

EDITORIAL

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Editorial: *Towards Regionalisation of the Common Fisheries Policy?*

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It is with great pleasure that I write this Editorial for a series of papers on European fisheries policy in *Maritime Studies* (MAST). The papers collectively will constitute a special issue, entitled *Towards Regionalisation of the Common Fisheries Policy?* When the special issue was first conceived, *MAST* was published semi-annually and in hard copy, but since that time, the publication format has changed. In 2011, the MAST Editorial Board received an offer from Springer to develop *MAST* as an Open Access (OA) publication, and beginning in 2012, articles will be published on-line on a more frequent basis. The first set of papers will include this Editorial and two of the seven articles devoted to the special issue. The other papers will be published subsequently and in due time and order. The policy papers will constitute the first set of related papers to be published in the new arrangement with SpringerOpen. They also will be the first set to be devoted exclusively to policy issues in fishery policy. The papers, then, have the distinction of being a “first” twice, a development that bodes well for *MAST*.

Throughout its history, *MAST* has focused on coastal and maritime issues from a social science perspective. Coastal and marine policy, however, has been an allied interest from the outset. Social science and policy, are, of course, related, and they share many common interests in fishing communities and fishers, as well as the natural resources and related livelihoods related to the sea. As increased interest in inclusion of papers on policy in the journal emerged, two major steps were undertaken. One of those was to add a policy specialist, Jan van Tatenhove, as one of the Chief Associate Editors. A second step was to promote a special issue of *MAST* focused on policy issues within European fisheries. I am pleased to say that the endeavor has now become a reality. The Guest Editors responsible for the special issue are Jesper Raakjær and Troels Hegland, both affiliated with Innovative Fisheries Management, an Aalborg University Research Centre in Denmark. I have had the privilege of serving as the *MAST* Associate Editor, assisted by the Assistant Editor, Silke Hoppe.

Given that the papers will be published sequentially over a period of time, it seems advisable to list them here, more or less, in the form of a table of contents. They include:

INTRODUCTION: Regionalising the Common Fisheries Policy; *Jesper Raakjær and Troels Hegland*

Regionalising the Common Fisheries Policy: Context, Content and Controversy; *David Symes*

Why and How to Regionalise the Common Fisheries Policy: A Theoretical Framework; *Troels Jacob Hegland, Kristen Ounanian, and Jesper Raakjær*

What Does 'Regionalisation' Mean? An Exploratory Mapping of Opinions on Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy; *Troels Jacob Hegland, Kristen Ounanian, and Jesper Raakjær*

All at Sea; Regionalisation and Integration of Marine Policy in Europe; *L. van Hoof, J. van Leeuwen, and J.P.M. van Tatenhove*

The Regional Advisory Council's Current Capacities and Unforeseen Benefits; *Kristen Ounanian and Hegland*

CONCLUSION: Regionalisation: What Will the Future Bring? *Jesper Raakjær, Poul Degnbol, Troels Jacob Hegland, and David Symes*

As is evident from the titles of the papers, the central topic is regionalisation within the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). In the ongoing evolution of the European Union's fishery management and policy, the reform of 2002 included the establishment of several Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), a move toward progressive implementation of an eco-system based approach in fisheries management. Among the various objectives was the use of advice from regional councils established according to marine regions. In the ensuing decade, RACs have moved beyond ecosystem areas and have served a variety of roles in management and policy. A major objective of the set of papers is to document the position and importance of RACs in management and to argue for greater prominence and expanded roles within CFP. The broader aim is to influence decisions that will occur within an up-coming reconsideration of European fishery policy, following a proposal released by the Commission of European Communities in 2011.

The Introduction, by Raakjær and Hegland, provides a brief history of the planning behind the set of papers on regionalisation, deriving from recognition of the problems extant in the now top-down management of CFP and the opportunities provided by the actions of the Commission to develop a new basic regulation. Background is provided for the steps leading to the Commission's formulation of new plans, including an account of the CFP Green Paper issues in 2009. The Green Paper identified the major failings of the current policy, setting the stage for reform and the planning actions taken in 2011.

The Introduction also provides a succinct overview of the papers contributed to the special issue, addressing their contributions to the proposal that RACs should be more centrally located and engaged in European fishery management. Although the Introduction will be the first of the seven papers to be published, additional summary comments are provided in this Editorial, both to help provide continuity across the papers but also to spell out in more detail the content of the Conclusions.

The article by Symes provides a detailed, comprehensive overview of the history of regionalisation, toward highlighting the need for its inclusion and engagement in fishery management. The next article, by Hegland, Ounanian, and Raakjær, provides a grounded framework for discussion of RACs, including a typology of benefits that they provide for policy and management. They also identify five 'archetypes,' essentially prototypes of possible regional based governance models for future CFP. The third article, also by Hegland, Ounanian, and Raakjær, reports on the implications of what regionalisation means to its participants. The discussion is based on the results of survey research among RAC participants. The survey was intended to document experiences of participants in the current RAC structure but also to gain perspective as to what is needed to make RACs more

important in CFP and how steps might be taken in that direction. This paper reports on the second aspect of the survey.

The fourth article, by van Hoof, van Leeuwen, and van Tatenhove, broadens the scope of the discussion by addressing both CFP and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). The aim is to situate fishery management within a more encompassing framework of marine management. The authors identify implications for fishery management within this broader consideration. The fifth paper, by Ounanian and Hegland, reports in detail the results of the survey of RAC participant. In addition to providing an empirical data-base, the discussion underscores the point that RACs have played important roles in fostering communication about policy and needs considerably beyond what was envisioned when they were first established. Meant originally to be occasion for informal discussion and liaison between national and local agencies, RACs have become sources of new and innovative ideas.

The Conclusion, by Raakjær, Degnbol, Hegland, and Symes, explores possible outcomes for regionalisation as discussions move forward in the reconsideration and reorganization of CFP. The hope is that new basic regulation would include what the authors identify as “moving down” and “moving out” of authority for fishery management. The former refers to shifting certain management responsibilities to lower level authorities, away from central EU institutions. “Moving out” refers to increasing stakeholder involvement, moving toward more involvement and governance within the public and the fisheries sectors. Regionalisation would be pivotal in both of those changes away from top-down CFP. The authors recognize that a critical problem is that the current legal framework of CFP does not include regionalisation. Successful implementation of regionalisation in basic regulation would require changes in that regard, a major but not impossible hurdle to overcome. Collectively, the papers in this ‘special issue’ are also special in that they make an exceptionally strong case for revision of fishery management policy inclusive of regionalisation.

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