

The *cofradías*' role within the Fisheries Local Action Groups system: Implications for small-scale fisheries in Galicia (Spain)

Iria García-Lorenzo PhD^{1,2}  | María Ángeles Piñeiro-Antelo PhD³  |
Sebastián Villasante PhD⁴ | Pablo Pita PhD⁵ 

¹ECOBAS, ERENEA, Department of Applied Economics, University of Vigo, Vigo, Spain

²Fisheries Economics Research Unit, Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

³Department of Geography, ANTE, IDEGA, University of Santiago de Compostela, CAMPUS VIDA, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

⁴EqualSea Lab-CRETUS, Department of Applied Economics, University of Santiago de Compostela, CAMPUS VIDA, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

⁵Department of Biology, CICA-Interdisciplinary Center for Chemistry and Biology, Universidade da Coruña, A Coruña, Spain

Correspondence

Iria García-Lorenzo, ECOBAS,
Department of Applied Economics,
Faculty of Economics, Campus As
Lagoas-Marcosende, University of Vigo,
36310 Vigo, Spain.
Email: iriagarcia@uvigo.gal

Funding information

Xunta de Galicia and European Regional
Development Fund, Grant/Award
Number: ED431C2018/48; Spanish
Ministry for Science and Innovation and
European Regional Development Fund,
Grant/Award Number:
RTI2018-099225-B-100; Spanish Ministry
of Universities; European Union

Abstract

Structural funds for fisheries have a long history in the European Union, but the use of public funds for the sustainable development of fisheries-dependent areas is a relatively recent practice. This approach is based on the concept of sustainable fisheries management and focuses on increasing the importance of the involvement of local communities in conservation and management. Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs), created to harmonise social development in a broad sense with the specific, sectoral development of fishing, have become key players in this process in some European countries. In Galicia (NW Spain), FLAGs started to be created in

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

© 2024 The Author(s). *Sociologia Ruralis* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of European Society for Rural Sociology.

NextGenerationEU/PRTR; Xunta de Galicia and University of Santiago de Compostela, Grant/Award Number: ED431C2019/11; University of Vigo and CRUE-CISUG

2008, and soon they were deeply integrated into the small-scale fisheries (SSF) sector, which was already highly organised. Thus, synergies have been established between *cofradías*—fisheries organisations with a key role and strong responsibilities in the management of fisheries resources— and FLAGS. This article studies the interdependencies between *cofradías* and FLAGS and how these relationships can influence the development of SSF and their communities. Galician FLAGS and *cofradías* have created in general positive relationships that contributed to the development of the SSF sector. On the other hand, bureaucratic obligations are concentrated funding in larger *cofradías*, while the needs of the most vulnerable fishing stakeholders are less covered.

KEYWORDS

community-led local development, fisheries areas, fisheries organisations, governance, institutions

INTRODUCTION

Small-scale fisheries (SSF) play an important role both in achieving sustainable development goals and in the development of economic activities (WorldFish et al., 2018; FAO, 2022). SSF can improve human wellbeing and social equity and reduce environmental risks while being more resilient and locally based than other fisheries sectors (FAO, 2022). Pauly (2018) even suggested that if fisheries have a long-term future, it will be as local activities; in other words, SSF may represent the future of sustainable fisheries. This sustainable development of fisheries, however, has to face global challenges such as climate change, stock depletion, pollution or harmful fisheries subsidies (Sumaila et al., 2019) and the shared use of maritime and coastal spaces with other sectors and ocean conservation actions (Farmery et al., 2021).

In the European Union (EU), despite the differences in definitions that can be established, SSF make up around 82% of the active fleet and 47% of employment (Pascual-Fernández et al., 2020a). Some of their challenges—shared with other EU regions—are the generational replacement, the growing competition between the multiple activities that take place in the same areas (Pita et al., 2020; Villasante et al., 2021) and those derived from access to markets by SSF (Penca et al., 2021). Thus, SSF play an important role not only in the EU fisheries sector and the economic development of the region (European Commission, 2019, 2021a, 2021b) but also in local development and the wellbeing of coastal communities.

In this regard, the promotion of sustainability in fisheries communities is included in the European structural funds and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the main tools for fisheries management. The CFP introduced in 2007 the Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) approach, based on previous experiences of rural development that focus on mobilising communities in the design and management of strategic development plans at the local level (Van de Walle

et al., 2015). This led to the creation of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs), which aimed to shape territorial governance into a more complex, plural and inclusive manner, encouraging the participation of civil society (Piñeiro-Antelo et al., 2018, 2019). The establishment of funds specifically earmarked for the sustainable development of fisheries areas represented a move away from the purely sectoral approach—fisheries—to give prominence to territorial development policies.

This duality between sectoral and territorial approaches has been addressed in a recent study on FLAGs in different European regions (Said-Bugeja et al., 2022). This analysis argues that while the CLLD approach seems to fit better for enhancing small-scale fishers' interests than the more hierarchic governance instruments, FLAGs can be both beneficial or detrimental, or have no definite effect on SSF and fishing communities, depending on how their sectoral or territorial vision is established. Even so, the territorial dimension of the FLAGs is strongly marked by the design of local development strategies (LDS) for their areas of action, through participatory processes, where the identities, values and resources of the fishing areas are incorporated. Other studies have evaluated the implementation and effectiveness of the FLAGs at the European level (Budzich-Tabor, 2014; Miret-Pastor et al., 2020; van de Walle et al., 2017) and regional level (Linke & Bruckmeier, 2015; Loizou et al., 2014; Phillipson & Symes, 2015; Piñeiro-Antelo et al., 2020). These studies highlight that the inclusion of CLLD in CFP through FLAGs contributes significantly to the development of coastal regions. The challenge for the future is to strengthen the connections of the FLAGs with other development agents in the territory to generate broader and more horizontal LDS.

To deepen the relationship between FLAGs and SSF, this article presents an empirical case study focused on Galicia, north-western Spain. This region has important marine resources, a long fishing tradition, where almost 90% of its fleet is small-scale (i.e., <12 m), and an important presence of shell fishing (Pita et al., 2019). The sector also has the peculiarity of being strongly organised around traditional organisations called *cofradías de pescadores* (*cofradías* from here on; Pascual-Fernández et al., 2020b). *Cofradías* are the main organisations integrating and representing small-scale fishers and shell fishers in the region—although their members also include fishers from other, more industrialised fishing sectors. They are complex organisations with a public–private nature (García-Lorenzo et al., 2019b) that act as consultation and collaboration bodies of the regional government in fisheries management (Law 3/2001, Spain).

In the EU, the presence of traditional organisations in the fisheries sector is not exclusive to Galicia and Spain—for example, they also exist in France and Italy (Bavinck et al., 2015; Raicevich et al., 2018)—but it does differ from other regions (Linke & Siegrist, 2023). It seems therefore interesting to study the relations between these traditional organisations and the FLAGs, as well as the consequences for the SSF sector of CLLD structures being created in parallel with, and having to incorporate long-established local institutions.

The general objective of this is to study the implications of the creation of the FLAGs system for the development of SSF and their communities in Galicia. We focused our study on the relationship between FLAGs and *cofradías*, as they are the main organisations representing SSF in the region (Pascual-Fernández et al., 2020b), and they play a key role in the management of fisheries resources. The specific objectives are to analyse (1) the leading role of the *cofradías* as part of FLAG Boards, (2) the participation of *cofradías* in the design of the LDS, (3) the support of the FLAGs' funding for the projects developed by *cofradías*, and (4) the consequences that the relationship between the two actors has had on the sustainable development of SSF and their communities. The research hypothesis is, on the one hand, that the integration of *cofradías* allows the FLAGs to benefit from the experience, importance and recognition of *cofradías* at the local level, thus favouring their proximity to local communities, and on the other hand, *cofradías* strengthen their

protagonism by being able to participate in the design of LDS, accessing new sources of funding and expanding their participation in projects with a more territorial focus.

The structure of the article is as follows. After this introduction, the Theoretical Aspects section is followed by the Case Study section, which presents the case of Galicia, including information on the SSF sector, the *cofradías* and FLAGs. Next, the methods and data collection used for the empirical study are explained, followed by the Results of the Study, the Discussion and the Conclusions sections.

THEORETICAL ASPECTS

For this study, which combines top-down and bottom-up strategies and sectoral and territorial dynamics, we will use theoretical approaches to governance, local development and neo-endogenous development. These approaches allow us to frame and present the complexity of the Galician SSF sector and its actors, both new and traditional, and serve as a basis for the empirical case study.

SSF present different problems and characteristics depending on the region and time—for example, historical and environmental factors—resulting in a multiplicity of situations (Isaacs et al., 2020; Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2015; Li & Namikawa, 2020; Pascual-Fernández et al., 2020b), making it difficult to find unique solutions. Governance analysis frameworks have helped to study these specific situations through the different relationships between governance systems and natural resource systems. Governance is no longer understood as a simple definition and dynamic imposed by a public administration but depends on the various variables of the system. In this regard, the Interactive Governance analysis framework (Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2015) shows that there are three types of governance modes (hierarchical, co-governance and self-governance¹) as well as hybrid forms. SSF organisations can hold especially prominent positions in the co-governance and self-governance modes (Chuenpagdee & Jentoft, 2018).

Another analysis framework, the social-ecological system, is structured around four main components (resource system, resource units, governance systems and actors) that are exposed to exogenous influences from the environment (McGinnis & Ostrom, 2014). The actors in the system include local fishing communities and their organisations, which can occupy different positions. These actors could participate in co-management systems, where there is a definition of shared rights over resources by a group of users or the regulator recognises associative experiences that have shown management capacity.

The theoretical framework of local development was developed in Europe as a response to the productivist sectoral approaches that had been dominant since the post-war period. In the case of fisheries, EU and state public policies have promoted the intensification, modernisation and specialisation of fisheries, without taking into account local peculiarities and the interests of artisanal fisheries (Phillipson & Symes, 2015). In the last decades of the 20th century, there was a shift towards considering local initiative as the main driving force of development, driven by EU cohesion policies and programmes such as «Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale» (LEADER). Boisier (2016) characterises local development as endogenous in the sense of its close association with local culture and the values it embodies, being bottom-up, participatory, territorial, sustainable, durable, integral and social, among others. Local development is a practice that triggers an endogenous and multidimensional (social, economic and environmental) process in small territorial units, the aim of which is to establish a strategy at the local level for environmental protection and social and economic prosperity.

In this process of local development, the territory is not a simple producer of resources and support for human activity since its identity dimension prevails, which stimulates and structures the potential of the community. The territory is provided with a strategy and becomes an agent of development (Vázquez, 2007), in the same way that it connects with the identity and belonging to the place of the actors (Arocena, 2002; Klein, 2005).

Ray (2001, 2006) argued that the local level does and must interact with the 'extralocal' level, and there is therefore an endogenous-based development in which extra-local factors are recognised and regarded as essential. He defined it as neo-endogenous development, a situation that goes 'beyond endogenous and exogenous models' by focusing on the dynamic interactions between local areas and their wider political and other institutional, trading and natural environments. This framework provides a new perspective that essentially reconciles the endogenous potentialities for rural development with the exogenous dynamics (Georgios et al., 2021; Gkartzios & Lowe, 2019). It combines bottom-up and top-down planning, internal and external participation and networks, vertical political-administrative relationships and horizontal links between local actors (Navarro-Valverde et al., 2022).

In this context, FLAGs can be framed in terms of local and neo-endogenous development. They were created as implementation tools for community funds for the sustainable development of fishing areas and initiated participatory processes to establish their composition and the scope of their territory, as well as to design their strategies and action plans (Van de Walle et al., 2015). They also build bridges between territorial and sectoral approaches and become an instrument that seeks to leverage local capacities and external resources, policies and actions (Phillipson & Symes, 2015).

CASE STUDY

Resources and governance systems of SSF in Galicia

Galicia has historically been very dependent on fishing activities that shaped a variety of cultures and traditions (Suris-Regueiro and Santiago, 2014; Garza-Gil et al., 2020). Regarding the resource systems, Galician marine ecosystems include both oceanic and coastal areas characterised by the *rias*, relatively wide and deep estuaries with a mixture of oceanic and brackish waters. This variety of ecosystems hosts a great diversity of species, including fish, crustaceans and molluscs of commercial interest, which fuels human settlements along the coastline (Pérez-Pérez et al., 2008; Varela-Lafuente et al., 2000).

Galicia has different fishing sectors associated with this diversity of marine resources and its fishing tradition, including pelagic and deep-sea fishing in international waters, fishing in national and regional waters, shell fishing with a relevant position of women (Frangoudes et al., 2008), fish, seaweed and mussel aquaculture (Fernández-González et al., 2020; Labarta & Fernández-Reiriz, 2019; Outeiro et al., 2020) and relevant recreational fisheries (Pita & Villasanté, 2019). As a result of the abundance of resources and the demand for seafood, an important commercialisation and processing industry has been developed, with sectors such as freezing and canning standing out. These sectors coexist and share the space with other activities such as maritime transport or recreational sea sports, while plans for new activities, like offshore wind power are being developed (Salvador et al., 2018). This diversity presents multiple opportunities for the development of the coastal areas (Cavallo et al., 2021; Cortés et al., 2021; Ruiz-Salmón et al., 2020), but it also poses challenges for the long-term sustainability of the fishing sector.

The Galician fishing fleet is the most important in Europe in terms of fishing power and global coverage (STECF, 2021), representing 8% of the fleet (EU-28), and 12% of production (IDEGA, 2021). It also represents approximately half of the Spanish fleet. In 2022, there were in Galicia more than 4254 fishing vessels, of which 3781 were engaged in SSF (2.30 GT and 21.47 kW on average), while 195 vessels were purse seiners, longliners and gillnetters fishing in national waters (48.40 GT and 215.00 kW) (Xunta de Galicia, 2022). In addition, there are 1280 aquaculture boats and about 3700 'on foot' shellfishers.

Regarding the marine governance system, the Galician and Spanish fisheries sectors underwent a profound transformation at the end of the 20th century, derived both from economic development and the establishment of a new legal and institutional order—the end of the dictatorship and the entry into force of the Spanish constitution, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982 and Spain's accession to the EU in 1986 (UNCLOS, 1982; Sobrino-Heredia & Oanta, 2019). The new political organisation entailed the delegation of different management powers to the regional government of Galicia, including those related to many fisheries in coastal waters, SSF and shellfisheries (Villasante et al., 2015). Thus, a wide range of actors are currently involved in fisheries governance, including European, national and regional governments and institutions, as well as local actors. These include shipowners' associations, cooperatives, fishing clusters, producer organisations (Alló & Loureiro, 2017; Caballero-Míguez et al., 2008) and *cofradías*. Compared to other EU regions (Linke & Siegrist, 2023), some of these local actors have a very strong position within the governance system.

***Cofradías* as traditional actors of the SSF system**

Cofradías date back to the 12th and 13th centuries and are related to the hierarchical guild system of feudalism. From its origins to the present day, *cofradías* have successfully adapted to different social, political and economic changes, such as the breakdown of feudalism, the economic liberalisation or the EU accession (Barrio García, 1998; González Arce, 2011; Marzoa, 1985; Taboada, 2004). *Cofradías* were incorporated into the newly developed fisheries management system, and although their current socioeconomic reality is different from when they were created, they adapted while key elements of their past persist—for example, associationism, joint participation of workers and shipowners or fisher assistance (García-Lorenzo et al., 2019a).

Nowadays, Spanish *cofradías* are regulated at the state level by Law 3/2001 on State Maritime Fisheries and its modification in Law 33/2014, which define them as 'public law corporations, non-profit, representative of economic interests, which act as consultation and collaboration bodies of the competent administration in matters of maritime fishing and management of the fishing sector'. These laws establish common requirements for all *cofradías* but allow regional development for their implementation and management, which means that they are under different regional institutional frameworks and have specific characteristics (Florido-del-Corral et al., 2020; Herrera-Racionero et al., 2019; Pascual-Fernández et al., 2015). Spanish *cofradías* have been the subject of previous studies both from a historical and institutional perspective, describing extensively their evolution and transformation (Alló & Loureiro, 2017; Ballesteros, 2018; Fernández-Vidal & Muiño, 2014), as well as from a business perspective (Astorkiza & del Valle, 2018).

In Galicia, Law 11/2008 on Galician Fisheries and its modification in Law 6/2009 recognised their role as relevant agents in the fishing sector, while Decree 8/2014 established the specific conditions of their operation, such as membership, electoral system and functions. *Cofradías* are

also recognised as Social Economy entities² (Cervera, 2010), both at the state level by Law 5/2011 and at the Galician level by Law 6/2016. This consideration is due to their internal democratic organisation, their cooperative character and their solidarity with society, characteristics linked to their traditional provision of social assistance to their fisher members (Bavinck et al., 2015). Nowadays, the Galician *cofradías* continue to participate strongly in their local communities, for example, by collaborating in local festivals—sometimes linked to religious aspects, gastronomic festivals, sporting activities or activities promoting traditional fishing culture—such as museums (García-Lorenzo, 2021).

The Galician *cofradías* are highly linked to SSF and shellfishing, although not exclusively, and develop key functions within the governance system (Pascual-Fernández et al., 2020b). They develop key functions in a fisheries co-management system based on the Territorial Use Rights for Fisheries and, as collaborative bodies, provide data to the regional administration—for example, the environmental status of marine resources or fishers' information. Galician *cofradías* have managed to adapt to the new EU framework and occupy a prominent position in the co-management of fishery resources, especially at the operational institutional level and at the level of collective action (McGinnis & Ostrom, 2014). Their co-management functions include resource protection and monitoring, management of shellfish exploitation plans and other specific resources and fishers' representation. In addition, they can also carry out organisational, production and commercialisation activities—including the regulation of their fish markets (García-Lorenzo et al., 2019a, 2019b; Macho et al., 2013; Villasante et al., 2021).

In Galicia, there are 63 *cofradías*, but it is important to note that there is great diversity among them. Thus, this position in the governance system and the functions of organisation, production and commercialisation differ between *cofradías*. Similarly, they tend to have a small enterprise size, but there are also some with a medium-sized enterprise size—out of the more than 12,000 members at the Galician level, some *cofradías* have around 30 members and others more than 1200. These members may belong to different productive sectors (SSF and shellfishing, but also purse seiners, trawlers and distant water) and can be both employees and employers (e.g., fishers and ship-owners). *Cofradías* usually include members from several sectors, although some of them can be predominant, especially in certain areas and *rias*. The *cofradías* that have the most members tend to be more shellfishing-intensive (García-Lorenzo et al., 2019a), therefore being linked to the SSF.

FLAGs as new actors of the SSF system

The local development approach is associated with local power, understood in its broad concept of integrating the public and private actors present in a territory in an associative structure (partnership) that designs an LDS (Piñeiro-Antelo et al., 2020). The main result provided by local development is the constitution of local systems of actors, who acquire increasingly solid collective commitments. This approach, known as CLLD, involves communities in the design and management of their development strategies and has become a frame of reference for European public policies and territorial initiatives, including the CFP—the CFP adopted an area-based approach through the LEADER method already in the period 2007–2013.

There is a wealth of literature on the process of creating FLAGs and their impact on the sustainable development of rural coastal areas. Some studies have evaluated the implementation and effectiveness of the FLAGs at the European level (Budzich-Tabor, 2014; Capgemini Consulting, 2014; Symes et al., 2015; Miret-Pastor et al., 2020; van de Walle et al., 2017) in the Atlantic regions

of Europe (Felicidades-García & Piñeiro-Antelo, 2017; Piñeiro-Antelo et al., 2020) and in countries such as Greece (Loizou et al., 2014), Poland (Kurowska et al., 2014), Sweden (Linke & Bruckmeier, 2015), Spain (Miret-Pastor et al., 2018), the UK (Phillipson & Symes, 2015), France (van de Walle et al., 2015) and Italy (Marcianò & Romeo, 2016, 2019). The impact of FLAGs on the visibility and empowerment of women has also been studied in Estonia, Croatia and Spain (Freeman & Svets, 2022), as well as the challenges that FLAGs must face to avoid becoming instruments of political, social and economic power, reinforcing the structures of established power and existing hierarchies, as happened in some cases with the LAGs of the LEADER Programme (Esparcia et al., 2000; Felicidades-García & Piñeiro-Antelo, 2017; Shucksmith, 2000). Research studies highlight that the effectiveness of FLAGs depends to a large extent on the context in which they operate, but they are recognised as playing a leading role in new forms of organisation at the local level. Although the capacity of FLAGs to actively involve fishers and integrate local needs and knowledge into decision-making varies widely, they have in most cases demonstrated the ability to mobilise social capital and reinforce synergies between the fishing sector and other activities and services—such as tourism and sociocultural sectors—in the coastal economy. In this context, many projects supported by FLAGs have undoubtedly benefited SSF in fishing communities, although there is a need to strengthen the participation of small-scale fishers and maximise the benefits they derive from their involvement.

Galicia was a pioneer in Spain in establishing and developing the FLAGs. The delegation of fisheries management powers from the national government implied that, unlike other European countries that took a centralised management approach, the regional government of Galicia oversaw the definition of the boundaries of the different fishing areas in which the FLAGs were to be implemented. Between 2008 and 2009, following the CLLD approach, the Galician government started a broad participatory process to encourage the mobilisation of social, economic and political actors in coastal communities, which led to the creation of seven FLAGs and the approval of the LDS for each area. *Cofradías*, social and environmental associations, councils and different stakeholders were able to participate in the creation of the LDS (Piñeiro-Antelo et al., 2018). As a result of this process, the entire coast of Galicia was covered by the territories of the FLAGs, except for cities and municipalities with high population densities (such as the cities of A Coruña, Ferrol and Vigo). These highly populated cities and municipalities were integrated in a second phase starting in 2015, which ended up constituting the final number of eight FLAGs.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Once the specific case of SSF in Galicia has been introduced, our object of study focuses on the *cofradías*, as traditional and endogenous actors of the SSF sector, and on the local FLAGs, as the new actors that incorporate a change. In other words, to study the role of the FLAGs system and its implications for SSF, we focus on the interrelationships between these two actors of the Galician SSF socio-ecological system. Consequently, the eight FLAGs and the 63 *cofradías* of Galicia are the objects of study in our analysis.

The first link between these eight FLAGs and 63 *cofradías* arises from the territory where they carry out their activities. On the one hand, the different conditions of the Galician coastal resource systems mean that the fishing sectors are not homogeneous and that the estuaries areas and *rias* concentrate the greatest fishing activity and, consequently, a greater number of *cofradías*. These *cofradías* have their territory specifically determined in their regulations, and, in general, it is not modifiable. On the other hand, these differences between coastal areas were considered when

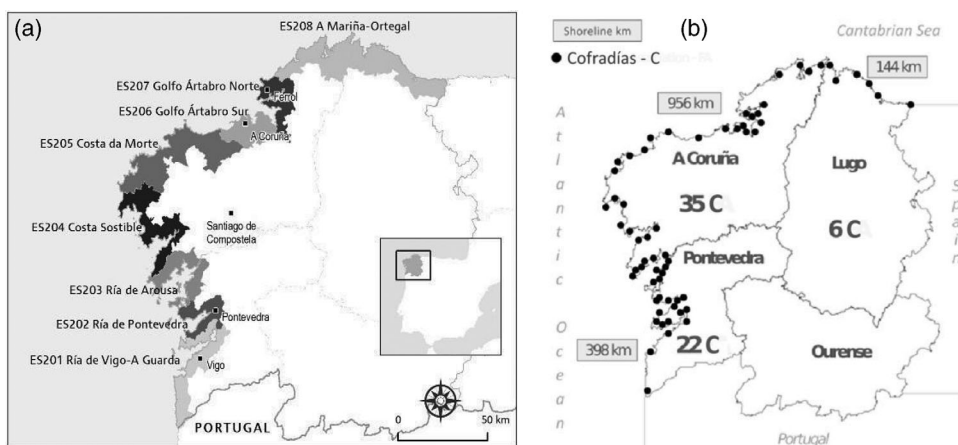


FIGURE 1 Maps of Galician Fisheries Local Action Groups (a) and *cofradías* (b). Source: Authors' compilation on the information from Federación Gallega de Cofradías de Pescadores (2017) and FARNET (2021).

establishing the FLAGs, being the geographical area of the *ría* in the very name of some FLAGs. Thus, for this study, we related which *cofradías* belonged to each FLAG (Figure 1) and presented some of the information collected based on this relationship.

Data collection for this study was done through two methods. First, we collected official Spanish government reports related to the list of beneficiaries of EU funding through the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF; MAPA, 2018, 2022) and the websites of Galician and Spanish FLAGs networks (GALP, 2021; REGP, 2021). The economic data concerning FLAGs projects granted to the *cofradías* during the EU periods were mainly obtained from these official reports and websites.

The second method consisted of a questionnaire answered by the FLAGs and *cofradías* representatives. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: (a) the participation of the *cofradías* in FLAGs' creation processes and their governing bodies; (b) the projects financed through FLAGs and managed by *cofradías*; and (c) how the synergies between FLAGs and *cofradías* contribute to the development of SSF and their communities.

The elaboration of the questionnaire is based on the system of implementation and functioning of the FLAGs (i.e., membership, decision-making, LDS, etc.) and the characteristics of the Galician case study, presented in the previous section. Specifically, when elaborating the questions, FLAGs and *cofradías* were considered both as actors of the SSF governance and socio-ecological system and as actors of local and territorial development. One of the reasons for applying this perspective is to gain a better understanding of whether governance systems that establish sectoral or territorial visions of CLLD have a positive, negative or no impact on SSF and fishing communities, a question that has been raised in recent studies on FLAGs in Europe (Said-Bugeja et al., 2022). The complete questionnaire with its Sections A, B and C can be found in the Appendix—note that there are two slightly different versions to suit both FLAGs and *cofradías* perspectives (Tables A1 and A2, respectively), for example, '1. Does your *cofradía* participate in any FLAG?' in the *cofradías* version versus '1. How many *cofradías* are members of the FLAG?' in the FLAGs version.

Questionnaires were sent by email with an explanation of the purpose of the study and were answered and returned by the organisation's representatives. As some organisations required more information, the authors also conducted one off-site telephone interview based on the

questionnaire and several phone calls to clarify the research. The questionnaires were sent to all target organisations and were finally answered by seven of the eight FLAGS (in June 2021, by the managers) and 23 of the 63 *cofradías* (between March and July 2022, six by presidents—*patrones mayores*, eight by managers—*secretarios*, *secretarias*, five by technical assistance and one by the diversification agent³). The highest participation of the *cofradías* was among those belonging to the FLAGS Ría de Arousa (six *cofradías* responded), Ría de Vigo-A Guarda (five), Costa Sostible Muros—Noia (four), and A Mariña—Ortegal (three), and the lowest to the FLAGS Ría de Pontevedra (two), Costa da Morte (one), Golfo Ártabro Sur (one), and Golfo Ártabro Norte (one). For the analysis, we kept the questionnaires and transcribed the interview (deleting the recording).

Consequently, the information collected through these questionnaires represents the perceptions of the leaders and/or managers of the FLAGS and the *cofradías*. For ease of reading and clarity, throughout the presentation of the results, we will refer to their perceptions and comments as those stated by their organisations, that is, we will directly express ‘the FLAGS perceived’ instead of ‘the FLAGS’ managers perceived’ (and likewise with the *cofradías*).

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The results of the study are divided into three sections. In the first section, we analyse the decision-making bodies and projects. Regarding the former, the information presented comes from Question A1 of the questionnaires, with the exception of one FLAG that did not respond and whose information was obtained through official sources. Concerning the projects, we present the information collected exclusively through public sources, divided between the period of the EFF and the EMFF. It is important to note that the questionnaires also asked about these issues in Section B, but we have chosen to present the public information as it is more homogeneous and complete.

The following sections present exclusively the information from the questionnaires concerning the perception of the FLAGS and *cofradías* on the FLAG system, their relationships and the SSF sector. This information comes from the answers to Questions A2, A3, B4, part of questions B5 and B6—Question B6 is only found in the FLAGS version of the questionnaire—and the entire Section C of the questionnaire⁴ (Tables A3 and A4).

Involvement of the *cofradías* in the FLAGS and projects managed by *cofradías*

Galician *cofradías* have been linked to FLAGS since their creation in 2008, 2009 and 2015, and to the present day, there has been very little variation in the number of *cofradías* integrated in each FLAG (Question A1). At the time of the study, *cofradías* account for between 8.3% and 20% of the total membership of the FLAGS, and only two of the 63 *cofradías* do not belong to any of them (Table 1). It is noted that some FLAGS also have other fishing organisations involved, such as producer associations (mussels’ producers, fish-traps fishers and net-menders women, among others) and foundations.

Concerning the decision-making, the involvement of the *cofradías* is high, although there are important differences between the FLAGS: *Cofradías* account for between 23.5% and 46.7% of the FLAGS’ boards (one FLAG pointed out that at the beginning, the percentage of representation

TABLE 1 Participation of *cofradías* in the Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) and their decision-making bodies in 2021.^a

FLAG	Total number of members of the FLAG	Number of <i>cofradías</i> belonging to the FLAG (percentage of total members)	Number of members of the FLAG board	Number of <i>cofradías</i> belonging to the FLAG board (percentage of total board members)
Ría de Vigo -A Guarda	48	8 (16.7%)	15	7 (46.7%)
Ría de Pontevedra	70	7 (10.0%)	20	7 (35.0%)
Ría de Arousa	55	11 (20.0%)	–	5 (–)
Costa Sostible Muros-Noia	41	8 (19.5%)	18	8 (44.4%)
Costa da Morte	54	7 (13.0%)	21	7 (33.3%)
Golfo Ártabro Sur	48	4 (8.3%)	17	4 (23.5%)
Golfo Ártabro Norte	38	6 (15.8%)	13	6 (46.2%)
A Mariña-Ortegal	52	10 (19.2%)	21	6 (28.6%)

^aThe FLAG Coste Sostible Muros-Noia data are from 2016.

Source: Authors elaboration based on the FLAGs and *cofradías* questionnaires, Xunta de Galicia (2016) and Federación Gallega de Cofradías de Pescadores (2017).

was higher, then the rules were changed, and no sector could weight 50% or more). Moreover, in the specific case of the FLAG Ría de Arousa, *cofradías* rotate their participation on the board, so they are not all counted at the same time. In addition, many *cofradías* hold the presidency of the FLAGs—according to this study, at least four of them—and two FLAGs argued that the presidency belongs to the fisheries sector on a compulsory basis (Question A1).

On funds invested and projects implemented, Galician FLAGs managed up to €20.7 million during the EFF period, of which *cofradías* received 13% of the total available funds, about €2.7 million (MAPA, 2018). Regarding the EMFF period, Galician FLAGs supported a total of 487 projects with a public investment of about €29.4 million. More than 60% of these projects were productive,⁵ and both *cofradías* and fishing companies were among the most funded beneficiaries (Xunta de Galicia, 2021). According to information obtained from the Spanish Ministry, *cofradías* received about €2.8 million, 9% of the total available funding during the EMFF (MAPA, 2022).⁶

Table 2 shows more detailed information about FLAGs projects managed by the *cofradías*, both in the EFF period (2010–2015) and the EMFF period (2016–2020; data from 2021 was not included in this study). There are significant differences between the funding allocated to the *cofradías*, especially during the EMFF period. For example, *cofradías* managed projects worth €835,887 in the Ría de Arousa FLAG (19% of the FLAG's total); €480,601 in the Ría de Pontevedra FLAG (16.02%); €91,029 in the Costa da Morte FLAG (2.68%); and €70,301 in the Golfo Ártabro Sur FLAG (3.20%). These differences are high, although it must be considered that the number and size of *cofradías* vary among the FLAGs and the territorial areas have very different fishing sectors and coastal resource systems.

Focusing on the total number of *cofradías* that received funds, 38 *cofradías* received funding from the EFF and 34 from the EMFF (Table 2). Some of them do not coincide in the two periods, so it can be stated that 78% of the Galician *cofradías* (49 out of 63) have managed a FLAG-funded project in at least one of the two funding periods. Many of them had only developed one project, while the most successful *cofradía* developed up to eight projects in one period.

Table 3 shows more differences between *cofradías* regarding the FLAG funding received. The three *cofradías* that managed the largest amount of funds, more than €200,000 each, received 32% of the total funds given to Galician *cofradías* during the EFF period (five *cofradías* and 52.8% during the EMFF). On the other side, other *cofradías* managed less than €19,999, most of which was spent on one or two projects (one *cofradía* developed three projects). Even so, only two *cofradías* repeat among those receiving the most funds in each period. In terms of project type, during the EMFF period, *cofradías* managed mainly non-productive projects⁷ focused on adding value and, to a lesser extent, on improving the environment and governance⁸ (REGP, 2021).

FLAGs' perceptions: FLAGs system, *cofradías* participation and implications for SSF

The first section of the questionnaire, Section A, focused on the participation of the *cofradías* in FLAGs' creation processes and their governing bodies. In this regard, the seven FLAGs of the study considered that the involvement of the *cofradías*, together with the municipalities, was key and advantageous during their creation⁹ (Question A2). FLAGs stated that the understanding of the fisheries sector by the *cofradías* helped to better tailor FLAG actions and to improve the allocation of funds targeted to the needs of the sector. They also perceived that *cofradías* learned about the functioning of the FLAGs during this process, especially in terms of fundraising and management, which has improved the development of funding opportunities for the fisheries sector. According

TABLE 2 FLAGs projects granted to *cofradías*.

FLAG	EEF (2010–2015)			EMFF (2016–2020)		
	Total cof. projects (€)	Total cof. (n)	Total cof. projects (n)	Total FLAG (€ aprox.)	Total FLAG projects (n)	Total cof. projects (€)
R. Vigo—A Guarda	455,086.85	7	12	2,400,000	44	252,999.79
R. Pontevedra	326,534.21	3	6	3,000,000	55	480,600.89
R. Arousa	246,597.40	5	8	4,400,000	78	835,887.76
Costa Sostible	337,973.95	5	10	6,300,000	57	541,912.00
Costa da Morte	312,701.01	6	10	3,400,000	35	91,028.91
Golfo Ártabro ^a	593,179.09	4	11			
G. Ártabro Sur ^a				2,200,000	32	70,301.00
G. Ártabro Norte ^a				2,700,000	83	169,244.27
Maríña-Ortegal	425,681.22	8 ^b	23	5,000,000	103	306,965.85
Total	2,697,753.73	38	80	29,400,000	487	2,748,940.47

Abbreviations: Cof., *cofradías*; EEF, European Fisheries Fund; EMFF, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

^aNote that the FLAG Golfo Ártabro was split in two during the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) period, with the Golfo Ártabro Sur and Golfo Ártabro Norte emerging.

^bSeven *cofradías* and one Provincial Federation.

Source: Authors elaboration based on MAPA (2018), Xunta de Galicia (2021) and MAPA (2022) and FLAGs-cofradías questionnaires.

TABLE 3 Amounts received by each *cofradía* in the different funding periods.

The amount obtained by a <i>cofradía</i> during one funding period	2010–2014		2016–2020	
	Number of <i>cofradías</i> that received this amount during the funding period	Amount granted out of the total funds given to <i>cofradías</i> (%)	Number of <i>cofradías</i> that received this amount during the funding period	Amount granted out of the total funds given to <i>cofradías</i> (%)
More than €200 000	3	32.0	5	52.8
From €100,000 to €199,999	5	24.6	3	16.2
From €20,000 to €99,999	15	36.3	20	29.5
Less than €19,999	15	7.1	6	1.5

Source: Authors' elaboration based on MAPA (2018, 2022) and FLAGs and *cofradías* questionnaires.

to all the FLAGs, there were no relevant conflicts between them and *cofradías*, as well as any other sectors, during this creation process.

About the LDS (Question A3), the seven FLAGs agreed that most *cofradías* were very active in their elaboration. They were also involved in the diagnosis phase developed before FLAGs' creation, in which they assessed the socio-ecological relationships and interdependencies of the fisheries sector in each of the FLAG areas. The result was the development of operational strategies closely aligned with the needs of the local fisheries sector, including the creation of a strategic action plan, and the selection of evaluation criteria for funded projects. Therefore, all FLAGs claimed that the objectives of the *cofradías* are well represented in these LDS.

Regarding the questions on projects managed by *cofradías* of Section B, all seven FLAGs considered that their performance supports or complements the *cofradías* activities (Question B4). They perceived that they were becoming permanent support agents, not only for fundraising but also as consultant bodies where ideas could be proposed and discussed. One of the main advantages highlighted is the increase in collaboration with other agents of the territory, facilitating the establishment of relationships and synergies. They emphasised that relations between *cofradías*, city councils, environmental associations and other stakeholders have intensified. In this way, there were established joint projects with other organisations, which would have been more difficult to achieve without FLAGs.

Funded projects may consolidate the classic lines of action of *cofradías*, but most of the FLAGs argued that funding should encourage new activities and areas (question B5). Two FLAGs also added that *cofradías* are used to developing projects aimed at reinforcing their traditional productive activity and that there are other sources of funding for these purposes. In this sense, FLAGs highlighted the importance of projects related to the diversification of economic initiatives in the territory, new marketing technologies (e.g., better product traceability), the introduction of new products and tourism. FLAGs also valued projects related to the promotion of *cofradías*, their products and the local culture, as well as those focused on solving problems in the fisheries sector, such as projects on control and surveillance, training and generational change. The FLAGs stated that the main reasons for the rejection of project proposals from *cofradías* (Question B6, FLAGs version), were incomplete documentation, formal errors in the application, non-compliance with the requirements of the call, lack of financial capacity to develop the project and lack of budget during the EFF period.

Section C of the questionnaire aimed to analyse how the synergies between FLAGs and *cofradías* contribute to the development of SSF and their communities. In this sense, when asked how their relationship with the *cofradías* could contribute to the sustainable development of fishing activities, all FLAGs showed that there is still room to strengthen relations and develop more collaborative projects (Question C7, FLAGs version). Specifically, four FLAGs considered that the flow of information between the *cofradías* and their members is hampered by governance issues and that it would be advisable to have more active individual participation (fishers, shellfish gatherers or other actors). One FLAG also mentioned the lack of economic capacity of the *cofradías* as a difficulty, and another noted that *cofradías* should promote stronger links with universities and research institutes, as well as demand themselves studies based on the best scientific knowledge available, for example, to achieve the maximum sustainable yield or to ensure marine ecosystem and species conservation.

FLAGs perceived they can help address the medium and long-term challenges of traditional fishing communities, fishers and their organisations (Question C8, FLAGs version). Among the arguments presented, five FLAGs highlighted their training, promotion, dissemination and awareness-raising work (environmental awareness, climate change, and importance of maritime

fishing heritage, among others) aimed at both the fishing sector and civil society. Four FLAGs also considered their role as technical and scientific advisors to be very relevant (promoting projects that would not have been developed without them), and five of them referred to the cooperation projects that they carry out together with *cofradías*, public institutions and associations (some led by the FLAGs themselves).

Regarding their impact, five FLAGs perceived that their creation generated positive benefits for both the SSF sector and *cofradías* across the Galician territory, while two of them perceived the benefits for the *cofradías* but believed that they had no impact on SSF (Question C9, FLAGs version). Funds allocated to SSF—for example, commercialisation of local seafood products—and the relations created with the sector, the development of innovative initiatives and the maintenance of maritime cultural heritage were the main advantages highlighted. Those FLAGs that did not see the impacts on SSF argued that in their area, very few actions targeting this sector were funded, and artisanal fishers have to deal with a lot of bureaucracy to get these projects.

Similarly, the main weakness of the system and the aspect that all FLAGs wanted to change is excessive bureaucracy (Question C10, FLAGs version). They considered it necessary to simplify the processing of funds and streamline the system, although it was also stated that this was not up to them but to the higher levels (regional and European administration). FLAGs stated that they lack the resources and competence to, for example, change regulations or finance more fisheries-related projects. One group stressed that fishers just want to develop their activity, not engage in other complementary or diversification activities. Other weaknesses mentioned were the difficulty for FLAGs to reach the very base of the fishing sector and the low level of entrepreneurship among professionals in the fishing sector.

FLAGs considered their link to the territory and the fact that they favour interrelationships between the maritime sector and other sectors as their main strengths. They also highlighted the projects and activities they develop, their advisory services, the promotion of cooperation or the high degree of participation of the *cofradías* in the FLAG. The change in the second funding programme, whereby non-profit organisations were able to receive funds to develop projects, was also mentioned as a positive transformation.

***Cofradías'* perceptions: FLAGs system, *cofradías* participation and implications for SSF**

Regarding their involvement in the creation of the FLAGs (Question A2), most *cofradías* stated that they were neither advantageous nor disadvantageous in the creation of the FLAGs.¹⁰ The majority also agreed with FLAGs that there were no relevant conflicts between them during these creation processes. However, one *cofradía* that participated in the first years of the FLAG's creation reduced its involvement, and another abandoned its membership due to management conflicts, disagreements with the proposed strategy and a lack of recognition of the relevance of the fishing sector in the actions undertaken by the FLAG.

About the LDS (Question A3), the majority of the *cofradías* of the study stated that they were very active in their elaboration, and half of them said that their objectives are well represented in these LDS. However, five *cofradías* highlighted that these strategies could be improved. Some of the ways they proposed are to improve the guidelines of the funding calls to make them easier to understand and to create specific calls for *cofradías* and their members. One case stated that some actions in non-fishery sectors (such as tourism) have been highly funded, while projects in

the fishing sector have faced difficulties in obtaining funds. The non-flexibility of EU regulations was also highlighted twice.

In general, *cofradías* perceived that FLAGs support and complement their activities (Question B4). Funding and training are two of the most mentioned aspects of support. Some organisations also appreciate the position of the FLAGs as a group that facilitates the integration of the territory and its institutions. From *cofradías*' perspective, FLAG funds favour both the classic lines of the fishing sector and innovation, although there is a diversity of statements (Question B5). *Cofradías* valued projects related to training activities, access to new equipment to help in the daily work and improvements in the processing and handling of landings in the fish markets. They also highlighted those aimed at raising awareness of the effects of marine pollution on ecosystems and fish stocks.

Concerning the questions about the development of SSF and their communities in Section C, *cofradías* perceived that their relationships with the FLAGs are adequate or good and could still be improved (Question C6, *cofradías* version). These improvements could favour the sustainable development of the fishing sector and the wellbeing of coastal communities. In this sense, *cofradías* made a wide range of recommendations. Some of them stated that there should be more fluid, direct, and transparent contact within the FLAGs and greater flexibility in the administrative demands. Other *cofradías* perceived that the base of the fishing sector (fishers, shell fishers, and small ship owners) is not being reached. In this line, it was also proposed that the LDS should be improved and should define specific strategies for the fishing sector. More funding for the sector is considered necessary, and there is a lack of initiatives related to basic needs such as informatics equipment, office supplies, boat improvements and improvement of the existing facilities (it is not always necessary to buy something new, but it is difficult to obtain funds for small repairs). Another complaint was the need to contribute funds upfront for some projects before they are reimbursed by the FLAG. They also pointed out that there should be a greater exchange of experiences between *cofradías*. One *cofradía* in particular claimed to be very discontented with the FLAGs, arguing that they have led to a loss of human capital that moved to the services sector, especially to tourism.

In the specific case of the medium and long-term challenges facing the fisheries sector, more than half of the *cofradías* agreed FLAGs can help overcome them (Question C7, *cofradías* version). The most mentioned ways that they can help are through projects, financing innovative and sustainable actions focused on the fishing reality, raising awareness on these issues and improving employment in the sector. Some *cofradías* indicated that Galician FLAGs should align their strategies, encourage joint projects and ensure that individual projects address the challenges of the fisheries sector transversally, while others stressed that obtaining a project does not ensure its viability, it needs to be followed up. It was also mentioned that there is difficulty in proposing long-term projects and strategies since the fishing sector tends to seek immediacy and that it is necessary to strengthen the position of the fishing sector to overcome these long-term challenges.

Most of the *cofradías* interviewed agreed that FLAGs have benefited the development of the SSF sector and the *cofradías* (Question C8, *cofradías* version). They consider that certain projects have helped to improve the competitiveness of the fishing sector by increasing the added value of the fishing products and introducing innovations in the supply chain—production, marketing and distribution. In the same way, they have helped to reinforce the identity and quality of local fishing and shellfish products. Other projects have supported actions for the dissemination and promotion of fishing activity, specifically the SSF, the importance of women within the SSF, environmental awareness and marine and maritime culture. FLAGs are considered to provide economic support for certain activities that would otherwise be difficult to finance.

Regarding the strengths of the FLAGs system for contributing to the sustainable development of the fisheries sector and SSF (Question C9, *cofradías* version), five of the *cofradías* that identified strengths considered that the position of the FLAGs facilitates the integration of the territory and its institutions due to their proximity. Other advantages for SSF were the support and advice to the fishing and shellfishing sectors, the participation of the fishing sector in the FLAGs boards and the funds allocated to non-productive projects.

On the weaknesses of the FLAG system and what they would change about it, seven of the *cofradías* that identified weaknesses complained of excessive bureaucracy and the complexity of the administrative process of accessing and managing the funds. The next most commented weakness was the need for financial resources, more funds are needed, there is a limited FLAG budget, and this budget is divided by action lines, which sometimes leaves funds uncovered. Likewise, the lack of linkage of funds to the specific needs of the SSF sector or the lack of prominence of the fishing sector and the *cofradías*—they declared there are still few projects presented by fishers and *cofradías*—was mentioned on several occasions. Among the recommendations made to improve the system were to increase the transparency of the FLAGs, establish more continuous communication channels, establish global lines of action, align economic efforts—instead of giving small amounts to individual projects, or support and help individual fishers directly.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of both the information from official sources and the questionnaires shows that there is a strong relationship between the FLAGs and the *cofradías*, generally perceived as positive and without conflicts. *Cofradías* have been considered key actors of the Galician fishing sector and have therefore been included in the FLAGs, in their decision-making bodies—even holding the presidency of many of them—and in the development of the LDS. Similarly, the FLAGs have benefited from the recognition that these traditional organisations already had within the fisheries governance system, as well as from their knowledge of fishing activity. The encouragement of the regional government, the broad participatory process, and the involvement of the fishing sector have favoured the successful implementation of the FLAGs as new actors in the Galician territory.

However, it seems that *cofradías* have not always perceived the leading role of the fisheries sector within the FLAGs (Questions A2 and C6, *cofradías* version). Two *cofradías* have shown their dissatisfaction in this regard, one of them even by leaving the FLAG. It has also been pointed out that multi-stakeholder participation has reduced the percentage of representation of the *cofradías* due to the limited weight of each sector, giving rise to the ‘paradox of participation’ (Suárez de Vivero et al., 2008). On the other hand, both FLAGs and *cofradías* valued very positively the role of territorial actors played by the FLAGs. The fact that they facilitate the integration of the territory and its local actors (non-governmental organisations, municipalities and *cofradías*), as well as the joint projects carried out, was highlighted several times (Questions B4 and C9 in the *cofradías* version and C10 in the FLAGs version). FLAGs play a role somewhere between a sectoral and a territorial approach (Phillipson & Symes, 2015), and although the fisheries sector can play an important role, it is not exclusive. Moreover, FLAGs cannot avoid being constrained by EU regulations, which may hamper their ability to act.

One of the advantages of the collaboration of these two actors was that *cofradías* were able to access new sources of funding, even if only between 9% and 13% of the total Galician FLAGs funds have been managed by them. In particular, most of these funds were concentrated in just a few *cofradías*, some of which are the largest in Galicia and those that occupy strong positions within

the fishing sector. This suggests that some *cofradías* are better placed than others to achieve and develop FLAGS projects. This is consistent with what *cofradías* and FLAGS have stated about the excessive bureaucracy and complexities of the system, which make it more difficult for smaller SSF actors to access and manage funds (Questions C9 in *cofradías* version and C10 in FLAGS version). In this sense, FLAGS must be attentive to the tendency for endogenous development initiatives to favour those who are already powerful and articulate, and who already enjoy a greater capacity to act and engage with the initiative (Shucksmith, 2000).

Regarding the typology of projects, added value was a main objective among *cofradías*, while diversification projects were not relevant. This situation is different from the general Galician data, where diversification was the second main objective (FARNET, 2021; Said-Bugeja et al., 2022), and the Spanish data, where diversification stands out with 49.7% of the projects and the added value is the second most important (32%; Miret-Pastor et al., 2020). In this sense, tourism activities were the main beneficiaries of the diversification projects funded by the FLAGS. While well-planned tourism can bring multiple benefits and be linked to fishing activity (Lois-González & Piñeiro-Antelo, 2020), one *cofradía* in particular highlighted that tourism funding has led to a loss of human capital in the fishing sector (Questions A3 and C6, *cofradías* version). Long-term monitoring of the impact of FLAGS projects could be a good strategy to check whether fishing communities are benefiting.

Despite these difficulties and disadvantages, the FLAG system has contributed to the development of the SSF and their communities in Galicia. The potential of FLAGS as territorial development tools and their funded activities have contributed, for example, to introducing innovations in the supply chain, reinforcing the identity and quality of local fishing and shellfish products, improving environmental awareness and promoting marine culture. The experience, position and high level of organisation of the *cofradías* could be a very important strength to establish these improvements and develop synergies.

CONCLUSION

This article presents an empirical case study on the development and implementation of FLAGS in a European coastal region with *cofradías*, a highly organised fishing sector in traditional organisations. Our analysis shows there has been a strong collaboration since the introduction of FLAGS as new territorial and local development actors. The *cofradías* have accepted the new actors and have participated in their structures, allowing FLAGS to benefit from their experience, importance and recognition within the fishing sector and coastal communities. Similarly, the *cofradías* have been able to access new funds, participate in projects with a territorial approach and consider that territorial cohesion at the local level has been improved. The SSF sector and its communities have also benefited from this territorial development and from funds dedicated to fisheries-related projects and awareness-raising and sensitisation activities.

However, from a sectoral perspective, the role of FLAGS could be improved in the future. It is still necessary to improve the distribution of funds among the different *cofradías*, to reach out to the smaller actors in the SSF, to establish funding lines more focused on the specific needs of the sector and to monitor the funds to ensure that they have a positive impact on the territory without generating negative effects on the fisheries sector. Galician *cofradías* work closely with governments and administrations and already have a strong and effective structure in place, which can help to understand the weaknesses of the FLAGS system and how to overcome them. It would therefore be necessary to reflect on the role that these organisations and their traditional

knowledge should play in the European funds. Considering them beforehand and including them in the planning of strategies and allocation of funds can help us adapt to the different regional realities that exist in European fisheries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the members of the FLAGS and the *cofradías* of Galicia who participated in the interviews. IGL acknowledges funding by the Xunta de Galicia, the Spanish Ministry for Science and Innovation and the European Regional Development Fund (projects ED431C2018/48 and RTI2018-099225-B-100), and also by the Spanish Ministry of Universities under application 33.50.460A.752 and the European Union NextGenerationEU/PRTR through a Margarita Salas contract at the University of Vigo. PP acknowledges support by Grupo de Referencia Competitiva GI-2060 AEMI, under Grant ED431C2019/11. Funding for open access charge: Universidade de Vigo/CRUE-CISUG.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The author has provided the required Data Availability Statement, and if applicable, included functional and accurate links to said data therein.

ORCID

Iria García-Lorenzo PhD  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6122-672X>

Maria Ángeles Piñeiro-Antelo PhD  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8837-989X>

Pablo Pita PhD  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9273-1481>

ENDNOTES

¹Hierarchical governance (top-down and usually conducted by the government); co-governance (a partnership between government, civil society and industry stakeholders); and self-governance (conducted by stakeholders themselves at a community or group level, without interference from an external authority).

²Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE), or Social Economy in Spain, 'comprises associations, cooperatives, mutual societies, foundations, social enterprises, self-help groups, and social movements and networks, operating in both the formal and informal economies. SSE organisations and entities prioritise a combination of social, environmental, democratic, and emancipatory objectives. They are guided by principles and practices that emphasise the primacy of people and work over capital, a profit distribution constraint, participatory governance, mutual aid, voluntary cooperation, collective action, and local development as key mechanisms for empowerment and well-being' (ILO, 2022). SSE is consistent with the principles of the neo-endogenous approach to rural development, highlighting the potential of these organisations as agents of development within governance frameworks (Defourny & Nyssens, 2013; Olmedo & O'Shaughnessy, 2021).

³No information for three *cofradías*.

⁴Note that the numbering in Section C is slightly different among the versions of the questionnaire, with the questions in the *cofradías*' version being numbered C6 to C9 and in the FLAGS' version C7 to C10 (this is only because the FLAGS had one more question about the funds granted by them—Question B6 in the FLAGS' version).

⁵Defined as activities that involve the performance of an economic activity, aimed at the production of goods or services and that involve the creation and/or maintenance of employment.

⁶The figure would be higher, about €3.2 million, according to our questionnaires (ranging 10%–20% of the total funds), and consulted alternative information sources (GALP, 2021; REGP, 2021). However, for the analysis presented in this article, we used information from the Spanish Ministry.

- ⁷They do not imply the start or development of an economic activity or that, although they are related to an economic activity, and they do not affect the competition regime in the territory.
- ⁸Considering the five objectives of Axis 4: adding value, environmental improvement, improving governance, sociocultural and diversification.
- ⁹For this question and the following questions in Flags' Perceptions: FLAGS System, *Cofradías* Participation and Implications for SSF section, the specific responses on the perceptions of the FLAGS can be found in Table A3.
- ¹⁰For this question and the following questions in *Cofradías*' Perceptions: FLAGS System, *Cofradías* Participation and Implications for SSF section, the specific responses on the perceptions of the *cofradías* can be found in Table A4.

REFERENCES

- Alló, M. & Loureiro, M.L. (2017) The role of social norms on conservation programmes in shellfish fisheries. *Marine Policy*, 84, 134–141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2017.07.008>
- Arocena, J. (2002) *El desarrollo local, un desafío contemporáneo*. Montevideo: Taurus Universidad Católica.
- Astorkiza, K. & del Valle, I. (2018) An economic analysis of private side of fishermen's *cofradías*' activity on the Cantabrian Sea. *Marine Policy*, 90, 152–159. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2017.12.018>
- Ballesteros, M.A. (2018) Gobernanza policéntrica en sistemas socioecológicos complejos: la gestión de la pesquería del pulpo (*Octopus vulgaris*) en Galicia. PhD thesis, Universidad de Vigo, Vigo.
- Bavinck, M., Jentoft, S., Pascual-Fernández, J.J. & Marciniak, B. (2015) Interactive coastal governance: the role of pre-modern fisher organizations in improving governability. *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 117, 52–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2015.05.012>
- Barrio García, G. (1998) *Régimen jurídico de la pesca marítima*. Madrid: Marcial Pons.
- Boisier, S. (2016) Desarrollo (local): ¿de qué estamos hablando? In: Noguera, J. (Ed.) *La visión territorial y sostenible del desarrollo local: una perspectiva multidisciplinar*, vol. 1. València: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, pp. 23–46.
- Budzich-Tabor, U. (2014) Area-based local development—a new opportunity for European fisheries areas. In: Urquhart, J., Acott, T.G., Symes, D. & Zhao, M. (Eds.) *Social issues in sustainable fisheries management*. MARE publication series, vol. 9. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 183–197. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7911-2_10
- Caballero-Miguez, G., Garza-Gil, M.D. & Varela-Lafuente, M.M. (2008) Institutions and management of fishing resources: the governance of the Galician model. *Ocean and Coastal Management*, 51(8-9), 625–631. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2008.06.003>
- Capgemini Consulting. (2014) *Study on the implementation of Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund, MARE/2011/01*. Available at: https://www.capgemini.com/consulting-nl/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2017/08/het_europees_visserij_fonds_-_de_studie_van_de_implementatie_van_axis_4.pdf (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- Cavallo, M., Pérez Agúndez, J.A., Raux, P. & Frangoudes, K. (2021) Is existing legislation supporting socially acceptable aquaculture in the European Union? A transversal analysis of France, Italy and Spain. *Reviews in Aquaculture*, 13, 1683–1694. <https://doi.org/10.1111/raq.12540>
- Cervera, A. (2010) Percepción cooperativa de las *cofradías* de pescadores: un estudio empírico. *REVESCO Revista de Estudios Cooperativos*, 102(2010), 7–32.
- Chuenpagdee, R. & Jentoft, S. (2018) Transforming the governance of small-scale fisheries. *Maritime Studies*, 17, 101–115. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40152-018-0087-7>
- Cortés, A., Esteve-Llorens, X., González-García, S., Toreira, M.T. & Feijoo, G. (2021) Multi-product strategy to enhance the environmental profile of the canning industry towards circular economy. *Science of the Total Environment*, 791, 148249. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2021.148249>
- Defourny, J. & Nyssens, M. (2013) Social Innovation, social economy and social enterprise: what can the European debate tell us? In: Moulaert, F., MacCallum, D., Mehmood, A. & Hamdouch, A. (Eds.) *The International handbook on social innovation: collective action, social learning and transdisciplinary research*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, pp. 40–52.
- Esparcia, J., Noguera, J. & Pitarch, M.D. (2000) LEADER en España: desarrollo rural, poder, legitimación, aprendizaje y nuevas estructuras. *Documents de Anàlisi Geogràfica*, 37, 95–113.
- European Commission. (2019) *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The European Green*

- Deal*. Brussels. COM (2019) 640 final. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- European Commission. (2021a) *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future*. COM (2021) 240 final. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0240> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- European Commission. (2021b) *The EU Blue Economy report*. 2021. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0b0c5bfd-c737-11eb-a925-01aa75ed71a1> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- FAO. (2022) *The state of world fisheries and aquaculture 2022: towards blue transformation*. Rome: FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0461en>
- Farmery, A.K., Allison, E.H., Andrew, N.L., Troell, M., Voyer, M., Campbell, B., Eriksson, H., Fabinyi, M., Song, A.M. & Steenbergen, D. (2021) Blind spots in visions of a “blue economy” could undermine the ocean’s contribution to eliminating hunger and malnutrition. *One Earth*, 4(1), 28–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2020.12.002>
- FARNET. (2021) *FLAG factsheets, Spain*. Available at: <https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20191113163831/https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- Federación Gallega de Cofradías de Pescadores. (2017) *Cofradías*. Available at: <http://confrariasgalicia.org/> [Accessed 22nd June 2017].
- Felicidades-García, J. & Piñeiro-Antelo, M.A. (2017) Competitividad, Sostenibilidad y Diversificación en la Fachada Atlántica de la Península Ibérica: La Gestión Local del Fondo Europeo de Pesca (2007-2013). *Revista de Estudios Andaluces*, 34(1), 350–379. <http://doi.org/10.12795/rea.2017.i34.12>
- Fernández-González, R., Pérez-Pérez, M.I. & Varela-Lafuente, M.M. (2020) An institutional analysis of Galician turbot aquaculture: property rights system, legal framework and resistance to institutional change. *Ocean and Coastal Management*, 194, 105281. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2020.105281>
- Fernández-Vidal, D. & Muiño, R. (2014) Fact or fiction? Assessing governance and co-management of Marine Reserves of Fishing Interest in Cedeira and Lira (NW Spain). *Marine Policy*, 47, 15–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2014.01.016>
- Florido-del-Corral, D., Villasante, S., De la Cruz-Modino, R. & Pascual-Fernández, J.J. (2020) Small-scale fisheries in Spain: diversity and challenges. In: Pascual-Fernández, J.J., Pita, C. & Bavinck, M. (Eds.) *Small-scale fisheries in Europe: status, resilience and governance*. Cham: Springer, pp. 253–281.
- Frangoudes, K., Marugán, B. & Pascual-Fernandez, J.J. (2008) From open access to co-governance and conservation: the case of women shellfish collectors in Galicia. *Marine Policy*, 32, 223–232. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2007.09.007>
- Freeman, R. & Svets, K. (2022) Women’s empowerment in small-scale fisheries: the impact of Fisheries Local Action Groups. *Marine Policy*, 136, 104907. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104907>
- Freeman, R., Phillipson, J., Gordon, M. & Tocco, B. (2023) Social capital and short food supply chains: evidence from Fisheries Local Action Groups. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 64(3), 510–528. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12455> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- García-Lorenzo, I., Varela-Lafuente, M.M. & Garza-Gil, D. (2019a) Adaptative processes in small-scale traditional fishermen’s organisations. The case of *Cofradías* in Galicia (NW Spain). *Marine Policy*, 99, 382–390. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2018.10.041>
- García-Lorenzo, I., Cabaleiro-Casal, M.J. & Varela-Lafuente, M.M. (2019b) Fishermen’s associations of the small-scale fisheries: study applied to the participation in *Cofradías* of Galicia (NW Spain). *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 178, 104841.
- García-Lorenzo, I. (2021) The role of the Galician *Cofradías* in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: protection of marine resources and equity. CIRIEC-España. *Revista de Economía Pública, Social y Cooperativa*, 102, 97–122. <https://doi.org/10.7203/CIRIEC-E.102.18388>
- Garza-Gil, M.D., Pérez-Pérez, M.I. & Fernández-González, R. (2020) Governance in small-scale fisheries of Galicia (NW Spain): moving toward co-management? *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 184, 105013. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2019.105013>

- Georgios, C., Nikolaos, N. & Michalis, P. (2021) Neo-endogenous rural development: a path toward reviving rural Europe. *Rural Sociology*, 86(4), 911–937. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ruso.12380>
- Gkartziou, M. & Lowe, P. (2019) Revisiting neo-endogenous rural development. In: Scott, M., Gallent, N. & Gkartziou, M. (Eds.) *The Routledge companion to rural planning*. New York: Taylor and Francis Inc., pp. 159–169.
- González Arce, J.D. (2011) Análisis comparativo de las cofradías de pescadores de Castilla (siglos XIII–XV). *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos.*, 38, 141–217.
- Grupos de Acción Local do Sector Pesqueiro (GALP). (2021) *Proxectos aprobados*. Available at: <https://galp.xunta.gal/proxectos-aprobados> [Accessed 20th June 2021].
- Herrera-Racionero, P., Lizcano, E., Miret-Pastor, L. & Mascarell, Y. (2019) The Spanish Mediterranean Fishing Guilds (Cofradías): an example of collaborative management with a key role in sustainable fisheries. *Fisheries*, 44(4), 172–182. <https://doi.org/10.1002/fsh.10224>
- IDEGA. (2021) *A Economía Galega. Informe 2020–2021*, Afundación: Santiago de Compostela. <https://www.afundacion.org/es/cultura/publicación/a-economía-galega.-informe-2020-2021.-resumen-ejecutivo>
- ILO. (2022) *Advancing the 2030 Agenda through the Social and Solidarity Economy*. Geneva: International Labour Organisation.
- Isaacs, M., Onyango, P. & Akintola, S.L. (Eds.) (2020) *Small-scale fisheries in Africa: a regional portrait*. St. John's, NL, Canada: TBTI Global Publication Series. <https://tbtiglobal.net/>
- Jentoft, S. & Chuenpagdee, R. (Eds.) (2015) *Interactive governance for small-fisheries, global reflections*. Switzerland: Springer.
- Klein, J.-L. (2005) Iniciativa local y desarrollo: respuesta social a la globalización neoliberal. *Revista Eure*, XXXI(94), 25–39. <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0250-71612005009400002>
- Kurowska, K., Kryszk, H. & Gwiaździńska-Goraj, M. (2014) Sustainable development of coastal areas—Polish experience following accession to the European Union based on the example of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) during 2007–2013. *Acta Adriatica*, 55(2), 145–160.
- Labarta, U. & Fernández-Reiriz, M.J. (2019) The Galician mussel industry: innovation and changes in the last forty years. *Ocean and Coastal Management*, 167, 208–218. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2018.10.012>
- Ley (Law) 3/2001, de 26 de marzo, de Pesca Marítima del Estado, *Boletín Oficial del Estado* n° 75. Available at: <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2001/03/28/pdfs/A11509-11532.pdf> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- Ley (Law) 11/2008, de 3 de diciembre, de pesca de Galicia, *Boletín Oficial del Estado* n° 15. Available at: <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2009/01/17/pdfs/BOE-A-2009-805.pdf> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- Ley (Law) 6/2009, de 11 de diciembre, de modificación de la Ley de pesca de Galicia, *Boletín Oficial del Estado* n° 30. 9816–9834. Available at: <http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2010/02/04/pdfs/BOE-A-2010-1706.pdf> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- Ley (Law) 5/2011, de 29 de marzo, de Economía Social, *Boletín Oficial del Estado* n° 76. Available at: <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2011/03/30/pdfs/BOE-A-2011-5708.pdf> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- Ley (Law) 33/2014, de 26 de diciembre, por la que se modifica la de Pesca Marítima del Estado, *Boletín Oficial del Estado* n° 313. Available at: <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2014/12/27/pdfs/BOE-A-2014-13516.pdf> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- Ley (Law) 6/2016, de 4 de mayo, de la economía social de Galicia, *Boletín Oficial del Estado* n° 147. Available at: <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2016/06/18/pdfs/BOE-A-2016-5943.pdf> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- Li, Y. & Namikawa, Y. (2020) *In the era of big change. Essays about Japanese small-scale fisheries*. St. John's, NL, Canada: TBTI Global Publication. <https://tbtiglobal.net/in-the-era-of-big-change/>
- Linke, S. & Bruckmeier, K. (2015) Co-management in fisheries. Experiences and changing approaches in Europe. *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 104, 170–181. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2014.11.017>
- Linke, S. & Siegrist, N. (2023) Aligning top-down and bottom-up modes of governance? How Fisheries Local Action Groups support small-scale fisheries and coastal community development in Sweden. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 64(3), 490–509. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12452>
- Lois-González, R.C. & Piñeiro-Antelo, M.A. (2020) Fishing tourism as an opportunity for sustainable rural development—the case of Galicia, Spain. *Land*, 9(11), 437. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land9110437>
- Loizou, E., Chatzitheodoridis, F., Polymeros, K., Michailidis, A. & Mattas, K. (2014) Sustainable development of rural coastal areas: impacts of a new fisheries policy. *Land Use Policy*, 38, 41–47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2013.10.017>

- Marcianò, C. & Romeo, G. (2016) Integrated local development in coastal areas: the case of the “Stretto” Coast FLAG in Southern Italy. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 223, 379–385. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.251>
- Macho, G., Naya, I., Freire, J., Villasante, S. & Molares, J. (2013) The key role of the Barefoot Fisheries Advisors in the co-managed TURF System of Galicia (NW Spain). *Ambio*, 42, 1057–1069. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-013-0460-0>
- Marzoa, A. (1985) Importancia de la estructura asociativa en la economía de la explotación pesquera. *Investigación Pesquera, CSIC*, 51(2), 93–99.
- McGinnis, M.D. & Ostrom, E. (2014) Social-ecological system framework: initial changes and continuing challenges. *Ecology and Society*, 19(2), 30. <http://doi.org/10.5751/ES-06387-190230>
- Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación (MAPA) (2018) *Lista de beneficiarios de la financiación de la UE, a través del Fondo Europeo de la Pesca*. Available at: <https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/pesca/temas/fondos-europeos/iniciativa-comunitaria-de-transparencia/default.aspx> [Accessed 19th May 2021].
- Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación (MAPA). (2022) *Lista de beneficiarios de la financiación de la UE, a través del fondo europeo y marítimo de la pesca (actualizado a 31/12/21)*. Available at: <https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/pesca/temas/fondos-europeos/femp/informacion-publicidad.aspx> [Accessed 23rd March 2022].
- Miret-Pastor, L., Molina-García, A., García-Aranda, C. & Herrera-Racionero, P. (2018) Analysis of the fisheries diversification funds in Spain during the period 2007–2014. *Marine Policy*, 93, 150–158. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2018.04.014>
- Miret-Pastor, L., Svells, K. & Freeman, R. (2020) Towards territorial development in fisheries areas: a typology of projects funded by Fisheries Local Action Groups. *Marine Policy*, 119, 104111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.104111>
- Navarro-Valverde, F., Labianca, M., Cejudo-García, E. & De Rubertis, S. (2022) Social innovation in rural areas of the European Union learnings from neo-endogenous development projects in Italy and Spain. *Sustainability*, 14, 6439. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14116439>
- Olmedo, L. & O’Shaughnessy, M. (2021) A substantive view of social enterprises as neo-endogenous rural development actors. *Voluntas*, 34, 209–221. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-021-00442-7>
- Outeiro, L., Rodríguez-Mendoza, R., Bañón, R. & Alonso-Fernández, A. (2020) Influence of aquaculture on fishing strategies: insights from Galician small-scale fisheries. *Aquaculture*, 521, 735043. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aquaculture.2020.735043>
- Pauly, D. (2018) A vision for marine fisheries in a global blue economy. *Marine Policy*, 87, 371–374. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2017.11.010>
- Pascual-Fernández, J.J., China Mederos, I. & De la Cruz Modino, R. (2015) Marine protected areas, small-scale commercial versus recreational fishers: Governability challenges in the Canary Islands, Spain. In: Jentoft, S. & Chuenpagdee, R. (Eds.) *Interactive governance for small-scale fisheries: global reflections*. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 397–412.
- Pascual-Fernández, J.J., Pita, C. & Bavinck, M. (2020a) Small-scale fisheries take centre-stage in Europe (once again). In: Pascual-Fernández, J.J., Pita, C. & Bavinck, M. (Eds.) *Small-scale fisheries in Europe: status, resilience and governance. MARE publication series*, vol. 23. Cham: Springer, pp. 1–22.
- Pascual-Fernández, J.J., Florido-del-Corral, D., De la Cruz-Modino, R. & Villasante, S. (2020b) Small-scale fisheries in Spain: diversity and challenges. In: Pascual-Fernández, J.J., Pita, C., Bavinck, M. (Eds.) *Small-scale fisheries in Europe: Status, Resilience and Governance. MARE publication series*, vol. 23. Cham: Springer, pp. 253–281.
- Penca, J., Said, A., Cavallé, M., Pita, C. & Libralato, S. (2021) Sustainable small-scale fisheries markets in the Mediterranean: weakness and opportunities. *Maritime Studies*, 20, 141–155. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40152-021-00222-5>
- Pérez-Pérez, M., Torralba-Cano, J. & Varela-Lafuente, M. (2008) Las pesquerías gallegas en un contexto integrado y global. In: Laxe, F.G. (Ed.) *Lecciones de Economía Pesquera*. A Coruña: Netbiblo.
- Phillipson, J. & Symes, D. (2015) Finding a middle way. *Sociol Ruralis*, 55, 343–359. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12098>
- Piñeiro-Antelo, M.A., Felicidades-García, J. & Lois-González, R.C. (2018) Fisheries policy for sustainable development: coastal models and limitations derived from participation and power organisation in Atlantic FLAGs in Spain and Portugal. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 59(1), 44–65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12228>

- Piñeiro-Antelo, M.A. & Lois-González, R. (2019) The role of European fisheries funds for innovation and regional development in Galicia (Spain). *European Planning Studies*, 27(12), 2394–2410. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2019.1635996>
- Piñeiro-Antelo, M.A., Felicidade-García, J. & O'Keeffe, B. (2020) The FLAG scheme in the governance of EU coastal areas. The cases of Ireland and Galicia (Spain). *Marine Policy*, 122, 103424. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2019.01.013>
- Pita, P. & Villasante, S. (2019) The building of a management system for marine recreational fisheries in Galicia (NW Spain). *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 169, 191–200.
- Pita, P., Fernández-Márquez, D., Antelo, M., Macho, G. & Villasante, S. (2019) Socioecological changes in data-poor S-fisheries: a hidden shellfisheries crisis in Galicia (NW Spain). *Marine Policy*, 101, 208–224. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2018.09.018>
- Pita, C., Pascual-Fernández, J.J. & Bavink, M. (2020) Small-scale fisheries in Europe: challenges and opportunities. In: Pascual-Fernández, J.J., Pita, C. & Bavink, M. (Eds.) *Small-scale fisheries in Europe: status, resilience and governance*. MARE Publications Series, 23. Cham: Springer, pp. 581–600. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37371-9_28
- Raicevich, S., Alegret, J.L., Frangoudes, K., Giovanardi, O. & Fortibuoni, T. (2018) Community-based management of the Mediterranean coastal fisheries: historical reminiscence or the root for new fisheries governance? *Regional Studies in Marine Science*, 21, 86–93. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rsma.2017.10.013>
- Ray, C. (2001) *Culture economies*. Newcastle: Centre for Rural Economy, Newcastle University.
- Ray, C. (2006) Neoendogenous rural development in the EU. In: Cloke, P., Marsden, T. & Mooney, P.H. (Eds.) *Handbook of rural studies*. London, UK: Sage, pp. 278–290.
- Red Española de Grupos de Pesca (REGP). (2021) *Proyectos FEMP: CCAA—Galicia; Promotor: Cofradías*. Available at: https://regp.pesca.mapama.es/proyectos/femp?title=&field_gfemp_ccaa_target_id=15&field_gfemp_proy_promotor_value=&field_gfemp_proy_promotor_value1=All&field_pfemp_tipooperacion_target_id=All&field_gfemp_proy_promotor_value_1=cofrad%C3%ADa [Accessed 14th and 18th May 2021].
- Romeo, G. & Marciánò, C. (2019) Evaluating the economic performance of fishing systems using fuzzy multicriteria analysis in a Fishery Local Action Group in South Italy, *Fisheries Research*, 218, 259–268. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2019.05.015>
- Ruiz-Salmón, I., Margallo, M., Laso, J., Villanueva-Rey, P., Mariño, D., Quinteiro, P., Dias, A.C., Nunes, M.L., Marques, A., Feijoo, G., Moreira, M.T., Loubet, P., Sonnemann, G., Morse, A., Cooney, R., Clifford, E., Rowan, N., Méndez-Paz, D., Iglesias-Parga, X., Anglada, C., Aldaco, R. (2020) Addressing challenges and opportunities of the European seafood sector under a circular economy framework. *Current Opinion in Environmental Science & Health*, 13, 101–106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.coesh.2020.01.004>
- Said-Bugeja, A., Svets, K., Aagard Thuesen, A., Linke, S., Salmi, P., García Lorenzo, I., Piñeiro-Antelo, M. A., Villasante, S., Pita Orduña, P., Pascual-Fernández, J. J., Pita, C., Castelo, D., Kyvelou, S. S. & Ierapetritis, D. G. (2022) Flagging justice matters in EU Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs). In: Jentoft, S., Chuenpagdee, R., Said-Bugeja, A. & Isaacs, M. (Eds.) *Blue Justice small-scale fisheries in a sustainable ocean economy*. Cham: Springer, pp. 249–273. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-89624-9_14
- Salvador, S., Costoya, X., Sanz-Larruga, F.J. & Gimeno, M. (2018) Development of offshore wind power: contrasting optimal wind sites with legal restrictions in Galicia, Spain. *Energies*, 11(4), 731. <https://doi.org/10.3390/en11040731>
- Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF). (2021) *The 2021 annual economic report on the EU fishing fleet (STECF 21-08)*. Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/60996> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- Shucksmith, M. (2000) Endogenous development, social capital and social inclusion: perspectives from LEADER in the UK. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 40(2), 208–218. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9523.00143>
- Sobrinho-Heredia, J.M. & Oanta, G.A. (2019) The legal impact of the common fisheries policy on the Galician fisheries sector. *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 167, 87–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2018.10.011>
- Suárez de Vivero, J. L., Rodríguez, J. C. & Florido, D. (2008) The paradox of public participation in fisheries governance. The rising number of actors and the devolution process. *Marine Policy*, 32(3), 319–325.
- Sumaila, U.R., Ebrahim, N., Schuhbauer, A., Skerritt, D., Li, Y., Kim, H.S., Mallory, T.G., Lam, V.W.L. & Pauly, D. (2019) Updated estimates and analysis of global fisheries subsidies. *Marine Policy*, 109, 103695. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2019.103695>

- Suris-Regueiro, J.C. & Santiago, J. L. (2014) Characterization of fisheries dependence in Galicia (Spain). *Marine Policy*, 47, 99–109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2014.02.006>
- Symes, D., Phillipson, J. & Salmi, P. (2015) Europe's coastal fisheries: instability and the impacts of fisheries policy. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 55(3), 245–257. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12096>
- Taboada, M.S. (2004) *El papel de las instituciones en el origen y en la evolución de la cofradía de pescadores gallega: estudio de casos*. USC, Santiago de Compostela. <http://hdl.handle.net/10347/9711> (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (1982) in force 16 November 1994, 1833 UNTS 396. https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetailsIII.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXI-6&chapter=21&Temp=mtdsg3&clang=_en (Accessed date 01/08/24)
- Van de Walle, G., Gomes da Silva, S., O'Hara, E. & Soto, P. (2015) Achieving sustainable development of local fishing interests: the case of Pays d'Auray FLAG. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 55(3), 360–377. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12097>
- Van de Walle, G., Van Soetendael, M., & FARNET Support Unit. (2017) Providing information on present and future EMFF support to small-scale coastal fisheries through FLAGs. European Commission, DG MARE. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/sites/default/files/publication/at2-2_sscf_reportv4_approved_layout.pdf
- Varela-Lafuente, M., Suris-Regueiro, J., Garza-Gil, M.D. & Iglesias-Malvido, C. (2000) *Economía de la pesca. Presente y futuro de la regulación pesquera en Galicia*. A Coruña: Instituto de Estudios Económicos, Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza.
- Vázquez, A. (2007) Desarrollo endógeno. Teorías y políticas de desarrollo territorial. *Investigaciones Regionales*, 11, 183–211.
- Villasante, S., Macho, G., Rivero-Rodríguez, S. & De Rivero, J.I. (2015) *Estimates of total marine fisheries removals from the Northwest of Spain, 1950–2010*. Working Paper #2015-51 Working Paper Series, University of British Columbia.
- Villasante, S., Tubío, A., Gianelli, I., Pita, P. & García-Allut, A. (2021) Ever changing times: sustainability transformations of Galician small-scale fisheries. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 8, 712819. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2021.712819>
- Xunta de Galicia. (2014) *Decreto (Decree) 8/2014, de 16 de enero, por el que se regulan las cofradías de pescadores de Galicia y a sus federaciones*, Diario Oficial de Galicia n° 19. Available at: https://www.xunta.gal/dog/Publicados/2014/20140129/AnuncioG0165-220114-0009_es.html
- Xunta de Galicia. (2016) Datos do Grupo. Seo de Fisterra—Ria de Muros-Noia—GALP Costa Sostenible. EDLP, Estratexia de Desenvolvemento Local Participativo (2015–2020). Available at: https://galp.xunta.gal/sites/default/files/edlp_galp_seo_fisterra_ria_muros_noia_0.c.pdf [Accessed 2nd June 2022].
- Xunta de Galicia. (2021) *Información aos medios, Consello da Xunta. Referencia do Consello da Xunta de Galicia, 22 de abril de 2021*.
- Xunta de Galicia. (2022) *Rexistro de buques pesqueiros de Galicia (2022)*. Available at: <https://www.pescadegalicia.gal/rexbuque/> [Accessed 18th May 2022].
- WorldFish, FAO, Duke University. (2018) *Illuminating hidden harvests*. Rome, Italy: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Duke University and WorldFish.

How to cite this article: García-Lorenzo, I., Piñeiro-Antelo, M.A., Villasante, S. & Pita, P. (2024) The *cofradías*' role within the Fisheries Local Action Groups system: Implications for small-scale fisheries in Galicia (Spain). *Sociologia Ruralis*, 64, 415–444. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12490>

APPENDIX

Questionnaires given to the management board of the Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) and the *cofradías* and responses received

TABLE A1 Version of the questionnaire for the management board of the FLAGs.

<p>Name of the FLAG:</p> <p>Date of the questionnaire:</p> <p>Creation date of the FLAG:</p> <p>Number of members of the FLAG:</p> <p>Governing bodies of the FLAG:</p> <p>How often are the decision-making bodies of the FLAG elected (just once when the FLAG was created, every 4 years...)?</p>
<p>A. Participation of the <i>cofradías</i> in the process of creating the FLAGs and their evolution</p> <p>1 How many <i>cofradías</i> are members of the FLAG? How many <i>cofradías</i> are represented in the decision-making bodies of the FLAG (number, percentage, which ones)? Has the number of <i>cofradías</i> represented in the decision-making bodies changed since the creation of the FLAG?</p> <p>2 In the process of creating the FLAG, did the previous existence of the <i>cofradías</i> result in any advantage or disadvantage for the creation of the FLAG? Were there any conflicts with <i>cofradías</i> during the process?</p> <p>3 Which <i>cofradías</i> were involved in the Local Development Strategy elaborated by the FLAG? In which parts of the process? Do you consider that the objectives of the <i>cofradías</i> are well represented in the Local Development Strategy?</p>
<p>B. Projects financed by the FLAGs and managed by the <i>cofradías</i></p> <p>4 Do you think that FLAGs support or complement the activities of the <i>cofradías</i> in any way? How?</p> <p>5 In relation to the financing granted by the FLAG: do you think that the financed projects consolidated the classic lines of action of the Galician fishing sector, or that they encouraged new areas of action? If so, which ones?</p> <p>6 How many projects did the FLAG grant to the <i>cofradías</i> in the following funding periods (please, indicate to what <i>cofradías</i>, amount, percentage of the total projects granted, and objectives of the project)? –2007–2013 // –2014–2020 // –2021 Has any project presented by a <i>cofradía</i> not been granted? What was the weight of the projects awarded to the <i>cofradías</i> in the total number of projects approved by the FLAG?</p>
<p>C. Relationship between FLAGs, <i>cofradías</i> and the sustainability of small-scale fisheries and their communities</p> <p>7 What do you think should be improved in the relations between FLAG and the <i>cofradías</i> to contribute to the sustainable development of fishing activities?</p> <p>8 To what extent do the actions of the FLAGs help to face the medium and long-term challenges that must be faced by the communities with a fishing tradition, the fishers and their organisations? For example, climate change, Ecosystem Approach (EAF) and Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), generational replacement, gentrification, population loss, changes in fish consumption, global trade, elimination of fishing subsidies, the relationships between <i>cofradías</i> and Producer Organizations (POs), and so forth</p> <p>9 Do you think the creation of the FLAGs benefited the small-scale fishing sector in Galicia? And the <i>cofradías</i>? Why?</p> <p>10 What are the main weaknesses and strengths of the FLAGs to contribute to the sustainable development of fishing and specifically of small-scale fishing? And for local communities not related to the fishing sector? What would you change in the FLAGs system?</p>

TABLE A2 Version of the questionnaire for the management board of the *cofradías*.

Name of the <i>cofradía</i>:	
Date of the questionnaire:	
A. Analysis of the participation of the <i>cofradías</i> in FLAGs	
1	Does your <i>cofradía</i> participate in any FLAG? If it participates, is the <i>cofradía</i> represented in the decision-making bodies of the FLAG? Has it been represented since the creation of the FLAG or was it incorporated later?
2	In the process of creating the FLAG, did the existence of your <i>cofradía</i> have any advantages or disadvantages for the creation of the FLAG? Was there any notable conflict between your <i>cofradía</i> and the FLAG during the process?
3	Did your <i>cofradía</i> participate in the process of drawing up the Local Development Strategy (LDS) drawn up by the FLAG? In which parts of the process? Do you think that the goals of your <i>cofradía</i> are well represented in this strategy?
B. Analysis of the projects managed by the <i>cofradías</i> and financed by the FLAGs	
4	Do you think that FLAGs support or complement the activities of your <i>cofradía</i> in any way? How?
5	In relation to the funding granted by the FLAGs: did your <i>cofradía</i> obtain funding through the FLAGs? Do you think that the funded projects have consolidated the classic lines of action in the Galician fishing sector or that they have encouraged new areas of action? If so, which ones?
C. Relationship between FLAGs, <i>cofradías</i> and the sustainability of small-scale fisheries and their communities	
6	What do you think should be improved in the relations between the FLAGs and the <i>cofradía</i> to contribute to the sustainable development of fishing activities?
7	To what extent do the actions of the FLAGs help to face the medium and long-term challenges that must be faced by the communities with a fishing tradition, the fishers and their organisations? For example, climate change, Ecosystem Approach (EAF) and Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), generational replacement, gentrification, population loss, changes in fish consumption, global trade, elimination of fishing subsidies, the relationships between <i>cofradías</i> and Producer Organizations (POs), and so forth
8	Do you think the creation of the FLAGs benefited the small-scale fishing sector in Galicia? And the <i>cofradías</i> ? Why?
9	What are the main weaknesses and strengths of the FLAGs to contribute to the sustainable development of fishing and specifically of small-scale fishing? And for local communities not related to the fishing sector? What would you change in the FLAGs system?

TABLE A3 Specific responses on the perceptions of the FLAGs (related to FLAGs' Perceptions: FLAGs System, *Cofradías* Participation and Implications for SSF section).

1 <i>Seven out of eight Galician FLAGs responded to the questionnaires. For each question, the number of FLAGs that gave a given answer is indicated in brackets.</i>	
A. Participation of the <i>cofradías</i> in the process of creating the FLAGs and their evolution	
2	In the process of creating the FLAG, did the previous existence of the <i>cofradías</i> result in any advantage or disadvantage for the creation of the FLAG? <i>Responses: The previous existence of the cofradías was advantageous (7)</i> Were there any conflicts with <i>cofradías</i> during the process? <i>Responses: There were no conflicts (7)</i>

(Continues)

TABLE A3 (Continued)

3	Which <i>cofradías</i> were involved in the Local Development Strategy elaborated by the FLAG? In which parts of the process? <i>Responses: Most of the cofradías were involved in the LDS (7)</i> Do you consider that the objectives of the <i>cofradías</i> are well represented in the Local Development Strategy? <i>Responses: The objectives of the cofradías are well represented in the LDS (7)</i>
B. Projects financed by the FLAGs and managed by the <i>cofradías</i>	
4	Do you think that FLAGs support or complement the activities of the <i>cofradías</i> in any way? How? <i>Responses: FLAGs considered that their performance supports or complements the cofradías activities (7)</i>
5	In relation to the financing granted by the FLAG: do you think that the financed projects consolidated the classic lines of action of the Galician fishing sector or that they encouraged new areas of action? If so, which ones? <i>Responses: FLAGs support the classic lines of action in the Galician fishing sector (0); FLAGs encourage new areas of action (4); FLAGs support the classic lines of action and new areas (2); does not know or has no answer (1)</i>
C. Relationship between FLAGs, <i>cofradías</i> and the sustainability of small-scale fisheries and their communities	
7	What do you think should be improved in the relations between FLAG and the <i>cofradías</i> to contribute to the sustainable development of fishing activities? <i>Responses: The FLAG proposed improvements to strengthen the system and their relations and/or develop more collaborative projects (6); the FLAG highlighted problems that should be addressed to improve the relations (1)</i>
8	To what extent do the actions of the FLAGs help to face the medium and long-term challenges that must be faced by the communities with a fishing tradition, the fishers and their organisations? <i>Responses: The FLAG perceived they can help address the medium and long-term challenges (7)</i>
9	Do you think that the creation of the FLAGs benefited the small-scale fishing sector in Galicia? And the <i>cofradías</i> ? Why? <i>Responses: Their creation generated positive benefits for both the SSF sector and cofradías (5); their creation generated positive benefits for the cofradías and no impact on SSF (2)</i>
10	What are the main weaknesses and strengths of the FLAGs to contribute to the sustainable development of fishing and specifically of small-scale fishing? And for local communities not related to the fishing sector? What would you change in the FLAGs system? <i>Responses: The FLAG have identified strengths in the FLAG system to contribute to the development of the fishing sector and/or the local communities (7)</i> <i>Responses: The FLAG have identified weaknesses in the FLAG system to contribute to the development of the fishing sector and/or the local communities (7)</i>

TABLE A4 Specific responses on the perceptions of the *cofradías* (related to *Cofradías' Perceptions: FLAGs System, Cofradías Participation and Implications for SSF section*)

1 Twenty-three out of 63 Galician *cofradías* responded to the questionnaire. For each question, the number of *cofradías* that gave a given answer is indicated in brackets

A. Analysis of the participation of the <i>cofradías</i> in FLAGs	
2	In the process of creating the FLAG, did the existence of your <i>cofradía</i> have any advantages or disadvantages for the creation of the FLAG? <i>Responses: The existence of the cofradía was neither advantageous nor disadvantageous (14); the existence of the cofradía was advantageous (3); does not know or have no answer (6)</i> Was there any notable conflict between your <i>cofradía</i> and the FLAG during the process? <i>Responses: There were no conflicts (14); there were conflicts (1); does not know or has no answer (8)</i>

(Continues)

TABLE A4 (Continued)

3	<p>Did your <i>cofradía</i> participate in the process of drawing up the Local Development Strategy (LDS) drawn up by the FLAG? In which parts of the process?</p> <p><i>Responses: The cofradía participated in the LDS (17); the cofradía did not participate (3); does not know or has no answer (3)</i></p> <p>Do you think that the goals of your <i>cofradía</i> are well represented in this strategy?</p> <p><i>Responses: The goals of the cofradía are well represented (12); the goals of the cofradía are not well represented (4); does not know or has no answer (7)</i></p>
B. Analysis of the projects managed by the <i>cofradías</i> and financed by the FLAGs	
4	<p>Do you think that FLAGs support or complement the activities of your <i>cofradía</i> in any way? How?</p> <p><i>Responses: FLAGs support or complement the activities of the cofradía (18); FLAGs do not support or complement the activities of the cofradía (4); does not know or has no answer (1)</i></p>
5	<p>In relation to the funding granted by the FLAGs: did your <i>cofradía</i> obtain funding through the FLAGs? Do you think that the funded projects have consolidated the classic lines of action in the Galician fishing sector or that they have encouraged new areas of action? If so, which ones?</p> <p><i>Responses: FLAGs support the classic lines of action in the Galician fishing sector (5); FLAGs encourage new areas of action (5); FLAGs support the classic lines of action and new areas (7); does not know or has no answer (6)</i></p>
C. Relationship between FLAGs, <i>cofradías</i> and the sustainability of small-scale fisheries and their communities	
6	<p>What do you think should be improved in the relations between the FLAGs and the <i>cofradía</i> to contribute to the sustainable development of fishing activities?</p> <p><i>Responses: The cofradía expressed it has good or very good relations with the FLAG (2); the cofradía expressed it has adequate or good relations with the FLAGs and/or proposing improvements (12); the cofradía expressed its disagreement with the previous FLAG strategy and agreement with the current one (1); the cofradía expressed its disagreement with the FLAGs (2); does not know or has no answer (6)</i></p>
7	<p>To what extent do the actions of the FLAGs help to face the medium and long-term challenges that must be faced by the communities with a fishing tradition, the fishers and their organisations?</p> <p><i>Responses: The cofradía explained how FLAGs help these challenges (14); the cofradía perceived FLAGs have no impact on these challenges (1); the cofradía perceived FLAGs have a negative impact on these challenges (1); does not know or has no answer (7)</i></p>
8	<p>Do you think the creation of the FLAGs benefited the small-scale fishing sector in Galicia?</p> <p><i>Responses: FLAGs have benefited the SSF sector (11); FLAGs have not benefited the SSF sector (1); does not know or has no answer (1)</i></p> <p>And the <i>cofradías</i>? Why?</p> <p><i>Responses: FLAGs have benefited the cofradías (17); FLAGs have not benefited the cofradías (1); does not know or has no answer (5)</i></p>
9	<p>What are the main weaknesses and strengths of the FLAGs to contribute to the sustainable development of fishing and specifically of small-scale fishing? And for local communities not related to the fishing sector? What would you change in the FLAGs system?</p> <p><i>Responses: The cofradía has identified strengths in the FLAG system (10); the cofradía has not identified strengths in the FLAG system (1); does not know or has no answer (12)</i></p> <p><i>Responses: The cofradía has identified weaknesses in the FLAG system (15); the cofradía has not identified weaknesses in the FLAG system (2); does not know or has no answer (6)</i></p>