

CHAPTER 10

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TWO FORMS OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN AQUACULTURE GOVERNANCE: SELF-REGULATION AND INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

European aquaculture governance contains elements of the three main modes of governance: 1) hierarchical; 2) market; and 3) participative. This chapter focuses on the participative mode, both because it is the dominant mode, and because it offers a better prospect for the future of the aquaculture industry than either of the other two modes. There are two distinct forms of stakeholder participation: a) self-regulation, where participation is largely confined to the industry; and b) Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), where participation is (ideally) shared by all stakeholders. In this chapter, both forms of stakeholder participation are explained and evaluated, and the conclusion is drawn that the future of European aquaculture governance lies in strengthening the element of ICZM relative to the element of self-regulation.

10.1 Introduction

Aquaculture in Europe has been subjected to much less control by the European Commission than has the capture fisheries sector. This is partly because marine aquaculture generally takes place within Member States' territorial waters, and is therefore regulated mainly by the states themselves, and partly because aquaculture is a new industry, on a relatively small scale, and so has not raised many serious issues of competition between Member States in comparison with fisheries. As a result, the predominant mode of aquaculture governance in Europe is not the hierarchical mode (the top-down, centralised and coercive mode which predominates in the European catch fisheries in the form of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)), but what appears at first sight to be a modified version of the market mode, in which market forces of supply and demand are permitted to hold sway, subject to domestic legislation on planning, environmental protection, health and safety. However, scrutinising this modified market mode more closely, we can see that, notwithstanding its free market features, it contains a considerable amount of voluntary control by the aquaculture industry, laying down detailed guidelines and codes of conduct that all producers are virtually obliged to adopt. This form of governance, which has been termed 'self-regulation', thus embodies a 'thin' or partial form of stakeholder participation, in that the industry participates in decision-making, though other stakeholders are generally excluded. Accordingly, I have categorised it in the participative mode, rather than in the market mode, of fisheries governance.

However, there are increasing signs of a challenge to this self-regulating form of

aquaculture governance in Europe, coming from two quarters. First, there are demands from other coastal resource users to participate in decision-making. Second, there is pressure from the European Union (EU) to shift from a single industry perspective to an eco-system approach, whereby aquaculture is governed in the context of the wider ecological environment in which it is located. The concept of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) has arisen to satisfy these two aspirations, incorporating both a 'thick' or comprehensive form of stakeholder participation, and an ecosystem approach.

In this chapter, I examine each of these two forms of European aquaculture governance – self-regulation and ICZM – and show how the tide is gradually turning in favour of the latter. I conclude by arguing, however, that the best arrangement is where the two forms are combined, so that the industry retains its self-regulating capacity in spheres such as quality assurance, but that the whole coastal community is empowered to make decisions on such issues as the size and location of fish farms.

10.2 Development of aquaculture

Aquaculture is considered to be the fastest growing animal food production sector in the world, having increased at an average compounded rate of 9.2 per cent per year since 1970, compared with 1.4 per cent for capture fisheries and 2.8 per cent for terrestrial farmed meat production systems (FAO 2002). The marine aquaculture sector is dominated by high-value finfish, crustaceans, molluscs and aquatic plants. Finfish farming is the most important form of aquaculture in developed countries, having started commercially in the late 1970s/early 1980s, and having established itself as a successful alternative to fishing by the early 1990s. In western parts of the world, like Europe, the main opportunities for growth in the marine aquaculture sector lie in developing value-added products based on traditional farmed species, such as salmon (*Salmo salar* L.) and mussels (*Mytilus edulis*), and diversification into production of newer species such as cod (*Gadus morhua*) and haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*). Within the next 10 years, this sub-sector of aquaculture has been predicted to provide significant new employment. Organic fish farming is undertaken on a smaller scale, and the potential markets for organically farmed finfish, where a premium on price is paid, are more unpredictable, given that many consumers are more interested in competitively-priced products than in how fish are farmed.

Accordingly, despite some uncertainty, marine aquaculture is considered by many as a promising opportunity for diversification in coastal areas, especially in those areas that contain fisheries-dependent communities. Many human settlements are socially and economically dependent on unstable catch fishery resources, and, in some cases, aquaculture can offer an alternative sustainable livelihood, especially in rural areas where activities for income generation are limited. There are many examples where fishers have diversified into aquaculture successfully, meeting the need for employees skilled in working in and from a boat. Similarly, mollusc and cage culture provide additional revenue for fishers, who often perform them on a part-time basis. Indeed, in many parts of the world, fishing and aquaculture activities share similar coastal areas and services, and interaction between the two sectors is increasing. Moreover, offshore cage technology continues to advance and is becoming cheaper and increasingly viable,