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# **The attitudes of fishermen on the island of Ireland towards the development of marine renewable energy in their locality**

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# Introduction

- Expansion of marine renewable energy (MRE) will increase pressure on existing marine industries.
- Commercial fishing is the sector most likely to be affected.
- Building acceptance towards MRE requires an understanding of attitudes and perceptions.
- Detailed information on fishers' attitudes could help developers avoid conflict.

# Survey Design

- Builds on similar fishermen's attitudes studies (Mackinson et al., 2006; Pita et al., 2010; Alexander et al., 2013).
- Gather information on the attitudes of fishermen towards the development of marine renewable energy in their locality.

# Case Study Sites

- **Atlantic Marine Energy Test Site**
  - pre-commercial wave energy test site, off Belmullet, Co. Mayo.
  - fishing activity consists mainly of brown crab and lobster.
- **Torr Head/ Fair Head Tidal Projects**
  - two separate 100MW tidal farms to be built off Torr Head and Fair Head, Co Antrim.
  - fishing activity consists mainly of crab and lobster.

# Case Study Sites

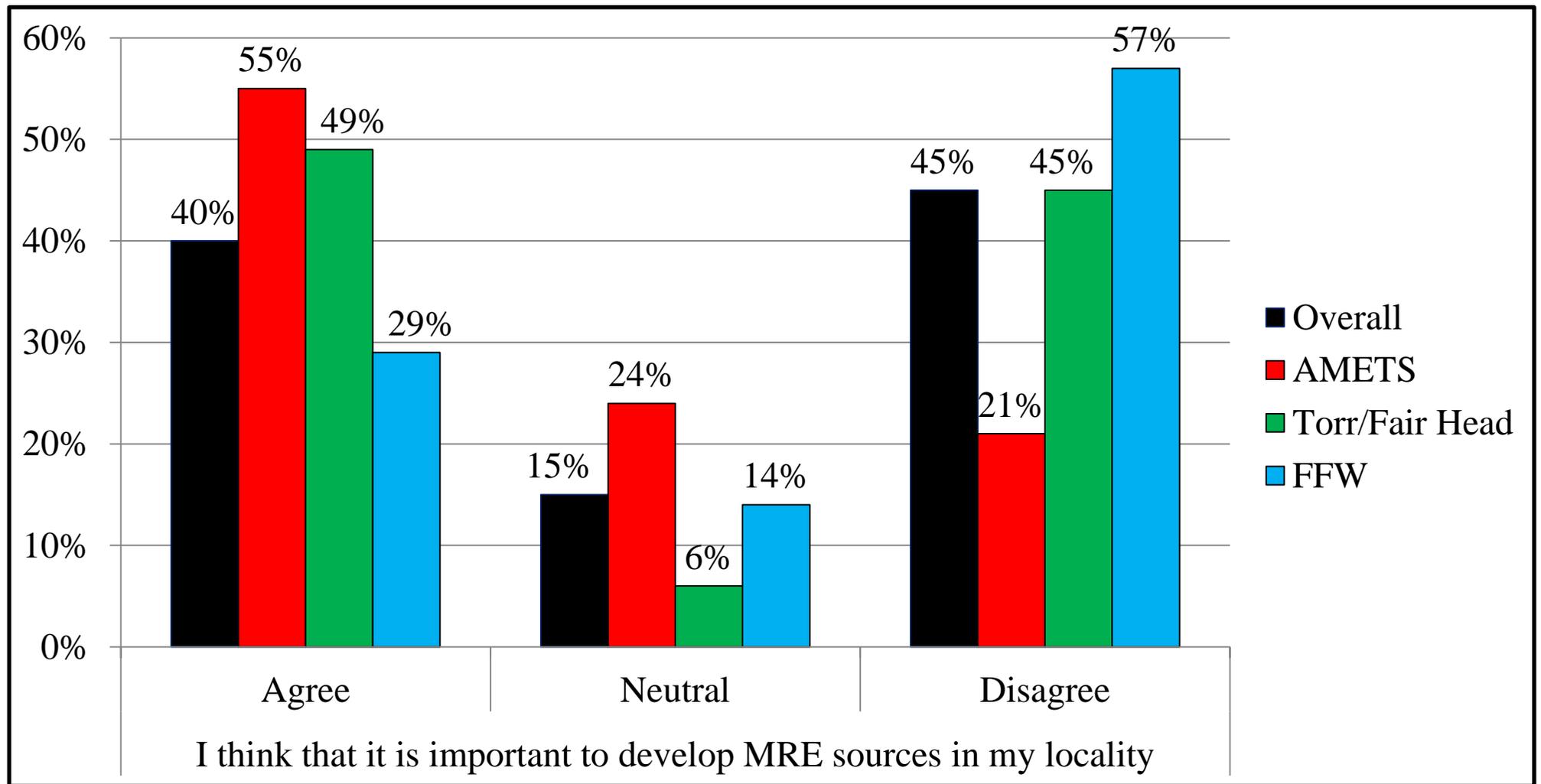
- **First Flight Wind Project**
  - 600MW offshore windfarm proposed off the coast of Co. Down.
  - Majority of commercial sea fishing in Northern Ireland is concentrated at three ports in Co. Down.
  - Kilkeel, Ardglass and Portavogie.
  - Majority of fishing effort is directed towards Nephrops fisheries.

# Survey Methods

- 104 surveys conducted with vessel skippers/owners operating from ports near case study sites.
- Survey methods used – face to face, telephone and email.

	<b>Population (registered vessels)</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>% of population</b>
<b>AMETS</b>	73 (Bord Iascaigh Mhara)	29	37%
<b>Torr Head/Fair Head Tidal projects</b>	28 (Yates, 2012)	18	64%
<b>FirstFlight Wind</b>	212 (Yates, 2012)	57	27%

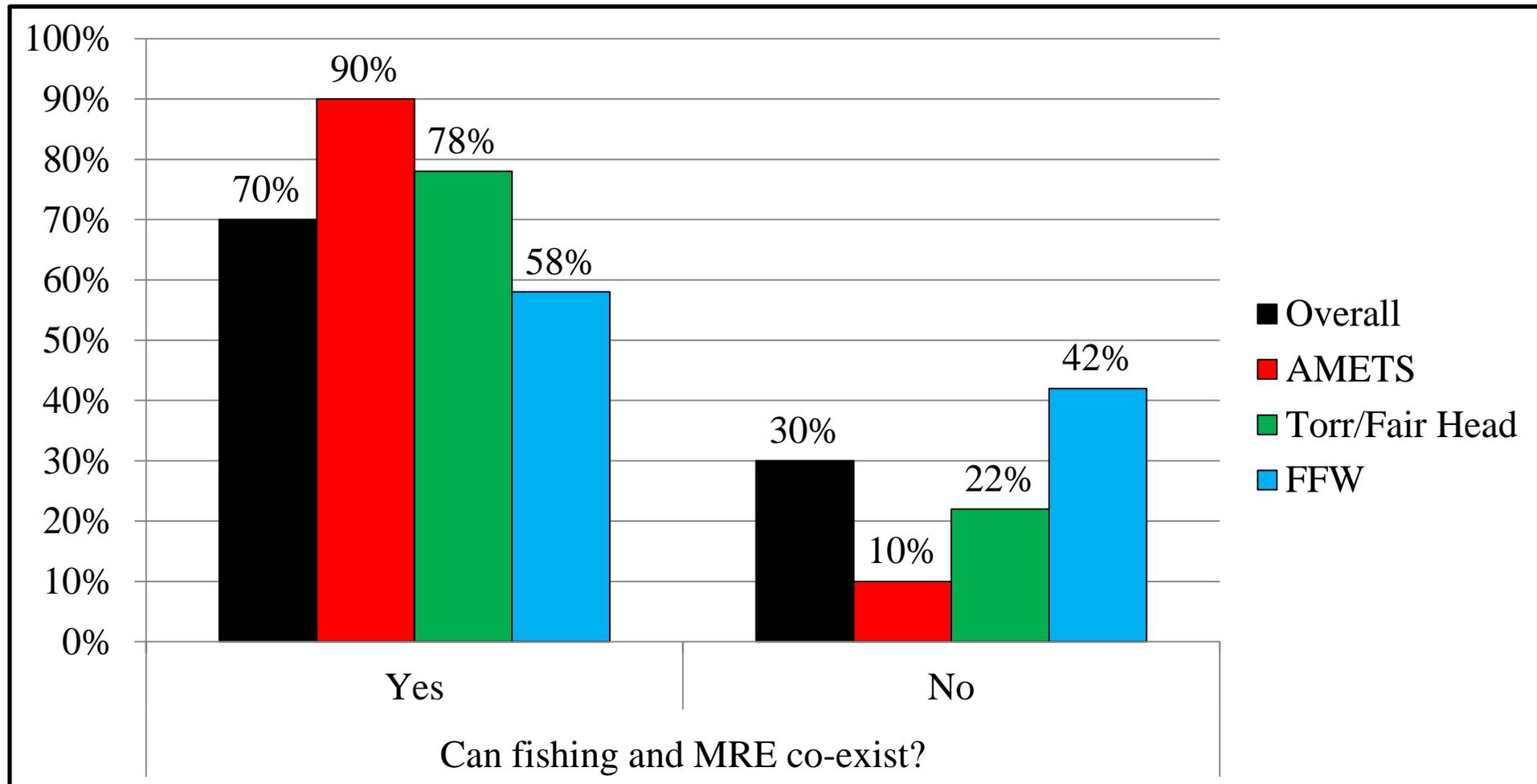
# Results - Attitudes towards MRE



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- Agree - “if it does not affect fishing”
- Agree – “there will be jobs for local fishermen”
- Disagree – “it will take up fishing ground”
- Strongly disagree – “it will finish a lot of small boat owners”

# Results - Co-existence of MRE and fishing

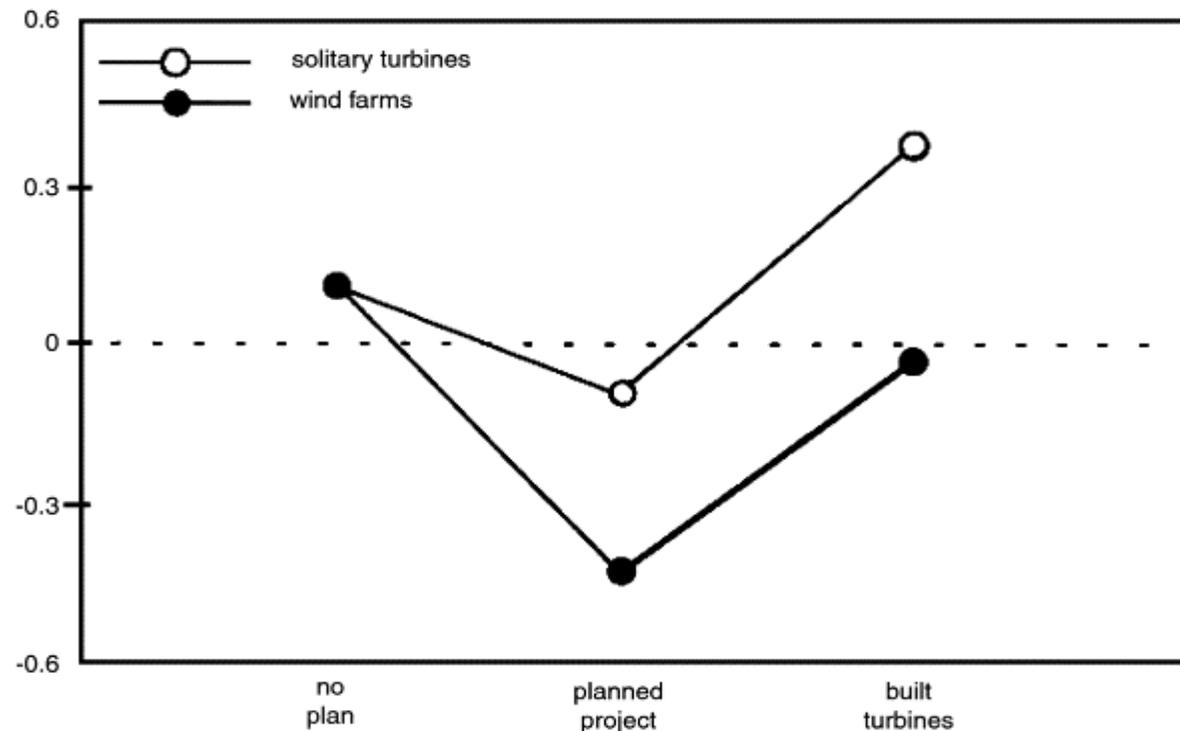


# Results - Co-existence of MRE and fishing

- Yes – “if properly managed in collaboration with fishermen”
- Yes – “as long as they are not on fishing ground”
- No – “not where they plan on putting it”
- No – “we cannot trawl through farms. Potting will be ok”

# Discussion

- Attitudes towards renewable energy development follow a U shaped curve (Wolsink, 2007).



# Discussion

- Familiarity with renewable energy technologies shapes attitudes (Ladenburg, 2011).
- Prior experience can influence the acceptance of renewable energy projects.

# Discussion

- Place attachment refers to positive ties or connections with familiar locations (Devine-Wright, 2009).
- Most of the ports near the proposed developments have been associated with fishing for centuries.
- Fishermen have concerns over potential loss of access to traditional fishing grounds.

# Concluding remarks

- Understanding the attitudes of fishermen towards MRE will assist in the mitigation of impacts.
- Addressing the concerns of fishermen at an early stage could enhance their acceptance.
- Consultation process provides a platform for the discussion of mitigation options.
- Improving the effectiveness of the consultation process remains a key challenge.

Thank you for your time and attention.  
Questions or comments?

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