

TBTI GLOBAL BOOK SERIES

THE GIFT OF COMMUNITY

MORE ESSAYS ON HUMAN EXPERIENCES
OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

BY

SVEIN JENTOFT

SVEIN JENTOFT

The Gift of Community

*More Essays on Human Experiences
of Small-Scale Fisheries*



Small-Scale Fisheries are Too Big To Ignore

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Too Big To Ignore Global (TBTI; toobigtoignore.net) is a research network and knowledge mobilization partnership supported by over 800 members from around the world. The network aims at elevating the profile of small-scale fisheries, arguing against their marginalization in national and international policies, and developing research and governance capacity to address global fisheries challenges.

TBTI Global Book Series is a publication series that aims to highlight why we need to pay close attention to small-scale fisheries. The series will be of use to anyone interested in learning more about small-scale fisheries, especially about their important contribution to livelihoods, well-being, poverty alleviation and food security, as well as to those who are keen to help raise profile of small-scale fisheries in the policy realm.

Cover graphic design by Vesna Kereži
Photo by Arne Eide. Lake Victoria, Tanzania. 2011.

Production manager for the TBTI Global Book Series: Vesna Kereži

“I believe that one is only truly free when learning, and one can only learn when one is free.” (Peter Fonda, n.d.)

“It’s No Fish Ye’re Buying—it’s Men’s Lives.” (Sir Walter Scott, 1893)

“If modernity means a withering away of institutions such as the tight-knit family and the local community that once taught the moral rules of interdependence, modern people must simply work harder to find such rules for themselves.” (Alan Wolfe, 1989)

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Foreword

A few years ago I attended a lecture by a speaker from the US. I didn't know who he was, but I remember everything he said, including how he said it. He did not use PowerPoint, but a flip chart, and on it he drew pictures as he was talking. He talked about 'ABCD,' or 'Asset-Based Community Development,' and on the flip chart he drew a circle of houses, and in the middle, he drew a person holding a gift in one hand. ABCD is an established methodology to look at strengths and potentials in communities for sustainable development, through identifying resources, skills, and experience available in a community and figuring out what can be done to organize and mobilize the community to take actions on certain issues.

It is obvious that ABCD is applicable to small-scale fisheries but I never thought of it that way. I keep using ABCD in my own research and talk about it in my classes, with the following preamble - I'm learning this from Barack Obama's teacher. This is true, since it turned out that the lecturer did teach Barack Obama how to be a community organizer in Chicago during his early years.

Professor Svein Jentoft's book, *'The Gift of Community'*, reminded me of that lecture. He has many interesting ways of delivering lectures, with key messages that stick with us for a long time. Through the book, we learn more about Professor Jentoft, not only as a researcher and a teacher, but also as a person. In fact, he is giving us a gift with this book.

Professor Jentoft has long argued that the issues and challenges facing small-

scale fisheries in the Global South are something that those in the Global North also experience. The book shows us that many of the reasons why small-scale fisheries exist, and what will sustain them, are similar. There is no one size fits all in terms of solutions, but the solutions can be found on the same strong basis, with well-functioned communities as the bedrock for viable and sustainable small-scale fisheries. It cannot be simpler than that.

Yet, achieving that is not straightforward, especially with numerous changes that are happening around the world. The aging workforce and the changing demographics are real concerns in the Global South and North. Fishing tradition and local knowledge may be at risk. Coastal and ocean natural disasters are more frequent and severe, especially for vulnerable coastal communities. Food insecurity is growing. New actors, like large-scale developers, are popping up in coastal areas and ocean space, all claiming that they are bringing social and economic benefits to the communities. Even though this has been happening for decades, mostly in the name of sustainable development, we seem to struggle with coming up with counter-narratives that value and prioritize the importance of small-scale fisheries. This is despite the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries within the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication by FAO member countries in 2014.

This is, however, not the time to feel doom and gloom. *'The Gift of Community'* offers the opposite. The book is a collection of stories about hope, about the joy of being in the communities, witnessing and learning why small-scale fisheries matter to them. It helps us sort through some of the tangling aspects that affect small-scale fisheries governance, and think about innovative ways to address them, through different ways of learning and knowing, or through different images. The book brings us closer to small-scale fisheries even if we do not feel that we are very connected to them. The book helps ease some of the concerns about the future of small-scale fisheries as the basis for their existence still seems intact when looking through family and community lenses.

Professor Jentoft was working on the book manuscript during the COVID-19 pandemic. He wrote the acknowledgments on his 75th birthday. He

took us on a precious journey and has given us so much of himself with this book. All we can do in return is to use what we learn from reading this book, as well as his book # 1 in the series – *‘Life Above Water’*, and do our best to remain hopeful and be enthusiastic about what we can do, individually and collectively, to help make small-scale fisheries and coastal communities sustainable and viable around the world.

Ratana Chuenpagdee
TBTI Global Director
St. John’s, Canada
June 8, 2023

Acknowledgement

This is my second collection of essays published as part of the TBTI Global E-book Series. The first, titled 'Life Above Water', came out in 2019 and received encouraging reviews. I could not resist the temptation of trying to do it again. The isolation during the most intense period of the COVID-19 pandemic was a good time to do it. I am extremely grateful to TBTI for accepting this second attempt to express my ideas and arguments from the perspective of social science on how to make small-scale fisheries more sustainable and robust. My ambition was to get the book published during the 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fishers and Aquaculture (IYAFA), but it took a bit longer than that. Many of the essays were originally talk manuscripts at conferences of which some have been published in SAMUDRA of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF). Two essays, first published in *Maritime Studies*, appear here slightly revised. I am grateful for the permission to include them here. The TBTI director, Professor Ratana Chuenpagdee has been supportive throughout this journey. She has read and provided helpful comments on all 35 essays as I wrote them. Ms. Vesna Kereži, TBTI coordinator, has carefully gone through the manuscript and turned it into this nicely designed book, as she also did with the 2019 book. Greta Jentoft read all essay chapters and helped to clarify my argumentation and removed unnecessary academic jargon. The reader will find that I draw a lot on philosophy. It could not have happened without my old friend and colleague, professor Jens Ivar Nergård. When we meet every week for

coffee in a downtown café in Tromsø, our meeting always turns into a small philosophy seminar. These conversations have helped to fill a gap in my own academic training.

Tromsø, June 4, 2023, my 75th birthday
Svein Jentoft

Introduction

This book is a follow up, or a continuation rather, of the one I published in 2019 as part of the Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) Global Book Series, titled '*Life Above Water: Essays on Human Experiences of Small-Scale Fisheries*'. The design and purpose of the current book are the same. The introduction in the 2019 book could also work here, even if this book has a sharper focus on communities. Both consist of small chapters written independently as reflective pieces. A few of them were published before in SAMUDRA Report. Some chapters draw on things I have published in Norwegian. Several chapters were originally talk manuscripts prepared for invited lectures. One chapter is based on my keynote address at the 2019 Mare Conference, 'People and the Sea'. Another is built on my response to commentators. They both appeared in *Maritime Studies (MAST) Journal* but are slightly revised for this book. Most chapters have not been published before, although some of the ideas have appeared in my other publications, like academic journals, books, and edited volumes.

I hope the two books will be read as one, but that is not necessary. Chapters are organized in a sequence but do not have to be read in the order they appear in the table of content. Chapters are grouped together according to topics, but they could have been placed under a different topic than where I have put them. In some instances, there may be some overlap. Like in the 2019 book, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries within the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF

Guidelines), which FAO member states endorsed in 2014, play a vital role in this book. They can both be read as a commentary on the SSF Guidelines and the remaining challenges with respect to their implementation as well. The books are also a contribution to their 10th anniversary in 2024.

The thirty-five chapters are written in essay form. They should be easy to read, also for people with little prior knowledge of small-scale fisheries and academic prose. It is important to know that we are talking about millions and millions of people around the world who make a living and a life in small-scale fisheries. More than 90 percent of people employed in the fisheries industry are in the small-scale sector. They have a significant role to play for food security, but they often live in poverty, sometimes even in extreme poverty. All countries with a coast, estuaries or inland waters have small-scale fisheries people, and one will find them in local rural or urban communities. A reader should consult the many publications of FAO and TBTI on small-scale fisheries globally. There is also a considerable academic journal literature on them. One would find that there are considerable differences between small-scale fisheries in the Global North and South, but also many important similarities, one of them their links to a local community.

All chapters focus on small-scale fisheries as a socio-economic and cultural activity, as a social scientist would write them. Small-scale fisheries are all those things, and they are intricately connected and played out in a community setting. The aim of the book is to explain how they come together and must be seen as a whole. I discuss what this means for the way small-scale fisheries work and how they must be governed.

What are communities?

Small-scale fisheries are hard to define because they are diverse at local, national, and global scales. They are also difficult to define because communities are diverse too. They form complex systems that vary in composition, functioning, and connectivity from place to place. This requires governance fine-tuning. Still, small-scale fisheries have things in common.

As suggested in the SSF Guidelines, even though the guidelines lean toward

small-scale fisheries in the south, there are governance principles that apply to all regardless of geographical location, like human rights, social justice, and gender equity, to mention a few. Rather than looking for essential features, we should assess their ‘family resemblances’ – to use one of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s (1953) concepts.

One of these resemblances is their embeddedness in local communities. They are part of the communities they operate from and belong to. When communities are different, small-scale fisheries also differ. When small-scale fisheries differ, so do their communities. Their inter-dependence works both ways. They are two in one. I argue in this book that this stands out as a unique feature regardless of location, whether in the Global South or the North. We should not assume that the SSF Guidelines are only for small-scale fisheries in developing countries. Their concerns and challenges are not as different as we often think they are.

Still, it is not difficult to find outliers, exceptions from the general rule. That should not hinder us from arguing about things that are general. It is enough to be ‘approximately right’ to say something useful and trustworthy. We do not need to be reminded of things we are fully aware of. I do not pretend to speak for every setting and situation, but there are still concepts, ideas, and principles that would apply to all. Small-scale fisheries may be different, but their people share a struggle to live a good life for themselves and their families. Everyone wants their children to be safe, healthy, and happy. Like anyone else, people in small-scale fisheries strive to be free to lead their life as they want it to be. And they all want their community to function well. It is not only a landing site but a home. I have never met anyone in small-scale fisheries communities where this is not their primary concern.

A reader will find little empirical description of small-scale fisheries in this book. Based on what I have seen and learned over the years from researching small-scale fisheries in various parts of the world, the book offers observations and arguments about what I find to be problematic about current perspectives, methodologies, and policies. Governance systems and practices are often insufficient or flawed when the goal is to make small-scale fisheries sustainable. Social scientists should not hesitate to ‘speak truth to

power'. But we also have an obligation to be constructive. We should ask ourselves what we would do, what decision we would make, if we were in the same situation as those whose responsibility it is to act on a problem. People in governance positions often have dilemmas to address and hard choices to make. The implementation of the SSF Guidelines is no different.

People centrism

We should avoid state and corporate centrism. Governments and business actors have problems with governing fisheries, which social scientists can help them with. But small-scale fisheries people have problems of their own, some of them existential, which we should focus our work on. Social scientists are not here for government or industry only. We are also here for civil society, in which communities belong, and the people who live there. We should assess the performance of civil society with the same critical eye as we have for states and markets. Communities are sometimes in conflict with themselves, and we should not romanticize them. Social scientists may help communities to come to grip with their challenges. They are not destined to perish, but they must be less vulnerable than they often are.

The reader may well disagree with my arguments, which is all fine. Nothing would please me more if the book would trigger debate and reflection, and make people think twice about things they feel sure or unsure about. Learning has value in itself; it sets us free. We learn from criticism. This is also how it works for this author. The chapters may be used in class to engage students in interesting questions. The *'Life Above Water'* book has served that purpose. Hopefully, this book may do the same.

The analysis is anchored in different disciplinary perspectives, ranging from anthropology, sociology, political science, and economics. Classical thinkers have ideas and concepts that fit with the current challenges in fisheries and environmental governance and community wellbeing.

Some of the chapters draw on philosophy. I am not a philosopher but a social scientist with no distinct disciplinary identity. Still, I have felt free to use what philosophers have said on issues like morality and freedom, language

and knowledge, equity, human rights, and social justice. These are also issues in small-scale fisheries, as highlighted in the SSF Guidelines.

Why communities?

There are things that do not need empirical evidence, only reflection, argumentation, and deliberation, like the guiding principles that the SSF Guidelines are built upon. They are not about ‘facts’ but about moral standards and norms, things we should try to live up to. What constitutes good governance and progress in small-scale fisheries are not scientific or technical questions, but ethical and moral. They are about social values and norms, and about our ideas of what a quality community and a decent life is. I argue in this book that these things are not just off-shoots of a thriving small-scale fishery but among its necessary conditions.

To exist, small-scale fisheries communities need fish and fishers. There are also things that communities offer that small-scale fisheries cannot do without. These are the gifts of community that I talk about in this book. They are the things the small-scale fisheries get by being embedded in local communities. The gift of community is not part of a transaction; it does not come with a price-tag. The community’s main purpose is not to serve the fishing industry but to serve the people living there. People in small-scale fisheries communities do not bring up their children to contribute to the functioning of the fishery, but to build their families. They create their lives in communities because, like anyone else, they need others to become harmonious individuals, or ‘persons’ like Immanuel Kant called them, with relational skills and the morality they require. For us to be well, we need other people.

I have often missed this dimension in our political and academic discourse. It is true that a populated coast strengthens the claim of sovereign fishing rights. My country Norway would look very different if coastal communities were abandoned, which they often are if they cannot uphold their fishing industry. No-one wants a deserted coast. But that can only be a part of why we ‘keep’ local communities, which is the patronizing perspectives common

among political elites. Communities have a deeper reason for being than serving some national policy purpose. They matter to those who live there. They are home to people. The question is not whether they can afford the community but how to make it a better place to live. If they cannot maintain the community where it is, they must build it somewhere else.

The SSF Guidelines have changed the conversation about small-scale fisheries. They appear in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which talk about the need for secure access to resources and markets. My two books argue that small-scale fisheries need more than that. Viable communities are essential, and that involves more than access to markets and resources. Secure access is necessary but not a sufficient condition.

As sociologist Richard Sennett (1998) argues, we need durable social relationships and long-term purposes and commitments, without which we will not be able to develop a consistent narrative and a stable identity. This we have in families and communities, not in ideal markets where relationships are episodic and irrelevant. Commitment to, and responsibility for others, means loss of freedom, but we would not know how to use the freedom that we have left if we were entirely on our own. Isolation is not good for the human soul. No-one thrives in loneliness. "*Atomistic individuals cannot make for themselves a life worthy of human beings,*" as Donnelly (2013: 30) points out.

The gift of the community is diffuse and subtle. We get it for free without thinking much about it. We may not even see it as a gift. We just need to be there and behave according to the written and unwritten norms and rules that the gift is associated with. With a gift, we show gratitude and acknowledgment, but we are not, as in a market transaction, supposed to pay for it. To draw a parallel: the gift of community is not like the thing that is under the Christmas tree for you; it is Christmas itself, and all what it involves; family, love, nearness, belonging, atmosphere, warmth, identity, memories, etc.

As Marcel Mauss (1954/2000) observed, there may be an unspecified expectation that we should return a gift at some later stage, but not as compensation. We do not pay or reciprocate in the sense Karl Polanyi (1944/2001) defined it, as a solidaric exchange, for what our parents give

us, but we are assumed to give our children the same thing. The gift of community is, as with family, neither charity nor luxury, but a necessity like the food the fisher brings home. The gift of the community makes small-scale fisheries possible.

I

The Watershed



*Joining in on the communal dance. Lake Victoria, Tanzania.
(A. Eide, 2011).*

The SSF Guidelines for the World

The SSF Guidelines are the first instrument of its kind. They agree on what constitutes progress for small-scale fisheries.

Endorsed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) member states in 2014, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (from now on the SSF Guidelines) are a landmark achievement. They are the first global instrument of its kind that focuses specifically on small-scale fisheries. When I talk and write about small-scale fisheries these days, I regularly mention them. There is a before and after the SSF Guidelines. From now on they should change our conversation, fisheries politics, and our research. In many parts of the world, including professional meetings, the SSF Guidelines have already done so. The SSF Guidelines help in empowering small-scale fisheries people. They are a basis for holding states accountable. States have promised to make sure that small-scale fisheries people can lead their lives with their human rights and dignity intact. This is essential for small-scale fisheries to contribute to society as expected of them. But will states live up to their commitments?

The SSF Guidelines leaves a positive image of the future of small-scale fisheries. One gets an idea of what is possible to achieve, given recognition

and support. For such a future to materialize, policy change, institutional reform, and a different governance practice would be necessary. The SSF Guidelines have recommendations on how to achieve this. They call for new legislation, reorganization and redistribution of resources and power. They are also rich with insights, ideas, concepts, and arguments. This is why the SSF Guidelines pop up in many chapters in this book.

Whether states will do what they committed themselves to do is something that should interest us all, including the academic community. One should not assume that they always will. Therefore, as social scientists, we must follow what states do to implement the SSF Guidelines and how they will be received by stakeholders. The enthusiasm may not be shared among legislators and administrators. The reforms envisaged in the SSF Guidelines may not be in everyone's interest. The SSF Guidelines call for contributions from the research community.

The SSF Guidelines are voluntary. States are not in any strict legal sense obliged to implement them – they are free to implement them as they see fit. Since they endorsed them, states may have second thoughts about them, especially if they have received resistance at home. The SSF Guidelines do not land on an even playing field. Some stakeholders may be powerful enough to block reforms that the SSF Guidelines call for. Therefore, we should not expect that the implementation process would be straightforward, as implementation processes rarely are. It is reasonable to expect that their implementation will be uneven. They will find fertile ground in some countries but not in others.

Moral power

To craft the zero-draft of the SSF Guidelines took years. The process involved the input of thousands of stakeholders at meetings around the world. The Technical Consultations in FAO, prior to the endorsement by COFI (Committee of Fisheries) had representation state representatives and civil society organizations (CSOs). The consultations proved difficult. They were scheduled for one week in 2013 but since delegates could not agree,

the consultations took another week in 2014, but were still not able to reach consensus. The adoption of the SSF Guidelines was up in the air when in June 2014 COFI met again. Some country delegates continued to have reservations regarding certain paragraphs. However, in the end, they were saved by skillful diplomacy.

I was a member of the Norwegian delegation in the Technical Consultations and had the opportunity not only to observe but also to participate. I was sitting next to the Norwegian lead delegate at COFI when the SSF Guidelines were adopted. It is important to know that every sentence in the SSF Guidelines was negotiated, which led to changes in the original zero draft, presented to us by FAO. Therefore, as one reads through the text, one may find sentences that could have been clearer and stronger. But they are what all the participants could agree on, and that is still quite impressive.

The SSF Guidelines are not as legally powerful as if they were obligatory. Contrary to Conventions, they are so-called 'soft law', like UN Declarations. Had the SSF Guidelines been 'hard law', they would have required ratification by nation states. The Technical Consultations would have been tougher, and the SSF Guidelines might not have seen the light of day. Now it is a consensus document, and that is significant. They are also framed within the ramification of international law, which gives them power.

However, as Julia Nakamura (2022) points out, what the SSF Guidelines lack in legal force they possess in moral power. You would have a tough case to argue why they should be rejected. There might be issues in certain paragraphs that would be irrelevant in some situations, but the guiding principles would be hard to contradict. Human rights and dignity are universal principles. The thirteen guiding principles that stress equality and equity, including gender equity, rule of law, respect of cultures, participatory democracy, all allude to what states have agreed to would constitute good governance in small-scale fisheries. This gives the SSF Guidelines moral power. If you disagree with the guiding principles, you will have to argue morally, not technically or opportunistically. The principles do not come with an 'as appropriate' add-on, as do many of the technical paragraphs in the Guidelines.

North and South

The moral power of the SSF Guidelines emerged from at least six years of collaborative thinking and deliberation among small-scale fisheries stakeholders, local governments, and civil society organizations. The process commenced from a FAO conference in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2008. Later, forty consultation events took place in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. The SSF Guidelines would have gained moral power if more consultations had happened in the Global North. Now there seems to be a widespread perception that the SSF Guidelines are only relevant for developing countries. The last sentence of the preface leaves the idea that there are no small-scale fisheries in the Global North in need of the SSF Guidelines. *“It is emphasized that these Guidelines are voluntary, global in scope and with a focus on the needs of developing countries.”*

There is no justification made in the SSF Guidelines why they should not apply in the north. During the Technical Consultations a delegate from Egypt pointed that out. Not only are there small-scale fisheries in the Global North; they also find themselves in a critical situation. Their people have the same human rights as their counterparts in other parts of the world. Their culture and traditional institutions deserve the same respect. The guiding principles also apply to them.

Small-scale fisheries people in the north may not be as poor in absolute terms as in any areas of the Global South. Lack of food may not be the same problem in the developed as in developing countries, and there is often a welfare state to pick up those who find themselves in a difficult situation. But there is also relative poverty, and small-scale fisheries people in the north often rank at the bottom on the income scale compared to other people in their countries. Think about it: Is it worse to be poor like other people in your community, or the only one who is poor? In the first case you share the situation with everyone. In the latter case you are an outlier, or worse – an outcast.

Small-scale fisheries people in the Global North are no less marginalized than in the south. In recent decades small-scale fisheries have been drastically

reduced in Europe and North America, while increasing in Asia and Africa (Eide et al. 2011). The survival of small-scale fisheries communities depends on their services. They are severely threatened when people leave in search of better opportunities elsewhere. In the Global North recruitment of young people to small-scale fisheries has dried up. In the Global South, small-scale fisheries attract people from the outside, sometimes as an occupation of last resort.

The preface of the SSF Guidelines may work as an excuse for states to ignore small-scale fisheries in the Global North. But this does not mean that civil society organizations and academia should do it. They, on the contrary, have a moral obligation to point out that the idea that the SSF Guidelines are only for developing countries is a misconception. My own country, Norway, has helped funding the FAO's SSF Guideline's implementation initiatives in the developing world, which is great. But there are few traces of the SSF Guidelines in Norwegian fisheries. If Norwegian small-scale fisheries people were fully informed about their existence and content, which they would have been if the initial consultations had reached this far north, they might well have raised their fist in protest.

Still, we should not underestimate the diverse needs for the SSF Guidelines. Some countries are poorer than others. Some have greater capacity for implementing them. Poor countries have both needs and insufficient capacity to implement them. Rich countries may have lesser need, but greater capacity. Notably, the SSF Guidelines do not only talk to states but also to civil society organizations. Thus, one may expect that a strong civil society organization sector may compensate for the lack of government initiative. The prospect of the SSF Guidelines making the difference they aim to achieve may therefore be bleak in countries where both the state and civil society are weak. But these are also the countries where the SSF Guidelines are most needed. Here, implementation initiatives would have to come from the outside. International organizations like the FAO can then be of assistance.

Representation

The Norwegian delegation was very active during the Technical Consultations. We often spoke enthusiastically in support of them. But we did not only have our own fisheries in mind. Our delegation was led by a representative of our development organization – Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) – and included a couple of professors with international research experience. We were clear that we were discussing an instrument for the world of small-scale fisheries. Many other countries were represented by their fisheries departments and argued from the perspective of their domestic policy agenda, often to give the text less teeth.

Delegates may have had quite different reasons for their support – or for rejecting some of the language. In negotiations such as these, state delegates do not have to explain why they argue as they do. They just state their views on the text. Delegates may have been driven by idealism or opportunism, or a combination of both, but there were also politics and ideologies at play. Small-scale fisheries may be considered marginal in the big, global picture, but they also touch bigger issues like global conflicts, regional disputes, and the interests of other industries. The interests of small-scale fisheries may then yield.

The SSF Guidelines represent a different paradigm than the current, dominant neoliberal one, which is associated with market-oriented policies, privatization, and a secluded state. Neoliberalism in fisheries is known by concepts like ‘rights-based fisheries’ and ‘ITQs – Individual Transferable Quotas’, and an overarching business focus. These are not to be found in the SSF Guidelines. Instead, they argue for the active engagement of the state. They are more concerned with the wellbeing and justice of small-scale fisheries people and their communities than business-interests and profits. The SSF Guidelines hold that they are about more than that. You may well manage fisheries in ways that erode communities and violate human rights, like when people are denied access to resources and markets. People have a right to livelihood and food. When the SSF Guidelines talk about tenure rights, they think of communities rather than private property rights.

When some countries were absent at the Technical Consultations or are critical and indifferent to the SSF Guidelines, it may well be for ideological reasons; they disagree with their paradigm and the policy measures following from it. When northern countries want to reserve the SSF Guidelines for developing countries, it may be because the Guidelines advocate for things that do not fit their neoliberal agenda. How else would one explain Iceland's position, for instance? Iceland is a major fisheries nation in the North Atlantic that has enthusiastically embraced the ITQ system to the detriment of small-scale fisheries. During the two weeks of the Technical Consultation, the Icelandic delegates were silent. At the COFI meeting in June 2014, when the SSF Guidelines were about to be formally adopted, the Icelandic delegate stated that they were not relevant for their fishery.

Civil society

Despite ambivalence and criticism from delegates, the main thrust, content, and language survived in the end, much thanks to civil society organization representatives present during the Technical Consultations. They argued passionately and with deep knowledge about small-scale fisheries. They had the global perspective that many state delegates were missing. In the Norwegian delegation, we often talked informally with the civil society organizations – and they with us.

The SSF Guidelines are dedicated to Chandrika Sharma, the leader of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), who played a pivotal role before and during the Technical Consultation. If not for her, I think the text on gender would have been watered down. Chandrika was in the Malaysian airplane that went down somewhere in the Indian Ocean when she was on her way to Mongolia for a FAO meeting about the SSF Guidelines. She was expected to be at the COFI meeting which endorsed the SSF Guidelines. Sadly, she did not experience the final celebration. For the world of small-scale fisheries, and for the successful implementation of the SSF Guidelines, her tragedy is a great loss. But it adds to the moral power of the SSF Guidelines.

Different but Similar

The SSF Guidelines are also for the Global North.

The SSF Guidelines are an extraordinary achievement, and for a person like me, an academic with no direct experience of how such negotiations work, a unique learning event. Since then, I have been an enthusiastic advocate for the SSF Guidelines, also as member of TBTI, which among other things resulted in the volume *'The Small-Scale fisheries Guidelines: Global Implementation'*, published in the *Mare Series* in Springer (Jentoft et al. 2017). If the academic community shall be mobilized for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, it should be brought on board from early on. Still, they must have an independent role with their critical perspectives not only on outcomes but also on the implementation process.

Social scientists often complain that no one listens to them, that policymakers and managers only lend ears to biologists and economists. With the SSF Guidelines, social scientists have less reason to complain. There is hardly an article in the SSF Guidelines, which does not have an underpinning social science literature. Indeed, knowing what social scientists have argued over the years about small-scale fisheries, it is encouraging to observe that our work has not been in vain. The SSF Guidelines recognize the role of the academic community in arguing for the importance of small-scale fisheries and in

helping the implementation. The SSF Guidelines are indeed a marching order for researchers to become even more involved.

Legitimacy

A technical expert could well have developed the SSF Guidelines at the desk in an office at FAO in Rome. Instead, they emerge from an extensive process of stakeholder consultations, involving about 4,000 people in 43 countries, predominantly in the Global South. They missed North America. In Europe, there were four consultations, one as far north as Denmark, and by that leaving out the entire circumpolar north. Therefore, they lost the chance of creating the necessary awareness and support of states and civil society organization in this region.

With the participation of small-scale fisheries stakeholders, and the active involvement of civil society organizations, the SSF Guidelines are still a moral force even though they are only voluntary. Implementation from the top-down would have lesser chance of succeeding than when stakeholders have been part of the process and committed themselves in advance. Now they feel they have a share in them. Thus, in the absence of full power of law, their implementation would hinge on their legitimacy. It is not just the text's quality but the process through which the SSF Guidelines were created that matters.

The SSF Guidelines are in many ways a progressive text. This, I believe, is a result of the nature of the authorship. It does not refrain from taking a stand on issues that are politically controversial and are likely to meet resistance among stakeholder groups who may feel threatened by them and among policymakers thinking about their next election. Although laudable, the SSF Guidelines advance governance principles that contradict those that inform current fisheries policies in many countries around the world. They talk about human rights and tenure, about asymmetric power-relations, gender equity and community organization. They also have special concern for Indigenous peoples.

The SSF Guidelines address state government and civil society organi-

zations, knowing that many are dysfunctional states that do not recognize the role of such organizations. The implementation of the SSF Guidelines will need backing at all levels and scales. If small-scale fisheries actors were well organized, politically effective, and powerful to begin with, the SSF Guidelines would hardly have been needed.

Consensus document

In the plenary session during the Technical Consultation, a state delegate from India suggested that the SSF Guidelines should embrace so-called ‘rights-based fishing’. It is commonly associated with privatization, market-based management, and neoliberalism and was immediately taken down by the Norwegian delegation. It was not considered a proper recipe for small-scale fisheries sustainability. No delegation expressed support for the Indian proposition. The SSF Guidelines drew strong backing from Indian civil society organizations, like the ICSF. Its leader Chandrika Sharma, often spoke in support of gender equity. Her strong voice is clearly reflected in the text.

The consensus on the SSF Guidelines may be due to article 2.1. *“These Guidelines are voluntary in nature. The Guidelines should apply to small-scale fishers in all contexts, be global in scope but with a specific focus on the needs of developing countries.”* How should one read this? Are they for the whole world, or primarily for the Global South, where food insecurity and poverty are bigger problems than in the Global North, like for small-scale fisheries along the circumpolar coasts of north? Or are they equally as relevant for small-scale fisheries in the north, like Canada, Alaska, Russia, Scandinavia, Iceland, and Greenland?

Judging from how many state delegates argued, many had implicit idea that the SSF Guidelines were for the Global South. They also had their own fisheries in mind. During COFI meeting, the Icelandic delegate stated that the SSF Guidelines did not relate to them. Iceland had no problem with the guidelines if they should not apply to their fisheries. This was also the position of many other states. The ambiguity of article 2.1 may well have

saved the SSF Guidelines.

Norway argued enthusiastically for the SSF Guidelines from a global perspective. If Norway, like many other countries, had been represented by the Fisheries Ministry and not by NORAD, which sorts under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one would have seen a different Norway. When COFI finally endorsed the SSF Guidelines, Norway was represented by the Fisheries Ministry, and not NORAD. The delegate leader did not voice any opposition. NORAD is active in supporting the implementation process which, contrary to the Ministry of Fisheries, is within its mandate. It is not possible to see any trace of the SSF Guidelines in Norwegian fisheries.

Undoubtedly, implementing the SSF Guidelines in Norway would challenge existing paradigms and power-relations. It would meet strong opposition from various stakeholder groups. They would, however, draw support among small-scale fisheries people, including among the Indigenous Sami communities whose fishery is small-scale. The fact that small-scale fishers are much fewer in number than they used to be, that they do not play their historical role for coastal settlement, has obviously weakened their political power to frame fisheries policies in their interest. The situation in other Scandinavian countries is similar, if not more extreme.

Still, small-scale fisheries do exist in this part of the world too. They face problems that are not that different from what their southern counterparts are experiencing, such as loss of income, tenure rights, political marginalization, and the erosion of communities. In both places, they are struggling for the lands and waters, their communities and culture. They have families to care for and natural resources to sustain. The world is a big place, small-scale fisheries are different, but they are also similar in striking ways. The idea that there is a distinct divide between small-scale fisheries in the Global South and North has no real merit. There is enormous diversity within the north and within the south. Thus, article 2.1 should not be used as an excuse for reserving the SSF Guidelines only for developing countries.

When, in article 5.2., the SSF Guidelines talk about small-scale fisheries being marginalized, they also express the reality of small-scale fisheries people in the Global North: *“States should involve small-scale fishing communities*

– with special attention to equitable participation of women, vulnerable and marginalized groups – in the design, planning and, as appropriate, implementation of management measures, including protected areas, affecting their livelihood options.”

One cannot argue that human rights is a guiding principle that has no relevance in the north. Neither can one assume that they are well taken care of and adhered to in the north and not in the south. In fact, the demise of small-scale fisheries in the Global North suggests differently. Social justice is as much an issue in the north as it is in the south (Jentoft et al. 2022). Small-scale fisheries people in the north, be they Indigenous or non-Indigenous, like in Norway, can make many of the same arguments as their southern counterparts. They are exposed to many of the same drivers and pressures, and they are not necessarily more forceful in the south than in the north. With the Blue Economy and Blue Growth policies now taking center stage around the world (see chapter 3), it is more important than ever to recognize that small-scale fisheries people have rights and interests that deserve attention.

We should understand how small-scale fisheries in the south are different from those in the north, also regarding the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. But we also must realize that small-scale fisheries differ not only at national but also at local levels. The implementation would have to consider their enormous diversity down to the community level. Norwegian fisheries management systems may have little to offer to let us say Mozambique. Our management experience may have limited relevance to Sri Lanka, for instance. Social scientists can help with demonstrating what difference such differences make when implementing the SSF Guidelines. Implementing the guiding principles in concrete contexts would also benefit from the input of scientists, but of the local knowledge and values that small-scale fisheries people have.

Despite their vast diversity, small-scale fisheries in the north and the south are more similar than we think. We must analyze what they have in common. There are cross-cultural lessons to draw from their comparison. Small-scale fisheries share embeddedness in local communities. When implementing the SSF Guidelines, the interests and functioning of the communities must also be thought of. Small-scale fisheries in the south and the north have

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experiences to share. Policies that have not worked in the north, may not work in the south either.

If it can be proven that neoliberalism has devastated fisheries communities in the north, there is no reason to assume that it will fare better in the south, quite the contrary in fact. For the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, it is important not only to be aware of each other's success and failures, but also to understand why things have worked or failed in both areas. Again, this is something the academic community can help with.

Small-Scale Fisheries in the Blue Economy

If the SSF Guidelines are not implemented, small-scale fisheries will suffer in the Blue Economy.

The European Union presents Blue Economy and Blue Growth as follows:

“Europe can unlock the untapped potential for growth in its blue economy while safeguarding biodiversity and protecting the environment. Traditional sectors such as maritime transport and maritime and coastal tourism will gain in competitiveness. Growing emerging sectors, such as ocean renewable energy and blue biotechnology, can become a key to creating more jobs, clean energy, and more products and services.”
(European Commission 2021)

There is no mentioning of small-scale fisheries here, not even fisheries in general. One may wonder why this omission. Small-scale fisheries are after all the most ‘traditional’ of all sectors in the Blue Economy. Is it because they have no growth potential? Is it just forgetfulness, or another example of their marginalization?

As a concept, the Blue Economy evolved from the Green Economy and the

Rio + 20 conference, originally launched by the association of small-island development states. It is now all over the world. Sometimes one gets the impression that it is not so much about a problem searching for a solution, but the reverse – a solution seeking a problem – as if we know the problem in advance and as the solution is the same regardless of geography. However, whether growth in the Blue Economy will be a win-win, depends how fitting it is to local context. If small-scale fishing people are excluded, they are at risk of losing their livelihood. If they are not at the table, they are on the menu.

Marine Spatial Planning

In the Blue Economy, the number and diversity of stakeholders in the coastal area are likely to increase. Then, space becomes scarcer, creating conditions for conflict, which will hamper growth. Who would invest in an area that looks like a war zone? The anticipated remedy for this scenario is Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), which involves mapping and allocating space for different users – or stakeholders.

Since MSP is conducive to Blue Growth, it would be of interest to know how small-scale fisheries are treated. The geographer Brice Trouillet (2019) examined the content of 43 current marine spatial plans in different countries around the world. He found that capture- fisheries do not show up either on the maps or in the plans. For small-scale fisheries in the Blue Economy scenario, this does not bode well.

A map is not a neutral instrument. And it is certainly not the terrain, just a representation of it. Once MSP starts mapping the sea, and then accordingly allocates space to different stakeholder groups, it is bound to have distributional consequences. This is especially problematic for fishers' mobility. In contrast to aquaculture pens, windmill farms, and oil rigs that stay put, vessels are mobile; fishers move where the fish is to be found. With mapping and spatial distribution, fishers run the risk of being both fenced in and out. If MSP means that they are no longer free to chase the fish, they have reason to be skeptical.

Whose stakes?

What is a fair share of space is in the eyes of the beholder. There is often no agreement on whose stakes are more legitimate and urgent and should, therefore, have more weight. This is a political issue. Those with most at stake are not necessarily those in power, as is the case with small-scale fishers. If measures are not taken to prevent it, small-scale fishers are easily pushed aside.

Ralph Tafon (2019), who studied MSP in the Baltic, says:

“MSP entails a move from the possibilities of chaos and “resource rush” to social order, which facilitates predictability and guarantees normatively laudable individual and collective agency. However, the space for concerted action is never immunized from politics, as powerful actors may misuse opportunities for collective action to pursue individual rather than collective goals.” (p. 177)

To achieve justice in the Blue Economy (see chapter 16), MSP must account for the weight of the different stakes and the rights that apply in local situations. Yet, according to Flannery et al. (2019), this is not what typically happens:

“Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) offers the possibility of democratising management of the seas. MSP is, however, increasingly implemented as a form of post-political planning, dominated by the logic of neoliberalism, and a belief in the capacity of managerial-technological apparatuses to address complex socio-political problems, with little attention paid to issues of power and inequality. There is growing concern that MSP is not facilitating a paradigm shift towards publicly engaged marine management, and that it may simply repackage power dynamics in the rhetoric of participation to legitimise the agendas of dominant actors.”

Should MSP bring democracy and order while securing the legitimate, urgent, and just stakes of small-scale fishers, they should welcome it. If, on the other

hand, MSP fails to deliver, small-scale fishing people should mobilize. They must, at their own initiative, be empowered to shield themselves from so-called ‘ocean grabbing’. They have beaches and fishing grounds to defend.

The SSF Guidelines

In the Blue Economy small-scale fishing people must have agency. They must have sufficient organizational, legal, and cognitive power to secure their own interests. The SSF Guidelines are of the same opinion. TBTI undertook a major study about the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, which includes over thirty case studies from around the world (Jentoft et al. 2017). The study shows that some countries have taken on the SSF Guidelines, while others are sitting on the fence.

Coming from an underdog position, a level playing field may still not be sufficient to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Blue Economy. Therefore, the SSF Guidelines (and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries) advocate ‘preferential treatment’ of small-scale fisheries as a means of protecting, respecting, and advancing their human rights. The SSF Guidelines also have a similar thing to say about MSP in article 10.2:

“States should, as appropriate, develop and use spatial planning approaches, including inland and marine spatial planning, which take due account of the small-scale fisheries interests and role in integrated coastal zone management. Through consultation, participation and publicizing, gender-sensitive policies and laws on regulated spatial planning should be developed as appropriate. Where appropriate, formal planning systems should consider methods of planning and territorial development used by small-scale fishing and other communities with customary tenure systems, and decision-making processes within those communities.”

By endorsing the SSF Guidelines, FAO member states committed themselves to protecting and advancing the interests of small-scale fisheries. Securing existing tenure rights would then be essential. The Blue Economy concept

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does not appear in the text, but the SSF Guidelines would apply, nonetheless. They both address the same reality that small-scale fisheries are in.

If states do nothing to implement the SSF Guidelines, the Blue Economy will come at a loss for small-scale fisheries. Since the concept and the policies that it promotes are not more than a decade old, it is an issue for future attention, also by the research community. The need for damage control is becoming increasingly pressing.

* * *

This article builds on my keynote address at the 1st. International Conference on Sustainable Fisheries. Sylhet, Bangladesh, August 25-27, 2019. It was also published in SAMUDRA Report.

Resilient and Robust

Poverty and vulnerability tend to go hand in hand. Solving one problem helps solving the other. It is important to explore what small-scale fisheries people can do themselves to reduce both. For that they need freedom.

Neil Adger (2006: 208) defines vulnerability as “*the state of susceptibility to harm from exposure to stresses associated with environmental and social change and from the absence of capacity to adapt.*” The SSF Guidelines (FAO 2015) mention ‘vulnerability’ 21 times. They do so exactly as often as ‘poverty’ and ‘poor’ appear in the text. The SSF Guidelines urge governments and civil society organizations to act at the level where vulnerability and poverty are experienced, at the community level. They stress the importance of securing the human rights of small-scale fisheries people, building capacity through education, and to form organizations to facilitate empowerment and social justice. These are all essential for fisheries people, their families, and their communities. They must be more resilient and robust in the face of multiple stressors that increase and threaten their livelihoods and way of life.

It is to be expected that vulnerability is a term that shows up in an instrument that aims to eradicate poverty. Small-scale fisheries people globally are often living in poverty-stricken communities and under the

extreme poverty line. They are settled in areas exposed to natural disasters such as cyclones and hurricanes, flooding, and land erosion. The effects of climate change are felt by small-scale fisheries around the world. These issues are therefore addressed in the SSF Guidelines. Notably, the vulnerability of small-scale fisheries is institutional and social, as much as due to forces of nature. They feel pressure from other industry actors. They lack the government's support and a legal defense mechanism necessary for them to be safe. Poverty makes it difficult for people to be the agents of change that the SSF Guidelines want them to be.

Policy initiatives

Poverty and vulnerability eradication would require policies instituted at global and national level that are only indirectly affecting small-scale fisheries. They are a sub-sector whose functioning is influenced by what is happening in other sectors and in society. Small-scale fisheries are therefore often suffering from problems that are not of their own, which they have little influence over, like climate change, national trade relations, and insufficient welfare arrangements. In Norway, more than 90 percent of the fish we produce are exported. What happens in international markets has a strong influence on fisheries and fishing communities. We therefore needed to create our own institutional buffers, like with the 'Rawfish Act' of 1937. In many instances, small-scale fisheries are victim of failed states. They suffer from an overall ineffective governance system. Ranking at the lower end of the pecking order, they are extra vulnerable, making poverty a permanent feature of their way of life.

Small-scale fisheries poverty and vulnerability also require macro and micro-level policies – initiatives targeting the general conditions under which they operate but also people where they are. As Anirudh Krishna (2010: 5) observes: *“Reducing poverty more effectively in the future will require attending carefully to the minutiae of everyday lives. Context-specific poverty knowledge is necessary for developing more effective policy designs.”*

To eradicate poverty and to make small-scale fisheries people less vulnera-

ble, governance and management must pay attention to context, which always has something that is unique about it. One cannot assume that poverty has the same causes and works the same in different fisheries communities, even when located in proximity to each other.

Poverty/vulnerability remedies cannot therefore only operate vertically, from the top down. It must also work horizontally, i.e., among people within communities, and the way up, from community to government. Small-scale fisheries people are the real experts in their own lives. People have their own understanding of their poverty and vulnerabilities, what they are, what are causing them, and which initiatives would make a positive difference in their lives. They know things that a distant authority like the state cannot know. Again, Krishna has a thing to say:

“People’s strategies and their aspirations are intimately tied up with their ideas that they hold about what constitutes poverty. Beginning by learning about these ideas and the strategies to which they give shape can help develop more effective assistance programs that complement, and do not displace, people’s ongoing efforts.” (p. 151)

People must therefore not be reduced to passive receivers of government handouts, like subsidies, but must be proactively involved in creating their own economies and lives. They must themselves be engaged in building their own communities. For that they must be better organized than they currently are. Such organizations must be part of a system where governments and civil society organizations do their part. They have an enabling role to play. Small-scale fisheries may well need help to self-help. There are, as Schuhbauer et al. (2017) point out, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ subsidies. Community support belongs to the former category.

Hand in hand

Poverty and vulnerability are mutually reinforcing phenomena. Poverty makes people vulnerable, and vulnerability is a source of poverty. Bangladesh provides a prime example. Frequent hurricanes destroy whatever infrastructure people have created for themselves, and they must start all over again until the next disaster hits (Islam 2011). In Bangladesh, small-scale fisheries people are therefore both poor and vulnerable, stuck in a dismal situation they are incapable of freeing themselves from. Since they are permanently poor, natural hazards have devastating impacts on the family household. When vulnerable, small-scale fisheries people have little control of what hits them. They are often just ‘one illness away’ from shattering the family economy (Krishna 2010). COVID-19 has brought many families over the edge. Eliminating their poverty makes them more resilient; reducing vulnerability makes them more robust. To secure sustainable small-scale fisheries, both are required.

Notably, one may bring people above the poverty line, but one must also install mechanisms for hindering them descending below it. Sustainability means stability and predictability – reassurance that you are safe and secure in the short and long run. In fisheries that is inherently difficult. Small-scale fisheries are targeting a fugitive resource, often under harsh conditions. Sustainability therefore also requires adaptability, the aptitude to tackle challenges caused by things one cannot control and predict. For small-scale fishers, vulnerability involves risks. They may, as in Bangladesh, be under pressure from moneylenders or boat owners to make choices that they would otherwise not have done. Poverty may force them to defy harsh weather conditions.

No wonder, therefore, that small-scale fishing, according to FAO, has casualty rates higher than for any other industry. One can and should do things to reduce the risk. Building more robust boats, keeping safety equipment on board, providing rescue services and shelter, would obviously help. But eradicating poverty would make small-scale fishers less exposed. It would remove their un-freedom to make more reasonable decisions, and

release the pressure that makes them take unnecessary, and potentially harmful, sometimes even fatal risks.

Self-interest

Garrett Hardin (1968) considered the freedom of resource users as the root cause of the ‘tragedy of commons’, as can be seen in his most famous quote: *“Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons.”* (p. 1,244). However painful it may be, reducing people’s individual freedom would, according to Hardin, be a necessary means of protecting them from their own folly. It would ease their vulnerability associated with the freedom of others. It would hinder the overuse of common pool resources which they need for food and income - in the last instance, their own starvation. If we follow his advice, it means restricting people’s access to the base of their food supply and source of livelihood. We also take away the only safety valve which poor small-scale fisheries people have, that is their freedom. We risk killing the patient with the medicine.

It is notable that SDG 14b, contrary to restricting access to the commons, wants to secure it. This is also the advice from the SSF Guidelines when they stress the importance of securing the tenure rights of small-scale fisheries people. Article 5.4 reads as follows:

“States, in accordance with their legislation, and all other parties should recognize, respect and protect all forms of legitimate tenure rights, taking into account, where appropriate, customary rights to aquatic resources and land and small-scale fishing areas enjoyed by small-scale fishing communities. When necessary, in order to protect various forms of legitimate tenure rights, legislation to this effect should be provided. States should take appropriate measures to identify, record and respect legitimate tenure right holders and their rights...”

For Hardin, the resource tragedy and people’s poverty are self-inflicted. It

has a social origin, in the lack of self-discipline that their freedom both allows and encourages. When users insist on their freedom to do what is in their immediate, individual interest, collective action would be out of reach. Binding agreements and cooperation would be difficult to enforce. People would be reluctant to follow rules, especially if the level of trust is low.

We see this logic play out among those who defy vaccination against the spread of COVID-19. You are fine if you are the only one who does not get a vaccine. But if everyone thinks selfishly and believes the health authorities have suspicious motives, collective catastrophe is unavoidable. The same applies to overfishing; the resource will be sustained if you are alone in exceeding your quota, but not if everyone thinks like that. The problem may exacerbate because you may be an example for others to follow. You are not alone.

Like philosophers before him (Locke, Hobbes, Kant), Hardin sees the need for an overseer, a ‘Leviathan’, a government regulator. Hardin keeps the door open for binding agreements initiated and enforced by resource users themselves. *“The only kind of coercion I recommend is mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon by the majority of the people affected.”* (p. 1,248). He can accept democratic decision-making that leads to a majority consensus on how to restrict resource use. But what happens when small-scale fisheries people are a minority without rights? Then, a different kind of tragedy than the one Hardin envisages may occur. They may be ignored, pushed aside, and further marginalized.

Notably, the poverty of small-scale fisheries is not necessarily caused by themselves. They are victims of external forces and drivers. They often meet fierce competition, sometimes total exclusion, from large-scale fishing operators, or by other actors occupying their fishing grounds and beaches. Then, poverty is a power issue. Fishing communities do not have the institutional resources to defend themselves from encroachment or ‘coastal grabbing’ They do not have the freedom *from* intrusion. Then, their vulnerability, and hence their poverty, is a consequence of their lack of power. Without power, their freedom *to*, which is the kind of freedom Hardin is talking about, becomes illusory.

Elinor Ostrom (1990) demonstrated that commoners like fishers under the right circumstances may develop, implement, and enforce their own management system. In many parts of the world, self- or co-management is instituted. Co-management (Wilson et al. 2003) draws on the support of government. It mobilizes people in the communities to take stewardship responsibility. By enhancing their empowerment, vulnerability is reduced to their organizational capacity and ability of averting the tragedy of the commons from ruining their freedoms.

Sustainable development

Poverty may not just be the outcome of the tragedy of the commons, as is Hardin's argument. It may also be the cause of tragedy. People must have food on the table every day and make ends meet. They do what they must do to survive, regardless of what government does to restrict their freedom in commons. If they cannot fish, they starve. If they fish, they risk ruining the resource. Then, they may eventually starve as well. They may be damned whatever they do. It is a dilemma people must be freed from.

To prevent a resource tragedy, one would first have to do something about the poverty problem, whatever that is and what is causing it, and whatever it takes to fix it. The Brundtland Commission (1987), which coined the term 'sustainable development', stressed the point that resource conservation, climate change action, and poverty alleviation, go hand in hand. Climate change makes people insecure, but one cannot get people to take necessary precautions and otherwise do the right thing to secure the environment, if they already live on the edge of survival. You can afford to be an environmentalist if you have enough to eat.

One cannot expect small-scale fisheries to think ahead if the immediate food security challenge takes all energy. Carsten Jensen (2000) said about poverty and poor people: "*Poverty means exclusion not just from wealth, but also, in the most fundamental way, from the potential for change, from the future. They have no future, we say of those in direst need, not because they are going to die tomorrow, but because their lives are static.*" (p. 130-131). They are locked in

their own poverty condition at the mercy of social forces they cannot even see, nor control. They are often victims of exploitation, manipulation, or outright abuse. Thus, it is not an issue of adaptation, but one of social justice and power. People should be taught not to accept but to revolt against injustice. As a Norwegian community worker on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua said to me: *“With poor people you can do anything.”* You can even convince them to sell off their commons, their property rights, and access freedoms. Then, they are doomed to remain poor.

Fisheries development as freedom

Amartya Sen (2000), the economics Nobel Prize winner and philosopher, argues that we cannot have sustainable development unless people have freedom and agency, which they do not have if they are poor. Poverty is not just shortage of food and income but also associated with poor health, little or no education, powerlessness, and lack of support networks. His book *‘Development as Freedom’* argues that freedom is a vehicle for change. *“Freedoms are not only the primary ends of development, they are also among its principal means.”* (p. 10). Investing in people’s capacities and capabilities is both a freedom and a development project. This also requires the building of communities, which is essential for collective agency, self-governance, and environmental stewardship.

The SSF Guidelines employ a broad poverty concept and a rich toolbox. They do not only talk about access to resources and markets, as SDG 14b does, but about the many hindrances for small-scale fisheries people’s freedoms and security. Agency means to have capacities and capabilities to build safeguards that would make them less vulnerable. This includes the freedom that education provides. Then, it is Sen’s rather than Hardin’s ideas of freedom that should inform their implementation. Indeed, in the context of food security and poverty eradication for the small-scale fisheries, we should, therefore, listen more to Sen than Hardin.

II

Why we Need Communities



*Women have gainful employment in the community when fisheries are landed and processed locally. Songkhla Province, Thailand.
(K. Juntarashote, 2018)*

Life Above Water

Small-scale fisheries depend on a healthy ecosystem; they also need well-functioning communities. People must have a place to call home.

Communities exist not only as places on a map, but they also have essential functions, which are not always understood. They are also often not appreciated by policymakers as they should be. Therefore, as social scientists we have a job to do in demonstrating what communities are and what they do, and why they are important for the sustainability of small-scale fisheries.

The title '*Life Above Water*', should ring a bell. Small-scale fisheries fall under UN Sustainable Development Goal 14, which is called 'Life below water'. Given their contribution to nutrition, food security, poverty alleviation, and community well-being, one should, of course, appreciate the specific mentioning of small-scale fisheries in such a prominent setting. The SDGs could well have ignored them. Yet, what is happening in small-scale fisheries, and certainly those things that catch the eye of the social scientist, is taking place not below but *above* water – *on* the water and *by* the water.

I will argue here that life above water is not just an offshoot of what is going on below water. It is easy to see how small-scale fisheries contribute to fishing communities. It is more difficult to demonstrate how the community contributes to sustainable fisheries and aquatic ecosystems, because this link

is more subtle. That is, however, what I will try to do here.

Embeddedness

Let me begin by stating the obvious: Small-scale fishers and fish-workers make their living off the fish that swim below the water surface, but they do so with the lives they construct for themselves with others on land. Fishing ‘out there’ is intimately connected with what is happening ‘in here’. People who fish depend on their communities as much as on their fish, boats, and gear. The social relations of fishers extend beyond the crew.

How global trends affect the social relations of those who populate the small-scale fisheries sector is of course an intriguing research question. Here I am more interested in how such trends change communities, and consequently those who inhabit the sector and what they do.

With the millions and millions of people engaged in small-scale fisheries worldwide, they are too important to fail. But even a thriving fishery is no guarantee that communities will survive, and that people will be secure. Small-scale fisheries will fail if their communities fail. A key to making small-scale fisheries sustainable is to make their communities robust and resilient. Therefore, secure tenure rights are important, but they alone are not sufficient to ensure sustainable small-scale fishing communities.

We struggle to precisely define what small-scale fisheries are because of their enormous diversity globally. Yet, they have a common denominator in their links to community. Economic sociologists would recognize this observation more generally as ‘embeddedness’, a concept, which they would associate with people like Mark Granovetter, Richard Swedberg, Anthony Giddens, or the seminal work of Karl Polanyi.

Gislí Pálsson, the social anthropologist, who has left an important mark on our discourse, applied this perspective in a book he published in 1990 titled *Coastal Economies, Cultural Accounts. Human Ecology and Icelandic Discourse*. “Fisheries are embedded in social life”, he says (p. 51). Small-scale fisheries involve a set of social relations that are rooted in local communities – much more so than in markets. Communities involve a more complex, fundamental,

and more lasting set of social relations than markets do.

I always found the book of Paul Thompson and collaborators *‘Living the Fishing’* stimulating. Published in 1983, it is based on life-story interviews with men and women in Scottish and English fishing communities. The community embeddedness thesis is clearly reflected in this quote:

“[E]conomic and social development depend as much on the situation of women, and of children, and the history of and consciousness of communities, as on matters of capital, cash and profit, and today’s and tomorrow’s market.” (p. 3)

Understanding communities

To see how fisheries activities form the life of the community, one would have to be at the landing site, watch the boats coming in, and the fish being unloaded. The beach or wharf is often a place buzzing with life, with people running around doing things, talking to each other, and bargaining on the price. A newcomer observer may find it chaotic. Finding order in what one sees would require a piece of research. You would want to quantify what the fishery generates in terms of employment, food, and income, and follow the fish from where it is landed until it is served on the dinner table. You may have to run some surveys. There may be public records available. You would need to get an indication of how life on the beach changes over the year, since fisheries communities are not places where time stands still. Yet, to get an idea of how the community forms the life of the beach and at sea, you would have to go deeper. You should get to know the people and their social relations, interactions, and traditions, including their governance. You would try to see the community as members see it.

For my PhD research I lived for two years in a small fishing community about where the Arctic Circle crosses Norway. This was back in the late 1970s, which for me does not feel like a long time ago. When I left and went back to my university to finish my thesis, I cannot say that I knew everything about that community, but I had grown fond of the place. I had established

friendships that still last. When I returned to the community many years later, I could see that much had changed. I was not even sure if it could be called a fishing community anymore. Many of the houses had been converted into second homes for city people. The fishing harbor was now filled with leisure boats. I found several of the fishers I knew and went out with in the graveyard. Some were retired, and their children had moved away. This is the fate of many small-scale fishing communities in Norway and elsewhere in the world.

To get a sense of what a fishing community is, you must go there, hang out with people where they gather, visit their homes, and join their meetings if you are allowed in. You should also participate when they go fishing. If you do these things, you will get to know people and what they do, but only if you let them learn who you are and why you are there. You will listen to their stories, hear about their concerns, and they will wonder if you share them.

With these experiences, you will understand that the community is more than a landing site, that it is also a place that people call home and that there is more to their life than fishing. Not all the people you meet take part in the fishery. Still, they make an important contribution to the fishing community. They run the school and daycare center, they operate the local store and café. They coach the local soccer team, nurse the elderly, drive the bus, and conduct the school band. They all help to make the fishing community a good place to grow up.

Sometimes fishers have a second career after they retire. Birger, my best friend in the community where I lived all those years ago, built a fisheries museum after he stopped fishing. If you visit the community, he will proudly show you the museum and run the old boat engines that he keeps there. With the museum he helps to keep the memory of the fishing community alive, preserving the idea of what it once was – and to a limited degree still is. Thus, he is reminding people of where they are, where some of the visitors who moved come from, and where they belong. For this and many other initiatives Birger took locally after he stopped fishing, he received the King's Medal of Merit.

Living the fisheries

Fishing is predominantly (but not exclusively) about ‘men’s lives’, as Peter Matthiessen called his book about the disappearing Long Island fishers in New York. Women also fish, but more commonly they provide crucial support to make the boat operative and the community functioning. They take care of the fish after landing and do other things related to the fishery and the community. More subtly, in a paper titled ‘*Woman the Worrier*’, Dona Lee Davis (2010) noted that women release the stress and anxieties of their men by ‘shouldering’ their worries associated with the physical risks and financial demands of fishing. Strangely, however, women’s contributions to sustaining the fishery are typically ignored as if their work had little value. Why this is the case is worth exploring.

In a talk I gave at the Women’s World Conference in 1999, I suggested that one reason women’s roles, rights, and input are disregarded is because the community is overlooked. Consequently, the many direct and indirect contributions that women make to keep the community and the fishery functioning become invisible. Not only does it hurt women, but also the men who depend on them. Men’s lives are intimately connected with women’s lives, even if capitalism in fisheries has changed this relationship, as Gislí Pálsson observed (p. 166). Still, if we want to understand what makes a fishing community what it is and how it makes small-scale fisheries work, we must understand how men’s and women’s lives are intertwined.

Morality

Twenty years ago, Bonnie McCay and I published a paper positing that IUU (Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated) fishing is to be expected when the moral fabric of the community evaporates. Free riding, violating rules, and cheating on the quota may be beneficial to the individual in narrow economic terms, but are also a sign of the breakdown of norms of honesty and solidarity. They are a moral failure. Without such norms, there will be no mutual trust, and without trust, people will not be able to cooperate, even when they see the

need for it. The community (in the sociological meaning) will malfunction. 'Community failure', as opposed to 'market failure', is therefore something that must also be addressed in dealing with IUU fishing, we argued.

People find ways to circumvent rules if they feel they must, if they see nothing wrong with it, and if the community has no way of sanctioning it – or even supporting it. The problem has no technical solution, but that seems to be the only thing management agencies can think of these days. Stricter control and surveillance, with or without the use of satellites, will hardly do the trick if the motivation to fish illegally is strong enough. As social researchers, instead of asking why people break rules, we should ask why they follow them, which they do most of the time. The former is a social problem, the latter is a sociological problem. The risk of being caught and sanctioned is hardly the whole answer. People follow a rule when they support the norm behind it and respect the authority enforcing it, even if they may be asked to make a sacrifice. In a healthy, moral community, we want to be honest and trustworthy. It is a matter of self-respect and dignity.

We may thus conclude that a fishing community is more than a landing site and a value chain within which goods, services, and money flow. It is also a moral system, where social norms and cultural values are building blocks. Women are not only part of the moral community but play a key role in making it so. This is what mothers do. One should therefore nurture those institutions in the community where people learn to be moral, honest, respectful, and trustworthy. You would then focus on the family, the school, the places of worship – all the places in the community where people learn to distinguish between what is right and wrong. "*It takes a village to bring up a child,*" as the African proverb says. Hillary Clinton adopted it for the title of her 1996 book. It also takes a village to bring up a fisher.

Notably, the moral community is not only a 'super-structure', an offshoot of the economy as Marx would have it. Weber questioned this one-sided determinism, that the causal arrow is unidirectional, going from material base to superstructure. Marx and Weber are both right. In a comment to the historical materialism of Marx involving the relation between the 'base' and the 'superstructure' of Marx, Jürgen Habermas (1995: 148) argues that "*species*

learn not only in the dimension of technologically useful knowledge decisive for the development of productive forces but also in the dimension or moral-practical consciousness decisive for structures of interaction.” Culture, and the moral norms and principles it encompasses, including the language they require, is dependent and independent variables. The causal arrows run in both directions, and men and women are typically riding each of them.

Belonging

If we say that we need small-scale fisheries to support local communities, or communities to support small-scale fisheries, we must have an argument for why we need both to begin with. In Norway, fisheries policy has traditionally aimed at securing a decentralized settlement structure. We need small-scale fishing communities to keep the coast populated. It makes it easier to claim our territorial rights. This was the Norwegian position in the Anglo-Norwegian Fisheries case, which was brought to The Hague in 1951, a case that Norway won. The issue here was about where to draw the baseline. Since then, the argument pops up in defense of coastal communities on the brink of losing their fishing rights. What was argued then, still holds, critics say.

However, people have their own reasons to live where they live. No matter what the government thinks about the settlement structure, coastal communities are home to people. Belonging to a community is part of who we are. We always feel attached to the place where we grew up. The British anthropologist, Anthony Cohen, in a paper about Whalsey, a Shetland fishing community, explains this well:

“Belonging’ implies very much more than merely having been born in the place. It suggests that one is an integral piece of the marvelously complicated fabric which constitutes the community; that one is a recipient of its proudly distinctive and consciously preserved culture – a repository of its traditions and values, a performer of its hallowed skills, an expert of its idioms and idiosyncrasies.”

Cohen's paper appears in a book titled '*Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures*' (1982). With the book in my bag, I visited Whalsey in the fall of 1987, and was impressed by the place and the people I met there. They had a keen sense of place, a firm community identity, and they spoke proudly about their fishery. What the ITQ system has since done to this fishing community is a story told by Emma Cardwell and Robert Gear in a paper in *Marine Policy* in 2013.

People who fish need more than quotas and secure tenure to access their fishing grounds. Just like anyone else, they also need a sense of belonging, a place to live with other people. Since our community provides us with an identity and an idea of home, we never really leave it; it stays with us. Stefan Zweig (1942/2013), the great Austrian playwright, novelist, journalist and biographer of the early 20th century, was convinced that "*ultimately one needs a fixed point, a place to set out from and return to again and again.*" Everyone should read his memoir now that fascism is again gaining traction. He understood the value of belonging better than most, even if he also identified himself as a European. Thus, he demonstrated the possibility of having several identities, something that also the economist and philosopher Amartya Sen (2009) talks about, for instance in his book '*The Idea of Justice*'. Belonging to community does not exclude one from having other attachments and identities.

Freedom

The communitarian school of thought, often associated with names like Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer, and Amitai Etzioni, argues the case for living in community with others to stay mentally and physically healthy. Yet, the community also requires the willingness to sacrifice freedom, as the sociologist Zygmunt Baumann pointed out. Communities thus inhabit dilemmas. "*Whatever you choose, you gain some and lose some. Missing community means missing security; gaining community, if it happens, would soon mean missing freedom.*" (Bauman 2001: 4).

The voice of the community may discourage us from pursuing our individual ambitions, should they break with community norms like conformity. We

often have a bad tendency to hold each other down. Breaking with community norms typically comes with a social cost, as the anthropologist Robert Paine pointed out in an article about entrepreneurship in a fishing community in northern Norway that came out in 1972. People may start to talk badly about you behind your back, or even sabotage your project out of envy.

Baumann has a point when he says, “*community deprives us of individual freedom*”, but we should not take it too far. True, our community limits our choice options, but also shapes our preferences – the idea of which choice options are worth having. Thus, if we do not value what we are missing, the loss of freedom does not necessarily feel like sacrifice. In any case, as Bauman suggests, such a sacrifice may be worth it. Communities, for instance, provide support in times of personal need, as when fishers perish at sea. Small-scale fishing is, according to FAO, the most dangerous of occupations. A fishing vessel lost at sea can have devastating effects on families and communities. This happened at a neighboring island to where I did my PhD fieldwork. One morning when I was there, I met a crew on the quay mending their seine. The crew consisted of a father, two sons, and a son-in-law. I knew the son-in-law, who was from my island. A couple of years after (1981), the boat went down, hit on the side by a big wave, and the entire crew perished. It has taken decades for the community to get back on its feet. How the family has since managed, I do not know, but I am quite sure that the community helped them to deal with the loss.

To the text of Kris Kristofferson, Janis Joplin sang: “*Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose.*” Imagine yourself in such a situation. When you have nothing left to lose, you are entirely on your own. You may be free, but you would also be lonely, and by that insecure. You have no attachment to place and things, and to other people. You would not belong anywhere, which was also Stefan Zweig’s personal tragedy after he had to flee his beloved Austria when World War II broke out. You may want to be free, which was Zweig’s ambition in life, but you also want to be secure, which you will not be if you are alone in the world. Belonging is not just a psychological mechanism, it is also a social relationship, because it is not entirely up to you whether you belong or not.

We depend on other people for our well-being. We are attached to a place, people, family, and friends. We need lasting relationships. We do not just know about community and family values and norms; we share them. The community is not just outside us; we also carry it inside. We see ourselves through the eyes of others and base our sense of self on how we think others view us. Individuals and society are therefore not two separate categories, as the sociologist Norbert Elias (1939/1983) argued. As Marx said, we are in a sense our social relations, or the assemblage of them (cf. Pálsson 1991: 20). Amitai Etzioni has another way of phrasing it: “*We are members of each other.*” “*The ME needs a WE to BE.*” (Etzioni, 2015). Marx is onto the same idea when he posits that “*the human being is in the most literal sense...an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society*” (1973: 84). Likewise, Jürgen Habermas (1995: 171) notes that the “*inter-subjectively shared knowledge that is passed on is part of the social system and not the property of isolated individuals; for they become individuals only in the process of socialization*”.

Agency

Freedom should not necessarily be seen as a problem in the resource commons, as Garrett Hardin (1968) led us to believe. It does not always lead to ruin. If people are free, they can do something about their predicament. The protagonists in the Prisoner’s dilemma, which is the Game Theory version of tragedy of the commons, are exactly what the name of the game says they are, inmates kept isolated from each other. Their freedom is severely limited. In Hardin’s narrative, there is no community. In the Prisoner’s Dilemma, the protagonists are not allowed to communicate, to agree on how to act. Communities do not have such a rule. Members can get together and decide to cooperate.

Like other people, small-scale fishers have a right to be free, also because they need their freedom to be secure. To be secure, they must have agency, and they cannot have agency unless they have freedom, because agency involves the power to decide for yourself. Therefore, rather than limiting the freedoms of the fishing community, one should enhance them. As Amartya Sen (1999:

10), states: “*Freedoms are not only the primary ends of development, they are also among its principal means*”. Still, in his “The Idea of Justice”, he argues that the quest for freedom should not be drawn too far: “*It is indeed possible to accept that liberty must have some kind of priority, but total and unrestrained priority is almost certainly an overkill.*” (Sen 2009: 65).

This is also what the philosopher Isaiah Berlin (1969) was alluding to with the distinction between ‘freedom to’ and ‘freedom from’: freedom to control oneself, which is ‘positive freedom’, and freedom from control by others, which is ‘negative freedom’. To pursue positive freedom, one also needs negative freedom. If people cannot feel secure, one cannot expect them to take on risk, for instance. There are certain things that you do not gamble with, like the well-being of your family or community. People will hesitate to assume management roles or venture into alternative livelihoods. They know what they have and cannot be sure if they will like what they get. Economists call this ‘risk aversion’, which is not necessarily a bad thing.

Thus, you need negative freedom to have positive freedom. But you also need positive freedom to achieve negative freedom. Communities need agency (positive freedom) to protect themselves from the vagaries of nature, the whims of government, or whatever threat that is out there (negative freedom). Agency makes communities less vulnerable because it frees them to take responsibility for their own destiny. Tenure rights protect fishing communities from encroachment like ‘ocean grabbing,’ but they need agency to claim and enforce them. Acheson’s study (1988) of the ‘lobster gangs’ of Maine is a classic illustration of this point.

The conflict between security and freedom requires a balancing act. You will never be completely secure and completely free, but you can still be happy if you have enough of both. You may not even want to be completely secure, as you would miss the excitement of taking risks, like when you invest, experiment, and innovate – or when you marry! Neither would you enjoy the total freedom that Joplin is singing about. You must have something, like social relations, to be secure. You must have someone and belong somewhere. The community may tie you down, but you would not want to lose it, because when you do, you lose more than place.

People have more choice options in cities than in small rural communities, but they do not necessarily make use of them all. Also, city people need lasting and meaningful social relationships. They often create their own neighborhood communities. They have meeting places in the vicinity of where they live, like their local ballpark, school, restaurant, pub, and church. A classic study is *'Family and Kinship in East London'*, by Michael Young and Peter Willmott, first published in 1957. I was reminded of this study when, in the early 1980s, when I spent a week with a family in Mexico City. The family had their own community of relatives, friends, and neighbors, which was their primary group of socialization. Their sense of home, as I understood it, was not so much Mexico City as whole, but their neighborhood district.

Network

I think we can now agree that communities are more than aggregates of individuals that happen to reside in a particular location. Instead, communities are synergistic, they are more than the sums of their parts. They are social and moral systems where people relate and interact in ways that are important for their well-being, security, and identity, but neither are they a given. The social relations that provide these synergies must be nurtured. People must know and care for each other; they must appreciate their interdependencies. The paradox, however, is that interdependencies come with vulnerability. What your friends, neighbors, and colleagues do and what happens to them, also influences you. Should fishers who you cooperate with and rely upon for your own fishing decide to quit, you lose. You would have fewer colleagues to rely on. It may also convince you to do the same. This may cause a domino effect in a community that leads to its demise.

Fishing communities need a critical mass of people, but they must also function as a collectivity, as an integrated whole. The story about J.A. Barnes is illuminating, Barnes was an Australian British social anthropologist who came to a small Norwegian fishing community in the early 1950s. His paper about the community was published in the journal *Human Relations* in 1954. The paper is known to be the first who used 'network' as a sociological

concept. Barnes had studied communities in New Guinea and other places before he landed in Norway. I do not know how and why he came there, which is not important here. The interesting part is how he came to see the community.

Barnes was puzzled over why, in the absence of a hierarchical structure, the community was still so orderly. It did not have a hierarchical structure, like the chief he was used to from communities he had studied in other parts of the world. One day as he was walking along the wharf, he saw a seine hanging to dry. (This was when seines were still made of cotton). He noticed the structure of the seine and thought: *“This is how the community hangs together, this is how social order is maintained!”* He summarized his observation as follows:

“Each person is, as it were, in touch with a number of other people, some of whom are directly in touch with each other and some of whom are not. Similarly each person has a number of friends, and these friends have their own friends; some of any person’s friends know each other, others do not. I find it convenient to talk of a social field of this kind as a network. The image I have is of a set of points, some of which are joined by lines. The points of the image are people, sometimes groups, and the lines indicate which people interact with each other.” (Barnes 1954; p. 43)

If you ask your students what they associate with the word network, I bet they will not think of a fishnet. The network concept has now long become part of common language, and it appears in many contexts. Barnes does here what social scientists often do. They take a word from daily language, reinterpret it so that it acquires a different or broader meaning, and then give it back to society. Eventually, the new meaning of the word becomes part of the way we think and talk. Take for instance Ervin Goffman’s sociological language drawn from the theatre. Today we use his concepts as if they have nothing to do with the theater, for instance when we talk about society as a stage where people have ‘roles’, and where there are important things going

on both ‘frontstage’ and ‘backstage’ (Shakespeare, n.d.)

For Barnes, a net is an image of the social structure of the fishing community, where the knots are people and the threads social relationships. And here is the point I want to make; remove one knot, and it leaves a much bigger hole than just the size of the knot. The social relations that the threads of the net symbolize are cut off and hanging loose. Barnes’ observation and concept work well to illustrate what happens in a local fishing community when fishers quit. Their exit has consequences for other fishers. To fish well, the net must be intact; all the knots and threads are needed, as a soccer team needs to have all the players to perform well.

I once gave a talk about fisheries management in the Faroe Islands. There, people have a tradition that when they gather on festive occasions, they entertain themselves with the ‘chain-dance’. The dance is inclusive. Everyone participates; no one is excluded. When more people join, they make room by extending the chain. Holding onto each other as they turn, they sing ancient, rhythmic chants, handed down through generations. Only the voices and the feet are heard. A chant may have more than a hundred verses, typically of moral content (Sigmundskvæðið yngra - Faroese folkdance, 2010). The lead singer is characteristically called ‘skipper’. For participants, the chain-dance is exhilarating and creates a sense of togetherness. As described on a website: *“You have to participate, and when it is at its best, the chain melts together and you feel a part of something vast.”* (Faroe Islands - Tourist guide 2014, 2013).

What I dared to say in my talk in the Faroes was: *“If you want to have an effective fisheries management system and a vigorous fishery, you’d better keep up the chain-dance tradition.”* I did not, of course, submit that there is a direct link here, only that there is an indirect one, because the dance helps to sustain the community experience. It creates a sense of togetherness and belonging, which nurtures social responsibility and inclusivity. This also helps sustain the resources and community, where one is constitutive of the other.

The chain-dance is to me a beautiful metaphor for a healthy, well-integrated, and functioning community sure of itself. Its inclusiveness is worth emphasizing. Fishers move and migrate with the fish according to the rhythm of the season. They know that they cannot expect to be welcome elsewhere if they

are not welcoming others at home. This was always a shared understanding of Norwegian small-scale fishers dependent on their ability and opportunity to be mobile. Some Icelandic small-scale fishers, who in recent years have moved to Norway to escape the exclusivity of Iceland's ITQ system, did not meet animosity among their Norwegian counterparts in the communities where they settled. Fishing communities are open systems, with networks that extend beyond a particular place. As Doreen Massey posited in the context of globalization and "*the migration of people, images and information*", instead of thinking of communities "*as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations.*" (1991: 28). Barnes would have agreed with her way of putting it.

Community research

Small-scale fishing communities experience the effects of globalization for better or for worse. It is important to understand what globalization does to social relations and cultural traditions like the chain-dance. From a research perspective, communities are not just a focus but also, as Arensberg (1961) argued, a locus – a place to situate ourselves when trying to understand issues that also manifest themselves beyond a specific location, like the impact globalization on the culture of small-scale fisheries.

For my PhD research, I did not locate in the community I chose because I was particularly interested in it. Inspired by the work of my mentor supervisor, the social anthropologist Cato Wadel, who is known for his studies in Newfoundland and Norwegian fishing communities (see e.g., Wadel 1973; Andersen & Wadel 1982), I settled there because I was interested in how autonomous but interdependent fisheries actors built organizational relations to coordinate their activities in situations of frequent resource and market crises. The community was a relevant context, a locus, because it was the home of such actors. I could well have gone elsewhere.

We can have an idea about small-scale fisheries from afar, but we cannot know for sure how they work as a process. We may produce a definition of them at our desk but cannot be certain to have hit the nail on the head. We

cannot know what small-scale fisheries represent for those who live in them unless we engage with people in their communities. We would benefit from an analytic perspective that suggests how to look at the community, where to find it, and what to look at. But we should go there. What we discover may then come as a surprise. We may not find the community where we thought it was. It may, for instance, be more open to the outside world than we anticipated beforehand.

Still, there are limits to what we can possibly know. Even our informants cannot know for sure what growing up in another fishing community is like. You cannot even be certain that other members of your community have the same experience as you have. In his book *'The Children of Sanchez'* (1963), which is another read that inspired me in my early career, Oscar Lewis showed that growing up in the same family can be a unique experience for different members. His children recalled the same things in their own distinct way, to the extent that you almost would believe that they did not belong to the same family. I think we all have shared experiences when we talk with our siblings. Our memories differ and we tell our stories differently. There is hardly one story about the community either. Still, stories are shared and help to bind people together. As stories make families (Stone 1988), they also make communities.

We do not really know how to be another person, because we cannot be that other person. We are unique even if we are similar. We are also a world of our own. The same thing can be said about communities. Yet, as the philosopher Wittgenstein (1953) noted, it is because we are similar that we can understand what it is to be unique. There is what he called 'family resemblance'. Fishing communities differ but they are still similar in a way that allows us to talk about them as fishing communities. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1974) postulated that even if we cannot know exactly how people see their world, we can at least understand what people see their world *with*. We can get access to how they conceptualize what they see, the words they use to explain what they know and do, and these words are shared among them. It is also through the way people talk to each other, the language they use when they talk about their community, that we get the idea of what is both similar

and unique about it.

Biologists do not have to bother with how fishers describe their situation, but social scientists cannot avoid how fishers do it. Fishers, as opposed to fish, have their own theories, models, and concepts, which we must have access to understand their situation and what they must do to cope. Then, on top of these, we build our own social science theories, models, and 'second level constructs' (Alfred Schutz [Embree, n.d.]). This is also Giddens' point with his concept of the 'double hermeneutics' of social science, in contrast to the 'single hermeneutics' of natural sciences (Giddens 1987).

More so than we used to do, we seem to let the government define our research questions (Bavinck et al. 2018), notably for valid reasons: governments have become ambitious in the fisheries realm, especially after UNCLOS (1982), which gave coastal states extended responsibilities. Governments increasingly set the fisheries agenda, like with the Blue Economy, and we discover new research questions. The politics of fishing are captivating, whether we like them or not. The SSF Guidelines call for governments to act. With this landmark achievement, we should track whether governments do what they committed themselves to. We must get an idea of how they think about the challenges ahead. The double hermeneutics also applies here. Like social scientists, governments have theories about how fishers think and act, and what communities are. The SSF Guidelines are marching orders for the academic community. We have a contribution to make, which may help to realize their implementation.

In our effort to understand how governments think and act on the SSF Guidelines, we must not forget how the people they target understand their own world. Government policies may look very different from the side of the community than they do from the summit of power. We should explore whether policies have 'latent functions', as Robert Merton, and before him Bronislaw Malinowski (1922/2010), talked about, be they dysfunctions or not. I am afraid with their neoliberal agenda, governments are now more than willing to let small-scale fisheries communities go. They are 'collateral damage.' The SSF Guidelines induce governments to think differently about communities. The human rights approach, which the SSF Guidelines

advocate, is about protecting their integrity and supporting their agency, i.e., enhancing both their 'positive' and 'negative' freedom.

Conclusion

There is a vast academic literature to draw on that is not specifically about fisheries, but which is still relevant. The Norwegian sociologist Gudmund Hernes once said that all thoughts have not only been thought before but also been thought 'better' before. That may well be true, but it should not discourage us from following our academic interests. There is no upper limit or remaining last hole to be filled in the current stock of knowledge. Our job will never be done. As social researchers we are part of a learning process which continues. We are in a different situation than the classical thinkers. But we have every reason to consult them, and they are likely to be found outside fisheries. I mentioned Marx and a few others, but the list of relevant thinkers is much longer than those I have pointed to, and it keeps expanding.

The quality of fisheries research would improve if we were to learn from these scholars. I believe that our fisheries social research would benefit if we thought of ourselves as social scientists first and fisheries scientists second, rather than the other way around. We should look across and beyond our disciplines. If we do not, we risk narrowing our narratives and missing their wider implications. We must do transdisciplinary work by engaging with local people. They have knowledge that we cannot ignore. We need to understand their norms and ethics. This is the idea underpinning so-called 'legal pluralism', which is a school of thought that has inspired me (Jentoft & Bavinck 2019). Scientists have no authority on moral issues and the legal norms they motivate that put them above anyone else. These norms, and the knowledge they build on, must underpin fishery policy, and scientists may help with a deeper reflection on them. I made this point in a Marine Policy article published in 2006, where I drew on Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*, sometimes translated as 'prudence'.

Regarding sustainable small-scale fisheries, we should provide more evidence on the direction of the causal arrows: from nature to resource to the

individual to culture to community, and in the opposite direction.¹ Contrary to how we usually think about it, I have here argued for the latter direction, and that is where I believe more of our research should focus from now on. Although important, we should not only focus on what small-scale fisheries do for communities, but what communities do for small-scale fisheries. The policy implications of exploring one or the other would be profound.

Peter Fonda, most famous for his role in *Easy Rider*, takes issue with Kris Kristofferson and Janis Joplin. He says: “*Freedom is NOT just another word “for nothing left to lose”*” (Fonda n.d.). Instead, as cited in the beginning of this book, he posits that freedom is strongly associated with learning; learning sets you free, and when you are free you learn more. He could have referred to Plato, who argued the same. This, one must assume, works not only for individuals but also for fisheries communities and society. As social researchers, we are part of that learning process. Our work is a freedom project. We assist society to reflect on its problems and opportunities. We offer empirical evidence. We speak truth to power, and by doing all this, we help democracy function. We should never doubt the meaning of what we are doing.

We must defend our ‘freedom to’ pursue our curiosity, to advance our own knowledge. We need positive freedom to define our research questions and be ‘free from’ external interference and efforts to control what we do. Even if it is essential to know what the classic thinkers were up to and what the paradigms and dogmas in our disciplines are, it is still important to be critical of them, and be free to rebel if we feel like it. We may stand on their shoulders but are not supposed to be their parrots. This is what tenure is about, why we have universities, and why it is necessary to protect academic freedom.

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This chapter was my keynote address at the Mare conference, Amsterdam,

¹ In his book *Dialoger med naturen* (‘Dialogues with Nature’) Jens-Ivar Nergård observed that renowned social anthropologists like Evans-Pritchard, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Barth all worked from the assumption that the causal arrow goes from nature, to humans and then to culture, and not in the opposite direction (Nergård 2019: 25).

THE GIFT OF COMMUNITY

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Community as Covenant

Small-scale fisheries communities have things in common that are often invisible to the observer. Our wellbeing depends on them.

I always found fisheries communities fascinating, not just for what they are but also for what they do. Communities are laboratories for studying issues of a global nature, be their impacts of global trade, governance systems, poverty eradication, sustainable development, and climate change. They are important in themselves, and as vantage points for exploring issues that are beyond them. Conrad Arentsberg (1961) made the point with his distinction between communities as ‘focus’ and as ‘locus’. For instance, there are many ways of studying what poverty and unemployment are. If you want to find out what these problems mean to people, what kind of experience they are, you’d better get close to them. You will understand these issues better if you get to know people who experience them. Then, situating yourself in a community would be a strategic choice of research method. You may well study something big by studying something small.

Cato Wadel (1972) went to the extreme when, based on a fieldwork in a small fishing village in Newfoundland, Canada, he wrote about one man, who he calls George. George happened to be Wadel’s neighbor during his fieldwork. But Wadel’s main interest issue was to understand what it means

to be chronically unemployed in a community where working hard is a sign of character. The subtitle of his book is telling: *'The Strategy for Self-Esteem in the Face of Chronic Unemployment'*. Many people experience unemployment, and when it lasts for a long time, one would expect that a person may lose the respect of others, and therefore also self-respect. The book is about what George felt that he needed to do, and what he did, to maintain both. Although George was out of a job, he was busy all the time, doing things for his family, working in and around the house, and in the community. By this, he maintained his dignity. In the eyes of the community, his unemployment was not his fault.

Discovering the hypothesis

Unemployment is a big issue in developed and developing countries alike. George is just one of a huge 'reserve army' that Engels and Marx talked about. But Wadel's book about him illustrates what social scientists do with their case studies when they locate themselves in a local community. It is not the case of the community per se, but what it is a case *of*, that is the point. You learn something about what it means to be unemployed by studying one man's struggle to maintain his dignity. You also learn what a local fisheries community is, does and means, by situating yourself in one. You also get an idea what small-scale fisheries are about. But you do not claim that what you learn from your experience is the same as in the next community. You may still have discovered something important, like a hypothesis for your next fieldwork.

As Robert Nisbet (2001) noted, a hypothesis must be discovered before it can be tested. Methods books tell you how to do the latter, but not the former. For discovering a hypothesis, your imagination is important. Locating yourself in a local community is, in my experience, a way to stimulate a hypothesis. A hypothesis may be about what difference social organization of communities makes to people's ability to cope with unemployment if that is the general topic of your research. You may assume that it is easier to cope with unemployment and poverty in a well-integrated local community than

in one characterized by atomization and fragmentation. You should still be open to the opposite. In the latter type, you risk being excluded and shunned; in the former there is nothing to be excluded and shunned from because you are already on your own.

Locating yourself in a local community is productive for the discovery of hypotheses. The more communities you study, the better equipped you are to generalize about the topic of unemployment, because you build general knowledge, stone by stone, from moving from one community to the next. You may realize that it is not just ‘about the economy stupid’; it is about the viability of communities. Small-scale fisheries are about people’s lives. The fact that communities are different would, from a research point of view, facilitate learning about what counts as important for communities to be the positive force they can be, often are, but sometime fail to be in people’s lives.

Defining communities

I once lived in a small-scale fisheries community. Over the years I have visited numerous of them in my own country and around the world. Everywhere I go, there is something unique and interesting about the way fisheries work there. As the fisheries differ, communities differ. Still, they have similarities. Otherwise, we would not identify them by that name.

Because of their diversity, complexity and dynamics, small-scale fisheries and -communities are difficult to define. We might have expected that the SSF Guidelines would put an end to the puzzle, but we do not find any definition there about what small-scale fisheries are. Still, community and communities are mentioned 80 times. This does not stop them or us from talking about them. We may have an idea, some expectations of what to find there. We therefore know them when we see them.

Despite a wealth of narratives, social scientists have been of little help in clarifying what small-scale fisheries communities are, except for Clay and Olson (2007: 28), who in an important paper suggest what characteristics to include for when trying to define them: “*The production of space and place, the practices of fishing, notions of identity, and other cultural, political–economic,*

and geographic processes all inhere in shaping something we might call a 'fishing community'."

The insistence on definitions runs the risk of derailing the understanding of small-scale fisheries. Definitions should reflect contextual characteristics and would therefore be different depending on where we are in the world. What counts as small in let's say the US, which is Clay and Olson's location, would be different from what is small in for instance Indian fisheries. Still, small-scale fisheries in both settings and elsewhere would share many other characteristics.

Clay and Olson offer a list of common denominators, such as 1) "*a variety of linkages of common residence on land with common place of work at sea*", 2) "*strong cultural beliefs about the importance of fishing to the community even when fishing revenues are only a small fraction of gross revenues*", 3) "*women's strong involvement in the resource enterprise*", 4) "*crew members as coventurers and – although not universal – kinship as an important hiring criterion, creating a unique relationship of capital to labor.*"

Bertrand Russel noted that we always need other words to define something, words which in themselves could need a definition. What are fishers and what is small anyway? We must agree on which approximations suffice. The missing definition of small-scale fisheries in the SSF Guidelines is no hindrance for starting to implement them. National Fisheries authorities know what they are and where to find them. They often have their own markers.

Rather than defining communities by searching for their essence as if there is one, we should look for their 'family resemblances', a term introduced by the philosopher Ludvig Wittgenstein (1953) (see chapter 1). Family members have individual features, but they also have recognizable, common characteristics. People say they can see me in my sons. The same could be said about small-scale fisheries communities and their fisheries operations. Rather than looking for their essence, we should look for their family resemblances, like those that Clay and Olson suggest.

If we were to visit fisheries communities, we would find it hard to grasp all that is special about them. They are more complex than what strikes the eye.

We would, however, naturally look for features that remind us of what we have seen before. But then we risk overlooking what is unique. We should be open to unexpected things. We may always find something, but not what we thought we would find. Wadel found George by chance when he moved into the community, and it changed his focus completely. Open-minded researchers should try to find out what and how things matter to a small-scale fisheries community, and those may not be what they at first believe them to be.

Invisible presences

My PhD student Paul Onyango had such a revelation when he landed in a local fisheries community on the shore of Lake Victoria to study how people there coped with poverty. He immediately noticed what he later would call ‘visible absences’; poor housing, hardly any infrastructure such a school and a health clinic – all what one could expect to find in a well-functioning small-scale fisheries community and which people in more affluent areas have come to take for granted. The only source of livelihood in the community was what people could draw from the water with their simple boats and gear and grow in the backyard. A man with a bicycle was considered better off. Yet, he did not find people in despair. Instead, he was puzzled by lack of anguish: *“How can it be that people who lack everything, still wake up with a smile on their face?”* as he phrased it. He asked what do people have, who have nothing?

He started to look for their ‘invisible presences.’ Despite their lack of material wealth, people had each other and their community and their sense of self – their dignity. Economists and sociologists call this ‘social capital’ and think of it as a resource in times of need. They have social relations, shared experience-based knowledge that can be mobilized for individual and collective well-being. In his thesis he argues that efforts at poverty alleviation should not necessarily commence from the ‘visible absences’ but from the ‘invisible presences’.

Development initiatives should build on what communities possess to provide what they are lacking. Also, poor communities have their own

customary institutions and practices, which the SSF Guidelines suggest should be respected and nurtured. Communities may be poor, but they are not without human resources and capabilities. Paul backed up his argument with the community's 'Beach Village Committee' and a self-initiated and -led project to build better sanitary facilities. The beach was their community hall, where they could meet, socialize, and play. A lorry from the city ensured that they had transport and a buyer for their fish.

Dignity and equity

As social researchers, we should explore in detail what it is about community that makes people in small-scale fisheries feel happy about themselves, their lives, and their community, regardless of their insufficient, material well-being. The cause may not be vastly different for poor and rich people. We all yearn for the respect and dignity we receive from our 'significant others'. When we lack it, we do not wake up with a smile.

Andrew Sayer (2011: 21) notes; *"In thinking about the nature of well-being, it's easy to get drawn back to the physical aspects of health and security, but dignity is sometimes valued more highly than those, and it is much more dependent on how others interpret and treat us, particularly in terms of relations of equality and difference."* But dignity is not just a matter of the mind. *"Where inequalities are structural features of societies then people cannot stand in dignified relations to one another."* (p. 21). Dignity is a sentiment that must also be understood sociologically.

Without equity and equality, people cannot have dignity, and without dignity, people cannot have the self-esteem needed to become proactive in building their community. Without community, they cannot have dignity. The causal arrow of poverty and well-being runs forward and backward in a potentially virtuous circle. This is also the topic for Paul's documentary film where he shows how local people were drawing on their invisible presences to build a better community to fill visible gaps. As they fill them, they feel proud of what they are achieving and good about themselves. They discover their latent individual and collective capabilities.

What communities do

For the supply chain to function, communities must do the same. Fish is an important part of our food intake, and communities help to free us from hunger. Numerous studies have shown how fish is distributed among members of the community to make sure that all have something to eat. But there is more to life than food. People do not live on bread (and fish) alone (cf. Matthew 4.4). Unlike other primates, we search for meaning, which we find in association with others, in our families and communities. Meaning belongs to the 'invisible absences.' It is subtle and requires empathy to get to it. As a researcher you must know who you are dealing with and how they see their world and their place in it. Then, you must, as Paul did, stay and interact with people on equal terms.

Aristotle (in *'Politics'*) said that we are by nature social animals, dependent on each other to be well. We need lasting social relationships, something that families and communities provide. Therefore, communities must be there for us. Society precedes the individual, he said. This is also how the French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1895/2013) later came to see the relationship between the individual and society; individuals are social constructs. Growing up in a community with others makes us become human, with all the virtues it involves.

Small-scale fisheries need communities to exist. As Clay and Olson suggest, to understand small-scale fisheries, you must know how they link to communities and the flows of goods and services between them. To make small-scale fisheries secure and sustainable, communities must be the same. They form a social and ecological system that connects activities and people in social relationships that extends the fish supply chain.

The solitary 'bowler', as Robert Putnam (2000) described him, should not be the role model of fishers and fish workers which to build fisheries policies and management systems. Neither should we perceive small-scale fisheries 'like a state' (Scott 1998), i.e., imposing grand-scheme policies from the top down and afar as if small-scale fisheries are uniform, just a particular type of fishing. Rather, they should see small-scale fisheries 'like a community' with

the contextual specifics, complexities, and dynamics of social life. Therefore, fisheries management must include a *phronetic* knowledge, as Aristotle called it, not just science and technical expertise, but practical, experience-based knowledge, and sound judgment.

Finding communities

For communities to be sustainable, they need mechanisms that nurture the 'We' rather than the 'I', as in Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs). A community that is only an assembly of 'I's, have an atomistic fabric; people will be there only for themselves and not for each other. Small-scale fisheries people would be less vulnerable if they can relate in people they know and can trust. There is now plenty of evidence of ITQ management systems are transforming social relations. Instead of social integration, they create social fissures in local communities. The 'I' perspective is what social scientists associate with methodological individualism. Here, people are perceived as self-centered profit maximizers – of wealth, power, or prestige. The alternative view, which sociologists support, is that communities are about 'We', more than 'I'. They look for mechanisms that bind people together.

Unlike markets, families and communities provide security. But they do so at the expense of individual freedoms, as the sociologist Zygmunt Baumann (2001) argued (see chapter 1). But markets would not work if actors cannot trust each other. The concept of trust is, however, something that we acquire by growing up in families and communities. You would hardly know what to do with your freedom in markets otherwise. Thus, markets are not free-floating systems, but also socially embedded, as the economist Karl Polanyi (1944/2001) argued. Markets are like fishing vessels that need the sea to function. Markets, and those who populate them need a society, and societies need communities – and communities of them.

The ambience of community

Communities come with a set of behavioral prescriptions, which informs how people should interact with each other, with strangers, and nature. Learning what these prescriptions are and internalizing them, i.e., making them your own, is what growing up in a community involves. But communities also work on a different level: We do not only have an experience of community, but we also have a feeling of it, which sociological language is not rich enough to define. Try to define 'love' and decide if the words capture what you felt when you had it or have it. The words of social science do not describe the feeling. Shakespeare and Tolstoy do a better job than sociologists do.

What is true for love is also true for communities. We care about the community we call home. When we are away, we miss our family and friends. Leaving and coming home is different from visiting unfamiliar places. Thus, our community relations have emotional dimensions. Sociologists have tools to depict the structural and interactive attributes of communities, but our concept of community is not sufficient to capture its deeper meanings and qualities. Therefore, community narratives must also emphasize their expressive sides. This, I submit, is what makes us convinced in our hearts that we are fighting the good cause when we try to convince policy makers and managers about the need to secure small-scale fisheries communities. Social scientists have a job to do, but they need assistance from other disciplines like the arts.

To get a sense of the ambience of a small-scale fisheries community, watch Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. *Catfish Row*, which is the imaginary scene for the opera, is a 'complete' fishing community, working for its members on many levels. It is not just the music that is exalting but also the story about how they struggle, grieve and love. Communities also speak to people's hearts. A novelist, poet, and composer, as in *Porgy and Bess*' case, can convey emotions better than any social scientist.

Community as covenant

Social scientists have not overlooked the role that religion plays in bringing people together. Indeed, Emile Durkheim (1912/1995) argued that building community is religion's most important function, that religion is less about believing than belonging. Communities are better off with a common morality. Loss of morality, religious or secular, may be what brings about community failure in sustaining the resource commons. Max Weber's (1920/1993) idea of 'disenchantment of the world', the deprivation of a genuine sense of community, erodes the spiritual 'We', and hence the community's ability to create cohesion, stability, and social solidarity and order. This is a different causality of the Tragedy of the Commons that Garrett Hardin (1968) depicts. Without fishers' sense of belonging to a moral 'We', and a perception that breaking rules is wrong, fisheries become unmanageable, even with the presence of an external, repressive force.

Jonathan Sacks argues that, like with a marriage, the 'We' works less as a contract than as a covenant. The former is about interest, whereas the latter is about identity. Thus, a covenant involves a deeper commitment than a contract does. "*This is why contracts benefit, but covenants transform... Covenants heal what markets and states sometimes harm*" (Sacks 2019: 327). The contract lasts as long as it is of mutual advantage to the parties, whereas covenant persists even with the sacrifice of freedoms. This, I hold, is how we should think of a well-functioning, small-scale fisheries community. It thrives when members feel morally rather than opportunistically committed.

Metaphors to think with

Elinor Ostrom warned against the dangers of implementing policy fixes based on metaphors, like Hardin's Tragedy. They are too simplistic for a complex domain. They easily become self-fulfilling prophecies, because what we believe is real, becomes real when we act on it. This is the famous Thomas theorem (Oxford Reference n.d.). Small-scale fishing people are not the 'rational egoists' that the Hardin perspective assumes, but if we lose

community, they may well become like that. I posit that modern fisheries management tools are doing exactly that. Managers are thus creating a problem they in the next instance are forced to solve, like overfishing and illegal fishing.

If we are going to employ Greek literary genres in our thinking about the commons and the community, we should not only use the tragedy, but also the comedy, romance, and satire. Whereas the comedy leads to reconciliation and the tragedy to resignation, the romance ends with a victory of the weaker party. For instance, small-scale fisheries people are often up against actors more powerful than they are. For people in small-scale fisheries, life is a struggle for freedom and justice. It contains the promise (but not a guarantee) of a positive outcome, as in Marx's narrative where the proletariat will be victorious if they unite. This is also the optimistic narrative of small-scale fisheries. Without it, the SSF Guidelines would not have been worth the effort.

With Maarten Bavinck and Joeri Scholtens, I have argued for a stronger research focus on fisheries as social struggle (2018), how small-scale fishers are involved in a fight for a better future, shaped in the image of a romance. For sustaining small-scale fisheries, this is critical, as their interests are often in contradiction with other stakeholders, especially now with the Blue Economy turning the coastal zone into a conflict zone.

The satire of community

We need a nuanced perspective on communities, including on their failures. It is then useful to employ the classical literary genres of the 'satire'. We must be critical: We do not have to like what we see and be quiet about it. We should also be self-critical about how we argue about things. We must be wary about what we say and how we say it. Words do more than describe; they can also be actions, as J.L. Austin (1955/1962) noted.

A satirist would play the Devil's advocate to Austin. We may be supportive of small-scale fisheries communities and what they can be, but still employ a critical perspective on how they function, for instance whether they in

fact deliver social justice. There would always be room for improvement. Communities are rarely idyllic and harmonious, but have inbuilt contractions, inequities and 'idiocies' (of rural life), as Marx and Engels called it in the Communist Manifesto. If we forget to be critical, including of our own perspectives and solutions, we may be rightfully labeled naïve romantics.

Metaphors such as literary genres are ways of looking and thinking about reality, and vehicles for making sense of it. They are also instrumental in generating research questions and hypotheses. Hardin's tragedy metaphor has been extremely successful in that respect. It has inspired the organization of an entire community of researchers – The International Association for the Study of the Commons, and numerous academic publications (IASC n.d.).

But metaphors like that of Garrett Hardin are not an exact representation of reality itself. It is not a proposition for how the world works that can be tested empirically. Neither are metaphors a recipes or scripts for how to act, for instance in a fishery setting. They should instead be thought of as 'hints', as Nietzsche would argue (Solomon & Higgins 2000), that alternative developments are possible and worth exploring. Why be stuck in a metaphor that sees tragedy as inevitable, leaving us with no imagination of alternative futures, when we in fact have choices that may bring happier outcomes, such as those the comedy and the romance offer.

The potential of community

Social struggles are not just about scarce resources, as within Hardin's narrative, but also about social justice. Communities can hardly function without social justice. Building more resilient and robust communities, essential for communities to remain sustainable, requires attention to how social relations and distribution of resources facilitate justice, and the possibility integration and cohesion that follow in its wake. Our work should be of help to those who struggle for justice. Our role is not to advocate quick, technical fixes. Foucault argued that our work "*should be an instrument for those who fight, who resist and refuse... It doesn't have to lay down the law for the law... It is a challenge to what is.*" (Foucault n.d.)

COMMUNITY AS COVENANT

The doom and gloom of the tragedy is not their only prospect, as the different literary genres suggest. Criticisms leave a question of ‘so what?’ How can things be different? We should not expect that other people have the answers to the questions we raise. Criticism is constructive if it points towards solutions. It would be useful to use our analytical tools and shift metaphor from the tragedy to the comedy or the romance of the commons. This would allow us to see the potential of community, which are absent in Hardin’s narrative but present in the sociological narrative of community as a comedy and romance.

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The chapter draws from my paper ‘From I to We in small-scale fisheries communities’ published in *Maritime Studies* (Jentoft 2020).

The Default Position

Not all the claims about small-scale fisheries need proof because they are self-evident.

Jeremy Bentham (1774-1832) is the founding father of ‘utilitarianism’, the philosophical doctrine that every moral argument must draw from the idea of maximizing happiness through utility value. From this perspective, an action is right if it results in the happiness of the greatest number of people in a society or a group. Our collective wellbeing is the aggregate of individual utilities.

However, according to Bentham’s critics – Immanuel Kant being the most prominent among them, utilitarianism reduces happiness and wellbeing to a calculation.² What about human rights and dignity, which are among the guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines? What about the rights and interests of minorities? Morality, according to Kant, “*is not about maximizing happiness or any other end. Instead, it is about respecting persons as ends in themselves*” (cited by Michael Sandel (2009: 105). Sandel concludes: “*By caring only about the sum of satisfactions, it can run roughshod over individual people.*” (p. 37). “*If you*

² Bentham published his ideas in ‘*Principles of Morals and Legislation*’ in 1780, Kant his response in 1785, with his ‘*Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*’.

believe in universal human rights, you are probably not a utilitarian.” (p. 103). Human rights and human dignity have morality that lies beyond utility and should be on a scale of their own.

Human rights

Still, there is a dilemma. Should the human rights and dignity of small-scale fisheries people yield when they conflict with other laudable goals? For instance, what should happen when measures to eradicate poverty breach human rights standards? Likewise, what if small-scale fisheries people possibility of earning a livelihood conflict with access regulations for the sake of resources conservation and economic efficiency? Don't they have a right to food?

Not only do the SSF Guidelines think of human rights and dignity as absolute thresholds that should be secured before other measures. Neither do humans rights and dignity belong in utility calculus. They should not be sacrificed for some other goals that states may find more opportune. The SSF Guidelines aim to uphold multiple goals at the same time; states must eradicate poverty and conserve the marine environment, *while simultaneously* securing the human rights and dignity of small-scale fisheries people. Human rights and dignity are not negotiable but absolute. Some goals are primary, others secondary. A guiding principle, human rights and dignity come first, and other concerns in sequence thereafter. They are the 'default position'.

Contrary to many of the other claims we make about small-scale fisheries, like their many contributions to society, the gifts of community, the role of women, the ecofriendly adaptation, the human rights, and dignity of their people are not in need of empirical proof. They are axioms. Claims that fisheries rights and women's rights are human rights may benefit from philosophical argumentation and investigation regarding the degree to which they are recognized and upheld, but the rights themselves are beyond empirical evidence. They belong to the ethical realm and express social values that are self-evident.

When push comes to shove, states may prove to be unconvinced. They

may not think that human rights are less important than eradicating poverty. Instead, they believe that that the latter is indeed a way of securing human rights. There is, of course, a connection between the two. For those living in extreme poverty, human rights are out of reach. First, they must eat.

The SSF Guidelines are about eradicating poverty, but have a broader idea of what human rights and dignity entail, such as the empowerment of small-scale fisheries people and respect for their culture and freedoms. If states and other powerful actors find reasons to downplay the human rights and dignity of small-scale fisheries people, they may instead cherry pick from the SSF Guidelines rather than implementing them to the full. The guidelines are ‘voluntary,’ and states will choose their own way of maneuvering them. How they handle their inherent goal conflicts in the implementation process, would be a matter for evaluation. Notably, human rights and dignity as codified in international law, are not voluntary even if they appear in the SSF Guidelines.

Collective rights

According to Bentham, the community is just a fictitious body, not more than the sum of individuals who happen to live there. They are a collection, not a group. They are no more than “*potatoes in a sack forming a sack of potatoes*”, as Marx famously said about the French peasantry in ‘The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon’ (Marx 1852). Margaret Thatcher’s “*there is no such thing as society*”, resonates with the same notion.

Contrary to this view, anthropologists and sociologists think of communities as social systems, held together by norms, rules and symbols that bring order and coherence into the way members relate and interact. Communities are something people have together. They are shared experiences. In the view of the SSF Guidelines, human rights are also collective.

We see this idea clearly spelled out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which figures prominently in the SSF Guidelines (UN 2007). To secure the livelihoods and culture of Indigenous peoples, one must also secure their communities, without which people would miss their

identity and sense of belonging. Cultural rights are inherently collective. Article 9 reads as follows:

“Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right to belong to an indigenous community or nation, in accordance with the traditions and customs of the community or nation concerned. No discrimination of any kind may arise from the exercise of such a right.”

Human rights are, as pointed out here, both individual and collective, and one cannot exist without the other. Rights depend on the recognition of others (Searle 1995). The same with collective rights: they exist when states, civil society organizations, communities, and individuals respect them, but they do not disappear if they do not.

The concern for, and rights of Indigenous small-scale fisheries peoples are mentioned repeatedly in the SSF Guidelines, also as a guiding principle: *“Respect of cultures: recognizing and respecting existing forms of organization, traditional and local knowledge and practices of small-scale fishing communities, including indigenous peoples...”*

Community as a gift

Respect for culture means respect for the values, norms and identities of small-scale fisheries people and their communities, be they Indigenous or not. The moral qualities of communities are not just incentives, external to the individual. They are assets that constitute a moral compass that enable members to distinguish between right and wrong. They decide what is decent and virtuous. They build character. They define who you are and what other people recognize you by. They are what you see in the mirror.

The SSF Guidelines have a different idea of community than that of Bentham, as can be seen from the foreword. *“The small-scale fisheries sector tends to be firmly rooted in local communities, traditions and values.”* *“[I]ndeed, small-scale fisheries tend to be strongly anchored in local communities, reflecting often historic links to adjacent fishery resources, traditions and values,*

and supporting social cohesion.” The SSF Guidelines would not say this if communities were ‘fictitious’. Instead, the perspective is that communities are *sui generis*. They are something in themselves, “*a reality with its own special nature, distinct from that of its members, and a personality of its own different from individual personalities*” (Emile Durkheim quoted in Lukes, 1985: 11).

For sociologists and anthropologists, communities are a unit of analysis, not just the individuals that populate them. Antony Cohen (1993) observes that members of communities “*find their identities as individuals through their occupancy of the community’s social space*” (p. 109). What exactly the social space of small-scale fisheries communities is and does to make this possible, is a matter of exploration if we are to secure them. If we are to believe Durkheim, these identities are there already and for members of a community to acquire. Identities are not an individual project alone, that start from nothing. It draws from the culture of the community that individuals receive and share with others. Identity is identifying with something that is outside the individual but internalized thought social interaction ongoing in local communities and beyond. In this way, people develop multiple identities. But growing up in a community always leaves a lasting mark on you.

The ‘gift’ of community, i.e., what it brings to people, like those in small-scale fisheries, gets lost from sight when the individual is the only unit of analysis. The Harvard economist Stephen Marglin (2010) argues that “*...thinking like an economist undermines community.*” Their idea that individuals are “*autonomous, self-interested, and rational calculators with unlimited wants and that the only community that matters is the nation-state,*” is at best a “*half-truth*”, he posits. Although their boundaries are not necessarily distinct and may therefore be difficult to exactly locate. Communities are neither totally autonomous, self-sufficient, nor self-interested. Neither are they rational collective actors bent at maximizing utilities. They are social institutions in the lives of those who grow up with them. In contrast to most economists for whom utilitarianism is the inspiration, anthropologists and sociologists are typically ‘methodological collectivists’ rather than ‘methodological individualists’. But the collective is more than an aggregate of individual parts. They get their form and character through their institutions

and as places of social interaction.

Social facts

The SSF Guidelines consider small-scale fisheries communities as what Durkheim (1858-197) called ‘social facts’ (1964), essential for the material, relational, and psychological wellbeing of members. Communities are imbued with values, norms, symbols, and rules. They are upheld and enforced by institutions like family, networks, school, associations, and economic enterprises that exist prior to and independent from individuals who are born into them. They exercise pressure to conform. Through this process, Durkheim argues, social order results.

Should these institutions wither, Durkheim predicted *anomie*, i.e., normative confusion, spurring the problem that Hobbes describes in his *Leviathan* treatise: communities in chaos and strife, unable to enforce their own rules and practice self-governance. In the next instance, this would release state interference to keep people in check, as fisheries authorities do with their management systems. However, by imposing restrictions, there is risk that the state may be inducing rather than fixing the problem, especially when they have methodological individualism and utilitarianism as their root perspective. Instead, as the SSF Guidelines advocate, states should help make communities stronger, more self-reliant, and secure.

Community ‘failure’ erodes community cohesion and solidarity, and by that, hampers members’ ability to work together for their common good. Collective action is difficult in fragmented local communities. They must come together, also at a moral level, before collective action can take place. Community failure results from fractured solidarities and frail identities, which causes anomia. A community without a firm idea of what they are, is vulnerable. Neither does it have what it takes to act. It is, Etzioni (1998) holds, not so much the exchange of goods and services that make people cooperate as the shared values and meanings on which their social relations rest. Should these values, meanings, and identities evaporate, the social relations conducive to collective action would stumble.

Alan Wolfe concludes: *“If modernity means a withering away of such institutions as the tight-knit family and the local community that once taught the moral rules of interdependence, modern people must simply work harder to find such rules for themselves.”* (p. 19). If fisheries people cannot find them in their own community, they are prone to go elsewhere, leaving their community behind while finding themselves in unfamiliar territory where they would have to reinvent themselves.

The Internet is now a lure and an escape, but as Thomas Friedman notes (2000), God is not to be found on the worldwide web; it is up to you to carry him there yourself. But from where would you bring them, if those community institutions that used to provide the moralities and identities that people need to mature, have withered? Sustaining the vitality of small-scale fisheries, securing local communities as moral entities, is as important as securing access to resources and markets. In the modern era, we need as Friedman notes, wings but also roots.

Communities are easier to break than to build, especially after they have been broken. ‘Building back better’ may just become a slogan. Once brought to ashes, a community cannot, like a phoenix, be brought back, as the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2001) posits. Communities should not be ‘burned down’ to begin with. They have merits that should not be lost. We should not do things, politically or otherwise, that put them at risk. Implementing the SSF Guidelines would be a good precautionary measure.

Imitating others

‘Social facts,’ as Durkheim understood them, do not rule out people’s freedom make choices, but they shape the conditions under which choices are made, both limiting their action space by sanctioning choices, forming the preferences that people have, and what constitute a life worth living. Communities do not just restrict the freedoms of their members; they also provide security, as Bauman (200) argues (see chapter 1). Communities facilitate freedoms, as people’s perceptions of what freedom means emerge from within our social networks. Our ideas of freedom, what we value and

prefer, are socially nurtured from socializing with people whose judgment we trust and who are role models.

The philosopher and sociologist René Girard's concept of 'mimetic desires' would apply here: We borrow our desires from other people. What our 'significant others' wish for, we do too. If your best friend believes it is cool to be a fisher, you are likely to think so too. Girard wrote (quoted by David Brooks in New York Times: "*Man is the creature who does not know what to desire, and he turns to others in order to make up his mind.*") From this, we may conclude that to secure a steady recruitment of young people to the fisheries industry, we must focus not on the individual but on the social networks of potential recruits. To make fisheries valued as an attractive career choice, we would also secure the viability of the community. The networks must be mobilized, as function as an intermediate, facilitating vehicle between the individual and the community.

Knowing yourself

Communities, and the social networks that make them, help to create the social order that makes freedom of choice possible. Your life's career as a fisher is your own choice, but your reasons for choosing it are what you share with like-minded others. You would be inclined to ask for their advice. "*Do you think I have what it takes?*" It is a not a choice made in an instant, but one that gradually evolves through joining family fisher members as a novice, starting as an experiment, testing my capacities and capabilities, finding out whether I would like to be a fisher. I would have to prove myself to others as well as to myself. I may fail the test but will not know before I have tried. What begins as a 'maybe', may either end as a 'no way' or a definite 'yes.' My decision does not have to be final. I may later change my mind, choosing other coastal occupations if available, or leaving home in pursuit of opportunities elsewhere.

A fisheries community has members with fisheries experience and knowledge. Some of them may have left the occupation but may decide to return at a later stage. They are still part of the local fisheries milieu and

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engage in conversation with their knowledge. The shared experience of community members, some of which are presently in other occupation, helps to create integration and social cohesion that maintains the culture of fisheries, shaping preferences and values, and hence the sustainability of the fisheries community.

The Sacra of Community

The community is a commons. It has things that members protect because they cherish them.

When visiting a fisheries community in Norway, you are likely to notice a monument in a place where everyone can see it, like next to the church, in the park or at the square. The photo here is from the community where I did my PhD fieldwork more than fifty years ago. The two monuments are standing on a hill in the harbor. You cannot miss it. It is the first thing you will observe as you anchor up. Inscribed on the left stone is: “*Erected by community members in memory of fisher comrades who perished at sea.*” The other says: “*WOMEN OF THE COAST. Labor and toil with nightly vigilance and anguish were the price you paid for every single catch.*”

On every 17th of May, Norway’s constitution day when communities are in festive mode, people gather here to celebrate. There would be parades, speeches held, singing of the national anthem in the deepest solemnity. As people celebrate the day, the community commemorates the husbands, fathers, sons, and relatives who lost their lives at sea and the families that were left behind. The monuments make sure that their legacy lives on. By honoring their memory while pursuing their livelihoods, the community also honors itself. When people gather around the monument, they remind

themselves of who they are and what community it is, the role of the sea in the life of the community.

Every time I visit a fisheries community in Norway, I look for the monument. People will tell you where to find it. Reading the words carved is moving. Sometimes the names of those lost at sea are mentioned, and people can recognize the names which are often their own family names. The sheer number of fishers who perished over the years is staggering, but also their age – young men in their prime. One can only imagine how the devastation was felt.

The commons

The monument, where it is placed, and the occasions when people gather around it, would be an example of what Stephen Gudeman in his *The Anthropology of Economy* (2001) calls a community's 'sacra' – a symbol of shared identity and expression of community values. As such, the sacra sits deep in the soul of the community, something that members recognize themselves and each other with.

Gudeman argues that a community will never, or only with great reluctance, divest itself of their sacra.³ For the community, the sacra is not for sale. *"It is ours to value and protect."* It has no market value, only 'sacred', symbolic value as an identity marker. *"If sacra are identified with community, then their destruction, like the extinction of a physical commons, is a community tragedy."* (Gudeman 2001: 30). If accidentally or deliberately, the fishers' monument should be destroyed, it will be felt likewise, and the community would hasten to restore it. The monument is not just a piece of rock; it is about the community itself. A sacra, Gudeman posits, is a shared interest of members, a collective good, like the fisher monument is what community members have together. For Gudeman, the sacra can be many things:

"It is the patrimony or legacy of a community and refers to anything that

³ In the original Latin meaning, sacra referred to the bottom bone of the spine.

contributes to the material and social sustenance of a people with a shared identity: land, buildings seek stock knowledge of practice, a transportation network, and educational system, or rituals.” “The complete commons of a community usually is a heterogenous collection of objects” (p. 32).

For Gudeman, the commons is “*a lasting core, though changeable over time,*” and represents temporality and continuity. “*Without a commons, there is no community, without a community, there is no commons.*” (p. 27). Therefore, a community would be reluctant to dissociate itself with the commons, as it would be tantamount to nihilating itself. The commons is not only material but also symbolic. In his book, Fikret Berkes (1999) talks about traditional ecological knowledge as ‘sacred’. Local ecological knowledge has symbolic meaning to those who share it. It is constitutive of community.

Since traditional ecological knowledge is embodied in shared language, losing language which is happening at an alarming rate around the world, is losing knowledge (Endangered language 2023) and by that losing community. When an Indigenous language dies, the concept in which ‘sacred’ knowledge is stored and used, dies too.

Social tragedy

In Gudeman’s view, one cannot distinguish between community and the commons. The commons should therefore not be thought of as a “*as a symbol of the community*”, but “*as the affirmation of the community itself.*” (p. 30). With reference to Garrett Hardin (1968), Gudeman notes that “*the so-called “tragedy of the commons”, which refers to destruction of a commonly held resource through unlimited use by individuals, is a tragedy not of a physical common but a human community.*” (p. 28).

This leads him to conclude that losing the commons is a social tragedy, because it would destroy a complex web of social relationships. Denying people’s access to the commons, would therefore deny them community, “*which is what the assertion of private property rights does.*” Therefore, Gudeman takes issue with the modernist idea that the commons can be managed

separately from the community. One cannot only have “expressly stated rights of access, because *by doing so objects are separated from subjects*”, reducing “*the social to self-interest*” and conflating “*community and market through the misapplication of the language of trade*.”

Communities, he argues, “*are not devised to serve market life*”. They are “*irreducibly social, they operate for themselves as they relate to self-interest and the world of trade*.” (p. 27). “*A key feature of competitive, market capitalism is making profits and accumulating them as capital, whereas the central process in communities is making and sustaining a commons*.” “*Capital and legacy, personal inheritance and heritage...may be exchanged for cash only at the expense of losing the patrimony, of severing the continuity of a community*.” (p. 33).

Without referring to small-scale fisheries, Gudeman captures the essence of the argument against the neoliberal paradigm of so-called ‘rights-based fishing’, a privatized property rights regime where fishing rights are for sale to the highest bidder in a market. You do not sell out the sacra, the commons, and the objects of which it is composed. If commons and community are inseparable as two sides of the same coin, you simply cannot divest yourself of only one side of it.

No community would do that unless it is determined to capitulate itself. “*Capital and legacy, personal inheritance and heritage... may be exchanged for cash only at the expense of losing the patrimony, of severing the continuity of a community*.” (p. 33). The closest example I can think of is Bugøynes, a community in North Norway – (see Apostle et al. 1998), who during the fisheries crisis in the early 1990s, put an advertisement in a national newspaper, announcing they were ready to resettle, but only as a community.

A fisheries crisis would make the community aware of the risk of destruction. An ITQ system works subtly and piecemealed – one quota-right at a time until the fishery as a base is gone and the fishing harbor is left idle (see chapter 1). The decision to sell out is left to the individual, not to the community. The individual is gaining while the community is losing. It is a process that gradually but unavoidably undermines a fisheries community’s ability to maintain itself because the ITQ system progressively takes away their capacity to protect itself as a commons. The tragedy is not a natural

occurrence, but a social calamity.

Defiling the sacra

Jacqueline Sunde's thesis (2014) about customary governance and law in South Africa in the Indigenous coastal community Dwesa Cwebe tells the story of a social tragedy of the commons. Sunde finished her thesis the same year as the SSF Guidelines were adopted. Her case-study falls within several articles that talk about social equity, respect of culture, secure tenure, and active involvement of local in Indigenous communities in resource management, and governance. Particularly relevant is the SSF Guidelines' article 5.4: *"States, in accordance with their legislation, and all other parties should recognize, respect and protect all forms of legitimate tenure rights, taking into account, where appropriate, customary rights to aquatic resources and land and small-scale fishing areas enjoyed by small-scale fishing communities"*.

According to Sunde, legislative reforms in post-Apartheid in the fisheries sector have failed to recognize customary systems of marine resource governance. These customary systems are still 'living law', i.e., yet actively practiced by community members in governing their affairs. Thus, the century old distortion of customary law continues into the present era when it conflicts with modern ideas and measures of natural resource conservation and management. In her case, the tragedy of the community is released by the introduction of an MPA's (Marine Protected Areas), leading to the eviction of people from their traditional homesteads and harvesting areas.

For the Dwesa-Cwebe residents, the sea is not only a source of food. It also has a principal place in their cosmology, culture, and everyday lives. *"It is a space that continues to hold a range of values and meanings for the local communities."* It is an area *"where the spirits of the ancestors and community meet and are given expression. It is where they go for their rituals, to pay respect to their ancestors, as they believe their ancestors reside there."* People have blended their spiritual relationship with the ancestors with Christianity. Thus, their entitlement to using natural resources goes via their ongoing respectful relationship with the ancestors. This they communicate in designed spots,

like on rocks in the water, which belong to, and are inherited within, families. As one informant explains:

“Between Mbashe mouth up to Shark Island, there are sacred places that are known where certain members from different clans, from different families in the community would go and talk to their ancestors who are residing inside the water – the spirits that are living in the water. When you are sleeping some of your ancestors would come and tell you that you must go and perform a ritual there, a custom there, and he would show you how to perform or else he would tell you must slaughter a goat and stay up to three days...” (p. 147)

On the pretext of natural conservation, forced removal is not a new experience for the people in this community. It happened again when the establishment of Dwesa-Cwebe Marine Reserve was proclaimed in 1975. A fence was erected around the reserve and families had to leave their homesteads. Their access to the sea and fishing grounds was also restricted. Not only did it bring them to the level of starvation. People were also denied access to their sacred sites. The rituals are considered an obligatory thing to do. Now, they are denied the opportunity to carry them out.

The MPA was imposed without prior consultation, and people therefore have little understanding of why it was introduced and why fishing restrictions are needed. Should they enter the area, they are chased away at gunpoint. One informant said: *“We continued to go there though especially at night... Now they shoot if they find you.” ... “Now we are living a very difficult life.”*

It is difficult to imagine a more blatant violation of the SSF Guidelines' article 3.1.2 Respect of cultures, which reads: *“recognizing and respecting existing forms of organization, traditional and local knowledge and practices of small-scale fishing communities, including indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities...”* Not only are local people denied access to their material commons, their fishing grounds. Their community sacra is also out of reach. A hotel inside the reserve was established before the declaration of the MPA, mostly to cater white tourists. The hotel is built on what were the burial sites

of the local community.

Losing sacra

For small-scale fisheries people, fish and fishing grounds that are held and harvested in common, are only a part of what Gudeman calls the community's 'base'. He wants us to think about all the things that communities hold in common, which together and without which there will be no community. The components of the commons form an integrated whole, an ecological, social, cultural, and spiritual 'system', which makes it vulnerable in a process that assumes the character of a domino-effect (see chapter 5) because one element cannot exist without the other. Losing one means toppling others because they are interrelated and interdependent, and eventually leaves the community with no base.

It is for this reason that Gudeman says that "*If we market the commons, ... we lose our communality, our community.*" *The value of living in a community, has no market price...*" (p. 163). Those rocks where people in Dwesa-Cwebe go to honor their ancestors or the monuments around which people gather to honor those fishers who lost their life at sea, have no price, because their significance cannot be measured in monetary terms. "*[T]he market can be allowed to exchange what the community does not need...*" Not so with its sacra.

"*[T]he conversation concerning how to divide our economic life between community and market must take place outside the market discourse. We ought not let ourselves be persuaded that the coin has only one side*", Gudeman holds (p. 163). This conversation must take place within the community among members who know what they value and do not want to lose. The community must decide for itself what their sacra is because it has intrinsic value and no price. If the SSF Guidelines can induce such a conversation, they would have served an important purpose.

III

Thriving Small-Scale Fisheries



Pulling the Baltic herring fyke nets. Kihnu Island, Estonia. (J. Plaan 2014)

Also about Communities

Neoliberal fisheries policies are bypassing the community. That is a bad idea and a lost opportunity.

In fisheries, the natural and the social system are intricately connected. How exactly the two systems connect and interact is knowledge we need to have to make small-scale fisheries become a reliable contributor to our economy, our food supply, and to the viability of coastal communities. Small-scale fisheries can be all this if we do the right things. The SSF Guidelines specify what these things are. That is why they are important.

The SSF Guidelines talk about the importance of having a holistic perspective on small-scale fisheries. For that, we must have insights from multiple academic disciplines, and bring them together to address their connectivity. But we must also bring out people's own perceptions and models, which are more holistic than those of scientists. Small-scale fisheries people cannot function unless they have knowledge about what is below and above water. They cannot specialize in one. Fish do not reflect on their experiences and opportunities. Neither do they think ahead. But fishers do it all the time because they depend on it.

Fisheries people also have arguments and opinions to bring to the governance table. They have a democratic right to speak, and the process requires

that they are heard. This means that fisheries management and governance must not only be interdisciplinary but also transdisciplinary, i.e., also beyond science. Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity are topics central to TBTI (Chuenpagdee & Jentoft 2018). We have not yet published a book specifically on communities, which is my topic here. But communities figure in more than 300 published case studies in about 80 countries globally.

Big questions

The concern for communities runs through the SSF Guidelines from beginning to end. Communities are mentioned 80 times. That is an invitation to talk about them; to explain what they are and what they do. How should we think about communities, how do we value them, and how do we make them more resilient and robust – for their own sake and for their natural environment? These are all big and important questions, and it is essential to find adequate answers.

When communities change, small-scale fisheries change with them, and when small-scale fisheries change, so do their communities. The process is mutual and iterative. And yet, at least in my part of the world, communities are a ‘missing link’ in the way governments think about and manage fisheries. For them, it is a one-way street. If the resource is healthy, the community is the same. The only thing to care about is the former, and the latter will take care of itself. This reasoning does not leave much room for social science.

Management usually follows a hierarchical, top-down approach. Interestingly, however, change is on the way. More participatory approaches to small-scale fisheries management and governance are being around the world (Chuenpagdee & Jentoft 2018), but the link to communities is still weak. The system is set up so that participant stakeholders are representing their sector and professions, not their communities. Communities are at best only indirectly represented but often forgotten.

It is a mistake to bypass the community because we then miss an important opportunity to make small-scale fisheries sustainable. Communities should be mobilized because they have relevant resources to offer in a management

context. Their knowledge and cultural values are relevant. Managers cannot ignore the local context they are stepping into and the lives they interfere with. No one knows that context better than those who live and work there. With the spatial turn we now see in marine management, like with the introduction of Marine Protected Areas and Marine Spatial Planning, it is more important than ever that communities are counted in.

Ignoring communities and local knowledge holders has a cost and a risk. We may easily come to manage fisheries in ways that hurt communities, eroding their economic base, weakening their own institutions and customary practices. By so doing, management undermines the capabilities of communities and exacerbates the problem management is trying to solve. Imposing solutions on local communities may trigger resistance. Conservation goals are easier to achieve when you have people with you rather than against you. People will resist if they expect that management measures are likely to hurt their communities.

How to make small-scale fisheries communities a part of the management effort is, however, easier said than done. Communities are often in conflict with themselves, also internally. They are often contested spaces, as Gene Barrett (2014) points out. They are not always well-integrated and harmonious. Instead, they may be ridden with antagonistic private interests, exploitative relationships, and domination of one group of people against the other. Not only does this make them vulnerable; their capacity for collective action may also be low. This is Fikret Berkes' topic in his TBTI book (2021). He says:

“Communities are not simple entities but show some of the characteristics of complex systems: they may be multi-level and may include competing groups and different interests. The notion of community is often used without an adequate critique of its geographic, political, and normative dimensions. Communities are often heterogeneous. There may be different interests by social group or ethnic group, not to mention differentiation by gender and age.” (p. 228)

Community-based fisheries management, which social scientists often advocate, is therefore no easy fix. As the argument goes, communities are often too disorganized and fragmented to take on management functions. Managers may therefore have a reason – or excuse – for not making communities a fisheries management instrument. They must be brought into order before they can assume management roles. As the SSF Guidelines point out, communities must organize. Their heterogeneity, complexity, instability, and internal divisiveness are challenges that must be dealt with anyway. But ignoring communities is a step in the wrong direction. Instead, building communities must be part of governance reform; by supporting their institutions they can be made ready for taking on management responsibilities.

Community survival

There is plenty of evidence, also from the TBTI research publications, of management systems having a dramatic effect on fisheries communities. Denmark is a case in point. As Jeppe Høst (2015) shows in a book in *Springer's Mare Series*, it took about five years after the ITQ system was introduced before half of their fishing harbors were left idle. Quota ownership had been concentrated on fewer communities and hands. Independent fishers had been transformed into what he calls 'captains of finance'. Particularly small-scale fishers were fishing on leased quotas, or become hired crew labor, thus splitting the traditional owner-operator status into two.

Another Danish book is similarly illuminating. Titled '*The Last Fishers. The Greatness and the Fall of the* (Danish – my addition and translation) *Fisheries*' (Kirk 2021), it tells the story of a previous fisheries minister. From his many observations of how Danish fisheries changed, are these:

"Among the actors who did not fish themselves but operated their business from ashore – they were not burdened with generations of fisher-community, but more interested in efficiency, profitability, and predictability. The landowners were business people (arm-chair fishers –

my insert) ...Even if people who fish from a vessel and people who 'fish' from the armchair on land lived from the same fish in the last instance, they viewed the world differently." (My translation from Danish)

According to the fisheries minister, the two types of fishers hold different ideas of what fishing is all about, what it is for, and why they are in it. Not only did it create a new type of fisher; it also changed the meaning and value of what it is to fish and be a fisher. A new conflict dimension emerged between the interests of large vs. small-scale fisheries competing for scarce resources and quotas and between two modes of thought.

Two meanings of community

Whereas Høst is talking of communities in a geographical sense – as ports, Kirk is talking about communities in sociological terms. You are from and live in a community which is a place, but you also have a set of relationships with relatives, friends, and neighbors where you live. For small-scale fisheries to be sustainable, their people need community in both a geographical (a place to live and operate from) and a sociological sense (in relation with others). In small-scale fisheries the two aspects of community are linked.

Fisheries sociologists like me are particularly interested in the relational dimensions of communities. Community is something we have together and cannot do without. It is something we create and perform together. In small-scale fisheries we must understand how community is spatially situated and impinges on what people do, how they live and think, and what they value. Small-scale fisheries are typically situated in local communities. It is possible to find exceptions as there are too many rules. Small-scale fisheries and small-scale fisheries communities are not the same all over the world even if there are things that make them similar. We do not have to agree on a definition that would work globally, and the SSF Guidelines do not have one. We know what they are when we see them and can act to improve what they are where they exist. The lack of definition does, however, complicate their quantification, like exactly how many millions of small-scale fisheries people

there are globally. We know they are in the millions, but exact estimates of how many are missing.

Fisheries communities are not always harmonious; people often conflict with each other. But as several theorists have argued, such Georg Simmel (1858–1918) (1967), George Herbert Mead (1962), and later Lewis Coser (1956) observed, conflict is a social relationship. Heated discussion around the dinner table confirms rather than dissolves the family. Conflicts can be divisive but also an integrating force, especially when people reach some form of consensus. Conflicts help to clarify which norms and values define the relationship.

The Golden Rule

A fisheries community is a place to grow up. It is also where you become a fisher. You mature as a small-scale fisher from working with others. It is in these relationships that you prove yourself and earn your dues. We find our foothold in interaction with others, like family and with people in the community. Communities are moral entities, as the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) pointed out. I become a mature, self-conscious moral person within the institutions that communities are made up of.

Kant argued that becoming an adult in a moral sense requires more than learning what moral norms exist in the community, about what is allowed and forbidden. By growing up, you must also internalize them and begin to impose them on yourself and on significant others. By principle, you live as you and your community institutions preach. You respond to the community largely but not necessarily subordinated, how other members of it responds, and as conventions and ‘organized attitudes’ of its institutions tell you. As George Herbert Mead (1962: 262) said, community norms do not have to be subversive of individuality, but may “*afford plenty of scope for originality, flexibility, and variety of such conduct.*” Still, individuals can have “*fully mature individualities or selves only in so far as they each of them reflects or prehends in his individual experience the organized social attitudes and activities which institutions embody or represent.*” In fact, you are not a full member of a community until

you do.

A mature person does not only think that norms and values serve a purpose. He or she considers them to be right. It is part of being socially responsible, including for the wellbeing of others. Kant believed that you do not become a mature person in this sense before you are about sixteen. Until then, you are only a 'being.' You are not mature enough to make your own moral judgment. You are not yet a 'person,' as Kant sees it. But you do not become a person in isolation from others but in the community of people with whom you interact and learn from, from what they tell you and how they live up to their own responsibilities.

Kant's famous 'Categorical Imperative' means that we should not think of other people, friends, and family – and crew members, indeed also strangers, as *means* but as *ends* in themselves, as if they have inherent value. It is when we have fully integrated this imperative in our mental constitution that we become autonomous, moral individuals, i.e., 'persons'. Our life before that is about moral education. He believed that one needs to be at least sixteen to fully grasp the value of this principle and to live by it yourself. A community where no one followed this principle would not be a place where we would want to live. It would make social relations unstable. We would feel we were being used. We would not want our leaders, like our fishing skipper, to violate this principle.

'Categorical' means that the imperative is unconditional – one lives by it no matter what. The Categorical Imperative is discernible in the 'Golden Rule', which is in all religions and cultures because we simply could not live together without it. We find it in the Bible (Matthew 7: 12): "*So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.*" Confucius, who lived five hundred years before Christ, ascribed to the rule. Communities would not work if members cared only about themselves. If people cannot live without the Golden Rule, we must assume that they would adopt it even in the absence of an external authority, a Leviathan as Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) would have it. They would find their life "*solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short*", and therefore a living nightmare. To avoid this happening, they would not be sitting idle, waiting for the state to intervene. One would expect the community to take

destiny into its own hands. They would engage collectively in self-governance, as Elinor Ostrom (1990) observed with her eight design principles for how the commons can be governed sustainably, equitably, and autonomously.

Thinking like a community

It may be smart to break rules, especially if you are the only one who does it, but it is morally questionable. If communities should fail in installing moral norms in fishers as they grow up, and become ‘persons’ in Kant’s sense, destructive fishing practices is to be expected. What crises, like natural disasters, do to the moral fabric of communities, is worth exploring. It is not only their physical infrastructure that gets broken. Do crises bring people in communities together or apart? Do they erode social norms?

The COVID-19 pandemic is now all over the place, also in the fisheries industry. It changed my day and the way I relate not just to strangers on the bus but also to family members. It is painful to know that having a grandchild on my lap involves a potential serious risk.

The pandemic is primarily regarded as a public health issue. People are indeed getting sick and many die, and vaccines are there to prevent it. But the COVID-19 crisis is also a sociological issue because it interferes with how we live together, interact, transact, share, and help each other. It affects communities because they are sites where we do all that, and fisheries communities are no exception. *Maritime Studies*, a journal of which I am chief editor, has been running a series of articles about how COVID-19 is affecting fisheries communities and value chains.

Pandemics affect individuals and because they are contagious, they spread and add up in local communities and in society. It also changes how communities work and thus what they are, with lasting transformational ways. If people cannot interact, they cannot have community. To tackle the COVID-19 challenge, as with other hazards, we need community and the morality that it harbors within its institutions. Without community, people are helplessly alone and confused, and therefore vulnerable. Without community, no Categorical Imperative.

ALSO ABOUT COMMUNITIES

To me, this is also a relevant perspective on COVID-19. Different perspectives make us see different things and are useful for understanding the often complex ‘nature’ of the problem and how to address it. Vaccines are important for people in small-scale fishers, but there is no vaccine for small-scale fisheries communities. Healing communities have no technical solution.

We must keep our distance from other people, wash our hands, and meet in other ways – at least until the pandemic is under control. But we also should mobilize our communities and their institutions. We must not let COVID-19 weaken the institutions that make communities into more than an aggregate of people who happen to reside there. Strong institutions, as is UN Sustainable Development Goal 16, make communities robust and resilient, which they must be when crises hits. This is a time to build stronger, more robust, and resilient communities, and to ‘build forward better’ when the pandemic is over and allow the communities to recreate their sociality.

Community as Base

Indigenous peoples depend on the survival of their distinct culture, and their culture has a basis in their communities.

Indigenous people also fish. Fish is part of their food intake, economy, way of life, and by that, their distinct culture. If not always materially poor, at least not in an absolute sense, they have often been outside mainstream fisheries politics and therefore ignored. National governance systems are rarely designed to support their distinct cultures. If not marginalized, Indigenous fisheries have been lumped in with the rest of the industry with no appreciation for their distinct cultures, needs, and human rights.

In some instances, like with the Indigenous peoples of Nicaragua's Caribbean coast where I worked for years, they are often among the poorest of the poor. Their customary institutions and tenure rights are insecure, and encroachment of their traditional territories is commonplace. In comparison, the Norwegian Indigenous Sami, which find themselves in a much better material and political situation than their Nicaraguan counterparts. In both instances, however, they are in a constant struggle to keep their communities secure, territories under control, the harvest system healthy, and their culture intact (Jentoft et al. 2018).

Legal instruments

For these reasons, and as supplement to existing international legislation aiming to protect Indigenous peoples such as ILO 169⁴, the UN Declaration for the Rights of Peoples (UNDRIP) saw the light of day when adopted by the General Assembly in 2007 – after having been decades in the making. Although UNDRIP does not talk explicitly about fisheries, small or large, as did drafts circulating before the final adoption (Jentoft 2003), it does have language that applies to them. In an annex to the document, the General Assembly “recognize” the fact “*that indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests.*” (United Nations 2007)

In Article 26.1, the conclusion is: “*Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.*” Article 26.3: “*States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.*”

In the Tenure Guidelines, FAO brings the UNDRIP down to the level of land, fisheries, and forestry (FAO 2012). In twelve articles in Section 9, the special needs of Indigenous peoples are spelled out. It is confirmed that state and non-state actors “*should acknowledge that land, fisheries and forests have social, cultural, spiritual, economic, environmental and political value to indigenous peoples and other communities with customary tenure systems.*” They also emphasize the right of self-governance, effective participation of all members, promoted through their local or traditional institutions, including in the case of collective tenure systems. It is the responsibility of states to recognize and protect the tenure rights of Indigenous communities legally

⁴ Such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention of Biological Diversity.

and otherwise.

The rights of Indigenous peoples are frequently mentioned in the SSF Guidelines. Respect of Indigenous peoples' cultures appear among the guiding principles. *“Existing forms of organization, traditional and local knowledge and practices of small-scale fishing communities”* should be recognized. Article 5.5 reads: *“States should recognize the role of small-scale fishing communities and indigenous peoples to restore, conserve, protect and comanage local aquatic and coastal ecosystems.”* Article 11.6: *“All parties should ensure that the knowledge, culture, traditions and practices of small-scale fishing communities, including indigenous peoples, are recognized and, as appropriate, supported, and that they inform responsible local governance and sustainable development processes.”*

Legal instruments such as these are important but not sufficient to eradicate poverty and vulnerability and to their political mainstreaming. They confirm rights and create opportunities. However, if they were enough, the Norwegian Sami would not still have to fight for their territorial, resource, and cultural rights. Norway has championed, ratified and endorsed all international instruments pertaining to Indigenous peoples. And yet their land and fishery rights are still an unsettled and ongoing issue. New challenges are also appearing on the horizon. With the Blue Economy at their doorstep, Sami small-scale fisheries people can no longer take for granted things they could previously. When fish farms, owned and operated by non-Sami corporations, are moving into their traditional fishing grounds, they have legitimate reason to object, but have no secure, legal right to reject. Ethnic conflicts over space and resources then appear.

Indigenous small-scale fisheries peoples in Nicaragua have a legal tool that their Norwegian counterparts would envy. Art. 33, in Law 445 (Law No. 445 2014). *“The indigenous and ethnic communities of the Atlantic coast, islands and keys have the exclusive right to take advantage of maritime resources for community and artisanal fishing, within three miles adjacent to the coastline and twenty-five miles around the adjacent keys and islands.”* However, the problem for the Indigenous peoples of Nicaragua is not the lack of supportive legislation but ineffective implementation and enforcement. Their territories are still up for grabs. They also suffer from a level of corruption and crime, which their

Sami counterparts are largely free from (Acosta 2021; Corruption Perceptions Index 2023). Gonzalez and Jentoft (2010) present an example of Nicaraguan coastal communities struggling to secure their access to traditional fishing areas in face of tourist development.

Governance

In Norway, the no-one's property – 'common pool' – of ocean fishing grounds and resources is the reigning legal principle. This principle makes the Norwegian state government the sovereign. The idea of existing Sami tenure rights has so far been rejected. Nonetheless, Article 108 in the Norwegian Constitution establishes that "*The authorities of the state shall create conditions enabling the Sami people to preserve and develop its language, culture and way of life.*"

In 2014 by government decree, the 'Fjord Fisheries Committee' was established with a mandate to look after Sami interests. Its legal status is defined in article 8.b in the Living Marine Resources Act (2009). The Committee ability to function as an instrument of securing the sustainability of Sami fisheries, is less than certain. Its restricted mandate and power are issues of concern in the Sami Parliament. It may end up in international courts should the Sami Parliament decide to bring it in there (Jentoft & Ulvsdatter Sørensen 2018).

Notably, a fisheries governance system that works for the Sami small-scale fisheries needs more than sound principles and robust institutional designs. It must also work daily for the decisions that determine actual resource allocations in local situations. The Fjord Fisheries Committee may well have formal representation in the national fisheries governance system, but their advice may still be ignored. A governance system for Sami small-scale fisheries must, in other words, function at all three governance orders, as Kooiman (2003) calls them; at the meta (principles), second (institutions), and first order (routine decision-making).

With article 108 in the Norwegian Constitution, the meta-order is secured; the Norwegian government does indeed have a legal duty to ensure that Sami

culture and society have what it takes for them to thrive. The Fjord Fisheries Committee institution is a reluctant second-order mechanism to secure Sami fisheries interests. It does not fulfill the criteria of co-management, which was proposed by a public task form in the preparatory legal formation process. Norwegian authorities are still in control. Therefore, the under-performance at first order should not come as a surprise. The Fjord Fisheries Committee is struggling to get the well-intended meta-order principles to make the positive difference for Sami small-scale fisheries communities that it was set up to achieve.

Social basis

Article 108 in the Norwegian Constitution is interesting for its emphasis on creating the conditions necessary for developing Sami “*language, culture and way of life*”. It does not specify what these conditions are, but there is a collective understanding, not just among the Sami, that they are material. In other words, to secure and develop Sami “*language, culture and way of life*”, traditional Sami industries must be sustained. The Sami are famous for their reindeer pastoralism (see for instance Paine 1994). Small-scale fjord fisheries are regarded as the other traditional Sami industry (Paine 1965). Consequently, to uphold Sami Indigenous culture in a broad sense, these two industries must prosper. That, however, requires more than enabling legislation. It would also be naïve to assume that Sami small-scale fisheries would be secured by a generous quota allocation. Sami fisheries would not thrive unless Sami communities do so and that requires more than intervention through the fisheries management system. Although the material basis is essential, the social basis is no less important. Indeed, the relationships are complex, as illustrated in Figure 10.1.

COMMUNITY AS BASE

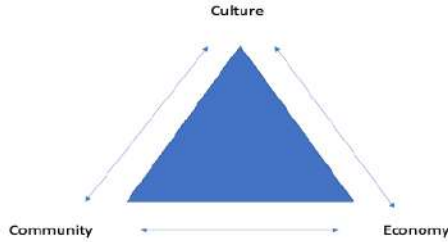


Figure 10.1. Societal institutions.

The survival of the Sami as a distinct culture has a material basis in their traditional economic practices. But there is more to the equation than that. As Johan Klemet Hætta Kalstad (2020) has argued about reindeer pastoralism, the arrow goes in both directions. There is a traditional way of organizing and practicing reindeer pastoralism deeply embedded in Sami culture. It matters for Sami culture what kind of reindeer pastoralism is practiced: a large scale, industrialized model replacing the family type would not work. This argument could clearly be extended to include Sami fisheries. Any kind of fishery, like large-scale and corporation driven fisheries, would not function as material basis for Sami Indigenous culture as we know it.

Communities also belong in the equation as shown in Figure 10.1. Sami small-scale fisheries communities must be sustained not only for their own sake but also for how they contribute to a functioning Sami small-scale fishery and a distinct Indigenous Sami culture. As I argued in other chapters of this book, communities are not just outcomes of small-scale fisheries. They are the social basis of small-scale fisheries. Healthy small-scale fisheries need healthy small-scale fisheries communities. In other words, to sustain a viable fishery, communities must be sustained. Thus, the arrow runs in both directions; the community and small-scale fishery reinforce each other. Not only are small-scale fisheries communities unimaginable without a small-scale fishery but the opposite is also true. The link between community and culture is no less real than between the economy and culture.

Bulwark

Culture is something people have together and live out in social relations embedded in communities. It is alive when these relations and interactions are thriving, and communities provide the setting for them. If Sami communities fall apart, their culture will as well. Consequently, the small-scale fishery would also falter. It will be difficult to maintain their distinct Indigenous languages; school can never replace community and family. Sami communities are a bulwark for Indigenous culture to be swallowed by majority and dominant pressure. Without thriving Sami communities, Sami culture will only remain in museums and the language preserved in dictionaries, like what happened with Latin.

As with their Nicaraguan Indigenous counterparts, some Sami languages are on the brink of disappearing, which requires support to education. Language is maintained if Sami communities and culture are intact. Still, losing the language is a blow to Indigenous identity. Sami culture needs direct support, and not just via their local communities. The annual Riddu Riđđu Coastal Sami festival (Riddu Riđđu n.d.) has become an important event and cultural marker for coastal Sami, especially for the young Sami.

The triangle in Figure 10.1. illustrates that the maintenance of the Sami as a distinct Indigenous people involves a complex set of relationships, mutually reinforcing processes, some of which are not easily seen by the open eye. I suggest that this is a general phenomenon, not unique for Sami small-scale fisheries. There are direct and indirect links that work across scales and through institutions that have both manifested and latent functions. Culture, economy, and community are not distinct spheres. Instead, they are nurturing each other. Focusing on just one axis and one arrow in the figure provides a too simplistic idea of what it takes to make small-scale fisheries peoples' culture alive – be they Indigenous or not. All three institutional spheres in Figure 10.1. play a role because they find their often-subtle ways into each other.

Constructive collaboration

With arrows running in both directions from each corner, the triangle suggests the existence and potential for synergistic outcomes. Milgrom and Roberts (1992) define constructive interaction as a circumstance when doing more of one activity increases the return on other related activities. It is the extras that mutually supportive activities bring when considered together, as if $1 + 1$ can be more than 2.

As a strategy for synergy, a systemic perspective is required, with the eye on how intervention into one corner of the triangle may trigger change throughout. What you do in one corner should be planned in such a way that it transpires into other corners. Each of the arrows must be part of a more comprehensive and integrated strategy where synergy is aimed (Fernández-Pascual et al. 2018). Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries demands nothing less.

Synergy is ‘tested’ when there is a crisis, be it economic, culturally or communally caused within the triangle or from outside pressures that trigger a destructive dynamic. The systemic nature of small-scale fisheries is a strength but potentially also a liability. When deficiency occurs in one corner, the remedy may well reside in another. When the economy fails, intervention may be required in the community or in the cultural sphere – and vice versa. Synergy may occur in a virtuous circle, but interdependence also brings risk of viciousness. If the Blue Economy can build the former and avert the latter, small-scale fisheries should welcome it, but only then.

Planning

Planning for synergy-creation must commence with an analysis of how relations and interactions form circles in the triangle and how institutional arrangements facilitate and shape them. This is what we aimed to do in the collaborative project between the Sami Center at my university and URRACAN University in Nicaragua, with IREMADES (Instituto de Recursos Naturales Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible) as our working

partner. The project title reflected our thinking around the triangle: 'Cultural revitalization, environment, and natural resources of the indigenous peoples of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua'.

Our perspective also informed our two research anthologies (Gonzalez et al. 2006; Koskinen et al. 2008) and in the ca. 100 student theses that came out of the project. Students investigated numerous social, cultural, and environmental issues, such as local ecological knowledge, governance, management, and environmental planning, marketing of local products, gender issues and the role of women, food security, agricultural practices, community fisheries and forestry, social values and worldviews, poverty alleviation, land rights issues, forest conservation, medical plants, language revitalization and transmission, and political activism, to name some.

Some URACCAN students came to Tromsø to enroll in our university's International Fisheries Management Master program. We also supported a few students to pursue their education in other countries, such as Canada. In addition to the academic assistance and exchange, we supported a local museum, a school, a community hall, language education through textbook development, and the making of community dresses and musical instruments.

On the Atlantic coast, Indigenous languages need revitalization and rescue. But it also transpires into natural resource management and conservation. Local ecological knowledge is stored in Indigenous language and therefore risks getting lost with the language. We worked on the urgent land and marine tenure issues. When Indigenous peoples must stand up in court and fight for their rights, they must do so with solid empirical proof of their traditional use of natural resources and territories. We were hoping for synergies that would support their legal battles, and we worked with a local law office on their legal claims.

With URRACAN, we helped to build research and educational capacity. We learned from comparing the Norwegian and the Nicaraguan situation. Indigenous peoples in our two countries work under very different conditions, but their struggle to secure their culture, communities, and traditional industries are remarkably similar. Learning is not a one-way street, from the north to the south, from an economically resourceful country to one that

must cope with poverty. Norway ranks at the top of the Human Development Index in 2022, while Nicaragua is number 128 among the countries (Country Economy n.d.). Still, there are lessons to be learned and inspiration to be found by comparing the two situations.

We did decent work over the seven years the project lasted. It convinced me that the triangle is good to think with also in other contexts, like with the implementation of the SSF Guidelines globally. But I am not sure whether we built something of lasting value. Community development, cultural revitalization and economic growth are never a quick fix. Their interactions and mutual reinforcement are an ongoing challenge that does not go away. Synergy is always something to strive for, and it sometimes happens unexpectedly, because it appears in different sections of the triangle than where the strategy was initiated. It is therefore a learning process.

At least we did something for the students, which they will always benefit from. Education transforms individuals. But there is no direct link between what individuals learn and what communities get out of it, unless communities value what students learn, and students want to implement what they have learned in the community. In poor countries with few employment opportunities for educated people, there is always a risk that students will take their newly acquired knowledge and move elsewhere. Local communities cannot afford young brain-drain.

The Norwegian Sami have advanced, also with the support of my university. But it took time, hard work, and patience to achieve. There are still things that remain to be accomplished also for the Sami living in a country with considerable wealth and a well-functioning welfare system. Even if their members are secure, Sami small-scale fisheries communities are not. Their sustainability is uncertain as their culture and traditional industries are under pressure. The pressure is also felt by their Nicaraguan Indigenous counterparts and by Indigenous peoples all over the world. Therefore, the SSF Guidelines should be commended for mentioning them.

Creative Destruction?

One does not save small-scale fisheries by destroying their communities!

According to the Roman author Plinius, North Norway, where I was born and have lived my life, is Ultima Thule – the end of the world, with the midnight sun, the dark winters, and the harsh climate. From there on, no more land, only ocean until the North Pole. Norway is at the same latitude as Alaska and Siberia. Tromsø, the city where my university is located, is 69 degrees north. Compared with other areas at similar latitude, one would expect an extreme climate. However, the Gulf Stream makes all the difference. It brings temperate water to our shores, with ocean temperatures between 5-10 degrees above other areas at similar latitude. January temperatures in Tromsø average -3.8 °C, in July 11.8 °C. In other words, not so cold, but not so warm either.

Facing the Atlantic and the Barents Sea, Norway is blessed with rich marine resources. The fishery supports livelihoods and a unique culture in coastal and fjord communities. People fish much more than they can eat. More than 90 percent of fish are exported. Traditionally, most important commodity was the dried cod, the stockfish, from the Lofoten area that found markets especially in Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Even the Vikings traded it.

When the Venetian sailing captain Querini shipwrecked at Røst, the

western-most Lofoten island, in 1432 (Pietro Querini 2023), he became not just folklore. The dramatic incident and his three months stay began the trade links between northern Norway and Italy that still live on. The Lofoten stockfish is a celebrated part of Italian cuisine (Barbera Agliano n.d.).

Mark Kurlansky's '*Cod: The Fish that Created the World*' (1989) fits the Norwegian story. The journalist Frank A. Jenssen was inspired by Kurlansky when publishing a book with the same title, only replacing 'World' with 'Norway' (Jenssen 2012). The fisheries industry was a focus of our nation building, it framed our foreign politics, and therefore a governance issue from early on.

Crises

As do numerous coastal communities around the world where alternative employment is often hard to find, Norwegian coastal communities stand and fall with the fishery. Managed sustainably, fisheries can be the future backbone that they always were, despite ups and downs, which are endemic to natural resources like fish. In the early 1990s, the cod stock was at a record low, and the fishery came near to a halt (Jentoft 1993). Unlike the crises that hit the northern cod fishery in Atlantic Canada around that time, the stock, however, recovered sooner than expected. The fishery was back to business before the crisis did much damage to fisheries communities. The crises inspired a research project where we compared the situation in the two countries. Findings are reported in the book '*Community, State, and Market on the North Atlantic Rim: Challenges to Modernity in Fisheries*', published by University of Toronto Press (Apostle et al. 1998).

Here, we broadly examined the implications of the crises on markets, resource management, communities, and small-scale business development. We assumed that crisis management would bring policy and institutional change but reinforce an already negative trend in the fishing industry in the two countries.

As noted on the book back page, "*the present development trends hold strong pressures for fisheries to shred all but the economic ethos and to leave coastal*

communities and cultures behind, concentrating on rational utilization of fish stocks.” “At the same time, it would turn fisheries into an insignificant sector, bringing good incomes and safe employment to handful of people, but hardly anything else.”

Now, a quarter of a century after the book came out, we may safely conclude that this was not an inaccurate projection. In Norway, we managed to save the stocks and create an economically prosperous industry, albeit at the expense of small-scale fisheries communities, especially in the northern coastal areas.

Thus, for a nation officially aiming at securing a decentralized coastal settlement structure and a thriving fisheries economy, the success story is dubious. Goals were reached in biological and economic terms, whose importance should not be underestimated. But from a social perspective, the outcome is less impressive. As professor Ottar Brox writes in the foreword (Apostle et al. 1998: ix), there is a general lesson here: *“Villages and industries may grow in harmony, one serving the other, but unfortunately, one cannot take for granted that what is good for the fishing industry is good for Fogo Island or the Varanger Peninsula.”*

A prospering fishing industry may well coincide with a depressive state of coastal communities. It may also be a cause of the demise of communities. Fish harvested and industrially processed onboard large factory trawlers, and shipped directly abroad via so-called ‘freezer hotels’, like the one located in the Tromsø port, is hardly in the interest of small-scale fisheries communities. The distribution of the total allowable catch is a zero-sum game – more to the trawler fleet means less to the small-scale fishing fleet.

Quota system

The cod crisis left a lasting effect on the management system, which until the late 1980s was ‘open access’ for the coastal fleet. Introduced in 1990, to reduce fishing effort, a new quota system closed the fishery commons (Hersoug 2005). It helped to save the cod stock, but it was at odds with the interests of small-scale fisheries communities, especially when quotas were allowed to be bought and sold along with the boat. Since then, fishing rights

have been concentrated on fewer and fewer hands and communities (Johnsen & Jentoft 2018), as noted in chapter 9 in the case of Denmark. It reached a point where the government realized they had to push the brakes, by limiting how much quota a single person or company may hold. It helped but did not solve the problem from a community perspective. In 2020, a report released by the Office of the Auditor General recommended that the government must consider measures to ensure that small-scale fisheries maintain a role in securing coastal communities and to assess how the quota system contributes to this goal (Riksrevisjonen 2020).

The negative impact of the ITQ system on small-scale fisheries communities is a foretold story. To remain in fisheries and secure a reliable livelihood, access the resources must be secured, as the SDG 14b and the SSF Guidelines point out. ITQ systems do not do that. Instead, they make communities more insecure, as Brox writes in our book foreword:

“The introduction of property rights in fish stocks may solve certain over-capacity problems in areas where fishing is but one of a whole range of economic opportunities. To regions like Finnmark (in North Norway, my insert) and Newfoundland, however, with whole communities and regional populations with no alternatives to the rich marine resources, the opportunities of outside interests to buy their resource base are bound to imply serious social problems – not taken into consideration by many consultants to the governments. Transferring the prescriptions that may work (at any rate on paper) in Seattle or Vancouver to areas where fisheries are embedded in the culture and organization of local communities can lead nowhere but to rural depression and impoverished villages, permanent dependence upon transfer payments, or in the best cases, to depopulation and ghost towns – if anybody at the center needs the peripheral population. Certain schools of economic thought are today more of a menace to coastal communities than foreign fleets, parasitic middlemen, and failing export markets ever were.” (Apostle et al. 1998, p. x-xi)

In the book, we argued for the community to be the receiver and owner of quota rights rather than a private individual. We found inspiration in community quota experiments in Nova Scotia and in Alaska (NOAA Fisheries. n.d.). We claimed that it would be a potent means of keeping small-scale fishing communities intact and that governments must not only want the goal but also implement the means of achieving it (Jentoft 2001). So far, they have been dithering.

Shoes to fill

Ottar Brox (b. 1932) is a tower in Norwegian in social science. He was professor of sociology at the University of Tromsø from 1972 to 1984, with a history of specializing in rural studies. In his later career, he was with the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research. From 1973 to 1977, he was also a member of Parliament. I was proud and happy to be offered his position when he resigned from University of Tromsø, but his shoes were bigger than I could fill, so my only option was to fill up my own footwear.

A native to Senja, an island to the south of Tromsø, Ottar drew on his homeplace experience in his academic life. Although broadening his research interests throughout his career, he never abandoned his home. The lessons he learned from the people he grew up with stayed with him. The peasant economy and coastal lifestyle has been a persistent interest of his as he expanded his research to communities around the north Atlantic. He also brought it to Newfoundland, where he authored an influential book titled *'Newfoundland Fishermen in the Age of Industry: A Sociology of Economic Dualism'* (Brox 1972). Here, he demonstrated the value of comparative research methodology. By getting to know Canada, he also learned about Norwegian fisheries.

Not only is he known as a prolific writer about a wide range of topics, but also for his academic prose. His observations, insights and perspectives generated a new paradigm for rural studies at the University of Tromsø and elsewhere. The research questions he raised were out of the ordinary. In his latest book (2016), titled *'Towards a Post-Industrial Class Society?'* (På vei

mot et post-industrielt klassesamfunn?), he asks why class differences are less in Norway than in most other countries. What made Norway a more equal society? It did not just happen by itself. The answer is complex, but he emphasizes the lasting impact of strong rural communities based on small-scale fisheries and farming, and the institutions that were created for their maintenance.

Rural life

Ottar Brox is, however, most known for his first book *‘What Happens in North-Norway?’* (Hva skjer i Nord-Norge?). When it first came out in 1966, it created a furor. It changed the way we think and talk about small-scale fisheries communities in Norway. The book arrived in a political context where the government determined to industrialize the fisheries sector and facilitate a more centralized settlement structure. To the government at the time, small-scale, community embedded, subsistence-oriented fishery was seen as inefficient and out of date. North Norway’s contribution to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) was out of proportion to the rest of the country.

In coastal communities, people typically combined small-scale fishing and farming in a household-based and subsistence economy where women took care of the children and animals while menfolk fished. Fishing took place in the winter months away from home. Thus, the men were free to join in the summer harvesting. The government succeeded in convincing people to specialize in one of the two activities, fishing, or farming, and by that increasing their economic efficiency. Moreover, the government also provided incentives for people leaving these primary industries to resettle in urban areas.

Brox took issue with this policy, arguing that if people could choose between the traditional way of life in small-scale fisheries communities and the modern, urban alternative, they would choose the former. In his book, he explains the rationality of small-scale fisheries people’s choices. He explored the benefits and costs of staying or leaving. People’s ideas of where to live and how to earn a living, he insisted, must be seen relative to their contextual

opportunities and restrictions. Their values and preferences are culturally and socially nurtured in communities, not by social values and needs that steer them in the direction of city life. Besides, they would have to give up their subsistence economy, which would come with a cost.

Brox noted that for a subsistence economy, GDP does not offer an adequate measurement of people's well-being. Low on cash is not tantamount with poverty when they can produce their own food. The fisheries minister at that time opined that small-scale fisheries people were foolish to keep on with their traditional adaptation. Brox argued what they would gain or lose by giving it up. North Norway was not as backward as the GDP suggested and the government believed.

Things that were cheap in the rural community, like housing, were expensive in the city. So why should they prefer the inferior alternative? Who would prefer to work on an industrial trawler away from home for weeks instead of in small-scale, community-based fishing where they could sleep at home every night? Small-scale fishing was a more flexible and attractive way of life, which allowed people to keep up their small family farm. Their unit was the household, the business enterprise. The small-scale fishing boat is a means of production just like the tractor and the grass mower are to the farmer.

Brox alluded to this issue in the forward to our book:

"The modern filleting machine demands a predictable volume of material every day, whereas to the coastal population, the sea is a garden or a farm - to be harvested cyclically. Nobody expects a farmer to drive a harvesting combine every day throughout the year."

Great scientists are remembered for their visions and perspectives, their deep insights, and for what they argued. They ask questions that no one has asked before. They introduce concepts that change the way we talk about things. They make us see the world, and ourselves, in new ways. They change the way we think and how we act.

Brox argued that instead of thinking about North Norway as made up of

industries, we should look at the region as composed of local communities. That changed the development paradigm. My book here is in many ways a result of his perspective. In my view, it needs restating, especially with neoliberal ideology now making pathways into the fishing industry.

What is good for the industry is not necessarily good for the community. There is more to community survival than employment. They thrive socially and culturally. They must be attractive as a place to both work and live. A non-functioning Røst would not arrange the annual Querini festival and opera (Querini n.d.). But the festival also helps the community function, and by that its fishery. The celebration of its historic roots and cultural significance is helping to keep the fishing industry and the stockfish trade intact, and by that the community. It also attracts tourists, which creates jobs.

Communities and markets

A healthy community keeps giving. It has a purpose beyond the support they give to industry. The question is not whether we can ‘afford’ to keep small-scale fisheries communities alive. People do not live in markets. Communities are home, where people have their roots and families. They need jobs, but they also need lasting relationships with others. Those they find in the community, not in markets.

The notion that we should look at North Norway, or any other region where small-scale fisheries exist, as constituted of communities rather than industries, makes us appreciate values that are not measured by GDP. These values are essential for making vulnerable small-scale fisheries communities viable and people satisfied and safe. In North Norway, small-scale fisheries and farming provided food security and food sovereignty for families. They did not have to earn money to buy these things. They were not wealthy but managed. They were self-employed and free from a dominant employer.

For Brox, killing small-scale fisheries communities for the sake of economic growth is not ‘creative destruction’, as Schumpeter (1942) coined it. It is just destruction straight and simple. Their destruction does not need a crisis, as the one Norway and Canada experienced with the cod-stock in the early

1990s. The crisis does not have to happen abruptly. It may be a slow process that goes unnoticed, with shifting baselines. Step-by-step, it is taking away what really matters to people: their home, their heritage, and their way of life. Norway has welfare state to pick up those that lose their income. Not all countries have that luxury. There, the alternative for people left out of small-scale fisheries is the urban slum.

Since the destruction of small-scale fisheries is a gradual process, it may feel like a natural development and a win-win-win. Abandoning your homestead, selling your boat if you can find a buyer, and moving to the city may feel like freedom, but only if you have the choice. When your community is falling apart around you, you do not. You cannot afford to stay behind when friends and family leave because you need them.

As Ottar Brox posited, people make choices under conditions. Their preferences cannot simply be assumed from the choices they make. By controlling the conditions under which people make choices, you control their choice – like whether to stay or leave their community. If you take away small-scale fishers' access to the resources, you force them to choose differently, but not freely. We should not therefore only focus on the choice people make, but also on the choice they do not have and those who have it in their power to take it away from them.

Empowerment as Cause and Effect

Small-scale fisheries suffer from unequal power relations. Their collective capacity to fend for themselves must be strengthened, and there are ways to do it.

As the coasts are getting increasingly crowded in the era of the Blue Economy, competition for space and resources intensifies. The coast becomes an arena of social and political conflict, changing whatever balance of power that existed to begin with. With Blue Growth, new expansive and powerful actors are entering, making the playing field more tilted. Small-scale fisheries are being pushed aside. Their fishing grounds are invaded, their beaches and dwelling areas occupied and gentrified. There is enough evidence to claim that this is not a future scenario; it is already happening in many parts of the world.

Thus, the SSF Guidelines have reason to worry about the marginalization of small-scale fisheries and how unequal power relations play a role in the process. Several guidelines' articles refer to the underdog status of small-scale fisheries people and that their empowerment is essential to bring them out of poverty. The preface says:

"Small-scale fishing communities ... commonly suffer from unequal

power relations. In many places, conflicts with large-scale fishing operations are an issue, and there is increasingly high interdependence or competition between small-scale fisheries and other sectors. These other sectors can often have stronger political or economic influence, and they include: tourism, aquaculture, agriculture, energy, mining, industry and infrastructure development.” (p. X)

Small-scale fisheries people must therefore, according to the SSF Guidelines, be equipped to withstand the pressure from outsiders encroaching on their territories and by that threatening their livelihoods, food security, and ways of life. For instance, article 6.1 concludes: “*Due attention to social and economic development may be needed to ensure that small-scale fishing communities are empowered and can enjoy their human rights.*” Power is an enabling force that small-scale fisheries people are missing but should have.

What exactly do people have when they have power? Chapter 19 defines what power is but does not say much about empowerment, i.e., how to get it. Power is an entitlement, something you have more or less of, whereas empowerment is the process of achieving it. Empowerment is both a cause and effect. It is a resource in an ongoing struggle to build a better life and a stronger community. Coming from a marginalized position, like small-scale fisheries people do, empowerment is a process of social struggle. It does not come to small-scale fisheries by itself but something people must fight for. They must overcome some hurdles within their own ranks and in relation to other stakeholders in the coastal zone, including the government. The SSF Guidelines have ideas of how to jump these hurdles, among them building alliances with civil society organizations and academic institutions.

What is empowerment?

The empowerment concept has an intriguing history and a rich literature, first appearing in the feminist and the civil rights’ movement in the 1960s. It also became a concept of the critical pedagogy movement and a motivation for adult education whose key person was the Brazilian pedagogue and

philosopher Paolo Freire. In his famous book *'Pedagogy of the Oppressed'* (1971), he argued that a 'culture of silence' is created among oppressed people. Social inequity generates a negative and destructive self-image that keeps them passive when they should be pro-active. *"The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption."* (Paulo Freire 2023: 39). Education helps give oppressed people skills they need to be effective in the struggle for justice. It will enhance their self-esteem and self-worth. It will boost their confidence. Freire's book achieved iconic status and is among the most cited texts in social science. It was an inspiration when I published a paper in 2005 in *Marine Policy* (Jentoft 2005) about fisheries co-management, which I will draw on in the following.

The empowerment concept has been widely embraced by psychologists and health professionals where it is associated with resilience. Swift and Levin talk (1987) about it as a 'mental health technology'. It also helps people to speak forcefully and convincingly in defense of their interest. Empowerment is improving small-scale fisheries people's possibilities and capabilities to lead a life in security and dignity. It enhances their opportunities and abilities to take responsibility for designing institutions that require their experience-based knowledge to achieve social, economic, and environmental goals.

Thus, Torre (1986) terms empowerment as *"a process through which people become strong enough to participate within, share in the control of and influence, events and institutions affecting their lives."* Likewise, Rappaport (1987) defines empowerment more briefly as *"a process, a mechanism by which people, organization and communities gain mastery of their affairs."* Empowerment works at the level of the individual and their community, and beyond. It does not stop at the community border but involves collective action among communities, groups, and social classes. This again requires institutions and organizations.

Assumptions

Empowerment is commonly thought of as a zero-sum game: when some gain power, others must necessarily lose it. The game is about outmaneuvering the other. It assumes that there is a given amount of power, and that empowerment implies its redistribution – i.e., taking power from some and giving it to some other. But it is also possible to think about it as a collective resource, that the total amount of power can be increased. In other words, empowerment is not just about redistribution from A to B but something that makes them both more resourceful and capable. Therefore, empowerment is not just the disarmament of the powerful. It may just be the help to create the social order that both must have to be effective. Community development, environmental conservation, and social cohesion are about growing together.

Empowerment as personal growth is not a distributional issue. When a community member gains competency and confidence through education, the community also gains. Thus, individual empowerment is contained within community empowerment. It is a characteristic of a group or a community. It is also to be expected that empowerment is a trickle-down process: when the community is empowered, for instance by means of strong and well-functioning institutions, individual members are empowered too.

Small-scale fisheries people are actively engaged in building and running such institutions. Then, they acquire knowledge and experience, which makes them better equipped to tackle individual and collective challenges, at a psychological and cognitive level. Participatory governance is a learning opportunity and process. Zero-sum does not apply to building competence, confidence, and trust. When shared, knowledge benefits the individual as well as the group. Sharing knowledge is not like sharing an apple. It makes the apple grow. It makes collective action and community development, and hence empowerment, possible – and *vice versa*.

The efficacy of small-scale fisheries people in their struggle for power is greater when they work together. This also applies to inter-community relations. Alone, individuals and communities stand weaker in their fight for social justice in the coastal zone if they are alone. Wallerstein (1992)

describes empowerment as a “social action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities towards the goals of increased individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of community life, and social justice.”

Thus, empowerment for marginalized and oppressed small-scale fisheries people living in a ‘culture of silence’ requires measures that work for communities as well as for individual members. It involves broad initiatives targeting both. The good news is that since such initiatives are mutually reinforcing, one thing does not have to start or be complete before the other begins. Measures to empower communities and members may preferably go hand in hand. But even if they do not, they will have a systemic effect and be an enabling force. Figure 12.1. shows their perceived interconnectivity in the dynamic process of empowerment.

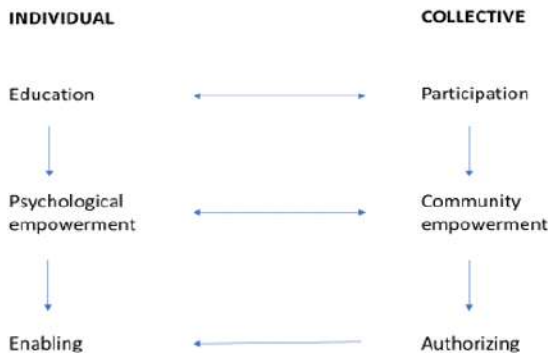


Figure 12.1. The empowerment process.

Empowerment tools

The very fact that the SSF Guidelines exist is empowering for small-scale fisheries people. They now have a reference point, a global consensus endorsed by governments, and a concrete instrument to use in their struggle for their

rights and interests, which they did not have prior to 2014. Implementing the SSF Guidelines, bringing them down to the local communities where they belong, would further the empowerment process, making them a reality beyond the 'speech act' that they are.

The SSF Guidelines did not fall like manna from heaven. They resulted from a decade long struggle among small-scale fisheries people to make fisheries governance also work for them. Indeed, the SSF Guidelines are a watershed, a 'before and after' in the history of small-scale fisheries. If we were ever in doubt as to what would make a positive difference for them, with the SSF Guidelines we cannot claim ignorance. The question is what states and others intend to do about them. With the emerging Blue Economy, the empowerment of small-scale fisheries community has urgency, and should therefore be a political priority.

My paper on the empowerment process in fisheries people was published a decade before the SSF Guidelines were established. It is therefore encouraging to see that the SSF Guidelines are similarly focused on it. They have several suggestions for how to make empowerment happen, which governments, civil society organizations, and the academic community cannot avoid considering if they are serious about them. The SSF Guidelines recognize that these actors have distinct contributions to make, which would fit into the Figure 12.1. model.

The implementation of all hundred articles of the SSF Guidelines would help to empower small-scale fisheries people. None of them should therefore be forgotten. However, three issues stand out relative to Figure 12.1.: what they say about a) tenure, b) organization, and c) education. They are discussed in turn below.

a) Tenure

In the preface and throughout the document, the SSF Guidelines emphasize the importance of small-scale fisheries people having secure access to land where they live, the fields where they grow food, the areas where they fish, and the beaches where they land it. Safeguarding such access by legislating

their rights would be an obvious empowerment. In Figure 12.1., this is listed as ‘authorizing’. Thus, article 5.1. holds: “*Small-scale fishing communities need to have secure tenure rights to the resources that form the basis for their social and cultural well-being, their livelihoods and their sustainable development.*”

Article 5.3 spells it out:

“States, in accordance with their legislation, should ensure that small-scale fishers, fish workers and their communities have secure, equitable, and socially and culturally appropriate tenure rights to fishery resources (marine and inland) and small-scale fishing areas and adjacent land, with a special attention paid to women with respect to tenure rights.”

It is notable that the SSF Guidelines also mention the tenure rights of communities, i.e., tenure as a collective right. It is also noteworthy that in the subsequent article 5.4., customary rights should be recognized, respected, and protected. Small-scale fisheries people and communities have rights earned through customary use, which the SSF Guidelines argue that states should now authorize. These rights are not government handouts. They cannot be arbitrarily nullified, but they stand firmer when legally codified.

The tenure rights small-scale fisheries people/communities in fact have, must be identified and recorded before they can be authorized, something states and civil society organizations can assist with. Since it requires research, academia can help with the needed methodology. Once all that is done, small-scale fisheries people have the legal clout to withstand eviction from their areas. In the lingo of the Blue Economy, they are not only stakeholders. They are rightsholders in a formal sense. Should they be required to defend their tenure rights in court, which they sometimes must, they now have a stronger case. States should however provide them with “*impartial and competent judicial and administrative bodies to timely, affordable and effective means of resolving disputes.*” (Article 5.11).

b) Organization

People are vulnerable when disunited, fragmented, and dispersed. Together they are stronger, alone they are weaker. When organized, people can do things that they cannot do alone. They must pool their resources and cooperate to build resilience and realize their common goals. This is as true for small-scale fisheries people as for anyone else. They must collaborate to be stewards of their social and natural environment. Community development benefits from joint initiatives and commitments. Lack of organization is part of what explains their marginalization and hence their poverty, which the SSF Guidelines are meant to remedy. That is also why they want small-scale fisheries people to get together and to take more responsibility for their own affairs. Article 5.14 reminds *“that rights and responsibilities come together; tenure rights are balanced by duties.”* Fulfilling one’s duties is a continuing endeavor and proactive role of the small-scale fisheries community. Empowerment is not a one off, but an ongoing process.

My 2005 paper was titled *‘Fisheries Co-management as Empowerment’*. I argued that co-management, if done right, could provide local people with more autonomy, self-reliance, and -control. This would enable them to protect their interests and exercise resource management according to rules that they would be part of establishing and enforcing. Empowerment is both a condition for, and an outcome of, co-management. At that time, there was then enough evidence to suggest that it was doable, especially with state authorization in the form of a supportive legal framework. The SSF Guidelines thus recommend that *“participatory management systems, such as co-management, should be promoted”* (Article 5.15).

Article 5.18 provides further detail:

“States and small-scale fisheries actors should encourage and support the role and involvement of both men and women, whether engaged in pre-harvest, harvest, or post-harvest operations, in the context of co-management and in the promotion of responsible fisheries, contributing their particular knowledge, perspectives and needs. All parties should pay

specific attention to the need to ensure equitable participation of women, designing special measures to achieve this objective.”

Co-management can be a function of fisheries cooperatives, which typically also have a broader portfolio. Co-management functions preferably need coordination with other community responsibilities as part of the “*holistic and integrated approach*” to small-scale fisheries governance that the SSF Guidelines are advocating as guiding principle number 11 (p. 3). The co-operative could be the tool through which this is achieved at community level. Co-management would then not have to start from nothing and create a new culture of cooperation and solidarity. Fisheries cooperatives often fail because they do not fit well with established norms and practices. Article 7.4 provides sound advice:

“States and development partners should recognize the traditional forms of associations of fishers and fish workers and promote their adequate organizational and capacity development in all stages of the value chain in order to enhance their income and livelihood security in accordance with national legislation. Accordingly, there should be support for the setting up and the development of cooperatives, professional organizations of the small-scale fisheries sector and other organizational structures, as well as marketing mechanisms, e.g., auctions, as appropriate.”

c) Education

In Figure 12.1., education is perceived to be empowering by building competency and the self-confidence that follows from having it. Education is therefore enabling, making it possible for people to do things that they would otherwise be hesitant to do, like arguing in public. It would make people become more qualified, and therefore more effective as participants in governance. Article 5.15 stresses that government has a responsibility for making this possible:

“States should facilitate, train and support small-scale fishing communities to participate in and take responsibility for, taking into consideration their legitimate tenure rights and systems, the management of the resources on which they depend for their well-being and that are traditionally used for their livelihoods.”

The best way to learn what participatory democracy means is through participation. Therefore, Pateman (1975) argues that democracy should also be seen as a learning process.

Competent members are a resource for communities for protecting their tenure rights and leading the building of their communities. Having that resource within the community rather than having to get it from outside, is an obvious advantage. Knowing the people who you work with and for, and who can represent the community externally, like in courts, is a clear advantage. If communities must litigate to defend their tenure rights, it is better to have legal experts within their own ranks, rather than having to solicit it from the outside and among strangers. Thus, empowerment is not just to have access to expertise; it matters from where and among whom. I have seen this with Indigenous people in Nicaragua with whom I worked. Not having their own lawyer, recruited from their own community and university trained, is a handicap when fighting for their rights to land and water (see chapter 10).

But communities need more than having legal experts available. The whole community depends on education, starting early in life with children. Access to education is, however, something small-scale fisheries people often do not have, especially in their own communities and partly for the reason spelled out in the preface of the SSF Guidelines: *“Small-scale fishing communities are commonly located in remote areas ..., and may have poor access to health, education and other social services.”* (p. XI). In many small-scale fisheries communities globally, literacy is a problem. Without being able to write and read, the ‘culture of silence’ is endemic. People are disadvantaged in participatory processes concerning their rights struggle, and affecting the possibility of co-management, which functions better when small-scale fishers can read and write. Co-management is a formal process, where information also flows

through written language.

Rights to education is a human right, an important value to secure for “*the development of a fully-rounded human being*” (UNESCO 2020) and to make small-scale fisheries communities sustainable. Being firmly embedded in human rights thinking, the SSF Guidelines affirm this right as far as small-scale fisheries people are concerned. Thus, article 6.14 holds that states “*should provide and enable access to schools and education facilities that meet the needs of small-scale fishing communities and that facilitate gainful and decent employment of youth, respecting their career choices and providing equal opportunities for all boys and girls and young men and women.*”

Conclusion

The SSF Guidelines provide suggestions for a complete and holistic approach to the empowerment of small-scale fisheries people. Empowerment was their reason for being created in the first place, as the survival of small-scale fisheries people was always an uphill struggle. The introduction of Blue Growth agendas worldwide, which because of a different timeline, are not specifically discussed in the guidelines, makes the empowerment of small-scale fisheries more urgent and the SSF Guidelines more relevant. Their marginalization, and all the bad things that occurs because of it, such as poverty and food insecurity, loss of livelihoods and erosion of communities, are likely to be exacerbated in the Blue Economy if the SSF Guidelines are ignored (see chapters 1 and 11).

It is important to explore how small-scale fisheries people and their communities can be empowered to withstand the pressure and to take advantage of the Blue Economy. Small-scale fisheries must have secure access to resources and spaces, which requires solid tenure rights. They need effective organization to ascend from the ‘culture of silence’. They must learn to speak out with knowledge, confidence and negotiate with strength. For that, they need a solid knowledge base. Their traditional, experience-based knowledge carries a lot of weight, but does not necessarily bring them all the way. Co-management involves a democratic process of interactive

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learning, also about science and the formal procedure for decision-making. The three mechanisms – rights, organization, and education, are mutually dependent and reinforcing, and should be part of a joint, coordinated effort of the empowerment of small-scale fisheries people and communities, as per the SSF Guidelines.

IV

Talking about Small-Scale Fisheries



*Fishing is not a job of one person, and help is usually easy to get.
Tenerife, Spain. (V. Kerezi, 2017)*

Acting Metaphorically

*We use metaphors to make sense of the world. We even govern by them.
There are risks to be aware of.*

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 3) argued that “*Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.*” We “*live by our metaphors*”. They are pervasive in everyday conversation and in scientific and political discourse, even to the extent that we are not always aware that we are in fact using them. They play a “*central role in defining our everyday realities.*” (p. 3). Indeed, we use them to describe ourselves, as when we think of ourselves as a ‘tough cookie’ or a ‘warm’ person. Metaphors also influence how we act, and how we act confirms the image we have of ourselves. The metaphor we act on determines how we appear in the eyes of other people who, when they respond to us, confirm, or reinforce the same image.

Metaphors involve figurative speech, as when we say that ‘argument is war’, that there is something ‘fishy’ about your argument, that you are now ‘off the hook’, that competition among resource users has turned into a ‘Olympic fishing.’ Or when we look for ‘scapegoats’ to make others take the blame for wrong things we have done. I once published a paper about fisheries crisis management as ‘riding out the storm.’ Borrowed from the field of physiology,

I used a metaphor in chapter 8 when I talk about the ‘sacra’ of community. ‘Using a hammer to paint the floor’ was the title of a paper criticizing current fisheries management solutions that I co-authored (Degnbol et al. 2006).

According to Lakoff and Johnson, “*the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another*” (p. 5). Metaphors simplify complex narratives by referring to something we can easily imagine because we already have it in our mind. They depict an abstract issue in plain, common sense, language. I understand that a person should not be taken literally when he talks about ‘the long arm of the law’ and that I should therefore be careful not to fish illegally.

Metaphors help us understand the essence of a problem that is wicked. In simple, intuitive terms we communicate by means of the mental ‘pictures’ that we share, as Ludvig Wittgenstein talked about and, thus, used a metaphor to explain his point. If the person I talk to has the same picture in his head, he can understand what I am trying to say. We understand from the context that a ‘rainy day’ does not necessarily describe the weather. Neither does the metaphor of a ‘stormy’ marriage leaves much confusion because we already have an image of what a marriage and a storm-full day are like. Metaphors make us get the clue without having to go through an extensive description.

Metaphors convey images that, according to Jan Kooiman (2003), make governance possible. They bring stakeholders ‘onboard’. They convince stakeholders of what needs to be done. However, as metaphors simplify and generalize, they make scrutiny of situational and contextual specificities redundant. Metaphors therefore also involve risks. They may make us ‘jump to conclusions’ and lead us astray when a problem such as a fisheries crisis, deserves more scrutiny and deeper reflection.

Reality constructed

Garrett Hardin (1968) used the ancient theatrical plot of tragedy as metaphor for capturing the process unfolding in the resource commons. Like with Sophocles’ King Oedipus, it ends catastrophically. The tragedy metaphor is used to explain in simple terms the inevitability of the outcome of an

unregulated fishery. It leads to the urgent call for government interference to solve an otherwise unsolvable problem.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors do not only depict reality and explain outcomes. They “*may also create realities for us, especially social realities*” because they guide action. Hardin’s metaphor comes with a management recipe. It depicts a role for the state in restricting freedoms of access and use of common resources. The full consequence of state interference is, however, not accounted for. The state may prove to be ‘the elephant in the glassware store.’ What it aims to fix, it breaks.

Metaphors may convert into ‘self-fulfilling prophecies’, as Robert Merton (1948: 156) coined them (and Malinowski before him): “[I]n the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior, which makes the originally false conception come true.” In a study of a Norwegian small-scale fisheries community, Anita Maurstad (2000) criticized Hardin’s metaphor for precisely doing that, as when the state inadvertently overruns the inherent, customary based, collective norms and rules. The state creates the very conditions for the Tragedy of the Commons to occur.

Instead of empirically representing the situation in its complexity and historical context, the metaphor works as a ‘stand-in’. It has no eye for what is unique about the problem and the situation where it exists. Herein lies the danger of metaphors, which Elinor Ostrom (1990) feared. Metaphors are insufficient as ‘blueprints’ for action.

The fisher habitus

Like Hardin, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (2005) used ancient concepts in his theory. His ‘habitus’ concept, drawn from Aristotle, refers to the values, characters, abilities, and habits that a person or a group have acquired through practical experience and have bearing on how they (such as fishers) orient themselves in the world. “[T]he habitus defines the perception of the situation that determines it” (Bourdieu 1995: 87).

From Bourdieu’s perspective, fishers recognize themselves with, and are recognized by others, by their habitus. When fishers act, they do what

fishers are supposed to do and habitually are doing. By that, they confirm to themselves and to others what it means to be a fisher and what fishing is about. The 'nature' of fishers, the idea that their character and functioning are inscribed in their genes, as it were, is for Bourdieu, rather, about their socially constructed habitus. Although persistent and deep sitting in their mental constitution, the habitus does not eliminate the freedom of fishers but is the basis from which they chose and decide. Bourdieu is interested in how people are constrained and free at the same time, and how the two work together.

Bourdieu's perception of habitus is critical of the theoretical assumptions about rational choice theory; the concept of *homo economicus* – the economic man.

"The most basic economic dispositions - needs, preferences, propensities – are not exogenous, that is to say, dependent on a universal human nature, but endogenous and dependent on a history that is the very history of the economic cosmos in which these dispositions are required and rewarded."
(Bourdieu 2005, p. 8)

Thus, to the extent that *homo economicus* exists outside economics textbooks, he or she is not a natural but a social construct, produced within the very system – or 'cosmos' - where he operates, which is the market. Bourdieu is not the first or the only one to point this out. His national, Marcel Mauss, for instance, makes a similar observation:

"Homo economicus is not behind us, but before, like the moral man, the man of duty, the scientific man and the reasonable man. For a long time man was something quite different; and it is not so long now since he became a machine - a calculating machine." (Mauss 1954/2000, p. 74)

How close or distant the small-scale fisher is from *homo economicus*, may be subject to empirical investigation. Such an investigation would not only focus on the heart and mind of the fisher, but also, if we follow Bourdieu,

on the cosmos within which he exists, which is not necessarily a market but a community. The small-scale fisheries are not alone in this cosmos, but together with peers and other members in his community. With all likelihood, one would find that fishers have a more complex and composite habitus than homo economics. He or she would be more of a *homo socius*, a person with multiple, often inconsistent, aspirations, tastes, identities, affiliations, and agendas, like other people.

Small-scale fishers cannot afford to think of themselves as ‘lonely riders’ on the marine ‘prairie’, unfettered by any social norms and restrictions. They need each other, and the reference point is not only the sea but also their community. The sea is not a new ‘frontier’, where space and resources are up for grab. Small-scale fisheries people are traditional users of the coast but do not have their homesteads, beaches, and fishing grounds for themselves. In the Blue Economy they risk losing them.

Captains of finance

When the government interferes in the fisheries system, it is not only the fishing patterns that change. The fisher habitus changes as well. To be a fisher after the quota system was introduced, is according to Jeppe Høst (2015), different from what it was before. He argues that by reframing the fisheries, the ITQ system in Denmark (see chapter 9) has reshaped fishers into ‘captains of finance’ – a metaphor originally coined by the Norwegian-American economist Thorstein Veblen. By adapting to the new quota system, fishers are transforming both themselves and the social structure of fishing. In the new system, other values, dispositions, and competencies are required and rewarded, like finance management.

The dialectic Bourdieu envisages, creates self-fulfilling prophecies. In addressing the tragedy, government reformats the fisher habitus, and by that creating the conditions for it. Hardin portrays commoners as self-serving, rational profit-maximizers. By constructing the management system on the ‘captain of finance’ metaphor, that is also what the fisher habitus becomes. Fishing is just a business, not a culture and a social activity. If the fisher

was not a self-centered individual before, that is what he will become – a ‘calculating machine’.

Small- scale fishers cannot afford to think of themselves as ‘lonely riders’ on the marine ‘prairie’, unfettered by any social norms and restrictions. The sea is not a new ‘frontier’, where space and resources are up for grab. Small-scale fisheries people are traditional users of the coast but do not have their homesteads, beaches, and fishing grounds for themselves.

Field metaphors

A more crowded coastal space becomes what may metaphorically be described as a ‘battlefield’ (Olsen et al. 2014), one of conflict. Within this language, people are either on the ‘attack’ or ‘defense’. They ‘strategizing’ vis-à-vis their adversaries. Knowledge then becomes a ‘weapon’, something to keep for yourself rather than sharing it with others. You hold your ‘cards close to your chest’.

The coastal zone may alternatively be described as a ‘playing field’ (EU 1999). Then, stakeholder interaction is thought of as the equivalent of a friendly sport, with the ethos of ‘fair play’, as competition. Outcomes would be acceptable if the coastal playing field is ‘leveled’. A tilted playing field would be unfair to those that have to play ‘uphill’. Players follow rules, which like in football clear, known and apply equally to everyone. Players respect the rules, and by that also the integrity of the game. Breaking rules would invoke a penalty.

However, the game is transparent; a team does not know the other team’s plan of winning. Footballers play within rules as the institution of football defines them. Lionel Messi plays with the same rules as other players, and yet he does unpredictable but spectacular things with the ball, which makes his team win.

Football is hardly a perfect metaphor for coastal interaction in the ‘Blue Economy’ – which itself is a metaphor. The economy has no color. Here, the playing field is rarely level. Small-scale fisheries people are sitting on the stand or playing in the lower division. Rules are not fixed, like in football,

but part of the game is an already tilted playing field. Powerful stakeholders create rules that suit them.

Unlike footballers, stakeholders have different goals, and they are not transparent about what their goal is. Some stakeholders have ‘coaches’, like lawyers, to train and guide them, even represent them. Small-scale fisheries people on the other hand, are usually left to fend for themselves. They may not even know what game they are in, what their stakes are, and what they should prepare for.

Bourdieu’s field concept

I believe that in the Blue Economy, it makes more sense to about the coast as a societal ‘field’ in Bourdieu’s sense (the field concept is borrowed from physics). Bourdieu thinks of society as divided into multiple, autonomous fields, like the economy, the polity, the arts, and sports. Here, different rules apply. The habitus that is relevant in one field is not easily convertible to another. You do not become a good fisher as a footballer, or vice versa, for instance. In Bourdieu’s perspective, the Blue Economy may be perceived as a separate, emerging new field – or a field and of fields, with small-scale fisheries being one of them. How these separate fields add up and connect is an empirical question.

In the Blue Economy, the coast is a new social field in the making. It is a fluid social system inhabited by old and new actors with distinct *habiti*. Following Bourdieu, we should focus on their social relations, how they shape interactions, and how interactions change relations in an iterative process. We would expect that also the *habiti* of small-scale fisheries people change, as actors learn and adapt. To survive, they may become ‘calculating machines’, as Mauss talked about.

‘Having one’s back’

Kooiman’s interactive governance framework (2003) (see chapter 20), as applied for small-scale fisheries (Jentoft & Chuenpagdee 2022), offers a method for analyzing how the coastal field looks like and functions. Kooiman frequently refers to Bourdieu, especially when discussing how different “capitals” “constitute individual and collective identities and strategies”, and how they are unevenly distributed within societal fields that are often uneven (Kooiman 2003: 64-65). Kooiman argues that the distribution of capitals in a particular field would impact on its governability. The governability framework, as outlined in Bavinck et al. 2011), is designed to delineate who the actors are, what positions they hold in the governance system, how their relations are structured institutionally, and how the system frames, but not necessarily determines how interactions evolve.

Interactive governance, like Bourdieu’s field theory may serve as a useful methodology for detecting how power-relations create the coastal playing field in the Blue Economy. We must find out what a level playing field can mean in the coastal zone, for instance for small-scale fisheries. How can it be achieved, and if it is even worth striving for? Could it be that a tilted playing field is necessary for achieving good goals, like social justice? Could it be that a hierarchical governance system would be the only way of securing the most vulnerable among stakeholders, as small-scale fisheries people usually are?

David has a slim chance against Goliath. Football is not divided into different divisions for nothing. Small-scale fisheries people may well represent the majority interest and have the most legitimate and urgent concerns. But without power to secure their interest, their winning chance is poor if the governance system does not ‘back them up.’ To have ‘someone’s back’ is another of those metaphors we use to explain what is needed to create equity. FAO member states justice for small-scale fisheries people when they endorsed the SSF Guidelines. In the Blue Economy, small-scale fisheries people need it more than ever.

Co-managing the field

If co-management is the answer in such a situation, according to which principles and rules should it be designed and operate? When local fisheries people are made part of a co-management system, as the SSF Guidelines suggest, they will be joining their full habitus array. This may therefore not just lead to a more informed management system. It may also result in the transformation of the premises on which it works and what it aims to do. When small-scale fisheries people are invited to have 'a hand on the wheel', they do not just bring in local ecological knowledge, but also their opinions, appreciations, moralities, and ideas about what matter to them, which are not likely to be identical to the current management ethos. The management system would assume a different and more multifaced habitus than the prevailing one, which would change the social field in more than one way. With co-management, managers must be prepared for a new field and a different paradigm, and not just a better tool.

Splitting Hairs

There is no reason to wait for consensus on what is justice before we do something about injustice in small-scale fisheries.

I was invited to speak at the TBTI online seminar organized 2020 on 'Blue Justice'. With the Blue Economy/Blue Growth now spreading around the world, I believe the issue of social justice for small-scale fisheries is an important and increasingly urgent issue, also for social research. We now have the SSF Guidelines, a landmark achievement by FAO in 2014. I believe that if states do nothing to implement them, the Blue Economy will come at a loss to small-scale fisheries. The many injustices they have faced for so long will only exacerbate.

The question of justice has been with us since humans started to form groups and communities. It never went away – and never will. Up through history, people have been thinking hard and long about what justice is and who deserves it. One cannot and should not discuss the Blue Justice concept without visiting this ancient old philosophical discourse. Because it is very much alive today.

A short essay like this is not the place to go into any depth of this discourse. Let me instead offer some ideas, based on some more recent contributions, on how we could approach the Blue Justice issue as a research topic. It is

not sufficient to be morally concerned about justice for small-scale fisheries. We also must know what we are talking about and how we should acquire more knowledge. For that, we will benefit from an analytical framework that is broad enough to help guide us in capturing the many complexities, dimensions, and dilemmas of Blue Justice.

Blue Justice

People familiar with TBTI's publications know that we have been drawing extensively on a so-called 'interactive governance theory' to direct our research. This theory was originally developed by Professor Jan Kooiman of Erasmus University in The Netherlands. With other TBTI colleagues, I worked with him for many years. Since he passed away, we have continued to apply and elaborate on his theory. Thus, we believe that Blue Justice – both as a concept and as a phenomenon – can be assessed through this. In his 2003 book '*Governing as Governance*', he explored what he termed the 'orders' of governance: the meta-(third), second, and first order.

Let me say something here about research questions related to Blue Justice, from the different governance-orders perspective. Starting on the top, the third (meta-) governance order emphasizes how images, values, and norms within a particular social system convert into justice principles in a governance context. Think of the 'guiding principles' in the SSF Guidelines. They derive from human rights standards, which are all about justice. However, national governments may have a different idea of justice than that of the SSF Guidelines. Similarly, the justice principles of the government may be discordant with those of the small-scale fisheries community. We cannot know if such disparities exist unless we have checked them empirically, which we should do because it will affect governance processes and outcomes.

Take, for instance, the famous 'Difference Principle' of the philosopher John Rawls (1999), which says: "*Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society.*" One will recognize

the Difference Principle in the renowned French economist Thomas Piketty's definition of social justice, which could also work for small-scale fisheries in the Blue Economy if we replace "members" with small-scale fisheries people. It reads as follows: "*A just society is one that allows all of its members access to the widest possible range of fundamental goods*" and "*organizes socioeconomic relations, property rights, and the distribution of income and wealth in such a way as to allow its least advantaged members to enjoy the highest possible life condition.*"

The Difference Principle is recognizable in several SSF Guidelines articles, for instance in 5.7: "*...States should, where appropriate, grant preferential access of small-scale fisheries to fish in waters under national jurisdiction, with a view to achieving equitable outcomes for different groups of people, in particular vulnerable groups.*" Does the governance system under investigation honor this principle? If not why, if yes how? At the second governance order, the focus is on institutions (like laws/rules) and the organizations that have the role to ensure that rules are just, for instance, regarding representation of small-scale fishers. Do existing access rules discriminate against them? Do small-scale fishers have equitable rights of access to the decision-making process where rules that affect them are established, which Rawls say they should? This is about what is called 'procedural justice.'

With two Swedish colleagues, we demonstrate that in the Swedish fisheries governance system, small-scale fisheries fall outside the advisory and decision-making system. Instead, this system is primarily working in the interest of the large-scale fisheries sector. In the Swedish fisheries, injustice is not so much at the third governance order as at the second order, in Kooiman's terminology.

When looking for justice gaps in the second-governance order, we should not only investigate what is there but also what is not there. Multiple governance institutions may work side-by-side and in competition with one another: some are of the government, others of the community; some may be informal, some customary, and others more recent. Justice must also be assessed within customary institutions, for instance, regarding their inclusiveness. They might, for instance, discriminate against women.

Commenting on Rawls' theory of justice, including his Difference Principle,

Amartya Sen, in his book *'The Idea of Justice'* (2009), argues that there is more to social justice than justice principles and just institutions. We need, he holds, to investigate how justice plays out in the daily life of people, in the freedoms they have. Essential for their freedom are the capabilities they possess, and the choices they have, do not have, and make. Institutions guide and steer, but do not necessarily determine interactions to the full. They do not guarantee justice. Therefore, justice is also an issue at the first governance order (in Kooiman's scheme); that is in the everyday experience of small-scale fisheries people.

Institutions set limitations, but often also provide opportunities for irregular behavior that negatively affects small-scale fisheries. Governments are supposed to rule and be ruled by law. But sometimes they abuse their authority. Some people at the receiving end of regulations do not always follow them. They are often involved in strategic games for power and resources, and they often succeed in bending the rules in their particular interest.

In an ideal world, there would be consistency between the orders; justice principles at the third (meta-) governance order would determine the design of institutions at the second order. In the next instance the governance interactions at the first order would be guided by them. Yet, we know that in practice, this 'ain't necessarily so.'

Authority abused

Here is Thomas Piketty again: *"... it is wise to be wary of abstract and general principles of social justice and to concentrate instead on the way in which those principles are embodied in specific societies and concrete policies and institutions."* The gap between governance orders is not always easy to reveal or close. Thus, the dissonance between meta-order principles, second-order rules, and first-order interactions may persist. We must, therefore, try to understand why this is so. What are the bottlenecks? Why does the status quo remain? Despite the consensus, the SSF Guidelines' justice principles may fail to trickle down to lower orders where business as usual prevails.

The values, norms and justice principles that guide people's daily social interactions may not trickle up and contribute to institutional and normative change in the way small-scale fisheries are governed. Thereby, the justice gap persists, especially if it has powerful supporters whose interest it is to conceal it. "*Justice comes to mirror too closely prevailing institutions and practices, rather than serving to assess them critically,*" writes David Miller in his book '*Principles of Justice*'.

The Blue Economy will test how serious FAO member states were when they endorsed the SSF Guidelines. States committed themselves to respect and enhance a series of justice principles, like the Difference Principle. Will they also do so in the Blue Economy? There is, of course, nothing wrong as such with concepts like Blue Economy and Blue Growth. They are neutral, hard to reject, and could apply everywhere. But the concept may still leave out things that should be in there. If the definition of the Blue Economy ignores small-scale fisheries, they have reason to be wary. State should follow what happens to small-scale fisheries, whether they win or lose in the Blue Economy as it unfolds in practice.

We always had a Blue Economy

Small-scale fishers and other marine stakeholders, including governments, do not necessarily have to agree what these ideal justice principles are, or what they should be, before they act to correct the gaps between the governance orders in the Blue Economy. Even if they do not have the conceptual sophistication of a professional philosopher, they will know injustice when they see it. The SSF Guidelines also give them a lot to go by.

Third (meta-)order justice principles are not sufficient to secure justice, but they are a yardstick for the evaluation of institutions, processes, and outcomes, and may well provide a basis for litigation if gaps persist. As Amartya Sen points out, just institutions are not enough either. To secure Blue Justice, we cannot stop at the second-governance order. We must also continue with the first order. That is where the final justice litmus test must take place, since justice is "*ultimately connected with the way people's lives go, and*

SPLITTING HAIRS

not merely with the nature or the institutions surrounding them”, in Sen’s words.

Sen argues that *“If a theory of justice is to guide reasoned choice of policies, strategies or institutions, then the identification of fully just social arrangements is neither necessary nor sufficient.”* We do not have to wait for conceptual clarification and institutional perfection. We probably never will get there, but we should always try. In the meantime, we can still do more to reveal and correct the injustices that are apparent now and in the Blue Economy as it is beginning to take effect around the world.

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The Power Game of Language

If people in small-scale fisheries wish to make the Blue Economy work for them, they must take control of the language to avoid rhetoric that further marginalizes them.

The full name of the SSF Guidelines includes the phrase “*in the context of poverty eradication and food security*”. Both poverty eradication and food security are social-justice issues related to the human rights of small-scale fisheries people, their rights to food, wellbeing, equity, and freedom. If the Blue Economy can deliver on these issues, threats may yet turn into opportunities. But only then.

In Norway, the Blue Economy is a hot topic, whereas the small-scale fisheries in not at all mentioned at all. Norway is supporting FAO financially to implement the SSF Guidelines in developing countries, which is great. But it is not possible to see any trace of the Guidelines in Norwegian domestic fisheries policies. The SSF Guidelines are also needed for small-scale fisheries in the Global North, Norway included (see chapter 2). The guiding principles apply regardless of region.

A Norwegian fisher was quoted as telling a local fisheries journalist: “*If coastal fishers had been a distinct marine species, they would have been on the red list for more than 40 years now.*” (Fiskeribladet, 15 May 2021). One should

perhaps not expect that the SSF Guidelines would lead to immediate and drastic policy moves. But if Norwegian fisheries authorities take in what this fisher is saying, they do not have much time. Small-scale fisheries people cannot afford to be patient, or they may soon be gone in my part of the world.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the SSF Guidelines are a landmark achievement. It is the first global instrument directly targeting small-scale fisheries. For me, as a participant during the Technical Consultation, it was an interesting process of language development. The SSF Guidelines are a text of sentences and words spread out in hundred paragraphs. Therefore, the negotiations that led to their final endorsement in June 2014 were about how sentences should be phrased, which words to use, and what they meant.

There were strong disagreements about whether certain words and sentences should be used at all. For instance, it did not take delegates long to take down the suggestion that the SSF Guidelines should have a definition of small-scale fisheries. ‘Governance’ was a concept that proved controversial. Should the word ‘redistribution’ appear in the text? How about ‘rights-based fishing’? The dispute around the term ‘colonization’ almost killed the SSF Guidelines. In the end, it was replaced with another word that changed the meaning of the article where it appeared.

The phrase ‘as appropriate’ appears 18 times in the SSF Guidelines. For example, in article 5.8: *“States should adopt measure to facilitate equitable access to fisheries resources for small-scale fishing communities, including, as appropriate, redistributive reform.”* (Highlights mine). It was unclear to me whether delegates meant the same thing by using the phrase. Is the term a way to put at ease those who had reservations against a particular article, or is the idea that context matters and that a pragmatic and flexible approach is needed? The term satisfies both concerns, and it works to underscore the voluntary nature of the SSF Guidelines. The problem is that States would easily find reasons why the SSF Guidelines, or articles in them, should not apply, especially if they expect that implementation may be painful.

The Blue Economy and Blue Growth concepts are not in the SSF Guidelines. These concepts are almost universal now. The pace at which concepts travel these days is amazing. Globalization is also about the proliferation of

language. They are part of the way we talk about the future for small-scale fisheries. The opposite is rarely the case. There is hardly any mention of small-scale fisheries and the SSF Guidelines in the Blue Economy discourse.

Language is power

We need language to understand what we see and do. We use language to make other people see what we see and to explain and justify what we do. We also use language strategically in an argument or dispute. By implication, the one who controls the language (to the degree that it is possible) controls the conversation, and the one who controls the conversation controls the action. Language is an instrument of power, intimately connected with any other form of power, like economic and political power.

Power is also an issue in the SSF Guidelines, as in the preface: “*Small-scale fishing communities also commonly suffer from unequal power relations.*” The ‘marginalization’ of small-scale fisheries – a word that pops up 19 times in the SSF Guidelines – is also about language. Consequently, if small-scale fisheries people want to make the Blue Economy work for them, they must take control of the language, to avoid a rhetoric that further marginalizes them.

With the SSF Guidelines, they are better equipped to speak for themselves about issues that are close to their heart, and they are likely to lose out in the Blue Economy if they do not. The question that concerns me here is how they should do that – which brings me into the age-old philosophical discourse on language, about how words get their meaning. Notably, this is not just an academic issue with no practical implication. Quite the contrary. Fisheries governance, including the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, is totally language dependent. We cannot govern without language. We must be concerned with how language functions in governance settings. We, therefore, have all the reasons in the world to explore how language works to shape the Blue Economy as far as small-scale fisheries are concerned.

The German-Swiss novelist and 1946 Nobel Prize winner, Hermann Hesse, illustrates the point in a revealing way. I quote from his book, *Steppenwolf*:

“Just imagine a garden with hundreds of different trees, thousands of different flowers, hundreds of different fruits and herbs. Now, if the only botanical distinction the gardener knows is that between edible things and weeds, he will not know what to do with nine tenths of his garden. He will uproot the most enchanting flowers, fell the finest trees, or at any rate detest and frown upon them.” (Steppenwolf, 1927, p. 68)

Clearly, the gardener would benefit from a richer language: he would see more of the biodiversity and appreciate the beauty in front of him. He would also be cautious about what he does with his garden. Instead, however, because of the paucity of his language, he will destroy what his job is to protect and nurture. The richness of small-scale fisheries and their enormous diversity globally, which made it difficult to find a definition that would suit all, illustrates the need for a similar language. We need more than a few words in a sentence or two to describe them.

How should we talk about small-scale fisheries then? We must make sure that the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and the Blue Economy does not become separate discourses, with no link between. But to create that link, we need new language. The issue came up during the World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress in 2018 when Moenieba Isaacs from South Africa introduced us to the concept of ‘Blue Justice’. It has since become a key focus of the TBTI initiative. Rolf Willmann, the architect at FAO of the SSF Guidelines, suggested during the 2019 Mare conference that TBTI should try to get the concept into Wikipedia, which we have done (Blue Justice 2020).

Blue Justice is a composite and complex concept, but it is also intuitive and at the same level of abstraction as the Blue Economy. We may, therefore, talk about Blue Justice as easily as we talk about the Blue Economy. Once brought into the Blue Economy ‘language game’—to use Ludwig Wittgenstein’s concept (*Philosophical Investigations*, 1953), it would require a response, just like in any other game. Games have rules, and it is essential that the rules of Blue Economy language game are not imposed on small-scale fisheries. It is not for States alone to decide which topics are relevant and can be raised, which arguments to make, which concepts to use, whose voices should be

heard, and how the conversation should evolve. In a democratic small-scale fisheries governance process, that is for all of us to determine. Freedom of speech is a human right and thus also a matter for the SSF Guidelines. The Blue Justice concept carries a long tradition of philosophical argumentation. It also has a moral foundation that is difficult to reject.

Notably, the Blue Justice concept, as TBTI defines it, is beyond the narrow, legal interpretation, which is used in connection with illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and law enforcement, as in the 2018 Copenhagen Declaration. Blue Justice, in the broader meaning offered by TBTI, is relational, multi-dimensional, material as well as moral, and works at different scales. It is about equity and fairness, without which fishers would find justifiable, even legitimate, reason to break rules. Therefore, the two meanings of justice are connected, and it matters where in the causal chain one starts to eliminate IUU fishing. Unless the equity and fairness questions are addressed, there is little hope that law enforcement, surveillance, and penalties will solve the problem.

Concepts have a home

The SSF Guidelines are a treasure chest for those who are short of words to express what Blue Justice means for small-scale fisheries people. The Blue Justice concept requires a narrative founded on practical, lived experiences of those for whom injustice is part of their history and daily life. But narratives need words, as do experiences.

Wittgenstein argued that a word does not get its meaning from other words but from its actual use in its context. The same word may have different meanings in different contexts. The word fish, for example, can refer to what we have for dinner, but it can also be what a person is out on the sea for. In the first instance, it refers to food on the dinner table, in the second to the purpose for his fishing trip. In TBTI's interpretation, the Blue Justice concept is to be understood in the context of the Blue Economy, but it would also mean different things for small-scale fisheries people in different Blue Economies.

Wittgenstein inspired Jakob Meløe in the philosophy department of my university when he wrote: “*Our concepts of the world come from our activities in the world.*” He added the example: “*Without coastal fishing, or seafaring, in boats too large for the crews to draw them ashore, there is no place for the concept of harbour*” (Meløe 1988: 387).

The ‘original home’ of our concepts is, according to Wittgenstein, in the activity in which they are used. The true meaning of the Blue Economy is not to be found in glossy pamphlets, seductive language, and in political statements about the ocean as a new frontier for economic growth. The true meaning is in how the Blue Economy works in practice, like for people in small-scale fisheries communities. Then we should not forget that justice also has emotional dimensions. When we see injustice, we get morally upset, but are often also rendered speechless. However, the paucity of language does not make injustice less real in the Blue Economy. It just makes people defenseless.

Wittgenstein observed: “*Concepts lead us to make investigations, are the expression of our interest, and direct our interest.*” (#570). Therefore, we need a concept like Blue Justice to bring attention to an issue of utmost importance to small-scale fisheries, which cannot simply be defined away and by that, ignored. You cannot insist that ‘this’ is not what the Blue Economy is about, if ‘that’ is what it does. You cannot say that marginalization is not what the Blue Economy means if that is what it does to small-scale fisheries. Without a concept like Blue Justice, the Blue Economy would do what Hesse’s gardener does to his garden.

Without the Blue Justice concept, there is a bigger risk that small-scale fisheries people and their communities get overrun in the Blue Economy language game, a game they cannot afford to lose.

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Imagining Blue Justice

We need a richer language to capture the many ways that small-scale fisheries are treated unjustly in the Blue Economy.

We have it in us, as if we were born with it; an innate ability to recognize injustice. Take away the pacifier from a toddler or a toy from a small child, and they will let you know how they feel. Therefore, we could be born with a ‘readiness’ – a cognitive predisposition for justice, like Noam Chomsky says about language. Children pick up a language much easier than adults, and they do it just by listening and talking. Similarly, they feel unfairness without having been told what it is. They will tell you, without hesitation, if you give an ice cream to one of your kids and not the other.

We may be more reluctant when it happens to others. It takes a degree of maturity to feel the same outrage when injustice happens to others. It requires the ability to project yourself into the other persons’ situation, see the world through his or her eyes, situate yourself with their shoes. We may reach adulthood before we are willing to do it, when we become a ‘person’ and not just an ‘individual’ as Immanuel Kant said happens when we are about sixteen years old. Then we are mature enough to internalize the ‘categorical imperative’ when we realize that true value of the Golden Rule; treat others as you want them to treat you! (See chapter 9).

Raising a child involves teaching them about rules and how to follow them. As part of their education, we correct them when they break the rules. But we do not always explain to them why the rules exist because we do not expect them to understand. Instead, we just insist on them, and may therefore instead run a strict regime. However, when caught, they often react as if they are treated unfairly. It is when they themselves have internalized the rules, made them their own, that we as parents feel that we can relax. I often wondered whether my kids took in what we told them, as there was little to indicate that they listened. Now, when they have become parents themselves, I am amazed to hear them telling their own kids what we told them. Sometimes it is like me speaking.

Emic perspective

We feel moral outrage when injustice happens to people that are close to us. We do so because we know them. We do not tolerate that our kids are being bullied in school or that our friends are hurt. However, the farther they are from us, relationally and spatially, our solidarity is watered out. That is why we need institutions, laws built on sound principles, like the Golden Rule, enforced in ways that are humane and just.

Unless it happens to us, we cannot imagine the full experience of being unjustly treated. We cannot know how it is to be excluded from enjoying rights and freedoms we take for granted. In our imagination, we somehow must be able to share the experience of those to whom it happens. We cannot fully know the feeling of missing these life qualities unless I have been in the same situation, and even then, I may have a different perception of them. But we can try to get to know them and see for ourselves that they must cope with and listen to what they say.

Therefore, sociologists and social anthropologists find fieldwork to be a relevant research method. You learn about poverty while locating yourself in a community where people are poor. You try to look at their situation and the world at large, from their 'emic' perspective. Thus, if you want to know about what poverty and marginalization mean for small-scale fisheries

people, you would be advised to leave your office and join the communities where people live and work to see for yourself how injustice is experienced and felt. Likewise, if you want to know small-scale fisheries, what poverty and marginality feels, you will try to get acquainted with those who experience it in the situation they are in.

Categorical imperative

I realize now that I spent too much time behind the desk in my career. I should have been out in the field more than I have. I could have brought the books with me. I am not the ideal social scientist. I have not always practiced what I preach. That is why I argue this. But I have not lost my ability to imagine a different world, one of small-scale fisheries being treated more justly than they currently are. I have seen and learned from interacting with small-scale fisheries people, visiting, and living in small-scale fisheries communities to understand why fieldwork is important. I can read what colleagues have written, and as I do that, I do not only learn but also feel about what I read. Some books have left an impression on me.

It could be the ‘categorical imperative’, my moral upbringing, that makes me think that what I often see and read about small-scale fisheries is not right. I believe that social scientists can help small-scale fisheries people imagine how their lives could be different, that justice is a legitimate demand, that they have rights of livelihood and community, of freedom and culture. They may show them alternatives, for instance how fisheries management systems work elsewhere, what justice reforms may involve, what people have a right to expect from by their government now that the SSF Guidelines have been endorsed by states around the world. I have stories to tell about how Norwegian fishers were able to ascend out of poverty because of some institutional reforms they fought for. Not everything can be transferred to other countries, but many things can be translated, contextualized, and then implemented.

Picturing injustice

I remember an episode from Nicaragua, where I spent lots of time over the years. Our project helped a small-scale, Indigenous fishing community, Punta de Agila, get the material they needed so that their little school could have walls; it already had a roof. But they had land to grow food and dugout timber logs to fish with. One morning I was with a fisher on a hill overlooking the bay, we could observe out-of-community shrimp trawlers operating. As per government fisheries regulations, they were not allowed to fish there. My friend was anguished but felt there was nothing he and his community could do about it. The trawlers were taking food out the mouth of his people.

Another image has also stayed with me: many years ago, I did some work in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, a small island state in the Lesser Antilles in Caribbean. I visited a small-scale fisheries community on the west coast, which was a bit upscale from that in Nicaragua but not by much. As I talked to a fisher while sitting together on a log on the beach facing the mouth of the bay, one foreign luxury yacht after another was passing. I could not avoid noticing the extreme difference: two worlds apart but still overlapping – one poor and another one overly rich, one local, another foreign. Justice is obviously a relational thing, between the haves and have-nots. For the fisher, the sight was a daily occurrence, not much he took notice of. But then, he did not aspire to a yacht, only a more secure livelihood for himself and his community members. He had a right to expect that.

It is funny how we remember things because we have an image of them. The two episodes are vivid in my mind, and I often think about them and have told them to my class. We can look back in our mind, just as we look at photos in our album. When we do that, we can also revoke the feel we had when we took them, what happened before and after, the situation when it happened, the things that are not in the photo.

We can, thus, travel back in time and locate our learning moments in exact time and space. Ludvig Wittgenstein (1974), the philosopher, takes it a step further when he argues that our communication is possible because we invoke pictures in our mind, as when we tell or listen to stories. He posited that

statements are meaningful only if they can be pictured in the real world. We do not only hear the voice of the speaker; we can also figure out what the story tells by seeing for our inner eyes the picture it conveys.

I tell my students who are about to write up their report from having spent time in a fisheries community: Do not just tell me how it is there. Bring me there, let me see what you saw, let me feel what you felt. That is also what my best teachers could do. It is like reading a novel. You see the story as it unfolds with your inner eye, how the protagonists look like and where they live. When a movie is made from the book, we often feel disappointed because it does not look as we saw it when reading it.

I do not expect my student to report 'how it really is'. I want her to tell me what she saw and learned from the people she worked with. The world does not show itself in one, correct way. We have different images to bring to the conversation. We construct our world together, but it does not look the same to all of us. The outsider and insider view may be different. I want to know both, and it is the student's task to not just tell me but to show me.

Socrates

If it is so that our sense of justice sits deep in us, it is to be expected that it is an issue that has been with us for a long time, that we for ages have debated how to make sense of it, what justice in the negative and positive might mean. We have feelings about justice, but we can also reason rationally about it.

Principles of justice have interested philosophers since antiquity. In Plato's *Republic* (1980) (book IV), Socrates is in a dialogue with two young brothers, Adeimantus and Glaucon about what constitutes a just city. They have agreed to debunk existing justice principles, for instance that justice is nothing more than the self-interest of the strong and powerful (book I, 338). Socrates argues that there is something beyond desire and calculation, like virtues, such as respect and the quest for recognition. This is *Thymos*, where justice about worth is rooted, and where emotions such as dignity, pride, shame, and anger sit. Fukuyama (2019) posits that *Thymos* is also the seat of modern identity politics (see also chapter 30 in this book).

It is remarkable, given the time and effort that has been spent, that we are still discussing these principles and ideas. This must be because we have not yet been able to resolve the dilemmas they involve, neither at a theoretical nor a practical level. We still deliberate what our virtues and principles should be, like what constitutes good governance, what goals are worth striving for, and how justice fits into the equation. We also discuss what they mean for particular contexts, like fisheries.

Socrates may have debunked the idea that justice is what serves the strong and powerful. Still, small-scale fisheries are victims of unequal power relations to the extent that they still struggle to secure their elementary rights. They do indeed have legitimate and enduring justice concerns. Otherwise, there would hardly have been much need for the SSF Guidelines that FAO authored. The sub-title telling: 'Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.' These are key elements for the well-being of small-scale fisheries people, and they are all about social justice.

The justice of small-scale fisheries people can still be contemplated. We must be able to imagine justice before we can achieve it. The struggle for justice begins with the idea that it can be realistically accomplished, if not to the full so at least in part. Any move towards more justice should be welcomed. The SSF Guidelines convey that idea. We must be able to see it, with our inner eyes, what they are talking about, the reality that the articles in the document are referring to. Implementing the SSF Guidelines would be a leap towards justice.

Expecting justice

What is justice, and when is justice served? What do people deserve, and what can they therefore rightfully expect and demand? How does a society look like that gives them this? This is not easy to tell. But they are important to examine because they are about how humans can live together in peace and harmony.

Ian Shapiro observes in his book *Democratic Justice* (1999) that it is easier

to say what justice is not than to specify what it is. This is what Socrates does when he argues that might is not always right and therefore not necessarily just. Government may well do things that are unjust. Things are not just, only because the government does it. In seeking some clarification of what social justice is (or is not), one may well start with the philosophers from antiquity, but there is a vast literature, in philosophy, law, and in the social sciences, to learn from.

Justice was always a central part of our politics and a governance concern. We design institutions to ensure that benefits and burdens are equitably shared. There are technicalities to decide on, like exactly how to split the fish quota. But the justice issue is always looming in the background. The issue does not go away. The problems the SSF Guidelines set out to address did not occur yesterday. They are part of the history of small-scale fisheries. Fishers had a low status and were treated thereafter, also in Roman times, as described by Analisa Marzano (2019). What is new is that they are now receiving attention on a global scale.

The SSF Guidelines guiding principles, that introduce the document, are philosophical in nature. They talk about human rights and dignity. They have advice to give regarding the institutional reform that is needed to secure their realization. They argue that small-scale fisheries need preferential treatment, to ensure that they do not lose out to parties that are stronger and more powerful. The Blue Justice concept explains what they deserve such treatment.

The SSF Guidelines reject the principle that Socrates debunked. Instead, they allude to John Rawls (1979) famous 'difference principle', which holds that inequalities in the distribution of benefits and costs and privileges are permissible only when they advantage the least well-off among us. In the abstract, this sounds fair; it is obvious. People who are poor and hungry should be the first in line. It is up to us to think of what that might imply in the concrete, like in small-scale fisheries.

With a colleague from University of Gdansk, I once did some work on the Hel peninsula in Poland. There, the age-old rule was that those who could not fish themselves, like the elderly and the widows, were the first to be provided

with fish that was landed. This is not an unusual practice in small-scale fisheries communities in other parts of the world. People come before profit, and the neediest have the privilege to go first. I have that image on my mind when I think of the difference principle of John Rawls. It is abstract, but imaginable in real life. But how should it be upscaled to small-scale fisheries at large? Does the difference principle have merit in the Blue Economy?

Blue Justice

The Blue Economy concept does not appear in the SSF Guidelines. With the Blue Economy now emerging all over the world, they are nonetheless relevant. The coastal zone has become increasingly congested in recent decades. Small-scale fisheries are not any longer alone in ‘ruling the waves’. With the Blue Economy, we have only seen the beginning of the competition for marine space and resources. How can one ensure ‘a balanced playing field’ when the field is already skewed in small-scale fisheries’ disfavor? What does balancing the playing field mean? Should we think of small-scale fisheries as just another stakeholder? Not so, if we apply the ‘difference principle’. Equal opportunity is not necessarily just if small-scale fisheries start with a handicap.

In TBTI, we made justice in the Blue Economy a focus point of our research. We delved into the literature, but we also made it an empirical issue. Like Wittgenstein, we believe that Blue Justice, as we coined it, must be figured conceptually in the real world: We cannot just picture in the abstract. We must also check it out in real situations. This is what we do in the latest TBTI book (Jentoft et al. 2022), which contains case studies of small-scale fisheries in all continents. Here authors explore what Blue Justice is in the Blue Economy. We conclude that there is a real danger that small-scale fisheries are going to be further marginalized, pushed aside by more powerful actors. It is not just anticipation but a reality already happening in many parts of the world.

Inspired by theories of justice, we asked our authors to explore three issues in their small-scale fisheries governance system; first, we wanted them to exhaust the governance principles as they are currently implemented in

the situation they studied. How do principles relate to those of the SSF Guidelines? Do states do what they committed themselves to do when they endorsed them? Secondly, we asked them to investigate the governance institutions and the extent to which they ensure that justice is served. How are they designed to allow small-scale fisheries interests to be secured and the voices of their people heard? Thirdly, we followed Amartya Sen's (2009) comment on John Rawls, where he argued that just institutions are no guarantee that justice will be served. The proof that justice is served is neither in the principles nor the institutions but in the actual practice of governing. We asked our authors to look for that proof.

A richer language

But there is a problem here: We do not always see what we believe we see. We cannot see what we do not have concepts for. In one of his most famous remarks, Wittgenstein (1974) wrote: "*The limits of my language means the limits of my world.*"

Injustice comes in many forms: harsh and subtle, direct and indirect, structural and interactive, intentional and non-intentional – and everything in between. Do we then have a rich enough vocabulary for the nuances of (in)justice? Do we have precise enough concepts for what we observe to allow us to act with precision?

We need to develop our language to fit the challenges that the Blue Economy brings to the justice of small-scale fisheries. This has been another TBTI initiative, the 'Blue Justice Alert' (TBTI Global 2020). Members were asked to provide stories from their own research sites about the life of small-scale fisheries people in which injustice is an issue. We now have a rich album, that keeps growing. We asked ourselves; what would we call the kind of injustice that we see playing out here? We have produced a glossary of concepts, which are listed in a paper we published in *Marine Policy* (Arias Schreiber et al. 2022).

Concepts in the glossary: 'Blue conspiracy', 'Cultural violation', 'Eco-Harassment', 'Fisher trafficking', 'Fisher phobia', 'Industrial pillaging', 'Marine carbon injustice', 'Sideline from governance', 'Marine peonage', 'Partici-

patory dominance', 'Recreational Assault', 'Seafood larceny', 'Value-chain grabbing'. These are suggestive terms, but they all have a real-world story behind them. Language develops when people start to use novel words. A glossary would therefore naturally be a work in progress. Language is a social thing, something we share and produce together in our ongoing conversation.

If language is the limit of our world, as Wittgenstein says, we must pay attention to it. We must think not only about what we say but also how we say it. We must be sure that we talk about small-scale fisheries in ways that capture what they are to themselves and to society. We must be able to describe what they experience in the Blue Economy that leaves an image in our mind that enables us to understand what is happening. If we are short of words, we must develop new ones, and here the academic community has a role to play. Blue Justice is just a concept for starting the conversation, a lens for opening our eyes to a consequence of the emerging Blue Economy that the enthusiasm that characterizes the current rhetoric tends to quell.

V

Small-Scale Fisheries as a Governance Challenge



*Fishing life is not an easy life, but it brings comfort when in good company.
Chilika Lake, Odisha, India. (R. Chuenpagdee, 2017)*

Why Organization?

In small-scale fisheries communities, actors are interdependent while autonomous. This creates vulnerability and the need for coordination, which better organization can help with.

Imagine a fishing community consisting of a range of units: fish-buyers, sometimes a fish-processing plant, a few vessels, a grocery store, a boat repair shop, a restaurant with fish on the menu, and households that provide labor to these entities. Imagine also they are fully dependent on each other, exchanging goods and services, forming a system – a value chain, an employment system, or whatever we would call it.

Suppose then that they are all autonomous decision-makers and accounting units, with no mutual responsibilities. They are all single-status firms; individual owner-operators with no interpersonal relationships other than what a business contract would imply. They all decide for themselves how to operate and invest, who to buy from and sell to, and recruit as labor. Everyone strives to make what is best for themselves. The plant has no control over the vessel, where it goes and delivers, the gear it uses, and what fish it brings ashore and when. Likewise, the vessel has no control over who shows up on the beach to buy the fish or when the plant stays open to receive them, if it will buy the fish or not, what services it provides, and how it invests. Their

relations are as in a market where everyone is operating according to what is in their best individual interest.

Thus, the system is no organization, only a random collection of individual actors. No one looks after the totality of the system, no 'visible hand' secures stability and integration. There is no hierarchy, no overarching goal, no joint commitment, no coordination at a system level. The value chain works as a cumulative of transactions on the spot. No one fills the role of securing that the system does not collapse. Should the local buyer or plant manager experience that local fishers chose to sell elsewhere, the problem is for him or her to solve. A dissatisfied fisher would choose 'exit' rather than 'voice' to express his grievances, as there is no loyalty between them (Hirschman 1970).

Not all small-scale fisheries systems look like this, of course. Sometimes there are organizational links that tie the system together. Let us assume, however, for the sake of argument, that this is how small-scale fisheries communities were like 'in the beginning', as Oliver Williamson (1975) says it when he reasons about markets and hierarchies.

Investment climate

Fisheries are inherently unstable and unpredictable to begin with. Fish is a fugitive resource, and natural conditions, like weather, are volatile. Disturbances expose actors to uncertainty and risk. They have problems planning. However, the way the value-chain is organized adds to the challenge because it works on trust. A plant owner/manager would hesitate to upgrade his premises if there is no loyalty in the system if deliveries of local fleet cannot be guaranteed. A boat-owner may have similar reservations about the plant. Without job-security and stability, the plant and the fleet would be unattractive as a career choice. Both processing plant and fleet depend on a reliable workforce.

However, there is mutual dependency between value chain actors, but no communication and transparency. How the other will respond to one's decisions is left to anticipation. Their relationship is not necessarily symmetrical. The fish-plant is stationary, while the boat is mobile. Therefore,

the plant is more dependent on the boat than vice versa. If their burden of debt increases, they may have to find a solution for themselves that breaks their ties. The boat owner-operator may have to search for better fishing opportunities or prices elsewhere, thus reducing the local supply when the plant needs fish more than before. Similarly, the plant-owner can decide to be more aggressive by lowering prices and pursuing suppliers from the outside. The interaction between the two parties changes for reasons that make sense only individually but not if we regard them together. A previously stable and mutually beneficial exchange pattern may suffer, interrupting the value-chain flow.

Suppose, then, that instead of being autonomous, value chain actors are part of the same organization, like in a multi-status company, a vertically and horizontally integrated unit, like a fishery cooperative. Mutually dependent actors would now be on the same team, under the same leadership, operating with the whole value chain in mind. Internal and external responsibilities would be coordinated. The cost and benefits associated with a new investment would be part of a calculus of how it all adds up.

Thus, we may conclude that the investment climate, essential for the sustainability of community, is not so much a culture and a mindset of people but an organizational issue. It is about how value chain actors in the community relationally connect, whether they have structural reasons to cooperate, whether mutual dependencies are organizationally integrated, secured, and directed under one roof.

Transaction costs

In the 'ideal type' (to use Max Weber's concept) local fisheries system, as depicted above, actors have no reciprocal commitments, only interdependencies. Actors could be anyone to each other, just like in an ideal type market. Who you are has no significance, only what you can offer. Outside the transaction, they do not owe anything to each other. Their rationalities are self-centered and narrow minded. Interactions assume the character of a game, driven by egotism, strategies, and opportunism (but not necessarily

dishonesty). How the value-chain functions from the perspective of the community are left to randomness, not to collective, communicative planning, and interactive governance. However, in a decentralized and fragmented system like this, the freedom of value-chain actors to choose for themselves also entails incentives for reorganization, for building firmer relations. Actors have things at stake: They need the certainty, stability, and predictability they are missing. Nothing less is hard to live with.

In a paper published in 1937, Ronald Coase, the 1991 economics Nobel Prize winner, questioned; why do we have firms when we have markets? Why are people not self-employed, selling their labor to an interested buyer? This, he argued, is because markets involve 'transaction costs.' Negotiating the terms of the transaction and securing abidance with what is agreed on takes time and money. You would need safeguards against opportunism. You would have to be sure that the contract is legally sound, and for that you would need a lawyer and to be fully insured.

Thus, internalizing the transaction into the organization, as when recruiting the fisher or the fish worker as an employee rather than on a short term, task-based contract, is a way of reducing transaction costs. You do not have to negotiate for every new task. Neither do you need mechanisms in place to ensure that people stick with their commitments. You just lead. The manager allocates the workforce according to the things that must be done. The terms of the transactions, like salaries, are standardized according to the role. The employment contract is for a longer period and in less detail. Price-setting becomes an internal matter to the organization.

But, Coase reasoned, if there are transaction costs to be saved by internalizing transactions into the organization, why do we then have markets? Coase noted that as transactions are internalized, the organization grows. The organization becomes increasingly complex and, hence, difficult to manage. Attention would be turned inwards. Conflicts that used to appear between autonomous market actors, now become an internal matter for the manager to sort out. At one point, the gains by internalizing additional transactions are lost by the rise of organization costs until the two marginal curves cross, after which buying rather than employing is a better strategy.

Markets vs. hierarchies?

Inspired by Coase, Oliver Williamson, another Nobel Prize laureate in economics (2009), developed a theory of vertical integration (1975). His theory helps to explain why processors own fishing vessels and run fishing operations, or fishers collectively own and operate processing and sale outlets. These are two quite different organizational modes, but they both internalize transactions. Decisions concerning the value chain take place under one post of command, such as the board of directors.

The command-and-control form of management as in a hierarchy may not work better in theory than in practice. Fishing, processing, and marketing require different kinds of expertise. These operations must have a degree of autonomy. Directing fishing operations from land is inherently difficult. Fishers know how to fish, but not much about fish processing and consumer markets. In cooperatives, fishers being a fisher and a member of a fisheries co-op may involve a role conflict. Are you primarily working for yourself or for the co-op to which you belong? As a plant manager, is the processing or the fishing operations the top of your priority? The value-chain needs co-ordination, but not necessarily centralized direction. The choice is not between markets or hierarchies. They should be considered as extremes. There are alternative governance modes between the two, like organized network modes.

In a market, if the value chain works well, all benefit. If it under-performs, all lose. Neither is necessarily a willed outcome; it may be an unforeseen consequence of individual, self-centered actions, and transactions. Initiatives for easing the flow may fail and create bottlenecks should actors not follow up. The plant owner may decide to install a new filleting machine and improve landing facilities. The fisher may determine to get a new boat and gear and change his fishing patterns. Such investments incur costs and affect relationships. Other value-chain actors may or may not be ready, willing, or able to respond.

Assume that one or both parties operate according to a peasant economic logic that Alexander Chayanov (1966) explained, which small-scale fishers

often do. Peasants are not profit maximizers, but ‘satisficers’. They work until they have achieved their consumption needs an income target, but not beyond that point. They are not enticed by a price increase or an upswing in the resources. Rather, it is an incentive to work less hard. The higher the price and the more fish they catch, the sooner they achieve the consumption/income target.

In a peasant economy, the supply curve falls. The more a fisher earns, the less his effort. This, however, may be contrary to what other value-chain partners need. The fish buyer’s debt is their own responsibility. The same with the fisher. The debt level and consumption needs determine the income target, which determines the work effort. Both needs and working capacity depend on which stage of the household life cycle is in. As loans are repaid and children grow up and leave, the fewer the needs are.

Thus, the timing of investment matters – how it coincides with which stage in the life cycle the other party in an exchange relationship is in, and whether their income targets match. Hence, the coordination problem. If transactions are internalized, as in a hierarchy where both parties belong, income targets would be shared as a joint responsibility. The manager would oversee the functioning of the value chain to ensure coordination and control, and hence, a smoother flow. There would be no confusion as to whose role it is to remove bottlenecks.

The Free Rider problem

To function, the fisheries value-chain relies on good infrastructure, such as landing facilities, boat repair, roads, electricity, water supply, etc. Whose responsibility is it to provide it, and who carries the cost? Does the responsibility rest with the government, the community, or with the value-chain actors themselves?

Again, organization matters. The economist Mancur Olson (1970: 47) noted: *“Where there is no pre-existing organization of a group, and when the direct resource costs of a collective good it wants are more than any single individual could profitably bear, additional costs must be incurred to obtain an agreement*

about how the burden will be shared and to coordinate or organize the effort to obtain the collective good.” These are the transaction costs that Coase talks about. Unlike in hierarchy, in a market no one sees it as their role to provide the infrastructure. It would need collective action, but such action would not occur spontaneously because also the initiative to negotiate organize is incurring costs. You benefit from the initiative but are better off if someone else takes it and leads the process. Olson argued that if actors are big and wealthy enough, they would be inclined to provide the collective good themselves. Less wealthy actors would then benefit as free riders. In small-scale fisheries, wealthy actors are often missing.

Collective goods require small-scale fisheries actors to pool their resources and to cooperate, which they sometimes do when they feel to be together in a well-integrated community. The community does not always function as the fragmented, ideal type model would suggest. Interaction does not take the form of a strategic game. Instead, there is formal or informal leadership in place. Individuals do not perceive other community members as a ‘they’ as they do in a market, as the sociologist Amitai Etzioni (1988) argues, but as a ‘we’, where members have multiple identities and linkages to each other. In a well-integrated community, the free rider is an outsider. Acting selfishly might be smart, but dishonest. The free rider easily ends up as an outcast in the community.

A different ideal type

I once visited a small fisheries community in Sri Lanka and was impressed by what I heard and saw. Not only did they have a well-functioning fishery co-operative. The co-op was also engaged in running the children’s daycare and the school. When I was there, they were about putting up light poles in public places. The leader of the co-op was also the community mayor. It was a fisheries community co-operative with a broad portfolio, not specializing but inclusive of fisheries services. Governing the fisheries value chain was only one of several functions within the co-op’s responsibility. Its overarching concern was the well-being of the community and the needs of inhabitants,

including fishers.

A functioning fisheries co-operative requires a functioning community. The co-op can, however, be an instrument for the latter. The two can be mutually supportive. They must co-operate because they are interdependent, but not necessarily within the framework of a co-op. However, a fisheries community co-operative can lead by including all necessary functions within the same governance system. By that, transaction costs may be reduced. But there is one caveat: the more inclusive the organization's functions, the more complex the organization, which as Coase noted, has a cost side too.

This applies to vertical integration, regardless of where in the value chain the initiative to integrate emerges. Fisheries co-operatives are complex organizations ascribing to great democratic governance principles, but sometimes fail. However, when they fail, it may do so for reasons that have nothing to do with them being a cooperative. Private corporations, like shareholder companies, also fail at times. They have a narrower responsibility. Their primary concern is to bring value to owners/shareholders, not to the community. If they do not satisfy their expectations, they are taken down.

Fisheries value chains have inherent structural conflicts. Vertical integration does not eradicate them. But contrary to markets, hierarchies internalize them. In hierarchies they become an in-house matter. In private corporations, interest conflict between labor and capital is zero sum. In a co-operative they are what sociologists call a role conflict, between your interest that follows from your status as a member, and your interest that is associated with your status as a client/producer. The more a fisher takes out of the co-op in terms of prices, the less he gets in annual bonus. Thus, what he gains in the short run, he loses eventually. In a community co-operative like the one in Sri Lanka, he must also have the wellbeing of the community in mind. This would also be in his family's interests as a consumer of public services, like the school or daycare center. If the membership of the community co-operative is open to any community resident, the wellbeing of the community will be their joint responsibility.

Community co-operatives, like the one in Sri Lanka, give people the opportunity of exercising their 'voice' (like arguing, expressing their ideas

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and opinions) if policies and management decisions are not as they would prefer. They may, as a last resort, also have the 'exit' option, to use the famous dichotomy that Albert O. Hirschman (1970) introduced, of opting out. Having both options is an advantage for members as well as the community, which would benefit from the ability to come together and act as one. Then community members must address common concerns. They need to talk to each other. For that they need a formal platform, which the co-op provides.

Governance Versus Management

The difference between the two has consequences for how we think about what needs to be done in small-scale fisheries.

How should small-scale fisheries be governed? Why do they need governance and not only management? What is the difference between the two? Both concepts appear in the SSF Guidelines, without being defined.

I was fortunate to be part of my country's delegation during the Technical Consultation on the SSF Guidelines in Rome in 2013 and 2014. This is not a usual opportunity for a university professor. It was for me a learning experience to be part of a process that resulted in such a groundbreaking achievement as the SSF Guidelines. Now, we should not and cannot talk about small-scale fisheries without mentioning the SSF Guidelines and what they say about governance.

Language dependence

Governance takes place within, and by means of, institutions. And since institutions are totally language dependent, as the philosopher John Searle (1995) argues, so is governance. We govern through institutions which we form and run with language.

How we talk about small-scale fisheries, the words we use, are more than descriptive representations of what they are and what happens to them. We argue about small-scale fisheries with words. We share our opinions by means of words. We see things through the concepts we have in our head. We understand things when we have words for them. Without words we cannot speak. *“Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent,”* Wittgenstein (1974) said.

We act when we use language to formulate a set of guidelines for how to govern small-scale fisheries. The SSF Guidelines are nothing but words for how to govern in the small-scale fisheries realm. The SSF Guidelines are, as Austin (1962) would have said it, a ‘speech-act’. When COFI (FAO’s committee of fisheries) said yes to them, it acted.

Therefore, when country delegates and civil society representatives deliberated on the SSF Guidelines during the Technical Consultations, they used words to discuss which words to use and how words should be understood. Delegates were then thinking of which consequences they would have, for their own small-scale fisheries as they know them, and for the world of small-scale fisheries.

Governance proved to be one of the words that stirred most controversy among delegates. What does governance mean, anyway? Could we not just stick to the commonly used word ‘management’, some delegates asked. What is the difference between the two? Are they not sufficiently overlapping to be thought of as synonyms so that ‘management’ would do? There were those who argued that the governance concept should be taken out of text. If it had not been for the civil society representatives in the room defending the governance term, they may well have succeeded.

This discussion came as a surprise to me, given the prominence that the governance concept has acquired in academic fisheries discourse. So why the fuzz? Delegates should be familiar with it. We are talking about a concept that has been with us from the Greek antiquity. Did they play ignorant? Was it something about the governance concept which they did not like? Did they have good reason for seeking clarification or for rejecting it? Or was it just a matter of semantics?

It is hard to tell because delegates in such settings are not obliged to explain why they argue as they do, what their basic concerns are; they just state their position on the matter. One may therefore wonder why they took that position? They did not explain what their problem was by having the governance concept in the SSF Guidelines.

Reason to be confused

I believe, however, that they had reasons to be confused about the governance concept. As some delegates pointed out, the governance does not translate easily into their language, which they must for the SSF Guidelines to be implemented around the world. Governance does not for instance translate into my own language. We use the term 'forvaltning', which in German is Verwaltung. This concept is close to householding, which is only part of what we associate with the governance concept.

The SSF Guidelines emerge from the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, endorsed in 1995. But the governance concept does not appear in the Code, contrary to management which appears multiple times. So why should there not be conceptual consistency if they are to mean the same thing?

However, governance is a concept with different meanings, also in academia, and we have not always made clear what the difference between governance and management is. We have tended to use management and governance interchangeably, as if they are synonyms. We have in the past talked about management as we now would talk about governance. The governance concept has multiple definitions. FAO has one that is much the same as you would find in academic texts. The fact that this definition existed before the Technical Consultations took place made me think that some delegates were not entirely sincere when they argued that governance does not have an official definition. Neither does 'management', by the way. They are not legal concepts. I guess FAO's governance definition is as 'official' as you can get (Jentoft 2019).

Language is a social phenomenon. Humans invented the words we use. We

gave them their meaning to capture the reality they represent and refer to. To fully understand the meaning of a concept, you would need to know the reality within which it is supposed to work. We would not be able to have a conversation if we demanded that all concepts should have a strict definition. We define words with other words that may need definition, and so on. We are satisfied with approximations, for instance on small-scale fisheries, which are not defined in the SSF Guidelines. How small is small? What is small and what are fisheries anyway (see chapter 14). We can still have a set of guidelines for how to govern small-scale fisheries without defining what they are. We still get an idea of what they are talking about.

Notably, words are not the reality they refer to. *“The name is not the thing being named,”* Gregory Bateson said. The chair is just a name we have agreed to call the thing you are now sitting on. It is not the thing itself. You may get an idea of who I am from the text I have prepared for this presentation, but the text is not me.

Fisheries management is a name for what managers do in the settings they operate, like in a government agency. Their work is technical, guided by science and by law. Fisheries governance, as we have come to define it, is broader, political in nature, and deals with issues that are strategic and ethical, within a set of goals, and which results in rules being established and actions taken.

When the governance concept is defined in academic literature, it is exactly the broad, inclusive, participatory, and interactive process that characterizes the process through which the SSF Guidelines were created. They evolved through stakeholder consultations around the world, involving thousands of people. The definition of governance below captures this process well. This is also the definition of governance in our TBTI book that came out in 2015. *“The whole of public as well as private interaction taken to solve societal problems and to create societal opportunities. It included the formulations and application of principles guiding those interactions and care for the institutions that enable them.”* (Kooiman & Bavinck 2005: 17).

Thus, governance is more than what government does and more than management. If we used a Venn diagram to illustrate the difference between

management and governance, management would form a small circle within a bigger circle which is governance. Same with government: government plays a vital role but is not the only actor in the governance system. To understand governance outcomes, how fisheries become governable, the interactions and relationships between the actors would be focused.

It follows that in a fisheries governance system, as we here think about the concept, goals are not given and imposed by government in a top-down manner. Instead, they are negotiated outcomes of a dynamic process involving societal actors, among them market and civil society actors, i.e., those representing the industry and those of the community and special agendas, like environmental groups. Governance forms a more open and unstable system, with inherent conflicts between actors that have their own interests, stakes, and goals that are not necessarily compatible with those of others. Negotiating conflict is therefore an important part of governance. The governance system is like a political coalition. It involves determining which goals are good and worth having.

Poverty eradication is a central goal of the SSF Guidelines. It is written in the guidelines sub-title. But what is poverty and who are the poor? What is the experience of being poor? Poverty is not thought about only in monetary terms, and that is not how the SSF Guidelines see it. We need a broader definition that includes multiple issues, such as lack of education, poor health, political marginalization, powerlessness, insecure rights, vulnerability, alienation and abuse, and absence of freedom to lead a life of one's choice. These are all issues raised within the SSF Guidelines, but it is hard to determine their relative weight and in which order they should be tackled. It is also a question of how they are linked, and if solving one problem makes it easier to solve another. Each of them has a distinct cause that must be assessed, and no one has a simple solution. They also have a moral dimension. They violate ethical standards.

Moving from management to governance

Societal problem solving therefore involves a different process of planning than say science. Before we can move to solve a problem, we must find a way to agree on what the problem is, which in a societal context is not always easy. The problem is to define the problem, Rittel and Webber (1972) argued in a famous paper, which uses poverty to illustrate what they mean by the term ‘wicked problems’.

Then we are back to what I started out with, the problem must be defined by the concepts that are available to us: we use language to determine how we define the problem, for instance what poverty is. We must act on it through a governance process as we agree to define it, with the means that governors have at their disposal. These means are language dependent, such as law. The governance reforms that the SSF Guidelines advocate, cannot happen without language. How does our conversation about the wicked problems and opportunities of small-scale fisheries change when we think of them from a governance lens?

a) Management-efficiency and effectiveness, and how to achieve the set goals, are undoubtedly important questions. Small-scale fisheries governance system would have been easier if they were the only challenges. But they are not the only indicators of a well-functioning system. There are also other concerns to think about, like power, justice, equity, rule of law, ethics, institutional design, process, rights, representation, knowledge, legitimacy – the list can be extended. The SSF Guidelines include most of these concerns. Should managers ignore or forget about them, they will be reminded, now with the power of language that is in the SSF Guidelines.

b) The SSF Guidelines are not a technical manual. They invite a broad conversation about small-scale fisheries, with other concepts than those which typically dominate a management vocabulary. Moving from management perceived as a technical, science-based issue, to governance with all the additional issues mentioned here, raises issues that are beyond instrumentality, i.e., thinking of management as a means to an end.

c) Many of the concerns of governance are beyond proof. They require deep

reflection and a more complex governability equation. They will certainly make the implementation of the SSF Guidelines messier, into a process of ‘muddling through’, as Charles Lindblom argued in a famous paper published in 1959. Managers would prefer a more linear process, with less strife and noise. This seemed to be one reason for the resistance to having the governance concept in the SSF Guidelines. Many of the delegates were ministry representatives.

d) The SSF Guidelines are voluntary but still powerful because they do not refrain from taking a moral stand, as when stressing the importance of respecting the human rights of small-scale fisheries people. There was not much talk about human rights in the context of small-scale fisheries before. The SSF Guidelines have changed the conversation.

e) Notably, human rights need governance, not only management, because they require a process fitting the complexity and morality of the challenge. Defining what these are in a concrete context like fisheries may also be challenging. It is easy to agree in principle but not necessarily in practice. We agree on principles because they are intuitively self-evident. The delegates to the FAO consultations did not have any reservations about human rights as a guiding principle, as they did with the governance concept, but there were delegates who had reservations about the human rights approach in some concrete situations.

f) Still, despite these reservations, and with some effective diplomacy, the SSF Guidelines luckily survived. Their final endorsement was never guaranteed. Now, what constitutes progress for small-scale fisheries is much clearer than it used to be. It is for the states to follow up.

Power Rules

Before identifying how power interferes in small-scale fisheries, one must have an idea of what power is and what makes some more powerful than others.

Bertrand Russel (1872-1970), the philosopher, said that “*the fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in physics.*” (Russel 1938/2004: 4). Nevertheless, how power works in society, which directions it takes, and how it establishes the conditions under which people operate alone and together should, as Bent Flyvbjerg (2003) argues, always be a concern of social scientists. For those of us interested in small-scale fisheries, this is obvious because it is more than likely that power plays a key role in explaining their poverty, vulnerability, and marginalization.

Power is not always easy to observe, but that should not prevent us from trying to unmask it. We should help to deconstruct how power works in communities and in the value chain. We should look for those social institutions in which power is embedded, including in fisheries governance. As the SSF Guidelines argue, small-scale fisheries people should have more power, also to protect themselves from it.

Since society is a social construction, it can always be different from what

it is. Still, we do not always know how to change it. Powerful forces may support the status quo because change may deprive them of their power. We often have problems imagining how our society, and the institutions within it, can be different than they are. We would have to explore how our political discourse plays a role in maintaining or changing the design and functioning of fisheries systems. Foucault provides a perspective: “*Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart.*” (Foucault 1998: 100-1).

Resistance power

Exposing power, detecting how it works in social relations and systems like those in small-scale fisheries and in the coastal zone, is not merely an academic exercise. The SSF Guidelines talk about the unequal relations of power that small-scale fisheries people must cope with (see chapter 1). Understanding power is of utmost importance for improving the wellbeing and dignity of small-scale fisheries people. The implementation of the SSF Guidelines would need the backing of power. Without it, it is likely to be blocked by those who have the power to prevent the reforms the SSF Guidelines suggest, if it goes against their interests.

As Steven Lukes (2004) points out, power is not only power *to*, which would determine the fate of the SSF Guidelines. It is also power *over* those who oppose and have power *to resist* their implementation. Government may have the power to implement the guidelines, but also the power to refrain from it. “*Power is a capacity not the exercise of that capacity*” (p. 12). “*Having the means of power is not the same thing as having power*” (p. 70). Power, Lukes says, “*identifies a capacity, a potentiality, and not necessarily an actuality*” (p. 69). However, power is a capacity, “*not the exercise or the vehicle of that capacity*” (p. 70). Awareness of the other party’s capacity to intervene may be sufficient to secure restraint or obedience. Small-scale fisheries people may choose not to challenge corporate or government power because of the risks involved. They may consider the odds of losing too high. Instead, they bend their neck.

This is a scenario in the Blue Economy. With the entrance of new

stakeholders, many of them are corporations with enough power to impose their own solution. Small-scale fisheries people cannot be sure that the government will come to their rescue. Therefore, the SSF Guidelines argue for legally securing their tenure rights. Small-scale fisheries people must be powerful enough not to be ignored and pushed aside. They must have collective power, which their organization can provide. If missing, they need to build it.

Locating power?

If, as Michel Foucault (1998: 63) said: “*Power is everywhere*” and “*comes from everywhere*”, it should not be so difficult to find it. It is in politics, in institutions, and in the way our economy works. It is part of our everyday life, in our family and community. It is, as Foucault argued, a socialized and embodied phenomenon; we learn to discipline ourselves. Power is, thus, in our bodies. Without self-discipline, there is no social order. In that case, our society would hardly function. The same would be true for small-scale fisheries. Illegality would be rampant. It would be difficult to secure governability. Installing self-discipline in people is, therefore, also a way of facilitating the ‘governmentality’ (one of Foucault’s neologisms), which all institutions, including families and communities, must have to function.

From Foucault’s perspective, the making of a fisher is, therefore, also an issue of power. But not necessarily in a physical, but a cultural sense. It is inherent in the family in the way children are brought up and on the fishing vessel when the adolescent is introduced to fishing. Fishers are also subject to government regulatory power, which they may choose to abide with, or resist if they have the power to do so. Violation of management rules and non-compliance is an expression of fishers’ resistance to regulatory power, but we may look at it as a cultural and not just a legal matter. It is both a success and a failure of power. It is power *over* meeting power *resistance*, limiting *power to*, as Lukes would say it.

Lukes posits that “*power is at its most effective when least observable*” (p. 1). Power is not always transparent. It may be working behind closed doors,

and therefore not easily accessible to scrutiny. Those in power may have an interest in keeping it away from the public eye. For this reason, it seeks to avoid inspection, also from social scientists. We are typically not invited into the corporate board room. We are left with observing the effects of power and inferring about its source. So, if people with power do not want their power to be discovered, for instance to make it more effective, they will do what it takes to hide or deny it or to make it less observable, as Lukes suggested.

Therefore, we know power when we see it, but we do not always see it. The omnipresence of power is illustrated by its numerous prefixes. Russel's chapter on religion is '*Priestly power*', then follows Kingly power, Naked power, Revolutionary power, Economic power, and Power over opinion'. We could add Gender power, Racial power, State power, Knowledge power in 'regimes of truth', (Foucault 1991). Discursive power is another of Foucault concepts, which is what Media power is about. My chapter 15 in this book is about the power of language. There is no end to the twists of the power concept, which suggest the prominence of power in social analysis. When power is 'everywhere', it is a challenging endeavor to search it out in all its shape and forms and arrive at a synthesized idea of what it is and how it functions.

There is, however, a vast social science literature to draw from. Thus, Russel may well be right. He may even be right for the social science of fisheries, which was hardly on his mind when he published his book in 1938. A Google scholar search on power, sociology, and fisheries combined yields the impressive figure of 518,000 hits. When replacing sociology with social anthropology – 622,000, political science – 528,000, and economics – 1,230,000.

What is power?

Before we start, searching out where power is to be found and what it does, we must have an idea of what power is. We need an idea of what we are looking for before we can start the hunt.

Russel defined power as "*the production of intended effects*". That would

suggest that behind power is always an agent with an agenda, who has what it takes to control the situation and impose a solution. Such agents certainly exist, in fisheries and everywhere else. With the SSF Guidelines, government and civil society organizations are likely to become increasingly prominent agents in small-scale fisheries. This is not necessarily good news, especially if there the people lack the power to resist or negotiate, an organization to represent them, and a leadership to inspire them.

The government may institute new management rules to secure the stock from overfishing or the integrity of the ecosystem. Likewise, the intent may be to achieve certain social outcomes, like sustaining small-scale fishing communities and distributional equity. However, the effect of interventions may be different from what the government had in mind, for reasons that would suggest that government power is less than absolute. That might lead the government to confirm or falsify prior expectations, which might result in power consolidation.

Government may give itself more power so that they can try harder the next time, which has been its response to lack of compliance. Consequently, fisheries management becomes increasingly repressive – more surveillance, stricter penalties. My own country Norway is an example. More control reveals more violations, which justifies even stricter measures. The tinkering of the management system evolves into a vicious circle.

And yet, when the government fails, it may have to do with lack of information, systemic frictions, things that are inherently hard to control and predict, or because of counter-wailing power from stakeholders whose intent are to hinder government plans to come to fruition. Thus, to understand outcomes, why and how they succeed or fail, we would have to seek out other agents, who they are and what it is they possess to make them powerful, and what they do to help or hinder a management plan to take effect as projected. Power then becomes a game rather than an exercise, but a game where also the rules are challenged and (re-)created.

If we think of fisheries governance as a power-game, as a process with uncertain, undetermined outcomes and which may end as a negotiated arrangement, power is perceived in relational terms. Power is something

an agent has relative to another agent, to be strategically used in their interactions. For agent A to impose his intent on agent B in a way B must abide with, would suggest an asymmetrical power-relation from the start, and from which B has no escape. Management outcomes would then result of relative strength, skewed interdependencies, and available choice alternatives. This is the essence of monopoly or monopsony power in the fisheries value chain. Small-scale fisheries are, therefore, at the mercy of powerful actors, like if the fish buyer or money lender is the only one around. If alternative options exist, A's power over B would be limited. If B is a fisher, he could choose to sell to C. Having such alternatives would therefore empower B. This is how a free market is supposed to function.

Institutional power

As a professor, I have power over my students only as far as they care about what I offer, like the grade I am about to give. My power-grip ends the moment the students decide to walk away. Still, as a professor, I function by virtue of the power of the institution I am part of. The exam was not created by me or any other agent that can now be identified. My university is inheriting the powerful institution of examination and academic quality control. It is part of what makes the university what it is and me into what I am as a professor. It also makes the student into a 'subject,' and by that an agent themselves in the examiner-examinee role-set. We are both fulfilling a role that is defined for us. My university did not invent this role-set. The fishing vessel is no different. The captain/crew role-set is there before they enter the boat. It is, however, not written in stone but a pattern of ongoing negotiation, as Fredrik Barth (1981) argued.

However, Foucault argues that power not only sits in my role but also in me as individual. I am not just fulfilling the role of professor, the professor's role also fulfills me, i.e., makes me the person I am. When I am part of the institution, I cannot escape the power that functions in me as I do my job. But I cannot really be free because I cannot stop being me. People ask me why I do not stop working now that I have passed retirement age. I tell them that I

cannot really stop being me, the person who authors this book. I might feel free if I stopped, but I am afraid that I would also feel lost. Thus, the power of the institution I was part of, still lives in me.

As a professor, I am its willing subject. The power of the role, which is empowered by the institution, operates *through* me as a professor, not *against* me. I am a vehicle of power at the exam table. This is how institutions work, Foucault posits. It makes him conclude that power is ‘everywhere’. Still, we might resist it if we knew and had the power to do so, but we rarely do. We are loyal to the institution we are part of. This is not just because it provides us with a salary but also because it gives us an identity. Institutions are human constructs, and humans are institutional constructs as well. Foucault argued that *“power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself, its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanism.”* (Quoted by Lukes 2005, p. 90). We usually have no consciousness of that mechanism because it works inside us.

There are methodological challenges of identifying agents of power and the power of agents. Power is therefore easier to philosophize than to study empirically. Foucault’s perception of power makes it even more difficult to delineate. Power works in ways that do not reveal itself; it is often anonymous and subtle. Even the agent who fills the role that the institution defines, may not be fully aware of how power works in the situation he or she or they both are in. The power in the role is hiding itself from the individual or collective agent, who performs it without deeper reflection. I bet that few professors think much about the power they have over the student when they do their job. They just take it for granted and are surprised when it is pointed out to them.

Power/knowledge

Francis Bacon (1597) said that *“knowledge is itself power”*. The one who has it may use it to control a social process and determine its outcome. Not only does knowledge empower the knower, but the knower also empowers the knowledge by determining what counts as it. The university’s role of

validating what counts as knowledge, and by that truth, is a tremendous power to possess. Foucault therefore linked power to knowledge and argued that the two go together in two ways. Truth “*isn't outside power or lacking in power: it is integral to power*” (Foucault 1977: 131). The power to decide what constitutes relevant knowledge resides with the research community and the government. The fact that small-scale fisheries people must have knowledge to operate has not been recognized as an asset in fisheries management.

By advocating for the inclusion of small-scale fisheries people into the governance system, by instituting co-management arrangements, the SSF Guidelines aims to correct for this deficiency – not only as a means of broadening the knowledge base of fisheries management, but also as a way of empowering small-scale fisheries people as knowledge-holders. To follow Foucault’s argument, it will empower the management institutions, and by that their ability to exercise their role more effectively and wisely.

The constitution of fisheries people will change accordingly. The power of the management system will work through them and by that make them more inclined to adhere to rules by self-policing and -surveillance, because the rules are also of their own making. It will change their image of who they are, from passive receivers of knowledge to active producers of it. Co-management may therefore also be expected to reduce the problem of non-compliance, not through coercion but making fishers more willing subjects. As co-management restricts the power of government, it also disciplines the fisher.

Transformation

Knowledge has transformative power. It empowers the individual in lasting ways. It also has potential to change the functioning of local communities, making them more resilient and capable of building their own future. Indeed, it would alter the world of small-scale fisheries, not just because small-scale fisheries people would learn about how the world works. They also learn about themselves, who they are and can be. That is why the SSF Guidelines see a role for the academic community and the need for more research into

the abilities and disabilities of small-scale fisheries to play a bigger role in poverty eradication and food security (see chapter 1). It is also the reason TBTI was established and why we find meaning in what we do.

The expectation is that research may help to curtail the abuse of power, thus creating a more level playing field because knowledge carries a weight of its own and by that imbues the governance process. But power may also be a disincentive to seek new and deeper understanding because it is costly and may reveal inconvenient truths to those who are comfortable with the status quo. As Rotschild (1971: 1) observed: "*The discovery of truth is not only difficult; it can also lead to clashes with entrenched interests.*" Flyvbjerg (2003: 143), therefore warned that "*power often ignores or designs knowledge at its own convenience.*" This may well be what determines whether the SSF Guidelines will achieve their goals. It is a responsibility for all of us to make sure this does not happen.

Governance Power

In governance, power is both a restricting and enabling force.

TBTI's research cluster focusing on small-scale fisheries governance was titled '*Governing the Governance*', as the title of Jan Kooiman's 2003 book. I worked with him from 1997 until he passed away in 2015. Not a fisheries specialist himself, Jan helped us think systematically about fisheries governance, applying his ideas about what Rhodes (1996) had called 'the new governance'. When TBTI started in 2012, it was a natural thing to make use of his thinking. His legacy can be seen in multiple TBTI books and articles, most recently in '*Blue Justice: Small-scale Fisheries in a Sustainable Ocean Economy*' (Jentoft et al. 2022). We are here using his analytical framework for exploring how small-scale fisheries are coping in the Blue Economy.

Kooiman had developed his conceptual framework before I first met him in 1997 upon his invitation to join him in Amsterdam for a workshop. He had published '*Modern Governance: New Government-Society Interactions*' in 1993. He did not have a particular name for his governance theory then. Our first book together was published by Ashgate in 1999, titled '*Creative Governance: Opportunities for Fisheries in Europe*' (Kooiman et al. 1999). The 'interactive governance' concept was introduced in his 2003 book. It also appeared in our 2005 volume on Amsterdam University Press (Kooiman et

al. 2005), titled *'Fish for Life: Interactive Governance for Fisheries'* and in the many books and journal articles that followed. Our latest 2022 book (Jentoft et al. 2022) shows that this is still a work in progress.

Interactive governance synthesized

We continue to develop and apply interactive governance theory, now with TBTI, more specifically on small-scale fisheries where we are trying to put more flesh on the conceptual bones. We think more needs to be done in exploring its analytical potentials on substantive issues, one of them the role of power as a restricting force and an enabling governance asset. Before I go into further detail on power, a synthesis of what this framework is. Such a synthesis is presented in chapter 16 of the *'Fish for Life'* book, co-authored by Jan Kooiman and Ratana Chuenpagdee, from which Figure 20.1. is copied. Our work before and within TBTI has since concentrated on unwrapping the boxes and how they link, and how they can explain what the governance of small-scale fisheries is about, including the challenges of implementing the SSF Guidelines.

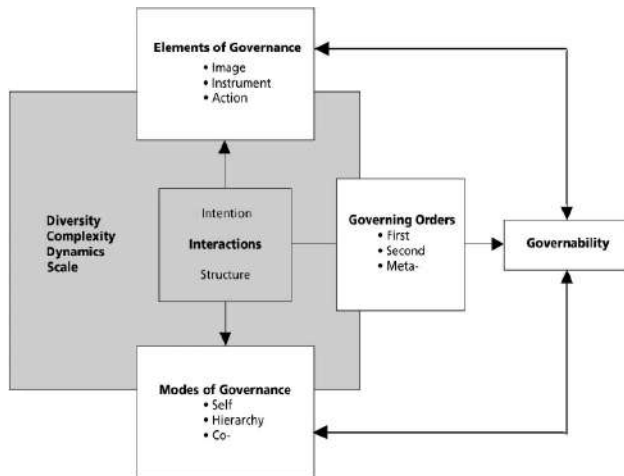


Figure 20.1. A synthesized scheme of governance. Source: Kooiman et al. (2005).

As can be seen from Figure 20.1., the end-variable is ‘Governability’, which originates in Kooiman’s 2003 book. He defined it as the ‘the quality of governance’, to which all the other elements in the model contribute. It is partly about governance capacity, its ability to deliver established goals. It is also about standards, like those associated with the concept ‘good governance’, such as human rights, transparency, rule of law etc., which appear in the SSF Guidelines. Governance outcomes are important, but so is the process, i.e., how people interact, including when they deliberate on images, principles, and goals, which according to Kooiman do not precede governance but are a part of it.

Beginning on the left, diversity, complexity, dynamics, and scale are characteristics of the system-to-be governed and the governing system. Both systems have multiple and interlinked components, like actors, technologies, and ecosystems. They work at different scales from the local to the global level, in a non-stable environment. The two systems change over time, partly as an inherent process and partly resulting from the ongoing interactions between them. The governing system intervenes in the system-to-be governed to bring order or change but is also subject to change because of it, for instance due to the learning that results. Kooiman has various categories for how the governing system tries to steer the functioning of the system-to-be-governed, which I will not go into here.

The ‘Governing orders’ refer to the principles of governance and how they stage the design and functioning institutions, as well as daily interactions. Kooiman argues that all governance systems work according to some implicit or explicit principles that provide guidance to the way governors work and to the rules and regulations and sanctioning mechanisms, which bind them to the mast. The guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines are a good illustration of why this is an important part of governance. Inspired by interactive governance, our book (Jentoft & Eide 2011) discusses the role of governance principles for eradication poverty in small-scale fisheries. The governance orders also frame the set-up of the Blue Justice book (Jentoft et al. 2022).

In the Figure 20.1., the ‘Modes of governance’ come as three ideal types: hierarchical, co-, and self-governance. In other words, governance takes place

as a top-down or a self-contained, autonomous process, or as something in between by combining central and local authority. This was the focus of our 2015 book *Interactive Governance for Small-Scale Fisheries*, where we were particularly interested in the arrow from the ‘modes’ to ‘governability’. We concluded that small-scale fisheries governance globally seems to converge towards co-governance. The hierarchical mode seems ‘outmoded’, whereas self-governance needs institutional support and formalization that the state can provide. This is also what the SSF Guidelines advocate.

The ‘Governance elements’ were the central focus of the VIP (Values, Images, and Principles) project, which Ratana Chuenpagdee initiated and coordinated in collaboration with Andrew Song. The project led to several journal articles, including Song et al. (2013). Here, the investigation focused on the underlying worldviews that governors and those who are being governed have, and how they make sense of the problem they aim to solve. No image of the system-to-be governed is more prevalent in fisheries than Garrett Hardin’s (1968) idea of the Tragedy of the Commons.

In another article, we also explored the underpinning image of the governance system, ideally perceived as a ‘pyramid’ or a ‘rose’ (Jentoft et al. 2008). Consistent with the ‘rose’ model, Jan argued that modern governance “*can best be explained by an awareness that governments are not the only actor addressing major societal issues*” and that new modes of governance are needed to tackle them (Kooiman 2003: 3). We have followed this insight in several published articles on marine protected areas in Spain and Mexico.

There is more work to be done to unpack the boxes in the figure. How actors within the governing system and the system-to-be-governed interact, cooperate, strategize, and communicate when building institutions, carry out their assignments, and strive to achieve their individual and collective goals in real time, would be a fascinating undertaking for interactive governance research. It would, however, require access to institutions and situations where power is exercised. These are places where doors are closed for social scientists.

Where is the power?

It takes effort to get familiar with interactive governance and to integrate its concepts into our way of thinking of small-scale fisheries. And yet, that is what any analytical framework requires. It is like learning a new language. What do words mean and how do we use them to form sentences in a conversation? When at the Mare Conference in Amsterdam, Professor David Symes reviewed our 2013 book on ‘governability’, he said that he would not recommend it as a beachside reading. A critique is often raised when presenting interacting governance to an audience, which I often do by showing and explaining the Figure 20.1. above. People will raise their hand and ask: where is power? It is not a variable in the model, and yet we know that power is an enabling and restricting governance force; it is among the things that make fisheries systems governable.

I once asked Jan Kooiman the same question. How is the power part of it, why isn’t it in the model? He said: *“I have given it lot of thought, but I could not fit it in.”* When I asked why, he answered just like Foucault did: *“Power is everywhere.”* (See chapter 12). He also mentions it in his book:

“Culture, power and democracy belong to the category of concepts one really needs to pay careful attention to. However, they are such broad, difficult and often misused categories, that I decided to consider them “silhouettes hovering in the background” rather than as “active figures in the foreground” of my effort to understand what governance and governability is about.” (Kooiman 2003, p. 229)

Here, he shares an overall experience of social researchers; power is difficult to pinpoint. Not only is it an abstract, composite concept; it is also operating behind a veil. It is in the interest of power to shield itself from inspection. They also have the power to deny access to it. Powerful actors will often deny that they have it. They may not even be aware of their power or reflect much on what it means. It is a privilege they take for granted.

Still, we know that power is always there, *“a silhouette hovering in the*

background”, much like gravity. We can see the apple falling to the ground but not the force behind it. Neither would power be easy or possible to catch – as a ‘problem’ to solve. We nevertheless ought to learn about what it is and how it works in governance settings, both as a negative and a positive dynamism, if we are to solve important societal problems, like making the SSF Guidelines take effect.

When people ask about the missing power variable in Figure 20.1., they might be thinking that there should be a separate box for it. But if “*power is everywhere*”, it is “*hovering*” in all boxes. Unwrapping them, as has been, and still is, our ambition, would, as far as power is concerned, require inspection into all of them. We would look for power in the system-to-be-governed, in the governing system, and in the interaction between the two. We would inspect the governance order, modes, and elements, including the images. As I discussed in chapter 15, detecting how the power of language is framing our ideas of what the problem definition and how it also be addressed. Therefore, I answer when I am challenged by the missing power in the model:

“Interactive governance is what you study power with. It is a tool for identifying where and how power works in concrete settings. It provides the researcher with a more fine-tuned apparatus for exploring the many faces and tracks of power. For this, you need a map to guide your search. You would have to try it out before you make up your mind: just because power does not have a separate box is not a reason for abandoning interactive governance for some other analytical perspective. But we need more reflection about how power may materialize in each box. Then we can use the interactive governance framework to phrase researchable hypotheses.”

Kooiman on power

Jan often talks about power in his 2003 book. But he does not spell out in any detail how power is hidden in the boxes, i.e., how power works in the element, orders, or modes in the governing system and the system-to-be governed, as well as in the ways the two systems interact. That is something he left for us to do. But he gave us a lot of hunches. His reflections about the functioning of power in governance appear throughout the entire text (as it also does in

the 2005 *'Fish for Life'* book). On page 71, he observes:

"...pluralism remains an important tool in theorizing about governing interaction and on the topic on how power or influence in those interactions are divided society-wise. The essence of a pluralist view on society is that no single group, organisation or class can dominate its governance."

Power is not necessarily concentrated but dispersed in an interactive process that involves government, markets, civil society actors, and the public. Governability would be determined by the relative power of each of them and their interactions. These interactions do not produce stable power relations. Who among them have more power than others are shifting with the issue and over time. The same with the question of what exactly do they possess relative to other stakeholders that make them powerful? The assets that used to make me powerful do not carry the same weight anymore. These are empirical questions that must be explored structurally as well as *in vivo* in real settings. The interactive governance framework provides an evaluative tool. There is something to find out about power in each box.

Kooiman often draws on other scholars who discuss power in ways he finds relevant for his interactive governance conceptualization. For instance, he reflects on how culture influences the way we think about governance.

"These subtle, unnoticed implications of cultural ideas are perhaps the most potent form of power. The existence of open conflict and debate at least assures that such forms of cultural power exertion are suppressed and that the political character of issues is brought out into the open. But not even political debate can solve such dilemmas in all respects." (p. 138)

This fits in the 'elements' box in Figure 20.1. Kooiman is thus not blind to how the 'soft' power of culture is embedded in 'hard' social structures and being a resource for actors who impose their will upon others. When culture is shared, governors will meet less resistance among the governed. Also,

he talks about “*the power of value judgments*” and the normative questions involved in governance; “*Is equilibrium desirable? Is order positive?*” (p. 107). Those questions allude to shared ideas, whose answers will have powerful implications on governance approaches and outcomes. But we cannot always assume that they are.

Small-scale fisheries people may have different ideas about what matters. They share many of many views, but not necessarily all. Political opinions vary among small-scale fisheries people as in the rest of the population. I know a small-scale fisher who named his boat ‘Fidel’. By that he displays where his political sympathies lie. Other fishers may be hesitant to show what they believe in. Instead, they name their boat by a son or a daughter. By that they signal how they value family. I was always fascinated by the boat names and the cultural meaning behind them. Large-scale, industrial vessels tend to have a less personalized name than small-scale fishing vessels, like North Star or Scorpion.

For achieving governability, governance actors would benefit from building alliances, as they will not be able to realize their interests on their own. Therefore, they must be willing to negotiate and compromise. However, there is no guarantee that they together will deliver governability if we think of governability in terms of quality, as Jan defines that term. Referring to Habermas, he says: “*Results of communicating governing are expected to be defensible from the point of view of public interest and not solely the needs of the most powerful actors.*” (p. 101). He also talks about bureaucratic power, the fourth branch of government, as a potential “*threat even to democratic governance*” (p. 75). Many small-scale fisheries people would say that this is also their experience. I have argued elsewhere that bureaucratic power may well be a roadblock for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines (Jentoft 2014). Bureaucracy does not necessarily share the urgency of small-scale fisheries people and may have a self-interest in maintaining a status quo.

Researching power

The SSF Guidelines are adamant about the role of power in explaining the marginalization and poverty of small-scale fisheries people and vociferous about the necessity of releasing them from the power-relations that hold them back. They advocate for governance reforms, including new legislation when necessary. Governance reform along the lines that the SSF Guidelines are mentioning is obviously part of the solution, but we need a better understanding of how governance systems and processes are often also part of the problem. The problem is not necessarily situated in the system-to-be governed. Governance failure may well reside in the governing system and in the way the two connect and interact.

Interactive governance, as synthesized in the Figure 20.1., provides a template for where we should begin to look for power. What exactly we should look at is to be found in the rich social science literature on power, what power is and does, as discussed in chapter 12. The interactive governance framework is not about right and wrong but about its efficacy in research. As with any other analytical framework, interactive governance directs attention in certain areas. It opens our eyes for specific aspects and makes us sensitive to nuance and subtleties. But as other analytical perspectives, it comes with blinders. Something remains out of focus; to see is also not to see.

For helping to move the implementation of the SSF Guidelines forward, we should be critical of the functioning of power that may hinder them in reaching the small-scale fisheries people they are meant for, like those who are stuck in their poverty and marginality because they are powerless. We must be prepared for the risks and obstacles that may complicate the fruition of the SSF Guidelines. As social scientists, we should move out of the ivory tower, and get our hands dirty by starting to apply the interactive governance framework in empirical research, using every research method in the social science toolkit.

We may then discover something about how power works that interactive governance did not prepare us for. But since interactive governance is not a

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statement of morality or truth, but a way of looking, it will not be falsified, only enriched. As we learn more about how power determines the fate of small-scale fisheries, we will also learn more about power, what it is and how it functions at a conceptual level. We would thus add to our understanding of governance.

VI

The Small-Scale Fisheries Employment System



*Small-scale fisheries are family-oriented, with husband and wife working together. Inatori, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan.
(Inatori Branch of Izu FCA, 2017)*

Family Resemblance

Small-scale fisheries communities are integrated social systems where people cooperate and share things.

In ‘*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*’, Karl Marx (1852) famously described the great mass of the French nation as “*formed by the simple addition of homonymous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes.*” By that, he meant that the French are not much more than aggregate of atomistic individuals, not a constituent whole. Regarding French peasantry, he argued that “*Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient, directly produces most of its consumer needs, and thus acquires its means of life more through an exchange with nature than in intercourse with society.*” (Marx 1852).

Emile Durkheim (*The Division of Labor in Society*, 1953) was onto the same idea with his distinction between ‘mechanical solidarity’ versus ‘organic solidarity’. In the first instance, social integration occurs among members who have similar values and beliefs, largely because they do the same thing, as French peasants. In the latter case, solidarity occurs because people specialize, and by that need each other, like in a system of labor division, where each person does his or her part. Here, people do not just exist side by side, and do and think the same. They are different, they make and know different things, which enables and motivates them to exchange goods and services and build

transactional relationships.

Could Marx have said the same thing about small-scale fishers? Are they just a ‘magnitude’ of spontaneously gathered clones? Which category would Durkheim have used? Is their solidarity rooted in sameness and self-reliance or in difference and inter-dependency? The few times he mentions fishers in his book, it is within a family context, which in his narrative clearly works as an organic system:

“In time, however, wealth and population grow, and with that growth there is an increase of motion in the community — the husband now ex-changing services with the wife, the parents with the children, and the children with each other — one providing fish, a second meat, and a third grain; while a fourth converts the wool into cloth, and a fifth the skins into shoes.” (Durkheim 1953: 398)

Repressive vs. co-operative law

Images like these have profound consequences when they shape our ideas about fisheries management. It matters whether managers think of small-scale fishers as the sack-of-potatoes or an integrated, organic whole. Durkheim’s two solidarities have implications for legislation. He argued that mechanical solidary requires ‘repressive law’, whereas organic solidarity would need ‘co-operative law’. If fisheries people are like the French peasants, a bunch of identical, self-reliant oriented individuals, law must keep them in check, hindering disorder, like with ‘*The Tragedy of the Commons*’ that Garrett Hardin (1969) discussed. ‘Repressive law’ penalizes irregularities and unhealthy competition which tend to occur in the absence of community.

If, on the other hand, small-scale fishers are dependent on each other and work as a system under division of labor and held together by organic solidarity, law must facilitate co-operation and exchange. Legislation must help to bring fisheries people together, aim at the system rather than the individual. Fisheries management legislation is currently mostly repressive and less cooperative. It is about controlling and penalizing rather than

encouraging and enabling.

The value chain is an organic system of buyers and sellers, producers, vendors, and processors, each conducting specialized but interdependent functions. On the one extreme, value chains may consist of individual market actors. On the other, it is integrated into a hierarchical organization like in a vertically integrated firm. The two organic systems, one 'inter-dependent' and the other 'functional' as Raymond Boudon (*The Logic of Social Action*, 1981) would call them, work differently because organic solidarity would involve different things.

Value chain organization may be a mixture of the two extremes and combine repressive and co-operative law. In Norway, the law prohibits fish processors from owning fish vessels, but fishers may own processing facilities. By law, fisher co-operative organizations control raw-fish price setting, and once prices are set, buyers or sellers would be punished should they go below them and thus bypass the sales-organization. The Law discourages vertical integration but encourages horizontal integration (Jentoft & Finstad 2018).

Similarities and differences

We cannot do without concepts that refer to aggregates and groups. There are trees but also woods, and sometimes we must talk about the latter. Likewise, boats constitute fleets and individuals form communities. We must address them as collectives, stressing the similarities of their entities rather than the uniqueness of their individualities. Nonetheless, like trees, fleets and communities represent units that are both similar and different; there are many sorts of trees in the forest, boats come in different shapes and forms, people are different and so are communities.

Knowing this, we still use concepts that conceal diversities, which often cause problems with definitions. Given diversity among the units that make up categories like fleets and communities, what are they? We struggle with defining small-scale fisheries. What is large and small in fisheries is relative. Small-scale fisheries are also different, but we often talk about them as if they are one thing, which they are truly not.

Rather than searching for the essentials of small-scale fisheries, I argue in chapter 5 that we should follow Wittgenstein's advice (in *Philosophical Investigations*, 1953) and look for 'family resemblances'. Family members do not look the same, but they still share enough features to distinguish them as a family. Families do not just 'add up' as 'magnitudes', they have lasting relationships, members interact and unite.

Despite the diversity of small-scale fisheries, the category of small-scale fisheries suggests family resemblance. In contrast to large-scale fisheries, they are typically embedded in local communities. But communities are likewise different and hard to define (Clay & Olsson 2007). Still, their family resemblance allows us to talk about them as communities. It is in all these cases, more important not just to focus on that they are, but also on how they function and 'give' to members.

We should explore whether the same is the case with small-scale fishing fleets. As families and communities form organic systems, fleets may do the same. We would then describe what they are by what they do, relative to each other. Are vessels independent and self-sufficient, as in a mechanical system, or do they interact because they depend on each other? Are they 'interdependent' or 'functional systems', as Boudon talks about – or combinations of both? May links between vessels be indirect and subtle, activated routinely or periodically? If we could demonstrate that small-scale fisheries, fleets, and communities are more than simply magnitudes, that they form dynamic, organic systems where units depend on each other in multiple and existential ways, we could build an argument for a different fisheries policy and management system, one that builds on 'co-operative' rather than 'repressive' law.

I once set out to explore how small-scale fishers connect, knowing that images like those of Marx and Durkheim are all analytical concepts and that their distinctions may not be clear-cut. Fleets may be both mechanical and organic system, they both compete and co-operate, for instance depending on types of fishing or their scale. Sometimes they operate alone, other times as a group. Co-operation makes their competition constructive, as when they all subscribe to the same norm and adhere to rules. Then, competition does

not evolve into chaos.

Series or group?

When local fishers share a particular fishing pattern, it becomes the identity of their community. They would say, “*We are a net-fishing community*, or “*Ours is a long-line fishing community*.” In the community I worked in when I did my PhD research, they took pride in being a purse-seine community. Partly, this is due to the ecological conditions, which allow and encourage certain fishing patterns. It seems equally important, however, that a similar fishing pattern makes co-operation relevant and mutually beneficial. Because they share the same technological and socio-cultural characteristics, and because they know each other, they have fishing experience and expertise to offer. Mechanical solidarity would then be a condition for fishers’ organic solidarity.

Without mechanical solidarity, fishers would have less to learn from each other. They are not self-sufficient and autodidact. For their social system to be sustainable, they must cooperate, as they would do if they were a crew. No one would think of the crew as a ‘homonymous magnitude’, like Marx thought about the French peasants. Neither would anyone call them what Jean-Paul Sartre (1960) termed a ‘series’. Boat crews are not like a bus-queue where people, although ‘homonymous’, are in the way of each other. Crews are a team who must know their roles and how to work together. Contrary to the present series perspective of fishing fleets, what is necessary for the crew may be equally indispensable for local fishing fleets. They must also know how to cooperate.

Lofoten fishery

A chapter in a book I edited with Cato Wadel (1984) explores the diverse ways small-scale fisheries vessels interact and co-operate. In Norway, it is common, for instance, for local fishers to travel together to the fishing grounds, not just to keep company but also out of safety reasons. They call each other ‘comrade boats’. As comrades, fishers look out for each other, and they communicate

frequently on the radio, asking how they are doing, seeking advice, raising issues of relevance to their fishing operation, like where to go, how to avoid gear entangling, what they catch, and when to stop for the day. On congested fishing grounds, they must communicate to avoid collision when they set their nets or long-lines.

In the Lofoten cod season, fishers from the same home community often arrive together and work as a group. They fish on the same grounds, land their catch with the same buyer, and spend the night in the same host community. Then they continue the conversation, compare the day's catch, check weather forecasts, meet fishers from other communities who they have met in Lofoten before. This is information they use to plan for the next day.

Sometimes boats pack the harbor. They tie side by side, thus forming a 'leg'. Svein Lamark, a colleague I cite in the chapter, did participant observation research in the Lofoten fishery. He witnessed that when fishers in the 'leg' must cross into the next boat to get ashore, they stop and chat with their colleagues. He noted that these conversations had non-intended functions. Lamark writes:

"For the beginner, the 'leg' is an important source of knowledge. Here he gets to hear professionals discuss catching techniques, vessel types, which gear is more profitable under certain conditions, plus a lot of other things that are essential for tomorrow's fishing and then can be put to the test at a later stage. For a beginner who has not grown into the environment, the leg becomes a school where you get the theoretical knowledge of modern hand-line fishing." (My translation)

Fishing requires more than the capability of handling a boat and gear. Knowledge of species and gear use is site specific. You must have an idea of where to find the fish and how to fish there. Fishing in Lofoten is different from fishing on home fishing grounds. This you learn from experience, from fishing with others, from talking with and observing what other fishers do. Fishing involves a socialization process; it is about learning the techniques of fishing, like how to use a knife, and about internalizing the norms and rules

of fishing, what in other words it means to be a fisher. It is not something you learn from a book. It is an informal, interactive process among fisher brethren. It takes a fisheries community, and it starts long before the teenagers participate in their first Lofoten season.

Fleet composition

The same book chapter cites examples of fishers moving between small and large boats, following a seasonal pattern where they crew a bigger, more seaworthy boat during the winter fishery and work their own small boat in the summer. They also switch between vessels throughout their career. Offshore fishing is often more strenuous than inshore fishing. Long line fishing is known to be more physically demanding than net- or hand-line fishing. You would, therefore, be more physically fit for some types of fishing. A fisher may still be too young to stop fishing altogether and has saved enough money to buy his own boat for less strenuous fishing.

A modern fishing vessel cannot afford to have newcomers onboard. Fishers must be fully skilled. On the job learning is difficult. Young fishers may then have to start out on a less technologically sophisticated, older fishing boat, where the efficiency demands are less. This is also where they end up later in life. Hence, fishers depend on the composition of the fishing fleet. They need a variety of boat sizes to be fully engaged throughout their career. Likewise, new and modern vessels rely on older, less intensively operated fishing vessels to train newcomers until they are qualified to switch. Thus, fleets form mechanical and organic 'employment systems', as Wadel and I called it (see chapter 26 in this book). Vessels need each other to be able to function. Should some vessels disappear, others would suffer. Thus, fleets should be thought of as a synergetic whole, and not an assemblage of parts.

Solidarity

Fisheries management is intervention into an organic system, not into an aggregate horde that works as a series where you, as in the bus queue, do fishers and vessels a service if you get rid of some of them. When fishers co-operate, they do not only make fishing more profitable, but they also make it more profitable for *more* of them. It also increases fisher mechanical and organic solidarity, as their 'sociality', i.e., their ability to be and work together, is dependent on both. The sociality of fishing makes fishing an attractive occupation and career, not just its profitability.

A problem with modern fisheries management is that it is narrowly focusing on profitability and not the sociality of fishing. It assumes, in fact, that there is an inverse relationship. Small-scale fisheries obviously need both to remain sustainable. Fishers do not only interact with nature; they also interact with each other, on land and at sea which are not separate spheres. They build relations that last beyond the moment of catching the fish.

A vessel would also need a stable and secure relation with a fish buyer, which in Norway is typically a processing plant. Then, for the plant to be viable, the vessel would depend on other vessels. How fishers here communicate their mutual interest in keeping the plant intact through their joint deliveries is indicative of their own mechanical and organic solidarity. Both are essential for the employment system to function because the links that bind the system together are both vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Boats may well have to queue up to land their fish when they arrive at the same time, but they do depend on the queue to exist. Without it, the plant suffers, and the fishers lose. They are therefore usually OK with waiting for their turn, also because it gives them an opportunity to socialize, which helps build the necessary solidarity for the value chain to function.

Not just about Jobs

Small-scale fisheries provide essential elements of what constitute a good life.

If, as a scientist, you want to reach through to policy makers and the public at large, your chance is higher if you can reduce your message into a simple, quantifiable metric. They will listen, even if they do not fully know the science behind it. Fisheries biologists have such a metric with the – the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), the largest quantity you can take out a fish stock without impairing its ability to renew itself at the same level. If we only allow fishing until that max-point is reached, fishing can in principle continue indefinitely.

Economists, on the other hand, argue that it is not fish stock yield *per se* that should be maximized at a sustainable level, but resource rent. Then one must consider that sustainable fishing also has a cost side, which increases as one approaches MSY and beyond. Hence, they suggest another acronym – MEY – Maximum Economic Yield. This is the point where the difference between total income and cost is at its peak, which typically occurs at a lesser point than MSY. Biologists have no problem accepting this idea as it gives the stock a safety margin. Policy makers will listen because of the revenue source, the resource rent, what the industry may bring into the treasury in

total revenue if proper management measures are installed.

Social scientists, however, tend to get uneasy with both measures. Sure, fish stocks must not be overfished, and fishing must be economically efficient and contribute to the funding of the welfare state, but that cannot be all; there are other concerns to consider, like jobs. People in fisheries communities should be employed and earn a decent living. Policymakers would say the same. But social scientists argue that even if jobs are important, there is more to fisheries and fisheries policies than job-creation. There are all the things the SSF Guidelines mention that determine the wellbeing of fishing families and communities, like human rights and dignity, gender equality, health, safety and food security, and decision-making, the role of power. These are not technical matters but moral and political. They are issues of social justice. They have no simple metric but real content, nonetheless.

Should the resource rent under MEY be taxed for public expenditure? Or should it remain in the industry to secure employment and food supply in small-scale fisheries communities, and to reward the risks small-scale fishers take in the most dangerous of occupations? Economic efficiency, in the narrow sense, must be balanced with other goals. As a metric, MEY is neutral but still biased. Whereas MEY brings in an additional indicator to MSY, it says nothing about work quality and labor relations, just quantity converted into cost and income. For a small-scale fisher, there are also things that matter for their job satisfaction, such as the freedom to plan and decide for yourself.

Wellbeing

Fisheries policies should aim for more than MSY and MEY: MSW – Maximum Sustainable Wellbeing. Johnson et al. (2018) discussed wellbeing in the context of small-scale fisheries. For these authors, wellbeing has three dimensions: material, subjective, and relational. Jobs score on all these dimensions, but some jobs score differently than others. Jobs in small-scale fisheries, for instance, have a higher score on the relational dimension. Small-scale fisheries involve teamwork among people who also have off-work

relations, and which together offer the personal satisfaction of a complete life.

Jobs do not only come in quantity but also in quality. Partly, job quality is determined by technology. My colleague, the anthropologist Iens Ludvig Høst (1977) identified major differences between trawling and purse-seining in this respect. The two fishing technologies implicated two very different work processes and leadership roles. Small-scale fishers use handlines, longlines, and nets, which again involve different ways of working. Besides, they create their own jobs. They own and operate their boat alone or together with a few others, who may also bring their own gear.

Crew relations differ. A company trawler hires captain and crew. Small-scale fisheries recruit them within personal networks. The crew is usually family and community member (Thiessen & Davis 1988). Thus, in small-scale fisheries the community is on board, so to speak. This means that the sea/land relationship is different from large-scale fisheries where crew are market-recruited. In small-scale fisheries, crew do not draw a salary but a share of what they earn from the catch. They also fish for their own consumption. Fish is often distributed among needy members in the community, given away to elderly people, widows of fishers, and non-fishing neighbors. In this way, fish is a network rather than a market commodity. It is securing local food supply and a means of creating and sustaining social relations and the values therein. It is more about sharing than transaction.

It should be added that these qualities do not always break squarely between small- and large-scale fisheries. In the diverse world of fisheries, there would always be possible to find exceptions. It is reason to expect that exceptions have operational and relational implications, like for their fishing performance. It is more than likely that working relations is a factor explaining job-satisfaction, and that job satisfaction is positively correlated with job execution. The issue is not explored in fishing to the extent it should.

Policy choice

People's preferences are not natural but cultural. Preferences dictate and are realized when people make choices. But people also make choices under conditions. One cannot therefore deduce what they ideally would prefer, for instance whether to stay or leave for a different occupation or community, from the actual choices they make.

Choices involve sacrifice - or 'opportunity costs', as economists say. They also bring risks. Complete knowledge of gains and losses of all alternative opportunities is missing. They may leave contentment or regret. Expectations may not be met. But you cannot know for sure in advance what they are. Small-scale fisheries people may prefer to stay where they are and continue what they do because they have invested in knowing their trade. They may enjoy their lifestyle, and the freedom that comes with being your own boss. Jobs outside fishing, suitable to their expertise, are often hard to find. Therefore, they may not have much of a choice. Shifting occupations may not just require retraining but also leaving home where they have a house and social network. They would like to see job opportunities inside and outside small-scale fisheries increase rather than decrease, as they do not only have themselves to think of. They might be supportive of a different metric, MSE – Maximum Sustainable Employment, as Maarten Bavinck and Joeri Scholtens (2023) have noted we should call it, albeit with some reservations due to the qualitative aspects of work. It is nevertheless a step in the right direction, addressing the concerns of social scientists.

Overcapacity

Schuhbauer et al. (2017; 2020) show that eighty percent of all fisheries subsidies goes to the large scale, industrial fisheries. This is contradictory to what FAO (2020) believes should happen, since "*overcapacity is negatively affecting the profitability of many fishing fleets*" (p. 123). Therefore, FAO recommends "[r]educe and eliminate harmful subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing" (p. 195). Likewise, article 5.20 in the SSF Guidelines holds

that “[s]tates should avoid policies and financial measures that may contribute to fishing overcapacity and, hence, overexploitation of resources that have an adverse impact on small-scale fisheries.” The policy advice is univocally clear: it is in the interest of small-scale fisheries that states should do a better job in managing large-scale fisheries. Subsidizing large-scale, industrial fisheries runs counter to what governments committed themselves to do when endorsing the SSF Guidelines. Still, reducing harmful subsidies is more than a distributional issue affecting the sustainability of small-scale fisheries. It is good policy from a MSY, MEY, and a MEY perspective.

Subsidies have different purposes and functions. They make little sense when they create excess capacity that is threatening the natural environment and disadvantaging small-scale fisheries people. It makes more sense to subsidize investment in human capabilities, in the functioning of the fisheries value chain, and in community development. Imagine how small-scale fisheries and their communities would work if the subsidy ratio was turned around – 80 percent to small-scale fisheries and 20 percent to large scale fisheries. The World Trade Organization has had fisheries subsidies on the agenda for about 20 years now. It now seems to be getting close to an agreement that is more lenient towards small-scale fisheries.

The concept of ‘redistribution’ proved contentious during the Technical Consultation on the SSF Guidelines, but it did survive. Article 5.8 partially reads, “*States should adopt measures to facilitate equitable access to fishery resources for small-scale fishing communities, including, as appropriate, redistributive reform.*” Any redistributive reform that means shifting support from large-scale to small-scale fisheries is likely to meet opposition from the most powerful part of the industry who are the primary beneficiary of the current order. This largely explains why it has proven so difficult to implement. Therefore, the fate of the SSF Guidelines and indeed small-scale fisheries, is also about the restructuring of power relations, which is not likely to occur by a simple change of government policy.

The good life

In TBTI, we made social justice for small-scale fisheries a key issue for the 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAF). We believe that with the advance of the Blue Economy and Blue Growth programs and initiatives around the world, small-scale fisheries will lose out if governments do nothing to implement the SSF Guidelines. ‘Redistribution’ may well come to mean ‘at the expense’ of small-scale fisheries rather than the reverse. Our book, *Blue Justice: Small-Scale Fisheries in a Sustainable Ocean Economy* (Jentoft et al. 2022) demonstrates that the risk is not only real; it is happening before our eyes, hurting small-scale fisheries communities and their livelihoods.

The philosopher Agnes Heller (1967) posited that there are concerns ‘beyond’ and more fundamental than justice, like freedoms and the opportunity of leading a good life. A good life, she argues, is “*normatively founded upon the generalization of the ‘golden rule’, upon the universal maxim of dynamic justice, and upon the universal values of life and freedom.*” Moreover: “*Although the good life of every person is unique, it is simultaneously shared by the members of a community, a group, a society. The choice of a way of life is a choice of a human community with which we share our lives.*” (p. 324).

Social scientists talk about people, not just labor. We believe that it is important to acknowledge the experience and perspective of those whose lives are affected by policy measures. We argue that management should not just be looked on from the top-down but from the bottom up. Small-scale fisheries people are in a struggle to achieve a better life for themselves, their dependents, and their communities. They have learned that government is not always on their side, but they have cause to expect that the SSF Guidelines will make a difference. Not implementing them after endorsing them would be felt as betrayal.

A Different Business Model

Small-scale fisheries people are not driven by a profit motive alone.

Small-scale fisheries have proven impressively resilient. Against the odds, they have been able to keep afloat, often under harsh natural and social circumstances and hostile governance regimes. True, in the Global North, their numbers have gone down to become almost like an extinct species in many instances. In the Global South, particularly in Asia, the opposite has been the trend. It is not doom and gloom for small-scale fisheries even if poverty is often rampant. There are many examples of small-scale fisheries being a thriving business, bringing wealth to their people, and contributing to the local economy in a way that makes coastal communities viable. Why some succeed and others fail would require the analysis of the sector, community, and firm/vessel. Like with the psychologist Fredrik Hertzberg's two-factor theory (1964), the factors that make people leave small-scale fisheries are not necessarily the same that make them stay or join. Poverty may induce people to take up small-scale fisheries, but they may not decide to leave when poverty is eradicated.

Small-scale fisheries may provide not only a good way of life but a preferred life. Income is not the whole thing. Small-scale fisheries people cherish other things as well, even more than the money they earn. Abraham Maslow's

famous theory states that humans are motivated to fulfill their needs in a hierarchical order, beginning with the most basic ones like food and ending with self-actualization. This would also apply to people who decide to get a life in small-scale fisheries. In a study of Swedish fishers, Milena Arias Schreiber and Maris Boyd Gillette (2021: 2019) conclude that *“fishers’ motivations for participation-exit decisions are not solely, and may not be primarily, monetary.”*

Resilience

We should, however, not underestimate the hard work and the sacrifice involved in small-scale fisheries. That would be romanticizing them. Small-scale fishers’ willingness to take on the financial burden and physical risk must be compensated: negatives must be balanced with positives, and we should recognize both and how they balance out. Despite the hardships and dangers of being out on the rough sea, small-scale fisheries must also be attractive as a business, an occupation, and a way of life. Otherwise, they would not be viable.

After doing research in a Norwegian small island community that has demonstrated resiliency over the centuries, the anthropologist Harald Beyer Broch argues: *“To assess social resilience, we need to look into cultural values that motivate... small-scale fishing”* (Broch 2013: 7). He refers to the inherent and immaterial values of small-scale fisheries, the joy of being on the water and close to nature, the freedom they provide to participants, the opportunity to being your own boss and not take orders from others. There is excitement in the hunt for fish, the game of fishing, all of which make small-scale fishing more than a simple business calculation.

However, such ‘pull factors’ can only be part of the explanation of why small-scale fisheries are resilient. We must also explore what makes small-scale fisheries possible. Then, we must look at the conditions under which they prevail. The resource must be sustained and available. Without access to fish resources – and markets, as noted in UN Sustainable Development Goal 14b, small-scale fisheries cannot survive. In the Blue Economy, these conditions are not guaranteed. In many instances, they are threatened by the

entrance of new actors in the coastal zone (Jentoft et al. 2021).

Small-scale fisheries draw vital support from their local communities. This support is often indirect and intangible, and therefore goes unnoticed. To keep small-scale fisheries functioning, communities must be sustained. That would require initiatives targeting fisheries communities directly. Their viability does not only hang on their fisheries activities alone. Communities rely on strong and functioning institutions, like a school, a store, a clinic, a community center, a sports stadium. They also need infrastructure - a jetty, a wharf, a key, roads, clean water.

All these facilities necessitate investments and maintenance, which involve costs that do not show up on the fisher's or the fish plant's balance sheet – unless it is their responsibility to build and run them. For the community, such a sheet rarely exists, which it should if we want to know what it costs in money terms to keep communities intact. The community is not a profit center, like firms and community co-operatives are.

There are strengths in the small-scale fisheries business model, the owner-operated enterprise – or what I would call 'multi-status' entities, i.e., when ownership is combined with other essential functions as in a co-op where fishers and fish plant workers are the collective owner of the fish plant. They perform different but mutually dependent functions in need of coordination. As owners/members of a producer co-operative which process and market the fish, fishers have responsibility for the whole value chain.

Profit concept

Small-scale fisheries have inherent strengths. Their small-scale helps to facilitate multi-status entities where coordination is direct, informal, internal, flexible, and swift. The owner and the operator are the same person who only must negotiate with himself. Often, ownership and work are shared by household/family members, as with father/captain/owner and family members as owners/crew. The business calculus is then different from a single-status firm that recruits its workforce in the labor-market. In a single-status firm, the remuneration of the labor work input appears on the right-

hand side of the profit and loss balance sheet as a cost. In contrast, a multi-status firm, like for owner-operators, 'wages' are income on the left-hand side of the account.

From a profit maximization consideration, wages in a single-status firm would be kept low and dividends high. The accounting is carried out from the owner's (shareholder) perspective. In a multi-status firm, however, when the same person is owner and operator, this would not make any sense. The remuneration of the two is zero-sum with yourself at both the winning and losing side; what I may gain as owner, I lose as worker, and vice versa. Therefore, as the operator, I would be reluctant to drain my business as the isolated ownership status might encourage. My business is also my workplace. I would not risk losing my job. Investing in the business firm is investing in my job.

In a multi-status firm, decisions are taken based on the sum of the capital dividend and the salary part, like the bonus I get as a fisher member in the co-op and the money I earn from selling the fish to my co-op. Consequently, in multi-status firms, when those who own and those who work (fish) are the same people, the concept of profit takes another meaning from a single-status firm, like a large-scale, shareholder company where the owner and worker are different people. In other words, the organizational design of the firm does not only determine the difference between income and costs. The form of the firm organization defines income and costs in the first place. The greater the number of statuses, the broader the profit concept. This has consequences for the organization's operation and, in the next instance, its viability.

Organizational slack

In multi-status firms like in the single or multiple owner-operator vessel or the fisheries cooperative, the remuneration of the work function is not a market transaction, but an internal affair within the firm. The owner-operators must decide for themselves which status is more important. Am I owner first and fisher second, or vice versa? Or should I keep two thoughts

in my mind at the same time and optimize? As one, the owner/captain worker/fisher experience what sociologists call a 'role conflict', involving mixed but contradictory identities and rationalities. What is rational in one role is not necessarily rational in another role. The decision on what I am, one or the other or both in what order, determines what I do, and is for me alone to make.

The mix of different statuses in one person or organization creates what Cyert and March (1963) in a famous treatise called 'organizational slack', an extra resource to tap on in times of turbulence or crisis. In a market transaction, worker wages and dock-side prices are settled. Whatever flexibility there was prior to the settlement, is now removed and non-negotiable once a deal has been struck. When, in a multi-status firm, labor costs are converted into income, the break-even-point is lowered, the risk of bankruptcy less while the flexibility remains. Orvar Löfgren (1972) thus observed an inherent 'shock-absorbing capacity' among the Swedish fishers he studied.

Inspired by the organizational slack concept by Cyert and March, Anthony Davis and I in a paper compared fisher/member interactions relative to their cooperative. As members/co-owners, fishers appeared willing to accept a lower price for their fish than the market rate (Jentoft & Davis 1993). At the end of the year, they would be remunerated if the co-op accounting showed a surplus. If they insisted on the market price, they might topple their co-op, a risk they may not want to take.

Thus, they showed more moderation in the transaction than they might have if their relationship with a private buyer. The difference between the internal price and that of the market – which they could have secured if they sold to another buyer, is in this case a quantified expression of the organizational slack. But the slack is not a given. It must be nurtured by building an organization that members trust and feel responsible for. Members must feel that the co-op is theirs. We argued that involving the members in the operation and management of the co-op would be essential for the slack to materialize.

Self-exploitation

For the captain/fisher/owner, the minimum requirement is his own income target. He or she is not obliged to maximize profit, as in a capitalist venture with external owners, if they meet the target. But they still have expenses, family obligations, and subsistence needs to cover. When the transaction is internalized and the remuneration of the work function is converted from cost to income, whereas the costs associated with the work, family functions etc., would show as an item on the right-hand side of the profit and loss account.

When wage is income and the fisher is in control of the work effort as owner, he/she may decide to work harder and longer hours to meet the income target if needed. If, on the other hand, the target is met, they may decide to reduce the effort, or even reduce the target by working less or for less. In the fishery, where catches are hard to predict and vary over time, such slack is essential for the fisher to have necessary flexibility.

When fishing is good, the owner-operator may decide to keep up the same level of activity to build a buffer. Thus, the owner-operator business model provides more saving capacity as compared to a model where the two statuses are split, and the wage part is a given cost rather than an income. The owner-operator may also decide to stop fishing when the income target is achieved and do other things.

When Norwegian fishers cannot reach their income target in the migrant Lofoten fishery, they would move north to Finnmark and continue there. If, on the other hand, the Lofoten season provides what they would consider to be enough, they would rather go home to be with the family. The quota system introduced in the 1990s changed the logic. It is now the extent to which fishers catch their cod-quota that determines whether they go north or not.

To build the slack, with the resilience it provides, the owner-worker, may engage in what the Russian agrarian economist Alexander Chayanov termed 'self-exploitation'.

In times of crisis, they would reduce consumption, work harder and longer

hours for less pay, take risks in a way that they would not do if they were employed in a single-status firm, i.e., only as a worker.

Chayanov's theory works for small-scale fisheries, especially in subsistence economies. You work until you have enough, and then turn your attention to other things that you value. The size of your family, how many mouths there are to feed determines the income target. The number of household members in working age determines how much each of them work. Hence, Chayanov's 'rule': *"In the community of domestic producing groups, the greater the relative working capacity of the household the less its members work."*

Marshall Sahlins (1972a) was onto the same idea in his book on 'the stone age economy'. Stone-age people did not work that much, just enough for them to enjoy life. He concluded:

"The world's most 'primitive' people have few possessions, but they are not poor. Poverty is not a certain small amount of goods, nor is it just a relation between means and ends; above all it is a relation between people. Poverty is a social status. As such it is the invention of civilization."
(Sahlins 1972: 129)

In a study of Thai small-scale fisheries, Chuenpagdee and Juntarashote (2011) posit that fishers operate according to a 'sufficiency principle' more than a profit motive. They 'satisfice' rather than maximize, to use the concept Herbert Simon (1956) introduced. This is what the Norwegian fishers do when they leave for home after the cod-season is over rather than continue fishing.

The sufficiency principle is more prevalent in a subsistence economy than in a market economy. It would also, if it was introduced in a market economy, curb the risk of resource degradation. The geographer Bernard Nietschmann's (1973) research among Nicaraguan lobstermen illustrates the point. Overfishing happened when lobster became a market commodity. Then the target of their fishing changed from food to money and the saturation of the pocket replaced that of the stomach.

Like the profit maximization concept, the sufficiency principle has a

cultural underpinning, according to Chuenpagdee and Juntarashote. The former reflects the ethos of the market, the latter that of the community. But as I have argued in this chapter, the two concepts also must be understood in the context of the organization of the value chain, how functional responsibilities are divided among economic actors, as with the single vs. multi-status firm with their different *modus operandi*.

What would be defined as externalities in a single-firm market system, would be internalities within a multi-status firm. The 'tragedy of the commons' does not occur within the firm. It only occurs in market systems, where actors operate from the narrow profit-maximizing calculus of the single-status firm with no responsibility for the community and for those whose livelihood and well-being depend on it. The sufficiency principle involves a different logic than the one that is behind the commons tragedy, as it prioritizes need instead of greed.

Succession

Small-scale fisheries communities depend on the ability of families to ensure a smooth transition from one generation to the next. This makes them vulnerable.

In small-scale fisheries, companies on both land and sea are typically family owned, managed and labored by people who are kin. They are in it together, 'in the same boat'. They form teams and share the responsibility for keeping the operation going. They do not give up easily. Rather than 'leaving the ship' when times are hard, they 'ride out the storm'. They share in their business as much as they share in their family and in their community. The community is dependent on their ability to work it out together. The community may not have that many vessels or fish-plants to rely on and can hardly afford to miss any of them.

The community can only survive if actors, be they plants, boats or local households fill their roles. The mutual dependency of autonomous value-chain actors makes them vulnerable and puts the community at risk. Building stronger inter-relational ties than those that exist between market operators is good for the value chain and good for the community. Should the plant be closed, jobs would be lost, fishers would have nowhere else to catch, as small boats cannot travel far daily. If local vessels disappear, the plant may be in

short supply. It also needs a steady supply for it to be able to offer secure jobs.

Smooth transition

There are certain times in the life cycle of a family enterprise where the risk of failure is higher than the ordinary; that is when a new generation is supposed to take over. There may be external factors complicating the transition, like inheritance taxation. But there are also challenges of an internal, organizational nature. Selecting a new leader is one of them. Who should be the next leader or skipper? A son or a daughter would be natural candidates but if there are several siblings, who among them should be chosen? What happens if no one is ready or qualified, if nobody wants it or if all of them are and do? Ambition and qualification do not always correspond, but who should decide on who the next leader should be? The transition may lead to conflict among family members that may threaten the peace within the family and the survival of their firm.

For the community, a smooth transition may be existential, but it can only sit watching it unfold. The generational succession is and for the family to solve. If you are not part of it, you must stay out of it. It is the most complex, sensitive, and private issue a family ever faces. Having only family members to choose from does not make it easier. The family constellation may be complicated; the bigger the family, the more contenders there may be. This normally happens when there is a transition from the second to the third generation, captured in the adage; *“from clogs to clogs in three generations”*. Original success is not sustained. The first generation builds the firm; the second keeps it going, the third ruins it. The following story illustrates the complexity of the challenge.

Case study

As part of my PhD research, I spent days in a small fisheries community in North Norway, exploring the interaction between the fish-processing plant, the local fleet, and the community. What makes the value-chain interaction

function in this community? With the manager of the family company and the only plant in the community, I had long conversations that led to an exchange about the generational succession, which was then on his mind. The manager, let's call him Harald, was approaching retirement and had to find someone within the family to fill his position. The problem, he said, kept him awake at night. How could he find a person that would secure the company which the family would accept, and who cared for the community? I got the sense that I, as a complete outsider, was the only one with whom he had shared his inner thoughts about the delicate matter.

Harald's parents established the company in the 1920s. Harald was the youngest of seven brothers and sisters who all inherited a share in it. All of them were involved in the board and all had positions in the operation. Two of the brothers were skippers on the company vessels. One brother managed its hardware store, while the two sisters supervised the grocery store. When Harald was old enough, he took over the fish plant and the overall management function, which became his role throughout his whole working career. When I visited, only three of the siblings were alive. When one of them died, a son or daughter stepped in on the board. At one stage, it was transformed into a shareholder company. This made inheritance easier, and Harald could retain his general management role.

Over the years, the family grew, and the shares were further divided. Thus, the ownership structure became more complex and the management function more complicated. Business policy was no longer a sovereign leader decision, but a dispersed family matter. The second-generation children had 24 kids, who again, in the fourth generation, had 47 kids. The family then has more members to choose from, but who among them should replace Harald? The age difference complicated the question. Harald's favorite was a fourth-generation family member in his late thirties, with an uncle in his twenties.

Harald's and the board's choice meant skipping one generation but, as he stressed, without excluding the opportunity to jump back in the future. Many third-generation family members were working in the company, one of them as fishing skipper, and would in principle be candidates. Other members/shareholders had chosen other careers, living elsewhere, and by

that excluded themselves from acquiring the top position. They had left home for a different career not necessarily because they were unqualified, but because the job was not available when they were ready for it.

Harald's candidate, who the board agreed on, was already a board member. He had manager experience, but not within fisheries. He was also interested in moving back home. By that, the family saved the firm, and consequently the fisheries community. However, the transition raised opposition when Harald raised the issue of concentrating shares in fewer hands. His view was that the company had become too complex and difficult to manage with shares divided among so many family members. He threatened to withdraw if the board did not accept his proposition. The board then gave in, which again helped to consolidate the family enterprise.

Management role

This may be an extreme example of how complicated generational succession can be and what risks it poses for the sustainability of small-scale fisheries communities. The transition is a social problem turned into a private responsibility, caused by the organizational form. If the firm had been a cooperative or a private, single-status non-family firm, the dynamics would have been different. In handling of this sensitive family issue knowing, Harald saved the company. He was fully aware of the social responsibility that rested on him. A family conflict could well have jeopardized the company, the family, and the community. He cared for all of them.

The problem is that family conflicts, especially over inheritance, do not go away easily. They are often bitter and explosive and may resurface at a later stage. It is not just about saving the firm and the community but also the family, which is destined to remain so also after the succession dispute is resolved. Conflicts may change family relations forever, as they do not forget or forgive conflicts easily. Given what is at stake, tough decisions may be necessary but are not always experienced as being fair. The conflict may take years to sort out and may still linger a long time after the hard decision is made.

Because of its sensitivity within the family, decisions on generational succession require relational skills. One must know what to say to each other, and how. Timing is essential, and there may also be issues that are better kept under the table. It is difficult to put a lid over issues so consequential. It is not just the survival of the company and the community which are at stake, but also family's unity and harmony. In multi-status family firms, members are more than co-owners. In the case of this firm, the various departments provided management positions for all siblings, which made it easier to avoid conflict.

In the second generation, coordination and communications could take place informally. Decisions could be made by consensus. But in the third and fourth generations as the number of co-owners/shareholders increased, this was no longer possible. The company changed from a multi-status organization towards a single-status organization. Owners' interest in the firm narrowed and reduced to the annual dividend. Regular voting and the majority rule would suffice for decision-making, which made Harald's job easier. However, the transition from the third to the fourth generation did not occur smoothly. Harald felt the necessity to clear up what he experienced as an ineffective and chaotic governance situation. For this, he met criticism from shareholder-relatives. In the meantime, the local community held its breath.

Relational skills

When the number of owners is still low, like in the second generation, disagreement would easily paralyze management. The greater the number, the easier it is to live with disagreement if there is still a majority in support of current management. In multi-status firms, the likelihood of disagreement is higher, power-relations more complex, and the paralyzing effect severe, more so than in a single-status firm. In multi-status firms, conflicts easily become multi-dimensional and 'wicked', and more devastating.

Members will carry their grudges from the boardroom to the workplace, and vice versa – between situations, where different statuses are activated.

Conflicts over work and money may be kept under the carpet, and remain unresolved over generations, as bringing them up would be hard to isolate from family relations and interactions. 'Avoidance', like Erving Goffman talked about in his *'Strategic Interaction'* (1970), becomes a governance skill required by all family stakeholders and especially by the top-manager, in our case Harald, which is why he needed an outsider like me to talk with. He had hopes for his successor, but was not sure how it would work out.

Inheriting property can be a burden that ties you down. Inheriting statuses can be an even greater challenge because of the responsibilities that follow. If your only involvement is through a stock in the firm, you may choose to remain indifferent and passive. If you also become a manager, a skipper, a worker, you must perform in the role that follows from the status. To be and to act are different things. In single-status firms it is possible to separate the statuses and their consequent roles. Your responsibility is limited to one status. The smaller the multi-status firm, the fewer people assume all the functional responsibilities. In the owner-operated fishing vessel, all statuses and roles rest on one person's shoulders. He becomes the 'jack of all trades', but he must also be the master of all of them. As the firm grows, those trades can be divided among more people, which makes them mutually dependent on each other, and vulnerable to performance of the other person. In fisheries, vulnerability extends to the entire value chain.

Responsibility

Small business management involves several roles requiring multiple skills. The manager often leaves a distinct mark on the enterprise. He or she is therefore difficult to replace. Does the next manager have all those skills, is he or she up to the broad set of responsibilities, and is such a person available within the family? The firm's goodwill hangs on the one leader, their personality and know-how. I have seen fishing dynasties fall and the fabric of the fishing community dissolve because there was no one in the family willing or capable of stepping into the shoes of the old leader.

The new manager should ideally have experience of working within the

firm to prepare for the takeover. But when the old manager is finally ready for retirement in his late sixties or seventies, the new person may be in their forties or fifties. That is a long time to have to wait for getting the chance of proving one's capabilities. The patience needed is a challenge and a potential source of conflict itself. As we saw in this firm, to ease the transition they jumped two generations to find the next top leader. Transition was eased because the new leader was already on the board of directors. But in other instances, succession happens quickly, sometimes unexpectedly. After years of self-exploitation, the health of the top-leader may be an issue, as it was in Harald's case.

The story of this company illustrates the volatility of the multi-status family firm during generational succession. As per the routine, single-status, non-family firm would just go on the market to find a new manager. The leader would have fewer bindings to the firm and the community, and a narrower focus for his business strategy. The manager can concentrate on being just that. His or her management experience is acquired in another firm and another community. The new person may know fisheries, but have no local knowledge, or family or community binding. But such bindings go both ways. The new manager must also learn to relate to the community, and the community to him or her. Harald spent his entire career in the company and in the community where he grew up. He had knowledge that a new manager from the outside cannot have and never will be able to build.

VII

Small-Scale Fisheries in the Global Era



Local community supporting locally sourced and sustainable fisheries in Malta. Food from the Sea Event, Malta. (V. Kerezi, 2018)

The Ethics of Cain

Civil society has a major role to play in the economic, social, and cultural life of the small-scale fisheries community.

Some books alter your focus and even the course of your career. For me, the sociologist Alan Wolfe's *'Whose Keeper: Social Science and Moral Obligation'* (1989) is such a book. When rereading it after many years, I noticed the impression it left with me simply from how often I used my pen to underline sentences and paragraphs that I found inspiring and worth quoting. The title draws from Genesis 4:1-13, when Cain asks: "Am I my brother's keeper?". Cain believed that he is not, contrary to what God would say: he indeed has a moral obligation to look after Abel, his brother.

As a societal credo, this leads us to conclude that we have responsibility for our brothers and sisters. The well-being of others, of family and friends, and even of people who are strangers to us, are also our concerns. It is simply not moral to be indifferent to what happens to other people. They may deserve our support and solidarity, and we should not expect them to pay back. We should not engage with them out of self-interest. We are each other's keepers, not by convenience but by principle.

Virtues

Society can be seen as a system made up of the three distinct but interdependent institutions –market, state, and civil society. We should, therefore, not only be concerned with how they function separately, but also how they link and interact. Being interdependent, they have the capacity to support or undercut each other. The market and the state can damage the nature and functioning of civil society, but by doing so they undermine the conditions for their own operation.

Wolfe does not offer a short and snappy definition of civil society, but he describes how thinkers before him have perceived its many dimensions, societal roots, and functions. He discusses how civil society fills gaps left vacant by state and markets, and how civil society forms the moral basis for the institutions that exist and the interactions that hold society together. Markets and states could not operate without it. *“We need civil society – families, communities, friendship networks, solidaristic workplace ties, voluntarism, spontaneous groups and movements – not to reject, but to complete the project of modernity.”* (p. 20).

Communities are part of civil society, but it stands out because many, but certainly not all, of Wolfe’s civil society element list, have a community link and location. They are what makes a community into one. Thus, when Wolfe talks about civil society as ‘a gift’ (237 ff), something we get without the requirement of reimbursement as in a market, we could say the same about community.

Civil society, including local communities, only in rare cases exist as result of an overarching plan, instituted by some central authority. Local communities exist because someone decided to settle and build their lives there. It is not meant to serve the state and market; it just does. Markets would not function without the lubrication of norms and values that make transactions possible, such as honesty and trust. Markets work when civil society functions. *“Civil society has always made economic man possible.”* (Wolfe 1989: 30).

The same is true with the state; it relies on committed and trustful citizens.

Without it, states would be compelled to exercise repression to operate. We engage freely when we cast our votes. We are not forced or paid to vote. Political positions are positions of trust, defined as a citizen's 'service' to society, not a regular job. It is meant for the collective good, not for private benefit. We vote and serve as citizens; not out of obedience but out of a sense of moral duty from being a member of a community or the nation.

Wolfe questions how and where we acquire our moral sense, of ideas of personal obligation to society, since it is not something we are born with. Instead, he posits that morality is a process of social interaction and construction, as "*no individual, standing alone, can ever be moral – or immoral*" (p. 225). We learn the principles of morality by growing up in a family and a community. Honesty and trust are learned at home, in the community, and in the civic associations we may be part of. In school, children learn how to read and write. But they also learn how to be social.

This is not necessarily a linear process but something that happens in discrete moments when we learn a lesson. I discussed this process in chapter 9 by drawing on Kant's 'categorical imperative' and his idea of what it takes for people to mature, becoming what he called a 'person'. Wolf phrase it like this:

"Families, communities, friendship networks, voluntary organizations, and social movements are to be valued not because they create havens in an otherwise heartless world, but because it can only be within the intimate realm, surrounded by those we know and for whom we care, that we learn the art of understanding the moral positions of others." (p. 233)

In the market, our preferences may define what we choose. But our preferences about our preferences are formed outside it. Whatever behavioral norms exist about how to act, what is permissible or not and where the boundary between the two goes, no one enters the market without any norm. Norms are internalized prior to our entrance into the market. They are not established on the spot. They may well be triggered in concrete events that

test our morality. However, markets can potentially be sites for testing our moralities.

Egocentrism and opportunism may be rational, but we are not supposed to cheat, even if it pays. If caught, sanctions occur, and we may learn a lesson from the regrets. But our mother and schoolteacher would have taught us not to cheat but to care in the first place. Therefore, as argued in a paper on so-called IUU fishing (Jagers et al. 2012), it is equally important to explore why fishers adhere to rules as why they break them. The same is the case with politics and collective goods. The free rider is violating the trust of others. This individual is not sharing the burden with others. He lets other people carry it for him. He is thinking like Cain.

Lifeboat ethics

According to Wolfe (p. 233), civil society is *“the place where people pause to reflect on the moral dilemmas they face,”* which *“is necessary if individuals are to possess those capacities of agency that will enable them to make rules as well as follow them.”* ... *“[R]eliance on states and markets does not absolve them of responsibility for their obligation for others – on the contrary this responsibility becomes all the more necessary.”* Wolfe is on the side of God rather than Cain. However, he realizes that we are often confronted with real dilemmas that do not have easy answers but require reflection on what is the rights thing to do in a particular situation.

Take the ethical dilemma of the lifeboat: what do we do when the boat is full while there are still people trying to avoid drowning by climbing onboard? Do we leave them to perish? Or do we follow Jack Dawson’s lead in the Titanic movie when he makes the ultimate altruistic choice? In his paper *‘Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor’* (1974), Garrett Hardin leans towards the ethics of Cain. *“For the foreseeable future, our survival demands that we govern our actions by the ethics of a lifeboat, harsh though they may be. Posterity will be satisfied with nothing less.”*

‘Open access’ in the fisheries commons risks sinking the boat. This is the *‘Tragedy of the Commons’*, that Garret Hardin predicted in his more famous

Science (1968) paper. The easy solution is simply to close the commons, not letting anyone in, like some MPAs do. But closing the commons challenges our morality, which Hardin was aware of. It is not a technical issue. Hindering small-scale fisheries people from sustaining themselves violates their human rights. People die if they drown but they may also starve to death. Their right to life is fundamental.

We need to reflect on how to restrict overfishing before we rush to the conclusion of closing the commons, as it is not the only way to safeguard the resource. Given the severe consequences, closure is the last, not the first thing one should think of. A management system should make sure that there are enough lifeboats to begin with and to bring them safely to shore. If people cannot survive only on their fish harvest, there are other ways of securing that they have enough to eat.

Handshake

Market actors are self-centered egoists, bent at maximizing their own gains. Such behavior was legitimized by Adam Smith (1759). Markets, according to Smith, if allowed to run free, are led by the ‘invisible hand’ that realizes what is in the common interest, such as functioning markets, efficient allocation of scarce resources, low prices. However, with collective goods, such as a healthy fish resource, a functioning community, the market fails. Therefore, the hand must be ‘visible’; it must intervene. This is what the state does in fisheries. Otherwise, the Tragedy of the Commons is inevitable.

It matters, however, how the state uses the hand, whether intervention is by the thumbs or the fingers, as Charles Lindblom (1977) noted. Does the state employ crude or delicate measures? Does it only relate to statistical averages, or does it consider contextual particularities? Must the state ‘shake hands’ with the market and civil society, as when it invites a more collaborative approach to addressing regulatory manners.

Because the state, market, and civil society operate according to distinct values, norms, and principles, their handshake may determine which of them take center stage. Governance outcomes may be different because of the

unique capacities and capabilities of the three institutions. Their relative power in making governance work in their interest is a factor. Whose hand is stronger and whose values, norms, and principles have greater legitimacy? This makes fisheries governance into more than a technical exercise; it also triggers a moral discourse about which goals are good. Then, serious reflection on the dilemmas that occur along all three axes in Figure 25.1., would be needed.

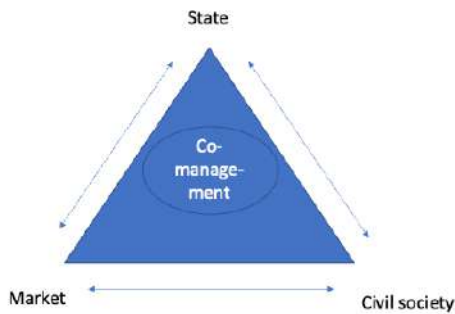


Figure 25.1. Societal institutions.

Making fisheries governance into a sole state-market affair, i.e., a process along the left axis in Figure 25.1. is much how current system works. True, fisheries are also a business, a relationship of the marketplace. Small-scale fisheries cannot prevail if the costs of fishing exceed income. They also have a ‘break-even’, as economists call it. But that is not all there is to fisheries. Important things take place along the other axes. There is also a social break-even. Sustainable small-scale fisheries depend on both.

Wolfe believes that “*civil society, not the individual, is a better alternative to government in modern society*” (p. 126). But in modern fisheries governance, civil society is not part of the equation. Communities are a missing link, which marginalizes women more than men. It also makes fisheries people into rule-takers, not rule-makers.

Still, small-scale fisheries occur within networks of familiar relationships rooted in communities where the egocentrism and opportunism of Cain are

not valued behavior. The functioning of civil society is not thought of in a cost-benefit perspective. Families are not functioning as a market. Neither are local communities, friendships, and social networks.

Network economy

Moving societal functions up and down the axes have consequences beyond costs and benefits. Wolfe holds it to be “*possible that ever greater state intervention in civil society may ultimately have the same consequences as the weakening of the boundary between civil society and the market; a world without strong caring relations among people who are close can harm the capacity of people to take responsibility for unknown distant others.*” (p. 130). Modernity requires the latter part, in his view.

Government tapping communities of functions will erode their social responsibilities and by that, their substance. It will weaken the community’s collective action ability, and more fundamentally their collective consciousness. The same with markets. Their penetration of the community will alter the social relations among community members. If members start to regard each other just as business partners, much of their sociality and the morality underpinning it, would evaporate.

The sociologist Georg Simmel (2004/1900) argued that when money is the medium of social transactions, like the way markets talk, something happens with the way members think about each other. You do not assist a needy neighbor without being paid. Community members exchange goods and services, but the nature of the transaction is different than in a market. Their social relations have intrinsic value which money can’t buy, like the ‘neighborliness’, which as George Herbert Mead (1962: 293) “*expresses itself in a large part of the social organization of modern society*”, as in a religious relationship. He argues that religion cannot exist without it.

Eroding civil society, as when markets assume functions of communities, means that social relations change from being cooperative to competitive. ‘Gesellschaft’ replace ‘gemeinschaft’ to use the concepts of Tönnies (1974). The ethics of Cain take over. Members come to see themselves as players

in a zero-sum game. Their focus is on winning or losing. How would they interact in their other capacities, like neighbors?

Stewardship

For communities to be stewards of their commons, people must be able to cooperate. They must have trustful relationships and earnest communication. Without it, they will expect that the agreements reached will be broken. There will not just be ‘market failure’, but also ‘community failure’. As part of the handshake, the state may legally confirm their stewardship role, as is a co-management arrangement.

Community stewardship requires a handshake among members, opposite to what people do in the Prisoner’s Dilemma, as illustrated in Hardin’s Tragedy of the Commons. A move along the axis from civil society towards the market, axis, risks producing the rationality of the actors in this game. In the next instance, it would call for the state to intervene along the state-market axis, which will further disempower civil society and hence, the community. This is how modern fisheries management is working – if not as a “*manifest, so at least as a “latent” functioning*” (see chapter 5).

The SSF Guidelines have a different vision for small-scale fisheries. They want to move their governance into the center of the triangle. “*Participatory management systems, such as co-management, should be promoted in accordance with national law*” (Article 5.15). Instead of full state control or a market mechanism running its own course, they want non-government organizations and communities to play a proactive role. This is also Wolfe’s position: “*...a morally just society is one whose institutions maximize the capacity of its members to contribute to the formation of the rules by which they will be governed.*” (p. 225).

Social choice

Jan Kooiman (2003) argues that the complexity and multiplicity of societal functions have reached a level that neither state, market, nor civil society are alone capable of handling theme. Societal governance, fisheries governance

included, must mobilize all three institutions, and work out a division of labor. The question is therefore not just what must be done, but as Claus Offe (2000) posits, who should do what, which constellation of actors would be capable of doing what needs to be done. He believes that we need partnerships that draw on all of them, without one institution colonizing the other.

We would then have to blend the different mandates of state, market, and civil society in a way that is effective, efficient, and just. There is nothing natural about the way social responsibilities and functions are divided and distributed among market, state, and civil society. The market is no more 'neutral' than the state and civil society. The same is true for their relative responsibilities.

For instance, a move along the axes from state and civil society toward the market does not neutralize the moral issue of distributional justice. As the economist Lester Thurow (2001) noted, it just means that we accept *a priori*, whatever the distributional outcome will be when the market has run its course. This is not in accordance with the paradigm of the SSF Guidelines, which set ethical standards for how governance should function. The wellbeing of small-scale fisheries communities requires more than what the market can deliver. The question is not just about market limits, but whether the market is suitable at all. The state and/or civil society may be better governors.

The market brings individual freedoms but creates a lot of societal problems in its way, one of them is the failure to conserve our common resources. The freedoms of the market are no guarantee for social justice. Therefore, as Wolfe points out, we must pause to reflect on the moral issues and dilemmas involved in designing our industries and societies. Who does what, state, market, or civil society, has no simple answer. It cannot be left for the state or the market to decide. Civil society is a better place for it.

How Communities Tick

Communities need people and people need communities. People need other people; they need communities.

Small-scale fisheries communities are intriguing: what are they, how do they work, and why do some succeed while others fail, are questions that have long been an interest of mine. All communities have a unique story to tell, and I have been puzzled why communities located close to each other and with similar natural conditions, like access to fisheries resources may have a very different development. What can explain their difference?

North-Norwegian fisheries communities are scattered along the entire coast, on islands and within fjords. Historically, people who settled there had easy access to an affluent fish resource. People were not rich but with the fish, they could eat. Archaeologists have discovered stone-age settlements on outer islands with short distance to fishing grounds, like in Træna, the oldest and westernmost fishing community in Norway. Today it has 450 inhabitants. When their summer music festival is on, more than 2000 people find their way there (Trænafestivalen 2023). I spent time in Træna during my PhD fieldwork research long before they started arranging the festival. I was recently back there and could see how the festival had changed the community from being about the fishery to becoming a tourist destination

Communities may both break down *despite and because of* a prosperous fisheries industry. They may also prosper even with the fishery in decline, like Træna has, partly because of the festival, but they are exceptions. People's preferences have shifted; cities offer more modern lifestyles preferable to young people who are moving out of their home small-scale fisheries communities. But communities may also be abandoned for other reasons, such as when the harbor becomes too shallow for bigger boats or when communication becomes too cumbersome, or when the public school is closed. The fisheries management system may induce fishers to sell out and retire. In Norway, the number of small-scale fishers has been in drastic decline in recent years, hurting communities.

The fate of fisheries communities is a hot political topic in my part of Norway. Do they have a future in the global era? Are they bound to lose and disappear? This has been a concern for decades now. In an ode to North Norway, the priest and poet Petter Dass (1647-1707), wrote; "*If Codfish forsake us, what then would we hold?*" The observation still has merit, but it is not just about the resource anymore, but people's entitlements; do they have access to the cod fishery now that the quota system has closed the commons and turned fishing rights into a tradable, albeit commodity? But the survival of small-scale fisheries is not only about access to fisheries resources. It is also about all the things that people value in these communities, including the young who have their eyes turned outwards, to the world.

Communities need people

The philosopher Viggo Rossvær (1998) titled his book about a fisheries community in North Norway '*Ruin Landscape and Modernity*'. The title should be read both in a literal and a fictional sense. The community had physical structures in decay, but he also saw signs of social decay. One is important for the existence of the other. When people leave, both suffer. To quote from a popular Norwegian song from the 1980s: "*People need houses and houses need people.*" Indeed, 'houses are like people', they both have a life. Without people, houses will rot away, as illustrated in the You Tube song video (Bremnes

2012).

The same would be true with communities. People need communities and communities need. Without both, none of them prevails. But people and communities also need more. A community is not only a place to live. It must also offer meaningful activities, like employment. When they don't, people leave. Therefore, we need fisheries to sustain communities and communities to sustain fisheries if we are to believe in the song text. The management system must facilitate both, and yet, communities are a missing link. In Norway and many other countries around the world, fisheries management is a relationship between the state and individual vessels owners. In right-based fisheries systems, individuals are rights-holders, not communities. This arrangement makes communities vulnerable to whatever decisions vessel owners make, whether to sell out or not. Individuals may gain while communities lose. Fisheries-dependent communities risk finding themselves without rights, and by that of access to fisheries.

Just business?

Before I entered sociology, I spent three years in business school in Oslo. I had never heard about local communities there. Nor can I remember small businesses and fisheries ever mentioned. The type of industry we had in coastal communities up north was never talked about. Instead, large scale and multi-national companies were the model in focus. They were addressed as if markets were their only relevant context. Within the curriculum and the classes, there was a bias. They did not only provide students with new knowledge but also social values about what in business is worth striving for. Fellow students from my area found less reason for returning home to build a career in coastal communities.

Notably, business firms are not the one-person buyer or seller, as micro-economic models portray them; they are complex organizations with internal challenges. The manager's and the organization's ambitions are not always the same. The power does not necessarily sit with the top-leader, but with what he called the 'technostructure', the middle range management staff, whose

interests are not identical with shareholders, as John Kenneth Galbraith showed in his *'The New Industrial State'* (1967). I read this book with great interest while in business school. Small-scale fisheries firms may be less complex internally, but they must operate in a complex environment, of which the community is part. They cannot ignore the community as large corporations do.

In contrast to large firms, the will of the small-scale business leader and that of the organization is often the same. There is no other administrative staff to rely on. Small-business leaders are often lonely riders. They keep their business strategies to themselves or their families. He or she cannot just delegate. They need more than business skills. The last time I visited a small-scale fisheries processing plant, the manager was driving a truck while unloading a boat that had just come in. He was not dressed up in a suit and polished shoes, but in oilskins and rubber boots. He did not only know the whole production process intimately; he took part in it.

This fish-plant manager, like most of them do in small-scale fisheries, does not just 'operate' in markets; they build them. They construct organizations and build communities because they need them. They may be alone decision-maker, but they are often also 'social entrepreneurs'. They mix for-profit goals with responsibility and goals of their community. They want to contribute to the community's sustenance, like providing jobs for members and a relationship that local people can have faith in. Small-scale fisheries communities are not just a place of location, but where crucial resources such as fish and labor are obtained. Cutting ties with the community will hurt the value chain on which actors depend and have a role in. Helping them to run their operation is also self-help.

Milton Friedman, the Nobel Prize winner in economics, argued that business leaders have no other social responsibility than maximize profit (Friedman 1970, September 13). This was also the implicit message of my business school. Small-scale fisheries business leaders, however, cannot afford to be narrow-sighted. They have complex goal structures. They know that they have social responsibilities in addition to their business commitments. If they do not, they risk failing also as a business leader. Due

to their central position, the manager often becomes the informal leader and spokesperson of the community, which requires more than business skills.

With more than 90 percent of fish products being exported, Norwegian fish-plant managers are cogs in an extensive global network. They manage trade-relationships with buyers in many countries. They must therefore handle multi-faceted relationships on both the input and output side. They must know both foreign and local cultures and idioms to understand how the value chain works, things that are essential for their role as business leader.

The coordination of this system became my PhD research theme. It brought me to fisheries communities along the entire Norwegian coast. I was comparing the relationships and interactions between firms, fleets, and labor networks, including leadership. I assumed that the organization and coordination of the value-chain functions would differ from community to community. The idea was that the key to both business and community sustainability would be hidden here.

I came to realize that small-scale fisheries are not just aggregate and arbitrary compositions of self-interested actors bent at profit maximation for themselves. Instead, they form intricate but dynamic socio-economic systems held together by actors who know each other and whose relationships and the wellbeing of their community mattered to them. In small-scale fisheries communities, actors often share a history as neighbors, family, or kin. Their relationships have value. They are not ‘just business’.

Relational work

Cato Wadel, who I introduced in chapter 5, was interested in the concept and meaning of work. Why do we define only some and not all the things we produce as work? What consequences does this have on the way we organize our economies? Is work just what we do ‘at work’ and within certain hours? He found the distinction between what we consider as work and not as arbitrary. We need a broader work concept that does not just include the production of goods and services. He argued that the creation and maintenance of social relations and values should be included in the work

concept, even if it is often 'hidden'. Women's work in fisheries often falls into that category. Their role is often 'veiled' and, therefore, not remunerated as if it is conducted outside a formal organization. If people do not draw a salary from what they do, it is not counted as 'real work'.

Teamwork, as between the crew on a fishing vessel, within a fish-plant, or in every other organization, even in the family household, requires team building. In Wadel's view, that is work. He later became advisor for the Norwegian Olympic soccer team and wrote a book that changed the way we talk about soccer in Norway. A good soccer player is also a team player, who must have 'relational skills' as he called it, in addition to handling the ball.

In a keynote at the annual meeting of the Norwegian Rawfish Association in 2015, I argued, inspired by Cato, that we should imagine and construct local fisheries communities as we do with soccer teams. We should not think of a fisheries community as the cheering crowd on the stand but as the team on the pitch. A football team does not fail because every player tries to outplay other teammates, as is the common image of fishers. The team fails due to poor organization, lack of co-operation, and poor relational skills. Government policies and regulatory systems are built on the image of the crowd rather than the team.

Workplace

Wadel also discussed the common notion of employment. In fisheries, stable, un-interrupted fish-work is hard to obtain. Full employment requires flexibility, and a willingness to move between seasons and throughout the career. Demand for labor shifts throughout the year, especially in small-scale fisheries which fish irregularly, also because of shifting weather conditions and when fluctuating fish is available inshore. In Norway, a 'full-time fisher is therefore not necessarily fishing full-time. It is just his main occupation, not necessarily his only occupation and only source of income. 'Occupational pluralism' is common in small-scale fisheries, in Norway and in many other countries (cf. Foley et al. 2016).

Work is commonly associated with place, as in 'workplace'. It 'takes place'

in a location – a community, an organization, on a fishing vessel, or in the home. Often it can only happen in a particular location, it cannot happen anywhere. I cannot fish in my office. With COVID-19, home has become a more prominent site for many during working hours, but with laptops and mobile phones, the connection between work and place has become blurred. I am writing this book in my office, in my home, or cottage, in café's – wherever is convenient, Work may not be 're-placed' again as it used to be before the pandemic.

Not all people live in the same community they work in. Commuting means transporting oneself from home to where your job is. Fishers often travel from their home community to a different place from where their vessel is operating. During off-season, they do other things, often working around the house or shifting to less intensive fishing, for instance from a large to a small boat. Wadel argued that in fisheries, full employment means that 'the place' must be available when people need it. That need may change throughout the year or career.

Fishers retire gradually rather than abruptly. If their health allows it, they may never stop completely. The strenuous work over many years takes a toll on their body – their back, their shoulders, arms etc., and when they reach their mid-fifties, they often move to a less strenuous fishing. They may not bring the quantities ashore as they used to do, but they still add to the local fish supply, to their own and neighbors' subsistence and well-being. Thus, full employment in fishing depends on the *composition* of the fleet, not just the sheer numbers of vessels. In fact, what creates full employment in a local fishing community is organic system 'workplaces', what we in a book (Jentoft & Wadel 1984) termed 'employment system'.

The employment system

We defined the 'employment system' as *a set of mutually dependent activities, statuses, and roles*. These interdependencies can be positive, like in a symbiosis. Here, when A does X, B can do Y, and vice versa. The different components can also block for each other, as when A does X, B is hindered from doing

Y. Moreover, it may matter who A and B are relative to each other, whether they are somehow related as in a community or a family, or indifferent to each other like in a market system where actors have no relation beyond the transaction.

We argued that in small-scale fisheries employment systems, the social relations and economic activities are linked differently than in many other sectors and industries. In small-scale fisheries people typically create their own employment – alone or together with family members. For the small-scale fisheries value chain, we must not only focus on the value of the product that flows through it, but also on the composition of the chain itself. The relationship between seller and buyer, the fisher and the vendor/plant-manager/owner ascribe value to the relationship.

We argued that full employment, and the answer to why some fisheries communities are thriving while other are perishing, is to be found within the employment system, how it is organized and hangs together and interact, for instance, whether components are compatible and mutually supportive, or fractured ridden with conflict. The components, relationships, and dynamic interactions in the fisheries employment system have changed a lot since we published our book (see Sønvisen et al. 2011). With globalization, scales and links have stretched outside the local communities. There are other drivers and new kinds of input, which has changed its dynamics, also at the community level.

Thinking of fisheries communities as employment systems would mean a focus on interdependencies and relationships and how their frame and are framed by the work-related interactions. The focus would be both on what people have and do relative to each other, the diverse ways they support or create obstacles for each other. Not all goods and services can be delivered by anyone. A family household works differently than a market in this respect. A fisher may prioritize the relation with a fish-processor and vice-versa, if they know each other personally. For a crew member it is of significance that the skipper is the father. When members of the same community, organization, or family, they may value their relationship as buyer and seller in a manner that may influence transactions, for instance, through prices and wages.

Pattern variables

With his ‘pattern variables’, Talcott Parsons (1967) captured the diverse ways in which we make the other people relevant in social interaction. He distinguished between; a) affectivity vs. affective neutrality; b) ascription vs. achievement; c) particularism vs. universalism, d) diffusion vs. specificity, and e) collective orientation vs. self-orientation. These variables refer to the different choices that actors have when they identify with each other; their emotional ties, the range of mutual obligations and mutual attachment and what they expect to achieve. The choice actors make about their orientation towards the other is likely to affect how the employment system works.

The first instance refers to emotional ties between actors, which are likely to be higher in a community as compared to a market. In the second instance the question is who the actor is, relative to what the actor can do. In ideal markets, in contrast to communities, no one cares who the other is as long as he or she delivers on a contract. In the third pattern variable, the choice under consideration is whether a particular object is of general value for a specific actor or community, as when you determine whether the object means a lot to all of us or just me. The fourth variable refers to obligations that are appropriate in a relationship, what and how much I owe to the other actor. Again, you would expect that members of a community ‘owe’ to each other more than in a casual encounter by market actors. What people in families or communities owe each other is more diffuse than in markets where debts are money. Finally, the question is about egoism or altruism – whether actors operate out of self-interest or out of the consideration of what benefits the group or community.

The pattern variables are not necessarily dichotomies but extremes on a gradient. They are useful analytical devices for researching how small-scale fisheries employment systems are constituted and function. We would then not limit ourselves to paid, permanent, or full-time work. We would include ‘hidden work’ involved in constructing social relations and values. We would also include sporadic work, even efforts that we traditionally do not think of as work, but which are nevertheless essential lubricants for

HOW COMMUNITIES TICK

the employment system, requiring not just operational but also relational skills. The employment system perspective thus applies a broad definition of employment (which includes relational) and work (operational work, like fishing or fish processing). It analyzes work both in spatial terms, as in communities, and temporal terms, as in seasons.

The Global Fishing Village

Globalization involves threats for small-scale fisheries communities but also opportunities for re-vitalizing them.

Sociologist Anthony Giddens (1990) defines globalization as “*the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa*” (p. 64). The key word here is “*intensification*”. Globalization is not an entirely recent phenomenon. People have traveled, traded, and explored the world since ancient times. The sea and the rivers were always a natural transport route, which enabled interaction over long distances, built relationships and made discoveries that changed the world, our place in it and our ideas about it (see Jarman 2021). So, what is new? Is it just a concept from the 1990s for an already established social pattern, or is it a word for a changing reality?

Keohane and Nye (2000: 105) argue that globalization implies that something is increasing; “*Hence, our definitions start not with globalization but with “globalizing” a condition that can increase or decrease.*” Thus, globalization, as we have come to think of it, brings the world together into a progressively inter-connected system in a process that goes longer, faster, deeper, and cheaper, as Thomas Friedman (2000; 2009) observes.

Friedman sees the world as ‘flattening’, in the sense that historic, cultural,

and geographic disparities mean less and less. Globalization, he argues, means “*the death of distance*.” ‘Here’ and ‘there’ become the same. We travel the world to an extent that never happened before. The tourism industry is booming while globalizing. But we also travel in a virtual sense, through information media, such as TV and the internet. In this way, we can be globetrotters in our comfy chair. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this was the only way of traveling for most people.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global phenomenon, which has brought the world closer together. Pandemics have occurred before, but hardly spread as fast as this one. It reminds us about the fact that when push comes to shove, we are in the same boat. Without the new information-technology and global media, we would not have been as effective in combating it. We would not have known how to prepare for it. We communicate through Skype and Zoom and thus, during COVID-19, we keep up old networks as well as broadening it to involve new members in different parts of the world. I can now lecture from home, giving talks at international conferences from my kitchen table. We will not go back to the old patterns when the COVID-19 crisis subsides. The COVID-19 pandemic taught us to function in a globalized world where locality has lost much of its significance – or acquired new meaning.

Global media

The world is not only flattening but shrinking when we get CNN in real time into our living room. We have become part of a global information network that is changing our outlook on the world and how we look at ourselves and our communities. Locality does not involve the isolation we used to experience. With globalization, we acquire multiple affiliations and identities. We are not just home in our own local community. We think that we could always be somewhere else than where we currently are, at home or abroad, physically, or virtually as when we check the internet instead of being fully present in the conversation at our dinner table.

Global media makes us updated on world events as they occur. But the

media is not necessarily a neutral messenger. The perspectives of the media also become ours. We have come to adopt the media's images of the world. Then it matters whether we watch CNN, BBC or Al Jazeera, or our domestic media, as they cover the world differently. They have the power to control our ways of seeing the world. Thus, global media enter our mind subtly, albeit not impartially. We are not always aware of our own biases and where they come from.

Marshall McLuhan (1960) coined the idea of 'the global village' where people connect on a global scale by new media technologies, such as TV. His book, *'The Medium is the Message'* (1967), alludes to the fact that we shape the tools of communication, which in the next instance shape us. Now, forty years after his passing, his observations are even more relevant. We may wonder what he would have thought about the Internet. The Internet has become a powerful instrument for multiple uses, also for the manipulation of the mind. Modern media has become a weapon. Winning elections and wars require winning the minds of people. Using the internet media is now the way to do it. Brexit would hardly have happened if not for the power of social media (Cadwalladr 2019).

Ambivalence

With globalization, it is hard to be selective. Globalization creates ambivalence; we remain undecided what to think about it. The evaluation tends to oscillate "*uneasily between utopian promise and dystopian menace*" (Beyer 2007: 98). If we open our gates to it, we risk being flooded. It also brings things we can well do without, like misinformation and manipulation. The Internet has qualities that we appreciate and become used to. We can now hardly imagine life without mobile phones and e-mail.

But globalization often erodes local traditions and practices. Traditional food is replaced by hamburgers, pizza, and pasta. I never knew the word fast food when I grew up. I can see why they now are preferable food, especially among young people. They are trendy and taste OK. But slow food that your mother prepares, that takes time to cook with local ingredients, is healthier.

It does not come with a standardized taste. McDonald's food tastes the same wherever you are, in addition to all other things that are standardized about it – which is quite an achievement, as Peters and Waterman (2006) observed.

We need control, stability, and predictability in our lives. Our identity is shaped by our roots, where we come from, the social relationships that we have, and the things we do. There are limits to how many shifts of lifestyles we can handle. Our world must hang together. We must find some consistency in our lives. We cannot change our sense of morality too often. If we do, we end up as hypocrites.

In the global economy, flexibility and adaptability do not only imply novelty. It breaks up tradition and established cultural patterns, norms, and identities. When small-scale fisheries people move into new occupations and localities, which current fisheries policies often promote, they also lose continuity in their social relations. We need lasting and trusting relationships. With modernity, people cannot be sure that they will see each other again when saying goodbye. Fishers are like the craftsmen Richard Sennett (2009) analyzes. The craft (of fishing) is the ability to do competent work. It is possible “*as long as relationship, community, and working together remains possible.*” (p. 277)

In the global village, ‘liquid modernity’ reigns (Bauman 2000). Relationships and identities that used to be stable and solid now undergo constant mobility and change. For Bauman, modernity is not caused by globalization; globalization is what modernity is. He belongs to the more dystopian camp:

“To ‘be modern’ means to modernize – compulsively, obsessively; not so much just ‘to be,’ let alone to keep its identity intact, but forever ‘becoming,’ avoiding completion, staying underdefined. Each new structure which replaces the previous one as soon as it is declared old-fashioned and past its use-by date is only another momentary settlement – acknowledged as temporary and ‘until further notice.’ Being always, at any stage and at all times, ‘post-something’ is also an undetachable feature of modernity.”
(p. 82)

Globalization impacts the way we think about the outside world, our community, and indeed ourselves. We cannot avoid taking it in, and when we do that, we change our minds and ways. Benedict Anderson (1983) talks about communities as an imagined entity. It exists in our head. The global community is no different. It appears in our imagination. Like McLuhan, Anderson was interested in the consequences of communication media – of ‘print capitalism’ as he called it.

Globalization makes people aware of their world-citizenship, that they are part of something vast. Small-scale fisheries people get to see that they share things with people who live far away, that small-scale fisheries are a way of life all over the world. They also notice differences, for instance, that small-scale fisheries people have different challenges and struggles from their own. Such observations implicate learning what globalization involves, and what may be coming their way. Learning about other people and other situations is also learning about oneself.

The realization of global interconnectedness is also in small-scale fisheries. In recent decades, transnational platforms and movements have emerged that addresses common concerns, such as the International Collective in Support of Fish Workers, the International World Forum of Fisher Peoples and the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers. They were also active in creating the SSF Guidelines, as the first international instrument of its kind (see chapter 2). They have become actors in setting political agendas for small-scale fisheries on a global scale. They also illustrate what a civil society can accomplish, if organized and resourced.

The adage: ‘think globally and act locally’, is what the implementation of the SSF Guidelines involves. But the generation of the SSF Guidelines supporters worked from the reverse process, from thinking locally and acting globally. Small-scale fisheries people around the world took part in the process of deliberating overarching governance principles and solutions that would work globally from their own, local experiences of being poor and marginalized but with a potential for achieving social justice and securing human rights.

Blue Growth

Globalization has material consequences for small-scale fisheries people, as when they adopt modern technologies and extend their markets. It also has social and cultural outcomes when information, ideas, and images move around the world. It is globalization when ideas of how to ‘micro-finance’ local projects spread from Bangladesh around the world to combat poverty. It is globalization when originally Canadian designs for quota-management are adopted worldwide. It is globalization when Marine Protected Areas are promoted for the oceans. Globalization, inspired by the SSF Guidelines, meant that the human rights approaches to fisheries management become part of the local conversation about how to manage small-scale fisheries. The way we think about the ‘fisherman’s problem’ (as McEvoy 1986 coined it), is now a global discourse, with the underlying assumption that the problem is the same all over, regardless of context.

The Blue Growth/Economy concept is a recent conceptual innovation, no more than a decade old. It is now framing the way governments around the world perceive the solution to a problem that is both economic and ecological. However, whether the ocean can take more economic growth, is a question, not a given. Does Blue Growth include small-scale fisheries communities, or are they just in the way? As we conclude in a recent book about the blue economy (Jentoft et al. 2022), contrary to what the SSF Guidelines give reason to hope, small-scale fisheries are now under siege in many parts of the world.

Blue Growth may provide opportunities for small-scale fisheries communities in need of additional employment. This is also why the concept is easy to sell. For example: from a tourism industry perspective, small-scale fisheries communities have authenticity. Tourists find functioning small-scale fisheries communities not just as scenery, but a chance of learning about a culture different from their own. In a community in the Canary Islands, the local tourist industry functions in sync with the local MPA (see chapter 10), thus helping to conserve marine habitats while creating new jobs for community members. It worked because the local community was in control,

able to make the tourism industry, the community and the MPA support each other (Pascual-Fernández et al. 2018).

Glocalization

Globalization is a 'megatrend'. Communities are better off if they engage rather than isolate, as the Canary Island community has done. Small-scale fisheries communities cannot just look through the rear window. They cannot resist, at least not for long, what is inevitable. But there are things communities can do to mitigate the adverse effects of globalization and to exploit whatever opportunity it provides to grow sustainably and equitably, without scrapping their identity. Tradition and culture are something to stand on and build from. It would help to counteract the artificiality that comes with globalization. In the Canary Island community, they created restaurants for tourists where they served local seafood in accordance with local recipes. They could have invited a global fast-food chain to locate. Visitors would have settled with McDonalds if that was the only available offer. But it would hardly have been a memorable meal making guests want to visit the community again.

Communities are not deemed to lose their identity and traditions in the new era. Rather, globalization can be an incentive for cultural revival. Instead of eroding local culture, including that of food, globalization may create awareness about the values it represents but which are otherwise taken for granted. Globalization may make people discover and appreciate who they are, what they have, and do not want to lose. Globalization may induce communities to re-vitalize and celebrate what is unique about their way of life. It may even create new jobs, as in the Canary community. Small-scale fisheries communities may get stronger with diversification, but only if things are, and will continue to be, interconnected in ways that empower them.

Thus, one may observe two parallel processes evolve simultaneously. To deliver on the best of both globalization and community, the sociologist Roland Robertson (1995) coined the term 'glocalization', the combination the globalization and localization concepts. This is a counter-idea of

globalization as a linear trend from the global to the local level. Glocalization involves the co-presence and coordination of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies. It is about ensuring that small-scale fisheries communities can continue to deliver on basic values and identities while they keep their eyes open to what is happening on a global scale. We should study how this is done.

Globalization allows small-scale fisheries people to “*live a life beyond boundaries*”, as Benedict Anderson (2016) phrased it the book he finished just before he died – and by that, securing their communities. Communities can sometimes exercise harsh social control, condemning deviance, holding people back by norms of conformity. Globalization can set them free by demonstrating that there is more than one formula for a good and decent life. By that, communities become inclusive rather than exclusive. In times of modernity, this is what communities must be to persist.

Networking

There are things about the modernity that globalization represents and brings, that communities should not want to miss out on. Connecting to the world through the media, traveling in cyberspace and in literal space, broadens our horizon and is liberating to the human spirit. We learn more about the world when we see more of it. We learn how to maneuver in it. The world becomes less threatening when learning about it, that other cultures have merits.

Once our networks extend the community to include people in far-away places, they become a resource. They connect communities to information they would otherwise not get. As the sociologist Mark Granovetter (1973) said, strong ties have qualities, but weak ties have strength too. He observed that weak ties are often “*denounced as generative of alienation*” but argued that they should be seen “*as indispensable to individual’s opportunities and to their integration into communities.*” (p. 1,378). When you involve unfamiliar people in your network, you also get access to theirs, which may prove useful.

If the only people you interact with are family and friends, and never with strangers, you soon exhaust your learning opportunities. Any information

would be old news. Stories are retold, and you will have heard them before. Weak ties, on the other hand, may serve as a bridge to new information, to lessons learned by people with whom you have a distant and occasional relationship. Networks that extend your primary group add resilience to your community, something you would want to expand and draw from rather than abandon.

Small-scale fisheries people are marginalized because of the often remoteness of their communities. They live away from urban centers and management agencies where many of the decisions that affect them are made. Their concerns and needs go unnoticed. With globalization, communities have things to lose but also to gain. Fortification may provide a sense of safety, but in the global era, walls are penetrated. Eventually they crack, and like water, globalization finds its way. Communities should be more concerned about the life-sustaining qualities of the water than the cracks in the wall.

Re-embedding Communities

The world is coming to small-scale fisheries communities. Isolation is not the solution.

Small-scale fisheries people often live and operate under conditions that make them marginalized, vulnerable, and impoverished. This is a good enough reason for assisting them in their struggles to achieve a better life. But if they remain in this situation, one cannot expect them to fulfill the role that the SSF Guidelines set out for them. They cannot be the provider of employment, food, and wellbeing. Thus, support is not just a lifeline for small-scale fisheries people, but a contribution to society which we all would gain from.

Small-scale fisheries are embedded in communities. One cannot function without the other. They depend on each other and must both be viable. Their resource base must be secured, but they must have institutions that keep members fit, unified, and empowered. To be secure, they must maintain control when pressures threaten their sustainability.

For better or worse, even in the most remote communities, small-scale fisheries are experiencing the impacts of globalization. As Moss Kanter (1995) argues, globalization is not the greatest threat to local communities; isolation is. They must engage with the outside world while at the same time avoiding being crushed by it. The SSF Guidelines do not have much advice to offer on

this challenge. How communities deal with the dilemma is worth exploring.

Globalization

Recent decades have seen political premises for small-scale fisheries governance flowing from the UN system, such as the FAO, down to the national level. Small-scale fisheries are no longer just a domestic concern – if they ever were. The SSF Guidelines emphasize their global significance for food security and poverty alleviation and the responsibilities that states have for enabling their viability and for respecting their human rights. The SSF Guidelines ‘take into account’ the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) outcome document ‘*The Future We Want*’. They also complement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries established by FAO in 1995, which in paragraph 6.18 states:

“Recognizing the important contributions of artisanal and small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security, States should appropriately protect the rights of fishers and fishworkers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to a secure and just livelihood, as well as preferential access, where appropriate, to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters under their national jurisdiction.”

Thus, the SSF Guidelines are part of a concerted global governance effort to deal with the most prevalent issues of our time. This makes them more powerful than their voluntary status would suggest. Their implementation must therefore be seen in a broader context than fisheries.

Global instruments such as the SSF Guidelines challenge nation states’ tradition of establishing their own fisheries policies and governance. They must now legitimize their systems and actions more broadly, and not just for the domestic audience. Should they, for instance, decide to go slow when implementing them, they must explain why.

States have committed themselves to implementing the SSF Guidelines

but may decide to drag their feet if there is no urgent pressure from local communities and civil society organizations. The SSF Guidelines help to generate such pressures, as they embolden small-scale fisheries stakeholders in their own political struggle to change their system from within. This is also why the SSF Guidelines do not just talk to states but also to civil society organizations. The first step must be to make small-scale fisheries people around the world aware that the SSF Guidelines exist. Here, civil society organizations bear a responsibility.

The implementation of the SSF Guidelines would hardly follow a linear path. States may decide not to take it on themselves to make sure that they reach the local community. Instead, the SSF Guidelines may detour the state level, making the implementation as much a bottom-up as a top-down process. Civil society organizations might be the ones spearheading them, but many of them do not have local representation.

In conclusion, this has implications for how we should think of social change and small-scale fisheries community empowerment in the context of globalization: we should look at external drivers originating from the global community, which the SSF Guidelines represent. They may be welcomed but also resisted at state level for the turmoil they may cause, as they challenge existing power-relations within the value chain. The SSF Guidelines should make states and small-scale fisheries stakeholders prepared for these obstacles: “*Small-scale fishing communities ... commonly suffer from unequal power relations.*” (SSF Guidelines: x), as there are “*sometimes unequal power relationships between value chain actors*” (article 7.1.).

Open system

Fish have always provided subsistence to local populations. But for many countries like my own, it was also a commodity for export and international trade, gaining importance in recent decades. As FAO observes: “*The seafood industry is becoming increasingly globalized. Between one third and 40% of all fish produced is now traded internationally, making fish and fisheries products one of the most traded food commodities in the world.*” (FAO n.d.).

Cod is Norway's oldest export item, going at least as far back as to the Viking era. Not only are markets (primarily southern Europe) the same as they always were, but the product has also not changed either. It is produced by hanging to dry in the same way today as it always was. This makes cod a cultural icon.

Almost 95 percent of the fish produced in Norway is exported, ranking my country second in the world (FAO 2020). In recent decades, farmed salmon have seen enormous growth, and have passed captured fish in value, finding markets way beyond Europe. We also import fish products from countries around the world to an extent we have never seen before. Globalization of fish markets brings a more diverse diet of far-traveled fish products. My regular grocery store carries seafood products from countries like China, Vietnam, Colombia, Argentina, and the Netherlands. Norway ranks among the top nations on per capita seafood consumption (Our World in Data n.d.)

Our coastal communities are not, and never were, isolated from world events and trends. When the US stock exchange crashed in the late 1920s, our fisheries industry was harder hit than any other Norwegian industry. It triggered a process that led to important institutional innovation, a nationwide organization of fishers and legal reform, such as the Raw Fish Act that gave fisheries sales-organizations monopoly rights (Jentoft & Finstad 2018). Not only did it change power-relations in favor of small-scale fisheries. It also put pressure on fish exporters to work harder in global markets.

Corporate responsibility

The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1988: 8-9) noted: "*Whoever is free to run away from locality, is free to run away from the consequences.*" The wellbeing of the community is only part of the business calculus insofar as it affects corporate profitability. Social responsibility is not categorical, only conditional.

Norway has seen numerous examples of closed fish-plants leaving the community in despair. They have been closed on short notice, and the owners have taken their business elsewhere, leaving small-scale fishers with nowhere

to deliver their catch. They would have to leave too. Consequently, the community comes to a halt. In one famous instance, a whole community ran ads in national newspapers asking to be evacuated (Apostle et al. 1998).

External management and ownership make local communities vulnerable to the logics of market-capitalism in the era of globalization. Markets have loyalty to capital, not communities. Market operators do not owe anything to the community. Local managers and owners are more likely to hang on to the community and ride out the storm when crisis hits. Their business calculus is different; it includes their responsibilities to the community, if not formally then at least informally. The calculus is also more transparent to locals. Decisions are not made in distant boardrooms.

I once interviewed a fish plant manager in a North-Norwegian fisheries community about what difference local management and ownership make for the way he ran his firm. He responded:

“A local owner/manager knows the community well and how he must cooperate with municipal authorities. He must live with his decisions, which is a good thing because it makes him more restrained about the working environment. We are here also to take responsibility for the community. Difficult decisions get even more difficult when you are born and raised in the community – for instance if closing something that should be closed.” (Cited from Jentoft 2001, p. 52, here translated from Norwegian)

This manager understands the mutual dependency between firm and community. He understands what he must do and not do to ensure that this mutuality holds. He must be as competent when operating local networks as when dealing with international partners. He has a key role in the value chain, of which his firm is part.

Whatever power his position grants him, he must use it to secure the functioning of the employment system. As leader, he has holistic responsibility. Without attachment to the community, he is less likely to know and care for local relationships, like those with the local fleet and workforce. It is not just

their services that matter. In this situation, the manager and the fishers have known each other since childhood.

A trustful management relationship has merits. The sociologist Mark Granovetter (1985: 487) argued, in embedded economies, “*Actors do not behave or decide as atoms outside a social context...Their attempts at purposive action are instead embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations.*” In small-scale fisheries communities, actors are integrated into ongoing social networks. They are not ‘atoms’, but in the global economy they may well turn into them if the local employment system is dis-embedded. That is what happens in the ‘great transformation’ that the economist Karl Polanyi (1980) analyzed. Rather than markets being embedded in communities, the reverse relationship develops. Whether the SSF Guidelines can reverse this trend may prove difficult in the global fisheries economy.

Communities in the global economy

For securing sustainable small-scale fisheries, communities are both a dependent and independent variable. Small-scale fisheries and local communities do not work aside from each other; they are inter-linked and inter-dependent. Thus, there are good reasons for talking about the role of communities, which the SSF Guidelines do throughout. As FAO’s Director-General José Graziano da Silva observes in the SSF Guidelines’ Foreword, small-scale fisheries are, “*firmly rooted in local communities, traditions and values.*”

But the SSF Guidelines do not talk about small-scale fisheries communities in the context of globalization. They are silent on how small-scale fisheries communities are threatened by the forces of globalization. Neither do they discuss what new opportunities open because of it, what globalization may imply for the structure and functioning of community embedded employment systems and the way fishing, processing, and labor recruitment are connected and operate together. Will globalization break up the local employment system and reinforce the dis-embedding of small-scale fisheries from local communities? What will it take to make globalization a force of re-embedding and re-integrating the local employment system? While recognizing the role

of communities, the SSF Guidelines have little to say about the architecture and functioning of the community, how it hangs together and works as a system, and what prospects globalization entails. This they leave for the academic community to follow up.

VIII

Learning the Small-Scale Fisheries Life



Children learn early about fishing and fisheries when working with adults. Dzilam de Bravo, Mexico. (S. Salas, 2018)

Local Knowledge - How?

Co-management provides a platform for making local, experience-based knowledge become relevant.

Upon the prize awarded at the Annual meeting of the American Academy in 1974 for his contributions to social anthropology, Clifford Geertz gave a lecture about what it means to collect local knowledge in a way that truly represents the knower. Published in Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the talk was titled '*From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding*'. Here, Geertz discusses the methodological dilemmas and limitations of getting to know how people understand their world. He raised the question whether it is even possible for a researcher to learn what an informant thinks, feels, and understands – given that a researcher cannot be that other person. Is an inside – or 'emic' – perspective as social scientists have come to know it even conceivable?

Geertz' question is relevant for the implementation of SSF Guidelines, which highlight the necessity to integrate local knowledge in fisheries governance and management. "{R}ecognizing and respecting existing forms of organization, traditional and local knowledge and practices of small-scale fishing communities, including indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities encouraging women leadership..." is among the guiding principles. It is also a recurring

theme throughout the text, like in article 11.6: “*All parties should ensure that the knowledge, culture, traditions and practices of small-scale fishing communities, including indigenous peoples, are recognized and, as appropriate, supported, and that they inform responsible local governance and sustainable development processes.*”

Informing governance

From principle to practice is a stretch. A principle is a governance challenge that may prove difficult to implement. Making principles mandatory for the governing system requires more than a declaration. It is insufficient unless it leads to real change in the way the system operates. For that to occur as the SSF Guidelines hope to achieve, the local knowledge that is harbored in the system-to-be governed must somehow be ‘excavated’ and then incorporated into the governing system where decisions are made. That is partly an issue of institutional design, about having or creating the necessary space for local knowledge considered and secondly an issue of daily decision-making. Institutions must come alive. Rules are insufficient unless implemented, enforced, and adhered to.

Before local knowledge, culture and so forth can ‘inform’ governance, one must address the question of Geertz: How does one get access to the local stock of knowledge, given that it resides in local fisheries peoples’ minds, in their narratives, language, and fishing practice? Local knowledge is often tacit; people are better doing things than talking about it. Secrecy may give local people a competitive advantage, like where to find the best fishing spots. Local knowledge is not just about empirical facts, but also about values and morality that a fisher may not share with outsiders, like researchers.

Getting to know what other people know takes more than ‘a rapid appraisal’. Tapping local knowledge takes more than an *etic* perspective. ‘*Respect of cultures*’, as the SSF Guidelines call for, is essential since there are ethical concerns when investigating the private and communal spheres of informants. You do not necessarily have the right to know what other people know. Neither will they allow access to all of it. Their book is not always open to you.

Geertz is concerned with the work of social anthropologists. Are they deemed to observe local life only from the wings? Must they remain an outsider? Or, when you cannot penetrate the minds of a small-scale fisher and thus get to know what he knows and values, do you have to be one to know one? To know small-scale fisheries, must you be a fisher yourself? Or as Geertz rhetorically posited. "*Must the ethnography of witchcraft necessarily be written by a witch?*" He thinks not:

"The ethnographer does not, and, in my opinion, largely cannot, perceive what his informants perceive. What he perceives - and that uncertainly enough - is what they perceive "with," or "by means of," or "through," or what - every word one may choose." (p. 30)

He goes on to say:

"I have tried to arrive at this most intimate of notions not by imagining myself as someone else - a rice peasant or a tribal sheikh, and then seeing what I thought - but by searching out and analyzing the symbolic forms - words, images, institutions, behaviors - in terms of which, in each place, people actually represent themselves to themselves and to one another." (p. 30)

Even if one cannot enter the mind of the other person, one may still, Geertz suggests, understand the words uttered and the images that words allude to and trigger in the mind of the listener. People share knowledge through communication, which is dependent on language, written or spoken. To understand utterances, knowing the context is necessary; the 'where and when' things are being expressed, to understand how and why. The same word may mean different things in different contexts (see chapter 14). Thus, to know the fisher, what he says and does, you must know his fishing. To comprehend what is unique about the fisher and his fishing practice; you would also need to know fishing in general. Otherwise, you would not have a basis for comparison. You must know what is unique about him and about

the way he operates.

Geertz spent years in the field in Indonesia and Morocco. Not only did he gain local knowledge; it also helped him to reflect on how to acquire it. The social anthropologist Harald Beyer Broch, who also did research in Indonesian villages, did the same during fieldwork in a Norwegian small-scale fisheries community (see chapter 31). To know the fishers and fishing, he entered the fishing expedition as a participant observer. He learned what fishers talked about by working alongside them. He gained his sea-legs by bringing on the boots and the oilskin and joining the crew on the deck. He shared their life on the boat, listening to their conversations.

Learning the local language, the words used to depict what fisheries people know, requires observation, communication, and participation – with recurring validation checks. Learning the meaning of language, what words refer to, and how they are used to steer fishing operations, is an essential part of the research process. It enables the anthropologist to ‘read’ what is observed and to grasp what is being said, but it does not make the anthropologist the ‘author’. Still, the researcher may talk to the same author to clarify what is obscure. Interpretation and experience are thus a circular affair, a ‘round dance’ of continuous re-validation, as the risk of misinterpretation is always present. This is necessarily time-consuming. Geertz and Beyer Broch spent years in the field. Often, they went back to the community they worked in. In some instances, a community becomes a life-long love-affair, as for my colleague Bonnie McCay who did her PhD fieldwork in Fogo Island, Newfoundland.

The knowledge narrative

Local knowledge, and the language that communicates it, is embedded in practice, and in the institutions that regulate it. It is therefore also tacit and taken for granted. While a fisher is still a novice, communication requires speech acts, as when the skipper says: “*Do this!*” “*Don’t do that!*” The novice also learns from observation; watching how things are done, how more experienced crew members perform. A true expert, however, as

Flyvbjerg (2001) observes, manages without being told, or having to consult an instruction manual. He knows what the task requires and how to do it. Knowledge is integral to the work routine, in no need of words. The practice to become an experienced fisher is by being one. Norms and rules are internalized in the act; they are practiced. The tool used to perform the task becomes an extension of the body, like the knife in the fisher's hand.

Local knowledge is also 'stored' in the stories fisheries people share among themselves as a collective memory. The narratives help to bring a newcomer fisher from being a novice to that of an expert. Not only do narratives contain factual knowledge, for instance, about where to find the fish and how to avoid danger. Thus, narratives connect experience to incidents and places. A skerry may not just be another rock in the ocean. It gains meaning from the fact that someone hit it and perished.

Narratives have moral content. They are, as Alasdair MacIntyre (1981: 2004-5) says, "*the moral starting point*". They tell the novice fisher what he should or should not do, like putting himself and others at risk. Communities may have different names for natural places and phenomena, such as skerries, weather, and fishing grounds. Fishers learn to avoid things that might put them at risk. They learn to read and respect the weather from being on the water, and from being with others. The novice fisher learns to distinguish between species, where to find them, and with which gear to catch them. Then, once he can handle the gear, steering the boat, and knows what his own role onboard is, he is all set. He is on track to become an expert fisher and a skipper someday. Who the crew members are, he would know already, as they are likely to be family and friends. He needs to know and trust the people who he is onboard with.

Then, the narrative is within the mind of the fisher, and the fisher is part of the narrative. The fisher relates to the narrative that gives meaning to his life and work. He makes sense of his life and work by coming to terms with the stories in which he finds himself. The narrative makes the fishers an insider to his team and community. The narrative is about membership and belonging. "*For the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity*" (MacIntyre 1981: 205).

Indeed, stories make communities because they are shared and thus connect members to a common narrative about their community. Local knowledge is about those narratives that give the fisher meaning to his life, work, and community, and hence the perception and appreciation of who he and his community are. A researcher may well access these narratives. By getting to know them, the researcher would get a sense of the community.

One should, however, not for a minute expect the process of learning to be comfortable, at least not to begin with. The experience of the young apprentice and the researcher is much the same. The anthropologist Gisli Pálsson, who studied Icelandic fishers at sea, writes:

“Field workers usually begin their ‘trip’ on the margin of the community, nauseated by their novice status. As they become increasingly involved in and knowledgeable about the activities of others, they move towards the center and begin to resonate with the social world around them – to feel at ‘home’ in both their bodies and the company of others.” (Pálsson 1994: 902)

Speaking for

Like fishers, governors learn from experience. They may well feel nausea the first time they lead a meeting. They may, however, benefit from consulting the anthropologist, which is what the SSF Guidelines envisage. Thereby, the anthropologist becomes an intermediate spokesperson for the fisheries community, and thus a part of the governance system. The SSF Guidelines call for the engagement of the academic community in the implementation process and encourage states to fund and make use of small-scale fisheries research. They also promote direct engagement of fisheries people in the governance process. Fish have no voice and may need a biologist or a conservationist to speak on their behalf. Small-scale fisheries people can speak for themselves; they need a platform for it, but not necessarily a researcher spokesperson. Like governors, they may, however, gain from consulting the researcher. Should the researcher gain trust from both sides,

he or she may become an important intermediary, a liaison.

Geertz (1974) makes the distinction between ‘experience-near’ concepts of insiders, like fishers, and ‘experience-distant’ concepts, like those of academics:

“People use experience-near concepts spontaneously, unselfconsciously, as it were, colloquially; they do not, except fleetingly and on occasion, recognize that there are any “concepts” involved at all. That is what experience-near means - that ideas and the realities they disclose are naturally and indissolubly bound up together.” (p. 30)

The native’s point of view is expressed with concepts of moral content. Small-scale fisheries people have ideas of what constitute a dignified life and what is a healthy community. They also have opinions and arguments regarding what good governance entails. Thus, the integration of local knowledge cannot leave out values, norms, and principles, which form a body of knowledge. The native’s point of view is also ethical and emotional. They do not experience the violation of their human rights and dignity without triggering feelings. Fisheries people’s ideas of justice involve issues beyond the mere distribution of material benefits, like quotas. One cannot expect a positive response if fisheries governance tramples on small-scale fisheries people’s feelings about what for them is right or wrong, and what they believe they deserve.

Geertz has a word about anthropologists’ affinity for Max Weber’s ‘*verstehen*’ concept, which refers to the understanding of the motives people have for their action: “*What happens to verstehen when einfühlen disappears?*” (Geertz 1974: 28). Informants do not only know, but they also feel. If they are short of words to talk about what they know and aspire to, they may find it even more difficult to express their feelings. They know injustice when they experience it, not just descriptively but intuitively and emotionally. The uneasiness comes before the articulation of words that amount to a statement, like an argument.

Without education, small-scale fisheries people do not have the conceptual nuances of moral philosophy. Still, they can talk about injustice with

experience-near concepts – if they have the chance and courage to speak up, that is. Criticism is rarely appreciated by those in power. Fishers may still be short of words to describe what they think and feel. As Wittgenstein (1974) notes in a famous passage: *“Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must remain silent.”*

Co-management

The SSF Guidelines advocate co-management, as in article 5.5: *“States should recognize the role of small-scale fishing communities and indigenous peoples to restore, conserve, protect and co-manage local aquatic and coastal ecosystems.”* Or in 5.17: *“They should provide support to such systems, involving small-scale fisheries actors as appropriate and promoting participatory arrangements within the context of co-management.”*

The limit of language is also a limitation of the deliberation and ‘communicative action’ (Habermas 1981). In co-management, where people are supposed to raise their concerns and speak in defense of their interest, words matter. They may not be able to argue with the smooth tongue of a politician or the eloquence of a philosopher. Experience-near concepts do not always carry the same power as the experience-distant concepts. Nevertheless, people may at the very least say yes or no to a proposition. People can express their disapproval or consent with a nod, a vote or by acclamation. It would still count as a co-management speech act.

Co-management, as participatory democracy, is not just a process in which knowledge represented and viewpoints expressed take the form of both experience-near and experience-distant concepts. It is also a process of interactive learning and knowledge co-production. The limitations of language can be stretched, but as Wittgenstein points out, reality is never fully superseded by it. Gregory Bateson (2000) is onto the same idea when he stresses that *“the name is not the thing being named”*. What should matter more when decisions are made is the reality as it is experienced by those who must live with them. Words may not fully capture this experience.

Nonetheless, like any other institution, co-management is language depen-

dent (Searle 1995). The limitation of language is not an argument against co-management arrangements but a warning that they can go astray and a suggestion that one should work to hinder it. The vocabulary is not a given for either involved party. Understanding the other takes an effort in understanding the concepts in use.

The SSF Guidelines argue that small-scale fisheries people have a voice of their own that should be heard as a matter of principle. To facilitate deliberation, the concepts of stakeholders would need 'translation'. The danger that the meaning of words may be lost is always present because translation would also be subject to the limitation of language: to define a word, you need other words. As Geertz points out, understanding words is different from understanding the mind. A researcher, or partners in co-management, would never be fully capable of understanding how the small-scale fisheries people think and feel. Still, understanding what they say and the concepts they use, carries a long way.

Co-management communication takes the form of an iterative feedback loop, with concepts and statements adjusted to achieve a better fit. For local knowledge, and the moralities embedded herein, to be integrated in the governance process, fisheries people must themselves be directly represented or indirectly by their chosen peers. This is how participatory democracy is supposed to work. People speak from their own perspective and in their own words. When small-scale fisheries people participate in the governance process, they bring their own explicit and tacit local knowledge. Researchers do not speak on behalf of those they study unless they have their permission. In co-management, people should speak for themselves. Otherwise, a governance arrangement is not co-management.

Finding the Sea Legs

Small-scale fisheries need people with a clear idea of who they are and how they fit in with the community.

When the great Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875 – 1961) (Carl Jung 2023) was once asked “*Who are you?*”, he replied in a way one would not expect by a person of his stature: “*That is something I have been wondering about all my life.*” But he added that the question is a bit misplaced because it assumes that deep down, we have a core, just like the kernel in a plum, which we will find if we dig deep enough.

Henrik Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt*, the protagonist in the famous play by the same name, struggled with the same question. In Act 3, Peer is searching for his inner substance but fails to find it. He is realizing that his search is like peeling an onion (Peer Gynt 2023). He says:

*There’s a most surprising lot of layers!
Are we never coming to the kernel?
There isn’t one! To the innermost bit
It’s nothing but layers, smaller and smaller.*

Impression management

We all struggle with this question, as we need to find some clarity to stay sane. We must find some inner peace, and we must be ready to respond to others who want to know something about us. When we apply for something, like a passport or a drivers' license, show up on a date, or seek counsel, we must have something to say about ourselves.

The question is easier to raise than to answer. But we are not asking for the full story, just what is sufficient to know. In daily encounters, I want to know who I am relative to you, and vice versa. It also works the same for you. For our conversation to begin, we must have an idea who we both are and in what capacity we are talking.

The question of who we are cannot be answered out of context. We, therefore, have an interest in presenting ourselves in a way that is relevant to the situation. Erving Goffman's (1959) concept of 'impression management' captures the idea; I express myself in manners that help control the impression other people get of me. If I want you to understand that I am a fisher, I act, dress, and talk like one. Whatever else I am, I do not convey in that moment unless it is relevant in the situation.

As part of my impression management effort, I may see an advantage in keeping other people confused about me. I may therefore be reluctant to reveal too much. Instead, we would tend to keep some things for ourselves. 'Avoidance' is an interactive strategy, as Goffman (1969) talked about. I do not want you to read me as 'an open book'. I do not want you to read between the lines. My book has many pages, and I am not even sure how many I have, but the book is mine and I will keep authoring this book throughout my life. Jung said that there is something unpredictable about the process of writing. I am not sure how it will end but I am as curious to know it as the reader.

The answer to the identity question of who I really am, is partial and preliminary. We would have to concentrate on the rings and struggle with the kernel. If there 'is nothing there, there'. i.e., no kernel to be found, we may have to conclude that the Bible (Matthew 7-8) cannot hold its promise: *"For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who*

knocks, the door will be opened.” But what is there to find behind it? Is there perhaps another door? And which way does it open – inwards or outwards? Does it open into yourself or out to the world, or both, as a swing door? Jung and Ibsen were more interested in the door opening inwards, but there was nothing to find behind it that would satisfy them. I suggest that the swing door metaphor is better, as we are not alone in this world. I need a We to be Me, is sociologists root perspective, as Etzioni argued (see chapter 5).

Getting the habit

The question comes before the answer; a precise answer requires a precise question. Before we can hope to find an answer to the identity question, we must first ask the question. Jung kept on asking and searching, as we all must do at some level because it is part of being human. But we do not reach clarity in splendid isolation. We have family and friends; we live in a community and take part in activities and events that involve other people. Social interaction necessitates that we know each other. If not, we are unwilling to commit, and without commitment, we are alone. But commitment rarely comes instantaneously. The clarity that we all seek results from a process which often takes the form of experimentation.

I cannot know whether I have it in me to be a fisher unless I have tried. I must prove myself to me and to other crew members. I do not know whether I appreciate being at sea in rough waters until I have experienced it. I may not be able ‘to get my sea-legs’ even if I try. In some instances, trying is not enough. I must work harder. I do not just pick up a violin and play unless I know how to do it, and that requires practice. One must learn to be an apprentice in life, and that requires patience and humbleness, and the ability to take disappointments and move on.

When we try, we learn about ourselves. We also learn from how others react, whether they reject or avoid what we do. When we speak to others, we also listen to ourselves, and learn from our stories. As I write this, I read myself, and in the process, I get a clearer view not just of what I try to say but also of who I am as a writer. Like Jung, I learn when I reflect on my memories

and experiences. I still benefit from my time when I did my PhD research in the small-scale fisheries community back in the late 1970s (see chapter 5). I often recall what I saw and learned in my time on Nicaragua's Caribbean coast (see chapter 10). As I do in this book, I keep coming back to being part of the Norwegian delegation during the negotiations on the SSF Guidelines. I am who I am because of these and many other experiences that I have learned from.

The myth

Nevertheless, my inner self remains a puzzle, as it was for Carl Jung or Peer Gynt. As humans we are left with the unanswered question. Often, we find some clarity in the negative: we find it easier to answer who and what we are *not*. Jung writes: "*I know that in many things I am not like others, but I do not know who I really am like*" (p. 3-4). Luckily, other people are not all as interested in me as I am – they have enough with themselves. No one knows, or tries to know me as I do myself, because they cannot be me. And if they were, they would wrestle with the same questions as I am. Jung again:

"The meaning of my existence is that life has addressed a question to me. Or, conversely, I myself am a question which is addressed to the world, and I must communicate my answer, for otherwise I am dependent upon the world's answer."

Jung believed one's personal life could only be understood as a myth, which in his view is more precise than science because science works with averages, not the specifics of individual life. No one, not even those who are close to me, can see into my myth. The myth is mine and is filled with stuff that only I can know of. I have books on the shelf, which tell something of who I am. My inner self does not have a fixed content but is continually filled with new stuff; experiences, concepts, knowledge, emotions, that change the way I look at the world and myself. We get a new gadget, meet someone by coincidence, we read something, we travel to a place we never visited before,

and life takes a turn. Therefore, Jung argued, we cannot have final judgment about ourselves and our life. I cannot know for sure how it is going to turn out and how the answer to the question of who I am and will become can only be “*hinted at*”, he writes, because “*the story has no beginning and no end*” (p. 4). Whether or not the story is true, is not the problem. “*The only question is whether what I tell is my fable, my story.*” (p. 3).

If this is how it is for me, it is likely the same for you. Little wonder, therefore, that our interaction is complex, and that we do not easily synchronize. Still, we depend on other people and must therefore be able to trust one another and find a way to do it. Learning who we are, where we come from, in what capacity and with what authority we speak, what our character, beliefs and values are, are all essential for trust to be established. They must all be communicated during our interaction. Trust is proven and earned, not declared, or demanded. I cannot force you to trust me; I must earn your trust. We are hard to convince if there is a gap between what other people say and what they do. Therefore, trust and worthiness combine into one word. Trustworthiness is as much an informal as a formal quality (Sennett 1998). It is not just about formal credentials but about learned experience.

Identity through activity

Assuming we are a synopsis of our experiences, knowledge, ideas, and moralities, we may try to answer the identity question by memorizing what we have been thinking throughout life. This is identity explored retrospectively. That means taking stock at a particular point in time, like at the end of life. However, our thoughts are too many, too volatile, too inconsistent and confusing to end up with a firm belief. Besides, it is more about what we have become than what we are. We do not wait to think about it until our ‘golden years’.

We may be more satisfied if we think of what we have filled our life with, what we do and have done. My career is in fishing; thus, I am a fisher. I am playing the violin; ergo I say that am I a violinist. I lead my community; therefore, I am a community leader. This is also how I conclude that I am a

father, a writer, a professor, or whatever. To say, “*I am SJ*,” would not reveal much of me to someone who has not heard about me and what I do. In English it is, however, just another way of saying your name. In Norwegian, it sounds pretentious. Therefore, I say “*My name is...*” when I introduce myself. If you want to know who I am, you would not be satisfied with just my name.

I am, in a way, what I do and have done. My identity is shaped by my activity. If the meaning of my life cannot be answered because it presupposes that I am part of a greater existence or plan than myself, that life has meaning beyond me, which I am supposed to live up to, I can still find meaning in my life, in the things I fill it with (Hellesnes 2014) (Metz 2022). I find meaning in fishing, fathering, playing the violin, or by listening to some who knows how to do it. Fishers find meaning in being on the water, by being close to nature (see chapter 31). I find meaning in doing something with my family, not because it is part of a divine plan but because we love to be together. I find meaning in writing this book. It is not so much about the product as the process.

Therefore, a meaningful life is determined by how we choose to live it. If we do not find what we currently do satisfactory, we shift to something else, like another hobby or career. We engage with other people, move to a different place. But other alternatives may not be available. They may not be within reach because we lack the qualifications. As we get older, options shrink. I realize now that I am too old to become a fisher or to learn to play the violin. I would love to have the choices I had when I was young. To be a fisher or a carpenter is now out of the question since I must have started long ago. I should keep on doing what I always did, like being a professor: my position comes with freedoms and rewards that other people miss in so far that they value them.

However, I have done, and still do, different things and cannot always figure out their relative significance, which of my activities defines me more. My identity is a complex but unstable composition. We are all multitasking and part-time occupants of the many positions we hold, but some are more definitive in defining who we are than others. Some things I have left behind. I am not today who I was before, and I may do other things and become a

different person later. The door to my world is open.

But I do not necessarily find what I am searching for, neither in my environment nor in myself. Jung (1966: 264) said: “*The older I became, the less I understood or realized or knew about myself*” (My translation). Most of us go through life without being very mindful of who we are. If we are to believe Jung, there is no clear answer anyway. The question is, therefore, too demanding to think about. We may admit to the recognition that Ibsen talked about in the Wild Duck (1884), another of his masterpieces (The Wild Duck 2022). “*If you take away the life-lie from the average person, you take away his happiness at the same time.*” (My translation Peer Gynt chose what Goffman called ‘avoidance’; he did not confront but went around the ‘Bøyg’ (Bøyg 2021). In the end he despairs, thinking his life is forfeit, that he is nothing.

Collective identity

‘Who am I?’ is not the only identity question we grapple with. We also struggle with the sociological question: ‘Who are We?’ The answer has implications for how we regard ourselves as a group or a nation, but also, in the last instance, how we think of ourselves as individuals. It is a question of how I fit in, which community I belong to, which association I am member in.

For most people, collective identity is associated with what I am part of, who I am related to, where I am from, and who I sympathize with. Individuals feel safety in knowing that they are not alone. They seek together with people whose background experience is similar, who live like they do and who they share ideas convictions with. We are less insecure in our social interactions when we know which group we belong to because it tells us what to expect and how to behave. Unless we are solitary romantics, we need other people’s approval and support. When Norwegians emigrated in considerable numbers to the US in the 1800s and early 1900s, they formed their own communities where they arrived. In this way they could still live the life they were used to in “the old country” and speak the language they knew.

Thus, I and We hang together. Our identity is not just formed introspectively, but interactively, together with others. In contrast to Jung,

Fukuyama (2019) believes that what most people “*believe to be their true inner self is constituted by their relationships with other people and by the norms and expectations that those others provide*” (p. 56).

Identities overlap because we experience the same things. We also have an impact on other people, and they are with us. We can see ourselves in other people. With people who are close to us, we communicate about what we learn, think, and feel. I share my identity as professor with colleagues and students at my university. The fisher shares his identity with the crew, with people in the community and beyond. A fisher has an idea how his life would evolve should he decide to remain a fisher, fishing with his crew, and if staying put in the community. He can just look at people he knows and see how their careers have evolved.

Jung is searching for his unique character, his inner self. He was not looking outwardly into his social environment. He talks about the loneliness he felt when young. He was not part of a We, which is not how growing up in a well-integrated and functioning community is like. In fishing, the crew is – literally and figuratively – ‘in the same boat’. They are in it together, must cooperate to be effective and safe. They cannot afford free riders. People who know each other from having worked together know how to relate. They also have less need to talk because they can read body-language. They do not have to be told what to do. In a well-integrated crew, individual fishers know their role.

Teamwork requires team-identity. Members who share the idea of who they are together find it easier to act collectively, also in the political arena. They need less time to negotiate over strategy because they agree on the basics. Instead, they can concentrate their attention outwardly. They may, however, learn more about themselves in the process, which may reinforce their collective identity and add social capital to their relationship.

Identity politics

Identity drives social movements and inspires political struggle. It also has a name: “identity politics”, as discussed by Fukuyama (2019) for instance. He posits that it grows “*out of a distinction between one’s true inner self and an outer world of rules and norms that does not adequately recognize that inner self’s worth and dignity.*” (p. 9-10). Small-scale fisheries people have interests to protect, claims to make, and cultural values to defend. But they may be too fragmented and disorganized to be politically effective, unless they can mobilize their collective identity. For that they need strong symbols, like the SSF Guidelines, which have human rights and dignity as key principles. This would make sense since the guidelines have poverty eradication as a main goal. As Fukuyama observes, “*the pain of poverty is felt more often as the loss of dignity*” (p. 84). But small-scale fisheries people currently also miss strong organizations who can front their concerns and secure their recognition.

Collective identity would be what Bourdieu (1990: 68) calls “symbolic capital”. What comes first is not always clear but does not matter much as one nurtures the other. Building identity “*constitute(s) investments in the collective enterprise of creating symbolic capital.*” If missing or lost, it must be (re-)established to be a political resource, although it takes more than “*an instantaneous decision of the will.*” It is “*a slow process of co-optations and initiation which is equivalent to a second birth.*”

Young, first-time fishers on the Lofoten fishing grounds, were expected to take their hat off and greet the Vågakallen, which is a mountain given a mythical, human name. Therefore, cultural expressions and manifestations, like the rituals involved in becoming a ‘real’ fisher create shared identity from which symbolic capital is built and collective action evolves. Norwegian fishers would hardly have achieved what they have politically and institutionally if they had not been able to identify each other as a We, a group, or class.

Jan Kooiman is onto the same point in the context of societal governance:

*“Action implies intention, which relates to consciousness and identity.
We see a constant oscillation between the need for predictability to keep*

interactions going, by reinforcing identity both at the individual and collective level, and indeterminacy due to the complexity of governing experiences and a necessary adaptation to the ever-changing conditions of the natural and social environment of these interactions.” (Kooiman 2003, p. 14)

Building a collective identity as symbolic capital is easier in small and homogeneous groups, but more politically potent in large groups. It is easier among workers on the factory floor than among scattered fishers on the fishing grounds. Notably, identity politics is not just small-scale, only something marginalized and out of the mainstream groups take on. In their struggle to defeat Trump, Obama and Biden repeatedly stated: “*This is not who we are!*” Then, they are playing identity politics, and by that must believe that identity has political relevance. One may ask if there is not always a collective identity behind any forms of political action, even if it is not played as a rhetorical card.

However, as with individuals, communities or nation may not have collective identity, a ‘kernel’. The ‘We’ is also an onion, with rings upon rings. A small-scale fisheries community is obviously about more than fishing. It has a particular location, a natural environment, unique architecture, social clubs, sports arenas, community halls, places of worship, and public squares where people gather. It serves as home to people, for families to live and for kids to grow up. It is within these institutions that values are transferred, and identities created, because they are what people have and bring them together in the community.

Moral panic

Identity politics is a challenge for establishment politics. Despite its moral righteousness, it is therefore often divisive. When Indigenous people reach back to their cultural heritage, it is about their struggle for justice and self-determination, their empowerment and dignity. Securing their rights to natural resources, as in fisheries, is part of the struggle. When the indigenous

Sami in Norway raise their voice, they meet resistance, as Indigenous peoples do elsewhere. Therefore, the SSF Guidelines are mentioning Indigenous peoples throughout. It is about their ability to exist as a dignified and distinct people after having gone through a lengthy period of assimilation, discrimination, and harassment.

The moral content of identity politics adds to the distributional issues involved. Thus, justice in the Blue Economy is not only about interest politics. It is also about all those things that make the life and livelihood of small-scale fisheries people possible, meaningful, and dignified. It requires restoration of things that are lost. What for Indigenous peoples is building collective identity and dignity, is for society at large a zero-sum power game.

Identity politics dressed in moral language often invokes what Stanley Cohen (1972) called 'moral panic'. It triggers a sense of threat and the urge to respond. This is how identity politics become negatively laden and a rhetorical weapon, just like 'critical race theory', which was originally an academic concept but now has become part of heated political discourse (Critical Race Theory 2023).

Identity politics is also directed inwardly; it is a marginalized group, like an Indigenous people, talking to themselves in trying to answer to the 'who are we' question. It is only they who can find that answer, but they risk the chance of 'the world' defining it for them, as Jung warned against but with individuals in mind. After centuries of discrimination, their collective identity may have been drained out, and they must therefore recreate it. Identity politics is among the means to do that.

The attempts to discredit it can therefore only be seen as a continuation of previous discrimination, a way to make legitimate justice claims drop off the table. Which is a reason this criticism is raised in the first place. Identity politics may take dubious forms, but underneath is legitimate justice claims that deserve serious attention. It is then ironic that when marginalized and disenfranchised groups, like Indigenous peoples, such as the Sami, are met with the negatively laden identity politics label, when they raise their voice to protest discrimination and injustice, and when the national governance system has failed to deliver on their legal duties.

Teaching Fisheries

Students have better understanding of abstract concepts if they can relate them to the world they already know.

From the very beginning, fisheries was an important program that made my university stand out from other Norwegian universities. It meant to fill a vacuum. Agriculture had university education a century before the fishery got one when University of Tromsø was established in 1972. When considering that Norway is primarily a fisheries nation, this is peculiar. Just look at the map; Norway is a long coastline facing the Atlantic. It has a rugged and mountainous landscape with long and dark winters. Most of Norway is not well suited for farming, at least not on a large scale. But we have all the necessary conditions for building a thriving fisheries industry – which was always a mainstay of our economy.

Up until the 1960s, coastal people would typically combine small-scale fishing and small-scale farming at a household scale – with the menfolk specializing on the former and the women on the latter. Since then, Norway has seen an industrialization of fisheries together with a rapid growth in fish farming. This has increased the demand for people with higher education. You could even say research and university education have made the modernization and growth of the Norwegian fisheries industry possible.

A foot in the community

For a university with fisheries education as part of the program, it is an advantage to be situated in the area where fisheries take place. A short distance between what is taught and where the action happens is an advantage. Students could just look out of the classroom window and see fisheries activities going on. Abstract theory inside the classroom could be juxtaposed with real life down below from the campus.

Over many years, the university required that, to be accepted, students had to have practical experience from the fishing industry, as a fisher or as a processing plant-worker. That requirement was later removed by a government decree to the dismay of our faculty. But we still try to connect with the industry through trainee arrangements and student excursions. It is different from when our students had industry experience, but it is better than nothing.

When students had practical experience, they also had knowledge to bring to class. Classes were an opportunity for learning through exchange between the professor and the student. Teaching could therefore be a hard challenge at times. Students would sometimes disagree with what we taught them. They did not always find academic concepts fitting the reality they knew. But in that way, classes became an exercise in transdisciplinarity. As a young teacher, I learned more from my students than they learned from me.

From the beginning, there was a pronounced ambition of interdisciplinary. Norwegian College of Fishery Science (NCFS) students had to read in many disciplines. Courses ranged from microbiology and resource biology to resource and business economics, the social sciences, law and history. No aspect of fisheries was alien and all disciplines were relevant to our program.

How did it work out?

It is fair to conclude that we failed in making our program truly interdisciplinary. Instead, we taught multiple disciplines and left it to the students themselves to find out how the disciplines hung together. Students got mixed,

and sometimes conflicting messages, which of course was not necessarily bad. It reflects the fisheries discourse in Norway and globally, which is a battle between conflicting disciplinary perspectives.

Teachers were all disciplinary trained, and that is how we taught. By that, we made it easy for ourselves and difficult for the students. They were assumed to be able bring together many disciplinary messages into an integrated, holistic perspective that we as teachers were not capable of ourselves. That was not fair to the students, and I often felt sorry for them.

But it worked better than one could fear. When I meet our students years after they graduated and had taken up important positions in the industry and in government, they often impressed me by how they could argue by drawing from different disciplinary perspectives and blending it in with their own life experience by growing up in a fisheries community. We did something right after all.

Recruiting students

Fishers are rarely 'bookish' people. They are practical people because they must be. You do not become a fisher from reading a book, but by starting fishing with other family members, and by learning how it is done from them. Kids aspiring for a fishing career therefore often find school a waste of time. School represents values that are not their own. They are much like the working-class children that Herman Willis wrote about in his book *'Learning to Labor'*, with the illustrative subtitle: *'How Working-Class Kids Get Working Class Job'*.

Willis describes a situation not that different from that of kids in fishing families. School does not have the appeal it needs to have to motivate them for higher education. Recruiting students from fishing communities was for us at NCFS deemed to be an uphill battle.

The anthropologist Harald Beyer Broch at University of Oslo did fieldwork in a fishing community, Helligvær, in North Norway. In a paper he published in *Maritime Studies* he talks about how the school- teacher struggled to get the boys to read novels. What's the point, their attitude was, when all they

wanted was to become a fisher like their father and elder brothers. However, they found one book intriguing: Johan Bojer's *The Last of the Viking*, first published in 1921, famous in Norway, translated into English and many languages. It is a story about fishers braving the sea during the Lofoten winter cod fishery. The teacher told the anthropologist that it "*instills pride in all the children, pride in those they are descended from. Pride in the fishing profession.*" There is a statue of Johan Bojer's protagonist at Trondheim harbor, as can be seen on this photo.

On a plaque on the pedestal is a quote from the book: "*In winter, they would sail the 500 nautical miles to Lofoten in their open boats. Perhaps it was only the hint of profit that lured them, but perhaps it was also because on the open sea, they were free men.*"

One may wonder if the latter still means anything to modern fishers. Is fishing now all about money and nothing about freedom? Not so, according to Beyer Broch, as the Helligvær fishers he came to know explained to him. Small-scale fisheries offer an opportunity to be your own boss, to pursue a life where you do not have to take orders from others, to be free.

Fighting for the survival of small-scale fisheries and their communities is thus a freedom project. But freedom is also what education is about, as the Nobel economics prize laureate Amartya Sen argued in an influential book. Education expands your life opportunities. It is empowering and enabling; a way to build resilience at both individual and community level, which is the topic of Beyer Broch's research. For those kids in fishing communities who value school, it is important to have the possibility to pursue a higher education that does not inevitably lead to a career outside fisheries. The fishing industry cannot afford the brain drain.

Therefore, the school curriculum must reflect the realities that students know and live in. It is not given that curriculums should be standardized and made identical for kids whether they grow up in Helligvær or Oslo, which has been the Norwegian tradition. In Helligvær, it feels natural that students should learn more about cod than elephants. For students in other parts of the world it would be the opposite.

The fisheries industry and the fisheries governance system have jobs that

require higher education. Would it not be good if those who fill them also have a background in a fisheries community and can still realistically think of a future there? Would it not be important that bureaucrats and managers have a clear idea of how their regulatory interventions work in practice at the receiver's end in the community – if they themselves had the experience of growing up in a fishing community? That was the vision underpinning the Norwegian College of Fishery Science. Which leads me to five conclusions.

What to do?

First, the SSF Guidelines talk about the need for a holistic knowledge base and approach. That requires more than multidisciplinary. To achieve holism, something must happen between disciplines. We all know that it is hard to achieve; academic disciplines are not called disciplines for nothing; they come with discipline. Crossing disciplinary boundaries is not necessarily good from a career perspective. But in fisheries we must try; interdisciplinarity is worth the effort, even if it fails relative to what we ideally want it to achieve. We are not Renaissance people, capable of emulating Leonardo Da Vinci. There are limits to how many disciplines one can learn to know. Learning the depth of what one discipline has to offer may well be a life project.

Interdisciplinarity must therefore be a collective venture; it occurs at a group level more than individual level. But even if we never become fully knowledgeable of another discipline, we do not have to remain ignorant about it. There are things to be said for 'being a jack of all trades but master of none'. You acquire skills that make you more flexible and self-reliant. You broaden your perspective on what the challenges in fisheries are. You know where to go to find knowledge. Interdisciplinarity is also empowering and enabling. With their broad, multi-disciplinary education, our students learned to understand and appreciate what the disciplinary specialist is talking about. They were educated to fill positions in the industry where they would be receivers of research information.

Second, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity are achieved through interaction, of people learning from each other. Learning is a two-way

process. I have often said that I did not become a biologist by working with biologists, but it made me a better social scientist. I also believe that interaction between people with different academic backgrounds should not be postponed until after people have graduated. It should be an integrated part of the education process. It should happen while still in the university but should not end there.

At 87, Michelangelo, another Renaissance genius, declared: “*Ancora Imparo.*” –“*I am still learning.*” That is an attitude that we should not only nurture among our students but live by ourselves. For this reason, I never liked the term ‘fisheries expert’. You may develop an expertise in not aspect of fisheries, but I have never met a person who is an expert in all of them. A fisheries expert that has stopped learning new things and who is without contextual including local knowledge, can do a lot of damage. At my office door, I used to have a quote by a President Henry Truman, which all students that came to visit me would notice: “*It is what you learn after you know it all that counts.*” We must therefore train our students to be humble. You do not have to be arrogant to be competent.

Third, fisheries governance, and therefore the education that is meant to qualify for it, is about more than ‘Life Below Water’, to quote UN Sustainable Development Goal number 14. I argue in chapter 5. that fisheries governance is also about life on the water and by the water. With their natural and social components, fisheries form complex, dynamic, and interactive systems, something our different disciplinary perspectives hinder us from understanding unless we bring them together under one umbrella. If we cannot see how life below and above water are connected, we cannot govern fisheries sustainably. Fisheries governance is about all the SDGs and not just SDG 14.

Therefore, holistic knowledge and governance that the SSF Guidelines are talking about, requires ‘system thinking’ in a broader sense than just as an underwater ecosystem. Fisheries management and governance must deal with a coupled social and natural system. That can only be achieved though interactive, transdisciplinary learning. If we do not start such a learning process at the university, students would be ill equipped for the real world of

fisheries.

Fourth, interactive governance must occur at all scales and be inclusive of fisheries people themselves. It should not be top-down, but allow for active involvement of those whose lives, livelihoods and communities are at stake. People in fisheries are not just stakeholders; they have human rights, like all people. It is interesting to notice that all FAO member countries that endorsed the SSF guidelines embraced this principle. It is easy to imagine and possible to find examples of fisheries management systems that do not fully recognize it, at least not in practice.

Education at higher level should therefore not only educate students in what scientists know but also what fisheries people know. Unlike those species that a biologist study, fisheries people have their own theories and models on which they base their behavior. For social scientists, such theories and models are data. They should also be a matter of discussion in the classroom. For educators, this knowledge is a source to draw on to make our lectures come alive. Students with practical fisheries experience from having been brought up in fisheries communities, may enrich the pedagogical process. Textbooks can support firsthand knowledge but not replace it.

Marine scientists have become more receptive of folk knowledge. It is a source of researchable hypotheses. Norwegian fishers long insisted that they can see the difference between the Arctic cod and the cod of the fiords. The Norwegian fisheries management system did then not make such distinction. In the late 1980s, biologists at NCFS decided to investigate the matter. Through otolith testing, they discovered there is more genetic diversity than previously anticipated. Not only is there a difference between the Arctic cod and the fjord cod; there are cod stocks genetically unique to individual fjords. The finding led to a systematic search for fjord spawning grounds. Local fjord fishers could tell them where they can be found. Biologists also made stock estimates, which had never been done before.

Fifth, fisheries scientists and managers often find inspiration in Garrett Hardin's article about the Tragedy of the Commons, which I have mentioned several times in this book. But they tend to overlook his main argument, that some problems, like resource degradation and poverty, do not have a

technical solution, because they challenge our norms and values. The SSF Guidelines are fully cognizant of this. This is why fisheries education and governance must seek knowledge beyond science disciplines. This is why we need transdisciplinarity, multi- or interdisciplinarity.

Transdisciplinary fisheries education, management and governance must integrate the knowledge of fisheries people but also their moral voice and world views. I have argued in multiple publications, also in chapters of this book, that IUU fishing cannot be solved by technical means alone. We must, as part of our fisheries education programs, convey the message of social responsibility and morality. They should also draw on philosophy, which specializes in this issue. Students bring their experience of what fisheries are about, but they are also their experience-based morality, the values that make a career in fisheries worth pursuing, like the idea of independence and freedom that Beyer Broch talks about from his work among small-scale fishers in Helligvær. These are concepts well suited for classroom reflection

Learning from Comparing

We learn how things can be different from comparing our own fisheries with those of others.

With a group of students, I once visited Japan, and had the opportunity to see for myself how co-operatives and community-based management functioned there. In Norway, we also have a co-operative tradition, and it was interesting to compare the two systems.

Many things have changed in the more 25 years since the travel to Japan. It is certainly true for Norway, and Japan is not different (Li & Namikawa 2020). Fisheries are a dynamic system, undergoing constant change. But we learn from history, including how we arrived at the present situation. Comparing Japanese and Norwegian fisheries would therefore not just be about how the two industries were historically and currently are, but also how they changed and why. Observing differences is interesting, but we learn more when we discover how differences came about and have consequences for their functioning.

My area of research is about 'life above water' – as is the title of my 2019 book. The fact that it is translated into Japanese, suggests that it must have some relevance there. Life above water works very differently from life below it. Life above water is about us, the life we live in families, communities, and

the workplace. We are social beings, we depend on each other, and must, therefore, learn to relate and interact. Together, we build institutions to create social order and solve societal problems. Life above water may seem chaotic at times. We do not always succeed in making it easier for ourselves. We often create our own problems, but we must solve them together. Some problems cannot be solved once and for all, and we must therefore learn to live with them.

Nature has given us some benefiting opportunities. Japan and Norway have long coasts and rich fisheries resources. Although our situations are different, we have things in common. We struggle to manage our fisheries sustainably. We try to make fisheries a lucrative industry while maintaining our fisheries communities and cultures, i.e., those things that make life meaningful and matter deeply to us.

Those are not easy things to achieve but we seek to do so in ways that are both different and similar. Over the years, Japanese and Norwegian fisheries scholars have visited each other, expecting to learn from our different systems. I remember several Japanese visitors to my university. I have also published a paper with a Japanese colleague where we compared our two governance systems (Makino et al. 2014). We did it because we believed that we learn from comparing them.

We easily get stuck in our own systems. We have difficulties imagining how they can be different than there are. Comparison is a way to broaden our mindset. It is a way of discovering alternatives ways of governing. There is nothing natural about our institutions; we made them and we can change them. We create and change the rules we live by all the time, but we do so within the ramifications of our imagination. What would happen if we did what they are doing? Would that even be possible?

Two hypotheses

When countries are confronting the same problems and challenges, like protecting their marine ecosystems from overfishing, their governance systems may come to look alike. Thus, a person traveling from Norway

to Japan or a person arriving in Norway from Japan would recognize their own system in the other. We can easily compare experiences and learn from similarities and differences. Differences may be small but significant. We would then expect that such differences would disappear if we copied each other's governance systems, problems solutions and ideas.

However, institutions often have a deep history that is unique to our countries. Institutions may have evolved over a long time, often incrementally and not through a grand design. There may be periods in our history marked by ground-setting institutional innovations, like in Norwegian fisheries in the 1930s in the aftermath of the international finance crisis. Our fisheries work today according to rules established then (Jentoft & Finstad 2018). I know that Japan is no different in this respect. To understand their institutions is to understand their history and the context in which they emerged.

Once institutions have lasted for a while, they tend to be taken for granted. Then we stop noticing the difference they make. For that, we would have to see them from a distance. The saying that 'the fish is the last to recognize the ocean' alludes to this. We may have forgotten why the institutions were established in the first place and cannot imagine how our fisheries systems would work without them. The original problem they were made to solve may reappear if they were abolished.

Otherwise, we may assume that fisheries are governed in a similar manner as other nature-based industries such as forestry and agriculture. Industries would be governed according to consistent principles and institutional designs that are unique to a particular country. I once argued at a meeting at the National Research Council in Washington DC that to understand the design of the US fisheries management system, one must read how the 'founding fathers' of the American constitution argued about governance in the so-called Confederate Papers (Library of Congress n.d.). There is an American way of governing that can also be identified in the way fisheries are governed, for instance in the way stakeholders are represented in the Regional Management Councils (Jentoft et al. 2003).

Thus, we have two hypotheses that we can test. When comparing fisheries systems between countries like Japan and Norway, we may find them to

be similar for reasons that have to do with their similar problem structure. Alternatively, we may find them to be different because of their institutional histories.

I am not sure what such a comparison between Japanese and Norwegian fisheries would yield if we were to undertake it. It might generate the same result that we found in a study where we compared fisheries governance systems among European countries; they appeared to be more different than similar (Jentoft & Mikalsen 2007). European fisheries governance institutions are different for reasons that have to do with their unique, country-specific, institutional histories, but there is an ongoing convergence between countries that are members of the European Union and its Common Fisheries Policy. The Advisory Council system established for all regional seas is an example (Linke & Jentoft 2016). But not all European countries, such as Norway and Iceland, are EU members, and they have, by and large, maintained their institutional traditions. I think we should make a greater effort to compare our systems more broadly. This is also what TBTI does when we investigate how small-scale fisheries policies and institutions are different globally. Whether the implementation of the SSF Guidelines (see chapters 1 and 2) will make institutional arrangements more alike, is a question worth exploring given that states are supposed to govern small-scale fisheries according to the same guiding principles.

Still modern

A fragmented industry has problems with acting collectively. Fisheries need a degree of social order to achieve common goals, like sustaining the resource base. They must be able to handle conflict. Therefore, the industry needs planning, coordination, and cooperation. For that it must have institutions, like organizations and legislation. This is similar for fisheries in all countries. There is always something that we can learn from each other, as I hoped when I visited Japan all those years ago, interested in their sustained experience with fisheries co-operatives.

Co-operatives may have deep historical roots, but that does not mean that

they are something of the past. It is noteworthy that the SSF Guidelines talk about the relevance of co-operatives for small-scale fisheries and communities. Article 7.4 reads:

“States and development partners should recognize the traditional forms of associations of fishers and fish workers and promote their adequate organizational and capacity development in all stages of the value chain in order to enhance their income and livelihood security in accordance with national legislation. Accordingly, there should be support for the setting up and the development of cooperatives, professional organizations of the small-scale fisheries sector and other organizational structures, as well as marketing mechanisms, e.g., auctions, as appropriate.”

The SSF Guidelines outline an optimistic scenario for small-scale fisheries. Traditional mechanisms, like cooperative ‘forms of association’, would help to empower small-scale fisheries communities. Small-scale fisheries do not necessarily need new tools. But they do need a more supportive policy environment. One cannot expect traditional associations like cooperatives to function in a hostile political and institutional environment. They need supportive legislation, without which they will be vulnerable. The SSF Guidelines argue that states have a particular responsibility for creating it. Sometimes traditional institutions must be re-discovered. We must learn again what their merits are. They should not be taken for granted. The fact that they have existed a long time is no guarantee that they will continue to deliver. They might need a brush-up. Still, as the saying goes; if they work, do not fix them.

Learning

My interest in fisheries co-operatives took me around the world. I was equally fascinated by their failures and successes and summarized my conclusions in a paper in *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* (Jentoft 1986). I also edited a special issue in *Maritime Studies* in 2018 on this topic (Jentoft et al.

2018).

To secure co-operation and coordination, small-scale fisheries communities do not necessarily need co-ops strictly organized according to the classic Rochdale principles of 1844 (Rochdale Principles 2023). But communities would benefit from the integration and discipline that co-ops deliver. As I argue in my *'Life Above Water'* book, a healthy ecosystem depends on the community's ability to enforce rules and achieve compliance. They need an institution like a co-operative to do so – or something like it.

Fisheries co-operatives come in many shapes and forms. They also do different things. Some are specialized in certain functions while others have broad responsibilities. Some are restricted to fisheries whereas others, like Japanese fisheries co-ops, work for their communities (Mochizuki 2020). Some cover only parts of the value chain, while others internalize all of it. In Japan, they build confederations at regional and national levels. Some co-ops have the government on their side, others are formed in opposition to it. Some succeed because of inner strength; others fail because of reasons that have nothing to do with them being co-operative. Some co-ops are outliers, like exceptions from the general fisheries system; others constitute the entire system.

Fisheries co-operatives in Norway have features that are different from their counterparts in many other countries. We used to have producer-co-ops at community level, as in Japan, but most of them disappeared in the 1950s. We do, however, have state legislated co-operative sales organizations through which fishers must sell their catches at minimum prices that these organizations by law are authorized to determine. Their function stops at the dockside and does not extend further downstream into the value chain. Vertical integration encompassing the entire value chain is a rarity.

In addition to organizing raw-fish sales, directly with the buyer or via auction, the Norwegian co-operative sales-organizations also play a role in our fisheries resource management system. The State determines the Total Allowable Catch Quota and their allocation to different fishing vessel groups. The sales organizations take care of quota control, as they have detailed overview of individual catches. Imaginably, the Norwegian co-operative

sales-organizations could have a broader fisheries management function than they currently have. Here they could learn from Japan (Makino et al. 2014).

Within a transferable quota (ITQ) system, they could for instance organize quota sales. They could also be the owner of quotas, instead of the privatized quota system that we have now. The current system makes fishing rights end up in fewer hands, thus shrinking the small-scale fisheries sector and concentrating fisheries to some geographical areas on the way. For Norway, aiming to maintain a settlement along the entire coast, this is an important issue.

There is sufficient evidence from around the world to conclude that ITQ systems do harm to small-scale fisheries and local communities. They are therefore not something that the SSF Guidelines support. Instead, they talk about co-management, such as in article 12.4: *“Government authorities and agencies at all levels should work to develop knowledge and skills to support sustainable small-scale fisheries development and successful co-management arrangements, as appropriate.”*

Design principles

When fisheries co-operatives engage in resource management and stewardship, they exercise co-management. Co-operatives can be an alternative to state-centric fisheries management and governance. Imagine, therefore, a fisheries management system designed and functioning according to the Rochdale principles, as they were revised by the International Cooperative Alliance in 1995.

1. Voluntary and open membership: *“Co-operatives are open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination”.*
2. Democratic member control: *“Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions.”*

3. Member economic participation: *“Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative.”*
4. Autonomy and independence: *“Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.”*
5. Education, training, and information: *“Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives.”*
6. Cooperation among cooperatives: *“Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.”*
7. Concern for community: *“Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.”*

These are principles that would work well for co-management as well. Therefore, co-operatives would not have to change their basic norms and rules if they should take on resource management responsibilities. They would handle resource management according to the same philosophy as they deal with other tasks in their portfolio. Moreover, it would be advantageous to integrate, within one organization under one democratic governance system, functions that should preferably be addressed in an integrated, holistic fashion, as community co-operatives often do.

No easy solution

Co-ops are complex organizations. They have multifarious goals. Not only do they require different leadership skills; goals may also be in conflict. It is not easy to combine a business agenda, a conservation, and a social service agenda in the same organization. Members may have different interests and agendas. The broader the portfolio, the more challenging the management. Still, small-scale fisheries need competent handling of all these functions.

Fisheries policies crafted on a neoliberal ideology are fonder of markets

and privatization of fishing rights than co-operative modes of organization, community tenure rights, and management. This is also the modern Norwegian story. Still, and against the odds, the co-operative sales-organization system has survived despite outside efforts to wing-clip it.

The system has not only survived but thrived because of its dedicated support of fisheries people, who talk about the Rawfish Act underpinning it as their 'constitution'. Constitutions are supposed to be foundational and stable. Small-scale fisheries need more co-operation, not less, as the SSF Guidelines point out. Should the law be abolished, the co-operative system risks falling apart. The consequence of this scenario is hard to imagine. From what I understand, the co-operative model of organization in small-scale fisheries have also been under pressure in Japan in recent decades. Restructuring has involved their merging into larger units (Delaney 2015; Mochizuki 2020).

The bottom line is not legal as much as it is social. Fisheries co-operatives do not survive unless there is strong membership support and solidarity. Shareholders of private enterprises are narrowly concerned with their dividends, not with the wellbeing of producers, families, and communities (Davis & Jentoft 1993). The participatory democracy that co-operatives institute must be actively used. If not, it withers, and the co-op risks becoming 'lazy monopolies' managed from the top-down. Then, business goals would push aside social goals.

Participatory democracy works better on a small-scale. When co-operatives merge into large corporations, they become bureaucratic and formal. The motivation of individual members who should have a feel of ownership, responsibility, and community, may easily change into indifference and passivity. This does not only risk jeopardizing the functioning and the survival of the co-operative, but also the community it serves.

Norwegian co-operative sales-organizations have been able to maintain a committed membership. The reason must be that they over time have delivered on member expectations. But I also believe that the pressure they have been exposed to has kept members constantly on their alert, thus hindering that they have been thinking that the co-operative system prevails

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regardless of their own backing. They realize that they must stand up for it, that they cannot take it for granted. But that requires that the co-operative is facilitating active and democratic participation of members in its affairs. Their membership should not be just a formality.

IX

Transdisciplinary Small-Scale Fisheries Governance



Cape Verdean fishers, repairing a net on the beach of the village of São Pedro. São Vicente, Cabo Verde. (S. Herve, 2017)

Phronetic Knowledge

Local knowledge is not just a data supplement to science. It is also imbued with morality, which should be recognized in Marine Spatial Planning.

There is hardly a more important topic to discuss than the role that knowledge plays, are supposed to play, and can possibly play in the way we address societal problems, like those in the Blue Economy. We then must reflect on our contribution, like how to balance a critical and constructive role. We need to be critical to be constructive. To get it right, we must also discuss the risks of getting it wrong.

This is also the case in the context of Marine Spatial Planning – or MSP, which is a tool for facilitating Blue Growth. MSP is not ‘a walk in the park’ but a challenging undertaking ridden with pitfalls. The Blue Economy is a juggernaut showing up at the door of small-scale fisheries people. What MSP can do for small-scale fisheries in the Blue Economy begs for critical and constructive analysis. Is it a threat or an opportunity? Scientists can help a solid knowledge base.

Then one should discuss the limitations of science. Does science fill all the knowledge gaps, or must MSP also look for other sources of knowledge? If so, what kind of knowledge is needed, and what difference does knowledge make in producing better outcomes in the marine realm, also for small-scale

fisheries people? To find a balance between criticism and constructivism is especially important when we discuss schemes that someone, like the government, is about to execute that will change people's ways and lives.

Small-scale fisheries people have high stakes in the Blue Economy. They need a secure livelihood. Their communities must be sustained. The government may well have the best of intention but not considered the externalities. The job of scientists would not just be to help planning agencies do a better job but also to make small-scale fisheries cope in a situation where they are vulnerable.

Win-win?

We are not beginning from nothing. As discussed in several chapters, we already know that small-scale fisheries are facing concrete risks in the Blue Economy. Jewel Das conducted a global literature review and concluded that social equity is often overlooked in national-level Blue Economy and Blue Growth initiatives. *“This overlooking leads to or accelerates processes of coastal and ocean grabbing, displacement, dispossession, and exclusion which strongly impact the livelihoods of marginalized coastal communities, particularly, small-scale fishers in various parts of the world.”* (Das 2023: 38). His findings correspond with those of other researchers, like Brice Trouillet (2019). It is also the topic of the recent TBTI book about social justice in the Blue Economy (Jentoft et al. 2022).

All over the world there are great hopes that the Blue Economy may provide a more sustainable ocean economy. But the observations outcomes that Das describes are not something we want to see happening. There are positive goals, things we want to accomplish, but also the negative goals – things we should do our utmost to avoid. MSP must strive to achieve both. If we cannot agree to avert the negative goals, there is less chance of obtaining the positive ones. The Blue Justice concept suggests that we need to think of the Blue Economy and Blue Growth not just as a win-win-win. It would be naïve to believe that there will be no losers, only winners.

We should be open to the possibility, which the economist Lester Thurow

pointed out in his book about the Zero-Sum Society, which came out in 1980, '*Good Intentions are not Sufficient*'. We must critically assess what takes place in concrete settings, who the winners and losers are, like we do in our Blue Justice book. It would contradict our sense of social justice if the weakest among us are those who must carry the costs of Blue Growth. We must also critically examine the rhetoric; the concept may promise more than it can deliver. We should not take promises of a win-win at face value.

In the Blue Economy, the numbers and diversity of stakeholders of the ocean users are likely to increase. Consequently, space becomes even scarcer than it already is, creating conditions for conflict, which will not only threaten coastal livelihoods and make life unpleasant for local people; it will also hamper Blue Growth. Who would invest in an area ridden with conflict? Especially if you cannot be sure that you will prevail?

What difference MSP makes is an empirical question. Does it put conflicts at rest, or does it add fuel to them? In my own country, we read about these conflicts in the newspaper every day. And we do have a bad planning system. Researchers would make an important contribution to society if we, with evidence to back it up, could demonstrate under which conditions one or the other, conflict or consensus, happens.

Transdisciplinarity

We get a deeper understanding of the structure and functioning of the social and the ecological systems of the Blue Economy if we bring the academic disciplines together. Multidisciplinarity would be a step in the right direction, but interdisciplinary would take us even further. Interdisciplinarity, if we should achieve it – is easier said than done. We do not communicate well across disciplinary boundaries (Buanes & Jentoft 2009). Disciplines are not called disciplines for nothing. They keep you in check. Straddling from established paradigms is not cost-free, for instance from a career perspective. But even if we should succeed in achieving interdisciplinarity, there is still a way to go. Scientists have more to offer MSP if they work together than when isolated from each other.

Yet, science does not have all the answers. We must look beyond them. We need transdisciplinarity. Transdisciplinarity integrates the sciences but also draws on the knowledge that non-scientists have, like that of small-scale fisheries people (Chuenpagdee & Jentoft 2019). Fishers make observations of what is happening around them, also below the water. They make inferences from their experiences, about the “*differences that make a difference*” to them, as Gregory Bateson phrased it when he talked about how local knowledge is built.

Local knowledge

It seems accepted now, also among scientists, that local ecological knowledge is relevant to marine science, management, and planning. However, local knowledge is not necessarily reliable. People may not always see what they believe they are seeing (Davis et al. 2004). Neither do scientists. ‘False learning’ occurs in both camps. But non-scientists may well be right when scientists are wrong.

In Norway, fishers long argued that the Arctic cod that visits our shores every winter to spawn is a different species from the cod that resides and spawn in the fjords. They claimed that with their trained eye they could see the difference. Now, marine scientists have confirmed that fishers are right, and that their fjord spawning grounds need protection, for instance from aquaculture installations. Stocks cannot be managed as one but separately, which we in Norway have not been good at. The Arctic cod has been managed well, while the fjord cod, and they may differ genetically from fjord to fjord, has been in bad shape for decades.

When I started out in fisheries research, local ecological knowledge was typically rejected as anecdotal knowledge, just stories that could not be trusted. An arrogant view, of course, which now seems to have died out. Bob Johannes’s work on the Palau islands in Micronesia, helped to change the attitude. His ‘*Words of the Lagoon*’ came out in 1981 and opened the eyes among biologists about the significance of local ecological knowledge. Just as there is folk medicine, there is folk ecology and biology, and it should be

rejected out of hand. Neither should their folk sociology and, I must add, their philosophy.

Local people may be onto something that should be systematically tested by science, like in the Norwegian case. It is also something the SSF Guidelines support. Now you sound foolish if you draw the anecdote card.

Tacit knowledge

However, for a researcher who wants to know what people know, they cannot just go and pick it up, like flowers in the field. Local knowledge is not necessarily easily available, for instance, as written text. Local knowledge may not be for the outsider. It is a competitive resource. MSP may require the local knowledge that fishers prefer to keep secret, not willing to reveal. Local knowledge is also tacit, embedded in practice, in the things people do, in their skills. A fisher does not necessarily have language for this knowledge for what he does. It is in his body. He makes decisions based on hunches and experience.

A professional fisher does not need to consult a manual when fishing. The knowledge is already in his body, in how he moves, in what he pays attention to. One may wonder if Ludwig Wittgenstein did not think about tacit, embodied knowledge when he in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922/1974) confidently stated that “*the limits of my language mean the limits of my world*”. A researcher may get access to this knowledge by engaging with the fisher, by watching what he does, talking to him, learning his idioms while joining him when he goes fishing. He will show you things, tell you things, even confide in you if you have his trust. He will explain what is not intuitively clear about what he does and why he does it. He is the expert; you are the novice. You learn and listen carefully and respectfully, and record what he says and does. Then you have data to bring home for further analysis. This is what it means to do anthropological fieldwork.

The SSF Guidelines recognize the value of research-based knowledge. Why are small-scale fisheries people so often in a state of deprivation? What is their contribution to local economies and food security? How can a transition from

vulnerability to viability be validated? Is the Blue Economy what small-scale fisheries have been waiting for? Important and intriguing as these research questions, they need data. Therefore, article 11.1 in the SSF Guidelines suggest:

“States should establish systems of collecting fisheries data, including bioecological, social, cultural and economic data relevant for decision-making on sustainable management of small-scale fisheries with a view to ensuring sustainability of ecosystems, including fish stocks, in a transparent manner. Efforts should be made to also produce gender-disaggregated data in official statistics, as well as data allowing for an improved understanding and visibility of the importance of small-scale fisheries and its different components, including socioeconomic aspects.”
(FAO 2015)

Small-scale fisheries would be in a better situation if these data were available. Local knowledge is a source. But is local knowledge just a separate set of data, about empirical facts that scientists and managers can collect? Or is it more to local knowledge and therefore transdisciplinarity than that?

Moral knowledge

Garrett Hardin is often criticized for misrepresenting reality with his metaphor about the Tragedy of the Commons. The commoners have a richer personality than he envisages, and the social field is more complex than the grazeland he talks about. But he noted one thing that should not be controversial.

“An implicit and almost universal assumption of discussions in professional and semipopular scientific journals is that the problem under discussion has a technical solution. A technical solution may be defined as one that requires a change only in the techniques of natural sciences, demanding little or nothing in the way of change in human values and

ideas of morality.” (Hardin 1968, p. 1,243)

The issue worth examining is whether in the Blue Economy, MSP is working from the same assumption that Hardin is criticizing here. Is MSP perceived as a technical instrument, only requiring the knowledge of natural science? Or is it also challenging our *“human values and ideas of morality”*?

A GIS (Geographical Information System) expert can help with mapping ocean space. Drawing the lines on the map requires intimate knowledge of the socio/ecological field, who operates there, and how they connect. But as Gregory Bateson (2000) pointed out, the map is not the territory, and we should not mix the two. The map is just an image of the territory. That is precisely the criticism that has been raised against the Tragedy of the Commons metaphor. As an analytical device, an image is just the camera, not the thing being taken picture of, as Erwin Goffman (1986) noted in his *‘Frame Analysis’*.

Law and morality

If we acknowledge that MSP is more than a technical exercise, that it also involves issues that are ethical and moral, how should MSP account for them? Scientists, and the planners who consult them, have no special authority on values and morality, but they are expected to know the law. Law and morality are not separate spheres. Law is founded on morality, on our ideas about right and wrong. But morality and law do not fully overlap. There are moral norms that are not legally codified. You can do things that are morally condemnable but not illegal, like being rude to other people.

In a Venn-diagram the relationship between morality and law looks like this:

Law and morality

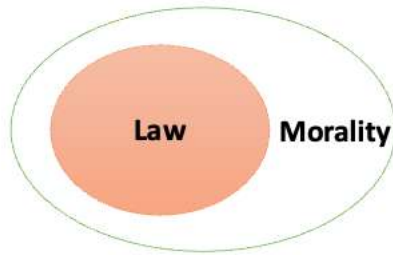


Figure 33.1. Law's relation to morality.

We find moral norms inside the law circle, but they also exist outside it, which you do not get to know by studying law. You would have acquired them on your mother's knee, when fishing with your father, and by growing up in a community. There you learn how to behave, how to be grateful and respectful, how to care, and how to act honestly and responsibly. In his book, 'Sacred Ecology', Fikret Berkes (2018) writes: "*Traditional knowledge systems tend to have a large moral and ethical context, there is no separation between nature and culture. In many traditional cultures, nature is imbued with sacredness.*" (p. 12). There is hardly any need to separate the two. In MSP, knowledge about nature as well as culture is essential, and planners must have an eye for both. That is why transdisciplinarity is needed.

Phronetic dimension

We must expect that MS planners and bureaucrats keep track of the law, that they know when legal boundaries are transgressed. But how do they get access to what is outside the inner circle? To make MSP appreciative of the ethical and moral aspects, you would need input from social sciences and the humanities. Unlike the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities do not have much to offer in terms of universal insights, like the laws of nature, what Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics called *episteme* – which has survived in the term epistemology. The laws of society are a human

construct. They have cultural, normative, and historical underpinnings, and must be understood in their context. This is the kind of knowledge that he named *phronesis* – which you would only have heard of in your philosophy class. It is often translated to ‘prudence’.

Bent Flyvbjerg (2003) posits that natural and social science may compensate for each other’s weaknesses. Natural sciences are strong where social sciences are weak, and vice versa. Together they may achieve things that they cannot on their own. With transdisciplinarity, they may go even further. Small-scale fisheries people learn about the ecological and socio-cultural field from inhabiting it. They also draw on what people before them have learned. Local knowledge is contained in local communities; it is part of their common heritage and social capital. Small-scale fisheries people get access to it by being part of the community. They would not be able to operate without this knowledge. But those in small-scale fisheries also have values, norms, and principles on which they base their opinions and politics. They do not need to consult Immanuel Kant’s ‘Categorical Imperative’ (see chapter 16) but know already what is morally right and wrong and how to behave accordingly.

Small-scale fisheries people do not only have knowledge about the social and ecological system they are part of; they also have wisdom, and they have their own metaphors to express it with. People are experts in their own life. They have what Bourdieu called *doxa*, which is another of his Greek metaphors. *Doxa* is the beliefs that people insist are indisputably true, and therefore non-negotiable, like things they hold as sacred and are central to their identity and dignity (see chapter 8). By ignoring or overriding them, MSP risks violating their human rights, as specified in the SSF Guidelines and in other international legislations.

MSP must therefore work as a platform for small-scale fisheries people’s knowledge as well as their normativity and their *doxa*. It cannot function as if local data is the only thing that transdisciplinarity brings to the table. Morally right means they are right in their own *doxa*. It is not disputable and should not be contested or dismissed only because they do not align with a scientific worldview. What local people consider right should be the basis for MSP as they are morally right in their own world.

Thus, it should not matter if they are scientifically wrong. The voice of small-scale fisheries should be heard not just because they have relevant data to offer. They have a moral right to be part of the planning process when their lives, livelihoods, and communities are affected. Especially, they should have a say if their doxa is brought into question.

Conclusion

In a transdisciplinary MSP approach, local knowledge is not only a data supplement to science. You also need the knowledge type that Aristotle called *phronesis*, which is what you get when involving local people and their communities. Then, you do not only achieve access to what they know about the system they are part of, if they are willing to share it, that is. You also get their wisdom, their values, and moral principles, including their philosophy – like their ideas of what constitute social justice in the Blue Economy – their doxa.

Without *phronetic* knowledge, MSP is set up for failure. MSP is not only about natural science and technology, such as GIS. It also requires deep knowledge about the social and cultural context. To acquire it requires a different process than that of science, one of participatory democracy, as in co-management. One must be prepared for a less linear planning process than how textbook flowcharts depict it. This, however, is how participatory democracy works, and we should not reduce it to a technical or scientific issue.

Involving people directly in the MSP process has inherent value. It is a justice issue. People have the right to be there. *Phronetic* knowledge is also evidence. Like the social sciences, they are not there to make natural science complete and whole. They have their own unique contribution to make.

When you involve local small-scale fisheries people, you will hear people's criticism: how they think the system has flaws. You will also get their constructivism, their suggestions on how to fix the system. And you will get their ideas on how to balance the two. Conflict may be a permanent challenge. There are conflicts about interests but also about values. One would have

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made real progress if stakeholders could at least agree on the negative goals – the things to avoid, like those Jewel Das observed. One may begin with the negative goals because they tend to be more urgent.

* * *

This chapter draws from a keynote lecture given at the closing conference of the PADDLE project, Brest, March 15, 2023.

In the Know

Governing small-scale fisheries requires contributions from academics and from those who know them from experience.

“A world in which small-scale artisanal fishers, fish farmers and fish workers are full recognized and empowered to continue their contributions to human well-being, healthy food systems and poverty eradication through the responsible and sustainable use of fisheries and aquaculture resources.” (FAO 2022)

This was the vision for the International Year for Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA), in 2022. IYAFA was an opportunity for states to reconfirm the commitment they made in 2014 when they endorsed the SSF Guidelines. It was a window for real action in many arenas, also within research and knowledge production.

The SSF Guidelines give reason to hope that IYAFA will lead to positive change for those who devote their time and effort to learning more about small-scale fisheries to support their viability and sustainability. Just as small-scale fisheries have been overlooked in the past, small-scale fisheries research has been similarly disregarded – and for many of the same reasons. If governments see little potential in small-scale fisheries and that the future

is in large-scale industrialization, they have few reasons for incentivizing small-scale fisheries research.

However, the SSF Guidelines define specific roles for the academic community in Article 11 (Information, research, and communication). The SSF Guidelines serve as a marching order for researchers around the world to engage more directly in small-scale fisheries. Knowledge about their strengths and weaknesses are needed to answer questions such as: Why are they so often in a state of poverty and marginalization? What is their contribution to local economies and food security? What are the opportunities and hindrances for bringing about needed progress in small-scale fisheries? How can we facilitate a transition from vulnerability to viability? Is the Blue Economy what small-scale fisheries have been waiting for, or is it a new threat to their survival? Important and intriguing as they are, these are research questions in need of funding, which the SSF Guidelines also emphasize.

Holistic approaches

The research community is hopeful that states and civil society organizations will deliver on article 11.9, which holds: *“States and other parties should, to the extent possible, ensure that funds are available for small-scale fisheries research, and collaborative and participatory data collection, analyses and research should be encouraged. States and other parties should endeavor to integrate this research knowledge into their decision-making processes.”*

The SSF Guidelines have expectations and suggestions for the research community. The same article specifies how the research process unfolds. *“Research organizations and institutions should support capacity development to allow small-scale fishing communities to participate in research and in the utilization of research findings. Research priorities should be agreed upon through a consultative process focusing on the role of small-scale fisheries in sustainable resource utilization, food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, and equitable development.”*

Article 11.10 mentions areas requiring more research, such as conditions of work, health, education, decision-making, also in the context of gender

relations, and urges research to capture how interventions have contributed towards social change. Many of these topics and questions speak to the need for comprehensive understanding about small-scale fisheries in their own contexts and in their relations to their communities and broader society.

Chuenpagdee and Jentoft et al. (2018) stress the importance of transdisciplinary perspectives on small-scale fisheries as they are too complex and many-faceted to fit within a single academic discipline. Natural and social sciences and the humanities all have relevant insights and methodologies to offer. The guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines also invoke philosophical reflection about what human rights, dignity, and social justice are, and what makes a good life in small-scale fisheries communities. This is what the SSF Guidelines are aiming at.

Transdisciplinarity implies the integration of the experience-based knowledge that people in the industry have built over generations from being on the water and working in the value chain. They have their own ideas of the problems they are facing, and what they are caused by, and how they should be addressed. They also have their own ideas of what a good life involves for them. Many questions facing small-scale fisheries have moral implications of which academic have not supreme authority. Small-scale fisheries researchers are involved to learn, understand, and support, and not to impose their own perspectives and concepts.

The SSF Guidelines support 'holistic approaches' to small-scale fisheries development. This would require a process of co-production where researchers and small-scale fisheries people make the building of knowledge a joint and interactive effort. Note how the SSF Guidelines envisage a role for communities in the research process.

In the spirit of transdisciplinarity and organized by TBTI, researchers, practitioners, and governments gather with small-scale fishers and supporting organizations to share knowledge and discuss emerging issues affecting small-scale fisheries globally. This has been every fourth year since 2010. The 4th World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress (WSFC) coincided with IYFAFA and was split into five regional congresses that took place in five countries, Japan, Canada, Mexico, Malta, and South-Africa. The small-scale fisheries research

community is stronger because of these events. More information about the conference can be found on the TBTI website (toobigtoignore.net). Here, one has the possibility to see how they unfolded and what was discussed. Events like these should not be a one off. They should be repeated and routinized.

The knowledge we need

The problems facing small-scale fisheries do not go away easily. That is why Rittel and Webber (1973) call them 'wicked'. The health of the environment and the marine ecosystem requires constant attention. Otherwise, crises can become recurrent. Food security is not permanently solved. People must eat daily. They may ascend above the poverty line but may also slip back below it. Conflict is inherent, often latent, in social relations. Still, every new generation must learn to live together. Small-scale fisheries are not isolated and shielded from conflicts outside them, which also became clear during the technical consultation on the SSF Guidelines.

Communities must be sustained, also in the age of globalization. People will still need a place to call home, as belonging is a central element in our mental constitutions. They must find meaning in what they do and what they are. Communities must deliver to the psychological, relational, and material wellbeing of inhabitants. Communities are the gift we cannot be without. We will not be able to sustain small-scale fisheries unless we sustain communities, also in a moral sense. That concerns the socialization of the underaged to responsible adulthood. Communities must work for people of all ages, which is not only a fisheries issue.

The value chain will continue to be under pressure from both inside and outside. Activities, like supply and demand, must be coordinated to secure a stable flow. The employment system must function, because activities, and the people who perform them, depend on each other. Social justice will always be a concern. Small-scale fisheries are, and always will be, a dynamic system, undergoing change that will bring new challenges and raise new questions, also for the research community.

The way we govern small-scale fisheries is not a constant. Institutions

adapt to new challenges. They are human constructs and not written in stone. We create them, we change them, and we form new ones. They often have side-effects that we did not expect but must deal with. We also have ideas of what good governance entails – in fisheries and in society. Our perspectives and world views come and go. We realize that the world is one place when we begin to talk about it as such, as when we introduce concepts that spread and define what needs to be done, like we now talk about the Blue Economy. We think differently of the role of the state, community, and markets today than we did a few years ago. Neoliberalism is here but not necessarily to stay.

The interconnectedness of environmental and social issues needs collective action on all scales, from the community to the global level. Climate change calls for effective response at all levels. We know that the future will be different, but it is hard to imagine how. With the SSF Guidelines, human rights are now an issue in small-scale fisheries. These are universal rights, and the default position of small-scale fisheries governance. Whatever we do in small-scale fisheries, they must not be undermined. They are the litmus test, but it is not easy to reconcile with other things we must do, like taking care of the environment. But one thing cannot be realized without the other. Healthy ecosystems require healthy communities, and vice versa.

We will never reach a situation where we will know all there is to know about small-scale fisheries. There are obviously holes to fill, but the holes keep expanding and new holes are discovered as we deepen our knowledge. Knowledge is a wicked problem that we will continue to face, regardless of how much of it we have. It is not a problem that should make us depressed. It is different from that of Sisyphus, who always had to start all over again when he believed he had reached the goal.

Knowledge building is a cumulative affair. We sometimes must think twice about what we believe. Sometimes we realize what we thought is true, proved false. But we nevertheless gain knowledge and wisdom, occasionally in the form of revelations, which may bring us forward. That is why we as academics should be excited about what we do. There are always new things to learn. The process of learning is a freedom project, a road to happiness for us and those who come after us, as Plato argued. What else can be more meaningful

IN THE KNOW

in life?

* * *

A shorter version with Ratana Chuenpagdee appears in SAMUDRA Report, April 2022, Pp. 49-51 .

The Gift of Community

So much of our fisheries social research focuses on government performance. We want to make it work better. The role of scientists is, however, not just to serve the government – the wellbeing of people and communities is also a concern. Without fish in the sea, there is no fishing. Then livelihoods are lost, and coastal communities cannot exist, at least not as fisheries communities. The government must do its part to maintain this link. But the sustainability of fisheries communities involves a more complex equation, which we often fail to see.

There is no one-way street from a healthy resource to the sustainability of communities. The causal arrow runs in both directions, especially in small-scale fisheries. Life above and below water are interlinked. Healthy resources need healthy communities. Therefore, as we take care of the resource, we must also take care of communities. But communities require more than landings of fish. They are not only locations scattered along the coast. They are also places where people live their lives.

Norwegians know the song titled 'Houses need people, and people need houses' (see chapter 26). The reader should replace houses with communities, and they will get my drift. Communities need people, but people need a place to live, feel at home, to grow up, and raise a family. They need something only communities can give. The same is true for small-scale fisheries. The community is a gift they cannot be without. It is not a charity or a luxury.

Like the food the fisher brings home, it is a necessity. The gift of community is what makes small-scale fisheries possible.

Like Christmas

The gift of community is not a tangible thing as the gift under the Christmas tree. Instead, it is diffuse and subtle. We get it for free. It cannot be shipped like a package but it requires our presence. Unlike the things that exchange hands in the market, there is no money involved. If it were, we would not call it a gift.

Still, we may think of the gift of community as we think of Christmas. The greatest gift is not the thing under the tree but Christmas itself. I have no clear recollection of the gifts that came with my nametag, except for the jumping skis I inherited from my brother. But I have a vivid image of the Christmas that my mother prepared for us. At 75, I can still sense it.

As Marcel Mauss (1954/2000) observed, gifts come with expectation of a counter-gift, with the norm of reciprocity. Should you forget a gift for your friend for Christmas while he has not, you will remember it next year. Thus, as Mauss noted, gifts are fundamentally about relationships. They bind people together.

The gift of community requires no counter gift. Still, it is not condition-free. Members are expected to abide by community norms. If you do not, you will be sanctioned. You will hear the voice of community. You may even be shunned. People may stop talking to you.

Mauss is not the only scholar who explored the function of gifting as a mechanism of social integration. Bronislaw Malinowski and Georg Simmel were also among them. Mauss inspired sociologist Richard Titmuss (2018) who studied the blood donation system in Britain. He called his book the '*Gift Relationship*'. There, as in Norway, donation of blood is voluntary. The giver and the receiver of blood do not know each other.

Giving blood is therefore an altruistic act, 'a moral transaction', as Titmuss called it. The giver is not compensated, and there is no counter gift. In families and communities, people know each other but there is no *quid pro*

quo. Nor can this be explained by altruism.

The institution

Like Christmas, the gift of community is about the institution. Institutions transmit knowledge, like fishing knowledge. They also frame values and norms. They teach the language you need to have to function in the community or on a fishing boat. By doing so, they shape individual preferences, for instance, whether a career in fishing is worth pursuing.

As the gifts under the tree, the gift of the community must be unwrapped. It requires the kind of inspection that social scientists are good at. A researcher has a visual impression of the place, of the buildings, the wharf, the school, the fishing vessels, and the people who live and work there. He cannot eye the pillars of the institutions, the values, norms, and knowledge. But he can get to know them during the fieldwork, by talking to people and observing how they interact.

As in families, life in communities is as much about sharing as transacting. Markets teach egotism and opportunism, not generosity, gratitude and solidarity, as the family and community do. You would have learned how to be honest and kind at home. Your parents will give you a lesson on what compassion, trust, and respect are. Without it, schoolteachers and skippers would have problems. Contrary to the values of the family and the community, the values of the market would not work onboard a fishing boat.

Markets vs. communities

Sociologist Richard Sennett (1998) argued that we need durable, trustful social relationships and long-term purposes and commitments. Without it, we cannot develop sustainable communities. But that is also what communities give. Without it we cannot create a consistent narrative about ourselves and, thus, a stable identity. Commitment to, and responsibility for others, means loss of freedom, as Zygmunt Bauman pointed out (see chapter 5), but we would not know how to use this freedom if we were alone in the world.

No-one thrives in isolation. As any psychologist or psychiatrist will tell, loneliness is not good for the human psyche. We need other people to be happy, as Aristotle observed. We get to know ourselves via people that are close by. They are the mirror we need to recognize who we are. To know whether you have it in you to be a fisher, you compare yourself with other fishers. Unlike markets, communities make us human, and they also require that we are human.

Being human means having an ability to show compassion and an understanding that we depend on and must be responsible for each other. In a way, it means we are part of each other. Contrary to what Michael Douglas in the role as Gordon Gekko said in the movie 'Wall Street', greed is not good in communities. Greed destroys them.

Markets do not involve durable commitments. Here relations are sporadic, they exist for the moment. Markets, therefore, have a trust challenge. Actors must have guarantees that promises are met, like bills being paid. In the absence of trust, you need guarantees, such as a formal contract. Thus, transactions have costs (see chapter 17). Lawyers are expensive.

In communities, on the other hand, relationships often exist for a lifetime and even beyond. You soon forget your latest shopping spree, but always remember those who took care of you when you were a child. You do not forget your schoolteacher or the one who taught you to be a fisher, long after they are gone. The gift of community has a lasting value.

The moral community

If in adulthood you should come across Immanuel Kant's 'Categorical Imperative' or the 'Golden Rule' (see chapter 9), it would be old news. You would know that you are not supposed to treat other people, not even strangers, as a means. You understand that you should not do something to other people that you do not want done to you. We cannot live and work together if we do not recognize these principles and abide by the rules they outline. Communities cannot function otherwise. That, I assume, is the reason we find the Golden Rule in all religions and why Kant thought of the

Categorical Imperative as a universal ethical principle. It is a social necessity, also among crew onboard a fishing vessel.

These principles are basically the same. Adopting them is integral to growing up, for our moral education. Kant thought that you must be at least sixteen before you have fully internalized his principle. Until then you are an individual; afterwards, you have become a person, he said (see chapter 9). As Titmuss (p. 55) noted, moral principles become “*woven into the fabric of being*”. They also become woven into the cultural and social fabric of the community. Communities need morality and we the morality they provide.

Thus, community and morality work together. Therefore, it makes sense to talk about ‘moral community’, as anthropologist Harald Eidheim (1981) did in his ‘*Grand Bay*’ community in Dominica in the Caribbean, which was obligatory reading when I was an undergraduate student. The concept was first coined by Emile Durkheim in his work on religion. Durkheim argued that religion is more about belonging than believing (see chapter 6). A church is not just a place of worship. In my experience it is more of a community.

Transactionalism

As in the family and the community, the roles and relationships of crew members are morally defined, and their interaction normatively regulated. I gave up trying to convince my fisheries students about the merits of the ‘transactionalism’ of anthropologist Fredrik Barth when applied to a fishing crew. It did not fit the life onboard a fishing vessel as they knew it.

Ottar Brox (see chapter 11 in this book), applied Barth’s lens (1981) in a paper on the exchange of food fish among neighbors in a community in North Norway (Brox 1985). Instead of putting the day’s catch surplus in the fridge for another day, they gave to the neighbor with the expectation that he they will do the same when he goes out. The idea that this is something neighbors do to each other due to a concern for each other’s wellbeing, is missing in his article. Instead, the arrangement as he describes it, it totally self-serving.

Barth’s transactionalism also occurs in Terje Nilsen’s study of knowledge transfer between the skilled fisher and the beginner (Nilsen 1982). He argues

that the skilled fisher is willing to take on this responsibility provided that the beginner in return does small, simple tasks for him, like filling up his coffee cup. Nilsen observed that this transactional relationship changed with the age of the beginner. It is an interesting observation, but we may object to the notion that this is the only way generations interact. A father does not view his son in transactional terms. He is there for his son, not vice versa.

The transfer of knowledge between the fishing father and the son is as much about caring and sharing as transacting. It is a moral relationship, not an economic calculus. When a father checks on the son who is out fishing, which anthropologist Harald Beyer Broch (2022) writes about, it is not just because he is curious, but because he worries about his son's safety. I worried a lot when my son was on a fishing boat mid-winter way north in the Barents Sea. Fishing, especially small-scale fishing, is the most dangerous occupation in the world.

Eilert Sundt's (Norway's first social scientist) study of the Haram community (1858) is still worth a read – if you know Norwegian language⁵. Sundt was appalled by the number of fishers who perished at sea and interested in how communities coped with their loss. He also discussed the importance of local knowledge, what fishers need to know how to travel safely at sea, and how this knowledge may be lost if fishing is discontinued from one generation to the next.

Fishing is as much about cooperation as competition. Skippers may compete for the largest catch, but they also look out for each other. If in trouble, they help each other. Local fleets often form teams. They bring their community with them to the fishing ground. Anthropologist Jim Acheson's 'Lobster Gangs' of Maine is a classic. Geographer Kevin St. Martin's and anthropologist Madeleine Hall-Arber's (2008) mapping of fishing patterns off the coast of Massachusetts is a more recent study. Anthropologist Aslak Kristiansen (1985) provides a Norwegian illustration from his fieldwork among Mausund community.

⁵ I talk about his book in Jentoft (2019).

Moral memory

We would never be able to give back what our parents gave us. We do not just say ‘thanks’ and by that are done with it; we show lasting gratitude. Sociologist Georg Simmel called this ‘moral memory’. The gratitude is not only related to what they gave, but also to who they are or were, the way they existed in our lives. This gratitude lives on, long after the parents passed away.

I submit that our relationship to the community to where we grew up works much in the same way. It stays within our memory. We are grateful for what we received. It is part of who we are. In that way we never leave it. The community is a gift that keeps giving. Simmel argues (Wolff 1950: 389) that if the moral memory of community were suddenly eliminated, the community (at least as we know it) would break apart. Therefore, one must find ways of keeping it alive. This is what my retired fisher friend Birger, who I talk about in chapter 5, does with his fisheries museum. That is also what the Querini festival does in the fishing community mentioned in chapter 11. The statues of fishers that perished at sea in chapter 8 have the same function. They remind people what their community is, who lived there and made the community into what it is.

The school has a responsibility to make sure this knowledge does not get lost. How else can students be proud of the community where they grew up, their family history, therefore of themselves. The school shall enable students to thrive in the modern world. But students must also know where they come from, who came before them. This is what the New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman (2000) discussed in his book *‘The Lexus and the Olive Tree’*. The Lexus symbolizes modernity, which comes with gifts we must have to function. We also depend on the cultural traditions that the olive tree symbolizes. We need both the wings of modernity and the roots of community. Modernity requires that we adapt, which is an ongoing struggle. But we cannot be on the run all the time and constantly reinvent ourselves. Something must stay put. We must have solid moral ground under our feet.

Both the community and the school have a role for keeping the moral

memory alive. The education works better if school and community work together. Students cannot only get to know the history of the nation. They must learn the history of the community, who lived there before them and how they created a life for themselves in fishing. The school must teach what they believed in, what they took for granted, and held as sacred. Teaching morality cannot be confined to religious studies. It must be a cultural pillar of the whole school program. In February 2023, in my grandchildren' school, they held an Open Day for families. The theme of the students' many artistic performances was 'how to be a friend'. It was heartwarming for me, but I am sure even more so for the students themselves. Memory is primarily a matter of the mind. Morality is learned with the heart.

Ends and means

According to FAO, more than 90 percent of the people in fisheries globally are employed in the small-scale sector. Since it is largely an informal sector, their number is uncertain. Recent employment estimates are about fifty million, the overwhelming majority in Asia. They are often living in extreme poverty, struggling to secure the wellbeing of their families and communities. Therefore, FAO organized a process around the world more than ten years ago, which resulted in the SSF Guidelines which I have often talked about in previous chapters.

For the SSF Guidelines, sustaining local communities is a way of securing the human rights of their people. The SSF Guidelines also believe in communities as resource stewards. Local people have a potential collective capacity for self-governance that should be strengthened. But they would need to be empowered and supported to be able to fill a gap in the management system that is typically marginalizing them. Especially in the Global North, management systems are structured as a relationship between the state on the one hand and individual boat-owners on the other. It is market transactionalism rather than the community paradigm that is underpinning fisheries management.

People need a community for their own wellbeing. If the only justification

for keeping coastal communities would be to keep the fishing industry alive, for earnings to increase, and to forget about the things that people get from their community, which they need to be healthy and happy, we would fail the test of Kant's Categorical Imperative, because it works not only on interpersonal level but also on the community level. There is no difference between the individual and the group.

Communities are not just a vehicle for government's or business entrepreneurs' use. Communities are important in themselves and for the ends that people themselves have for their lives. They are a gift that local people share among themselves as part of their being and belonging. Unless the community can keep on giving in the sense I have been discussing in this book, they would have no errand in a participatory, co-management system. Then, we can just as well leave it all to the state and the market.

There are dysfunctional small-scale fisheries communities, as there are dysfunctional families. They do not always deliver as we expect them to and what they potentially could do. But examples of community or family failures do not make us conclude that we can just as well get rid of them. Instead, we must do what we can to repair them. Communities, as families, are always a work in progress. They are a living process, being continually formed and reformed. They will never be perfect but still need to be cared for.

States and markets are no substitute for communities. Communities are, however, the link that is often missing in our fisheries management and governance system. Communities should not just be part of fisheries management to make the system work more effectively, but for its own sake. They have a collective, democratic right to be part of a management process that seals their fate, whether they can continue to be a fisheries community or not.

For the gifts they provide, they should not be left out as they have in the past. Community failure, their inability to provide the gift we need them to do, is no excuse for abandoning them but an impetus for their restoration. Speaking metaphorically, communities are the heart pump in the blood stream that keeps small-scale fisheries functioning.

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