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Small-scale fishers as allies or opponents? Unlocking looming tensions and potential exclusions in Poland’s marine spatial planning

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ABSTRACT

The success of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) depends on the effective participation of small-scale fishers (SSFs), and the extent to which marine governance in general can address the problems they face. As Poland’s MSP in areas that are key to small-scale fisheries are yet to begin, this paper explores tensions in the country’s looming coastal MSP processes through clarifying both the risks faced by SSFs and their perspectives on MSP. Using semi-structured interviews with SSFs and analytical literature reviews on small-scale fisheries, it is found that Poland’s MSP is cast against a contentious history of marine resource management that shapes negative perceptions of and attitudes towards both the European Union-mediated MSP and marine scientists. Notably, SSFs believe that (1) authorities often undervalue and underutilize their experiential knowledge, (2) MSP is intended primarily to facilitate the siting of offshore wind farms and, (3) scientific knowledge is either not effectively communicated or is at the service of investors. A discussion follows that proposes measures through which planners can ensure procedural fairness. The paper concludes by offering TURF-Reserves as a novel and integrated co-management system within MSP which has potentials for empowering SSFs and revitalizing Poland’s small-scale fisheries, while ensuring effective marine protection.

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Introduction

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is introduced worldwide as a radical approach to governing multiple uses of marine space to meet ecological, economic and social sustainability objectives (Ehler & Douvere, 2009). European MSP emerged from ecosystem-based management and is thus seen as a strong commitment by the European Commission to ensure good environmental status of European seas. However, marine protection measures undertaken thus far are described as insufficient, owing to goal conflicts in key EU MSP-related policies, and their neoliberal growth orientation (Flannery, Healy, & Luna, 2018; Jones, Lieberknecht, & Qiu, 2016). Likewise, serious doubts have been forwarded about whether commitments towards reaching social sustainability at sea can be achieved in practice, (Flannery et al., 2016) as emerging MSPs indicate that significant political resources are invested towards ‘growing’, and to some extent ‘greening’, the seas but with very little efforts to plan ‘just’ seas.1

Indeed, just as it was feared that ‘we may end up adopting systems of MSP that are socially regressive’ (Flannery et al., 2016, p. 124), some participatory processes tend to legitimize strategic sectoral interests (e.g. shipping, renewable energy etc.) while delegitimizing those of less powerful actors. Paradoxically, the tendency to gloss over controversies for the sake of delivering quick strategic plans is not without implications for their implementation. Indeed, there is evidence that these de/legitimization processes often lead to damaging...
impressions about participation (Flannery et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2016; Smith & Jentoft, 2017) and sometimes provoke open resistance (Tafon, Howarth, & Griggs, 2019), which may also lead to the cancelation of proposed developments in extreme cases (as discussed subsequently). For actors engaging in the depoliticization or displacement of conflict, Kidd and Ellis (2012) caution that, ‘it would be wrong to assume that once plans are in place that the main planning task is over’ (p. 60). The implication is the likelihood that unresolved issues will recur and haunt both planners and maritime economies in unexpected ways – what I discuss as the paradox of zombified or therapeutic-style participation.

Given these issues and their disruptive potential, there are calls for marine social scientists to clarify the ‘problems, risks and opportunities faced by different types of organizations involved in MSP’ (Kidd & Ellis, 2012, p. 58) as a condition for ensuring both management efficiency, and equitable processes and outcomes. A fruitful means is to engage with pressing issues faced by vulnerable marine communities early on. Small-scale fishers (SSFs) are identified as the least powerful and most vulnerable marine user group (Jentoft & Knol, 2014). The success of marine governance interventions depends not only on their effective participation, but perhaps, more importantly, on the extent to which the former can address the problems that SSFs face.

However, because those with responsibility to plan and manage different marine and coastal spaces do not always possess sufficient understandings of the nature of the fishery ‘problem’ (Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2009), SSFs often end up being ‘pushed around’ in different governance regimes (Bavinck & Jentoft, 2011), which adversely affects community wellbeing and prospects for achieving environmental, economic and cultural sustainability in coastal settings. It is thus feared that as competition for marine space increases between these ‘traditional’ users and new ‘comers’, MSP may further marginalize SSFs and fisheries communities (Jentoft, 2017). Another key concern is the attitude of fishers towards MSP. Jentoft and Knol (2014, p. 9) note that because fishers may ‘see [MSP] as another step towards enclosure of the fishery commons’ they ‘are likely to be hesitant if not vociferously antagonistic’ towards MSP.

Many attempts have been made to better incorporate fisheries into MSP, yet such efforts often fail (Janßen et al., 2018). As a means to contribute towards a more efficient and socially progressive MSP, this paper discusses the problems faced by Poland’s SSFs in the looming coastal MSP processes, and proposes mechanisms through which marine governance can promote collective agency and potentially contribute to environmentally sustainable and economically viable small-scale fisheries in Poland.

The focus on Poland and particularly, on SSFs is motivated by the following three factors. First, MSP is ultimately about making decisions related to multiple and often conflicting uses of sea space, whereby actors are invited to both indicate and defend their interests and preferences. However, while the success of MSP in Poland is highly contingent on the meaningful participation of different sub-sectors of fisheries (Lamp, 2012), the country’s SSFs are reluctant to participate and pursue their interests in the invited spaces of MSP (Ciółek, Matczak, Piwowarczyk, Szefler, & Zaucha, 2018; Piwowarczyk et al., 2019). This is so even though they are vulnerable to further pressure, as they already face poverty traps related to resource overexploitation and depletion, as well as social marginalization from the rest of the Polish population (Marciniak, 2011).

Second, it has been argued that collaborative management efforts can disintegrate in situations where participants have a contentious history (Jenkins, 2015). Poland’s MSP is organized in a contentious socio-political context characterized by distrust and social discontent, which if not addressed early on, may render planning relations in Poland highly volatile. In short, Poland’s MSP is characterized by an ‘immature planning culture’ where authorities are reluctant to communicate (Zaucha, 2012, p. 467), set alongside a fledgling democracy, an authoritarian decision-making system, and skepticisms towards marine scientists (Figus, 2015; Figus, Carothers, & Beaudreau, 2017).

Third, Polish fishers often view themselves as victims of time (Rakowski and Szymanek 2015). This view stems from the fact that Poland’s fishery over the years has undergone numerous socio-political and organizational transformations, which have resulted in fatigue. Figus (2013) notes: ‘Transition not only from communism to [market economy], but also from fledgling democracy to EU membership, has led to fatigue throughout the Polish fishing fleet’, which ‘point[s] to a need to treat Polish fisheries differently – to expect a low level of support for new policies, regulations, and rules’ (pp. 46–7). What is more, fish stocks have also declined over the years and with it an erosion of the institutions that provided social connection and protection (Marciniak and Jentoft, 1997;
This has led to increased economic insecurity for small-scale fisheries communities and their social marginalization from the rest of the Polish regions and population (Marciniak, 2011).

Thus, put together, the aloofness and potential non-participation of SSFs, as well as the socio-political and institutional context against which Poland’s MSP is set are likely to both render the country’s MSP quite contentious and impede the socio-ecological and economic transformation of its declining small-scale fishery.

Nonetheless, the looming presence of conflict is no cause for resignation, whether for SSFs or for planners. First, it appears that Polish marine planners are aware of some of the concerns of SSFs and are considering not to a priori discount fishing from any particular marine space, except to impose some restrictions where absolutely necessary (Ciołek et al., 2018). Second, the pervasive idea that conflict is destructive and as such should be avoided in planning must be replaced with a more promising understanding of it not only as inevitable but also as legitimate and constituting a productive force. Indeed, if encouraged early on and harnessed, the agonistic playout of conflict can lead to positive gains both for planning and across stakeholder groups (Tafon, Howarth, & Griggs, 2019).

The above understanding of conflict as having transformatory potential may also apply in coastal MSP processes in Poland, even if the country is yet to fully abandon its authoritarian planning culture legacy. Indeed, although Poland’s national MSP processes are ongoing, planning in areas with ports and the Vistula and Szczecin lagoons, which constitute key fishing grounds for SSFs are yet to begin due to the intensity of possible conflicts in these areas. This presents a unique opportunity not only to build much needed trust among various Polish MSP stakeholders, but also to collectively seek ways to transform small-scale fisheries into an activity for the sustainable exploitation, planning and protection of marine resources. While the focus is on Poland, insights in this paper may have relevance elsewhere, especially given that SSFs in other contexts face similar MSP-related problems, which relate to resource access, distributive justice and collective agency (Jentoft, 2017; Said, MacMillan, Schembri, & Tzanopoulos, 2017), as well as knowledge integration (St. Martin and Hall-Arber, 2008; Trouillet et al., 2019).

The paper is organized in the following manner. The next section describes and motivates the methodological approach. I then review the marine governance literature on stakeholder-related issues to fully consider the risks of therapeutic-style participation, which have implications for how stakeholders may respond to MSP and the relationship of this to the effectiveness and efficiency of marine governance. This is followed by a description of the policy context of MSP in Poland and the level of participation undertaken thus far. I then describe how SSFs themselves construct their role, as well as that of scientists and decision-makers in shaping the planning process – which reveals a number of tensions that need to be addressed. This is followed by a discussion section, which highlights procedural mechanisms through which MSP authorities can reverse the aloofness and potential non-participation of SSFs. The paper concludes by offering TURF-Reserves as an alternative co-management system that has potentials for empowering the collective agency of SSFs and promoting long-term environmentally sustainable and economically viable small-scale fisheries in Poland.

Methodology

The research approach adopted in this paper consists firstly, of a literature review into the political economy of Polish fishery. Although this literature is broad and extensive, I focus on that which specifically deals with issues of participation and power in order to gain insights into: (1) transformations that the Polish fishery has undergone over the years; (2) how these transformations have contributed to vulnerabilities in small-scale fisheries and; (3) how these past experiences may shape SSFs’ perceptions of MSP.

To further explore looming conflicts and how they may be transformed into synergies, the paper draws on interviews with SSFs to illustratively clarify how they construct their role and that of others in shaping the planning process. Primary data for this exercise is derived from case study work undertaken in Poland during 2015–2016 as part of the broader BONUS BALTSPACE² research project, which involved several case studies around the Baltic Sea and workshops with BALTSPACE participants over a three-year period (2015–2018). Reports were produced for the Polish case based on extensive interviews with MSP actors (e.g. public authorities, non-governmental organizations, scientists, offshore wind energy developers as well as SSFs and industrial
fishers). As the perspectives of planners and other fisheries stakeholders are considered elsewhere (e.g. Piwowarczyk, Matczak, Rakowski, & Zaucha, forthcoming), this paper focusses on the perspectives of SSFs alone, which were gathered from semi-structured face-to-face interviews with a total of 18 willing interview participants. They are coastal fishers along the Gulf of Gdańsk (Władysławowo and the Hel) and the lagoons (Vistula River Mouth and the western part of Gdańsk Bay), who conduct mainly artisanal operations using vessels under 15 meters in length. Respondents were selected on the basis of their past participation in marine governance arrangements, including MSP pre-planning encounters and previous NATURA 2000 arrangements. They were asked to reflect both on their experiences of participation in these previous encounters, as well as on the prospects of their active participation in the upcoming development and implementation of Polish marine plans in areas with ports and the Vistula and Szczecin lagoons.

Respondents’ perspectives were analyzed based on two integration issues – stakeholder and knowledge – which were identified by Saunders et al. (2017), Turski, Matczak, Szalucka, and Witkowska (2018) and Gilek, Saunders, and Stalmokaite (2018) as constituting key challenges in Poland’s MSP. Due to sensitivities around respondent confidentiality in the ongoing national MSP process in Poland, the number of respondents interviewed is limited so that far from representative of the perceptions of a cross-section of SSFs, the responses are only indicative of looming concerns that necessitate the attention of planners and other key MSP actors. Secondly, due to constraints imposed by a confidentiality clause agreed to in the BONUS BALTSPACE project, I am also restricted in what direct empirical material I can present (particularly in relation to quotes and directly attributable opinions). So, in some cases, I refer to insights and findings in a way that ensures that the identity of respondents is not disclosed.

In addition to these primary sources, the paper also draws on the documentary analysis of Polish national MSP papers and roadmaps, previous reports on fisheries, as well as on the author’s insights from BONUS BALTSPACE-led stakeholder forums with Polish MSP authorities and social scientists to problematize issues in the country’s MSP. The paper also draws on other BALTSPACE-related work (e.g. Piwowarczyk et al., forthcoming) for additional insights on SSFs’ role in and perceptions of MSP.

**Emerging realities of MSP and the paradox of therapeutic or zombified participation**

After several years of MSP-ing (verb form), critics argue that MSP across Europe and beyond is largely driven by neoliberal logics, with much faith put in deliberation and market mechanisms to deliver economic, ecological, as well as distributive and procedural gains (Flannery et al., 2018; Tafon, 2018). While marine protection concerns are seen by some (e.g. Calado et al., 2012) as having sway in MSP, many see it as being blurred in very loose environmental objectives, as the state promotes and sponsors private interests, particularly marine renewable energy developments to ensure uninterrupted economic growth (Flannery et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Tafon et al., 2019). In terms of issues of social justice and equity, it is feared that the discourse of participation may be serving only as ideological cover for growth objectives, so that several MSPs may end up generating more negative attitudes than ‘buy-in’ among coastal communities (Tafon, 2018). It is also argued that because the epistemological basis of MSP is framed in predominantly rationalist terms, the production of knowledge is not only constrained, but its circulation mainly rationalizes the rationalities of dominant groups (Flannery et al., 2016; Flannery, Clarke, & McAteer, 2019; Jentoft, 2017; Saunders, Gilek, & Tafon, 2019; Tafon, Saunders, & Gilek, forthcoming).

Seen thus, the mere guarantee of political rights to participate in the ‘invited spaces’ of MSP often does little to level the playing field for weaker stakeholders (Smith & Jentoft, 2017). Instead, MSP may function as a power minefield in which strategy and performativity function to mold rule-following subjects of planning.

Admittedly, MSP is a laudable system of resource governance because it empowers various stakeholders, including the planner with dispositional capacity. As such it constitutes the condition of possibility for collective agency in the marine environment (Tafon et al., forthcoming). However, enabled by the powerlessness of the planner – differentials in the distribution of actor’s social resources to defend their interests usually result from circumstance beyond the planner’s sphere of influence (Smith & Jentoft, 2017) – opportunities for concerted action are often misused by more powerful actors to pursue individual, rather than collective goals. Besides
her powerlessness, the socialized subjectivity and cognitive limitations of the planner may also impede her agency, so that rather than resist particular planning fantasies and power asymmetries, she becomes no less than a rule-following subject who privileges universal theory over local action (Gunder, 2003; Tafon et al., forthcoming). As she fails to put her structurally derived agency into effective use, her powerlessness ends up zombifying the invited spaces and participants of MSP into what seems like therapeutic-style consultations.

Ultimately, the zombification of planning has implications for the social acceptability of plans and the sustainability of marine governance. Indeed, while some scholars (e.g. Jay, 2010) encourage developers to appropriate the ‘politically-determined policy context’ of MSP, which ‘allows the explicit prioritization of wind energy’ (p. 498), the paradox is that the perception of MSP as exclusionary may either deter the participation of stakeholders – as observed in the US context (Flannery et al., 2018) – or transform potential allies into opponents, as in the Estonian context (Tafon et al., 2019). Elsewhere in the US, Fox et al. (2013) describe how two attempts between 2000 and 2002 to implement the California statewide network of marine protected areas failed because of objections that the plan was exclusionary. It was not until authorities had initiated direct stakeholder involvement that the project finally garnered wide enough support to make implementation feasible in subsequent years.

Of course, in cases where projects ‘break’ over potentially irreconcilable politico-ideological issues, planners and other project proponents may quickly draw on programmatic logics to postpone or dismiss dissent, and then legitimize their action, sometimes by vilifying objectors as misinformed NIMBYs (Aitken, McDonald, & Strachan, 2008; Tafon et al., 2019). However, the experience of MSP as dislocatory can sometimes transform participating actors into ‘immovable subjects of resistance’ to planning and development (Inch et al., 2017, p. 469), who may make use of the multi-institutional landscape of MSP (e.g. the judiciary system) to push forward their rationalities.

For instance, Jones, Rigg, and Pinkerton (2017) describe how faced by pressure from Canada’s Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to open a commercial herring fishery on Haida Gwaii, aboriginal communities deployed a combination of political strategies, including litigation, confrontation, and negotiation, which resulted in a Federal Court ruling in 2015 in their favor. Elsewhere, in the context of MSP in Hiiumaa in Estonia, Tafon et al. (2019) describe how planners deployed politico-managerial strategies to displace concerns raised by residents and municipal actors around a proposed offshore wind project. However, the dismissal of claims and demands as being inconsistent with legality and programmatic rules paradoxically unleashed a 26-month legal battle, which culminated in a Supreme Court ruling that invalidated sections of the Hiiumaa marine plan that allocated space for wind energy development (Tafon et al., forthcoming).

Admittedly, both the Estonian and Canadian cases of realpolitik and their subsequent outcome are far from representative of a general trend in MSP, or of the politics of marine governance more generally. The point is that there are good and poor planning processes out there, just as there are successful and unsuccessful instances of opposition. Nonetheless, due to insufficient primary investigations (largely because many marine plans, particularly those across Europe are not likely to materialize before 2021 – deadline set by EU regulation), it is premature to ascertain that most collaborative planning processes are therapeutically-led or not. What is more, even where local, context-specific processes have been empirically studied and have been found to be exclusionary (e.g. Jones et al., 2016; Smith & Jentoft, 2017), the response (whether passive or otherwise) of locally delegitimized stakeholders has not been examined beyond those documented by Tafon et al. (2019) and Flannery et al. (2018).

Notwithstanding, the following insights from the terrestrial planning literature, as well as emerging experiences of MSP and its theoretically-guided literature can be useful to planners who struggle to make participation count both in Poland and elsewhere.

- First, ‘success’ in MSP should be measured not by the mere approval of plans, but more by the extent to which stated objectives in plans are actually implemented.
- Second, planning practice may gain more in terms of legitimacy and social acceptance from processes that encourage agonistic dialogue than from those that seek to displace conflict. If opposition is encouraged early on, it may pave the way for mutual learning between adversaries (Tafon et al., 2019).
• Third, trust throughout the entire planning cycle is a necessary condition for a successful and equitable planning process (Pomeroy & Douvere, 2008). The absence of trust-building mechanisms, even for a seemingly irresistible force like MSP, may lead to lack of support for interventions, which may in turn impose transaction costs and delays on planners and businesses alike (Kidd & Shaw, 2014).

• Last but not least, stakeholders do not always come to the table with the intent to disrupt (Tafon et al., 2019). Stiff opposition often represents an extraordinary moment of conflict in planning. Yet, its persistence is an indication that planners may have missed opportunities to listen to alternative rationalities (Inch et al., 2017, pp. 469–472).

**MSP in Poland**

Participatory MSP in Poland, in terms of engaged two-way communicative procedures between planners and various stakeholders has only just begun, with several procedures planned to take place subsequently. Poland’s MSP is administered by the Maritime Administration through its regional offices in Gdynia, Szczecin and Śłupsk. MSP gets its legal status from the ‘Act on sea areas of the Republic of Poland and the Maritime Administration’ of 1991. However, a supporting law – the ‘Ministerial Regulation on MSP of 17th of May 2017’ was introduced to ensure full implementation of the EU MSP Directive of 2014 (Government of Poland, 2016).

MSP began in 2013 through a comprehensive stocktaking exercise to map areas of conflict, as well as analyze the spatial, legal, social, economic and natural conditions for preparing plans for Polish seas. This first phase was concluded in March 2015 and produced a non-legally-binding report (‘Study of the Conditions of Spatial Development of Polish Sea Areas’) – henceforth The Report (Government of Poland, 2016). In March 2016, the Maritime Office in Gdynia announced the beginning of procedures for elaborating one comprehensive marine plan for Polish marine space (in the scale of 1: 200,000) and a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) report. Administered together with the other two Maritime Offices, elaboration of the plan which covers all Polish sea areas except areas with ports and the Vistula and Szczecin Lagoons effectively began in July 2016 (Government of Poland, 2016).

The following three, more engaged participatory procedures are organized at the national level as part of ongoing processes:

- Delivery of the first drafts of plan (end of September 2017).
- Modification of plan after incorporation of SEA stipulations, as well as comments from consultations (third quarter of 2018).
- Final round of discussions (mid-2019).

The final version of the plan is expected in the second half of 2019. Besides these planned procedures, other forms of consultation considered to be outside of formal MSP processes were conducted, but with low response rates, particularly from SSFs. Other non-formal MSP processes include the preparation of three MSP pilot plans between 2008 and 2011, as part of the PartiSEApate project. The limited participation of SSFs in these processes raises concerns among planners and Offshore wind energy (OWE) developers who are worried that this low turnout may be repeated when actual planning begins with SSFs in areas with ports and the Vistula and Szczecin Lagoons, and that this may adversely affect the legitimacy of plans.

**Fishers’ perceptions of marine spatial planning**

Polish SSFs, in general, have been reluctant to participate in national MSP-related processes, both formal and informal. This disinterest largely relates to concerns over loss of fishing grounds, as MSP is viewed as designed primarily to protect marine biodiversity and to facilitate the development of OWE schemes – that is, to give the energy sector either equal or more access rights to the marine space. This concern mainly stems from confusions that stem from lack of proper communication and distinction between MSP-led meetings, and those
that were organized by other MSP stakeholders to discuss sector-specific goals and interests (e.g. developer-organized meetings and NATURA 2000 workshops). Particularly, as developer-organized meetings were attended by planners, fishers tend to confuse these with those that appertain more broadly to MSP.

I attended one or two meetings organized by someone there about something there but at the end it turn[ed] out that it was always organized by the wind farm industry and the cooperating organizations. [fisher cited in Piwowarczyk et al. (forthcoming)]

Furthermore, while the fishery sector in other Baltic waters, such as in Germany has engaged in MSP and obtained notable concessions vis-à-vis proposed OWE developments (Saunders et al., 2017), their Polish counterparts demand rigorous scientific studies on the potential adverse effects of OWE on fisheries and marine habitats as a precondition for dialogue. However, in the absence of such studies, they challenge decision-makers to apply the Precautionary Approach to OWE, claiming that this approach has often been invoked when there are uncertainties about the adverse effects of other developments on marine biodiversity and habitats. Besides such requests, SSFs believe that marine managers generally do not value their local experiential knowledge (LEK) and do not see the possibility of their opinions influencing MSP. They ascribe the underutilization of their LEK to their lack of financial resources to lobby their interests.

[Decision-makers] do not value the opinion of [fishers] who use the sea since tens of years because we are not well organized and do not have unlimited funds. And unfortunately, we lose due to lack of money and they [the OWE sector] win. [fisher]

Similar perceptions of disregard for their LEK are also well documented in another study on Polish SSFs by Figus (2015). Related to knowledge issues, fishers are of the impression that science communication by MSP-related authorities and scientists is very ineffective. For some fishers, the use of scientific jargon and charts are not tailored to their needs and expectations. Importantly, some see such methods as restricting their capacity to engage in dialogue, thus contributing to eroding possibilities for meaningful cooperation in MSP.

[Scientific results] were presented, some numbers were shown but it was all difficult to understand. It was like a professor is giving a lecture to students who are not listening to him. [fisher]

Scientists are careless how to communicate their knowledge. They cannot present it in a way that fishers expect. They show charts, drawings and bars, but what is the conclusion? [fisher]

Fishers also saw what they perceive to be the ‘dubious’ role of scientists as preventing their meaningful participation in MSP processes. Particularly, they question the neutrality and scientific basis of research, claiming that scientific studies are carried out either to restrict fishers’ access to marine resources, or instrumentally to support the expansion of the maritime economy. Consequently, fishers expect scientists to direct their practice more towards answering and solving fishery-related questions and problems.

It is not that we dislike scientists, but we would like to see that the research they undertake is done for fishers … and that their goal is not to close the whole Baltic for five years. [fisher]

If you want to ask me if businesses use scientific institutes to do research for them, and if this is proper, then I would say science should not be used to support investments but – on the contrary … it should investigate what effects these investments will have on the coastal areas. [fisher]

Perceptions about insufficient science communication, the partiality of scientists and the undervaluation of their LEK were not the only barriers to fishers’ meaningful participation in MSP. Indeed, some fishers acknowledge the inevitability of offshore wind farms (OWFs) in Polish waters and want to be treated as partners in MSP processes. Yet, they fear that they will not be treated with respect by MSP authorities and other influential and better-organized actors. This fear is bolstered by memories of interactions in past fisheries management initiatives (viz EU-led CFP), during which fishers were given only ‘minimum’ compensation for lost fishing rights.

We [the fishers] are aware that OWFs will have to be developed sooner or later as this is what the modern world demands. However, we wish we were treated as partners and not as savages as we have been using the sea for years. And I often have a feeling that all these men and women behave as if they were visiting some kind of natural park full of uneducated savages. And they felt they should give us some colorful beads. [fisher]
Another key perception of MSP is that when authorities view the participation of the fishery sector as an absolute necessity, it is often well-organized groups such as fishers’ organizations that are invited to decision-making forums. Not only are SSFs (with insufficient organizational skills and lobbying capacity) a priori excluded from such meetings, but they also believe that better organized fishery interests do not always table issues that are more specific to SSFs in negotiations.

These representatives can present an incomplete picture and a lack of a full picture can create conflicts. [fisher cited in Piwowarzcyk et al. (forthcoming)]

**Discussion**

The previous section has briefly illustrated fishers’ worries about, and expectations of MSP. Though the data is not representative of a cross-section of Polish small-scale fisheries – and certainly indicates the need for further research into the issues – the responses nonetheless indicate that SSFs increasingly view MSP as a mechanism to facilitate the introduction and expansion of OWE in Poland’s marine space. Relatedly, they fear that the introduction of this new form of sea-space use will encroach on their access to, and use of, marine resources. Specifically, this fear relates to the heterogeneous and fluid occurrence of fish in the water, which necessitates a more dynamic and extended access to marine space for fishing. Such fears are not unique to Poland’s SSFs but are commonly expressed by fishers elsewhere. For instance, in the Maltese context, Said et al. (2017) describe how SSFs are worried that the creation of marine protected areas will intensify the problem of ‘spatial squeezing’ that they already face.

Notwithstanding, the fact that some SSFs increasingly recognize that they must make space for the inevitability of OWE development in Polish waters shows signs of potential synergies and cooperation between SSFs, developers and planners. Indeed, although many Polish SSFs are generally unenthusiastic about participation (Giolek et al., 2018), this is not a sign that they are a priori opposed to MSP as might be thought. In fact, there are reasons to be optimistic that their disengagement can be transformed into a fruitful alliance. However, this potential is contingent on the realization of the following interrelated procedural imperatives.

Firstly, planners need to clarify the purpose of MSP, making it clear that it is not simply intended to legitimize the development of OWE nor to restrict fishers’ access to specific marine spaces. That is, that MSP is about transforming conflicts into political tradeoffs. Furthermore, planners and other MSP actors (including developers) need to be willing and ready to create transparent space for SSFs to meaningfully express and defend their concerns. In short, planners should be ‘seen’ by various stakeholders as planning with and assisting them in making tradeoffs. This kind of ‘visible’ planning proved useful in unlocking the disengagement of fishers in German local MSP processes (Saunders et al., 2017) and in the development of a zoning plan in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Protected Area (Day, 2017).

Secondly, while objectivity may be practically impossible, science must be seen as being as neutral and independent as possible, and not in the service of specific stakeholder groups. Furthermore, planners need to valorize and utilize the LEK of SSFs, which can prove quite instrumental to MSP, particularly in a Polish context where fisheries and other relevant ecosystems data are relatively scarce. Participatory mapping, in which SSFs are key participants could prove useful in this exercise (Kafas et al., 2017; Trouillet et al., 2019). Relatedly, scientific knowledge should be communicated in a more accessible manner to ensure better dialogue and engagement across stakeholders.

Thirdly, MSP authorities need to improve their communicative skills and be clear enough about which processes are MSP-led and which are sector-based and organized by developers and other interests.

Finally, for the outcomes of dialogical processes to be widely accepted, they must be reflective, not of some predefined objectives or preunderstandings of the needs and interests of different stakeholders, but rather, of the various stakeholder inputs and political tradeoffs that are made ‘in process’, so to speak.

If these procedural conditions are met, MSP in Poland – albeit cast against a troubled socio-political and institutional past – can move towards gaining legitimacy among SSFs and the wider public. However, some of the more pressing problems faced by SSFs (e.g. poverty, social exclusion, as well as insufficient collective
mobilization and lobbying capacity) do not result from unfair process but relate more to broader structures of inequalities so that procedural fairness alone may do little in terms of empowering SSFs and promoting their collective agency. Below, I consider how Poland’s small-scale fishery can be transformed into a viable economic activity with multiple benefits for fisheries, MSP and marine governance in general.

**Conclusion: towards a locally embedded co-management MSP**

Marciniak (2011) notes that Polish SSFs around the Vistula lagoon are ‘searching for new possibilities of rationally exploiting marine natural resources in such a way as to halt further degradation, while simultaneously permitting their further exploitation’ (p. 143). Other SSFs, particularly those around the Hel peninsula and elsewhere are making calls for the reintroduction of the *maszoperia*, a premodern system of artisanal fishery (Bavinck, Jentoft, Pascual-Fernandez, & Marciniak, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016). The *maszoperia* maintained livelihoods and wellbeing for coastal communities, as well as the ecological sustainability of fisheries (Marciniak & Jentoft, 1997). However, a renovated *maszoperia* is likely to be at odds with the integrative and multi-use approach of MSP.

A more promising and lasting solution to the socio-economic, environmental and resource problems related to Poland’s fishery may be achieved through experimenting with TURF-Reserves, a co-management initiative that is increasingly recognized around the world. TURFs (Territorial Use Rights for Fisheries) – as a rights-based approach to fishery management, and marine protected areas (MPAs) – as a spatial protection regime are concepts and practices that often develop separately. However, nowadays, these two approaches are increasingly being paired under one co-management practice – TURF-Reserves. TURF-Reserves can increase fishers’ access to space and guarantee food sovereignty and economic opportunities while simultaneously reducing overexploitation of fish resources and maintaining healthy oceans (Barner et al., 2015). While some TURF-Reserves typically develop out of a history of community-based marine tenure practices, others result from policies put in place more directly by national governments as an alternative strategy for managing fishery and protecting the marine environment (Afflerbach, Lester, Dougherty, & Poon, 2014).

In the Polish context, a combination of historical community-based tenure practices and direct state policies may be required. For instance, state authorities may build on and adapt the old *maszoperia* institutions in ways that can revive small-scale fishery and improve economic conditions for coastal communities. In addition, the state may also need to establish policies, enact laws and promote other capacity-building reforms that specifically aim at strengthening the collective agency of SSFs (e.g. through giving them a degree of access, management and ownership rights). It has been found that when fishers are granted territorial use rights, they do not only protect marine resources, but they are sometimes incentivized to establish their own marine protected area (Ovando et al., 2013). Furthermore, when TURFs are well designed and explicitly paired with adjacent MPAs, this has the potential of decreasing illegal fishing and promoting effective conservation. This is because by giving community members exclusive access rights to specific marine spaces, fishers may be incentivized not only to ensure that fisheries are well managed but also that the surrounding ecosystems on which fish depend are kept healthy (Barner et al., 2015). In short, TURF-Reserves can potentially transform Poland’s small-scale fishery into an activity for the sustainable exploitation, planning and protection of marine resources. However, in order for TURF-Reserves to align with the multi-use and integrative approach of MSP, they should not be designed in isolation, but the initiative should be integrated into the broader MSP system.

For instance, Jones et al. (2010) describe how the capacity of the Haida and other First Nations was strengthened in view of an integrated marine planning initiative in the northwest coast of British Columbia, Canada. As the authors note, the state – through court decisions, government policies, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) – lent its weight to resolving problems of Aboriginal resource ownership and access in marine areas. Specifically, the MOU with First Nations established a particular structure, which enabled First Nations to collaboratively plan with Canada ‘on a government-to-government basis’ (Ibid. p. 11). Furthermore, rather than adopt a piecemeal approach to planning, both First Nations and the Federal Government agreed to integrate the planning initiative with other planning processes in the region. It is thanks to the fact that First Nations are supported through court decisions, as well as other rights-based agreements and laws that local communities
were able to resist the plan by the Canadian Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to open a commercial herring fishery on Haida Gwaii. These laws and agreements thus empowered community actors to adopt a precautionary approach to commercial herring in ways that effectively protect local herring stocks (Jones et al., 2017).

Of course, while national authorities in Poland are encouraged to emulate this ‘exemplar’ and promote resource co-management, they must be mindful of place sensitivity and tailor their efforts to suit the social, economic, ecological, cultural and historic conditions of context (Jay, Ellis, & Kidd, 2012). For instance, since SSFs are only a sub-sector of fishery, the participation and cooperation of other actors, including scientists, fishing industry members and fishing associations, non-governmental organizations, as well as local, regional and national governments is a necessary condition for context-tailored TURF-Reserves to function as an effective sub-system of MSP that can both revitalize coastal fisheries and ensure effective marine protection.

Notes
1. Campbell (1996) used the terms ‘growing’, ‘green’ and ‘just’ cities to describe the conflicting goals of sustainable development and the role of planning in reaching these objectives.
2. Towards Sustainable Governance of Baltic Marine Space, see www.baltspace.eu

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