

Socio-cultural importance and use of Baltic salmon and herring

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BONUS GOHERR project meeting

Copenhagen

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Theoretical framework: French pragmatic sociology

Boltanski, L. and Thévenot, L. 2006/1991. On Justification: Economies of Worth. Trans. Catherine Porter. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

- Values as moral principles applied in resolving public issues
- Seven orders of worth providing different basis for valuation:

Inspiration

Domestic

Fame

Market

Industrial

Civic

Green

Reviewed literature

- About 100 scientific articles/research papers (1974-2015) dealing with Baltic salmon and/or Baltic herring use and/or management
- The Finnish authors dominate the material (it was possible to include only articles written in English or Finnish)
- Most of the articles focus on fisheries management issues with strong emphasis on biological and to a lesser degree economic aspects. Social scientific research is marginal, and mostly limited to Finland.

Values present in the literature

Market worth

- Huge disagreements between the relative economic worth of recreational and commercial salmon fisheries
- ITQs actively promoted as a way to increase profitability of herring fisheries

Domestic worth

- Traditional work(ing class) culture of coastal salmon fishers
- Peasant life modes of insular and coastal herring fishers
- Cultural heritage related to salmon fishing in the Northern coasts and riversides
- Herring as a distinctive part of the traditional (Eastern) food culture

Values present in the literature

Industrial worth

- Salmon farming reduced the value of wild salmon as industrial/food resource
- Herring increasingly perceived as raw material for fur feed and fish meal instead of food
- Work on herring has shaped the development of fisheries biology and management probably more than work on any other fish (within ICES)
- The industrial nature of herring fisheries emphasized in the development of its fishing methods (trawling in open sea)

Values present in the literature

Civic worth

- Salmon management as a question of social justice: commercial fishers' call for solidarity to their livelihoods, recreational sector emphasizes more balanced distribution of the catch, both demand better political representation in management
- Recognition for livelihood demanded by small-scale herring fishers
- Participatory science suggested to reduce uncertainty and to enhance legitimacy of both salmon and herring management

Values present in the literature

Inspirational worth

- Emotional attachment to salmon stressed by recreational fishers and riverside dwellers
- Symbolic value of salmon (king of fishes)
- No discussions on the inspirational worth of herring

Worth of fame

- Salmon as a tourist attraction/imago-factor
- Imago problem of herring

Green worth

- Importance to ensure the genetic integrity of wild salmon
- Herring as an eco-friendly food choice, MSC certificate

Next steps

Comparative study on socio-cultural values in Finland, Sweden, Estonia and Denmark:

- Theory driven content analysis of workshop sessions on the herring consumption (spring 2016)
- Consumer questionnaire where values are addressed in a general level as well as in relation to food choices (autumn 2016?)
- In-depth interviews with stakeholders where orders of worth serve as themes for discussion (spring/summer 2016)