitimacy is due to the complexity of social systems
 (Wagenaar, 2007)

Relevant factors of the social acceptability (main focus in recent works)



What's relevant : Social Acceptability in practice

✓ Robustness of Policy actions is higher when they are supported and legitimized by social groups that have a certain critical mass and relays in other social groups

Example : For example, in the case of onshore wind energy in France, the opponents (after an initial positive growth) have been able to aggregate around their struggle a multitude of other social groups to finally change complement the vision of wind power by rural territories

- ✓ The implementation of programs, plans and projects always fit into a local context that can not be neglected
- It is currently a fundamental expectation of European citizens to be involved in the decision-making processes that concern projects that concern them.
 For example: Water Directive, MSP, etc.



Efficient involvement of stakeholders in decision making

- There is gap between the European/national and local-territorial levels
- No "transfer of skills" from traditional territorial approaches (integration of stakeholders, territorial facilitation, long run consultation bodies, etc.) and proposed approaches for coast areas more based on technical approaches driven by external objectives ("developing aquaculture at sea" => territorial demand ?)
- Absence of institutional frameworks to address and manage social issues associated to institutional top level decision making
- Social dimensions (gender, salaries, conditions of employees...) WHAT ELSE ?

- \checkmark Social acceptability : new concept to address and old issue.
- ✓ Addressing the SA as is priority confess that policy making has not property addressed social issues in policy making (in aquaculture)
- Today the main top level institutions focus on communication to improve SA (main strategies of GFCM and European Commission ... but, understanding criteria of SA and communicating: NOT ENOUGHT
- \checkmark Necessity to promote institutional innovation
 - Tools and frameworks to solve social issues
 - The need to better integrate social dimensions in sciences and policy frameworks

Thank you for your attention!!



WELCOME TO MEDAID

MedAID (Mediterranean Aquaculture Integrated Development) is a four-year project, funded by the European Union in the frame of Horizon 2020, grant agreement number 727315. The goal of MedAID is to increase the overall competitiveness and sustainability of the Mediterranean marine fish-farming sector, throughout the whole value chain.

http://www.medaid-h2020.eu/

MedAID: together with PerformFISH: are two RIA (Research and Innovation Action) which have been approved under the call SES-23-2016