

Evaluating Perceptions of Co-management on Small-scale Fisheries in the Wild Coast of South Africa

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Breaking the ice

2024 SAIAB's Student symposium – Alan Whitfield presented

“In order to safeguard Africa’s estuarine fisheries resources we need to

1. Ensure that appropriate fisheries regulations are rigorously enforced by dedicated law enforcement staff
2. Ensure that wise environmental legislation is fully implemented and that rehabilitation is initiated where necessary
3. Facilitate the creation of a network of protected areas for threatened estuarine species and associated aquatic resources
4. Take steps to reduce and reverse the impact of global and climate change on estuaries
5. **Conduct socio-ecological studies in estuaries and communicate these findings to both government and local communities”**

Why this study?

- Conflict between government and communities over the management of natural resources in the Wild Coast has attracted global attention as there has been court judgement against government in favour of:
 - The local communities who were fishing in the nature reserve without a licence = threat to the conservation of the species being exploited. The future power of government in executing its conservation mandate is doomed
 - The local communities on the issue of mineral mining in Xolobeni
 - The local communities against Shell seismic oil and gas exploration along the Wild Coast
- Government (EC) has a role to play to bring solution as these conflicts will undermine conservation efforts of the natural resource (i.e. to end overexploitation since it can deplete fish spp. which is a resource that DEDEAT should conserve, disrupting food web, negatively impacting the functioning of ecosystems)
- DAFF (2012) p. 23: Small-scale fisheries policy on co-management says, “...*fishing communities, are empowered to participate with Government in developing, implementing and evaluating fishery policies and management plans.*” Is co-management feasible for the Wild Coast?

Some Concepts

- **Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries** “strives to balance diverse societal objectives, by taking account of the knowledge and uncertainties about biotic, abiotic and human components of ecosystems and their interactions and applying an integrated approach to fisheries within **ecologically** meaningful boundaries” (FAO, 2003: 14). EAF aims to achieve sustainable fisheries using the ecological sustainability of fish stocks and the socio-economic viability of the fishing sector.
- **Tragedy of the common:** In the absence of the regulation of the environmental common resources, the resources will be ruined by self-interested individuals and become unavailable for others in the future (Hardin, 1968) ~ SSF represent common resources
- **Theory of Common Property Right (particularly the Communal Property)** is used to analyse the regulation of SSF under co-management (Jentoft, 1989; Kuperan & Pomeroy, 1998)
- **Government top-down management approach** has failed all around the world to manage SSF due to complex socio-economic/political/cultural dynamics within communities
- **Participatory management (co-management)** is gaining an increased support.
- **Co-management** is partnership arrangement whereby the community of the local resource users, government and other stakeholders share the authority and responsibility for the management of resource (Pomeroy & Ahmed, 2006)

Some Concepts Cont...

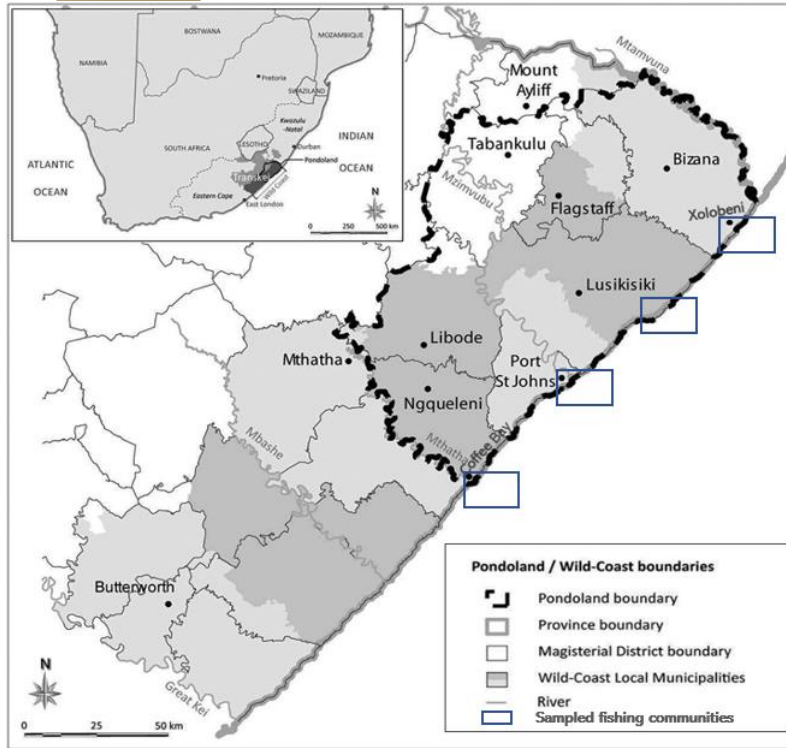
Source: Takahashi & Duijn (2012)



Why Co-management?

- Co-management is recognised and recommended by the FAO on:
 - Achieving the FAO goals of fisheries management guidelines by bringing change in institutional policy and regulatory framework (Westlund & Zelasney, 2019)
 - Helping advance gender equity and human rights (Pittman, Gianelli, Trinchín, Gutiérrez, De la Rosa, Martínez, Masello & Defeo, 2019)
 - Strengthening tenure rights and decision-making processes, thereby achieving increased and more equitably shared economic benefits (Oldekop, Holmes, Harris & Evans, 2016)
 - Providing a strong institutional structure as a sustainable, equitable and efficient fisheries management strategy (Pomeroy & Ahmed, 2006)
 - Achieving the goals of the EAF as a governance model (Jentoft, 2003; Gianelli, Martínez & Defeo, 2015)
- Co-management can address Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Smallhorn-West, Cohen, Phillips, Jupiter, Govan, & Pressey, 2022) i.e. sustainable use of the ocean (SDG 14); poverty eradication (SDG 1); food security (SDG 2); gender equity (SDG 5); decent work and economic growth (SDG 8); partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17)
- This study was undertaken to determine the feasibility of co-management on the **Wild Coast**

The Wild Coast of South Africa



Why Wild Coast?

- Former Republic of Transkei under Apartheid Government
- Amalgamation of the fisheries regulations of Transkei and RSA happened in 1997 (Government Gazette No. 6029 of 1997)
- Unique socio-economic conditions (the poorest level of literacy, poverty) pose threat to the sustainability (Stats SA, 2016)
- The world's most spectacular coastline (rugged scenery with diverse ecosystems with endemic species) (De Villiers & Costello, 2006) + Global biodiversity hotspot
- Possible distinct marine bioregion based on distinct fishery species assemblage & genetic composition (Jooste, Oliver, Emami-Khoyi & Teske, 2018)

Methodology: Research paradigm, samples and data analysis

1. Qualitative Approach – Post Positivism Research Paradigm

A deductive approach derived from the literature can adopt the post-positivism paradigm (Pearse, 2019).

Accuracy, sound reasoning and production of evidence are central to post-positivism, and truth is bound by context, human action and interaction (Tanlaka, Ewashen & King-Shier, 2019).

2. Themes

Deductive thematic approach using literature yielded 7 themes. Questions were derived from these themes to collect data using *semi-structured interviews (Pearse, 2019)

- a) Understanding co-management
- b) Benefits of co-management
- c) Coordinating and communicating co-management
- d) Governance
- e) Participation
- f) Ownership and empowerment
- g) Challenges of co-management

3. Sampled Respondents (Total of 11)

- a) Government: Provincial Officer (1), National Officer (1)
- b) University: Walter Sisulu University (1)
- c) NPOs: Sustaining Wild Coast (1), World-Wide Fund (2)
- d) Fishers: Coffee Bay (1), Port St Johns (1), Lusikisiki (1), Xolobeni (2)

*Semi-structured interviews are beneficial because they can provide information on the lived experience of the participant while addressing the researcher's theoretically driven variables of interest (Galletta, 2013)

Methodology Cont...

4. Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

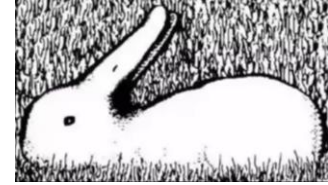
- a) Familiarising yourself with the data & identifying items of potential interest
- b) Generating codes
- c) Generating initial themes
- d) Reviewing initial themes
- e) Defining and naming themes
- f) Producing the report



Results: Positive Outcome (Similar Perceptions)

- Definition of the term “co-management” - involves “partnership” among different stakeholders e.g. one respondent used a direct word and said, “*partnership*” whereas, the other used indirect words and said, “*working together*”
- Every stakeholder could benefit from co-management – different benefits identified: access to fishing rights, self-regulation, information sharing, eliminating IUU fishing
- Every stakeholder would recommend co-management
- Overall, benefits exceeded costs of co-management = **prediction that co-management was viable for the Wild Coast**. Similar inferences were previously made also elsewhere (Pomeroy, Katon & Karkes, 2001; Napier, Branch & Harris, 2005)

Results: Cont... (Different Perceptions)



- Different opinions **on the benefits of co-management** on SSF (Securing fishing rights; Mobilising and utilising different stakeholders' strengths; Self-regulation; Information sharing and overcoming the language barrier)
- Different perceptions on whether **the government should be the key stakeholder or not**
- Different opinions on whether the **government's effort to involve the local communities in decision-making was adequate or not**, where the stakeholders were equally divided
- **Gender equity**, where gender-specific fishing inshore and offshore was interpreted as a form of gender discrimination, while others perceived that there was no issue in this regard
- **Diversity of ethnicity** wasn't an issue of concern, whereas others felt that it required more attention
- **Overlaps of stakeholders' perceptions** to be used as **collaboration points**, whereas **different perceptions should be addressed**

Discussion

- Every stakeholder's common interest on co-management = protection of fish from declining
- Common perception of each stakeholder to co-manage leads to common vision → to build trust & relationship
- Government-led multi-stakeholder initiative
 - **Integrated resource management strategy** as government cannot meet all the basic demand of community livelihoods (linkages with other government departments) (Hauck and Snowman, 2001)
 - **Embrace sustainable livelihood approach** for tackling social challenges i.e. illiteracy, unemployment and poverty (Serrat, 2017)
 - **Investing in organisational capacity** by capacitating the fisheries scientists to provide scientific advice to the fisheries management, while enhancing the communities' practical skills on improved fishing techniques
- Creating a **shared understanding of co-management**
 - **Involve local communities in decision-making** (Considering communication and language arrangements as local communities would prefer convening meetings using their own native language)
 - **Identify roles and responsibilities** of all stakeholders [FAO's initiative in Viet Nam (Takahashi and Duijn, 2012)]

Discussion Cont...

—— A model showing the process of operationalising co-management (Takahashi & Duijn, 2012)

1. Preparatory	2. Inception	3. Planning	4. Implementation	5. M&E
Initial survey of local conditions	Est. & strengthening of FA	Lagoon co-management planning	Lagoon co-management implementation	M&E
2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2010	2010-	
First contact with fishers	FA mobilisation meetings	Community res mapping	User and gear registration	Criteria & indicators
Socio-economic surveys	FA mobilisation board est.	Lagoon mgmt strategies	Patrolling & conflict mgmt.	M&E framework est.
Participatory rural appraisal-SLA surveys	Awareness raising of fishers	Lagoon mgmt regulations	Gear rearrangement	M&E schedules
Co-mgmt feasibility study	FA charter development	Water surface demarcation	Environmental conservation	M&E implementation
Target selection	Executive board and sub-group est.	Zoning plan	Awareness raising, training...	Feedback to FAs
Staff training	Formal est. of FAs	User fee dev.	FA econ activities	
Environmental surveys	Meetings and congresses	Patrolling team est.	Pilot projects	
Fishing gear and aquaculture surveys	Traditional festivals...	Co-mgmt body est.	Meetings and congresses	
		Fishing rights allocation		

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