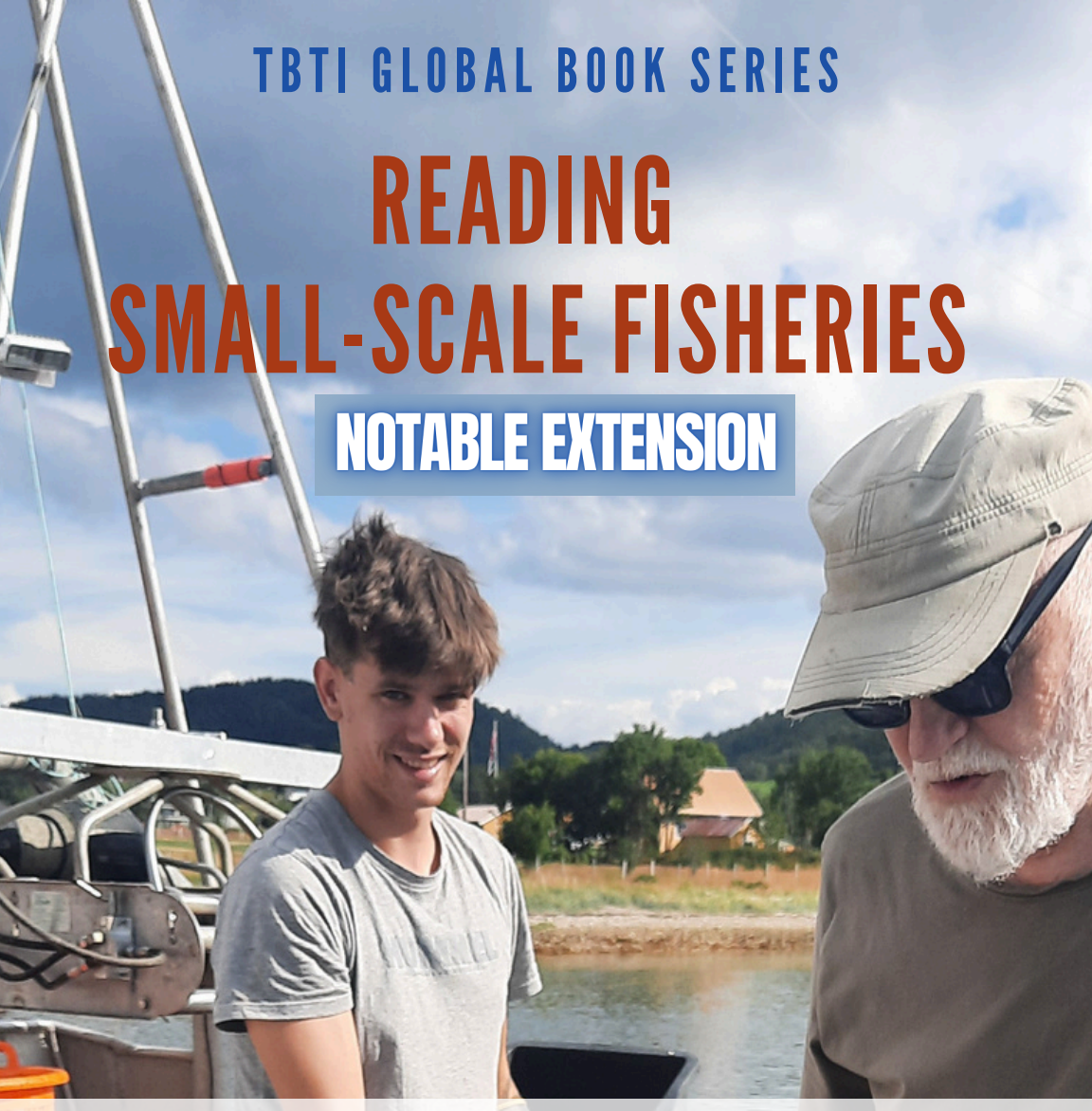
TBTI GLOBAL BOOK SERIES

READING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

NOTABLE EXTENSION



ESSAYS ON HUMAN EXPERIENCES
IN THE BLUE TRANSFORMATION

BY

SVEIN JENTOFT

SVEIN JENTOFT

Reading Small-Scale Fisheries

Essays on Human Experiences in the Blue Economy

Notable Extension

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Too Big To Ignore Global (TBTI; https://tbtiglobal.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 design by Vesna Kerezi

Photos on the cover: Svein Jentoft and Bjørn-Erik Hansen, a young fisher from Malangen, in the north of Norway. Together with his father and uncle, Bjørn-Erik invested in a boat and fishes in the Malangen fjord as well as in the open sea. As a new generation fisher, he uses a Facebook page to help sell his catches. Photos taken with Bjørn-Erik's permission by Greta Jentoft in the summer of 2024.

Production manager for the TBTI Global Book Series: Vesna Kerezi

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Foreword

The first book of essays by Prof. Svein Jentoft (2019)[1] – which was also the first book in TBTI Global Series – was written at the time when Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #14, 'Life Below Water' was gaining global attention. Several initiatives have been proposed and implemented to enhance protection and conservation of the marine ecosystem. Svein's book 'Life Above Water' offered a counter-perspective, highlighting how small-scale fisheries connect with both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and how the entire system benefits when policies and initiatives promote their wellbeing and sustainability. His argument is well supported by other studies that show the contribution of small-scale fisheries to many SDGs and is in line with what FAO member states are urged to consider, in the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines).

Those familiar with Svein's work know he has been persistent in bringing up the fact that small-scale fisheries are embedded in communities. This means that small-scale fisheries thrive when communities are strong and functional, and vice versa. Svein's book #2, 'The Gift of Community' (2023)[2], argues for a people-centric approach to small-scale fisheries governance, contrasting it with the state and corporate centrism, which seems to dominate the governance system, even though the majority of the world fisheries are small-scale. The book explains why communities are needed, how to recognize them, and how to understand and support them, not only for small-scale fisheries but for their own sake.

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[1] https://tbtiglobal.net/life-above-water/

[2] https://tbtiglobal.net/new-e-book-release-the-gift-of-community/

There is another important point that Svein keeps reminding us about – that small-scale fisheries do exist in the global north, and thus the SSF Guidelines are applicable there too. Svein emphasizes this in both books, as he reflects on the making of the SSF Guidelines, and the promises it brings. But it is his current book, 'Reading Small-Scale Fisheries', that truly reveals what underlies this line of thinking. Svein is not only from the North; he lives and works there, like in Lofoten area where he studied the fisheries co-management system since the 1980s. This is in addition to leading major international projects, which have enabled him to spend ample time visiting and learning about small-scale fisheries in several countries around the world.

With perspective from both the North and the South, Svein's argument for 'family resemblances' in small-scale fisheries around the world is made on not just one but two solid grounds: his own experience and his extensive library. As in his previous writing and the first two books, and even more so in this one, he brings wisdom from philosophers and big thinkers in social sciences into fisheries discourse, which helps broaden our understanding about small-scale fisheries and transform how we approach them in research, and in governance. There are several ideas that he tries to communicate in this book, sometimes through the use of metaphors, but often with concepts and theories that are not normally referred to in the literature about fisheries. This is a good exercise as it helps build different vocabulary and fresh narratives in the discussion about small-scale fisheries, which is not a bad strategy to attract policy attention amidst competing interests from other sectors.

"Reading Small-Scale Fisheries" is like reading Svein Jentoft, with the turn on every page bringing new awareness about how to think about small-scale fisheries, and a growing appreciation for what it means to be a fisheries researcher. New researchers should find it inspiring to see what Svein did earlier in his career, and how lifelong learning can always find relevance. It is not only research that needs to be done responsibly, but learning and governing as well. The book is thus a good read for governments and non-governmental sector alike, offering guidance about key considerations for

responsible fisheries governance, including in aquaculture. The latter is especially pertinent, given the excitement during the release of the latest State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) report at the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in July of 2024, revealing the surpassing of aquaculture production over capture fisheries for the first time in history. This may be good news for global food security, but the chapters in Svein's book suggest that unless the aquaculture industry is governed responsibly, with due attention on small-scale fisheries and what matters to them, there may be more harm done than good.

We have no doubt that Svein's current book will join his first two on our 'most downloaded' list. Altogether, the trilogy offers 90 essays about small-scale fisheries, written by an all-around small-scale fisheries expert, whose knowledge of and appreciation for small-scale fisheries community shines through on every page. It is quite a treat.

Ratana Chuenpagdee
TBTI Global Foundation
Bangkok, May 2025

Series Editor's Preface

I thought that reading three books of essays about small-scale fisheries written by Svein Jentoft was already a big treat, and didn't expect that there could be more. But Svein has proven me wrong with the new ten essays that are added to Book # 3. He may have done it merely to round up the number, so that it will be a total of 100 essays with the three books combined. Of course, reaching 100, whether in essay writing, or in age, is very impressive, not to mention rare. Yet, after reading these new essays, I appreciate that it is not just the number, but a 'notable extension', as the amended title suggests.

I have the privilege of working with Svein for more than 20 years, and I recognize the writing bug in him, especially after he attends interesting conferences and meetings. The exchange with colleagues and peers and the interaction with students and early career researchers, a.k.a. the 'Young Futures,' at these events usually give him ideas about what to write. Sometimes his writing aims to clarify some of the questions that people might have, like about power in Interactive Governance. Sometimes it is to reiterate important messages, like about how small might indeed be beautiful. He also has more to say about certain issues, like about academic freedom. As a whole, his essays invite us to look at small-scale fisheries from numerous perspectives, and broaden our thinking about what we can do, individually and collectively, as researchers and practitioners interested in small-scale fisheries and fisheries governance.

Svein has been very generous in sharing his knowledge, experience, perspective and worldviews in his writing, and we are truly honored to have published his three books of essays in our series. Somehow, I don't think that he will stop at 100. In fact, I sincerely hope that he will continue

to write since we learn so much more about small-scale fisheries, as well as about him, from reading his work.

Ratana Chuenpagdee
TBTI Global Foundation
St. John's, November 2026

Acknowledgement

This is my third collection of essays on small-scale fisheries published in the TBTI Global E-book Series. The first volume, titled 'Life Above Water', came out in 2019 and 'The Gift of Community' in 2023. Essays are different from the standard research papers in scientific journals. They are more like writing newspaper or magazine articles. It is a form of academic writing I find enjoyable, especially at this late stage in my academic career. This book is more of an autobiography than the previous two as in many chapters I reflect on my life experience and what I have learned about small-scale fisheries over the years.

As with the other two volumes, I have found inspiration in the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines), which FAO[3] initiated ten years ago. They are packed with observations, concepts, and arguments that are intriguing from a social science perspective. There is hardly a chapter where I do not refer to the SSF Guidelines. Many of the essays build on talk manuscripts that I prepared for various meetings over the years. Others stem from comments and questions raised from the audience. Only chapter 1 has been published beforehand; the other 24 essays have been written since my second collection came out in 2023. They were not written in the sequence they appear in the book and can be read in the order the reader may prefer. They are individual, stand-alone essays, and do not build on each other, although the same theme may be discussed and expanded upon in several chapters. A reader would therefore find cross-references between chapters.

Writing is not just hard work but can be a way of life. It structures your

[3] UN Organization for Food and Agriculture

days into routines and determines your whereabouts. Some essays were written in my family cottage or at 'my table' in a downtown Tromsø café. Several of them came about while in Tarquinia, the Italian town where I have been a regular visitor for many years. D.H. Lawrence and Stendhal also found inspiration there. I was often thinking that we must have walked the same streets, visited the same piazzas, and enjoyed the same views.

I am immensely grateful the TBTI director, Professor Ratana Chuenpagdee, whose unyielding support made this and the other two volumes possible. She provided invaluable feedback on every essay. Ronald W. Jones also read and commented on the whole volume and made me aware of relevant literature. Ron helped me contextualize my thoughts from Cambodia where he lives. Hans-Kristian Hernes and Maarten Bavinck gave me advice on some of the essays. I continue to learn from conversations with my longtime friend and colleague Jens-Ivar Nergård, especially on issues that are touching philosophy. Greta Jentoft, my wife of fifty-three years, helped me get rid of convoluted sentences and excessive academic jargon. As with the other two volumes of this trilogy, TBTI coordinator Vesna Kereži has edited my English and turned the manuscript into this nicely designed book.

Svein Jentoft
Tromsø, April 2025

> *"Sociology is, without question, one of the sciences but it is also one of the arts – nourished ... by precisely the same kinds of creative imagination which are to be found in such areas as music, painting, poetry, the novel, and drama. Nor is sociology in any sense alone in this kinship with the arts. Behind the creative act in any science, physical or social, lies a form and intensity of imagination, a utilization of intuition, ..., that is not different in nature from what we have learned of the creative process in the arts."*
>
> Robert A. Nisbet:
> *"Sociology as an Art Form."* New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 9

> *"Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it."*
>
> Attributed to Bertolt Brecht

Introduction

Whenever I have the opportunity while on travels, I visit art museums. I cannot claim any deep knowledge of art, only curiosity. I always enjoy the paintings and sculptures even when I do not understand what the artist tries to convey. I marvel at the beauty, admire the creativity and the skills that the artist has put into them, but I rarely stop long in front of one of them before I move to the next. In that sense my relationship with art is embarrassingly shallow. But there is so much to see, and I want to take it all in.

I once had the pleasure of visiting the Villa Borghese Museum in Rome with the renowned Paul Barolsky, a professor at the Department of Art at University of Virginia. He was a true professional, I was a fumbling amateur, and he changed my way of viewing a painting. His perception was obviously much more sophisticated than mine. He saw other things in the painting we both looked at. But he did not only look at the painting as I did; he could also read it as if it was a text. He was searching for the idea the artist wanted to express. A painting can tell a story and be an argument, but you would need to find it.

Professor Barolsky drew my attention to details. They were there for a reason, he said. *"Look at how the artist is trying to draw you into the painting"*, he pointed out to me. *"Always notice the person in the painting who looks at you! He might well be the artist's self-portrait."* From then on, my perception of painting changed in a way that has made visiting art museums more interesting.

This is also how I learned to appreciate Roman architecture from my late friend Professor Roy Eriksen. In addition to being a scholar on Renaissance literature and for years a resident of Rome, he also knew architectural

history out of the ordinary. He did not only admire the beautiful buildings that Rome has plenty of. Like his friend Paul Barolsky, Roy also 'read' them, and in doing so made them more fascinating.[4] When in front of one, he used to show me what in fact I was viewing. He opened my eyes to things I used to miss. Roy explained how nothing in the design was left by chance – everything has a meaning, and must be understood in a cultural and historical context, which is also an argument a social scientist could make.

I could not have a better guide in Rome and on our many travels through Italy. We discovered Tarqunia together. You need "cultural capital" to notice difference and detail, as Pierre Bourdieu discussed in his now classic 'Distinction' from 1984. Roy generously shared some of his affluent "cultural capital" with me.

Becoming a professional

There is more than one way of looking at works of art and architecture, and even these two scholars cannot say that their perspective is the only one possible. Still, you can always learn from what they see and you don't. There is often more to the eye than what you take notice of. This, however, is not unique to painting and buildings. A doctor, an engineer, an economist, a biologist, a sociologist, a lawyer – and a small-scale fisher, all have their own way of reading things into and out of their objects. As experts, they understand the significance of details and how they fit into the big picture. They all come to professional age in a cultural setting where they learned to be literate in their discipline.

The two professors could explain what I was viewing by means of their much more nuanced terminology than mine. This is the same thing a novice of small-scale fisheries must learn. A young fisher must learn what things are called and what he must pay attention to. He needs to first have the name of a knife to know what he is holding in his hand, what the thing

[4] In his book, 'The Building in the Text: Alberti to Shakespeare and Milton' (2000), he does the opposite; he reads architecture into Renaissance texts.

is for, and how to use it. This, he learns on the spot from people he fishes with.

As with art, there is no one way of looking at and reading small-scale fisheries. You can think of them as a sector, an industry, a culture, a job opportunity, and a way of life. You can view them broadly, with a statistical lens and capture how they appear in an aggregate form. But you can also read them like the two professors were reading the Roman paintings and buildings. Then you search for the subtle details, the things that easily go unnoticed but which you should not miss because they are central to the whole. A holistic approach to small-scale fisheries cannot only focus on the broad picture. It must also examine the details. But then you would need concepts for them, like those of "interactive governance" (Kooiman et al., 2005), which has inspired TBTI's work on small-scale fisheries.

Good governance requires dexterity because the small things are often more important than you think (Jentoft & Eide, 2011). You cannot only handle macro. You must also address micro – those issues that cannot be managed well from a distance but must be dealt with in proximity to where the problem is occurring. Small regulatory mistakes can make a big difference for those affected. For instance, justice is both a macro and a micro issue in small-scale fisheries. Injustice appears in the global picture, but also in local settings, like in a family, in the workplace, and in a community. The same is the case with most issues that I talk about in this book, like equity and power, dignity and human rights, gender, knowledge, conflict, interaction and communication, decision-making, emotions, cultural heritage, poverty and wellbeing. There is hardly a 'big' issue in social science that is not also in small-scale fisheries at various scales, also in the everyday life of people in local communities and in their institutions.

The universal in the particular

We can observe all these issues at every 'order' of governance in small-scale fisheries if we have the conceptual eye for them. They are the 'God of

Small Things' as Arundhati Roy (1997) described in her famous novel. Her book is about how apparently small daily occurrences fundamentally shape people's experiences, perceptions and decisions in family settings. The metaphorical "God" does not reveal himself in the detail. You would have to look for him and bring him out. This means, in other words, to search for the universal in the concrete, which Robert Nisbet (1976) says sociologist should always do. You should, for instance, explore how ethical principles work in both daily interactions and governance systems.

I talk about big issues in small-scale fisheries contexts in this and the other two books in my TBTI trilogy. They allow me to draw on non-fisheries literature and to see the significance of empirical detail. I could not have addressed these topics in small-scale fisheries situations without the general language that my academic training has taught me. But I have also been inspired by themes of which I have no formal education, like philosophy, music and poetry (see for example chapter 6). I take ideas from any source that enables me to address "the God of small things." In chapter 18, I discuss transdisciplinarity through the lens of Jazz. In chapter 15, I compare an academic career to how a tree grows.

You do not understand the cultural abundance of small-scale fisheries unless you learn to read the details, for instance with the eyes of Rembrandt in his famous 'The Nightwatch.' You cannot avoid seeing this huge painting if you visit the National Museum in Amsterdam (yes, Rembrandt has painted himself into the painting, but he is difficult to spot). Then, compare it with Caravaggio's paintings in the Borghese Museum. They do not only tell different stories, but they tell them in vastly different ways. If you do not have the opportunity to go there, you can watch them on the internet.

Rembrandt's painting is full of life, portraying a group of people with an important mission in their community, and we can see each and everyone. In Caravaggio's paintings on the other hand, the sharp light is on the protagonist. The protagonist is not alone, but we hardly see other people in the shadows. They seem irrelevant to the story, which is dramatic enough. Rembrandt's story is richer in detail, more holistic, and requires more time to take in. Should you happen to be in Mexico City, you may need to spend

a whole day in front of Diego Rivera's impressive mural on the entrance wall of the National Palace. It is as big and detailed and thus as holistic as a painting can possibly be. His is the approach of an ethnographer and a historian of Mexico from the Spanish Conquest until modern times (Flattley, n.d.). His Marxist perspective reveals itself the mural.

Thick description

I once saw a live performance of the 'Nightwatch' as summer entertainment in a park in Amsterdam, with real people dressed up like in the painting. You could not do that with Caravaggio's paintings. The comparison between the two painters' work illustrates the difference between what social scientists call 'thin' and 'thick description.' The former you can do at your desk by using your imagination. The latter requires that you get your feet wet, as when you spend time with people in a small-scale fisheries community. The two paintings also illustrate the difference between 'methodological individualism' and – 'collectivism', one with the sharp focus on the protagonist, the other on the group.

In a holistic approach we need both the thin and the thick description. The former can be developed in 'splendid isolation' in your lab, as when you do mathematical modelling. Many of Caravaggio's paintings draw from biblical imagery and are created in his studio. He did not observe 'The Beheading of St. John the Baptist', which he portrays in the painting located in the Oratory of St. John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta, Malta. It is entirely his own vision and a good example of his style.[5]

I assume that Rembrandt would have seen a night watch *in vivo* and created the portrait from a sketch, just as a social scientist would develop his narrative from field notes. Thick description is based on empirical observation, as a landscape painting, which Caravaggio also did many of. In principle, there is no big difference on drawing lines on a canvas and

[5] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:La_decapitaci%C3%B3n_de_San_Juan_Bautista,_por_Caravaggio.jpg

letters on a piece of paper.

With the more than 350 case studies and numerous 'Blue Justice Alerts', TBTI's methodological approach is more like that of Rembrandt than of Caravaggio. They are rich on detail, but they also give us a deeper understanding of the broader issues. Multiple case studies make it possible to identify regularities and patterns and to develop new justice concepts like those of Arias-Schreiber et al. (2022). This is the method that the medical profession call 'anamnesis' (chapter 14).

The SSF Guidelines play a prominent role in this third TBTI book as they did in my previous two. There is hardly a single chapter where I do not refer to the Guidelines. They advocate the holistic approach and are themselves thick' in their description of what constitutes progress in small-scale fisheries. They portray them like Rembrandt. However, the Guidelines do not specify in any detail what they mean by the holistic approach, as I try to do in chapter 11.

The implementation of the SSF Guidelines would benefit from the nuanced conceptual frameworks of the social sciences, and the language that small-scale fisheries people govern themselves by. Then, policymakers and decision-makers would see more clearly what small-scale fisheries entail. They will get a sense of significant detail, that the individual fisher is indeed part of a wider landscape, like that of the local community.

Thinking metaphorically

Metaphors play a big role in how we think about things, including small-scale fisheries. We all use metaphors when we think, speak, and argue. They help us make sense of what happens around us and what we and other people should do. Metaphors carry a commonsense morality that cuts into the core of the issue and are effective in explaining and justifying the choices we make. They are also important in research as a way of framing both problems and solutions, like Garrett Hardin (1969) does with his Tragedy of the Commons. Rembrandt's Nightwatch is more of a classical comedy, which should work well as a metaphor for the social responsibility of local

communities, which is a topic in chapter 14. Communities provide much needed safety, as Baumann (2001) argues, and like what the Nightwatch does.

Metaphors are broad enough to convey both rationality and morality. They contain acquired wisdom, which may well be captured in poetic form, as in Robert Frost's narrative (see chapter 6). We internalize them when they are used in communication and social interactions. They are intuitive and do not need explanation. We do not think of them as metaphors that draw from real things, such as roads or weather. When saying that "the road taken" (Robert Frost) may end in Hardin's tragedy, we understand the meaning because we know the context and are accustomed to metaphors. We know that we are not in a real sense on the road to the theatre. We take it for granted that metaphors are figuratively meant, but still consequential for the choices made and actions taken in our private and public life, as well as in the political arena. We do not only "live" by metaphors, as Lakoff and Johnson (2003) noted; we also govern by them. In fisheries management, Hardin's 'Tragedy' is the root metaphor.

What's new?

In February of 2025 I attended an ICSF (International Collective in Support of Fish workers) workshop in Sri Lanka. In his inaugural address, Professor Oscar Amarasinghe, my colleague and friend of many years, posited that the problems in small-scale fisheries that we were discussing 30 to 40 ago, are still with us. They have not been solved. If "the times they are a-changin" (Bob Dylan) for small-scale fisheries people around the world, they do not seem to have changed for the better. They are as poor and marginalized as they ever were, if not more so. Pressures have mounted. Climate change is affecting small-scale fisheries people everywhere. The Blue Economy is emerging in both the Global North and the South. Neoliberal policies are a threat more than a solution to the sustainability of small-scale fisheries communities. In some parts of the world, small-scale fisheries are being eradicated with dire consequences for the people and communities

involved. For small-scale fisheries, the future is uncertain unless negative trends are turned around. The best solution for small-scale fisheries people in the Blue Economy is for states to implement the SSF Guidelines (chapters 1 and 2).

Despite negative trends, there are also things to celebrate. The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2022 was a recognition of their relevance for global food security, poverty alleviation, and employment. Small-scale fisheries are also mentioned in the UN Sustainable Development Goal 14.b. The SSF Guidelines that FAO members endorsed in 2014 were a landmark achievement, which has created a new policy momentum. Not only do the Guidelines identify the problems that small-scale fisheries are facing, they also lay out what states, civil society and the academic community should do to put small-scale fisheries on a different track. For civil society organizations, the SSF Guidelines have been a boost. They now have a new mission of holding governments to account. The Guidelines are an inspiration for researchers, including this author, as my trilogy shows. I talk about their call for research in chapter 5.

Academic contribution

Since the SSF Guidelines were inaugurated, we have seen exponential growth of publications on small-scale fisheries, also by members of TBTI. Lack of information about small-scale fisheries can no longer be an excuse for a lack of implementation. This is even less so with the recent Hidden Harvest study that documents in numbers their global significance (Basurto et al., 2025). Moreover, states have the "precautionary approach" to go by, which they ratified with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The SSF Guidelines are now in the hands of the nation states, who have the political, legal and financial means to implement them. So far, however, most states have shown limited interest. Prior to the 2024 COFI meeting, FAO asked member states to respond to a few questions regarding the SSF Guidelines, as they routinely do on the Code of Conduct for

Responsible Fisheries (FAO, 1995). Out of 110 states responding, only 33 percent reported that they intend to implement the SSF Guidelines. Asian member states had the highest score (60 percent). European states were at the bottom with 20 percent (COFI, 2024). The European response is unimpressive but not unexpected given their neoliberal agendas within which small-scale fisheries are perceived to be a problem rather than a solution.

Implementation processes are rarely linear. States are not the only hindrance. Obstacles also occur among stakeholders in the industry and in bureaucracies. Implementation of codes and guidelines are not a technical issue, as I explain in chapter 1. Many of the issues in the SSF Guidelines are complex and contentious and cannot be implemented without a prior political process which includes local stakeholders. In many countries, this goes against their deeply entrenched hierarchical governance mode.

Tenure, as part of the human rights approach that the SSF Guidelines advocate, is one such issue (see my chapter 2). It is relevant in the context of the UN Sustainable Goal 14.b., which emphasizes the rights of access of small-scale fisheries to resources and markets. These rights are necessary but insufficient for the survival of small-scale fisheries. Small-scale fisheries people have multiple needs that the policy process must deliver on, in accordance with the holistic perspective of the SSF Guidelines. It is important to defend the rights of small-scale fisheries people, but they need constructive, innovative solutions to thrive. They cannot remain as an occupation of last resort. The SSF Guidelines have higher ambitions. Therefore, small-scale fisheries managers must think like a football coach, for whom football is a game as well as a science.

Next move

As every football coach knows, a solid defense may avoid loss but not secure a win. To win, the team must have a plan for what to do when they have the ball. Secure access rights to resources and markets are about small-scale fisheries' defense, not the offense. The SSF Guidelines were

secured through an 'upstream' process that was complicated enough. Once their endorsement was made, the implementation is 'downstream', with its own challenges that must be overcome in the offense (Sørensen & Torfing, 2021).

In his book 'After the Revolution' (1990), political scientist Robert A. Dahl observes that one cannot only have a theory about how to win the revolution; one also needs a theory of what to do the day after you succeed. If you do not have a plan for how to govern, the revolution is likely to fail, leaving hopeful citizens disappointed and disillusioned. This is also a risk that the SSF Guidelines face. Dahl talks a lot about participatory democracy. His book inspired my work on fisheries co-management, a governance mode that is mentioned in the SSF Guidelines and in several chapters of this book, as well as in the two other books in the trilogy.

Innovation and building community organizations are offensive strategies (See chapters 21-23). In talk about fisheries co-operatives and similar organizations as vehicles for adding value in the small-scale fisheries value chain. Professor José Pascual's project of building a market for local small-scale fisheries in the Canary Islands, is a good illustration of what an offensive, creative strategy may involve.

Food security obviously requires access to both resources and markets. Fish as food and a source of income for small-scale fisheries, is about supply as well as demand. Small-scale fisheries not only have a high-quality product. They also have a unique cultural narrative to show for itself in the marketplace, which large-scale fisheries are lacking. But they must use it pro-actively. This is an issue I exemplify with the eel fishery in Sweden in chapters 8 to 10. In Sweden, the effort to save the eel small-scale fisheries have become a "cultural war" (Stockholm University, 2022) – a concept in my chapter 7. This is a war small-scale fisheries people must fight everywhere.

Thinking solutions

TBTI argues that we should think solutions. They may be found in the defense or in the offense, or in both, i.e. in the "system-to-be-governed" in interactive governance lingo, or in "the governing system", i.e., with the coach. Solutions may be found both internal to the organization and operation of the governing system and externally in their environment. This we cannot know for sure until we have investigated it. The SSF Guidelines, therefore, have reasons to call for more research. Small-scale fisheries are important for people and communities, and we cannot allow them to fail. They may well need 'blue transformation' (chapter 25), but what kind of transformation? Small-scale fisheries are not saved by killing them. As stated on the TBTI website: "*Getting rid of small-scale fisheries will just make the matters worse*." (TBTI Global, n.d. [a]).

> *"New narratives about small-scale fisheries are needed – ones that clearly illustrate the values and importance of small-scale fisheries and consider them as key solutions for issues such as sustainability and sustainable development, climate change, economic prosperity, food security, gender equity, cultural identity, rebuilding fisheries, community wellbeing, and Blue Justice, among others. We also need initiatives that seek solutions for the numerous issues affecting small-scale fisheries and promote ways of sharing and scaling-up the success stories."*

This is positive thinking within the communitarian paradigm of the SSF Guidelines. They are all concepts that must be tested out and addressed in concrete settings. Neoliberalism has little to offer here. Academics can make important contributions, with 'good practice' stories, like those TBTI are collecting around the world. By doing so, we have an opportunity to learn about how the small details and the big issues connect in the small-scale fisheries, and what opportunities for transformation exist at different governance orders and scales.

Robert Nisbet (2017) argued that sociology and other academic discipline have a strong kinship with literature, painting, and other art forms. But rather than reading small-scale fisheries like Caravaggio, a holistic perspective would involve reading them more in the manner of Rembrandt and Rivera. Then we would be able to see how small-scale fisheries people can work together, share in leadership, and be entrepreneurial in a social sense, as I talk about in several chapters in this book.

Works of art may trigger strong emotions in us, as they are often intended to do. We are supposed to feel something – delight or horror, sadness or happiness. They are meant to evoke concern and empathy and invoke action. Picasso's 'Guernica' comes with a strong antiwar message that one cannot watch without feeling pain. Munch's 'Scream' is capturing human despair. Van Gogh's masterpiece 'The Potato Eaters' is exposing poverty. Hamsun's 'Hunger' is a novel about human dignity.

All these issues are in the SSF Guidelines because they are part of life in small-scale fisheries in the world. We should not allow ourselves to be indifferent about these issues. In chapter 13, I claim that emotions play a legitimate role in research, in the way we select our topics, construct our narratives, build our careers, and communicate with society. We do not just have an intellectual but also a moral reason for how we conduct ourselves in our work and in our lives. This is how it should be. If sociology can be thought of as an artform, as Nisbet noted, it can also be the 'hammer' that shapes the future of small-scale fisheries, that Brecht talked about.

I

Implementing the SSF Guidelines



Breivoll, Ibestad, Norway. 2024. © Greta Jentoft

1

Walking the Talk

Introduction

[6]The United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that 50 of the world's 51 million fishers are small-scale and that most of them live in developing countries. These small-scale fishers produce nearly half of the fish that is consumed globally and most of the fish consumed in the developing world. In addition, "*hundreds of millions of rural people in developing countries depend on fisheries for their livelihood*". Despite these big numbers, most small-scale fishers and the communities in which they exist are far from the radar of national, regional and global decision-making. There is also uncertainty about the actual figures due to the lack of a global statistical information system. Nevertheless, these estimates certainly make small-scale fisheries sector 'too big to ignore.'[7]

For this reason, FAO has been spearheading the initiative to develop international guidelines for small-scale fisheries. After years of planning, extensive consultation with civil society organizations (CSOs) and stake-

[6] This chapter was originally published in Maritime Studies, 2014, 13:16 and slightly revised here.

[7] https://tbtiglobal.net/

holders, including the research community, and intense negotiation among member states, on June 9, 2014, the Committee of Fisheries (COFI) of FAO adopted the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). For the millions of small-scale fishing people around the world, many of whom are poor and marginalized, this was no doubt an historic event and a potential turning point. Never has this sector received such global recognition.

Expectations are that the Guidelines will make a big difference for small-scale fishing people around the world. Although the process of adopting the Guidelines has been cumbersome at times, including at the final stage of negotiations, the real challenge now is to make sure that they will be implemented. Even if FAO member states have agreed to the Guidelines, there is no guarantee that they will follow up in practice. As Raustiala and Victor (1989, p. 660) conclude in a different context: "*Often, a country adopts an international accord without a clear plan for putting the commitments into practice*". As far as the SSF Guidelines are concerned, the ultimate test is whether states will really 'walk the talk'. However, even if member states hesitate, one should give them the benefit of doubt until evidenced that their support is not sincere.

As the SSF Guidelines are voluntary and address issues that are politically contentious, they are likely to be met with reluctance or resistance in some quarters. Despite some imprecision in terminology and definition, they are what member states reached consensus on. Indeed, that more than hundred member states supported them was quite significant and remarkable.

I will comment on the SSF Guidelines in many of the essays in this book. Here, I will limit myself to pointing out some of the implementation challenges that lie ahead. I begin by explaining what the SSF Guidelines are, what they aim to do, and why small-scale fisheries are difficult to define in the context of the SSF Guidelines. Then follows a discussion on two key implementation issues: the voluntary nature of the SSF Guidelines and their strong emphasis on human rights. Thereafter, based on the academic literature on the multiple ambiguities and challenges of the implementation

of policies and codes, the prospects of implementing the Guidelines are addressed.

What are small-scale fisheries?

Quoting from the document preface, the SSF Guidelines intend "*to support the visibility, recognition and enhancement of the already important role of small-scale fisheries and to contribute to global and national efforts towards the eradication of hunger and poverty*." The hope is that they will lead to policy change "*for the benefit of current and future generations, with an emphasis on small-scale fishers and fish workers and related activities*". The SSF Guidelines will also:

> *"...be in support of national, regional and international initiatives for poverty alleviation and equitable social and economic development, for improving governance of fisheries and promoting sustainable resource utilization. Their objective is to provide advice and recommendations on implementation, establish principles and criteria, and information to assist States and stakeholders to achieve secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries and related livelihoods."*

As the title points out, the SSF Guidelines are voluntary, and this is also stressed repeatedly throughout the text. States may therefore choose to ignore them. Although civil society organizations (CSOs) called for the SSF Guidelines to be binding, they cannot and perhaps should not be imposed on States. States cannot be held legally accountable if they decide to disregard or deviate from them. Nevertheless, the Guidelines have been adopted in an open, participatory, consensus and transparent process, and can therefore at least be held morally applicable. States can be asked to describe what they have done to implement them and to explain why they decide not to.

The SSF Guidelines are not just a set of recommendations; they include normative 'meta-governance' principles, intended to 'govern the gover-

nance' of small-scale fisheries (Kooiman, 2003). The ultimate test will be the impact that the SSF Guidelines have at the level of local fisheries communities. It must then be considered that small-scale fisheries are characterized by enormous diversity (Berkes et al., 2001; Chuenpagdee, 2011; Jentoft & Eide, 2011; Ratner & Allison, 2012). They differ ecologically, organizationally, economically and technologically from one region to the next. They also exhibit attributes that are often unique to a particular fishery or locality.

Moreover, small-scale fisheries are rarely a distinct sector. Rather, they are closely connected to, indeed embedded within, a larger social and ecological system – as a 'system within systems'– intimately connected with economic, social and cultural life in local communities. Small-scale fisheries are typically family enterprises, often involving women and children whose roles and interests are not always recognized.

Small-scale fisheries must also be understood in relation to large-scale fisheries. Conceptually, they are small because they are not large, as Hegel would emphasize; things are what they are because of what they are not (Hverven, 2025). Otherwise, it would make sense to call them small-scale fisheries. In real life, the two fleet categories are often in conflict (Bavinck, 2005; García-Flórez et al., 2014). Keeping the two fisheries apart is a major challenge, since large-scale fisheries do not often respect the areas set aside for small-scale fisheries. All these traits call for a governance approach that is holistic and systemic. What is happening within the small-scale fisheries is often due to what is going on outside them.

What is interesting and important about small-scale fisheries, therefore, is not their scale per se, but all that they are associated with. The SSF Guidelines apply a broad perspective, which attempts to capture inherent and related features. A prevalent stereotype of small-scale fisheries is that they are simple and traditional, and thus lags in the modernization process. However, small-scale fisheries technology is often well adapted to the ecological and social circumstances within which they must operate. Small-scale fisheries can also be sophisticated in the way they are organized and how they serve markets. They are not necessarily stuck in the past but

are a dynamic sector undergoing constant change: what they were is not what they are, and certainly not what they might become.

The SSF Guidelines emphasize the important contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation. This implies that small-scale fisheries deserve attention not just for their problems, such as poverty, but also for the opportunities they provide in addressing important societal concerns that exist beyond the sector, such as providing safe and nutritious food (HLPE, 2014) and employment. But small-scale fisheries do more than just provide society at large with a 'service'. They are important in themselves. Millions of people depend on them for their livelihood. Small-scale fisheries represent cultural heritage, they offer a way of life, a particular lifestyle that provides both identity and meaning to the lives of those who inhabit them. As Onyango (2011) argues, they are not always 'an occupation of last resort'.

The lack of a precise definition of what small-scale fisheries are in the SSF Guidelines is justified by their extreme diversity globally. Their multi-faceted nature also makes definitions complex, rich and 'clumpish' (García-Flórez et al., 2014). The only way to define them is to employ what the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) termed 'thick description'. Thus, for a FAO Working Group on Small-Scale Fisheries, the definition that eventually emerged filled a whole page (FAO, 2005, p. 4). The Group listed features including technology (boat and gear), multi-species fishing, processing and marketing, communities, gender, labor intensity, organizational characteristics, livelihood, food security, and poverty.

Since those who make the effort to define them use their own situation as a point of departure, definitions tend to differ from region to region, and it is often hard to reach a consensus on language. For this reason, small-scale fisheries also go by different names in different countries, with terms such as inshore, coastal, artisanal, municipal, small-boat, community-based, and so forth being used. The SSF Guidelines use the term small-scale fisheries, but do not offer a definition. Instead, they leave it to countries to define them in a way that fits their situation. As shown by Chuenpagdee et al. (2006), most countries do in fact define small-scale fisheries using

common features like boat size, gear type, engine power, etc., for the purpose of regulations. Still, the Guidelines have a lot to say about most of the characteristics of small-scale fisheries mentioned above.

How voluntary?

From the beginning, CSOs throughout the world have been deeply involved in the preparation of the SSF Guidelines through workshops and consultations. They also played a constructive role during the two Technical Consultations in Rome in May 2013 and in February 2014. Their hands-on experience with the state of small-scale fisheries was often decisive for the language that ended up in many of the guideline articles. In a lengthy comment on the zero-draft presented by the FAO secretariat, they requested that the Guidelines should be binding. This would obviously have changed the legal status of the SSF Guidelines, which most likely would have made it more difficult for member states to endorse them.

A preceding document, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, is not binding either. The same is with other FAO guidelines that are frequently referred to in the document, such as the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security and the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. The repeated insistence that the SSF Guidelines are voluntary (mentioned 18 times in the document), makes it easier for States to acquiesce since they also have the choice of non-implementation. If the SSF Guidelines had the status of a UN convention, one might have expected a more demanding and time-consuming negotiation process (although perhaps an easier implementation).

Consequently, there was willingness to compromise, also among those who would have preferred more commitment and a stronger text. Yet, negotiations proved more time-consuming than anticipated. In particular sections, the voluntary issue is present by implication more than by intention. For instance, the fact that the SSF Guidelines do not prescribe a

standard definition of small-scale fisheries and how it should be applied in a national context, creates flexibility as to their interpretation and, hence, implementation. Countries may therefore decide themselves who the SSF Guidelines are relevant for – or, indeed, if they are relevant at all.

It will thus be interesting to see how States now choose to define small-scale fisheries in the context of the Guidelines. There will always be room for ambiguity and interpretation as definitions contain words that may themselves need such. For instance, what does it mean to be poor? The poverty concept has over time undergone considerable change, from a narrow focus on income to include aspects such as health, education and empowerment (Béné, 2003). Small-scale fishers are not necessarily among the poorest of the poor in income and subsistence terms (Bavinck, 2014), but they are often poor in terms of these other variables (Kurien & Willmann, 2009).

Poverty is also relative. Small-scale fishers may be deprived in comparison with other groups in their country but not necessarily in an absolute sense – as is often the situation in the north (Jentoft & Midré, 2011). They may be poor because they are vulnerable, and vice versa, or because they are marginalized (Islam, 2011). What comes first is not easy to say. If these terms had been more elaborated in the text, countries in the developed north would perhaps have found the Guidelines more relevant for their own small-scale fisheries.

The human-rights approach

As stressed throughout the document, the SSF Guidelines should be implemented in accordance with national legal systems and their institutions. This would have gone without saying if it had not been for the fact that the SSF Guidelines also underscore the need for legal reform. If every country insists that the Guidelines should be in conformity with existing domestic policies and legislation, there is a risk that their implementation ends up confirming the status quo, or that they would only lead to insignificant reform. The national legal lens may suggest that member states are cautious

to commit.

In a communication with this author during the Technical Consultation in May 2013, the representative of the UN High Commission on Human Rights argued that it is important for small-scale fisheries to have access to justice and to effective remedies not only guaranteed by national but also by international law. By explicitly linking the SSF Guidelines to 'hard' international law (such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO 169) the SSF Guidelines are less voluntary than they appear. It is probably for this reason that during the Technical Consultations some delegates felt uneasy about the frequent reference (29 times) to human rights in the text.

The Human Rights Approach (HRA) to fisheries governance has received both support and criticism. Allison et al. (2012, p. 14) see the need to move beyond the narrow perception of property rights as a fisheries governance tool, to a broader human rights approach. This, they view to "*enhance the chances of achieving both human development and resource sustainability outcomes in small-scale fisheries…*" These authors criticize the idea of "rights-based fishing" for advocating property-rights and privatization, which tend to lead to exclusion of poor and vulnerable small-scale fisher groups. Potentially, fisheries/property rights and human rights are in conflict, as was, for instance, demonstrated with the UN Human Rights Committee's ruling on the Icelandic quota system in 2007 (Einarsson, 2004).[8]

In contrast to Allison et al. (2012), Ruddle and Davis (2013) perceive the HRA to small-scale fisheries as a neoliberal idea. As they see it, there is a risk that "human rights rhetoric" may discredit "*customary practices and*

[8] The UN Human Rights Committee ruled that the Icelandic state had infringed the human rights of two fishers violating article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by introducing an ITQ system that effectively denied them access to the fisheries. Iceland was also the country who most strongly disassociated itself from the SSF Guidelines during COFI, stressing that the Guidelines are only relevant for developing countries.

separate the individual from her/his social contexts and relationships." (Ibid, p.89). Given the universality of human rights principles, the two authors fear that such an approach will "homogenize" "*diverse human conditions and cultures*" (Ibid, p. 91). If valid, this criticism, would also affect the SSF Guidelines. Ruddle and Davis are referring to Donnelly (2013, p. 97), but seem to disregard this statement:

> *"Human rights today remain the only proven effective means to assure human dignity in societies dominated by markets and states... Virtually everyone on this planet today lives in a world of modern markets and modern states which need to be tamed by human rights if those powerful institutions are to be made compatible with the life of dignity for the average person."*

In his keynote address at the 2013 People and the Sea conference in Amsterdam, FAO's Rolf Willmann, who is also one of Allison's co-authors and the main architect of the SSF Guidelines, commented on the Ruddle and Davis article (Willmann et al., 2017). First, he pointed out that human rights constitute both domestic and international law. The implication is that human rights violations in small-scale fisheries can be prosecuted at both levels. All 192 UN member states have also signed on to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Secondly, although Ruddle and Davis refer to Amartya Sen (1999), Willmann argues that they miss his point that human rights legislation secures basic entitlements and freedoms without which development cannot take place. Thirdly, Willmann takes issue with the notion that tenure arrangements advocated through the HRA are necessarily individualistic and that this approach excludes opportunities for community and collective tenure.[9]

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[9] Gutmann (2001, p. xxi) argues that "*what human rights protection seeks is not the destruction of cultures, as critics too often accuse, but the integration of human rights protections as critics too often deny is possible*".

Many of the SSF Guidelines articles do indeed refer to communities (mentioned 77 times), culture (19 times), customary rights and practices (10 times), and Indigenous peoples (10 times), and it is important to note that these were not viewed as controversial concepts during the Technical Consultation. Indeed, delegates had no problem with the 's' in peoples – a letter that determines whether the text refers to individual or collective rights. Concepts like governance, co-management, redistribution, informal sector, and human rights standards (as opposed to law) met objections but survived. One State, however, uttered strong objections to the term 'situations of occupation' proposed for Article 6.18, which until the final hour of the COFI meeting threatened to overturn the adoption of the SSF Guidelines.

The sometimes-heated negotiations on the text do suggest that member states take the SSF Guidelines seriously. It also indicates that the implementation process is likely to be cumbersome, as the concrete meaning of general concepts and norms, and what they imply, will need to be defined for particular situation. The negotiation on the SSF Guidelines therefore does not stop with COFI's endorsement.

Implementation challenges

Implementation is the process by which "*intent is translated into action*" (Rein & Rabinovitz, 1987, p. 308). Now that member States have endorsed the SSF Guidelines, the former is settled, and the latter is about to begin. Most likely, however, the implementation of the SSF Guidelines will not be a graceful, straightforward transition. Rather, one should expect a cyclical, interactive, and iterative process, where original objectives are subject to repeated questioning, debate, evaluation and reformulation. Lessons learned during implementation may lead to reconsideration of the original intent and to subsequent reformulation of principles and goals. The stated principles, and the values and norms underpinning them, are therefore not stable, at least not in the long run. Their interpretation may change over time.

Technical or political?

SSF Guidelines are meant to spur new legislation. Initiatives in this regard would be a clear sign that governments are both willing and able to move from intent to action. As far as legislative reform is zero-sum (as when aimed at redistribution), probability is high that the Guidelines will meet pressure to maintain the status quo. Legislative reform and implementation are separate processes, but both are up-hill battles. The burden of proof rests with those who want change, not with those who defend the current order. As Machiavelli already observed, "*it must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success* (*...*), *than to initiate a new order of things*. *For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order…*" ([1532] Machiavelli 1950, p. 21).

The SSF Guidelines promote norms and principles about issues that are social and ethical. They are meant to intervene in situations where different interests are in conflict and where small-scale fisheries are the weaker party. They will inevitably interfere with power. The Guidelines and their implementation are therefore as political as technical.

As stated in the Preface:

> *"Small-scale fishing communities also 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 developments."*

When, during the Technical Consultation, delegates were arguing about language, they were not only considering conceptual clarity and precision but also their own national interests. They were as concerned about what the SSF Guidelines might imply for national interests as what they would

do for small-scale fisheries globally. In the meeting, delegates therefore sometimes had to consult their capitals, i.e. own governments, about what they could go along with. This illustrates the political rather than a technical nature of the SSF Guidelines

Unavoidably, as the quotation above indicates, translating intent into action may have consequences not just for small-scale fisheries but also for other stakeholders inside or outside the fishing industry. One may assume this was their concern when some country delegates had problems with 'redistributive reforms', but the term survived. The most controversial issues tend to be phrased in ways that allow interpretation flexibility. Some delegates argued for less gender specific language, to the dismay of civil society representatives who forcefully – and successfully – spoke up to defend the proposed wording. The gender equity perspective has a separate chapter in the Guidelines and otherwise crosscuts the entire document: 'Gender' is mentioned 22 times and 'women' 50 times.

Neutralizing or removing controversial concepts watered down the text and made it more 'voluntary' as it were, whereas explicit and precise definitions have the opposite effect. But less ambiguity would have made it more difficult to reach agreement. Regardless of their legal status, voluntary guidelines are better than no guidelines at all. Therefore, many delegates were satisfied with a lower level of exactitude. However, this may eventually make the implementation process more challenging.

Implementation as interaction

The implementation of the SSF Guidelines needs an overseer, and FAO is well positioned to play such a role. However, FAO might benefit from building a "system for implementation review" (Victor et al., 1998) involving, among others, academics experienced in such research. CSOs also have an important function in the implementation process as perhaps the most important watchdog. States, which are the main recipient of the SSF Guidelines, control essential legal, financial, and technical resources and must therefore contribute. They must also be part of the feedback

loop, where actual accomplishments are reported on, as is the case with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

One should not necessarily expect a top-down implementation process. This is especially because of the current move "from government to governance" in many countries (Bevir, 2011), including fisheries (Kooiman et al., 2005; Bavinck et al., 2013). This move results in a more open, inclusive and interactive form of governing where stakeholders have a more proactive role to play (Hill & Hupe, 2009; Bellamy & Palumbo, 2010) in accordance with 'good governance' principles such as democracy, equity, transparency and accountability. Interactive governance puts pressure on governments to become more accommodating to stakeholder interests and concerns. It transforms the role of the State from supreme governor to mediator, negotiator and facilitator.

The SSF Guidelines required a lot of flexibility by involved parties to reach consensus, and their implementation too will still depend on it. During implementation, they will have to be operationalized and contextualized. As new participants are drawn into the process, people who have not so far been involved will have to be convinced about their merits. In this process enthusiasm might get lost. Therefore, as Susskind (2006, p. 282) argues, *"even though the parties to a mutual gains negotiation are almost always satisfied with the outcome (or they would not have agreed to accept it), they still need to worry about the mechanisms of implementation"*. Parties must therefore invest time in crafting the best ways of making their agreement *"nearly self-enforcing"*. This may require *"adding incentives or disincentives to the terms of the agreement"* (Susskind, 2006, p. 282). Which incentives would be required as far as the implementation of the SSF Guidelines is concerned, are not clear at this point but must be defined and agreed upon as part of the implementation process.

Implementation depends as much on the messenger as the message. The SSF Guidelines may be met with skepticism just because it is the central government that is sponsoring them, especially if the track record of supporting small-scale fisheries is poor. Why this sudden change of government attitude? Is there perhaps a hidden agenda somewhere? As

Tsang et al. (2009, p. 101) point out:

> *"Although government may be able to implement its own agenda without trust or exert absolute control over a population through the use of coercive resources, it is nowadays impossible to implement the programs of a modern state effectively without trust. A government has a great deal to gain by facilitating trust."*

The implementation of the SSF Guidelines will therefore hinge on the legitimacy and trust that the state government enjoys among stakeholders. For this reason, also, the implementation process must be interactive, as participation tends to increase stakeholder cooperation and compliance (Susskind, 2006; Jagers et al., 2012).

Signing up to conventions, declarations, or, in this case the SSF Guidelines, has symbolic value: it shows goodwill. But it may also be an effort of window-dressing to make the authorities look good to the international community and domestic constituents. Sometimes governments implement what they have committed themselves to because of external demands to follow up. For instance, as far as international environmental codes are concerned, Rastislav and Victor (1989, p. 671) conclude that "*minimal implementation of international environmental commitment in these states mainly reflects low public pressure for environmental protection*". There is little reason to expect that the implementation of the SSF Guidelines would be any different.

It is therefore probably crucial that CSOs, like those who have been involved in the development of the SSF Guidelines, along with research community and public at large, act to prevent this from happening. CSOs are often "*the first to spot deviations from the terms of consensus-based rights and rules*" (Young, 2006, p. 851). FAO too may play this role. FAO may also encourage CSOs and the academic community to do their part, as it outlines in a follow up document that was presented to COFI. All this would turn implementation into a trickle-up as well as a trickle-down process, as illustrated in Figure 1. To act, governments would first need to

be reminded from below what they at COFI have agreed to.



Figure 1. *The implementation model*

Implementation obstacles

According to Rein and Rabinovitz (1987), implementation is generally subject to three hurdles - or 'imperatives': a legislative hurdle, a bureaucratic one and one regarding consensus-building. The SSF Guidelines would have to pass all three. First, what is legally required to bring about change for small-scale fisheries may vary from country to country. Therefore, it makes sense to add the phrase "as appropriate", which happens frequently (18 times) in the SSF Guidelines text. The legal status of small-scale fisheries would need to be clarified in particular cases, and in some countries, as mentioned, new legislation may be required to accommodate the change that the SSF Guidelines aim for. Legal processes and other governance reforms for improving the rights of small-scale fishing people are taking place in some countries, such as South Africa (Sowman et al., 2014) and

Cambodia (Ratner et al., 2013).[10] These provide insights into the conditions for successful implementation of the SSF Guidelines in other settings as well.

Secondly, even if endorsed at the legislative level, there is no guarantee that the implementation initiatives will pass the bureaucratic hurdle. Bureaucratic rules and demands are not always conducive to effective implementation. Bureaucrats have ideas about what is feasible from an administrative point of view, for instance because of available data, which in the case of small-scale fisheries are often scant. Who are small-scale fishers, how many and where are they? The implementing agency would need to have this information as implementation would otherwise easily misfire. Policies may not reach the poorest and most marginalized of small-scale fishers, i.e. those who the SSF Guidelines especially have in mind.

Should the implementation process pass the second hurdle, it would next have to face the industry and all other stakeholders who may or may not agree with the notion that small-scale fisheries deserve special attention. Without consensus about the need to act upon the SSF Guidelines, implementation may come to a halt. There is also the risk of regulatory capture by special interest groups. Powerful stakeholders may attempt to bend the SSF Guidelines to their benefit. The implementation must therefore be sensitive to power differences, also those that exist within small-scale fisheries, for instance between boat owners and crew (Cooke & Kothary, 2002; Jentoft, 2007). Raustiala and Victor (1989, p. 669), however, find that "*while regulatory capture is a risk, the capturing influence of target groups has been offset through informed participation by countervailing groups*". Again, this calls for broad and transparent participation in the SSF Guidelines implementation process.

Over time, partly due to power struggle, goal displacement is to be expected. This may cause disappointment among those who initially had

[10] I heard from Cambodia (personal communication, January 2025) that community-based small-scale fisheries are no longer in vogue in policy circles.

high expectations of the Guidelines and for whom they were primarily intended. This is particularly the danger when implementation is not controlled by a single authority but is open to negotiation among multiple parties, as within interactive governance. Implementing agencies and stakeholders must be prepared for this eventuality, as goal displacement may easily go unnoticed (Jentoft et al., 2011).

Thus, implementation is a process with uncertain outcomes, especially in small-scale fisheries where issues tend to be politicized (see for example Scholtens et al., 2013). Since the SSF Guidelines are voluntary, outcomes are particularly unpredictable.

Raustiala and Victor (1989, p. 660-1) observe:

> *"When national implementation is complex, more political and economic interests are likely to be affected, leading to political mobilization and shifting coalitions. Typically, these coalitions become more complicated, with less predictable outcomes..."*

Despite this risk, and for the reasons mentioned above, the broad scope of the SSF Guidelines requires an implementation process that builds coalitions. Whether countries with a tradition of stakeholder participation are more inclined than others to effectively implement the SSF Guidelines in an inclusive manner is an empirical question. Research on the implementation of environmental codes suggests that *"participation during the negotiations of international commitments and the making of national implementing policy is high, but it has often proved difficult to expand participation at the implementation phase"* (Victor et al., 1998, p. 23). Some countries may already have robust institutions in place that help facilitate implementation, while others may have to create them first. Institutional development is therefore an integral part of the implementation process in many situations. Parallel to the negotiations on the SSF Guidelines, FAO initiated a process of investigating the organizational conditions of small-scale fisheries to prepare for implementation (Kalikoski & Franz, 2014).

The relative economic importance of small-scale fisheries and the level of development and industrialization may all affect willingness to implement the SSF Guidelines. In the Preface section it is emphasized that not only are the Guidelines "global in scope", but that also they have a "focus on the needs of developing countries". State governments in the developed North may here find an excuse for distancing themselves from the Guidelines. Crises may also influence implementation (cf. Krämer, 2006). Policy changes in fisheries often occurs when some emergency calls for action. One may, therefore, not expect much action on the SSF Guidelines if the situation in the fishing industry is characterized by tranquility, development, and growth. If small-scale fisheries are in a bad condition but still 'too big to ignore', as is the situation in many developing countries, the SSF Guidelines are more prone to find fertile ground. Developed countries, on the other hand, can perhaps afford to ignore small-scale fisheries (although they are likely marginalized and can benefit from the implementation of the SSF Guidelines) whereas less well-off countries may find them more relevant.

Measuring outcomes

The overseer (FAO and partners) would need a suitable monitoring and evaluation plan and a measurement instrument. The study conducted by Pitcher et al. (2009) is an example of what can be done. These authors compared country compliance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and found substantial variation. However, this study measured conformity, not achievement. Countries may already have been living up to the principles of the Code at the time it was initiated, or their policies may have been initiated regardless thereof. What the overseer would want to know is whether the SSF Guidelines are precipitating to real policy change and whether they are making a difference to small-scale fisheries. The latter might be more difficult to establish due to the presence of other causal factors. Ideally, one would need to know what small-scale fisheries would have been without the SSF Guidelines and be able to separate other variables having influence. But small-scale fisheries are a dynamic sector, in

which internal and external drivers that are hard to control cause constant change. The SSF Guidelines may therefore at best partially impact on how small-scale fisheries are developing.

Concluding remarks

With regard the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, one should expect considerable variation between countries as institutional contexts, policy agendas and the preferences of key agents and participants differ from one another. Countries do not have the same capacity to act, causing therefore what is often called an "implementation gap", defined by Hinds (2003, p. 350) "*as the gap between the approval and the implementation of intergovernmental/international conventions, agreements, resolutions and recommendations*". State governments may sometimes lack what Cappelli (2008) termed "stateness" i.e. the capacity, power and control of states to implement public policies. Indeed, the SSF Guidelines are targeted at governments that in many instances would fit Gunnar Myrdal's (1970) concept of "soft states"[11]. Some would even qualify as "failed states" (Thorpe et al., 2009). If the capacity to implement legislation is generally low, there is little reason to assume that it will be much different in the case of the SSF Guidelines. In fact, both the willingness and capacity to implement policies regarding small-scale fisheries are often lacking (Ratner et al. 2013; cf. Carbonetti et al., 2014). CSOs may be called for to fill the gap (Béné et al., 2004) but are usually short on resources. Therefore, capacities need to be developed at all levels to help implement the SSF Guidelines.

Implementation is often time-consuming and incremental but without a clear stopping rule. The SSF Guidelines may therefore take years to take full effect. But when can one say that their implementation is complete?

[11] To Myrdal, the concept refers to "*all the various types of social indiscipline which manifest themselves by deficiencies in legislation and, in particular, law observance and enforcement, a widespread disobedience by public officials and, often, their collusion with powerful persons and groups ... whose conduct they should regulate. Within the concept of the soft states belongs also corruption*" (Myrdal, 1970, p. 208).

The Guidelines may be implemented to some extent, but not necessarily to the full. Implementation is likely to be an ongoing, adaptive and iterative process, as small-scale fisheries are dynamic. Although the governance principles that are stated in the SSF Guidelines may remain, the policies and actions that follow from them must change according to how these fisheries are developing and what lessons are learned in the process implementing them.

The implementation of the Guidelines would for these reasons clearly qualify as a "wicked problem", as Rittel and Webber (1973) coined it (see also Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2009). The parties involved, also those in charge of monitoring and evaluation, are in for a long haul. Consequently, monitoring should be longitudinal, following the implementation process as it unfolds at all levels of governance. People with experience in implementation research have relevant knowledge on how to set baseline and monitor progress. The literature points out, however, that studies of implementation processes are in themselves costly and time-consuming (Goggin et al., 1990, p. 205). The States that the SSF Guidelines are addressing have a responsibility to provide such funding. Indeed, their willingness to do so would be a sign of how serious and supportive they are.

The lessons learned from the implementation of the Code of Conduct and other FAO guidelines are particularly relevant. The SSF Guidelines are interlinked with the Food security guidelines and the Tenure guidelines. Evaluating the implementation SSF Guidelines will also partially be evaluations of these other instruments. To separate the impact that the SSF Guidelines have would, consequently, be difficult. But then, at the end of the day, what really matters are whatever positive changes take place in small-scale fisheries globally, and not which instrument such success can be attributed to.

2

Tenure as Rectitude

Thomas Paine (1737-1809) famously argued that some rights are "natural" to humans. They have them "in right of their existence." Indeed, to have these rights is what it means to be human, to live a life in dignity. We have them qua human beings and do not need to do anything to deserve them. They are not "made" and do not have to be declared by some institutional authority to exist, only to be respected. They were there before they were codified in law and are not discovered as you would of a natural or a social phenomenon, but by reason and moral conscience. Natural rights are foundational to civil rights, which in the words of Paine "*are those which appertain to man in right of his being a member of society*." (Paine, 1791).

Consequently, small-scale fisheries people have the same human rights as everyone else, not because they fish but because they are human beings. But as members of society, they cannot take for granted that states and stakeholders will recognize these rights, accept their implications, and behave accordingly. Small-scale fisheries people live under conditions where they cannot be sure that these rights will be implemented institutionally and in a governance context in a manner that is consistent with their principles. They need legal instruments to secure that their individual and collective human rights are respected in practice. The SSF Guidelines are one among several of such instruments with a global reach.

The SSF Guidelines will not be implemented in a social, and political

vacuum and will, therefore, not always be well received. They must relate to existing complex institutional landscapes and a legal scenery that differs from place to place (Jentoft & Bavinck, 2019). A way to start the implementation process is to assess what this landscape is and how it can help to facilitate the implementation process in ways that are both appropriate to local context and consistent with the guiding human rights principles and standards.

As a soft law instrument, the SSF Guidelines have a weaker legal status than a convention that states have ratified and integrated into domestic law, like the Convention on Biological Diversity or the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Still, the institutional reforms that the SSF Guidelines promote have a strong moral message because they have human rights and dignity as a basic governance principle. Their voluntary status does not invalidate their moral power.

Human rights – individual and collective

The 1948 UN Convention on Human Rights has been signed by 193 states and ratified at least one of the nine binding treaties that the Declaration have inspired, with the vast majority ratifying four or more. The original convention emphasized individual rights while leaving collective human rights aside, perhaps assuming that it would be sufficient for securing the rights of minorities, groups, and communities. Later the realization emerged that collective rights for marginalized groups with a history of discrimination and neglect are important in themselves but also as a means of supporting individual rights. The human rights of the individual are now typically expressed and defended together with others (Kymlicka, 2001). My rights are often our rights and vice versa. Therefore, to secure social justice, individual human rights need collective, institutional backing, such as tenure arrangements that co-management and governance provide. Defined by Cordell (1989, p. 5), tenure in small-scale fisheries refers to "*any system of informal, relatively closed, communal, shared, collective or even private property in fishing*."

Both the SSF Guidelines and the Tenure Guidelines (FAO, 2012) underscore that human rights are also collective rights. The UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples does the same already in the title with the "s" in "peoples".[12], Rolf Willmann and FAO colleagues state that tenure rights are part and parcel of the human rights approach in the context of the small-scale fisheries:

> *"The notion of collective tenure rights is perfectly coherent and a valid legal proposition in a human rights-based conception. This is amply reflected in the frequented references to traditional and customary tenure systems – many of which are collective arrangements – in the VG Tenure and SSF Guidelines." (Willmann et al., 2017, p. 28)*

Institutional facts

John Searle (1995) argues that people have human rights in so far that they are collectively recognized both in principle and by those with the authority and power to secure them. "*Human rights, as other rights should be considered as human institutions for their very existence*." But human rights are also embedded in other institutions, like the legal and the organizational apparatus that underpins them. They are what he calls "institutional facts." Although clearly man-made, their maker will be out of sight over time. As facts, institutions acquire a sense of objectivity, which is sustained when we adapt and abide with them. Then, institutions get under our skin in a process that forms our perception of self.

Searle's concept of institutional fact goes deeper than the law. He posits that institutions, such as laws, are "language dependent", cannot exist and work without language. Indeed, language is itself an institution and, in that sense, a "fact". The language we speak, also in legal contexts, was

[12] Article 1: "*Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law*."

there before you and I entered this world. We cannot function in society without it. To become a small-scale fisher is also to learn the language that other fishers speak. Small-scale fishers have words for what they do, where they operate, for the tools they use, for the fish they catch, and for the institutions they have.

Language makes it possible not just to fish but also to claim human rights, such as rights of tenure and these rights are stated by the means of language. The SSF Guidelines is a text arrived at through extensive linguistic consultation, but they did not invent human rights and tenure concepts. They just invoke them and, by doing so, change the conversation about small-scale fisheries. It was not common to say that fisheries rights are human rights. Now, with the SSF Guidelines, it is. This is perhaps their greatest achievement so far.

Moral facts

Angelo Corlett (2016) criticizes Searle for overlooking the non-institutional foundation of human rights. He argues that institutional facts, such as law, have a moral core. Human rights were thematized as a moral discourse before finding their path into international and national law. Human rights exist regardless of whether they are institutionally recognized. They are, as Thomas Paine suggested, inherent in the human condition which is morally circumscribed.

Jack Donnelly (2013) distinguishes between "entitlement" and "rectitude." To have a right, like tenure, is not the same as being right. You may or may not deserve what you have. Entitlements are a way of ordering a social relation. Tenure arrangements intervene in the freedoms of fishers to access marine space and use their resources. They grant privileges and possessions to tenure holders that non-tenure holders do not get, as when they reserve fishing rights to residents of a particular community.[13]

[13] A special issue on tenure arrangements in small-scale fisheries is published by *Land Tenure Journal* in 2013. Land Tenure Journal 1-13. https://shorturl.at/XwELL

Tenure arrangements are a means of avoiding tragic outcomes, such as overfishing. But they are more than a rational "policy instrument" (Howlett, 1991). In the SSF Guidelines, tenure rights also have a moral foundation. Local communities, Indigenous peoples, and minority groups have a right to secure their livelihoods, food supply and culture. Communities have a moral right to exist because they are fundamental to human existence. Tenure is therefore also a rectitude.

However, depending on where they find themselves relative to the tenure arrangement, resource users think differently whether the distributional consequences are justified as a human right. Moral issues such as social justice, tend to be perceived through the prism of special interest. Tenure arrangements involve a moral dilemma and a 'lifeboat' ethics that enter the political arena. Regardless of their status as institutional fact, tenure rights become politically contested – if not by the beneficiaries, so by those who are denied the chance of survival by entering the lifeboat.

Since Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) and his treatise on the Mare Liberum, the freedom of the seas has become an institutional fact. By closing the marine commons and limiting the open access to fisheries and other marine resources, tenure arrangements diverge from that principle. They become institutional facts in themselves. In the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, legal formalization of tenure is not a minor institutional reform. To achieve consensus, a convincing moral argument of why such reform is needed, one that human rights thinking and theories of justice provide.

Governance instrument

From human rights and dignity as a guiding principle (paragraph 3.1.1), the Guidelines specify what this may imply from a governance perspective. Tenure takes a full section of the SSF Guidelines. Paragraph 1.1 states: "*All programs, policies and technical assistance to improve governance of tenure through the implementation of these Guidelines should be consistent with States' existing obligations under international law, including the Universal Declaration*

of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments." By implication, also the SSF Guidelines subscribe to the idea of tenure as a collective human right, like that of local communities and social groups.

Paragraph 5.2 holds:

> *"All parties should recognize that responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests applicable in small-scale fisheries is central for the realization of human rights, food security, poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods, social stability, housing security, economic growth and rural and social development."*

From this paragraph follow ten others that all talk specifically of what states should do to secure the tenure rights of small-scale fisheries people. Paragraph 5.3 stresses the importance of communities having "*secure, equitable, and socially and culturally appropriate tenure rights to fishery, fishing grounds and adjacent lands*" and specifies that women have the same rights as men. Paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5 mention customary tenure rights and norms, including those of Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities. Subsequent paragraphs contain the principle of preferential access of small-scale fisheries people to waters under national jurisdiction and the need for exclusive zones for small-scale fisheries. We here recognize the "difference principle" of philosopher John Rawls.

Paragraph 5.8 mentions the possibility of "appropriate, redistributive reform", while 5.9 recommends that states "*should ensure that small-scale fishing communities are not arbitrarily evicted and that their legitimate tenure rights are not otherwise extinguished or infringed.*" States should "*hold effective and meaningful consultations with these communities*" (para 5.10). Paragraph 5.11 emphasizes the need for states to secure that small-scale fisheries communities and individuals have access to adequate legal assistance in situations where tenure rights are disputed. Paragraph 5.12 reads in full:

> *"States should strive to restore access to traditional fishing grounds and coastal lands to small-scale fishing communities that have been*

> *displaced by natural disasters and/or armed conflict taking into consideration the sustainability of fisheries resources. States should establish mechanisms to support fishing communities affected by grave human rights violations to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. Such steps should include the elimination of any form of discrimination against women in tenure practices in case of natural disasters and/or armed conflict."*

Concepts are not always clearly defined in the SSF Guidelines and therefore leave some leeway for interpretation and implementation. Ambiguity may have helped in providing consensus. Some concepts were, however, contested during the Technical consultation. For instance, paragraph 5.8 on redistribution did not go through without a strike of swords.

Overall, the tenure section did not, as might have been expected, create much controversy. Since the text is largely drawn from the Tenure Guidelines, which also target land and forests, the two instruments advocate largely the same approach for the three resource systems. As paragraph 5.2 emphasizes, small-scale fisheries people need secure access to both land and sea resources for their food security, livelihoods, and well-being. This underscores the embeddedness of small-scale fisheries in local communities.

Reality or rhetoric?

The implementation of the SSF Guidelines may be selective and piecemeal. States may choose to cherry pick among paragraphs and ignore those they dislike. Thus, they may still claim that they are implementing the Guidelines. However, the implementation may also take a more holistic approach. Then they would follow the human rights approach through the entire instrument. States may be tempted to choose the opportunistic approach. An assessment of the 'plan of action' would tell which strategy states prefer, including how they deal with the tenure issue and the "difference principle."

Co-management is an institution, which once established as a fact, provides entitlements to members. It does not emerge by itself. Someone must take the initiative and the lead. States must create the legal conditions for co-management to work. It needs a legal mandate that it cannot provide itself. Co-management must have the support of other institutions. Co-management will not function in isolation and as an exception from the general rules of governance.

Co-management is also a rectitude, 'the right thing to do'. It is anchored in small-scale fisheries people's democratic rights and freedoms. SSF Guiding principle no. 6 stresses the importance of

> *"...ensuring active, free, effective, meaningful and informed participation of small-scale fishing communities, including indigenous peoples, taking into account the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP) in the decision-making process related to fishery resources and areas where small-scale fisheries operate and taking existing power imbalances between different parties into consideration. This should include feedback and support from those who could be affected by decisions prior to these being taken and responding to their contributions."*

Strictly speaking, this does not necessarily mean co-management, but one can argue that by virtue of participation, they are entering in to a 'co-management' arrangement, whether it is formalized or not.

Governance orders

TBTI has been investigating the implementation the SSF Guidelines in a series of books and papers, most recently in Nakamura et al. (2024). The assessment has applied the interactive governance framework, arguing that implementation should establish consistency between the governance "orders," as Kooiman defines them (2003). Rectitude is a meta-order issue, whereas tenure as an entitlement and institutional fact is at the second

governance order. Tenure arrangements are meant to steer first-order, day-to-day governance interactions.

The assessment of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines is focused on the relationships and interactions between the governance orders. Are they consistent or in conflict? Not unexpectedly, the findings show mixed results. Many states have a long way to go before their governance system is brought in line with the guiding governance principles they have agreed to when endorsing the SSF Guidelines. They may not have their governance institutions and practices in line with the meta-order principles.

The SSF Guidelines are an effort to define the implications for small-scale fisheries people of the stated human rights and good governance principles that they declare. Each paragraph provides a yard stick for assessing whether the state, civil society, and academic institutions are following suit. The number of states that have developed 'a plan of action' on how to follow up on the SSF Guidelines is so far not very impressive (FAO, 2023).

The SSF Guidelines may themselves undergo internal scrutiny. Is there consistency between the guiding principles and the substance paragraphs? Each paragraph was subject to intense negotiation, which at some point was at a risk of breaking down. Delegates were not necessarily looking for consistency as much as they were protecting their interests. For this reason, the Technical consultation on the SSF Guidelines text took double the time as planned without reaching a consensus before the COFI meeting in June 2014. Even there, state delegates had second thoughts.

Challenging institutional facts

Moving from principle to practice is a stretch that states may be reluctant to go. Even with their endorsement, the implementation of the SSF Guidelines is not likely to be a straightforward process but more of an uphill battle (see chapter 1). There may be hijackers waiting in the bushes and trolls hiding under the bridges. If power asymmetries are the cause of the marginal status and support of small-scale fisheries to begin with, it is likely that

they will also work against the effective implementation, if the Guidelines challenge the current order, which they undoubtedly do in many situations.

At which governance order the implementation obstacles occur may vary from country to country. Stakeholders who are negative to the SSF Guidelines, may well start their obstruction at the meta-order and work itself downwards through the second and first governance order. Should they lose at the meta-order, they may move the defense line to the second order. Should they fail again at the second order, they may attempt to influence governance routines and practice at first order, for instance by breaking tenure rules.

In Norway, a Sami Indigenous small-scale fisheries organization (*Bivdu*) has in 2024 initiated a legal process claiming that the state is failing to abide with ILO 169 (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (article 27), which are both referred to in the SSF Guidelines. *Bivdu* assumes that the case will reach the Supreme Court and possibly the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg. The SSF Guidelines would support their position on tenure rights, should they invoke them in the process. But the case illustrates that their endorsement is just a beginning.

A tenure arrangement that is not consistent with meta-governance is likely to be legally challenged. Should fisheries authorities practice their mandate at first governance order in ways that small-scale fisheries people find are inconsistent with their rectitude as stated at meta-governance order, individual fishers and organizations that represent them may respond accordingly. People may lack the entitlement but not the rectitude.

The politics of tenure

For small-scale fisheries people around the world, realizing their human rights as an institutional fact is a constant struggle (Bavinck et al., 2018). With the SSF Guidelines, small-scale fisheries people have a stronger case to make, and they have a more powerful language to stand up and argue their rectitude. The SSF Guidelines did not create the rectitude of tenure

but gave it institutional verification and support.

Because of the SSF Guidelines, it is easier to argue that individual and collective human rights are a relevant concern when fisheries management and governance systems are designed, whether the instrument is tenure arrangements, quota regimes, marine protected areas or other instruments. Now, small-scale fisheries people can hold their government responsible for not respecting their rectitude. They can say that *"since you have agreed to supporting the SSF Guidelines, where human rights and dignity have a prominent position, you need to follow the advice given in the paragraphs"*.

Small-scale fisheries people are often not alone in the areas where they operate. They must often share their traditional fishing grounds with other actors, some of them newcomers. In the Blue Economy, small-scale fisheries need secure tenure rights more than ever. By endorsing the SSF Guidelines and the Tenure Guidelines, states have promised to deliver such security, but they may need a convincing moral argument to act.

Political arena

Without institutional facts like tenure rights, small-scale fisheries people are vulnerable to human rights abuse. They exist and operate in a territory where power asymmetries traditionally have worked in their disfavor. Tenure rights are empowering small-scale fisheries but may need a champion like *Bivdu* to represent and to fight for them both at second and first governing order. Institutions like tenure may not yet be the objective reality they need to be to exert power.

To achieve secure tenure, small-scale fisheries peoples must fight on a legal and a political front but also one at the level of their community, as there is no guarantee of a trickle-down effect from the meta-order to the first order. Indigenous people, like the Sami, have the international and domestic legislation on their side. Non-Indigenous small-scale fisheries are less fortunate but not defenseless. With the SSF Guidelines, they are all empowered, especially on the political arena where meta-order human rights claims are first made, and where the discourse is predominantly

about whose rectitude is more legitimate and should have a right of way.

Norway was the first to make ILO 169 the law on the land (Minde, 2001). Like other FAO member states, Norway has also endorsed the SSF Guidelines. Consequently, implementation should be straightforward. However, there are those who disagree with the idea regarding special tenure rights and "preferential access" (para 5.4) to small-scale fisheries and the Indigenous Sami. *Bivdu* is preparing to sue the government but must also fight a political battle, even among the Sami. Non-Indigenous small-scale fishers are also in a political struggle to secure their interests and have powerful rivals in the large-scale fisheries industry. The reality on the ground is, therefore, not in favor of small-scale fisheries. Institutional facts are still a work in progress but not as the SSF Guidelines envisage.

Rivals are not without rectitude when they argue that fishers should have equal rights regardless of ethnicity. Tenure arrangements are less controversial when they do not distinguish between Sami and non-Sami small-scale fisheries. The Norwegian model is to distinguish between municipalities with a Sami population, not between Sami and non-Sami small-scale fisheries residents. The so-called fjord lines inside which large scale fisheries vessels are not allowed to operate, are benefiting Sami small-scale fisheries. In the beginning, the fjord lines were controversial, but things have settled down after they reached a status of institutional fact.

Now, however, with the legal process that *Bivdu* has initiated, the water is boiling again, and the opponents of Sami tenure rights are drawing another card; should a political process be converted to a legal one? Which conflicts are better resolved through democratic debate and consensus. In the case of the Sami, should fisheries rights be a matter for the municipal assembly rather than being fought out in court? Are we, as a society, on a trajectory where democracy gets less and less space? This issue is beyond the Sami and the tenure issue.

Political poverty

In politics, proof is elusive. It is more about winning the argument. Being right about what is a tenure right is no guarantee that the political process will give it to you. Yours may not be a winning case. In a political process, people can ignore evidence if it serves their interest and then leave it to other people to defend theirs. A court, on the other hand, must consider all evidence for and against a position before a verdict is made.

The SSF Guidelines are created as an instrument for establishing institutional facts from a human rights perspective. Tenure arrangements are among the means that make small-scale fisheries people less vulnerable and more viable. As impoverished and marginalized, small-scale fisheries people tend to lose in political process. They are not only materially poor; they are also politically poor, something the SSF Guidelines seek to rectify.

Small-scale fisheries people need more than rectitude. It is not enough to be morally right. They must also have tangible entitlements that tenure provides. States must act on the principles. This is the "preferential access" that paragraph 5.2. is about. The issue must therefore be moved from the political to the legal arena. In the case of the Norwegian Sami small-scale fisheries, tenure has long been a political talking point. By bringing it into the legal arena, *Bivdu* aims to make it an institutional fact.

Negative freedom

Small-scale fisheries people need both individual and collective freedom to realize their life projects, to lead the life and build the community they want, but as philosopher Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997) phrased it, freedom is both positive and negative; freedom *to* is not the same as freedom *from.* Their positive freedoms are stressed in SSF Guidelines paragraph 6.1, *"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*."

Their negative freedoms are about shielding small-scale fisheries people as individuals and collectives from onslaught, marginalization, exploitation,

discrimination, and abuse, which paragraph 6.9 is about. First sentence reads: *"All parties should create conditions for men and women of small-scale fishing communities to fish and to carry out fisheries-related activities in an environment free from crime, violence, organized crime activities, piracy, theft, sexual abuse, corruption and abuse of authority."* Without negative freedoms, small-scale fisheries communities would not be able to realize their positive freedoms.

The governance approach of the SSF Guidelines is meant to secure both these freedoms, also through means of secure tenure rights. Those in Norway who now criticize the government for giving the Sami the advantages of the special entitlements seem to put more emphasis on their positive freedoms than their negative freedoms, while overlooking the moral rectitude behind the entitlements. Political processes are more suitable for positive freedoms (Slagstad, 2024), whereas the negative freedoms need the stability and security of institutional facts that the legal system helps in safeguarding. Neither individual nor collective human rights should be left to the whims of political logrolling.

3

Do We Need the UN?

It is clear for everyone to see that the United Nations (UN) are less united than the name suggests. Therefore, it is not as effective as it could have been. Especially, the Security Council often seems to be unable to reach needed consensus on important issues for the world. The situation in Ukraine, Yemen, and Gaza are current examples. The Council, therefore, needs a structural overhaul (Hirsch & Bowen, 2016). Its representation and decision-making rules leave out many countries while privileging others. Consequently, international conflicts where big countries and strong national interests are at stake remain unresolved. The Council could be more representative, and less special interest driven than it is.

Countries like India are absent in the Council. Africa and Latin America have no permanent role. Europe, on the other hand, is well represented. Both the UK with 68 million people and France with 64 million people have a permanent seat – that comes with veto power. Three African countries have more than a hundred million habitants – Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Egypt. Seven of the world's 13 countries with more than a 100 million habitants are in Asia. Only China is a permanent member. The Security Council is, therefore, not composed according to the size of the population. Instead, it is a result of the power-relations that came out of the World War II when the UN was created. In today's world, the representation of the Security Council is outdated, and the UN seems incapable of fixing it.

A different Security Council could make the UN more forceful in solving international conflicts. The UN could also, I assume, be more effective in mobilizing member states for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (the SDGs), which the General Assembly adopted in 2015 as a follow-up to the Millenium Development Goals (Shea, 2023). Widespread hunger and poverty (SDGs 1 and 2) require decisive measures. Climate change (SDG 13) raises problems that call for urgent action at a global scale. All SDGs are interlinked; we cannot have one without the other. When taking stock in 2030 on whether the SDGs have been achieved or not, we are likely to conclude like we did with the Millenium Assessment Goals that they have not, at least not to the full. The blame should then be directed at those whose responsibility it is to implement them, which is the states. The UN has no way of forcing states, should they remain passive. The SDGs are not obligatory in a legal sense.

Achievements

However, for all its shortcomings, the UN has delivered important services, policies, and legislations for the global community. It has proven to be an important alarm button.

The UN formulated, established the platform to negotiate, and provided the multilateral consensus on the SDGs. The UN gave us the Biodiversity Convention, the Law of the Sea Convention, the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Convention of Civil and Political Rights, the ILO 169 of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to name a few achievements, in addition to many 'soft law' instruments, like Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples (UNDRIP), and the SSF Guidelines, the Tenure Guidelines, and the Guidelines on the Right to Food.

Let's not forget, the UN created the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These conventions are

now domestic law around the world. They also help to empower the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

The UN helped create nearly 600 treaties. They took years, sometimes decades, in the making, involving states and civil society stakeholders in the process. I was a fly on the wall in Geneva when they negotiated the UNDRIP, where major countries expressed reluctance but finally endorsed it (Jentoft et al., 2003). Here the Indigenous movements showed their *tour de force*. But it took more than a decade to realize.

Global governance

The UN has created a more governable world despite not having unilateral power, as of a hierarchical governance system. Without the UN, the treaties and declarations would hardly have seen the light of day, and the world would be worse off because of it. Many of the problems that we are suffering from today, like widespread poverty, hunger, injustice, war crimes, environmental deterioration and natural disasters, are not the UN's fault. The UN is working against political tides, state and corporate self-interest and power. It is what it is because states are reluctant to give away their own power.

The UN is an open, multilayered, and interactive governance system, which is both a strength and a vulnerability. Decision-making processes are cumbersome but conducive to the legitimacy and support. A hierarchical UN system may be quick to decide but slow to implement because of the inertia further down in the governance system. Achieving both requires nuanced analysis and thoughtful institutional designs. But that again requires a process that is inclusive and just.

The UN can be criticized for not living up to these ideals, at least not to the full, and for not undergoing the change to accommodate them. The institutional constipation of the Security Council is trickling down in the organization. Alternatively, one may look at the UN as a work in progress, still learning and struggling to adapt to a changing world that is not supportive of the project of global governance. Security Council

resolutions are not always implemented at national level, even when adopted by the General Assembly. The UN does not have the power to enforce them on unwilling states. Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories is a case in point. The General Secretary has condemned the war on Palestinian in Gaza, but to little effect (Biryabarema, 2024).

Rational opportunism

Any change would require consensus from council members, who, with their veto power, have the interest and power to block it (Merelli, 2018). They also have the power to block any sanction on them. Brian Mulroney, who passed away in February 2024, was the prime minister of Canada in the 1980s when I was on a sabbatical in Halifax. He made one remark that must have made a strong impression on me, since I still remember it. The issue was Canada's position on Cuba, which was different and less antagonistic than that of the US. When asked to explain this difference, he said: "*Canada does what is in Canada's interest*." I do not think he was more friendly with Fidel Castro than Ronald Reagan was. He was simply a rational opportunist on behalf of his country. I often hear prime ministers and presidents say the same thing, also the Norwegian prime minister. Protecting and advancing the national interest is always at the top of the political priority list.

When the UN Security Council has proved to lack resoluteness in cases when it is needed, this is the reason. The state diplomats and officials are all rational opportunists working for their own country's interests, as they are instructed to do. The Council does not work according to the simple majority rule. They reach consensus only when their individual interests coincide, which does not happen often. The US has consistently voted against any measure to hold Israel accountable for atrocities in Gaza, like Russia has done on the Ukraine carnage. The US and Russia are by far the members of the Security Council that use their veto most often (Wikipedia, n.d. [a]).

The biased representation and the consensus decision and veto rule

would create problems for any organization. If Council members could reach consensus, it would enhance the legitimacy of the UN and strengthen its action capacity. With the rule of unanimity rather than simple majority, organizations like the UN have a built-in mechanism for inertia. This is also the situation within the EU, where Poland and Hungary's violation of EU rules could not be enforced. In 2024, we saw the same thing happening whether Sweden should become a member of NATO. In the end, it all hanged on a vote in Hungary's parliament.

Therefore, we cannot demand of the UN to act unless it has the power to do so. But that has proved difficult because states reject the idea of power sharing. This is a main reason why the US is reluctant to ratify UN Conventions, including the UNCLOS, the Law of the Sea, not even the CRC – the Convention of the Rights of the Child (Bold Business, n.d.). Like all other conventions that the US does not ratify, the issue gets entangled in the enduring power struggle between the federal and individual states. It is not necessarily because the US is against the substance of the law. The US often implements what they do not ratify. In contrast, many states do the opposite; they ratify but do not implement. This is also a likely scenario as far as the SSF Guidelines are concerned. Unlike a convention that has been ratified and then becomes domestic law, they are voluntary. Rational opportunists would easily excuse their lack of implementation.

How institutions change

If you cannot change the UN from the top, you may have a better chance by starting from the bottom, working inwards and upwards. For instance, you do not need to change the composition of the Security Council to change the ways the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division of FAO is working. The SSF Guidelines is a landmark achievement, not resulting from a Security Council resolution but from within the FAO. For institutional change to occur, pressure must sometimes come from the outside. The SSF Guidelines had a step zero, where CSOs were active and constructive, and which resulted in a so called zero draft. When state delegates met to

negotiate the exact language of the instrument in 2013, they had a draft document to work on, developed through widespread stakeholder and academic participation.

This assumes an open organization with eyes on the outside world, that listens to criticisms and is willing to learn from mistakes and adapt accordingly. It requires the imagination that things internal and external to the organizations can be different than they are. This is not always easy with organizations that have existed for a long time and where identities, values, rules and routines have become institutional facts (see chapter 2). Organizational change also involves transaction costs. It is to be expected that organizations are hesitant to fix something that functions, even if it does not work to perfection. Change is likely to occur incrementally rather than drastically, despite the impatience that the organization then is met with. The current orders have supporters both inside and outside the organization. Rapid, drastic, punctuated change is not likely to happen. Overcoming the institutional inertia may be long time coming.

Few, if any, organization can deliver up to everyone's satisfaction. The UN and its sub-units are no exception. Suggestions of defunding are common (Better World Campaign, 2-23). This is rational opportunism in the extreme, as the Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide discussed in New York Times in February 2014 regarding UNRWA (The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees), a nearly 75-year-old agency (New York Times, 2024). Similar suggestions were raised against WHO during the Covid 19 pandemic (Global Choice Center (n.d.). It has now resulted in the US and Argentina pulling out of it. The general resentment of the UN seems to be waiting for cases to hang it on. For all its horror, the pandemic was an event to express the bias against the UN.

It is possible that the super-powers can do without the UN, but hardly the rest of the world. Even big powers like the US are "not an island, entirely of itself", as John Donne (1557-1631) wrote. The are all "part of the main." We all live in a complex, interdependent world. Ignoring this simple fact is not in anyone's interest, at least in the long term. This was the idea that the UN was built on, and which is even more valid today.

Complex organizations

The UN is a huge and complex organization, with many suborganizations like UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, WHO, FAO, World Food Program, International Court of Justice – and the list goes on. The UN has more than 130,000 employes working around the world. Hardly any organizations are simple instruments in the hands of their leaders and/or owners. This is also true for small organizations (like those in fisheries). Whatever leaders do and whatever policies an organization arrives at, results from internal processes and interactions with actors in the environment.

Still, as would be expected, even in democratic systems, it is not always clear where power sits, who has it, and how it works. It is in the power of power to shield itself from inspection. Transparency is the enemy of power. In his book 'The Industrial State' (1967), John Kenneth Galbraith pointed at the middle management, what he called "the technostructure", as the location of power in big corporations. We cannot be sure that this is always the case, but here is at least a place to look for power. In the Security Council, veto is a powerful tool to have at one's disposal. But that does not imply that everyone in the UN conglomerate is powerless.

It is, therefore, difficult to know exactly how organizations work. We may have theories about it, often of conspiratorial tenet, but that is because we are never allowed to empirically test them. Researchers do not have access to the power centers, like board rooms. They never get detailed insights into how policy agendas are formed, by whom and how, what happens informally in the backrooms when decisions are/were reached. It is not for the public to follow the diplomacy that occurs within an organization like the UN.

But understanding what the UN is and stands for, and how power functions require a focus not just on what happens at the top but throughout the entire organizations. The same applies to sub-organizations like the FAO. The Committee of Fisheries (COFI) is FAO's central fisheries authority, with biennial meetings where member states deliberate on issues that are prepared and presented to them by FAO's administration.

Thus, understanding how FAO works, for instance relative to the SSF Guidelines, would also require a focus on how the administration works. We should assume that within hierarchical organizations, initiatives do not only emerge at the top. The top authority is just giving the go-ahead on issues needing their confirmation.

This is not how Max Weber imagined the "ideal type" bureaucracy. A closer inspection would reveal how the organization really works. Hierarchies are more interactive than one would expect. People are not always sitting idle, waiting for directives from the top. Thus, understanding the operation would require an eye on the people on the 'ground floor', who they are, how they work, and which formal and informal action space they have. We should not assume that their role and performance are only reactive to instructions from higher up in the hierarchy. In FAO, employees have mentors at the next level with whom they seek advice and feedback. It is not run as an army unit. The higher authority does not intervene on issues handled at lower level, if there is no need for it, even if it has the power to do so.

We cannot really know a complex organization to the full because we do not have access to the minds of people who work there. Leaders, administrators and employees are complex individuals who have many things on their mind. They experience role-conflicts and dilemmas both at a professional and personal level. Their mandates are not defined in detail or always stable. They may shift when new personnel come in. They are met with demands and expectations from the organization but also from themselves. People have ambitions of their own, but do not necessarily have the full overview of the organization they are working in. They discover boundaries of their action space when they trespass them. They may have ideas of what is good or bad right within the organization and their own role, but they cannot be sure that their analysis is correct or complete. Therefore, they cannot fully understand their own role in it and can only see the organization from their own vantage point.

FAO has about 14,000 employees, a couple of thousands of them in the Rome headquarters, and the rest scattered around the world in regional

offices that run their own agendas. The General Director needs his administration to keep him informed and up to date. He has experts to rely on. As Galbraith observed for industrial corporations, FAO has a technostructure but often calls on expertise that are external to the organization, which for instance happened when the SSF Guidelines were developed. The General Director is in a powerful position, but his sovereignty is limited.

For an organization with a global agenda, knowledge is always in short supply. It must continuously acquire new knowledge, building upon existing one. In my observation, FAO works in many ways as a university with a research, publication, and a teaching function. Like universities, it cannot be an 'ideal' hierarchical organization, even if it may look so on paper. It is an organization working as an interactive governance system designed to handle internal and external problems that are inherently "wicked", i.e. those that require constant attention but are hard to define. FAO has responsibility for SDG 1 on hunger and SDG 2 on poverty, but what exactly are they? These problems won't go away if FAO and UN should cease to exist. The mission would not be accomplished once and for all. Should UN succeed in bringing people above the poverty line, there is no guarantee that they would not descend below it again.

Another world

It is hard to imagine a world where all the things that the UN has achieved since its inception are gone, like those 600 treaties or indeed the organization itself. The SSF Guidelines, which now draw general support among the small-scale-fisheries people they are meant to serve, would not have been created without FAO. This does not imply that UN system is perfect. It is suffering from many of the typical bureaucratic illnesses, such as cumbersome decision-making processes and internal power struggles. But it is not stuck without a possibility for change. Everything that is social has been constructed and everything can be different than it is. Institutional facts are not written in stone. The UN is no exception to this rule. The

current composition of the Security Council is a construction ripe for change. We should applaud constructive local initiatives or those of nation states, but they will never fill the vacuum left by a dismantled UN.

Civil society organizations can perhaps fill gaps left by the UN. They played an important role in the creation of the SSF Guidelines. The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) spoke with passion, and knowledge during the Technical consultations, more so than many state delegations who often took a more defensive position. Without ICSF, the gender perspective would have been less pronounced in the text. Knowledge of small-scale fisheries is a critical governance factor. In a free world, CSOs like ICSF have a right to speak up without being persecuted and the FAO involves them in its processes. The open nature of FAO is a main reason behind the successful creation of the SSF Guidelines. FAO depends on CSOs for their implementation.

The SSF Guidelines could have been created at someone's desk in the Rome headquarters. Instead, they emerged through an extensive consultation process that involved thousands of stakeholders around the world over several years. The Technical consultations in Rome among state delegations, and with inputs from CSOs, were cumbersome. I was there as a member of the Norwegian delegation, and I remain impressed by the process. Every sentence was negotiated. Many concepts did not go easy with some delegates but who in the end were willing to compromise. The fate of Palestinian small-scale fisheries was the elephant in the room. The situation in the world has changed since 2014 and I wonder how the Technical consultations would have evolved in today's political climate. At the 2025 COFI meeting, the Ukraine war was an issue, where the Russian delegation fought hard to make it go away in the final report.

Pie in the sky

There are critical things to be said about the functioning of organizations with a global agenda, like the UN. But there are also lessons to be learned. I often wonder how some people can be so sure that they are right in their

criticism of things that are complex and requires in-depth knowledge that few people can possibly have. This chapter is written as a reflection on this phenomenon. I believe the position of Socrates is a healthier one when he said that *"All I know, is that I know nothing"*. This is a humbler, healthier attitude, which means that you ask questions that you thoroughly investigate before you draw conclusions and act on them.

Policies that are based on sweeping generalizations, like the perception that the UN is bad for the world., may create more harm than good, should they be taken seriously. Institutional reforms come with a great degree of uncertainty. No one can be sure about what they will bring. They might give surprises; they may even make things worse. Should organizations be terminated, the problem they were established to solve may reemerge. Wicked problems may remain dormant and resurface. Thus, there is no one who can with certainty predict what would happen if the UN was gone. We better think hard before we do something that we may later regret. Gut feelings are not to be trusted in decisions that are as consequential as institutional reforms often are.

I am an impatient reformist, not a burn and slash revolutionary. The day after the revolution, we would necessarily have to start thinking about how to establish something like the UN. The challenges we face are global in nature. They do not go away. Therefore, we need an institution with a global reach. Given the existing power relations, we may not be able to recreate an organization like the one we have. The UN was established at a time when the political climate was very different than what it is now. New institutions often emerge in unique circumstances that do not come again. Forming an alternative to the UN would be a waste of time, which we do not have. It has taken decades to build the UN that we have, and the project is still ongoing. A suggestion to restart it from scratch would likely be 'a pie in the sky.' We should remind ourselves what Dag Hammarskjöld, the Swedish UN General Secretary, said: *"the purpose of the United Nations is not to take mankind to heaven but to save humanity from hell"* (quoted in Shea, 2023).

4

The End of the Beginning

Ten years have passed since FAO member states adopted the SSF Guidelines. The global consensus on this extensive and remarkable text was an achievement of great significance for the hundreds of millions of small-scale fisheries people around the world. The Guidelines hold a promise of a better future, and they have reason to be optimistic but also cautious. With their unanimous endorsement, states committed themselves to secure small-scale fisheries people' human rights, customary practices, livelihoods, and communities, indeed their way of life. But are the SSF Guidelines being implemented? Are states living up to their commitments? Are they 'walking the talk'? (Chapter 1).

Although it is premature to draw a conclusion, important steps have been taken in many parts of the world, particularly in the Global South. It is important to routinely check what is happening with the SSF Guidelines, with which outcomes, and what can be learned from them. In several countries, a National Plan of Action has been developed (Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, 2021), such as in Malawi and Tanzania, and other countries are following suit. These are promising signs that the SSF Guidelines are being taken seriously, but such plans need also to be implemented. Talk may lead to more talk but is of little use if not followed up by action. The SSF Guidelines provide the advice for states and civil society organizations on what to do.

Celebrating the SSF Guidelines

In July 2024, prior to the COFI (FAO's Committee on Fisheries) biannual gathering of member states, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other small-scale fisheries stakeholders from around the world met to celebrate tenth anniversary of the SSF Guidelines (FAO, 2024). I was fortunate to attend the event. Participants were all in celebratory mood and spoke enthusiastically about how the Guidelines had created noticeable progress. They were unwavering in their belief in a better future for small-scale fisheries communities because of them.

Participants stressed the importance of equity and empowerment of men and women, and of making small-scale fisheries an opportunity for the young. They also emphasized issues and concepts that would need a stronger focus in the years to come. One of them were "food sovereignty," i.e., small-scale fisheries peoples self-governance of their food supply and security. This concept is not in the SSF Guidelines. Another frequently referred concept was the Blue Economy, which was not well known in 2014 and therefore not mentioned in the Guidelines. Now, the Blue Economy has become part of the conversation on coastal and ocean development all over the world. Judging from the SSF Summit, small-scale fisheries stakeholders are more worried than supportive of what this concept involves and what it may bring to their doorstep. They expressed fear for their tenure security and their livelihoods, indeed the very existence of their communities.

CSOs and NGOs were in majority on all the summit panels. Since the SSF Guidelines also define a role for them in the implementation, this was not surprising. Only states meet at COFI. The academic community, which the SSF Guidelines address as well, was less represented at the summit. Given that the implementation of the SSF Guidelines is a research issue, it would have been noteworthy to hear from them too. There is a need for a critical evaluation of the implementation efforts and roadblocks, indeed of the SSF Guidelines themselves.

The representation from the Global North was thin. This, one may suspect, is a consequence of the inherent bias in the SSF Guidelines. The

preface makes it clear that the SSF Guidelines are primarily (but not exclusively) for developing countries, which I was told at the time, was necessary for their endorsement and subsequent funding. The effect is that small-scale fisheries in Europe and in the circumpolar North do not get the attention they desperately need. Not only are the SSF Guidelines "voluntary," as all guidelines are, but the foreword gives states and CSOs a carte blanche to ignore small-scale fisheries in the Global North. This is a paradox when all the guiding principles and every single paragraph are relevant for the Global North just as much they are for the Global South. One would have expected that participants had expressed solidarity with brothers and sisters in the Global North, but they were not talked about.

COFI

State delegates at COFI voiced support of small-scale fisheries and the SSF Guidelines both in their verbatim statements and in their agreed upon draft report from the meeting. But there was also a noticeable difference between delegates from the Global North and the Global South, which is understandable given that most small-scale fisheries people live in the south. Delegates speak for their country's interests and from their geographical vantage points. Northern delegates were positive to the development of small-scale fisheries while protective of their industrial fisheries, whereas delegates from the Global South argued for the reverse. In the south, small-scale fisheries people have urgent problems, like poverty and food shortages. Their northern counterparts are under pressure emerging from new marine industries that are threatening their communities, livelihoods, and cultural heritage. Whereas the SSF Guidelines embrace a communitarian paradigm, northern governments have adopted a neoliberal agenda. As developing countries are also increasingly embracing the latter, they might take another position at future COFI meetings.

Some of the statements from the north felt reminiscent of the Technical consultations in 2013 and 2014 when delegates expressed opposition to the Robin Hood principle in SSF Guidelines paragraph 5.8 "*States should adopt*

measures to facilitate equitable access to fishery resources for small-scale fishing communities, including, as appropriate, redistributive reform, ..." Presumably, they would be happy to renegotiate this paragraph, but since that is not possible, they would be more inclined to ignore it. In 2024, in a new quota policy, the Norwegian government proposed to transfer quota shares from the offshore to the inshore sector in support of small-scale fisheries communities. The new policy prompted fierce resistance from the large-scale fishing operators and from parts of the country where industrial fisheries dominate. There were no references to the SSF Guidelines in the new quota policy. In Norwegian fisheries policy discourse, the Guidelines are never heard of.

Opposition

Even when states are championing the 'good' fisheries governance principles in the SSF Guidelines, like equity, human rights, and community empowerment, powerful stakeholders may attempt to hinder their implementation. Rather than engaging directly in global settings, like at COFI, they take the fight at home. The SSF Guidelines are voluntary and leave room for interpretation; they are fair game. The reforms that the Guidelines are advocating, will take time, and time may not work in their favor. States are also forgetful.

Powerful stakeholder may find it to be in their interest to maintain inconsistencies between the "governance orders" (Kooiman, 2003), i.e. between the governance principles, institutions, and interactions. Thus, they would support the principles but oppose their institutional implications and strive to take control of governance interactions. In Norway, large-scale fisheries operators argue for 'stable working conditions' as a euphemism for keeping the quota system as it is, since it largely works in their favor.

To implement the SSF Guidelines, state governments must maneuver between the powerful stakeholders who may attempt to subvert the concrete intervention. Some of these stakeholders may be part of government. Their agendas may not fully overlap with the holistic perspective of the

SSF Guidelines.

The Guidelines leave it to the academic community to examine the stakes, capacities, capabilities, and performances of involved parties. The academic focus on the NGOs and CSOs must be as sharp and critical as on the state, as they are both powerful actors in the small-scale fisheries "governing system." They have their own interests and images of themselves and the small-scale fisheries as a "system-to-be governed," as interactive governance theory would phrase it (Kooiman et al., 2005).

Empowerment or dependency?

The SSF Guidelines make a case for community empowerment, self-reliance, and freedoms. To be self-sustained, communities would need to become as independent from donors like CSOs as well as from the state. The support they receive establishes a "gift relationship" that is mutual, as sociologists Marcel Maus, Pierre Bourdieu and Richard Titmuss describe. Gifts create expectations of return gifting (See chapter 35 in Jentoft, 2022). Thus, the donors depend on small-scale fisheries as partners as much as these small-scale fisheries actors depend on them. The interactive relationship between such organizations and small-scale fisheries actors is worth examination. What do they get out of it? How are relationships structured? Who is empowering who? Like small-scale fisheries communities, CSOs need to sustain themselves. Their cooperation is of mutual benefit. By demonstrating dedication to the SSF Guidelines, they attract support from small-scale fisheries communities, FAO, and funding sources for their own sustenance. They acquire their identity from their partnerships.

From my years in Nicaragua, I have seen how donor support can make local communities dependent and passive. Instead, external support should make small-scale fisheries communities able to stand on their own feet by their own initiative. Otherwise, communities become vulnerable and less sustainable. When a donor project ends, which they always do, communities are back to square one while waiting for the next donor to

show up. For poverty ridden communities, support is urgent, but does not necessarily lead to development, only dependency.

A learning process

Small-scale fisheries need honest and transparent evidence-based politics and management. The implementation of the SSF Guidelines is no exception from this rule. Research data must be made available in ways that are useful to small-scale fisheries communities, policymakers, civil society actors and government agencies. These actors must know the SSF Guidelines, which they do not always do, even when their states have endorsed them. They must also understand small-scale fisheries, what they are, how they function, and how they change. They often do neither of these things.

The SSF Guidelines welcome the participation of researchers. With the Guidelines' holistic ambition, the implementation must be a trans-disciplinary and an adaptive learning process. The Guidelines point at which direction academia should go when searching for more knowledge about small-scale fisheries. There are research questions in every single paragraph. Much work has been done over the last ten years to provide evidence-based knowledge to support the implementation, which must continue to be done in the years ahead. Academic contribution is vital.

Evidence-based knowledge will always be in demand, but lack of it is no excuse for inaction. Urgent problems cannot wait and there is often enough knowledge to act responsibly and effectively. The process of implementing the SSF Guidelines is an ongoing process.. The small-scale fisheries sector continues to undergo change, with or without the SSF Guidelines. A research snapshot will never be sufficient. We need knowledge of how the SSF Guidelines can help in changing the lives of small-scale fisheries people. Policymakers, CSOs, and governments should stay tuned. With the 2024 SSF Summit and the positive attitude expressed by COFI delegates regarding implementation, we have just seen "*the end of the beginning and not the beginning of the end*," as Winston Churchill famously expressed in a

speech in 1942 after the Brits won the battle of El Alamein.

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5

Marching Order

States promised to implement the SSF Guidelines when they endorsed them. They have the authority and capacity to set things in motion. They also have legislative power to change institutional frameworks to release the development energy and ingenuity in small-scale fisheries communities. However, the state cannot do all this single-handedly. They need to bring non-state actors onboard in a partnership arrangement. Therefore, the SSF Guidelines define a role for civil society organizations such as those that met at the SSF Summit in July 2024 (see chapter 4). Civil society organizations can help to initiate and lead the implementation process from the bottom up, by educating and mobilizing people to take their destiny in the own hands. Implementation requires solid knowledge about the ecological and social territory it is stepping into. Institutional reforms do not happen in a social and ecological vacuum. Governors must know what they are reforming. The SSF Guidelines therefore extend a hand to the academic community. Thus, paragraph 2.3 lists broad range of contributors:

> *"These Guidelines are addressed to FAO Members and non-Members, at all levels of the country, as well as to subregional, regional, international and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and small-scale fisheries actors (fishers, fish workers, their communities, traditional*

and customary authorities, and related professional organizations and CSOs). They are also aimed at research and academic institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and all others concerned with the fisheries sector, coastal and rural development and the use of the aquatic environment."

Researching small-scale fisheries

When available, fish was always a food item. Every country that has a coast or inland waters, would have people fishing there. It is also likely that there would be someone in the universities or research institutions who would take a research interest in small-scale fisheries. Biologists were involved from early on. Social scientists have done fisheries research at least since the late 1940s when Raymond Firth published his seminal study of the Malay fishers (Firth, 1975). As a student in the 1970s, I had a rich literature to delve into, also written in my own language. It is impossible to establish who were the first to do research on small-scale fisheries. We all stand on someone's shoulders.

It is not a new thing that an institution like FAO is requesting the input from researchers, not only social scientists. My first involvement with FAO about small-scale fisheries was in 1989. That same year I attended an international research conference on small-scale fisheries in Montpellier, France, organized by the late cultural anthropologist Jaques Weber. Since then, small-scale fisheries have drawn increasing research interest. It is a prominent topic at the biannual People and the Sea MARE conference at Amsterdam University, the TBTI World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress series, and by FAO itself, for instance through its Hidden Harvest project. Social scientists were involved in drafting the original text of the SSF Guidelines that state delegates based their deliberations on during the Technical consultations in 2013 and 2014 prior to COFI. These actions and events are simply too many to mention.

There are new research questions implicit in all the hundred paragraphs, also regarding their implementation. The SSF Guidelines tell the govern-

ments to stimulate more research Paragraph 11.9 posits:

> *"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. 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..."*

The academic community should welcome this paragraph. As Pasqual-Fernández et al. stated (2020, p. 2): "*Small-scale fisheries have been marginalized in research and decision making for decades all over the world. However, this underestimates their true relevance*."

The academic community can help implementing the SSF Guidelines with the knowledge they bring. The Guidelines are also an opportunity for them to pursue their own research interests. Hence, they have a stake in the implementation. As Figure 2 shows, there is an exponential growth rate (at least until 2022) in small-scale fisheries publications, which started well before 2014. It is reasonable to believe that the SSF Guidelines have inspired researchers to jump on the bandwagon. Lack of knowledge about small-scale fisheries can no longer be an excuse for states and CSOs not to act on the SSF Guidelines.

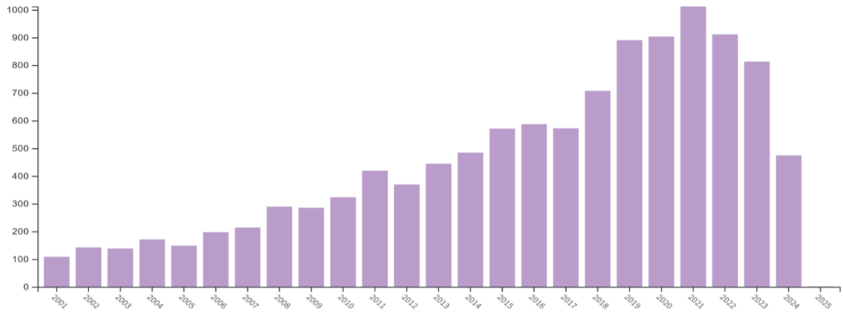


Figure 2. *The number of publications on small-scale fisheries over the past decades. Source: Web of Science*

Learning from and for

The SSF Guidelines are a marching order for small-scale fisheries researchers. With the funding the member states committed themselves to provide, comes the social responsibility to help solve the problems that keep small-scale fisheries people marginalized, disempowered, and impoverished. Academics cannot expect governments and other resourceful actors to implement this paragraph unless small-scale fisheries researchers are committing themselves to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

The SSF Guidelines do not tell researchers what to do; that is something they must figure out themselves. Researchers must use their own imagination while listening and learning from what small-scale fisheries people are telling them, and from observing what governments and other actors are up to. Researchers will also find relevant research questions within their disciplines. Small-scale fisheries have been a long-term subject of empirical research and should be a source of inspiration. Disciplines offer conceptual frameworks, which are useful in small-scale fisheries research.

Researchers may use their personal history as a source of inspiration. They may have own experiences of small-scale fisheries to tap from. Things they have observed outside small-scale fisheries may also be recognizable inside them. The research question would consequently emerge from

the urge to understand "*the intimate realities of ourselves in connection with larger realities*" (Wright Mills, 1959/1999, p. 15). This is also a perspective that researchers should bring to small-scale fisheries. The problems associated with implementing the SSF Guidelines may be the same as with implementing other international soft law instruments.

TBTI has made the SSF Guidelines a research focus. Its most recent publication on the SSF Guidelines, Nakamura et al. (2024), explores their legal dimension. The Guidelines are 'soft law' but they call for legal reforms to enhance the standing of small-scale fisheries. Whether the SSF Guidelines have triggered such a law process, is a research question. The Nakamura et al. book consists of country case studies, which is a useful approach when researching the implementation of the Guidelines.

Costa Rica was the first to introduce new legislation inspired by the SSF Guidelines and other countries have followed suit. Implementation of international law is rarely a linear process but one of a political struggle, and therefore an issue for social research. The Guidelines have also inspired other countries to make similar moves. The National Plans of Action for implementing the SSF Guidelines that FAO is spearheading should include research. They raise interesting questions regarding planning processes and outcomes and there is a wealth of planning theory literature to draw from (FAO, 2023).

Research manifesto

Maarten Bavinck and Jojada Verrips (Amsterdam University) developed what they called a research manifesto from consulting colleagues, previous keynote speakers, and participants of the 2019 Mare conference. The manifesto was published in Maritime Studies in 2020. Topics mentioned are of a general nature, but also relevant in a small-scale fisheries context, for instance regarding climate change, which is focused in the SSF Guidelines. In addition, the manifesto raises issues pertaining to the Blue Economy, which is also an important TBTI issue, elaborated through the Blue Justice (Jentoft et al., 2022) and the Blue Justice Alert concepts and

initiatives (TBTI Global, 2024).

The manifesto mentions the situation in local communities, young people, and inter-generational and gender relations, as well as challenges pertaining to governance, and outlines concrete research questions for all these topics. The manifesto favors interdisciplinary research and theory development: "*We should not forget that empirical (field) research must go hand in hand with theory development. Our aim should therefore be to develop social science theory based on coastal, marine empiricism from all over the world.*" (Bavinck & Verrips, 2020, p. 123). As important as such an approach is for the advancement of small-scale fisheries research, it can also benefit the implementation of the SSF Guidelines as a global instrument. This applies to all issues described in it. From exploring issues in small-scale fisheries, one may also learn something that has value beyond this sector. TBTI has its own research list of priorities in its "big questions" and its twelve research clusters (TBTI Global, n.d. [b]) all expressed in the context of the SSF Guidelines (TBTI Global, n.d. [c]).

Phrasing research questions

Small-scale fisheries will never be exhausted as an intellectual endeavor. They are part of our cultural heritage and a source of food and livelihood. They have both unique and common features. Like social and ecological systems in general, they are undergoing constant change and are confronted with new challenges. New people will produce original ideas as their area of research develops.

New concepts, like the 'blue economy,' lead to new perspectives and topics. Programmatic statements like the manifesto may inspire people to phrase novel research questions on familiar topics. They may help students and early career researchers to get started. Nevertheless, lists of research topics should never stand in the way of ingenuity and innovation.

In raising new research questions for small-scale fisheries, the only limiting factor is our imagination. Famous scientists are not only known for their discoveries but also for the questions they phrased. Isaac Newton

asked the simple question of why apples fall to the ground. To formulate it, he used his eyes and imagination.

Neither is there a limitation to where scientists may find inspiration: in their disciplines, public policies, communities, global challenges. Or perhaps in their individual stories, art, history or in daily life, as when sitting under the apple tree? Travelling is a source of inspiration. If you cannot go to a new place, you can travel in your own mind. If you cannot explore what poverty is in real life, you may imagine how it may affect your own life if you should be so unfortunate to experience losing your job and all your possessions. From there, you may query what experience poverty is, how people in small-scale fisheries cope with it, and indeed what poverty is.

Small-scale fisheries researchers may thus phrase research questions that are theoretically large-scale, but examine them in empirical settings that are small. As Conrad Arensberg (1961) argued, communities should not just be a research "focus" but also a research "locus" – a place where researchers situate themselves when researching issue that are "big." This is the idea with case studies, which is about a case of something more general like poverty, than the case itself. TBTI has published 350 case studies in 85 countries (TBTI Global, n.d. [d]. Within them, you may find answers to the questions of the research manifesto.

Case studies are not the only research tool that may provide lessons about small-scale fisheries. They illustrate what small-scale fisheries are, and depict a different, more vivid image than a graph or a table. They leave n vivid image in your mind. As a research instrument, they tell a story with a purpose, which underpins the argument you are making. on an issue that is beyond the image that the story conveys with its empirical detail. It is what the case is a case of that is important. They do not just tell the story but also reflect on what it tells us and what lessons we should draw from it.

II

Culture Matters



Mazatlán, Mexico. 2024 © Ratana Chuenpagdee

6

Which Road?

You do not have to be a scholar in literature to be moved by a poem. The poet wrote it for you, not for the professional critic. Reading it – or listening to someone reciting or singing it, can leave you with a powerful, heartfelt, and unforgettable impression. The poet wants you to see and think and feel it. Robert Frost's (1874-1963) beautiful poem 'The Road Not Taken' does exactly that, at least to me. Here, the poet (Frost) finds himself at a fork in the woods and must decide whether to go right or left. He cannot see where the paths are leading but one seems more trodden than the other, and he decides for the latter. "And that has made all the difference", he concludes.[14]

Interpretation and meaning

Any poem can be interpreted in different ways. They are meant to speak to your heart and mind. The image they leave with you is yours. There is no "mind control", as in George Orwell's dystopian science fiction novel '1984.' You are free to interpret and use it as you prefer, as I will do here to argue something about the SSF Guidelines.

You may take Frost's poem literary by imagining yourself in his situation.

[14] https://shorturl.at/nzkQ8

But you may also think that the poem tells a bigger story about the agony of choice, of having to decide which path to take in your own life, without knowing where it will bring you. You cannot walk them both and must take the chance that the road chosen will not lead to where you do not want to go. Your choice, therefore, had consequences that you were not prepared and hoped for. It may leave you with regrets. You should have taken the other road.

Frost probably wanted you to read his poem as more than a story or a report. He intended to convey a message. 'The road not taken' is a metaphor which Frost uses to say something about the choices that life involves The meaning is implicit and therefore yours to explicate. You would appreciate a poem more if you can imagine the deeper lesson. That is how metaphors make sense. The title of Chapter 1; 'Walking the talk' can only be understood figuratively. You do what you say you should do, as when you endorsed the SSF Guidelines. You do not just make empty promises; you fulfill them by implementing the Guidelines.

Life is full of such 'forks' where you must choose between paths as they lie there in front of you – one "trodden black," the other green because few have walked them before you. Or, as Frost does not say, you may decide to walk where "no man has gone before," as in the science fiction Stark Trek series. This is the most adventurous route, which takes more courage. It takes you through unfamiliar territory. Some succeed, like Roald Amundsen who was the first man on the South Pole, while others fail, like Robert Scott who arrived there about a month after Amundsen and perished on the return. Poems have been written about them.

The choice these explorers made was daring. They took their chance and hoped for the best. Amundsen is praised for his achievement, Scott for his courage. It was their ego and heroic dreams that drove them to Antarctica. But also, more modest people, like you and I, must choose between alternative life courses where the reward is uncertain and risks are looming, and where the choice will "make all the difference." Even for modest people, their dreams rather than meticulous calculus drive their choice. Still, we cannot have much trust in them. *"Is a dream a lie if it don't*

come true or is it something worse?" sang Bruce Springsteen in 'The River.'

Way forward

In 2014, FAO member states found themselves at a 'fork' in the woods. By endorsing the SSF Guidelines they made a choice on where to go with small-scale fisheries. Member states pledged to travel the 'low' road that takes them through the communities, rather than the 'high road' that leads outside them. On the low road there are meeting traffic, stop signs, bends and hills, bumps and potholes, and people living along the way. The high road follows a straight line where you can go fast and non-stop. The only thing you care about is where the road ahead will take you.

The SSF Guidelines are embedded in a communitarian, people centered paradigm, not in a neoliberal paradigm that is rooted in markets and the industrial model. With their endorsement, states agreed to choose the former route, but they only made a promise; they signed a 'letter of agreement,' not a binding legal contract. The SSF Guidelines are not obligatory, just 'voluntary.' Still, the Guidelines are embedded in international law, which states have ratified and thereby made mandatory. The voluntary, soft-law nature of the SSF Guidelines does not 'soften' their international 'hard law' references, like those pertaining to human rights.

The SSF Guidelines are not a blueprint but a compass and a roadmap. As any other map, it lacks detail. The potholes are unmarked. Those are for each member state to fill in. The road is bumpy here and there. There are hills to climb and roadblocks to be passed. Bridges must be built. And there will be new forks' that will require pausing and a decision on where to go next. We do not know exactly where "the road not taken" leads, or that the road taken has an endpoint. Like "wicked problems" addressed by the SSF Guidelines, solutions have no stopping rule or finishing line. There is a road leading into the community but also out of it, and you cannot assume that you have reached the destination.

Occasionally you would need to check the map if you are on the right track. If learning that you have lost your way, you would have to correct

your course. You may discover that you must fix the road to be able to continue. You may also have to change traffic rules, as the SSF Guidelines argue when they call for legal reforms. The implementation of the SSF Guidelines would need recurrent evaluation. Is the governance approach to sustainable small-scale fisheries on the wrong path or does it need to change course? And what difference would it make?

The SSF Guidelines have high ambitions. We should, as Frost posits in the closing line, expect that the different pathways would make "all the difference" for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries. 'The road' does not have an endpoint. We are bound to continue to travel.

7

Culture War

Small-scale fisheries people are fighting what Davison Hunter (1991) originally coined a "cultural war." They are not only in conflict over access to resources and markets, but also over images, ideas, and perceptions of what fisheries are all about and should be. Are they for profit or for people, for business or livelihood, family, and community? If small-scale fisheries lose the cultural war, they are likely to lose out in the Blue Economy as competition from ocean and coastal actors intensifies. We are thus at a fork in the road (chapter 6) and must choose which direction to take. For small-scale fisheries people, the choice will make a huge difference. They have a democratic right to be part of that decision.

To understand what the stakes are, one must look beyond law and economics and dig into our common values about what makes life meaningful and communities secure. Our social relations are not only about capital'. They make us human. Neither are small-scale fisheries only about food security. "*Man shall not live on bread alone*." We do not need to complete the sentence in Matthew 4.4., to grasp the wisdom expressed. We cannot live without food, but we need more than filling our belly with bread – or fish. Thus, there must be more to the story that the SSF Guidelines tell than food security and poverty alleviation. We also need to fill our heart and mind. We must have culture.

We need to find meaning in our way of life, in our relationships with

others, in the natural and cultural beauty that surrounds us. None of those things are for economic gain, but for us to value for their own sake. These are things we cannot take for granted but must protect and preserve. To survive, small-scale fisheries must triumph in the cultural war. They are economically and politically weaker than many of the opponents in the Blue Economy. They are, however, not without weapons, but must know what they are and how to use them. This is something the academic profession can help with.

Cultural heritage

The EU Council conclusions of 21 May 2014 perceive cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe (2014/C 183/08):

> *"[C]ultural heritage consists of the resources inherited from the past in all forms and aspects - tangible, intangible and digital (born digital and digitized), including monuments, sites, landscapes, skills, practices, knowledge and expressions of human creativity, as well as collections conserved and managed by public and private bodies such as museums, libraries and archives. It originates from the interaction between people and places through time and it is constantly evolving. These resources are of great value to society from a cultural, environmental, social, and economic point of view and thus their sustainable management constitutes a strategic choice for the 21st century."*

With such an inclusive perspective on cultural heritage, conservation and development efforts must be broad and comprehensive – even holistic – as cultural heritage is more than bits and pieces but comes together as a systemic whole. Explanations of why cultural heritage is eroded or sustained must be tentative and subject to empirical investigation, as what is done in the special collection of Delaney and Frangoudes in Maritime

Studies[15]. They define maritime cultural heritage *"as the material and immaterial cultural attributes of coastal or maritime-connected groups which have been inherited from previous generations"*. (Delany & Frangoudes, 2024, p. 26). Cultural is for them a "super-concept," that connects a wide diversity of heritage types (tangible and intangible), and cuts across a variety of public policies beyond the cultural, and includes those *"related to regional development, social cohesion, agriculture, maritime affairs, environment, tourism, education, the digital agenda, research and innovation"* (CEU 2014, p. 2). They argue that *"the loss of cultural heritage can weaken people's attachments with one another, their history, and with society, thereby increasing strife and a sense of* anomie *and decreasing cooperation and sense of identity"* (p. 25).

Originally Greek, the "anomie" concept is central in the sociology of Emile Durkheim and translates as lawlessness, norm confusion and –erosion. If fishing communities lose their moral foundation, they are in trouble. Small-scale fisheries depend on their community's ability to uphold values and norms among those who grow up there. The inability to do so would constitute what Bonnie McCay and I (1998) described as "community failure" (in contrast to "market failure"). Cultural conscience may help to avoid such failure, but only if members value and nurture it.

Cultural change is hard to envisage in real time. You may not notice that the cultural heritage is under threat and may be gone before you know it. What is a stake is not always clear, not even to the stakeholders. You don't conserve cultural heritage of small-scale fisheries unless you sustain the fishery as a practice and a living system. At the same time, a vibrant culture is also a condition for keeping small-scale fisheries alive. The link runs both ways. Culture is both a primary phenomenon and an epiphenomenon, a cause and an effect of a thriving small-scale fishery. One will not be secured without the other.

[15] Special Collection on Coastal and Maritime Cultural Heritage. Maritime Studies, https://link.springer.com/collections/cdgfgbfbbj

Cultural identity

Cultural identity gives meaning to individuals and groups. It enables a person or a people to explain to themselves and to others who they are. I can say that I am a Norwegian. It is part of my identity by which I recognize myself and fellow Norwegians and by which foreigners recognize me from others. It only makes sense to say it because other Norwegians are out there and because there are people in the world who are not. Thus, individuality is not about singularity and uniqueness. It is about how you compare yourself to other people.

Being a small-scale fisher makes you both distinct and indistinct. It tells you who you are both as an individual and relative to other people. You can see yourself as a unique individual but also as one of your peers, and other people will regard you as one of them. You carry cultural heritage in who you are and what you do. Culture helps you in seeing how you fit in. It gives historical depth to your identity. You are part of a tradition, living a life much like those who came before you and whose torch you are carrying. You acquire your values, norms, and skills in the family and the community where you grow up and from those you fish with. You learn how to behave to fit in. These are the things that Hegel called "Sittlichkeit." These values and norms and behavioral conventions were there before you. They are not your choice but your commitment and responsibility. They are the benchmarks of your life, which make it possible for you to make reasoned and rational choices. Without them, you lose your "direction home" and become "like a rolling stone", as Bob Dylan noted.

Fishing has a spatial dimension. Small-scale fishers operate from the community where they live, from where they leave in the morning and return at night. They do not go fishing just anywhere, in unfamiliar territory, but to places they know have fish. Fishers get their local knowledge from people who fished there before them, from people they know, are related to, and who they identify with. This knowledge is part of the cultural heritage of fishing, which you get for free as a gift because you are not just anyone to them. Thus, local knowledge as a cultural heritage

has a sociological component. The way it is shared determines who belong, who are insiders and outsiders. It connects you to the community.

In small-scale fisheries, cultural heritage does not comprise a constant stock of traditional knowledge that is stuck in the past. It is a living experience in a dynamic ecological and social system. It would be hard to find small-scale fisheries communities where everything has remained the same. Small-scale fisheries are a dynamic system where change is a constant. You may follow in your ancestor's footstep, but you may add to the knowledge base by drawing from your own experience and those of your peers. How and why, and with what consequence culture change occurs, is a question for researchers.

The cultural heritage of small-scale fisheries has a material footing, the fish. It is also grounded in social practice, fishing. To uphold the heritage, it must remain a living experience. It will not survive in a museum. People must know how to fish. You learn to fish by fishing. Your identity is associated not only with where you come from, but also with what you do. As I discuss in chapter 18 in book 1 ('Life above water'), a fisheries museum has an important function in a community by reminding people of their cultural heritage. They create the link between what was and what is. But museums cannot substitute the small-scale fishery as a living, learning experience.

Cultural revitalization

From 2003 to 2007, I was coordinator of a collaborative project between my university and URACCAN University in Bluefields, Nicaragua. Here, we did what I have argued for above, which is reflected in the project title: 'Cultural Revitalization and Natural Resources on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua'. One of the things we did was to support the language education of the Indigenous peoples we were working with, believing that local knowledge is harbored in Indigenous language. If you lose the language, which is a real threat among Indigenous people everywhere, the knowledge will also be lost. We helped finance the development of school

material that would assist teachers teach in the Indigenous Rama language.

Amidst their poverty these Indigenous small-scale fisheries communities, a local museum was among the things local people were interested in building. The idea that poor people have nothing left to lose, is false. If their cultural heritage is gone, they have nothing left, and they would be defenseless. In this project, we wrote about their heritage in two edited volumes (Gonzalez et al., 2007; Koskinen et al., 2008).

Small-scale fisheries are themselves a cultural heritage. The Indigenous and ethnic peoples along the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua (the Rama, Sumu, Ulwa, Miskitu, and Garifuna) have always fished. On top of that, they built communities where they could share knowledge on how to survive. For that they need their language to function as a community. They also need spirituality for having something to believe in, and a morality to guide their co-existence. Their stories are unique in so many ways, but also common because they are the human story that we all live, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. With a colleague, I have argued that non-Indigenous small-scale fishers have much to learn from the way Indigenous people in this regard (Davis & Jentoft, 2001).

Securing a future for small-scale fisheries is about upholding a cultural heritage for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. You do not create a future for small-scale fisheries by forgetting about their past. The fact that it is old does not make it old fashioned. Rather, it is about making tradition as part of modernity. It is bound to be a challenge. Not everyone looks at it in this way. Many falsely seem to believe that cultural heritage is holding small-scale fisheries back.

Burden of proof

In Norway, the Indigenous Sami small-scale fisheries people are daily up against this line of argumentation. They must confront the notion that they stand in the way of modernity because they cannot themselves be modern, as modernity is typically perceived. However, the gear they use and the way they fish, are not different from how ethnic Norwegians small-scale

fisheries are fishing. They have their tenure rights and have demonstrated that they can change. They have nothing to prove. They do not have to justify their existence to other than themselves. Their cultural heritage requires the respect of others, as the SSF Guidelines point out.

In Nicaragua, I learned that it is easier to lose than to rebuild cultural heritage, once it is lost. When a fish resource is over-exploited, the species gets on the red list. There is no red list for cultural heritage, even if it risks the same extinction. Fighting against the forces which have brought both the species and the cultural heritage close to extinction is therefore also a cultural war. It must be fought where their rights of access to resources and markets are violated. But it must also be fought in the local communities and in the minds of people. The cultural war must be battled at the "base" as well as the "super-structure", to stay with the idioms of Marx.

Preserving a culture should not be an issue of last resort when everything else that keeps small-scale fisheries secure is decimated. It should be a constant concern of small-scale fisheries governance and management. In Nicaragua, it may be too late to secure the cultural heritage, when the Indigenous language within which local knowledge is kept and transmitted to new generations, is about to get lost. There is few Indigenous speaking individuals left. English and Spanish are taking over. The native Rama dictionary is insufficient for saving an Indigenous language, but it is there for the future generations to learn from, should they be motivated. A dictionary is a rescue for the language from complete extinction. It functions like a museum.

8

A Cultural Icon

In early 2024, I accepted an invitation to be part of an international panel assigned to assess the revision of the 2008 eel (*Anguilla anguilla)* management in Sweden, which has long been in danger of going extinct. The Swedish situation is not unique. The eel is in crises all over Europe, with stock abundance of 3-4 percent of its pristine state. It is therefore on IUCN's list of critically threatened species.[16] There is no biologically distinct Swedish eel stock. It is only distinct in an administrative sense. Sweden cannot save the stock by itself but must still do its part (Cox et al., 2024).

Should the eel go extinct, it would mean the end of a ten-million-year tradition of travel across the Atlantic to the Swedish estuaries, lakes and rivers from the Sargasso Sea, where the spawning takes place, across the Atlantic to the Swedish estuaries, lakes and rivers where it matures before it returns to spawn where it came from. Thus, the eel has the opposite travel pattern than the salmon. The eel is a catadromous species, the salmon anadromous. It would be a sad and shameful tragedy if the eel disappears. It would also mean the loss of a fishery that has long been a cultural practice in Sweden. The eel is an economic resource, a source of livelihood, and a popular food item. The eel fishery has deep historical roots and has long

[16] *Anguilla anguilla* (European Eel); https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/60344/216177498

achieved the status of cultural icon (Gjörtler, 1996).

Mortality

There are multiple reasons for the dismal state of the eel stock. It is difficult to determine how they matter relative to each other, and who is to blame. Pollution is mentioned. Deterioration of the eel habitats is another factor. Overfishing likewise. Poaching is not uncommon. But in this case, the main villain is, without much doubt, the hydroelectric power stations. There are about 15,000 dams in Swedish rivers, which means that the chance for the eel to get through the turbines alive on the way down, which they must do to reach the sea, is slim. The estimate is that the turbines are responsible for about 70 percent of eel mortality. Hardly any eel survives the turbines.

Unlike the fishing where every eel caught legally is counted, no one knows the exact figure of eel killed by turbines. Fishing is heavily regulated whereas power companies have it easier, although there are suggestions of reducing their number. ICES[17] recommends that the eel fishery in Sweden should be closed, which the government has been reluctant to do. It is willing to reduce fishing effort but wants to keep the fishery alive. Eel fishers find it unjust that they are the ones who must carry the heaviest burden of reducing mortality.

The government introduced restocking as a crisis management measure. Glass-eel (baby eels) purchased from England and later Spain, is transported and placed in lakes and rivers (above the turbines) as a measure for the fishing to continue. However, it does not contribute in rebuilding the stock itself; instead, it gives the popular impression that the state of the stock is better than it is. The restocking is controversial from a biological standpoint. As one biologist said in an interview: *"Restocking is just a way of feeding the turbines."* Now, there seems to be consensus that the practice should be terminated. It is not sustainable and was not meant to be a permanent solution.

[17] The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

While the E-NGOs are pressuring the Swedish government to follow ICES's advice, the government wants to keep the eel fishery going, at least at some minimum level. I do not know how realistic it is to save the Swedish eel fishery. It is not easy when the main culprit for eel mortality is the hydroelectric power stations, which produce green energy that Sweden needs. They are an industry with considerable political clout. Yet, if the eel is going to survive, drastic measures are needed. The turbine technology to reduce eel mortality exists, but it would be a costly undertaking to install.

Balancing act

In 2022, the responsible Swedish minister stated unequivocally: "*Swedish eel fishing is a cultural heritage. We need to ensure that this culture and tradition does not disappear*." (Clarhäll, 2023). The eel is regarded as a charismatic species and a public good. It is part of the country's historical legacy. For the new eel management plan, this would be a concern.

Since eel is on the red list of endangered species, urgent and radical reduction of mortality rates is needed. Although the fishery would not be the only target for regulatory intervention, the eel mortality would also be an issue within the fishery sector. Reducing fishing effort, while at the same time conserving the eel fishery culture, constitute a policy dilemma. At least in the short term but possibly for good, the cultural heritage of the eel fishery risks extinction. Given that the culture is dependent on the eel fishery and the eel fishery is dependent on the eel as a stock and a species, the management of the eel fishery requires a delicate balancing act.

The 2008 EMP has a biological and ecological focus, whereas the social and cultural aspects of the eel fishery are omitted. In the public discourse on the eel fishery in Sweden, the emphasis tends to be the reverse. In the new management plan, closer scrutiny of the cultural heritage goal would be relevant. The concept is complex as it contains multiple elements, some of which may not be worth conserving while others are essential for the eel culture to survive. This is not a biological issue.

A justification for overlooking the cultural heritage is the assumption

that if the eel stock is viable, the eel fishery will continue, and the cultural heritage will remain intact by itself. This is not an unreasonable hypothesis, but it is also simplistic. As a living culture, however, the eel fishery must be a viable activity and source of livelihood and employment. Someone must then keep up the tradition. Traditional elements must be recognizable. To secure the cultural heritage, the eel fishery must continue as a small-scale, family-based, and community-driven occupation.

From the cultural perspective, the eel fishery could perhaps survive as a subsistence activity. Eel fishing families will then be able to sustain their traditional harvesting practices and way of life. The local eel fishing knowledge would then be maintained by new generations of family eel fishers. And eel would still be on the dinner table. In Sweden, there is much cultural inheritance in eel as food. Either as a species, a food resource, or a livelihood, the eel comes with an intriguing narrative, in addition to its commercial value.

Epiphenomenon

Cultural traditions, competencies and values are inherited from people who know how to catch eel and to prepare it as food. Families and communities are the heritage guardians. If the traditional knowledge does not stay intact over generations in families and communities, it will get lost. Therefore, one cannot take for granted that as long as the eel stock is secured, the rest will follow suit and take care of itself.

Culture is not just an epiphenomenon, a derived occurrence. It has explanatory value. As the eel fishery upholds the cultural tradition, the reverse is also the case, as explained in chapter 7. Therefore, the new management plan should build on the premise that cultural heritage is both a dependent and an independent variable – and outcome as well as a cause (*explanandum* and *explanans*) in an iterative process.

Although difficult to measure, the cultural heritage of the eel fishery may still be described and analyzed qualitatively in ways that provide concrete planning guidance (Krogseng, 2016). To know the cultural

heritage of the eel fishery is to know the history, the institution, the practice, the knowledge, and the livelihood of eel fishing. It also requires the understanding of what the eel fishery means to the people who depend on it, and whose eel-related lifestyle is integral to their identity.

As an independent variable, the cultural heritage must be cared for through direct intervention, and there must be a plan for how to do it. Such a plan would transcend traditional fisheries department mandates. Cultural heritage in the context of the eel fishery is also beyond fisheries management and planning. According to the EU Council, "*cultural heritage cuts across several public policies beyond the cultural, such as those related to regional development, social cohesion, agriculture, maritime affairs, environment, tourism, education, the digital agenda, research and innovation. These policies have a direct or indirect impact on cultural heritage and at the same time cultural heritage offers a strong potential for the achievement of their objectives. Therefore, this potential should be fully recognized and developed*." (Council of the European Union, 2014).

Inheriting culture

There will not be a viable eel fishery without a living eel fishery culture. To become competent, responsible, and trustworthy eel fishers, they must also acquire the traditional norms and values. They become *bona fide* eel fishers by growing up in a functioning eel fishing community where the cultural practice, ethics and narrative of eel fishing lives on. Then, they will themselves be carriers of the cultural heritage of the eel fishery (Sandstöm, 2018). Therefore, the cultural heritage cannot afford that the chain of knowledge transfer is broken. It does not take more than a generation for the cultural heritage of eel fishing to get lost. Afterwards, the only thing left is the memory of the eel fishery that once was.

The effect may be immediate and self-enforcing. If the eel fishing community starts disintegrating culturally and morally, rules cannot be effectively implemented from the inside. The local community would lose its ability to self-regulate. No one is left to care for the sustainability of the

eel. Consequently, the poaching that the 2008 EMP addresses becomes a predictable management problem, and if it is allowed to soar, a threat to the eel stock. Poaching may become part of the cultural heritage. In the community, breaking rules become an acceptable part of eel fishing.

Further, poaching becomes government's – rather than community's concern. This easily creates an atmosphere of public stigmatization of fishers and fishers' hostility vis-á-vis the government. When eel fishers are regarded with suspicion in the government and the public eye, the occupation becomes less attractive. Young people will think twice before taking it up. A culture is a sentiment that needs positive connotations to survive. Eel fishers must feel good about themselves and what they are doing. If not, they will seek other career opportunities.

Reducing effort to save the eel stock from overfishing must be carried out in a manner that ensures that the cultural heritage survives. Law and culture, government and community, must work together. That can only be achieved if a certain level of fishing activity continues to exist as a small-scale, subsistence oriented, family organized, and community-based fishery. There is no guarantee that the cultural heritage will survive if the only focus is on saving the eel.

More diversity, less vulnerability

The eel used to be one among several species that Swedish small-scale fishers targeted. As herring, cod, perch, whitefish, etc. were overfished and restricted, a great number of them quitted while other fishers concentrated on the eel. The remaining small-scale fishers became more dependent on the eel and could only secure their level of income (which according to Stage (2015) is less than half of the average per capita income in Sweden) by intensifying their eel fishing. Thus, the crisis in these other fisheries exacerbated the crisis in the eel fishery. While the number of eel fishers were reduced, eel fishing gear became more effective, so that the total fishing effort went up rather than down.

Consequently, as Björkvik and colleagues (2020) observe, eel fishers have

become entangled in a "social-ecological trap," which "*are situations in which interactions between humans and their environment reinforce unsustainable outcomes*." Eel fishers cannot escape their entrapment unless they find other sources of income locally or decide to move for better opportunities elsewhere. When eel fishers are stuck where they are with what they do, the eel fishery develops into a vicious cycle with unsustainable, tragic outcomes.

A new management plan for the eel fishery should pursue ways of freeing fishers from this trap. This would require a broadening of the management perspective from the eel fishery to small-scale fisheries as basis for sustaining livelihoods in eel fisheries communities. Thus, solutions to the survival of eel fishery as a living cultural heritage in the context of acute resource scarcity must be found outside as much as inside the eel fisheries sector.

More diverse fishing opportunities for small-scale fisheries would not only relieve pressure on the eel stock but also help sustain the cultural heritage of small-scale fisheries in general and the eel fishery in particular. The new Swedish EMP should discuss whether this is still a relevant opportunity. The EU has endorsed the SSF Guidelines that FAO initiated, but the implementation seems to be lagging in Sweden, which is a member country (Gillette et al., 2024). The holistic perspective that the SSF Guidelines are advocating, would also be relevant in the Swedish context. It is not just about the eel but the entire small-scale fisheries governance system within which the eel is a component.

Stakeholder distribution

A management plan must address the distributional issues that exist between commercial, recreational and subsistence fishing activities, between those for whom eel fishing is a profession, a livelihood, or a hobby, as they represent different individual cultural heritages. Whose cultural heritage has a right of way? Government restrictions have activated user conflicts and turned fisheries management into a heavily contested political

enterprise (Linke et al., 2022).

With the eel stock and the eel fishing culture on the brink of collapse, hard choices must be addressed. The management plan should think of saving the eel and the cultural heritage as a combined challenge, since the two are mutually dependent but are not necessarily in conflict, as explained above. The 2008 EMP is lacking in this respect. The new plan would be an opportunity to bring these issues up.

Culture is multifaced, integrated whole of artifacts, practices, relationships, competencies, norms and values. It is a collective phenomenon, which requires a critical mass to remain. In Sweden, the number of dedicated eel fishers is now just in the hundreds (Stage, 2015), and the cultural heritage will not remain if their number decrease by even a bit.

Cultural survival is less realistic if the cultural heritage is thinly dispersed. The goal of limiting eel fishing effort while securing its cultural heritage from the brink of failure may have a better prospect of achievement if fishing activities are concentrated to a limited number of communities, rather than spread thinly throughout the country. The cultural heritage would then live on and possibly thrive in those communities and districts where small-scale eel fishing is strongest, and where the conditions for keeping the cultural heritage intact are most conducive.

Such communities and districts still exist in Sweden and should be given priority with the management tools that are available to government. Then you would not only give the cultural heritage a change of survival. You may even secure it as social capital for job creation, value addition, and community development. The aim would be to create more cultural value out of less biomass quantity.

9

A Hard Choice

Natural resource management is a contested political issue and the Swedish eel management is no exception. It is, as fisheries resources often are, subject to divergent stakeholder values, interests, powers and timescales, which make it hard to achieve consensus on ends and means. Management becomes an ongoing process of conflict resolution and negotiations on how to compromise, as consensus is hard to achieve. The management problems cannot be solved once and for all. In a dynamic sector such as fisheries, they tend to reappear, and new opportunities emerge unexpectedly. Therefore, fisheries resources require persistent attention within a governance system that is often at odds with itself, for political and other reasons. Often, governments do not really know what to do with small-scale fisheries. They know that they are complex but not how they function. They have no clear idea on how to govern. Stupefied, they stand at the fork in the forest and cannot decide which road to take (cf. chapter 6). They may be undecided on how to implement the SSF Guidelines, if they know about them.

A political issue

The 2008 eel management plan (EMP) is silent on the political, social, and institutional context within which it is supposed to work. For

a management system that still cannot boast much success, this is a weakness. As Svedäng and Gipperth (2012, p. 807) argue: *"Natural resource management is about political objectives"* and yet, the EMP takes an "engineering" (their word) approach to avoid taking a firm stand on how the conflict between environmental and socio-economic goals should be handled.

The management of the Swedish eel is a complex political undertaking where stakeholders compete for attention and influence. As described in chapter 8, the eel stock is in critical situation, and in need of urgent intervention by management authorities. This is why the European eel is on the "red list" of critically endangered species and requires drastic intervention. Nonetheless, eel has traditionally been, and still is, a food source that provides income for people in coastal and inland communities where alternative employment is hard to come by.

Major stakeholders disagree on how the crisis should be addressed, where in the system intervention should occur, and who should bear the brunt of the burden of reducing eel mortality. Some want management priorities to change, while others prefer that they largely remain stable. In both instances, this is a hard political choice.

Exit and voice

To succeed, the Swedish government is dependent on active support of stakeholders, which cannot be forced or taken for granted. In the current situation, policies and management regulations are disputed between contrasting "advocacy coalitions," as Nilsson and Sandström (no date) call them (see also Nohrstedt & Heinmiller, 2024). Within each coalition, members agree on how to define the problem and how to manage the eel. Between the coalitions there is a disagreement. They differ on whether the fishery should be allowed to continue. They also disagree about who is responsible for the current situation, fishing or hydropower – or both.

Neither are they agreeing on how urgent the situation is, whether one needs to act now or later. The problem with the eel fishery has lasted for

decades, and if you are at the receiving end of the management measures, you naturally look for positive signs, even if they are hard to identify in the case of the European eel.

Fishers have doubts about how threatened the eel is, as they can still catch it. However, with fewer fishers, more effective gear, and shifting baselines, CPUE (catch per unit effort) becomes an unreliable indicator of the overall status of the stock, but not necessarily from the perspective of individual fisher. According to Clarhäll (2024), poaching is widespread, but not just in Sweden (Cutts et al., 2024). There were more than 360 illegal eel fishing gear seized in Swedish waters in 2017, according to a report from Stockholm University, and there are few signs that the situation has improved since then. This may suggest that some fishers are dissenting with current management policies, not just by their criticisms but also with the way they act.

Whereas fishers have been subject to strict and detailed regulation (time closures, non-renewal of fishing permits), large-scale hydropower actors have been engaged in reducing mortality on a voluntary basis. Nilsson and Sandström (no date) interpret the lack of involvement by hydropower companies in the political debate as an indication that they are satisfied with *status quo* even if the positive effect of their costly efforts to reduce mortality rates remains marginal (Cox et al., 2024).

Big power plants are not under the threat of closure like their smaller counterparts because of their relative importance for the energy supply. A substantial number of the small suppliers are not considered significant for the electrical grid. Nevertheless, they are still relevant for eel mortality (Clarhäll, 2024). In fear of being erased, representatives of small hydropower units argue that they, like eel fishing, also represent cultural heritage. In many instances, they have been operative for a very long time.

A European issue

Since the eel in Sweden is biologically the same as the eel in the rest of Europe and North Africa, the future of the stock depends on what measures

are taken in all of the involved countries. Each state must do its part but relies on other states to do the same. This creates a free-rider problem, which generates inaction unless a higher authority takes the lead. Since 2007, the EU has required member states to intervene to protect the eel. Still, there is considerable resistance among member states to implement effective eel conservation policies. Thus, the high mortality is not a unique Swedish problem.

The Swedish government does not dispute that the eel is in trouble but deviates from EU priorities and ICES recommendations by allowing a limited fishery to continue in accordance with Swedish cultural traditions. Again, other European countries do the same. In Sweden, this is a policy that has adamant support among the eel fisher groups, especially commercial fishers, and eel fishery municipalities. The government has responded with compensatory measures, such as restocking, which make the real situation with the eel in Swedish waters less visible to fishers.

For the government a dual approach – saving the eel and the cultural heritage of eel fishing – has been adopted, but the relative importance of the two goals is not discussed in the EMP. Svedäng and Gipperth (2012, p. 805-6) anticipate that "*the preservation of the eel fishery as such and the conservation of the eel as a species is equally important*." The challenge then becomes how to preserve both by realizing one goal in a way that is supportive rather than detrimental to the other. How low must fishing mortality become to save the stock, and how the maximum mortality can still sustain the fishery?

Since both fishing and hydropower are perceived as the two main causes of eel mortality, the government must separately regulate two structurally distinct and very different sectors, one more powerful than the other. The only thing that unites the two is their joint impact on the sustainability of the eel stock. The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management's (SwAM)' mandate only relates to one sector but must find ways to reach out to the other. For SwAM, conserving the eel stock and the eel fishery is consistent with its key agenda. For the agency responsible for energy and for the hydropower companies, the eel is a side issue. That makes them

unequal partners, which may work against balancing of the two concerns.

There is no indication that the eel is recovering in Swedish waters (Cox et al., 2024). The restocking has primarily aimed to serve the fishers but is of little biological relevance as it does not add to the stock. Due to the eel life cycle, one will not see any immediate effect at stock level of measures taken. This is a stimulus of political controversy, management under-performance and delay.

Multi-level governance

The Swedish government must maneuver between different stakeholder interests, concerns, and goals. Well-functioning communication between management authorities, researchers, fishers and other stakeholders would help create a common understanding of the situation with the eel stock and about which measures are effective to reduce eel mortality, while securing the fishery are needed. This would make intervention easier. One cannot expect commitment and support of government policies and management measures if what fishers experience in their fishery do not correspond with the observations of the research community and what the government does accordingly. This is what co-management arrangements intends to correct. The concept is already informing fisheries management debates in Sweden, including those about the eel (Jagers et al., 2012).

The eel cannot be micro-managed by the EU or SwAM alone. Lower-level governance institutions must be involved, as they are in Sweden, with the active involvement of county and municipal agencies. Non-governmental organizations and user-groups who operate in the area should be seen as part of the governance system, not external to it, and should be mobilized for the common goals. Therefore, a governance system analysis and consequent institutional design should also include them.

There may be overlapping responsibilities that can cause confusion of roles, as has been pointed out regarding inspection and control (Clarhäll, 2024). There may also be gaps in the governance system, leaving some issues out of sight. Whether the current governance system needs legal,

organizational or functional reform is a question the new management plan would need to address (Svedäng & Gipperth, 2012). The existing governance system may not work in the best interests of the eel, eel fishers and their communities or the aquatic environment. It is not in the mandate of SwAM to intervene on the hydropower issue or the cultural heritage. A fragmented institutional structure where the fate of the eel is determined by many legislation and agencies creates a coordination problem that must be solved.

To relate to local contexts, the management system must have near-sightedness and dexterity, which is hard to facilitate unless management decision-making occurs in proximity to where the management challenge is experienced. However, goal conflicts and difficult trade-offs related to conservation and use, become more evident further down the policy chain (Nilsson & Sandström, no date). Divisive controversy over policy goals and management measures makes goal attainment difficult to achieve. Hard choices do not get less politically charged when left to lower governance levels. Indeed, they may get harder with knowledge of local contexts and when those who are asked to abandon their sources of livelihood and way of life are no longer faceless.

Still, as local problems are addressed, the general situation with the eel stock must not get lost. It is the role of central government to make sure that individual, local interventions and initiatives add up in a way that is conducive to the sustainability of both the eel stock and the eel fishery. It is also the role of government (counties and municipalities) or local stakeholder organizations to ensure that implementation of national policies adapt to local contexts. Information must flow both ways as good governance requires transparency and coherence. Hard choices, like whether to prioritize the eel stock or the eel fishery, are political in nature and should be open to public scrutiny.

One may argue for stricter and more binding commitments from EU members, but the eel management system will face major challenges if centralized to the EU level (Nilsson & Stage, 2017). Legally, fisheries management is subject to more lenient legal prescriptions than environ-

mental legislation. Due to the stock characteristics, the eel governance system is, and must be, multi-leveled, from the EU in Brussels, via the national and county level down to the individual river, lake and coastal area. Unavoidably, it is institutionally complex, especially with the diverse goal structure as in the Swedish case, with considerable risk of governance failure due to insufficient coordination.

Policy changes

How the institutional setup for governance system works to facilitate goal attainment in the case of the eel is an issue which in the Swedish situation and elsewhere begs for more research (Cox et al., 2024). Does it need more streamlining to secure better communication and coherence not only regionally among EU member states as Clarhäll (2024) observes, but also at the national level? Institutional autonomy and interdependence are generally not an easy governance combination. It is not only the system-to-be-governed (the socio-ecological system) that should be examined, but also the governing system (Kooiman, 2003; Bavinck et al., 2013). The "governability" problem may sit in both places.

Nilsson and Sandström do not see any major policy change happening anytime soon, unless the EU intervenes more forcefully or if some disruptive external events should occur. This is an issue that the next eel management plan needs to address.

With the limited renewal of eel licenses and the high turbine mortality, the eel fishery as a livelihood and cultural heritage may undergo a slow death. Referring to SwAM, Clarhäll (2024, p. 31) notes that "*eel catches have decreased by over 90 per cent since 2006, from 825 tonnes to just under 52 tonnes. The number of sea-based eel fishing license holders fell by over 74 per cent between 2006 and 2022, from 384 to 99.*"

With such figures, the economic and cultural heritage of eel fishing does not have the solid footing it once had. The termination that ICES and the Swedish research community are calling for is about to happen, but not by a government decree. It may not make much of a difference for the

country in economic terms, but it may still be felt in certain districts and communities were the eel fishery still plays a role. For small-scale fishers, the eel is often part of a multi-species fishery which may collapse if one leg is gone (Svedäng & Gippert, 2012). Thus, the termination of the eel fishery may have wider consequences, which may explain the government's management hesitance.

On death row?

For the eel fishery to continue and the cultural heritage to survive, the trend must be turned around. The restrictions must at some point in the future be eased. That can only happen if the mortality caused by hydropower installation is substantially reduced, like closing some of them or requiring them to install technology that hinders eel from going through the turbines as a requirement for license-renewal. In a situation where Sweden needs all the climate friendly energy it can produce, the odds for this to happen are not high. Overall, the solution for the fishery lies in making turbines less lethal for the eel.

According to Clarhäll (2024), the EU Commission believes that implementation of the eel regulations needs to focus more on measures that are not directly related to fishery. Still, from the perspective of eel mortality, measures are interrelated. To secure a viable fishery, even at existence minimum. something must be done with hydropower mortality. A problem is that hydropower and the fishery are not mutually dependent and therefore do not have shared interest in saving the eel. The hydropower industry can live with high eel mortality. Fishers cannot. Only public pressure can force the industry to change, to become 'clean' while green.

Even if the government decided to completely terminate the fishery, you would still need to address other mortality causes like habitat degradati on/destruction, pollution, spreading of disease, and parasites. There is little to suggest that the Swedish government will move away from the dual policy goal. The public pressure for radical change is not strong in Sweden or in other countries, so a marginal rather than radical change is

more likely, at least in the near future. Symbolic measures may create the public impression that something is being done to solve the problem. The burden of proof that small measures is sufficient to save the eel rests with those in favor of a small-step policy.

The 'advocacy coalition' that wants the fishery to continue, seems now to have the upper hand. With the prevailing resistance against intervention to effectively secure the eel of many European countries and in Sweden, the crisis is as much a governance failure as a crisis of the eel stock and the eel fishery. Should Sweden aim for a more powerful management plan where the fishery can prevail, it should also develop a small-scale fisheries strategy in accordance with the SSF Guidelines and international strategy and use its voice in fora where common rules and regulations are determined.

10

Willing to Excel

Our consumption of food has fascinated social scientist for a long time. Torstein Veblen and Norbert Elias stand out as two influential contributors to the theory of food, Veblen with his concept of "conspicuous consumption" and Elias with his notion of "the civilization process." They argued that there is so much more to food than filling your belly. Food also makes us satisfied, even happy, because it is not only consumed but enjoyed. Food is about nutrition and relieving hunger, which are the two things the SSF Guidelines focus on when they talk about the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty eradication. But they do not talk about the other things.

Food does not only hold proteins, carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins. It is also filled with values, norms, and rules. You do not just 'stuff your face', as I once saw on a US highway billboard about what to do in a restaurant. We usually have other expectations as to the food we eat and how we eat it. We appreciate cultural sophistication – that food should do more to us. The image of a person just stuffing food into his mouth is vulgar.

The food and the way we eat it define who we are and what other people think about us. Learning to eat involves manners and etiquette. Your mother would not tell you to stuff your face. Learning to eat is among the things that parents teach their children. It is something that stays with them into adult life. Cultured eating is also about knowing the context, the

meal as a social institution and the situation in which it occurs. Learning to cook is a different process, which requires knowledge of the food you are preparing, the skills about how to do it, how it shall be served. Again, you may learn it at home, but it can also be a profession that requires formal training. In both instances, you need to practice cooking before you get good at it.

The meal

We praise food for its taste and nutritional value. We also cherish it because it brings family and friends together. By being shared, it adds substance to the family and community. When we celebrate something, like a birthday or a wedding, we eat. Likewise, dating involves a meal. Food forms social relations, as sociologists have noted (Wood, 1995; Murcott, 2019). It creates togetherness. We gather around the dinner table with family members at home, with colleagues at work, and in restaurants with friends. Food also creates routines. Our day is structured around it, like with breakfast in the morning, lunch at noon, and dinner in the evening. It also determines our food habits: we eat different things at each meal. Egg and toast are for breakfast, not for dinner.

Different food items are consumed in a certain order. Just look at the menu in a regular Italian restaurant; it begins with the antipasti, followed by the primi and the secondo, while the dolce comes last. The menu is like a one-way street, but there is no inherent, natural logic to the order. The waiter will not deny you the opportunity to begin with the dolce and end with the antipasti but may think that you are a weird foreigner. In my family we have problems explaining to our grandkids why they could not start with the ice cream. Why should they not be allowed to begin with what they like most. Reasoning with them is futile. The only justification we can give is that this is how it is done.

There are many ways to eat. Still, our eating patterns are remarkably stable. The week-day food is not the same as Sunday food or party food. When I grew up, we had fish during the week, except on Wednesday, when

we often had whale meat or some other meat stew. Otherwise, meat was for Sundays. This was common in most families around where I lived.

We know countries by their distinct food culture. It is among the things that makes travelling so interesting. The Japanese diet is different from the Norwegian one. We are both fish eating nations, but fish for breakfast was simply more than I could manage when I went there years ago. Later, I have learned to love their sushi. I go to a Japanese restaurant when in Amsterdam but had my first serious encounter with Japanese food in New Jersey.

Our food culture has emerged from using available resources where we live and has developed over a long time-period. Norwegians and the Japanese are not genetically disposed to eat fish, but we have learned to love it by eating it. But we eat it differently. I told my sons when they were small that it is OK not to like the food, but you are a coward if you do not give it a try. Then they discovered that fish tastes better than they had feared. As adults, they love it, but have the same struggle with their own kids as we had with them.

Stability means conformity and is a feature of any robust culture, including a food culture. Nevertheless, culture is not written in stone but is undergoing slow, random and sometimes abrupt change. In my city, we learned to appreciate capelin roe by an Austrian chef in a local restaurant. He introduced new fish dishes that we came to appreciate. My father-in-law, who was born and raised in the Lofoten area, which is famous for its cod fishery, never touched shrimp or shellfish. He refused to eat "bait," he said. Now they are delicatessen. I am told that in New Brunswick, Canada, it was the poor kids who took lobster sandwiches to school for lunch!

Our food culture is undergoing generational shifts. Now, the young teach their parents to broaden their food intake. People are also travelling abroad more than before and thereby pick up eating patterns from other countries. I never tasted fried anchovies (*alici fritte*) before I had it in my neighborhood restaurant in Rome. Since then, I have it every time I go there. My father-in-law had no appreciation for paella in Spain, but I might

have been able to convince him to try the *alici*. My mother had a Big Mac for the first time when she was in her 80s, while on vacation in Florida. She asked for a knife and fork!

Globalized food

Pizza and sushi are now all over the world and so is our farmed salmon. MacDonald's just opened an outlet in my town, and young people are streaming to it. It may change their food habits here as it has done globally. I have not been there yet, but I expect it looks much like the same as the outlets I have visited around the world. Tom Peters and Robert Waterman observed in their global bestseller 'In Search of Excellence' (2005), that it is remarkable how MacDonald's has been able to standardize everything about their food, the menu, the quality of food, the brand, even the design of the interior and exterior of the restaurant (McDowell, n.d.). Customers recognize the brand and know what to expect wherever they are in the world, and they do not leave disappointed because they always get what they came for. The quality and taste of the food are intertwined. Peters and Waterman were curious about how the company does it. Big Mac brings a different kind of excitement than when you enter a local restaurant in Italy, where you may be surprised of what the waiter brings to the table.

In Italy, you will be inclined to use your mobile to take a photo of what is on the plate and post it on social media. This is a new way of sharing the meal among family and friends who are not there but who can imagine what the taste must be when they see it. Food has aesthetic value. At MacDonald's, you pick up the food at the counter and bring it to your table yourself. You have the option of taking it with you in a paper bag, if you are in a hurry. You will like the food, but do not feel the inclination of taking a photo with your mobile. You will impress nobody.

The food on my dinner table now is not the same as it used to be in my childhood home, although some things are the same. My mother rarely experimented but prepared the fish and the meatballs like she had learned from her own mother. We all loved it. I miss her for many things, including

her food. I am from a generation where the mother prepared the food, and I never learned or have much interest in cooking. But my sons are different. In my family there is a clear shift in gender relations as to how food is made. It happens in other families too.

I am not the only one in my generation who is nostalgic about food. This is how food culture remains stable. In recent years pizza and taco have entered my dinner table, but I cannot say I miss it when it is not there. My grandkids think differently. Taco is for Fridays, and we do not need to ask them twice to come to the table. Fish is no longer as common on the dinner table as when I grew up.

A restaurant specializing on traditional Norwegian food, just opened in my city. There is nothing fancy about it, everything is basic. Often when I go there, I cannot find a vacant table. I notice that most guests are of my generation. At MacDonald's, I feel old. I have lived long enough to experience that going out to eat has become more common. When I was young ordinary families like my own could not afford it. We brought our own lunch in a box to school. Modernity has revolutionized our food consumption patterns.

When eating out in my city, we can now choose among a Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese, Thai, Syrian, Greek, Turkish, Italian, Spanish, and Eritrean restaurants. I sometimes wonder how they found their way up here, far north of the Arctic Circle. If you need an example of what globalization means in the modern age, there you get it. It has not replaced our food culture, at least not yet, but has enriched it. These restaurants do not import the raw material but demonstrate that there are so many things you can do with the local material that we were not aware of was possible. Go to Portugal, and you will find many items of bacalao on the menu. Bacalao is Portuguese for cod. In Norway, we have one special dish that we call bacalao – salt fish with onions and olives in tomato sauce. The bacalao you get in Portugal is likely to come from Norway.

The meaning of food

Before we began to mass-produce farmed salmon, salmon was rare. It was pricy, not so easy to find, and therefore meant only for festive occasions. Now, salmon has become everyday food, like chicken and pizza, and we buy it frozen in the grocery store at a lower price than fresh cod or saithe, which used to be staple food. The cultural heritage of salmon as food is transformed into something modern, less unique, replaced by another, more globalized food culture. When abroad, I often find Norwegian, farmed salmon on the menu, and I always look for other things to order. Why would I go to France and have a dish I can have at home? In my family, we think differently on this. My brother-in-law carries salt-dried cod and herring from home when he goes to Gran Canaria. It is great food, of course, but out of place, in my view, but I never bring it up. You are free to decide for yourself on what to eat.

Nowadays, we eat processed food more often than food we make from basic raw material. The process of preparing a meal is also culturally prescribed, but the skill of cooking or frying, the things we need to know, has become a process organized outside the home, brought to the extreme by the fast-food industry. It is served in a flash and eaten in a haste. This must be why it is called 'fast-food.' The most recent innovation is ordering food with your mobile phone, brought to the table by a robot.

What MacDonald's call a "Happy Meal" may give an instant but short-lived sense of bliss. It is not what we traditionally understood by a meal and the name feels like an insult. We usually think of a meal as consisting of more than the food we eat. A meal is also about the way we eat the food. There is a major difference between grabbing a sandwich at a fast-food restaurant and how we sit down together to enjoy food at the family table. Nobody cares if you do not show up in a fast-food outlet. Not so at the family dinner, which is not supposed to be finished quickly because it is not just about the food but also the family. A family dinner is a social event, which is made enjoyable by the togetherness and the conversation around the table. The dinner table is also where important information

is exchanged and family decisions are made. A restaurant meal can work in similar ways. The advice you get from the waiter will make the meal interesting by the expectation she creates. The restaurant also provides a different atmosphere around the meal.

A meal can be a sacred event. Then, a meal is loaded with symbolism, like the holy communion, which is as sparse as it gets considering the intake but full of meaning. You will not be able to order it in a restaurant, and it will never be served at home. Food gets meaning from where it is served and the narrative that comes with it. But the original Greek meaning of communion is 'sharing in common', like food, and that can occur in other contexts as well.

The meal as an institution

What we eat is part of the meal as a social institution, which is embedded in another institution, like a family, a community – religious or profane. Da Vinci's most famous fresco is of 'the last supper' and does not carry the same meaning outside Christianity. Institutions are like the Matryoshka Doll in Russian Culture; one inside another, and another. The smallest and innermost doll may be seen as the food itself. But the food is part of a layered institutional framework, which gives it meaning. The family meal is an affirmation of the family institution.

An image I carry is my parents and my brother, around the dinner table. We always had the same seats; my mother at the end, my father opposite to me, and my brother on his side. We also had separate cutlery. I can still remember my father's fork and spoon because they were a bit bigger than mine. It was my family's cultural dinner arrangement. It came with norms and rules. I was not allowed to take my father's seat. I had no problems with that. As *pater familias,* he had certain undisputed rights! This was not a cultural practice limited to my childhood family dinner. All families did the same thing, and most of them still do. Rearrangement just happens when guests are invited for dinner, but it does not create lasting change thereafter.

The family is also an organization, and the structure of the meal, including the seating arrangement, follows accordingly. It is a way of creating social order, which saves transaction costs. Family members do not need to negotiate where to sit for every meal. When families do what families are supposed to do, members feel that they are part of a cultural institution that is beyond themselves, and even their own family. In North America, the Thanksgiving meal is an annual family event but also a way of upholding the family institution, which must exist in a general sense and work in a concrete sense for the meal to occur. You do not enjoy the meal unless you appreciate the institutionalized cultural practice – the concept and the entire 'package.' The family and the meal constitute each other.

It bolsters our sense of being a family. It also affirms the family as a social institution when members gather and eat the same food, which they may have prepared together. Mother cooks the turkey, the father cuts it up, the children set the table. It is considered bad manners to 'stuff our face.' You will be reprimanded if you do that. If everyone knows how to behave, they chat and laugh and sing together. Through it, we show appreciation, gratefulness and respect. We clean up, dress and put on a happy face. Any kind of food will not do, even if it satisfies the hunger. The food served must be appropriate for the occasion. When family members are holding the hands while saying grace, they go even deeper. The grace is routine but links the meal to an imagined authority which is beyond the meal. Families can do without the blessing but not without the routines.

Thus, what is a cultural tradition is not just about culture. Culture, as Marx observed, is a super-structure which has a material basis. It is "soft" but has a "hard" underpinning." What makes a food culture possible is a healthy ecosystem, a sustainable natural resource, the secure access to it, and a functional supply chain. To have a food culture, one must secure access to the resource. Small-scale fishers must be allowed to fish. They must have a fishing culture. Yet, small-scale fisheries need the meal as a social institution and a culture. For us to care about the sustainability of the resource, we must value the food as well as the meal and the family as institutions. The causal arrow between the resource, food, meal, and

institution goes both ways.

Slow food

It was to be expected that the 'fast-food' concept would inspire its counterpart. First coined by the Italian political activist and author Carlo Petrini in the mid-1980s, the "slow food" concept is now all around the world (Slow Food, n.d. [a]). Here, the perspective on the food is broad and inclusive: food is thought about as an ecological and political issue. The slow food movement champions locally grown, customary produced and prepared food, which is enjoyed cheerfully with family and friends. No one is in a hurry because they appreciate the meal and the company as much as the food. Thus, the three are integrated into one.

Retracing traditional consumption patterns and making it modern again, creates an opportunity for small-scale fisheries to penetrate a value chain that the competition from large food producers have closed for them. Again, not surprisingly, the slow food movement has led to its equivalent, "the slow fish network" (Slow Food, n.d. [a]). Also here, the idea is originally Italian. I first met their spokesperson at a small-scale fishery meeting at FAO in Rome and liked what I learned.

The slow fish network is not only focused on how fish is prepared and served, but also on how fish is targeted, managed, and distributed. Their website presents their vision:

> *"The Slow Fish Network is committed to supporting small-scale fishing communities in their role as food providers and as they possess the skills and knowledge required to sustain and manage our aquatic ecosystems. Our vision entails a comprehensive approach, including actions relating to advocacy, fishery management, consumer awareness, market access, and the value chain as a whole."*

As with the slow food movement, the slow fish network supports a cultural heritage in danger of disappearing if measures are not taken to prevent

it. Their goal reads much like the SSF Guidelines. Small-scale fisheries deliver high quality fresh fish, suitable not only for healthy nutrition but also as gourmet food. Neither in Italy nor in my favorite seafood restaurant in Bluefields Nicaragua, will you find breaded fish sticks produced in an industrial setting on the menu. Gourmet restaurants depend on short travelled, high quality, fresh raw material properly handled, which only small-scale fishers can provide. Should they have frozen fish on the menu, they will excuse themselves to you as a guest or give a hint when you place your order. You are then likely to choose something else. At least I do when I ask for the catch of the day.

For small-scale fisheries this is a promising, trendy market. Notably, it does not make itself but must be created. They are not dependent on a large catch and work despite a high price, which the superb quality will provide with a functioning and just value chain. What small-scale fisheries lose in quantity, they gain in quality.

This, I believe, is where the future of small-scale fisheries lies. Small-scale fisheries must embrace modernity, not reject it, and they have a unique opportunity to do so. Small-scale fisheries can provide fresh quality food that no large-scale industrial fisheries can. It is shortly travelled and caught with gear that does not do damage to the catch like a trawler often does. They can even deliver live fish to the restaurant for the guest to pick out for their meal, as my favorite restaurant in Tajao, Tenerife does. Here, located in the same community as where the fishers live, the food cannot have a shorter travel. The restaurant was created by the fishers themselves.

Small-scale fishers can also provide photogenic food, which restaurant guests will value. The vision and taste are linked. You must like what you see on the plate before you want to dig into it. There is another seafood restaurant in Tenerife named 'FishArt.' It is an interesting but rare combination of two words. It shows potential when they on their website boast that all the fish they served are locally caught. It took an experienced chef to see it. You enjoy art slowly and with awe.

Therefore, more emphasis should be put on what you can do about the quality and imaginary of the fish than quantity. There is here a market

niche that only small-scale fisheries can fill. The SSF Guidelines could have stressed this more than they do. They claim to be primarily for developing countries, but there is no north and south divide as to customer preferences for what they put in their mouth. Poor people may enjoy delicatessen even more than the rich and blasé.

Reorienting the focus towards what only small-scale fisheries can provide – quality rather than quantity – would be important, even necessary for them to exist in the future. The price incentive will release the pressure on overfished stocks and be a win-win for value chain stakeholders all the way to the consumer. If you catch less and earn more, you stabilize your income. The bottleneck here is not with the fishers but with the value chain and what consumers are willing and able to pay. Industrial fisheries, with its large quantity, low price, and mass-produced product have a competitive advantage at the lower end of the market, whereas small-scale fisheries have the advantage at the other end of the market, which should be open for them to exploit. One should not insist on small-scale fisheries people staying poor because consumers are poor.

Market access

The Sustainable Development Goal 14b talks about the importance of securing small-scale fisheries the access to resources and markets. It wants government to guarantee that small-scale fishers can harvest and sell their products, and to secure that the fish value chain is open to them. These are necessary conditions for small-scale fisheries to function and to thrive. Without them, small-scale fishers are not able to do their job, earn a living, secure their families and communities, and make consumers satisfied. It is sometimes difficult to decide where the fish supply chain begins, but it always ends at the dinner table.

However, for small-scale fisheries it is important but not sufficient to have secure access to resources and markets. They must also be concerned with what they bring to the market they have access to. This is about the quality of the product. But even for a high-quality product, the market may

not be there. In those instances, the market must be created before they can access it. This is what my colleague Professor José Pascual at University of La Laguna in Tenerife has made his mission. He observed that even though the island has many small-scale fishers, their products were not to be found around the island in stores or restaurants. Small-scale fisheries could not be identified as a market actor. You would not know who had fished them where, whether it was imported or locally produced (Pascual-Fernández et al., 2019).

He formed a transdisciplinary group of researchers, nutritionists, local chefs, and small-scale fisheries organizations (*cofradias*) to create the supply chain and market for locally harvested fish. To generate awareness among consumers, a label was created for the fish from local small-scale fisheries. You can see this label (Figure 3) on the walls of buildings across Tenerife.



Figure 3. *Pesca Artesanal logo*

José and his colleagues also developed manuals and recipes for how to prepare delicious fish dishes in restaurants. Through the initiative, they gave small-scale fisheries in the Canary Islands a boost and provided the

world of small-scale fisheries an important lesson.

Small-scale fisheries must have a sustainable fish resource and a secure access to markets. For this they need government support, secure tenure and all the other things that the SSF Guidelines point out. But ensuring that they bring quality products to the market is largely a responsibility that rests on the industry. The work of José and his colleagues demonstrate that sustainable small-scale fisheries can only be secured by the innovative, collective, socially responsible partnership that encompasses the whole value chain, from pre-harvesting to the dinner table. Through his initiative, they show us how to achieve it.

Here, small-scale fisheries actors have possibility of taking destiny into their own hands, provided they think like the 'Slow fish network' does. Fish is not just the catch fishers bring ashore, but a food item with multiple possibilities if you know what they are and how to exploit them. It is a sociological as much as natural issue, as I have tried to explain here. It is not just about curbing your hunger but making it part of a family communion. It is about building and securing social relationships, including those that constitute the value chain. Fish from small-scale fisheries helps to fill life with meaning in a way large-scale, industrialized fishing cannot deliver. This is an opportunity too important for small-scale fisheries to miss. In the modern world, for small-scale fisheries to flourish, they must have the will to excel and an idea of how to do it, like my friend José Pascual had.

III

Researching Small-Scale Fisheries



Phayao Province, Thailand. 2018. © TBTI Global

11

Taking it All In

The ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus posited that we cannot step into the same river twice because it is in constant flux. Likewise, Montaigne (1533-92), the French philosopher and essayist, held that "*there is nothing that is constant, either of our being or of that of objects*," (Maclean, 2008, p. 152). This applies to society and the lives we live, but also to ourselves. He applied the river metaphor when he stated that "*we do not go, we are carried away, like floating objects, now gently, now violently, according as the water is angry or calm*" (Montaigne, 1965, p. 240). When our natural and social environment change, we do too, but we do not passively assimilate external stimuli. We actively participate in forming our lives and societies, also by our means of production and the way we apply them, as Marx pointed out.

Small-scale fisheries are more than a set of natural, technological, and social objects. They are also an organic, interconnected process, caught up in a continuous flow. Change is the reality that small-scale fisheries people live with. For policy- and decision-makers, small-scale fisheries are a slippery object and a moving target. They must always ask themselves: "*What river are we stepping into now?*" When new problems occur and things are changing fast as they often do in small-scale fisheries, experience is a limited source of knowledge. Solutions cannot easily be regularized and standardized. Reforms require innovation and improvisation. Small-scale fisheries governance must be "creative" (Kooiman et al., 1999). Otherwise,

it is caught up in the 'angry' river flow without much chance of staying afloat and changing course.

Governability

As mentioned in chapter 5, in 1989 I attended an international small-scale fisheries research conference in Montpellier, France, perhaps the first of its kind. Speaking from the floor, the renowned Canadian social anthropologist Yvan Breton quoted an Egyptian adage: *"The camel driver has a plan, but so also has the camel."* Breton noted that the same is the case with managers and small-scale fishers. Each have their own plans which do not necessarily coincide. Therefore, they must learn to cooperate, to build a trustful relationship that are mutually helpful. Like how the camel driver knows the desert and how to operate a caravan, the manager must know small-scale fishing, the fishers, and the natural and social environment they operate in.

Small-scale fishers do not easily give up their ways. To function, they need autonomy for the flexibility that comes with it. This is also what they enjoy most about their occupation and way of life. Government is there to help making a life in small-scale fisheries possible. It is not up to government to tell them how to live it. Small-scale fishers have other concerns than large-scale fisheries enterprises. They run a different kind of organization and operate according to standards and rules established and enforced among their peers. Therefore, they do not unconditionally yield to government directives. They may even have reason for not only opposing but also breaking rules. They have a family to feed which must take priority. Poverty makes them take risks because they lack alternative source of food and income.

Governments may have legitimate motives for introducing rules and regulations. They have the common interest in mind. Crises require urgent response. But it matters how they do it. For fishers valuing their freedom, persuasion is more effective than force. They would need to be convinced rather than coerced. Rules and regulations must make sense and

be perceived as fair. Therefore, government must have a communication strategy that generates trustful support. Should it fail to deliver convincing justification for intervention, governance failure is likely. Jan Kooiman (2003) phrases this as a "governability" issue, which he defines as the capacity and quality of governance, and a function of the structure and process of the governance system.

To locate a governability challenge, both as a problem and a solution, a 'holistic' analysis is vital. It involves a focus on system components, interdependencies, interactions, and synergies, as well as the eye on what the sociologist Robert Merton (1957, p. 105) called "manifest" and "latent functions." By the former he meant the apparent and intended functions of social institutions, whereas the latter are their less evident, unintended, and often unrecognized functions. Merton's concepts would work well in a holistic analysis of the role of the community in securing the sustainability of small-scale fisheries. The community is often a location of governability problems, as when it is ridden with social conflict and disorganization. The community may also be where solution is found.

Communities are complex and dynamic systems. Understanding their functioning also requires a holistic analysis. I argue in my second book in this TBTI trilogy (Jentoft, 2023) that communities are a "gift" to small-scale fisheries, much of it of a latent nature. The sociologist Richard Sennett holds local communities in the same regard:

> *"We want to imagine ...community as a process of coming into the world, where people work out both the value of face-to-face relations and the limits of those relations. For poor and marginalized people, the limits are political and economic; the value is social. Though community cannot fill up the whole of a life, it promises pleasures of a serious sort." (Sennett, 2008, p. 173)*

Communities are not the solution to all that is problematic in small-scale fisheries, as Sennett suggests here, but undervaluing and ignoring them would be a missed opportunity to realizing many of the objectives of the

SSF Guidelines. It would be like rejecting a gift that is offered to you.

Academic knowledge

In paragraph 6.1, the SSF Guidelines promote a broad perspective on small-scale fisheries sustainability. *"All parties should consider integrated, ecosystem and holistic approaches to small-scale fisheries management and development that take the complexity of livelihoods into account..."* (FAO, 2015). This paragraph is committing the academic community to contribute to their implementation, but for a diverse range of academic disciplines, this is not straightforward. The academia is fragmented, not organized to easily meet the expectation. They may be unequally supportive of the communitarian paradigm that the SSF Guidelines build on, and the holistic perspective. Disciplines are unique schools of thought, with their specific worldviews and languages. They specialize on certain aspects of the industry while working isolated from each other in different institutions and departments. They publish in specialized journal and do not attend the same conferences. They are not used to working together with people from other disciplines than their own. Academia offers few incentives for cross-disciplinary work. Scholarly identities are firmly anchored in disciplines and institutions.

The holistic approach must therefore be able to overcome such pluralities and divisions, or at a minimum facilitate a process to put conceptual and methodological disagreements aside for a moment and focus on solving practical problems. But this is also difficult. Holistic approaches bring academics out of their traditional roles and comfort zones, straining their communication. But they may also learn something new, which will broaden their perspective on what reforms small-scale fisheries need to remain sustainable.

Argumentation vs. discussion

Problems do not define themselves; we do! As Rittel and Webber (1973) noted, for societal problems that are "wicked", defining the problem *is* the

problem. Disciplines have their own way of framing problems. They may therefore have different, preconceived, ideas of what the problem is and where to find it. They may agree that a problem is one of governance failure but disagree on what governance reforms would solve it. Since wicked problems have no simple definition and solution, Rittel and Webber emphasize the importance of the problem-solving process.

> *"Wicked problem solving must be understood as an argumentative process: one of raising questions and issues towards which you can assume different positions, with the evidence gathered and arguments built for and against these different positions."*

Based on what Rittel and Webber are saying here, we may conclude that the holistic approach involving different disciplinary perspectives encompasses an argumentative process between different disciplinary positions, where the definition and solution of the problem is not given at the outset but emerge in the process.

However, I take issue with Rittel and Webber on one point: from my experience, academic discourse works better as discussion, rather than argumentation. Argumentation has a different dynamic than discussion. Argumentation is insistent, sometimes antagonistic, as if in a verbal battle. Sennett quoting from Montaigne's 'The Art of Discussion': *"[F]ierce assertion only suppresses the listener."* The debater Montaigne says, "*demands only assent*."

Argumentation and debate easily result in hard feelings and resistance. "*Montaigne observes that the declaration of a speaker's superior knowledge and authority arouses doubt in a listener about his or her own powers of judgement, the evil of passive submission follows from feeling coved*." (Sennett, 2012, p. 276). Academics argue, often with strong disciplinary conviction and arrogance, but with their ears closed. Arguing is about persuasion, a skill that some control better at than others. Neither is the ability – or willingness – to listen equally distributed.

Whereas argumentation is about scoring points, winning a debate,

persuading others that you are right, and they are wrong, discussion is about learning. The conversation is built from the ground up. It is a two-way process, notably not without challenge and contraction. Indeed, as Cicero said, there can be no discussion without it. (Montaigne, 1965, p. 705).

Sennet regards listening as *"a condition for cooperation and true dialogue."* (2012, p. 28-29). Even a poorly phrased argument can convey a truthful message. You may miss the point if you do not pay attention, also to the subtext – what the speaker is trying but cannot eloquently say. Therefore, the holistic approach requires more than scholarly knowledge and rhetorical skills. Deep listening is equally important. In his essay on the 'The art of discussion', Montaigne is quoting Cicero: *"We must see not only what each one says, but also what he thinks, and also why he thinks it"* (Montaigne, 1965, p. 715).

Interdisciplinarity presupposes a willingness to listen respectfully to people of another discipline than your own. That again depends on the mutual perception of the equal relevance and value of disciplines. The social anthropologist Leontine Visser notes that social scientists are often in an underdog position. *"Social data are mere 'contextual support' for natural and technical data: supplementary but not vital"* (Visser, 2004, p. 26). She concludes that the social sciences should not just be an add-on but be on equal footing with the natural sciences.

Montaigne also saw the natural sciences as above the arts (Maclean, 2005). In the marine realm, which is Visser's concern, academic disciplines form an informal, taken-for granted hierarchy of prestige and recognition with the natural sciences at the most elevated ranking. Fisheries biologists, economists, and social scientists of various stripes do not communicate well (Buanes & Jentoft, 2009). Their communication often evolves as Montaigne describes. Maclean (p.146) in an excerpt from a lengthy quote of Montaigne: "*For each science has its presupposed principles, by which the human judgment is [circumscribed] on all sides. If you happen to [attack] this barrier in which lies the principal error, they have this maxim in their mouth, that there is no arguing [with] people who deny first principles*."

Semantic infiltration

Researchers are restricted by the discipline of their discipline. Breaking the boundaries of disciplinary paradigms and norms is not free of costs. If you do this, you are likely to meet criticism from peers and being refused by journal editors. You even put your careers at risk. No wonder, therefore, that researchers bind themselves to the disciplinary mast and plug their ears like Ulysses were told to do. They are more prone to win arguments than to listen and learn from other disciplines, also because it involves an element of un-learning, as when other disciplinary assumptions put your own in doubt. Academic orthodoxy works counter to inter-disciplinary dialogue and cooperation.

It is not only a question of demonstrating superior knowledge, as Montaigne talks about. It is also about wielding superior language, about the way knowledge is phrased linguistically. Disciplines have their own conceptual frameworks and methodologies. Holistic approaches require a process of translation. Without it, the conversation easily ends as Montaigne describes.

The US senator and UN ambassador Patrick Moynihan coined the term "semantic infiltration", which occurs when you force another person to use your language (Wikibin, n.d.). This is an experience that colonized, Indigenous or minority peoples have. This is how they lose their native language and identity and become marginalized. It also happens when scientists insist that their disciplinary language is the 'lingua franca' in inter-disciplinary exchange.

Semantic infiltration disrupts an otherwise the free and uncoerced dialogue. People cannot join the conversation if they cannot use a language they know. Neither can they understand what the others are saying. The one whose language is spoken is in a superior position, contrary to how Jürgen Habermas (1984, p. 25) envisaged the "ideal speech situation." In that situation, participants evaluate what other people are saying based on reason and evidence, in an atmosphere free of irrational semantic coercion.

The ideal speech situation must be created, as it rarely happens by itself.

It must be imagined, then learned, before it can happen. Practicing it is also a learning process. The question is thus when and how the ideal speech situation begins and evolves. It naturally has a step-zero, where positions and relations must be clarified. It would help if members of different disciplines get to know each other on a personal level before the substantive issues and different analytic perspectives and methodologies are delved into.

The holistic approach that the SSF Guidelines prescribes for their implementation is an ambitious aim and a challenging undertaking, involving controversial conceptual issues and complex social relations, framed institutionally by disciplinary norms that are less than conducive for making it happen.

12

Activist Research

With a colleague, I edited a book with the title 'Poverty Mosaics: Realities and Prospects in Small-Scale Fisheries' (Jentoft & Eide, 2011). It has case studies from around the world, both in the Global South and the North. I think of it as my own forerunner to the SSF Guidelines that I later became involved with. I brought it with me to one of the early meetings at FAO. From working on this book, I learned about things that are much talked about in the SSF Guidelines. I had published extensively on small-scale fisheries before, but poverty was a new research topic for me.

My interest was triggered by my many years of work in Nicaragua from the mid-1980s onwards, about which I talked about in chapters 4 and 7. Nicaragua is ranking second after Haiti among the poorest countries in the region. The Atlantic coast where I spent most of my time is the poorest area of Nicaragua, and the Indigenous and ethnic minority peoples like the Ramas, the Ulwas and the Garifunas are the poorest people on the coast. My Nicaraguan experience was a sea change in my life and career. Poverty was not just a concept but reality on display. There I looked poverty in the eye.

In my case, it resulted in many years of cooperation with URACCAN university, made possible by Norwegian research council funding. Nicaraguan Indigenous small-scale fisheries people are victims of a failed state and dysfunctional governance system. Despite all the right language,

even legislation, the government's ability, or willingness to act on it, is unimpressive. Since my work in Nicaragua ended in 2011, things have become worse. Some of my colleagues there have decided to leave. Still, I have fond memories of a beautiful environment and good-hearted people who are struggling to sustain themselves, their families, communities and culture, like Indigenous small-scale fisheries people do everywhere.

For me, Nicaragua happened by chance, which occurs more often than we think. Our direction in life, and our outlook to the world is often formed by coincidence, by situations we stumble into, which we did not create ourselves. It is often the way we learn. Things happen that have life changing consequences, which we first come to realize afterwards. It is like what the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) famously argued: *"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."* It can only be comprehended in hindsight, but we are compelled to go ahead in a territory that is not known to us. Thus, life cannot be predicted – it involves opportunities and risk, uncertainty and a dosage of anxiety. This was how I felt when I first landed in Nicaragua while a war was raging. I had no idea of what my first visit would lead to. Now, it is hard to imagine how my life and career would have evolved without this experience. [18]

[18] Among many other things, the work in Nicaragua, led to two books: Gonzalez et al. (2006) and Koskinen et al. (2007).



Figure 4*. They named a 'panga' after me at the URACCAN University. Photo by S. Jentoft*

Poverty Mosaics

What happened to me in Nicaragua is not unique. Many people can tell similar stories. I tell people that if they only decide to read one thing in the Poverty Mosaics book, they should read the foreword by John Kurien, my colleague and friend from Kerala, India. I met him for the first time at a small-scale fisheries FAO workshop in the late 1980s but had already heard about him though Professor Johan Galtung's critique of Indo-Norwegian fisheries development project in Kerala. John is among the architects of the SSF Guidelines and founding member of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), of which I am a member. He is also a professor and a prolific academic writer.

In the foreword to the Poverty Mosaics book he talks about "the sea change" that happened to him when as a young person one day walked into a small-scale fisheries community in his home state. He could not avoid noticing that the community had all the features of poverty, "*congested housing conditions, poor sanitation, alcoholism, high morbidity, high level of*

literacy and the significant impact all the features have on women and girls in the community" (p. v). This could well have been a description of a rural, Indigenous village on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua.

Once he arrived in the community, John was approached by a man named Nelson, who he described "*as still wet and glistening in the sun*." Nelson was the leader of the local fisheries cooperative. *"Why don't you come and stay with us here, and help us sell our fish?"* That was a request that John could not dismiss. It set him out on a path that would determine his academic career. He came to define himself as an 'activist researcher'.

From the bottom-up

A life in the 'ivory tower' was not enough for John. His work among small-scale fisheries people in local communities became the university that Maxim Gorky talks about (see chapter 16). John is not just an engaged storyteller. He is a social scientist who does not refrain from drawing general lessons from his work. In the foreword (p. vi) to the Poverty Mosaics book he synthesizes his insights from his time in the community in thirteen statements, which are all valid for small-scale fisheries everywhere:

1. *"The interconnection between wealth and poverty*
2. *The need for conscious awareness* among fishers about the link and their resolve to break it.
3. *The primacy of credit* as a foundational requirement for investment in fishing equipment to raise productivity an investment.
4. *The need to disassociate the source of credit* from the control of the market.
5. *The vital requirement for the fishers to control the first sale transactions*.
6. *The importance of obtaining preferential rights* to coastal lands for providing house to fishers and post-harvest activity.
7. *The role of democratically and transparently functioning of people's organizations* which handling the sale of fish and fishing requisites,
8. *The need to establish social control* over the export market for fish.
9. *The fishers' huge fund of knowledge of the sea* and its resources.

10. *The pivotal but invisible function of women in shoring up* – and in effect subsidizing the fish economy – through their fishery and household related tasks.
11. *The key role of women* in the households and communities which finally do make the transition out of poverty.
12. *The wisdom of investment in education* – particularly for the girl child.
13. *The crucial nature of bottom-up collective action* as the bedrock of change."

Here, John is arguing for reforms he believes are necessary for making small-scale fisheries sustainable and socially just. He is reflecting on what he has come to believe after years of involvement with small-scale fisheries in Kerala and elsewhere. Although important, John realized that the issue is not only about the price of fish but also the access to the resource. He emphasized the shift toward a more politically motivated collective action, taking issue with its government's bias against small-scale fisheries. He wants to bring about institutional change and does not abstain from taking a stand on issues that are inherently political and acting on them.

Round dance

Jon's keynote address at the Mare Conference, published in 2003 in Maritime Studies, shows that he is also a social theorist. In his address, he talked about how the Kerala community he once visited had undergone major change. He reflected more broadly on the new challenges facing small-scale fisheries in what he calls the "tropical majority world". He is supportive of a bottom-up, grounded approach to social science theorizing, which in his view "*calls for setting aside the postulational method and its emphasis on a priori reasoning as the basis of social knowledge. Alternatively, it calls for understanding and appreciation – empirical and intuitive – of the actual social reality before moving to levels of abstraction, which are required for a more systematic study of this reality*." (Kurien, 2003, p. 24).

I believe that his methodological approach is no less relevant for the

"temperate minority world" than for the "tropical majority world." We should never dismiss the opportunity to learn about things that are important from getting your feet wet. You may prefer the cleanliness of modelling at your desk, but that is not the only way of learning and building an academic career. In my view, however, "a priory reasoning", like drawing inspiration and direction from conceptual discourse, also has merits. We cannot, and should not, dismiss centuries of reasoning on issues that have always been part of the human condition. In TBTI, we have benefited from the age-old discourse on social justice, now in the context of the Blue Economy (Jentoft et al., 2022). When you enter a small-scale fishing community and want to learn something from what is going on there, you bring theoretically informed questions from your education, reading, and prior reasoning. However, they should not exclude you from asking questions that emerge from what you observe when you familiarize yourself with what is happening in the community and from what people are telling you.

It is no waste of time to explore how conceptual discourse would function in the real world, as we have done by drawing on Jan Kooiman's ideas of interactive governance (Kooiman, 2003; Kooiman et al., 2005) in our TBTI small-scale fisheries research. How does it work in small-scale fisheries? Once you have an idea of what that may involve, which you will get a sense of from reading the literature, you have a tool for how to read small-scale fisheries and how to change it. Governance may be uniquely interactive in different settings. What constitutes interaction is therefore worth thinking about before you enter the field, as it would give you a hint on what to look for. But you always run the risk of not finding what you are looking for but something else. This is how groundbreaking discoveries in science sometimes happen.

My master and PhD theses supervisor, the social anthropologist Cato Wadel, was an ardent supporter of social research as an ongoing 'round dance' between theory and empirical research. For the research activist, one should not exclude the other because they can be part of the same process. It is not only a way of being an activist while running a research

project, but how to build a life-long academic career. A fieldwork is not a one off, but a way of revisiting issues that are empirical, theoretical, and political at the same time. But you may prefer to do it sequentially rather than synchronically. The latter approach is close to what characterizes as "action research", which should not be confused with "activism research." With action research you investigate an ongoing practice, which you feed with the knowledge you acquire while it is evolving. Your research findings are part of the development process. The term was originally coined by the psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946),[19] who defined action research as "a *comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action"* (p. 203).

Activist researchers are driven by a cause, a conviction, and a mission. The researcher does something concrete to achieve social change and does not refrain from challenging those in power, like big industry or government, sometimes as a means of civil disobedience. An activist researcher is one who uses his/her research to influence social and political development goals. It is not just work at the desk but combined with activism, as John has done in his career in small-scale fisheries research.

Much of what TBTI is doing would therefore count as activist research. TBTI does not stop with its publications. The mission is also to launch campaigns and training programs among small-scale fisheries stakeholders and practitioners around the world. As the work moves up the governance "orders", it targets policymakers, civil society organizations government agencies, and academia. It is knowledge production for transformative action. TBTI has therefore taken a strong interest in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.[20]

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[19] https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/action-research/ Cfr. also, Adelman (1993)

[20] There is extensive literature on activist research, as summarized here: Participatory, Emancipatory, Activist Research - Stimpunks Foundation; https://stimpunks.org/research/activist/

Neutrality

Max Weber (1864-1920), who was an economist and a sociologist, posited that social science should be "value free", neutral, and apolitical. The researcher should keep a personal distance to the subject matter and the people under investigation. His view has for decades stirred controversy among social sciences and produced a huge literature. Is it desirable or even possible to be strictly neutral? Scientific concepts have an inbuilt bias, as they are framing what we see and how we act. Can a small-scale fisheries researcher really be aloof when there is poverty, conflict, inequity, and human rights abuse?

Like everyone else, researchers are socialized into a world of norms, values, and politics, which they cannot step aside from. Our research topics are not chosen in a social and political vacuum. We are supposed to have freedom to choose what we think is relevant, interesting, and rewarding. Our disciplines are institutional regimes underpinned by values, norms and principles which are inherently ethical. Academic freedom allows us to be critical of our own biases and to 'kill our darlings.' Neutrality is also a political choice.

There are rules for collecting data, for analyzing, and communicating them. They are not meant to be instructive, not restrictive. They tell us what to do as researchers. Activism research does not free us from following them. If you chose to abandon these rules, you are just an activist. This is acceptable, but then you should take your research hat off. Research activism is supposed to be driven by social responsibility, not by personal ambition. It should be led by values and norms that are shared within the community where you work. Your informants have a right to know who you are and why you are there.

As researchers we chose to focus on poverty because it is prevalent in small-scale fisheries communities all over the world. It is laudable to use our research as a contribution to rid them of it, to help people leading a life in freedom and dignity, as is the motivation for the SSF Guidelines. Solidarity is a personal choice but also a social value, and you are free

to pursue them in your own research. You do useful work if you show how wellbeing and social justice can be achieved in a concrete small-scale fisheries community as well as in society as a whole.

13

Emotions in Small-Scale Fisheries Research

From where do we as social scientists get our research topics? How do we decide what to pay attention to? What triggers our curiosity and resolve? Do we select topics as part of a plan, build on previous work, or do we stumble into them? Do we select our research issues ourselves or do the issues select us?

I guess the answer is that we get our ideas from everywhere and sometimes from nowhere in particular. We make them up in our head, in our imagination, and sometimes in our heart. Researchers do not only have an intellectual relationship to their theme but have also a moral and emotional association to it. They care about what they are doing.

Academics also get ideas from their disciplines. We do what we do according to our training. We always stand on someone's shoulders, people whose work we found inspiring. We also find inspiration in observations we make, things we read, see and watch, in books, newspapers, films, and TV, social media, or even artwork, like music, novels, paintings, and poems in my case (see book introduction and chapters 6 and 12). For my own research on poverty in small-scale fisheries, I was triggered by the Danish author and journalist Carsten Jensen's observation from his travels: "*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 needs, not because they are going to die tomorrow, but because their lives are static." (Jensen, 2000, p. 130-131).

Jensen suggests that to understand what poverty is, we must look beyond material aspects and into what poverty means to the poor, how they see themselves relative to others and in the world. Poverty also comes with a perception of time. To understand poverty, you must understand what life involves for those who are poor and how they see their life in the future. Rather than interviewing small-scale fisheries people about their poverty, one should talk to them about their life. They do not necessarily see themselves as poor. Their perception depends on their aspirations, on what they are lacking relative to what they think they need and deserve.

My PhD student Paul Onyango, who passed away way too early, talks about a man in a small-scale Lake Victoria fisheries community who felt privileged when he got a bicycle. Not because he owned something that other people in his community did not, but because it allowed him to do things that he could not do before (Jentoft, 2022b). Paul concludes that people's sense of poverty hinges on whether they have the opportunity and capacity to improve their situation, whether they feel stuck or not.

Research questions may also emerge from lived experience, from our upbringing, our daily encounters with other people or from occasions and situations we find ourselves in, sometimes serendipitously. If you are born into a small-scale fisheries community, you have an intimate knowledge of which problems are pressing because you have seen your people struggle with them. My old professor Ottar Brox who figures in book II of the trilogy, once asked his mother about what she thought of as her most important and memorable event in her life. She said, "*when we got a cow, and I didn't have to ask neighbors for milk*." Ottar had the ingenuity to convert his personal story into research questions, projects, and career. The problems he experienced as a child formed him as an academic. In gratitude for his upbringing, he wanted to give something in return for what he received in his community. For him, the community was "a gift", as I write about in book II.

Ottar made his personal story into a sociology of small-scale fisheries. As an academic, he would ask why communities like his are struggling with the same things? For a curious mind like his, this was a natural step to take. If someone should ask him what a poverty is and what a local community is, he had an innate, heartfelt experience to draw from when he reasoned sociologically about how small-scale fisheries can improve.

Listening to myself

We may get research ideas from reading a paper and from attending a seminar or a conference. We are triggered by what we hear. Sometimes we even get them from what we say to others when responding to their questions or comments. As we are listening to others, we also listen to ourselves talking. Both can be equally inspirational. In a seminar I once attended, someone argued that we need to show more solidarity with Indigenous people, who just like small-scale fisheries people, are poor and marginalized. Indigenous peoples also fish when they have a chance. Therefore, the SSF Guidelines specifically mention them. When I spoke, I did not contradict the solidarity argument but felt the urge to say that their often-dismal situation is fundamentally about social justice and that they therefore need more than sympathy. Justice became an important issue in my work on small-scale fisheries, also in the context of the Blue Economy, which I discussed in several chapters of book I and II in the trilogy, and in Jentoft et al. (2022).

In fact, many of my essays in these books emerged in this way. I reflected on my response to an argument raised by someone else and felt that I had something to say about it, more than what I did there and then. I based my paper on a story and an argument that to me was as much emotional as intellectual. The story could be my own, as well as that of others. Emotions can be positive or negative. We do not just observe that small-scale fisheries people are often denied their human rights and dignity. We ask ourselves how this can be. We believe that many of the solutions for the crises in world fisheries are to be found in small-scale fisheries. But we also study

them because we feel that they deserve more than they currently have, that they have a right to be recognized. Enthusiasm and annoyance can both inspire research. 'Best practices' can be as inspirational as worst practices (APFIC, 2010).

We observe, think, and feel

Emotions play a bigger role in both natural and social science than researchers are willing to admit. For some misconceived perceptions of neutrality and objectivity, we are supposed to pretend that emotions should not be part of the mix. Therefore, they are rarely talked about. All people have feelings. The pure intellect is, as Hegel noted, an abstraction (Hverven, 2025, p. 54). A researcher is not a coldhearted observer of human misery. He or she is not absolved from the norm of human empathy and responsibility. I believe researchers are not fully honest to themselves and to others if they deny that emotions have nothing to do with what they do. It takes a rare degree of indifference and irresponsibility to be cold-hearted in the face of suffering and injustice. Human rights violations are equally disturbing to scientists as they are to other people. Using their expertise in defense of the wellbeing of others is an obligation, a meaningful mission, not an abstract principle, but a genuine, ethical endeavor.

I, for one, have a heartfelt relationship to the SSF Guidelines. They speak of issues in small-scale fisheries in a way no one should be indifferent to. With their foundation in human rights thinking, they appeal to our intellect as well as to our morality. When I try to persuade colleagues to engage with the SSF Guidelines, (see chapter 5), I appeal both to their scholarly curiosity and the sense of social responsibility. Responsibility is not only what you have but also what you feel. It is a function as well as a norm.

Human rights are conceptually challenging. But one should not be indifferent to human-rights' violations in real life. When you can put a face to poverty and hunger, you cannot remain unconcerned. It sticks to you because it is emotional. Supporting the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, with the tools of social science, is a way for researchers to make

a moral difference. This does not make social science political, even if the issue under investigation is (see chapter 12). Obviously, poverty and social justice are political issues, both as cause and effect. The same is true for fisheries management. But since poverty and social justice affect human lives, they are more than that.

Fieldwork

When social scientists step out of their "clean models" and into the field, they inevitably risk getting their feet muddy and their "hands dirty" (Zafirovski, 2002). Fieldwork is exhausting and stressful, in some instances even risky, but it is also emotionally challenging: what you learn may be as disturbing as it is interesting. It may challenge your basic beliefs and values both in research and in life. Shobana Shankar (2024) observes: "*Engaging in fieldwork elicits strong emotions in researchers, and feelings are powerful teachers*."

The classic example is anthropologist Brunislaw Malinowski's revelation in the diaries he wrote while doing fieldwork in New Guinea and Trobriand-islands in 1914-1915 and 1917-1918. The diaries took a long time to get published, in 1967, after he had passed away. Malinowski is the one who pioneered fieldwork as a research method, and by that set the stage for social anthropology as the distinct discipline as it is known today. The diaries tell the 'real' story of his research experience. They reveal a darker side of his personality and his feelings towards the people he met and worked with.

The diaries caused shock waves in the academic when they came out, but he was later praised for his honesty. I found them intriguing when I read them in graduate school. The diaries inspired other researchers like Geertz (1974) and Gable (2014) to reflect on their own fieldwork experiences in a similar manner. Now it is common practice for PhD students to tell their field story.

The fieldwork experience may test your personality to the core. They challenge your assumptions, prejudices, and worldviews, which may change

you as a person. My two years in a fishing community as part of my PhD work are still vivid in my mind and has had a lasting effect on me. I write more about it in book I. Researchers often continue to draw on their fieldwork experience long after their project ended, sometimes throughout their entire career. When I write about small-scale fisheries communities, the image of 'my community' shines through.

Fieldwork involves a learning process which is unavoidably emotional. It is a test of research hypotheses, and of yourself. Goethe's Faust undergoes a similar transformation when he left his ivory tower and was confronted with real people. It transformed his general outlook of the world and his perception of himself. I talk about him in book I, chapter 1.

Moral outrage

Emotions do not just come as an afterthought. They are vibrant throughout the whole research process – before, during and after. We choose our research topic not simply because it is interesting or puzzling, but also because we have feeling for it. We want to do and be good. We hope to be relevant in solving societal problems that we care about, for instance those that exist in small-scale fisheries. It is not just about our ideas. Knowing the importance of a topic is not the same as feeling for it. Much of our research on small-scale fisheries is not driven by abstract reasoning but by our anxiety about what might happen to them in the future. How will climate change affect them? Will neoliberal policies wipe them out? Will they survive in the Blue Economy?

Similarly, any credible solution to their problems leaves us with a sense of optimism and the impulse to contribute. Fear and hope are both strong motivators when outcomes are uncertain. Shobana Shankar (2020), who writes about emotions in social research, holds: "*When certainty is shaken,*

we are led to new perspectives and practices." (Shankar, 2024).[21]

Ask a social scientist how they arrived at their topics of interest, and they will tell you different stories. For some, it just happened by coincidence. But even if it happened in that way, serendipitously, they would have been prepared for it. They already had relevant analytical perspectives and concepts. They had feelings for the topic. You would hardly take up social justice as a research issue unless you already have an idea of what it is and have a feel for it. Injustice is an empirical problem that comes with moral outrage because it is always wrong.

Therefore, we recognize what we see through the lens that our concepts provide, and we feel the urge to act on it in our heart. If you are short of ideas of what to do in small-scale fisheries and how to get involved, get out of your office and into the field. There is no conflict between being interested in social theory and interacting with small-scale fisheries people in local communities. As Shankar argues, we learn from both, and one does not necessarily precede the other.

Comfort zone

Having been born and raised in Norway, I never experienced poverty. My hometown was devastated by the second world war, but I never saw people begging for money and food. I never had to go hungry to bed. I never heard my parents struggle to pay their bills. When I wanted something that they could not afford, like a new bicycle or jumping skis, I had to work for it myself. I sold newspapers or worked in a grocery store. One summer I worked in a fish factory. For a young person, there are important life

[21] My friend Ron Jones commented interestingly on this point and said: "This is why argumentation is valid and can open space when people admit they are wrong. Then, they have lost the argument, their certainty is shattered, and they now need to explore new views, paths, values, assumptions etc. it is the [power of the dialect of conflict and thus change (sensu Marx), argumentation is a key tool when speaking truth to power! Discussions often simply end in false positive or agreements (f.ex. The Indian head shake, » A Cha!» where a yes actually means no, or it is a yes, but not necessarily for you)."

lessons in realizing that there is 'no such thing as a free lunch.'

Travelling is among the best eye-openers. Being a fisheries researcher has brought me around the world. Things you used to take for granted as part of the 'natural' order, is not so certain anymore because they may be very different from what you are used to and expected. Concepts suddenly get another meaning. What was abstract becomes concrete. Travelling can thus be educational, and not only a lesson in geography. Travelling is maturing for the mind; it makes you wiser, humbler. As the Basque country novelist and poet Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936) said: "*Fascism is cured by reading, racism is cured by traveling*."

The view of a person begging for food is upsetting, also because it acts as a mirror for yourself. Looking into the eyes of the person stretching their hand to you may give you a sense of sympathy and pity, but it may also leave you with a burning sense of sadness and shame. The unfairness involved is disturbing. Your privileged position can be explained but not morally justified. I am simply lucky to have been born and raised in a country like Norway. "*You have already won the lottery*," our prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland used to say. But no one deserves to win like that.

Shankar believes that shame is a useful emotion for a researcher. Not only does it show their humanity; it defies the numbness one may feel to problems that are as overwhelming as it is familiar. It is a strong moral motivator. It jolts the researcher out of the comfort zone, the place where you feel safe because everything is familiar to you. This is how poverty in small scale fisheries became my research issue and why the SSF Guidelines became a heartfelt topic in my work. They are, as the subtitle says, devoted to eradicating it. With the Hidden Harvest project, FAO has the data to prove that poverty is a major issue in small-scale fisheries on a global scale (Basurto et al., 2025). I had my own narrative to bring me there.

Poverty research

I am not sure how it all began. One thing leads to another and ends with a conviction that this is something I could not leave aside. I had often

seen poverty on my travels, and like many so-called fisheries experts, we may get detached from the human tragedy behind it. You cannot respond emotionally to every hand that is stretched out to you with the embarrassment that Shankar talks about. Instead, you pass by and look away.

I still regret my indifference to an old woman sitting on a street sidewalk in Sri Lanka asking for my help. When I later talked about it to my wife, she asked what I would have thought if the woman had been my mother. I also vividly remember the strong effect a South African movie had on me, which told the story of a young mother knocking on the window of cars stopping on red lights. Passengers did not even bother to look her way when, with her baby in her arms, she begged for a Rand.

How often had I been in the passenger seat and just done the same? How could I not feel a sting of shame when ignoring the beggar? Was it just my way of dealing with it emotionally? The film reminded me that poor people who beg for help have an individual story to tell. They do not just belong to a category. Even if we as researchers cannot provide the help they need, we have a moral obligation to see and listen, regardless of how painful it may be. You will not violate their right to privacy and dignity if you do it, quite the contrary.

My life and working career would have been different without my years in Nicaragua, beginning in the early 1980s, when I was heading a mission sent there by the Norwegian Peoples' Aid – an organization working in development and relief in many countries around the world. I was there to investigate the possibility of this organization supporting fisheries development programs initiated by the Sandinista government. I was later part of a NORAD[22] mission to explore opportunities for direct aid to the small-scale fishing industry on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast.

When you stay there for some time, you do not only get familiar with the phenomenon, but also with real people. Some of them may become your friends, and you want to help them in their struggle to secure a

[22] The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

sustainable livelihood. Through our project we funded students to finish their degrees. We also helped build a school and a cultural center in a small fishing community. We supported the development of a dictionary in the Rama Indigenous language.

I arrived as an academic but made friends in the process and perhaps a few adversaries when we failed to take the project to the next step. The project came to a painful stop, and it took a year of negotiations until we decided to terminate it. It was my *annus horribilis*. Now, however, many years since the project ended, I still talk to and cooperate with people there. Friendship is not just a social relationship; it is also a moral relationship. Friends have lasting feelings for each other. I befriended colleagues and students and got close to the people who hosted me. When my plane landed in Bluefields, they were at the airport to greet me. It felt like coming home. They are also the main reason why I want to go back, if only for a visit. They are the main reason why I am still interested in what is going on in Nicaragua, where the situation is grimmer than when I was there. Some of the students we supported now live in exile in fear of persecution.

When I write and lecture about poverty in small-scale fisheries, I have an image in my mind of what it looks like. It is also what I think of when I talk about the SSF Guidelines, where poverty eradication among Indigenous small-scale fisheries people figures prominently among the goals. The SSF Guidelines speak with a moral voice.

The Nicaragua project was over in 2007, but my engagement continued. In 2010 I went back to do a study of the plan to establish a marine protected area (MPA) in the Pearl Cays, an important fishing area for people in adjacent communities. For them, the MPA was seen as a way of protecting their tenure rights from coastal grabbing by a US tourism developer. I had been shocked by his brazen efforts to take the area from the Indigenous communities who were not protected despite having the law on their side. The tourist entrepreneur did not shy away from violence to realize his plan. With my previous student, I went to see the cays myself. We were met with armed guards and the poster below (Figure 5). The story is told in Gonzalez and Jentoft (2011).



Figure 5. *Warning sign at Perl Cays. Photo by S. Jentoft*

I went 'full scale' on the poverty issue in the 'Povfish' project, which started in 2008 that resulted in the edited volume 'Poverty Mosaics: Realities and Prospects in Small-Scale Fisheries (Jentoft & Eide, 2011), which I mentioned in a previous chapter. The book contains 15 case studies from around the world on how people in small-scale fisheries cope with poverty in their lives and communities. That is why we put "in" rather than "of" small-scale fisheries in the title, as a way of stressing the people perspective instead of making future predictions about the sector. I brought the book with me to FAO to one of the early meetings on the SSF Guidelines in the hope that it would inform the process. In their paper in Nature, Basurto et al. (2025) refer to it. So maybe the book had the impact I was hoping it would. The book also has chapters from the Global North, from Turkey and Poland, to demonstrate that small-scale fisheries people are not only poor and marginalized in the Global South.

With poverty in small-scale fisheries, researchers will never be short of material. Not because there is little one can do to eradicate it. The SSF

Guidelines are full of suggestions of necessary remedies. But poverty is not eradicated once and for all. You may bring people above the poverty line as the UN defines it [23] – and in small-scale fisheries there are millions who live below it. However, there is no guarantee that they may not slip under the poverty line again should one manage to lift them above it. Nothing is permanent. For the individuals, hope would be replaced by despair, an emotion that researchers may well share.

The poverty line cannot be defined in monetary terms. Like small-scale fisheries, poverty is hard to define, but we know what it is when we see it. As the SSF Guidelines observe: "*Where poverty exists in small-scale fishing communities, it is of a multidimensional nature and is not only caused by low incomes but also due to factors that impede full enjoyment of human rights including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights*" (FAO, 2015, X-XI).

The SSF Guidelines will always be relevant but may well lose attention as time goes by. If the SSF Guidelines do not make any visible difference in the lives of small-scale fisheries people, they are likely to breed cynicism and give up on them. For social researchers to not become disillusioned and move to less demanding areas than poverty eradication, their moral flame must continue to burn. For that to happen, researchers must continue their fieldwork practice, be out in the communities and examine how people try to make ends meet and keep the family safe. They cannot simply hope that the problem would solve itself in a growing blue economy. There is no trickle-down mechanism in a growing economy unless it is put there.

'Laissez faire' policies that leave small-scale fisheries people to fend for themselves in the face of poverty and marginalization are not above moral judgment. Contrary to the common belief that the tide will lift all boats, small-scale fishers may sink to the bottom. In his foreword to the Poverty Mosaics book, John Kurien quotes an old Sanskrit verse which sums up

[23] The UN defines extreme poverty as a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extreme_poverty

the conundrum:

> "My Lord, since you have banished poverty
> From this fair land, I feel it is my duty
> To lay an information that the outlaw
> Has taken refuge in my humble home,"

14

Social Responsibility

I published my first book in 1981, which translated to English, was titled 'Organization and Responsibility: Local coordination problems in fisheries.' For a young person that had just begun what would later amount to an academic career, it was a major thing. I couldn't be prouder then. I experienced that holding your own book for the first time is among the most exhilarating moments in one's academic life. When I scroll through the book now, I can see that I was onto something that has stayed with me ever since. Without a plan, my work appears to have had a consistent line of thought. I have branched out over the years, but there was always a "trunk" (see chapter 15), which is well captured in the book title.

The topic is rich and has largely stayed the same. It also pops up from time to time, like in the SSF Guidelines. The question of my continuing interest can be phrased like this: How do we deal with problems that are bound to occur, at least occasionally, when multiple, mutually dependent but poorly organized actors without formal responsibility for each other, still need to coordinate their actions, especially when crises hits, and the regular order is under stress?

I have found fisheries to be a well-suited laboratory for exploring the issue, which can be investigated in any sector. Under normal circumstances, when things are calm and working according to routine, this does not have to be a challenge; actors do what they are used to do without much

worry. But that is not the situation that small-scale fisheries people are experiencing. They must live with change rather than stability. When resource and market crises occur, mutuality and social responsibility become strained.

This is not a unique Norwegian small-scale fisheries condition. Neither is there a Norwegian solution that would fit regardless of context. Still, one can learn from the Norwegian experience. Historically, crises have had consequences for how social relations have been arranged, including in a legal sense. In Norway, fisheries crises have triggered institutional reform. The reason is simple: crises raise questions about the current order, as when a resource collapse make us rethink the efficacy of the existing management system. If the current order had been 'in order', they should not have happened in the first place. To understand how the current institutional arrangement came about, one must go back to the time when they were established, as sociologist Arthur Stinchcombe (1990) argued. Thus, the design of institutions has historical roots, but over time, they may have become unfit for handling new situations.

My first book was only about Norwegian fisheries, but the topic was of a general nature. The problem is felt everywhere in small-scale fisheries. It is truly "wicked" (Rittel & Webber, 1973). It is not solved once and for all but needs permanent attention because it may return. And even at one moment in history, it may then and now have had alternative solutions that need careful examination. It is a once-was, here-and-now, and a future problem. Thus, wicked problems need solutions for the short as well as the long term. They are both urgent and imminent. Solutions tend to create path dependency and inertia. They need a plan that creates room for adaptive learning and institutional change.

In the same boat

[24]In a free society, humans decide their own pathways. They are self-managed and powerful, not at the mercy of others. Small-scale fisheries people are no exception to this rule. Small-scale fisheries would not function unless the freedoms of their people are secured. It is among the qualities that make fisheries attractive to those who inhabit them. People need the autonomy and the ensuing flexibility to run a sustainable industry and feel free. But it is also a matter of individual self-respect. Therefore, the SSF Guidelines have human rights and dignity as a basic principle. This is a default position, i.e. beyond dispute, an inherent existential value.

Yet only the hermit lives alone. The rest of us must relate to other people because we depend on them and they on us. We interact with each other. We build groups and communities and create institutions with rules for how to relate and behave. We have commitments, obligations, and responsibilities in every role we fill. We are met with expectations and held accountable, which also become what we demand of ourselves. Inevitably, this puts limits on our freedom. We are required not to do something that may hurt other people. This is what it means to be socially responsible. We are not supposed to reduce other people's freedom so that we can enjoy ours. Freedom is for all to enjoy. My freedom is not more important than yours.

Because we are in it together, in the same lifeboat, we could not live without norms and rules, and someone to enforce them. If not, society would descend into chaos where we would live in constant fear of violent death, as Thomas Hobbes described in his Leviathan; Without a central authority, human life is *"solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short"* (Hobbes, 1651/2017, xiii.). However, he drew it way too far. We can manage without a hierarchical structure, a state, a chief. There are things we are better in handling ourselves.

We can agree among ourselves on which norms and rules should apply in small-scale fisheries, and we can establish the necessary tools for making

[24] This is the title of my second book which I edited with Cato Wadel.

them socially responsible. We are not deemed to fall into the situation that Hobbes talks about. Institutions can develop from below. Small-scale fisheries have empirical evidence to prove it. And yet, it is Hobbes who looms behind much of the current fisheries governance approach. His image of a society in chaos and conflict provides ample justification for a strong presence of the state. The SSF Guidelines think differently.

No social responsibility without justice

As we strive for social order, we also strive for social justice – because they are interrelated. We create order to secure justice, and without justice, social order will be under continuing pressure. Injustice may result in revolt, even 'brutish' rebellion. Injustice is the recipe for creating the outcome that Hobbes described. But injustice may also lead to peaceful introspection, deliberation, and social learning: whatever justice is, it is not this! If the experience does not tell us what justice is and how to achieve it, it tells us what to avoid. It is like pain; if you haven't experienced it, you would not know what it is. And if you do not know it, you would not know how to remove it.

Institutions may not be deliberately made unjust but nevertheless appear to be so because it is hard at the outset to predict all effects. In January of 2024, the Norwegian fisheries minister presented a new quota policy, claiming that it would bring justice to small-scale fisheries. She was immediately challenged by a question of what justice is. She refrained from engaging in a philosophical discussion of the meaning of social justice, but she seemed to have an idea of what injustice is when she suggested to transfer quotas from large to small-scale fishers and to regions that the current quota system has been proved to The fisheries minister should not be blamed for not coming up with a simple definition of justice. It is a difficult concept to come to terms with. Even Socrates claimed ignorance about it. It has been a matter of general concern and philosophical reflection ever since. It is indeed a wicked problem. It is an inherent part of social relations and interaction. In fisheries, where people compete for scarce

resources and where powerful actors determine the functioning of the value chain, justice is a prevalent issue. The struggle for justice is what underpins social movements and create policy change (Bavinck et al., 2018). Equity and justice figure among the guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines. They run through the document from beginning to end, but without a definition.

We seem to have a better understanding of what injustice is. We do not need to know what justice is to feel injustice. Without much hesitation, we can say to ourselves that whatever justice is as a concept, it is not what we are experiencing here and now. We know it by feeling it. Our sense of injustice comes early in life. Children have a clear idea of what injustice is – at least for them. My granddaughter was not more than three when in a dispute with her older sister, protested: "*This is unfair*."

What we can say, however, is that social justice and social responsibility are both relational, and two sides of the same coin. Although there is more to social responsibility than justice, one cannot exist without the other. Social justice is achieved through social responsibility, they both happen between people and between institutions and people, working interchangeably at all scales, from the inter-personal as within a family to the international level, like between the Global North and the South. And the sentiment is largely the same at all scales. Without social justice and social responsibility, our ability to interact and cooperate would be hampered. It would reduce our ability to grow and build sustainably.

The Brundtland commission (1991), which coined the sustainable development concept, argued that economic development must go hand in hand with poverty eradication. The SSF Guidelines posit the same. Now it has become a prevalent issue in fighting climate change, which also the Brundtland commission discussed. To achieve stated climate goals, we must simultaneously deal with the other "sustainable development goals" (SDGs) such as social justice . The goals are intertwined. "Climate justice" is now a concept and a consideration in the climate change discourse, thus combining SDG 13 and 16.

The meaning of social

As humans, we depend on being together with other people. We interact, transact, communicate, and cooperate. Together we can carry a heavier weight. The sociologist Richard Sennet (2012, p. ix) observes: "*Cooperation is the oil in the machinery of getting things done, and sharing with others can make up for what we may individually lack*."

Social relations make us stronger. We depend on each other to act responsibly, to not put us and the others at harms risk. Social responsibility involves mutuality, that we make the wellbeing of other people also our own. We need to put ourselves in their shoes, to feel what they feel, and recall the 'golden rule' that we should not do to others what we do not want them to do to us. If we cannot imagine ourselves in their situation, we are in trouble as a society. We lose the bonds that hold us together and make society possible. Social responsibility is a moral creed, with social consequence.

Thus, our relationships with other people go deep; they have an emotional and moral content. We survive because we have the gift of caring for others, even for strangers. If we do not feel the responsibility that comes with inter-dependency, we can destroy each other and our community, because inter-dependency goes both ways and because we also have the capacity to act irresponsibly. Inter-dependency may make us vulnerable, and we need the moral guardrail. There are things we simply should not do to others. What is forbidden is normative although it is not always codified in formal law but in a categorical imperative, as in Matthew 25:40: "*Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me*." Accountability extends formal law.

To have social responsibility is to have a burden on our shoulders. It requires of us to think twice before we act. The total absence of social responsibility would be a warped sense of freedom. It would be social irresponsibility brought to the extreme. Contrary to the idea of Cain in the Genesis, we are indeed our "brother's keeper". The well-being of other people is ultimately our own. Caine's attitude is not only irresponsible, but

also unsustainable. I argue in another chapter that small-scale fisheries are doomed if this is their dominate ethics. Their sense of community would evaporate and the sentiment that keeps its social fabric intact would unravel.

Ownership

We adapt to what a rule says and to what other people are doing. Sometimes we do it spontaneously, as when we yield in traffic to another car which has the right of way. This is what social responsibility would imply in that situation. Not doing it would have negative consequences for both of us. But sometimes we need to do more: we must talk to each other, agree on whose responsibility it is and to coordinate to prevent a problem for happening. Or we may decide to re-order our social relations to ensure the endurance of agreements and to reduce transaction costs.

Some problems cannot be solved by an individual. They require collective action, which, to occur in orderly fashion, requires cooperation. We cannot assume that individual action will add up in a way that is socially beneficial. This, for instance, is the essence of the Tragedy of the Commons scenario where no cooperation or coordination occurs.

We are responsible for what we own. Ownership makes us responsible. Owning a house or a car or a share in a company comes with responsibilities. We are therefore assumed to act responsibly because it is in our private interest to do so. Thus, responsibilities give content to the roles we occupy and the role-sets we are involved in.

Shareholders have social responsibilities relative to the company and vice versa. But does the company have responsibilities to other stakeholders than shareholders? The Nobel laureate in economics Milton Freedman, answered in the negative. Shareholders are the ultimate stakeholder, which the company should feel responsibility for. Maximizing profit translates into dividends and taxes, and that is what their social responsibility should amount to.

There are, however, other ways of looking at this, and Friedman (1970)

has been criticized to thinking too narrowly. Companies have other stakeholders, like workers, suppliers, and customers who should not just be treated as means to the shareholders' end. Therefore, the concept of corporate social responsibility would involve all social relationships of the company. The company should include all stakeholders in their accounting.

My book, which I referred to above, is about how social responsibilities are handled in all social relationships of fisheries, for instances how fishers and fish-processors not only take responsibility for each other, but also for the community they are part of. I was curious how organization matter for their perception of how far their social responsibility goes. Does local ownership matter? Are interactions informed by a shared sense of responsibility, as when fishers decide where to land their catch? Would the local plant always keep his door open for them, buy what they bring ashore at a price fishers could live with? Would their transactions by guided by a shared understanding of their (informal) social responsibility for the local community?

Within the broader definition of social responsibility than that of Friedman's, a skipper is responsible for the safety of the crew. As the owners of a boat, they are responsible for its seaworthiness. They are responsible to those who buy and consume the fish the crew brings ashore. Skippers have commitments to government, who has a demand on their earnings. Likewise, a fisher has responsibilities vis-a-vis the person or institution that lent them money. The list goes on and on. Every social relation and transaction involves responsibilities. In some instances, we have 'objective' responsibilities for damages even without direct guilt.

As a professor, I am responsible to my university and my students, but I do not own them and neither do they own me. Our relationship is specified by a contract that defines the limits of our mutual responsibilities. Likewise, as a father, I have responsibilities for my children, but they own themselves. Thus, I clearly have a formal and informal legal and moral responsibility, but I also have a functional responsibility; there are things I must do in my role as professor and father. My two roles have a split social responsibility, a functional and moral aspect. I have a job to, which I must take seriously.

I must teach my students and help my kids with their homework. Both roles are 'jobs', i.e. things I must do to fill them. But they are also moral commitments involving my dependability.

Subsidiarity

Social responsibility is something that I have, do, and feel. Thus, social responsibility has a triple element. I act responsibly by abiding with the norms that rests on me in my role. When I break them, I suffer moral or (semi-)legal condemnation and accountability. In another sense, I take on and have responsibility when I fulfill the task that society has given me, in my role as a fisher, professor or father. I did not invent that role myself but largely act as society believes what it means to have those roles. In a similar fashion, the skipper has a moral responsibility to respect rules, which also means that they should take into consideration other roles they have to fill. It comes with the role of being a skipper. Functional responsibilities are an organizational matter. They are about how we in society divide labor. But we also think of how functions are divided from a moral perspective.

There is rarely a clear distinction between the moral, functional and action dimension of social responsibility. How we divide societal functions between ourselves, i.e. whose responsibility it is to do what, is not just an issue of expediency, efficiency, and effectiveness: it is also a moral issue. The 'subsidiarity principle' is also a moral principle. When we, for instance, believe that the family is better equipped than the state to raise children, it also translates into an argument that families should have this responsibility, and that taking it away from them would be a violation of their human rights and dignity.

Families have a moral and a functional claim to the upbringing of their children. It is not just the most convenient or effective to raise a child, but something society considers the right thing to do. There would be no good reason why others should take over this responsibility if it cannot be proven without reasonable doubt that in a particular case parenthood is dysfunctional. According to the subsidiarity principle, the burden of proof

does not rest with the family but with some higher authority.

The same principle can be said to apply in the case of fisheries management. There is something to be said for local knowledge and autonomy. There is no reason to absolve small-scale fisheries communities from having management responsibilities if they can do the job equally or better than the government. Management functions could therefore be situated at the local level. This is why the SSF Guidelines are calling for respect for traditional practices and management systems, like tenure arrangements.

Small-scale fisheries communities may need to be better organized for handling a broader set of social responsibilities than they currently have capacity for. Atomistic communities could therefore have use for something like a fisheries cooperative to enable them to handle social responsibilities. This would not just be a practical arrangement. It is also underpinned by moral arguments like those defined by the seven Rochdale principles.[25] These principles are not 'just business.' They read much like the guiding governance principles in the SSF Guidelines that are ethical to the core.

This is the gist of co-management, which is also in the Guidelines. There is a functional argument pertaining to co-management, which involves a rearrangement (delegation and decentralization) of functional responsibilities. But co-management also contains a moral argument. It is about the empowerment of fisheries people and communities, much like the argument for democracy.

The expectation is that small-scale fisheries actors will act responsibly in an informal, moral sense if they have responsibility in a formal, functional sense. But they also have a democratic right to be involved. Fishers have an intense moral duty to follow regulations that are of their own making than those that are imposed of by an external authority. But this is not the only reason to institute it. It is a means to reduce Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, but also a goal in itself. With co-management, there is a moral justification with an organizational consequence and

[25] https://cloyne.org/rochdale-principles/

an organizational justification with a moral consequence. For the SSF Guidelines, co-management is part of their human-rights approach, and ideal solution worth striving at for more than one reason.

15

As the Tree Grows

In hindsight, I see my work much as a continuation of what I started out with. I am, in a way, still writing on my business school thesis, which was about the organization of small business firms, some of them fisheries related. Over the years, I covered a wide range of topics. They were never part of an original plan but have been circling around the same theme. There was no straight path ahead of me; it developed as I proceeded, one step at a time without a clear idea of a direction.

Without always thinking so much about it, I followed the advice from my master and PhD supervisor, Professor Cato Wadel, which he lived by himself; "*When you are wondering about what to do next, think of what you did last*." What he meant was that there is always an interesting research question in your last piece of work; you just need to carve it out. You do not need to continuously reinvent yourself throughout your career. Instead, you expand and go deeper into the questions that already inspired you.

Therefore, my own mantra is the advice I gave to the young aspiring social scientists that I have mentored: Do not think of yourself as planting a forest. If you do, you may be a victim of hubris. Instead, you need focus. Think of your career as a tree that grows upwards into the sky, downwards into the ground, and sideways along the branches. But as it grows in all directions, and some branches get bigger than others, so does the trunk, and that is what you really must have in mind. If you find yourself out on

a branch, it is not smart to cut it. Instead, you must return to the trunk before you can grow up or down, or into a new branch.

The French sociologist Emile Durheim (1858-1917) may be your role model, as he has been mine. His research developed along many branches; on the division of labor in society, on suicide, on social pathology, deviance, and crime, on sociological theory and methods, and on religion, to mention some of his research issues. But the core question in his work, the trunk as it were, was always the same: How is society even possible, what makes it hang together rather than disintegrating? That is a question broad enough to last a lifetime of exploring. As an early career social scientist, you will be well advised to find a research question at the same level of abstraction that will continue to inspire you even after you have written your report.

The start

In business school in Oslo in the early 1970s, I had no particular concern for small-scale fisheries – or fisheries for that matter, even if I was growing up in part of the country where fisheries are important. Looking back, I can now, however, see the link. I got curious about small-business organizations and leadership, not because they taught it but because they did not. The primary focus was on large-scale business organizations – even multinationals. I was impressed and a bit shaken when visiting Volvo in Gothenburg, Sweden, and the Ford factory in Dagenham, East London as part of a student excursion but it was more about the culture shock than anything else. Finding myself at the assembly line was a staggering, almost bodily experience. The scale of the operation took my breath away. When visiting a tuna cannery factory in Puerto Rico with a group of Rutgers University students in 1988, I got a flash back. How could people work like that over a long time without losing their health and mind out of repetition and boredom? I guess it was the money and lack of alternative jobs that were attractive to workers.

A modern, large-scale fish plant is inspired by Henry Ford and organized around the conveyor belt. It does not offer a more inspiring and personally

developing kind of work than what I saw then and have seen many times since, also in my region. It cannot be very rewarding for the worker if all there is to the job is picking bones out of the fish filet as it passes your station. It is not much different from installing the four screws on the front wheel as the car in progress is passing where you stand. Now, robots are coming to their rescue, also in the fish processing industry but may create another problem – taking the only available job away from people who need it. A job in small-scale fisheries has its own challenges but does not create illness out of boredom. Sometimes it may bring too much excitement, which may be bad for you.

Small is beautiful

Coming from North Norway where business firms were, and still are, predominantly small, the large-scale corporations that I heard about in business school were not part of my reality. But it triggered my curiosity: How are small businesses different from large corporations except in scale? How is it to be a manager in a small company compared to a large one? Can we assume that a big company is just a larger version of a small one or that small firms are always in the process of growing into a large one – or else they will perish? Or do they have unique qualities that make them sustainable? Is 'small' therefore 'beautiful'? as E.E. Schumacher posited in his bestseller (1973), which had an equally intriguing sub-title: 'Study of Economics as if People Mattered.'

I assumed that the beauty of the small business firm was imbedded in the way it treated employees, that workers were seen as individuals and not as a collective labor-force. My impression from Dagenham was that people did not matter all that much when we asked whether workers could change position along the assembly line. We were told that there were a lot of people outside the factory gate ready to replace them, should they decide to quit. Volvo was more worker-friendly, starting early with so-called 'self-managed work-teams,' which was originally a Norwegian experiment of the Employers' Association and the labor unions in collaboration. I

found them intriguing then, and still do, now in the form of small-scale fisheries co-management. Which to me is fisheries management "as if people mattered."

I finished business school in style but felt the need to bring my research interest home. I had to make it relevant for the reality I knew. So, when I decided to move to the new University of Tromsø and into Department of Social Science, I made small-business organizations my topic of research. My master thesis was a study of twenty small-scale businesses in various industries, including fisheries. I also brought the topic into my PhD research which was entirely on fisheries. Then not only the branch but also the trunk was developing into a considerable size, and the tree has kept growing ever since. In recent years I have become increasingly interested in developing the philosophical and methodological root system of my work, without which the tree risks toppling. But the tree also needs pruning occasionally. This is what you do when you think twice and reconsider your own assumptions.

Small-scale fisheries are a branch among others, like my interest in community development, and culture, Indigenous peoples and their tenure rights, fisheries co-operatives, co-management, poverty and well-being, legal pluralism, interactive governance, gender relations, generational succession, organization theory, decision-making, participatory democracy, marine protected areas, marine spatial planning, blue economy, social justice, collective action, common property theory, theories of language and morality, social network and entrepreneurship, power and social conflict – to mention those I can remember to have written on, but all in the context of small-scale fisheries.

What this suggests is not just my personal interest in the multiplicity of research topics and my lifelong effort in building my tree, but that small-scale fisheries relate to broader issues that one may intuitively think, as I mentioned in the book introduction. There is hardly an issue in social science, including those that Emile Durkheim worked on and whose concepts and perspectives I frequently use, that cannot be studied in small-scale fisheries. Centering your research career on small-scale fisheries does

not mean a lock in. Small-scale fisheries are not in a box. It is up to you to think outside it, to stretch the perspectives, raise new questions, and to make other people see what they are and what small-scale fisheries need to thrive. Then you should not jump from branch to branch but return to the trunk of the tree where the conceptual issues are located.

Collegial friendships

It is up to you to demonstrate that small-scale fisheries research provides insights that non- fishery people can learn from. Small-scale fisheries are a laboratory for exploring general issues that are not just in fisheries. Small-scale fisheries are also about the essential things in life, those that matter to people, like happiness, living well, raising a family, feeling togetherness with other people etc. There are always new things to discover. The tree of knowledge, which your research helps nourishing, may grow tall, while it may also keep on growing in width and depth and bear fruits, understanding that some trees grow slower than others. The philosophical questions of the antiquity are still with us, and are evident in small-scale fisheries too: how should we live together? How should we govern ourselves? What is freedom?

The trunk of the tree grows a branch, bearing leaves and fruits. The growth process depends on the quality of the soil and the natural environment, including the supply of water, and perhaps some fertilizer. What the tree will grow into is not easy to predict but it is likely to look like other trees, although not in the same exact details. Only time will show. This is also how a research career develops. You need nourishment from the inspiration you get from others. Cato Wadel's approach was one of continuation driven by curiosity and discovery. The former requires persistence while the other involves unpredictability. You realize the new topic in the previous one. You develop much like other researchers, but to stand out from other researchers, you must also be like them. We are all trees, albeit different from each other.

Thus, a career does not usually develop according to an original plan. I

know of no one who had it all laid out at the beginning. They all became a result of their own aspirations and ideas as they emerged throughout. But like the apple tree I planted in my yard last summer, it will not bear fruit in isolation. It needs another tree to pollinate. Likewise, no scientist bear fruits when growing in isolation. We benefit from having colleagues, interacting with others, and from building networks.

In hindsight, herein is the back-story of my career. My career would have been different without my collegial relationships and friendships, the people who I learned from and who inspired me. The back-story is more important than we tend to think, and that is why it should be nurtured as your career develops, also because it helps to build you as a person. You do not grow into a social scientist in splendid isolation, locking yourself into a lonely tower. The people I worked with were helpful on the branches as well as on the trunk. We grew together in a process of cross-pollination, which prepared us for new projects and laid the ground for my decade-long involvement with TBTI and the SSF Guidelines. The essays that resulted in this trilogy would not have happened if I worked only by myself.

Growing the trunk

I cannot compare myself with Durkheim, far from it, but his sociology taught me a lesson. Your career should be more about the trunk than the branches. There are big questions in the minor questions that one should continue to work on. His question on how society is possible does not have a definite answer. We should not stop pondering about it. It is one of those challenges that will never go away but we must keep working on because it requires a governance response adequate for our time. The answer to these big questions must also be found in a small-scale fisheries context.

The spring blossom and the summer's fruit will come and go, but the trunk will grow if you care for it. Being interested in coordinating social and economic activities through cooperation and collective action is near to Durkheim's topic. As I see them, all my research topics come together into a more abstract whole, which is the trunk of my work. Society is possible

because we coordinate and cooperate in managing our interdependencies, solve our conflicts and deal with power differentials and inequities that exist between us, including those between men and women. We keep society together through the institutions we create and the communities we build through informal and formal organizations and legislation that we establish to govern them. But underpinning them are the moralities, values, and principles we deliberate, where we must find common ground and make sure they do not get lost when they change because of the global trends that are now also impacting small-scale fisheries, like those associated with the Blue Economy.

All this depends on our ability to communicate and interact through the culture and the language we share, the knowledge we need, and the rules we create to manage our resources and steer our industries. This is how all societies work, Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous, and how they hang together. This is also how we must organize our fisheries for our communities to remain. The cooperative mode brings people together in taking social responsibility for needed functions. Through our small-scale fisheries research, we may help to make it possible also by growing a more solid trunk because we are part of the same equation that was Durheim's concern.

A career like mine was not meant to be. I did not grow up in an academic family. I was not the best in class. I wanted to be a middle-distance runner, not an academic. Military service changed me. As I matured, my outlook on the world changed. I grew up. But I was also fortunate. I met people who changed my views and plans. Opportunities came and I took them, but I was not particularly courageous. Getting serious about education is important. But there was no guarantee that it would eventually lead to a career, that there was a stipend and a job waiting for me. I consider myself lucky. This was decades ago. Young people, smarter than me, are not so lucky as I was. For them, finding a job in academia, where they can grow and thrive, is not as easy as it was for me. And should they be fortunate, their academic freedoms are shrinking, if not for other reasons but because of work overload. They cannot grow their own tree as freely as I could.

Working hard is still important but, unfortunately, no longer a guarantee that you will succeed in finding the opening that you are looking for. But it never was. Patience is still a virtue that may pay off. Finding an academic job is more difficult because there are fewer offers. This is not only a personal but a structural problem. My own university is also different from what it was when I started out and I am not sure if I would be happy there if I were to begin now. An academic career seems less attractive than it used to be. We need to make sure that the academia remains a garden where trees can grow.

IV

Learning Responsibly



Chennai, India. 2004 © Kungwan Juntarashote

16

Raw Experience

Many years ago, while living in Highland Park, New Jersey, I picked up a book from a used bookstore in my neighborhood where I used to go to read, as they also served good coffee. It was Maxim Gorky's memoir of his youth: 'My Universities' published in 1923. Born in 1868 and died in 1936, the Russian/Soviet author and socialist political commentator was five times nominated to the Nobel Prize but never received it. He was allegedly a favorite novelist of Lenin, despite his strained relationship with Marxism-Leninism. He was sent into exile twice and wrote 'My Universities' while living in Sorrento, Italy. I was once outside the house where he lived. Henrik Ibsen, our renowned playwright, wrote many of his plays while also living there.

What drew me to Gorky's book, I guess, was the combination of his fame and the peculiar title. I expected to learn about his life in academia, but as I started to read, I soon realized that he was never admitted to a university. The universities he talks about are just a metaphor for a different learning experience in his youth. The book remained an unfinished reading in my own bookshelf for decades, until I again found the title intriguing and decided to delve into it. Gorky's book is about the people he met – some of them fishers on the Volga River. The book has no chapters; it is basically his conversation with people he encountered. Maybe it could tell me something on local knowledge, which is now a popular topic in fisheries

management, and how to acquire it? Local knowledge has become an interest of mine in my research on small-scale fisheries and in the context of transdisciplinarity. It is also mentioned in the SSF Guidelines.

What exactly Gorky learned in his "universities" remains for me somewhat of an enigma. I am sure he himself learned things from his conversations with people, but he does not tell us about it. The book is meager on abstract reflections. It contains raw knowledge, no refined reflection. It is not a book of philosophy and folk knowledge as such. I assume that is why I did not finish reading it when I first acquired it. When I finally did, I found it rather tiring. For me, there is little in the book to learn from that has value beyond the tedious storytelling. Gorky is a master storyteller, and the reader should draw their own conclusions. But that is not how a philosopher, or a social scientist works. They tell stories for their pedagogical value. They want to convey a point that readers can learn from. They make arguments, sometimes even based on allegories and made-up stories, as Plato does with his allegory of the cave. Most of the time social scientists draw conclusions from empirical investigation, which may include conversations with real people, like those of Gorky.

Anamnesis

Gorky is not arguing anything in this book, other than what is implicit in title. He does not explain in any general sense what things he saw and experienced that are about issues that readers can identify. He makes no effort of what the medical profession calls 'anamnesis', which is a term borrowed from Plato. Rather than experimentally testing theories and hypotheses in a laboratory, with anamnesis knowledge is built like stone upon stone, story upon story, case after case about a medical condition of people who have it. When listening to the patients' symptoms, the doctor must be able to fit it into a medical category, which is a 'building' that already exists, to recognize the symptoms, arrive at a diagnosis, and prescribe relevant medicine. The more such stories of people with the same symptoms exist, the more solid the knowledge about the condition is, the

more secure the diagnosis and treatment. Years of university training has given the doctor the name and nature of the medical condition, but his/her confidence is established from their own experience with patients.Gorky is not arguing anything in this book, other than what is implicit in title. He does not explain in any general sense what things he saw and experienced that are about issues that readers can identify. He makes no effort of what the medical profession calls 'anamnesis', which is a term borrowed from Plato. Rather than experimentally testing theories and hypotheses in a laboratory, with anamnesis knowledge is built like stone upon stone, story upon story, case after case about a medical condition of people who have it. When listening to the patients' symptoms, the doctor must be able to fit it into a medical category, which is a 'building' that already exists, to recognize the symptoms, arrive at a diagnosis, and prescribe relevant medicine. The more such stories of people with the same symptoms exist, the more solid the knowledge about the condition is, the more secure the diagnosis and treatment. Years of university training has given the doctor the name and nature of the medical condition, but his/her confidence is established from their own experience with patients.

This is also how social scientists do case study research. They build "grounded theory" (Wikipedia, n.d. [b]) through an inductive approach that starts in the real world, like in a local small-scale fisheries community. Then they work themselves upwards into an increasingly more general perception about the problem under investigation. Then they achieve an understanding of what the case at hand is a case of, which is essential for making a diagnosis of the problem they are studying.

In the grounded theory approach, as originally described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), one does not begin with a theory and a hypothesis drawn from a discipline. Instead, the field experience provides them the hypotheses, which they explore empirically – by, for instance, talking to small-scale fisheries people about their lives and livelihoods. Then, over time, they acquire increasingly deeper understanding like on what poverty and marginalization in small-scale fisheries are all about. Subsequently, they have expert knowledge to offer, one that is drawn from real-life

experience rather than just from abstract discourse in textbooks.

How to learn

My PhD supervisor, Professor Cato Wadel, who was a social anthropologist, developed knowledge about unemployment from acquainting one person, which he for the sake of anonymity he called George (Wadel, 1972). Sigmund Freud did the same with his most famous patient, 'the Wolf of Odessa', which allegedly "*left a lasting mark on the entire field of psychology*" (Goloperov, 2016). Contrary to Gorky, Wadel and Freud took it one step further – from the story to the issue, from getting to know the informants and their story, to more general insights into the phenomenon.

Despite being without a job, Wadel's George was a busy man, working from early morning till late in the evening within and outside his house, taking care of things, helping family and neighbors. Wadel argues that we need a broader work concept than that of contracted, paid labor. Work is not the same thing as having a formal job that comes with a paycheck. We need a concept of work which includes building and maintaining social relations and values. This is often informal, unregulated, unplanned, and non-compensated activities that we should not ignore because they also form the foundation of formal work.

Like Freud, Wadel demonstrated that one can indeed study something that is empirically 'small' (one person) but socially big (unemployment, human psyche) and conceptually complex (work, personality). Learning from 'histories' in the present, like with George or the 'Wolf Man of Odessa', is thus different than learning history about the past in the way how professional historians do their research. A historian who wants to learn about life in the Middle Ages or how the Vikings travelled has no one to observe and interview. They must build their story on existing material in the archives or libraries. Archeologists dig in the ground and find things that provide clues about ancient history. Philosophers often build arguments from imaginary examples. But sometimes they scrutinize real-life examples to explain something that is more complex than it appears.

Hannah Arendt's concept of the "Banality of Evil" emerged from her sitting in and listening to the trial of Adolf Eichman (Arendt, 1963). Out of her experience came an intriguing but disturbing concept. It thus happens that philosophers also do empirical research (Wilson & Santoro, 2015), which is how my friend and colleague Professor Jens-Ivar Nergård (2022) does his work.

Refined knowledge

Jens-Ivar Nergård has opened my eyes to philosophy, which was not part of my own university education. Originally trained as a primary school teacher, he is also a social anthropologist interested in psychoanalysis. His research takes place in Indigenous Sami communities in North Norway and Northern Sweden, where he talks with people about their lifeworld. He is interested in their industries (small-scale fisheries and reindeer pastoralism) as well as their spirituality and culture. In his analyses, he draws heavily on philosophical teaching and thus appears as a truly interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scholar.

His method is observation and informal conversation rather formal interviewing and survey method. Being a Sami himself, this approach puts him on a more equal footing with his informants. He treats them for what they are: real people with deep knowledge who deserve respect. He also tapes his conversations for further analysis and films them, knowing that seeing provides a better understanding. His books are rich with illustrations. Over the years his informants have become his friends, who contact him as often as he contacts them. He also invites them to his book launches.

Among his many books are 'The Living Experience' (Den levende erfaring) (2006), 'Dialogues with Nature' (2019), 'The Sámi Narrative Tradition' (2022), and most recently 'Reconciliation with lost time' (Forsoning med tapt tid) (2025). Here, he reflects on the stories he is told and the things he has been shown in a cultural and philosophical context in which scholars like Wittgenstein, Jung, and Freud inspire him. His theoretical approach is

grounded and inductive, much like Wadel's and Freud's, but unlike that of Maxim Gorky who in 'My Universities' cuts his stories short.

Reflection

A 'real' university education does not always teach you this. It takes more than reading books. You learn as you do it, as Nergård has done throughout his whole career. This is what you need to learn in life, and why Gorky's "universities" are also places for learning. You feel with the characters you hear from. We can easily imagine ourselves in the shoes of George. But we also learn that unemployment can ruin our sense of self if we do not actively work to hinder it, like George does. Wadel's book will change your mind if you think that unemployment is about laziness and unwillingness to work.

Both Wadel's and Nergård's work relate to ongoing public debates. They help build knowledge-based arguments for the political realm, about employment and about the discrimination of Indigenous peoples. They tell stories that draw from real people who are the experts in their own lives. No one knows better what it means to be unemployed than those who experience it. No one understands racism and injustice more than the victims of it. Hearing their stories should be an obligatory part of both a university education and a political process.

This is the same with small-scale fisheries people whose lives are increasingly determined by forces beyond their control. They are the ones to talk to. They are the ones to consult if you want to know what difference the SSF Guidelines make in changing their working conditions and their life. But you need to refine the knowledge that is raw, through reflection and transdisciplinary scholarship, which is what "real" universities are there to help you with. This is also how the academia can contribute to their implementation.

In his book 'Proposed Roads to Freedom', first published in 1918, Bertrand Russell (2002, p. 4) observes:

> *"The great majority of men and women, in ordinary times, pass through life without ever contemplating or criticizing, as a whole, either their own conditions or those of the world at large. They find themselves born into a certain place in society, and they accept what each day brings forth, without any effort of thought beyond what the immediate present requires. Almost as institively as the beasts of the field, they seek the satisfaction of the needs of the moment, without much forethought, and without considering that by sufficient effort the whole conditions of their lives could be changed."*

Russell could not have read Gorky's 'My Universities', so he must have his observations from somewhere else. But Gorky alludes to the same observation when he posits: "*People seek oblivion, comfort, but not knowledge*!" (p. 53). Life is not necessarily the school that people sometimes claim.

It is not enough to have lived. Learning requires reflection. You may have strong opinions on this and that. You may be frustrated, disappointed, and angry. Small-scale fisheries people have good reason to be angry. They are often victims of injustice and governance failure. But anger is not knowledge.[26]

Emerging patterns

Is it really, as Russell suggests, possible to go through life without any learning? Gorky asks a man: "But *do* people really desire and search for knowledge?" The answer he receives is resolute: "*Of course they do! Don't you?*" (p. 56). Some of his protagonists make strong claims about things they pretend to have learned: "*Progress has only been invented as a means for comforting oneself. Life is stupid, without any meaning*." Or a bit down on the

[26] In one of his aphorisms, the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) puts this argument more bluntly: "*Mere experience is no more a substitute for thinking than reading is. Pure empiricism is related to thinking as eating is to digestion and assimilation. When empiricism boasts that it alone has, through its discoveries, advanced human knowledge, it is as if the mouth should boast that it alone keeps the body alive.*" (Schopenhauer ,1976, p. 82)

page: "*The less men need, the happier they are. But the more they desire, the less freedom they have*." (p. 52). These statements are among the few general reflections I find in the book.

Learning may happen suddenly and brutally but also gradually and unconsciously. You may learn even without being aware it. A child learns instantly that placing the hand on a hot stove is not smart. You may not learn much the first time something happens to you, but the second time the same thing occurs, you realize that you have learned it. Then, you may at least have a 'déjà vu'. After the third and fourth time, you become certain that the first time was no coincidence. Now a pattern is formed in your head. Now, you have learned something that would prepare you for next time. I assume this is what a man alludes to when he says to Gorky (p. 41): "*Life without synthesis is impossible*."

Should your synthesis still be bewildering, you ask around. Do other people have the same experience? You will then have commenced on an interactive and iterative learning process that may solidify as true knowledge. You may decide to form a group, an organization, or a political movement. This is not something happening in Gorky's or in Wadel's book. In Nergård's books, individual experiences emerge as Indigenous culture that holds people together in communities. The stories they share among themselves, they transfer to the next generation.

Transdisciplinarity

This has implications for transdisciplinarity, which is supposed to integrate local knowledge, like that of small-scale fisheries actors as a supplement to that of science. To have impact in a governance context, their involvement in the co-production of knowledge must take place within a mutual, interactive learning process. For instance, it should not just entail the 'mining' of peoples experienced stories as data, but also welcome their experiences, interpretations, values, and worldviews – their 'syntheses'. Otherwise, their participation will only add to the frustrations that they already have about the unfortunate situation they are in. They have more to

bring to the process than their stories. Still, researchers should be prepared to what Gorky says: *"People teach more painfully than books and they teach more crudely"*. And yet he says that "what you learn (then – my add.) takes firmer roots." (p. 103).

Transdisciplinary learning requires respectful listening not only to the stories but also to what they mean to the people who tell them, also at a moral level. People have facts to report but also ideas about how facts should be understood. They have both symptoms and diagnosis about the problems they are facing. In between both, is their reflection. Their approach is grounded in their own experiences and observations. Transdisciplinarity in small-scale fisheries research and governance would need platforms where interactive learning takes place, where the real-life stories lead to shared learning in the broad sense on what the life and work of small-scale fisheries people entails. I expand on how transdisciplinarity is achieved in the chapter 18.

17

A Score for Small-Scale Fisheries?

In a symphony orchestra, the maestro follows the score, and the musicians play the notes as the composer has written them for their instrument. The maestro is leading the way, making sure that individual performances make the orchestra sound like a unit, to the extent that it is impossible to distinguish one musician from the other. There is little room for individuality and no room for improvisation. The score is a formal set of rules worked out to secure synchronization and harmonization. Musicians practice individually and rehearse collectively.

A symphony orchestra is a formal organization managed from the top down. In interactive governance terms (Kooiman, 2003), it is a "system-to-be governed" with an inherent "governability" problem – to get the individual musicians to play together in harmony as a team, under the leadership of the conductor. Yet, the structure has remained the same over the centuries – with some new instruments added. With the conductor's score and the individual note sheets, the governability problem has a recipe. The musicians follow the conductor as they read their own notes and play accordingly. Still, the scale of the orchestra works against it. A full symphony orchestra consists of between 80 and 100 members.

Informality in formality

In comparison, as a governance system, a modern, large-scale factory trawler has a crew of less than half of a symphony orchestra. They would not need the same level of synchronic coordination. It is also a hierarchical system, with the trawler captain in the conductor role. But unlike the orchestra conductor, the captain must be prepared for surprises and make decisions on the spot, under stress and with risk involved. Both captain and crew must be able to improvise when a situation requires it. This is what it means to be a skilled fisher. This is not something one would expect from the members of the orchestra. That is part of what resilience in fisheries involves. Captain and crew have formal positions onboard. In a modern factory trawler that I was allowed to inspect, they had a meeting room for consultation and decision-making, with all the technical apparatus available, like in a modern classroom!

Still, when handling situations that appear unexpectedly and require immediate action, their informal skills are challenged. Informality is an essential governability quality. Fishing would not be possible without it. Formal organizations have wiggle room for informal relationships and interactions. The maestro has a score to read from but then look at how they communicate with the musicians! Without it, the orchestra would not be sure how to perform. While members have distinct roles that guide their behavior, in unexpected situations the task requires that they communicate informally.

As a professor, I have an institutionally prescribed role to play. But exactly how I teach is largely up to me. It is also influenced by the responses I get from students. Professor/student is a formal role-set, but within it, there is room for informality. I could not do my job without it. Neither would I like my job if everything was formally regulated as when I did instruction as an officer in the military. It was boring to teach and boring to listen to it. I do not think that fishers have it differently. It is less interesting and inspiring to follow an instruction manual or than to use your own judgement.

Regarding education, Malcolm et al. (2003) argue that "*there are significant*

elements of formal learning in informal situations, and elements of informality in formal situations; the two are inextricably inter-related." The same is the case in many small-scale fisheries situations, from the level of the individual vessel to the local community, and beyond. Likewise, the process of creating, endorsing, and implementing the SSF Guidelines is a mutually intertwined formal and informal process (Figure 6). I posit that their implementation would not otherwise be possible. Also, the human rights approach needs a combined formal and informal approach. How exactly, for a particular social system, the relationship between formality and informality is, is a matter for sociological inquiry.

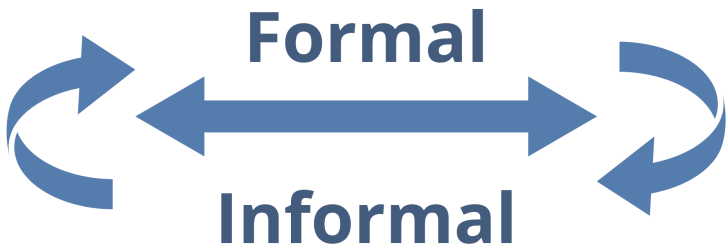


***Figure 6**. Formal and informal arrangements and processes influencing each other*

The figure illustrates the two-way link between formality and informality. They hang together and work interchangeably but vary with the context. Formality and informality set the stage and compensate for each other, but their relative importance differs according to organizational scale. The lesser the scale, the lesser the need for a formal 'score', and the more wiggle room there is for informality.

Contrary to the factory trawler, in a small-scale fishery vessel, the leadership and crew interaction function more informally. There would be no need of a meeting room, written communication, and rule-based decision-making. Still, skipper and crew hold together a formal role-set

within which informal interactions occur. The informality does not break with the formality, it confirms it.

Role formation

In a case study of purse seine fishing, the Norwegian social anthropologist Fredrik Barth demonstrates that there is no "one way street" from role-set to role-behavior. The ongoing interaction between captain and crew also defines the roles. Role-sets contain a dynamic process. Roles, and the rules and responsibilities that come with them, are not immune to change. They may not be aware of it, but all are informally engaged in the ongoing social construction and performativity of the formal role set. (For consistency, I am using sociological rather than Barth's anthropological vocabulary here).

In Barth's narrative, the authority of the skipper, and the performance that follows from it, is a matter of implicit negotiation. It does not result from formal job description. In fishing, and especially small-scale fishing, roles are customarily defined. People know what it means to be a skipper and crew, at least in broad terms by growing up in a fishing family. No one becomes skipper unless he has been crewing.

I would think a close inspection of the conductor's role in the symphony orchestra would reveal the same, even with the score that they read from while conducting. A maestro begins their career by playing an instrument in an orchestra. Like in Barth's boat steering house narrative, the maestro role is formed through the formal and informal interaction with the orchestra, by swinging the baton, and by the musicians showing that they know the music and how to play it. A skipper and a conductor would lose the trust among the crew and the orchestra, should it be revealed that they don't know what they are doing. Formality does not do the trick.

In a small-scale fishing boat larger than a crew of one, there is also a social structure. Members have roles, but the helmsman have no formal score to follow. They are not in need of one. Still, all the individuals onboard must cooperate and coordinate. The crew take orders when needed, but they know their job and do not always need someone telling them what

to do. They know how to perform by heart. As I discuss in chapter 18, they function more like a jazz band than a symphony orchestra. They know each other well. They are typically kin, as father and son or as brothers and cousins growing up together in the same community. Their relationship is longtime and informal. They communicate in informal but familiar capacities rather than as skipper and crew. You respect your father regardless of his formal role onboard. They can read each other from their body movements. A frown or a glance is often enough. A nod may be what it takes to show appreciation. It is important to keep both eyes and ears open. They learn the fishing from practicing it together, not from knowing and reading each other and not from a book.

Rules are unwritten but known from experience. They are followed out of necessity, which skipper and crew understand. They must be able to read the situation as it appears and solve the problem on the spot. Dissatisfaction is articulated verbally. Complaints do not go through a lawyer and to a higher authority but is expressed face to face.

Labor relations

Small-boat skippers are informally connected to the crew, the boat, and the fishing patterns. The authority of the skipper is predominantly charismatic. Boats are often named after a significant other, like a close relative. Bjørn-Erik on the cover page of this book named his boat after his aunt Margit. By doing so, fishers show that boats are more than a technical vehicle, that it has a personality. Skippers rarely move around from boat to boat as maestros do between orchestras. The skipper of a small-scale vessel is usually also the owner, and they may have a life-long relationship.

The owner, skipper, and the crew are sharing the value of the catch, often according to a standard key. They are co-responsible and co-winners/losers. They are in it together, as a team. The crew is not on a fixed labor/salary contract, which is common on a large company trawler. This leads to flexibility and "organizational slack" (Cyert & March, 1992). With Anthony Davis, I argued the same regarding small-scale fisheries

cooperatives (Davis & Jentoft, 1989). Members contribute informally to their co-op, which helps to make is stay afloat. They, for instance, accept lesser price than standard market rate because the co-op is their own. They are willing to make sacrifices because they are morally involved. The co-op is not like any other firm; it is yours in both a formal and informal sense.

In co-operatives, as well as on a small-sale fishing vessel, fishers are not wage-labor. However, as Jeppe Høst (2015) shows in a study of Danish fisheries, the new quota systems (ITQs) are turning skipper and crew into it. The skipper and/or the crew are increasingly fishing on a quota owned by other people, He calls these people "slipper skippers" because they do not fish themselves. Thus, quota systems are not only a resource management instrument aiming to generate rent while conserving the stock. They transform social relationships, and therefore the role-set in fishing. Such transformation was not necessarily meant to occur but happened anyway. It is not the only unforeseen thing they have led to. A recent OECD (2025) report shows that as the number of fishing vessels have decreased, the total fishing capacity has increased.

For the small-scale owner/operator, fishing is vocation. They create their own job, for their family and community. Small-scale fisheries cannot persist if the opportunity for people in fishing communities to create their own jobs disappears. This is especially important for young people who wish to make a career in small-scale fisheries and do not have any wish of moving away from home. Small-scale fishing is an extension of the family household more than a business venture, organized similarly to small-scale farming. In North Norway, combining small-scale fishing and farming was the traditional way of living. Ottar Brox compared the small boat to the combine harvester or the tractor. It is an extension of the family household and not an independent 'thing.'

Chaos theory

From the perspective of chaos theory, anthropologist James Acheson and economist James A. Wilson (1996) pointed to the negative consequences

of a rigid management system. For fishers, the natural response to a stock in decline would be to shift their target species, thus leaving the species in decline a chance to recover. However, modern management systems tend to make it more difficult for fishers to do so. They must seek permission but without a quota, they may be denied to fish on another species. Therefore, fishers tend to be stuck with the species that have quota for. They would consequently fish longer on a declining stock than what they would and should otherwise do.

Instead of the "numerical approach" (counting fish), Acheson and Wilson recommended a "parametric approach." Here, the emphasis is on how and where fishing is practiced (such as gear use), making sure that basic biological processes like spawning, nursery, and migration can occur undisturbed. These are relatively stable parameters, which the management system can leave alone once the decision to secure them are made. A numerical system is more data heavy, for instance on fish mortality and recruitment, and requires more frequent decision-making, like on an annual basis or less.

They argue that a parametric model would allow a bigger management role for local communities, thus embedding the system where prompt, adaptive, and site- specific decisions can be made, informed by the local knowledge that exist about such parameters in their local contexts. This again would bring far more informality to work its way in fisheries management, making fisheries more governable, also from an ecological perspective. Rules would then be framed from insights into biological processes that persist the same over time and which can be transferred from generation to generation of fishers and thereby become a stock of local knowledge. This happens when you protect a fish habitat, like a nursery ground. The fish has a safe haven where to spawn and grow.

Conformity

Formality breeds conformity: always work by the book, always follow the rules, do what is prescribed, do not go alone! This is what a symphony

orchestra requires of its members. Even a soloist must play the notes as the composer wrote them. Conformity is also what a government wants of fishers as their response to rules and regulations. This is expected of small-scale fishers, who are typically regarded as 'rugged individualists', not characterized by the "governmentality" that Foucault talked about (see Lemke, 2000), that a well-functioning value chain also requires. But their individual autonomy suggests that they cannot really be trusted. Therefore, government must make sure that rules are adhered to. Information technology has made close inspection of fishing activities possible. Satellite surveillance now makes it difficult for fishers to hide. Thus, the freedom of small-scale fishers is encroached on, making fishers feel uncomfortable.

But this also works the other way. Government does not always follow their own rules. Therefore, government does not always have the trust of small-scale fisheries. Sometimes it is the government that is brought to court. Paragraph 8.3 of the SSF Guidelines says that states should support small-scale fisheries actors' ability to litigate but does not say whether that would also apply in situation when it is the state that is the defendant. What small-scale fisheries people cannot gain in court, should they bring it there, they can possibly achieve on the political arena. The political arena is mostly driven by informal processes, which does not in itself make political struggle corrupt. Legal processes have a step zero which starts informally, before they end up as a formal endeavor.

Conformity comes with a cost; it kills creativity, improvisation, playfulness, and innovation – all essential qualities and capabilities in small-scale fisheries. These qualities do not necessarily destroy order, but create governability, at least I the long run. The orchestra performance on a Liszt or Tchaikovsky composition is largely the same from one concert to the next. A new maestro sticks to the same score as the previous one. This is not the conformity a small-scale fishing skipper expects from himself or his crew, or the crew expects of him. Together, they need to adapt to the changing environment and be prepared for the irregular. One fishing expedition may be very different from the other and for a skilled skipper and crew, they know how to handle it.

18

Think Jazz!

In small-scale fisheries and coastal governance, transdisciplinarity is *á la mode* (Visser, 2004; Chuenpagdee & Jentoft, 2018). The SSF Guidelines do not mention transdisciplinarity but between the lines there are hints when they talk about holistic knowledge and the relevance of local knowledge. For instance, paragraph 11.4 states that "*[a]ll parties should recognize small-scale fishing communities as holders, providers and receivers of knowledge*." We may well interpret this as a quest for transdisciplinarity. Science has important contributions to make, but so also have small-scale fisheries people, as they know the social and ecological context better than anyone else. The Guidelines do not just promote inclusion of local knowledge and local knowledge holders for instrumental reasons, i.e., as a means of broadening the knowledge base. They do it also as a matter of principle, as respect of local, traditional cultures and human rights.

Interactive curiosity

Transdisciplinarity is meant to provide transformative solutions to the problems that motivated the development of the SSF Guidelines in the first place, poverty and marginalization of small-scale fisheries people. Their wellbeing is not a scientific fix but a social process where interactive, transdisciplinary learning is part of their empowerment. This again

is underpinning people's self-preservation and dignity, where one is conducive to the other. The "governability" of small-scale fisheries, as Kooiman (2003) defined the term, depends on both. Transformative knowledge production requires interactive curiosity and creativity. There are things to discover and learn about what small-scale fisheries are, how they operate and prevail. However, they are not the same everywhere but have adapted to the local context where they exist.

Turning small-scale fisheries governance discourse into an 'ideal speech situation' free of semantic infiltration and domination (cf. chapter 11) is worth the effort even if not fully achieved. It is conducive to holistic approach, interactive learning, and hence transdisciplinarity. Following Montaigne again, one should therefore not dismiss out of hand what other people are saying, even when schooled and talking differently from you. Researchers should show patience and listen carefully. If you do not understand what is said, you ask for clarification. Asking a question is recognizing that the speaker may have something worthwhile to say. Therefore, we like to be asked questions, not just for being given the opportunity to explain our position and address our concerns, but also for the dignity it bestows in us. It matters how the question is raised, from an arrogant or superior position or from a modest, respectful position. Montaigne was in favor of the latter while advancing skepticism to dogmas.

Transdisciplinarity makes small-scale fisheries people into subjects, not objects. They become knowledge co-producers. They also have the knowledge that Aristotle called "phronesis", as distinct from "episteme" – or science (Jentoft, 2006). They have notions of what differentiates right from wrong, about the current governance system as they experience it. They even have things that they hold to be sacred, and therefore not negotiable. Nature does not only provide a livelihood and food security. It is also part of their cosmology and their sense of self, as Jens-Ivar Nergård demonstrates in his books.

Scientists may not be prepared for a phronetic discourse. They are more familiar with exploring technical aspects of the fisheries governance process. However, small-scale fisheries governance has a phronetic

dimension, which needs to be taken seriously in a transdisciplinary knowledge-production process. This is ultimately about ethical principles and their implications for governance conduct. The more open and inclusive the process is, the less control do scientists have of what counts as relevant knowledge. Transdisciplinarity is a challenge to the self-perceived superiority of scientists. It is a needed reality check.

Plato's vision of the "philosopher kings" who rules by virtue of their expert knowledge is not for a transdisciplinary governance system to emulate. Plato was no democrat. He might have supported inter-disciplinarity but hardly transdisciplinarity. Transdisciplinarity brings scientists out of their sovereign position and down from the pedestal. The definition of the problem and the solutions prescribed would not be entirely up to them to decide.

The transdisciplinary process

For good reason, people often wonder what the difference is between multi-disciplinarity, inter-disciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. I have struggled to find a simple way of explaining it not just to others but also to myself. It is not that easy because they are overlapping. Multidisciplinarity is included in interdisciplinarity, which is included in transdisciplinarity, as shown in a Venn-diagram (Figure 7).

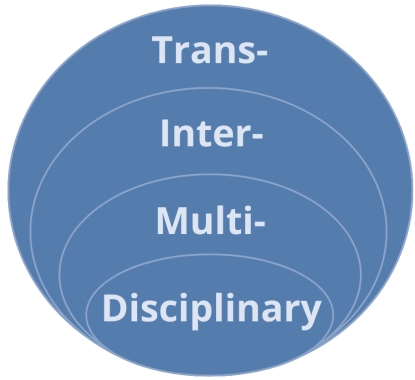


***Figure** 7. Transdisciplinarity*

Some years ago, in a TBTI course in Ho Chi Minh City about transdisciplinarity, I asked people to imagine that the hotel we were staying in is where the problem of fisheries management is located. I asked them to think of researchers of different disciplines occupying different rooms while they only meet each other for breakfast. This, I argued, is how we may think of multidisciplinarity. Interdisciplinarity is when people walk into each other's room through connecting doors when they cannot wait for breakfast to talk to each other.

Transdisciplinarity, on the other hand, is when they share the same room. Then, together they own the problem they are supposed to solve and must take responsibility for the situation, the process, and the outcome. However, the hotel metaphor only says something about the organization of transdisciplinarity, what goes on in the room. To explain the process of transdisciplinarity, we need another metaphor. Then, to me, jazz is handy. Oscar Peterson and his band may help to explain it.[27]

Peterson and band members do not read from notes and there is no

[27] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SewFqU5SjuE

conductor who reads from a score. Together they improvise, and by that they are creating new music in real time. Think of it as equivalent to new knowledge. The band members are brilliant on their own instruments. They harmonize as they individualize when they play solo, after which they come together again. They do not compete; they work as a team – they listen to each other and respond accordingly. They know the other instrument as well as the person playing it. They must like and respect each other.

Henning Ørsted Pedersen on the contrabass was Oscar Peterson's most fateful band member. They worked together for many years. It is delightful to hear and see them playing together. They communicate, which they do with their instruments, but also by watching each other.

When Peterson throws a glance at Ørsted Pedersen or Barney Kessel, the guitarist in the video clip, he signals that now it is your turn, now we need to hear from you, and he lowers his volume to create the opportunity for the others to play. That is their social contract. Without such a contract, the band would not work and there would be no co-creation of music. Again, read new knowledge.

Interpretation

Yuja Wang is a virtuoso pianist classical pianist. Like Oscar Peterson, she is unique. But when she plays Mozart or Rachmaninov, she does not do it so differently from Rubinstein or any other classical pianists would play them. You need a sharp ear to notice the difference. Oscar Peterson plays differently than any other pianist. You do not need to see him to know that he is the one at the keyboard. In a long interview with the composer and conductor André Previn, which is on YouTube, Oscar Peterson makes the point of distinguishing himself from a classical pianist. He says he is playing, not interpreting.[28]

Yuja Wang and Arthur Rubinstein play each note as the composer wrote

[28] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFNsywQOW1I&t=13s

them, like the symphony orchestra does. They interpret the music, and their interpretation is largely the same every time. The audience enjoy the music because they recognize it. Not so with Oscar Peterson. You recognize Peterson's style, but not every note he plays. He plays the same tune differently each time. Unlike Errol Garner, another great jazz pianist, he could read sheet music. Still, Peterson deviates from the scripted notes. He plays the tune in the sense that a footballer or a child plays. The footballer plays with the ball and the child with the toy. Peterson does not play the melody; he plays *with* it. This is what improvisation is about.

Judging from his facial movements, he has fun doing it. I am sure Yuja Wang and Arthur Rubinstein have fun too, but they have a different kind of fun. You do not see them smile as they perform, like Peterson and his band members do. They reserve their smile until after they are finished and receive the applause. I doubt that Rubinstein felt the child in him when interpreting Peter Tchaikovsky or Franz Liszt. Not sure what Peterson felt when he played Mack the Knife or Sweet Georgia Brown, but I believe it was with a dose of humor. Transdisciplinary small-scale fisheries research is a challenging exercise, but who says it should not be fun? When it is fun, it is because it works, and then you want to do it again.

Playfulness

Like new music, the innovation and creativity that leads to new knowledge require playfulness, or "foolishness," as the sociologist and organization theorist James March (1976) pointed out. To be foolish is to be curious, willing to experiment, take risks, to be undisciplined, like how children are before we take those things away from them. That is also how discipline works.

March says that it is rational for organizations to be foolish. If they lose their foolishness, they are likely to lose in the marketplace. You could argue the same for science, especially the science that aims to break new ground. Einstein said that if you know what you are doing, you are probably not doing science. Science is about innovation, it cannot be predicted.

If it could, it would not be innovation. To create new knowledge, we should be more focused on the research process than the outcome. This is what is special about transdisciplinarity: it is different from the scripted disciplinarity process of classical music.

Uncertainty is an inherent part of the process of transdisciplinarity but has a positive function (Gelatt, 1989). When you feel uncertain about things, you are naturally inclined to find ways to reduce it. Then you might surprise others as well as yourself. That would be less likely if all your focus is to follow disciplinary scripts and rules, as when you follow the trodden path or play sheet music.

We learn more when we play than when we interpret, like when we challenge our disciplinary assumptions and boundaries rather than when taking them for granted and follow them slavishly. Playfulness requires a flexible attitude to the discipline of the discipline. But playing is also bounded. Play has its rules, as has jazz. Talking about city planning, Richard Sennett draws a parallel to jazz. Some things are given, "*like the written melody and the fundamental harmonies that are spelled out*" in the song they base their improvisation on (Sennett, 2008, p. 237):

> *"Good jazz improvisation follows rules of economy; variations pick out an element to explore, otherwise they lose focus; the harmonic reversals are disciplined by what came before. Above all, the jazz musician has to select elements for his or her own instrument that someone playing a different instrument can respond to. A successful improvisation would avoid something like the equivalent of a visual maze."*

Freedom

A jazz musician enjoys a freedom that a classical musician does not have. As classical musician asks herself: how does the composer want me to interpret his music? The answer in the smallest detail is on the sheet (or now on the iPad) in front of her. Jazz musician does not ask that question. They play it as they choose and make the decision on the spot. That might be what

Oscar Peterson has in mind with his "hymn to freedom." Who knows? He plays a tune, not a song with lyrics, or "a song without words" (Lieder ohne worte), which is the cryptic name of Mendelson's beautiful composition for piano. (You may have to consult to Ludwig Wittgenstein to understand how it makes sense. What is a word anyway?). But Peterson may instead have been thinking of the human rights kind of freedom, which the SSF Guidelines promotes. Or the freedom Plato illustrated metaphorically with his 'Allegory of the cave,' which is the freedom that comes with education, knowledge, and enlightenment.

The freedom to play as you like but within limits is the difference between a jazz band and a symphony orchestra. Gustavo Dudamel, the Venezuelan maestro, follows the score, and you can see him read as he turns the pages. Oscar Peterson does not have a score. In a symphony orchestra the composer has determined how the musicians shall play to harmonize, and they just need to follow what is on the sheet in front of them. The members of a jazz band follow each other.

There are no jam-session in classical music as in jazz. In jam sessions, jazz musicians start playing without preparation. They simply listen to each other and respond as they see fit. Peterson does not instruct Ørsted Pedersen what to play. How could he? He knows his own 'discipline,' not Ørsted Pedersen's. He is an expert on the piano, not one the contrabass.

Transdisciplinarity does not require that we play jazz in a band in a room we inhabit together in a hotel, just that we pretend to. Imagine if natural and social fisheries scientists could work together like a jazz band in a jam session. "It isn't hard to do" as John Lennon sang. The Beatles demonstrated their transdisciplinary creativity in the documentary series about how they composed their songs. Their process of composition was informal, interactive, and playful.[29] And in sharp contrast to how Chopin worked; it was him and his piano and a pen, isolating himself in a room in frustration and despair from not getting it right, until he finally did (Chopin.pl, n.d).

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[29] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHxl6eDYLUs

A transdisciplinary research process would enable collective creativity through spontaneous brainstorming and trial and error. We may think about researchers of small-scale fisheries as musicians like Oscar Peterson and his band or the Beatles, not Chopin. The musical instruments are their specific methodologies and concepts they play with. The music would be the new knowledge created co-operatively. Becoming a scientist is not that different from becoming a musician. You learn to play your own instrument (or discipline) from years of practice. Playing together in a jazz band – or a symphony orchestra for that matter – requires a different kind of training. It is not enough to become skilled on your instrument. You must also learn to play with others. It is a social practice that requires relational skills. It is about sociology. Just like the process of transdisciplinarity.

Live at the concert

When Yuja Wang performs, the audience sit still while listening in awe. They wait with the applause until the end. In a jazz concert on the other hand, there is typically applause after each solo and people are cheering throughout. What is a jazz concert without an engaged audience? The latest jazz concert I was at, people were dancing. They were part of the process of enabling the music in a way the audience in a classical concert is not.

The interaction between the band and the audience makes a jazz concert into a great happening. People in the audience share the freedom of the musicians. They are all in the same hall – or room, as I made a point of earlier, and they do not have to sit still. They do not have to wait for the vinyl to come out – or the research report if you like. If there is a live recording, they are part of it. Thus, a jazz concert, like transdisciplinary research, involves a different form of interaction and therefore a unique experience. In a classical music concert, the audience are more passive and disciplined. Jazz comes with different vibes.

You do not need to be world class performer, Yuja Wang or Oscar Petersen, to play an instrument. Neither do you have to be Montaigne

or Sennet to contribute to transdisciplinarity. As there is folk art and folk music, there is folk knowledge. Musicians play their instrument on different levels of sophistication. People know different things and have different experiences to share. Soloists depend on the backing of band, and the band depends on people in the audience. I attended a jazz concert where the vocalist invited us in the audience to sing with her. We were not just passively listening; we were part of the performance, and we had fun. For a moment there were not us in the audience and them on the stage. We were in it together, we formed a 'we'. The feeling was exalting. I submit that transdisciplinarity can work the same way.

19

What Women Do

It is impossible to imagine a thriving small-scale fishery without women's contributions, as authors of the edited volume by Neis et al. (2005) argue. The hard work of women in small-scale fisheries cannot be over-estimated and should not be taken for granted. Women's work should not just be valued because they are useful for some goal that is not their own. They 'own' the small-scale fishery as much as their male counterpart. Women in small-scale fisheries have the same universal human rights as men and should be valued not just by what they do but also for who they are. In her keynote address to the World Women's Congress in Beijing, China in 1995, then 'first lady' Hillary Clinton maintained that "*human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights*." This should go without saying. It is one of the guiding principles in the SSF Guidelines. Along with the guiding principle #1 on respecting the human rights of small-scale fisheries people, principle #4, states: "*Gender equality and equity is fundamental to any development. Recognizing the vital role of women in small-scale fisheries, equal rights and opportunities should be promoted*." Women are mentioned 51 times and gender 23 times in the document.

One would think that it should be redundant to state something this obvious. Still, it seems necessary to say it, as Clinton did, also in the context of small-scale fisheries. If you do not say it, it is easily overlooked with the risk of women being even more marginalized than they currently are.

One cannot be sure that what is implicitly assumed is made explicit when needed. Women have in the past been forgotten and discriminated against in the ways fisheries governance systems are theorized, constructed and practiced. Fishing as an occupation and livelihood have traditionally been seen as a male domain. And yet, women are active at all "governance orders" as interactive governance theory (Kooiman et al., 2005) defines them (see chapter 2 in this book).

When creating the SSF Guidelines, women had a real impact. Without their participation, the Guidelines would most likely have been very different. I know because I was there when the text was negotiated in 2013 and 2014. It is not for nothing that they are dedicated to the memory of Chandrika Sharma whose voice set the tone of the deliberations during their Technical consultations at FAO. When other state delegates thought it was unnecessary to talk specifically about women, she strongly intervened.

Governance orders

Women's roles are typically more pronounced at first governance order than at second and third order. My longtime colleague, the fisheries anthropologist and feminist scholar Siri Gerrard pointed to the scant representation of women in the leadership of fisheries government agencies and fisheries organizations in Norway. The lack of women here reflects fishing as a predominantly male focus with women in subordinate roles. It is also a power issue. In small-scale fisheries, as in many other social relations, gender relations are power relations. Gender equity is a recurrent issue in the SSF Guidelines, which is not achieved without women's empowerment. I have argued elsewhere (Book I, chapter 16) that the inferior representation of women in the governing system is not necessarily a result of active and deliberate exclusion and discrimination, but it is also a consequence of the second order design of the governance system where communities are a missing link.

If you ignore the community, you miss women's roles in small-scale fisheries at first order. Women's empowerment is closely linked to the

empowerment of communities. Therefore, interactive governance theory is well-suited for the analysis of gender relations and inequities. This is due to the focus on the interaction of both a governing system and a system-to-be governed. Gender equity requires the empowerment of women in both systems and the three orders.

Fisheries roles

Borrowing a term from aviation, Siri Gerrard coined women's roles in small-scale fisheries as "ground crew." A plane needs people on the ground to take off. So do small-scale fishing vessels. Women's many pre- and post-harvesting tasks, like baiting the lines, mending the nets, bringing fish to the market, keeping the books, paying bills, preparing food for spouse to bring onboard, cleaning working cloths as well as the boat itself are all essential services for a working fishing vessel crew. Women are also handing functions like smoking, drying and selling the fish brought ashore. In some instances, they buy the fish at an auction. When fish processing is automated, women are at the assembly line.

The Danish social scientist Eva Munk Madsen (1998) pointed out that modern rights-based fisheries management systems, particularly ITQ systems, tend to further marginalize women. Those who originally thought out this system seem to have forgotten this effect. Quota rights are granted to boat owners who are typically men. This, she posits, is fundamentally unjust and discriminatory to women. The ITQ system is mostly beneficial to large-scale corporate operators with a greater financial muscle than small-scale fishers are. Consequently, quota rights are becoming concentrated in the hands of large-scale fisheries operators at the expense of small-scale fisheries. Small-scale fishing in Denmark is taking place on quotas that are leased rather than owned (cf. Salmi & Sonck-Rautio, 2018).

Once it is settled, reversing the system in favor of small-scale fisheries and gender equity would require second governance order intervention, which government seems reluctant to do, particularly because of the resistance

within the large-scale sector to any reform that goes against their interest. My own country, Norway, is a good example of this. Notably, the SSF Guidelines reject the idea of rights-based fisheries in the form of individual private property. Instead, as explained in chapter 2, they support collective tenure rights, embedded in local communities. By that, they aim at creating the opening for women in the small-scale fisheries governance in a way that has direct impact on their status, financial security, social control, and wellbeing, also relative to men.

Family setting

That women's work takes place in a family setting does not annul their human rights, but it makes it difficult for them to raise demands for labor rights as in more formal employer-employee relationship. But also in a family context, women are often in a subordinate position. Should they decide to challenge 'their system' by raising demands for gender equity, the family will suffer. The SSF Guidelines stress women's need to organize, making the struggle for equity and justice a collective enterprise. Paragraph 12.1 reads: "*Where appropriate and necessary, separate spaces and mechanisms should be provided to enable women to organize autonomously at various levels on issues of particular relevance to them*."

Small-scale fisheries are typically a household and family enterprise, with the fishing vessel as a means of production essential for family sustenance and food security. Fish is both sold in markets and consumed within the family. Small-scale fisheries, families and communities form an interdependent system. Fishing makes the family and community function, whereas the latter two also keep the fishing vessel 'afloat'. Everything that women do within a family and community context is therefore a contribution to the fishing activity. Their role as "ground crew" is important but it is only part of their contribution.

Fisherwoman's contributions give content to the concept of multi-tasking. She takes on a wide range of essential roles in the family and community. Finding time for herself is difficult. Rest is a luxury, sleep

a release, empowerment and freedom a dream. Then comes the anxiety for the husband and sons who are away at sea. Small-scale fishing is a dangerous occupation, and like many of her sisters, she bears the risk of having to raise the children and caring for the elderly by herself, should the husband not return home.

Information hub

In my PhD fieldwork research in the late 1970s, I became acquainted with a small-scale fisher, whose name was Arthur. He was also a member of the municipal board, representing the Labor Party, and I used to sit in at meetings as it was a good way of becoming informed about what was going on in the community and of how local politics worked. Arthur lived with his family on a different island from me. On one occasion when travelling in the area with the secretary of the regional branch of the Norwegian Fisher Association, we visited him at his home. As his wife served coffee and waffles, we talked about his fishing career, his fishing patterns, and what else was going on among fishers on the island. While we were talking, the wife had retreated to the kitchen, but the door was open so she could well hear what we talked about. Sometimes, Arthur had difficulties remembering and knowing things we raised with him, but then his wife stepped in. She knew it all, had the full overview, much more than he did. We came there to interview him, but instead we learned from both. They had their division of labor and different places of work, but they were also in it together. They were a team.

The interview was interesting for the information it provided. But the way it progressed also taught me something about the role of women in a small-scale fisheries community. She is the hub in the information system that constitutes both family and community. She keeps both together in an integrated whole. He knows fishing, she knows fishing life. He is more of a guest in the house and the community, which is still what he would think of as home, the place he returns to and belongs to. Without women's contribution in both places, he would have problems calling it a home.

Home is not only a house and place but a gendered social relationship. Home is where you hang your hat but also where your heart is.

The visit to Arthur's home more than forty years ago also taught me something about fisheries community research. If you want to know something specific about fishing, do not just talk to the men. To explore how the community works, including how its small-scale fisheries are functioning and contributing, do not only talk to the men. We should be interested in the life and work of fisherwomen because they count as much as the menfolk. But talking to the women also yields more holistic and systemic understanding about how small-scale fisheries are part and parcel of community life, and how the life of community in every aspect is fundamental to the small-scale fishery.

Changemaker

Fisherwomen are the hub in the community's information system. Their holistic oversight selects them for taking on leadership roles. With the husband away fishing, this is not so much a matter of choice but of necessity. Women speak on behalf of the community, and sometimes as the initiator and organizer of collective action. In my country they often enter politics as member of the municipal assembly. By doing so they may challenge established gender roles in way that require their experience and prudence.

In a paper I published in Maritime Studies in 2011 with my PhD student Paul Onyango titled 'Climbing the Hill: Poverty Alleviation, Gender Relationships, and Women's Social Entrepreneurship in Lake Victoria, Tanzania,' we tell the story of a group of women in a fishing community who did exactly that when they decided to solve a problem that was negatively affecting livelihoods. Their community did not have a decent road, which hampered the ability to bring fish produce to the market. By their agency they demonstrated 'social entrepreneurship.' Through their initiative, they did not only fix the road; they also encroached a space where men traditionally reigned.

The women carefully used their cultural and relational skills to avoid

provoking men's antagonism. They became change agents not merely in a technical and a material sense by demonstrating that they could also achieve the community's development goals. Through skillfully maneuvering gender relationships, they restructured gender relations and expanded women's action space in the community. Women became change agents in the community in a social relational sense. They created the 'Tweyambe Fishing Enterprises' (Medard, 2005) to secure a lasting effect of their initiative. By establishing this organization, they created a platform for other women-led projects, thus a more solid basis for women's empowerment and social responsibility. Their efforts provided lessons for implementing the SSF Guidelines in Africa and beyond.

20

Small and Large

Small-scale and large-scale fisheries have their own unique characteristics. They come in different organizational forms and operate in different institutional settings. Small-scale fisheries are less formal than large-scale fisheries, more numerous and diverse. They exist spatially more scattered and occupy different resource and market niches. Large-scale fishing vessels have crew whereas small-scale fishing vessels are owner-operated, in many cases just manned by one or few individuals.

Small-scale fisheries are much more labor intensive and differ along the rural-urban scale. Large-scale fisheries are governed hierarchically and are operated like corporations/companies, whereas small-scale fisheries are more often self-governed as family firms and independent from corporate structures. Small-scale fishers are independent-minded 'rugged individuals' resisting external interference in their affairs. Small- and large-scale fisheries are therefore unequally governable. Governments are more prone to support large-scale fisheries with subsidies, partly for their governability but also for their support of industrial processing like freezing and because they are meant for export as provider of hard currency. Small-scale fishers are not offering enough and regular supply of produce for industrial processing.

Small-scale fisheries are often primarily about subsistence; they bring food for the family. Fish not consumed within the fisher household, sold

or gifted within the community, may be brought to the urban and regional markets. Thus, they are also involved in a cash economy. If they have the opportunity, small-scale fisheries people practice 'occupational pluralism.' Small-scale fishing may be part-time and combined with other income-generating activities. The boat may not be an independent 'profit center' but an extension of the household enterprise, a means of production, as I previously mentioned (chapter 17).

Interdependence

Small-scale fishing constitutes both a horizontal and a vertical value chain. The horizontal link is to other fishers within the community at the same level in the value chain, whereas the vertical chain often extends beyond the community. The working conditions and wellbeing of chain actors are influenced by what happens sideways, among fishers competing for resources and space. They are also dependent on what happens further down or up the chain, for instance regarding landings, price setting and access to markets. The vertical and horizontal link sets the stage for each other.

It is arguable whether small-scale fisheries should be seen as a 'sector' or not, given how they are woven into the life of families and communities. They are not just about fish and fishing but also about communities and a way of life. Small-scale fishers often build networks and form family teams, where the spouse of fisher, serve as "ground crew," providing necessary assistance to those who are out at sea (see chapter 19). They are part of a household within which fishing is among several activities that must be carried out for the fishing and the household to function.

In large-scale fisheries, crew is often recruited via the labor market. In Norwegian industrial fisheries, they now often come from abroad. The bond between the vessel and the community is weak, if existing at all. But the relation between small- and large-scale fisheries may also be symbiotic. In Norway, it is not uncommon that fishers move back and forth between the two vessel types from season to season or throughout their fishing

career. They often prefer fishing with or on a small boat later in life. How small- and large-scale fisheries are formally and informally inter-linked is scarcely explored in fisheries social science literature. We get to know more about conflicts and zero-sum games than about cooperation and synergies. In Norway, researchers have argued that full employment and career in fishing depend as much on the varied composition of the fleet. Large-scale vessels have room for young recruits more than small vessels, so that is where a fisher starts. Later in their career they move into small-scale fishing when they have made enough money to invest in their own boat.

Employment

Like small-scale fisheries communities, a small-scale fishing boat is an arena for formal and informal learning. But even if boats are 'schools' for newcomers, they cannot take care of all the education that a young person needs. Yet, under-aged or young adults brought onboard as part of a family crew are often denied the opportunity to go to school, causing the problem of widespread illiteracy among poor small-scale fishers in many parts of the world. Children are not always recruited to keep up the family tradition but because they are cheap labor. Small-scale fishers are sometimes unable to afford a non-family crew. Honoring non-family crew would be a cost whereas the compensation of household members would constitute an income for the household enterprise.

Children's and youngsters' participation is a meaningful part of what they do within a household/family context. They help their parents to secure a livelihood and food on the table. Their participation in fishing is also part of their socialization process. Recruits start early, by them learning the fishing, experiencing the boat as a working space, and becoming familiar with the gear and how it is used. They also learn how to take care of themselves. Still, their situation is not unproblematic. Small-scale fishing is a dangerous occupation, and the boat is not a safe space, especially for children. There are certain jobs onboard that are too exposed to be filled

by underaged crew.

Formal education cannot deliver all it takes to become a skilled fisher. Reading manuals will only get you so far. Fisher's safety cannot be taught outside fishing. It is site and fishery specific. The boat must serve as the school. Young recruits learn to be safe in situations involving risk. To maneuver the boat to avoid a skerry, they must be shown where the skerry exactly is. They must learn how to behave in rough sea from watching how it is done. The risk of capsizing is much bigger on a small vessel. Falling overboard is another danger. According to a recent study of Norwegian fishing, most fishers perish from falling overboard, as when they get a foot entangled in the net that is being deployed (SINTEF, n.d.).

As Maria Pena, a researcher from Barbados, pointed out in a FAO meeting I attended, being safe is not the same as being comfortable. Working conditions may be safe but still inconvenient, for instance to women who would therefore rather refrain from taking a job onboard, especially on a small-scale fishing vessel, which is typically designed to accommodate men. But there is little to suggest that the captain and crew on a small-scale fisheries vessel cannot be women only. There are also issues off-vessels, like access to child daycare, that would make fishing a more attractive job-alternative for women. Women's participation in fishing would transform social relations in ways that require more than a structural reform. In Norway, sexual harassment in fishing has been a hot topic in recent years with female fishers sharing their stories.

Community organizations

Small-scale fisheries often involve a sharing system that may include people in the community, like the sick and elderly and families of fishers lost at sea. In this way, it takes a form of a social security system. Sometimes, this is what community organizations, like cooperatives, do as part of their social/corporate responsibility. With a Polish colleague I once published a paper on a local fishery in the Hel Peninsula. There, the arrangement secured the food supply to the widows of fishers. The 'Mazoperia', a local

organization of fishers, oversaw that people were taken care of (Marciniak & Jentoft, 1997).

The mazoperias are history now but worked much like the "cofradias" in Spain (Bavinck et al., 2015) and the "prud'homies" in the Mediterranean (Soltanpour et al., 2020). The fisheries community cooperatives in Japan conduct similar functions (Li, 2023, 2023b). Maarten Bavinck's work on the fishery "panchayats" in Tamil Nadu/India also provide an example (Bavinck & Vivekanandan, 2017). They are all age-old community organizations that are still part of a vibrant local, small-scale fisheries economy, even if the increasing presence of the state and in Europe, the Common fisheries policy, have changed some of their traditional roles.

Fisheries co-operatives also have deep historical roots. They have a business element in their portfolio but often take on a responsibility for their communities, as illustrated by The Harpan Fewa Fishery Cooperative of Pokhara Valley in Nepal, presented at a TBTI workshop in Chitwan in February 2024. In a community I visited in Sri Lanka, in addition to the fishery related activities, the co-op is engaged in community development, childcare and pre-schooling. It also runs the primary school. It is caring for the elderly, engages in environmental and lake conservation, awareness education, entrepreneur development, and capacity building. It runs educational capacity building programs for youth, women, and children.

These organizations are solutions to a problem that is felt in small-scale fisheries globally. Everywhere, there is a need for coordination of small-scale fisheries activities in the horizontal and vertical value chain. The first place to encounter it is in the local community. Therefore, small-scale fisheries and local communities are two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other. They both benefit from building formal institutions like a cooperative as a way of making the relationship more robust, stable, and predictable.

Institutionalizing formal and informal organizational arrangements makes them lasting solution to problems that exist in the value chain. Communities obviously have a role to play in this process. Should they for some reason break, for instance from working as the countervailing power

to government or private corporations in the blue economy, both the local fishery and the community suffer. They often have the needed governance capacity for making sure small-scale fisheries are socially responsible and just, and that rules are followed. In this role, they help to secure that small-scale fisheries also work for the functioning of the value chain and the sustainability of the community.

Hierarchy

Hierarchies govern less by negotiation and more by direction. They do not need to govern neither by persuasion nor consent. In the final instance, their governability relies on repression. Thus, they have their own way of reining in on individual actors who insist on going alone. In contrast, given their atomistic structure and often geographically dispersed locations, small-scale fisheries governance has a more difficult task. They lack the power to steer by decree compared to that of a hierarchical system. Governance must take a different approach, aiming to voluntarily bring small-scale fishers onboard.

An individual small-scale fisher can manage on their own, but as a group, they may produce outcomes that are detrimental to their sustainability, both individually and collectively, in the short but especially in the long run. The "tragedy of the commons" occurs within an atomistic social system. Small-scale fisheries as an aggregate system may then need an overseer but also one who could facilitate their co-governance.

Problems that occur in the aggregate and must be addressed accordingly. This is what formal organizations like government agencies, legal authorities, or cooperatives provide. In Japan, fisheries cooperatives form federations at regional and national level. The Spanish cofradias create an overarching similar structure. However, according to the classic "subsidiarity principle" that also the SSF Guidelines are alluding to, social responsibilities should not arbitrarily be lifted out of communities unless necessary for solving the problem – instead, they should be retained at the lowest possible level.

A conflict may exist between freedom/autonomy and responsibility, as one cannot avoid restricting the former for achieving the other. The more social responsibility resting on our shoulders, the lesser is our action freedom. Yet, the freedom/autonomy that a small-scale fisher has, is among the qualities that make their occupation attractive, even possible. It is not an unlimited freedom but a freedom within the limits of social responsibility collectively defined One's own freedom should not be allowed to limit the freedom of others, especially when it causes damage to livelihoods and life. Small-scale fishers are stakeholders among other stakeholders with whom they have formal and informal relationships. They also have their family and local community to think of, and value chain actors who rely on them.

Small-scale fisheries people are also rights-holders, as specified in the SSF Guidelines, but rights come with responsibilities. For instance, tenure is not unlimited freedom to over-exploit or to exclude and alienate other stakeholders. Tenure entails the incentive and a responsibility to collectively prevent such a scenario, which is one reason why the SSF Guidelines insist on it. The Tragedy of the Commons occurs in the absence of tenure, i.e., in a situation of open access to natural resources. Hardin's metaphor is not applicable to a well-functioning tenure arrangement, an organized cooperative or hierarchical governance system.

Living law

There is informal, 'living' law in fishing communities, for instance regarding rights of access to resources and spaces, which may directly address the wicked problems of the commons. But we cannot assume that it is perfect just because it is traditional. It may well be discriminatory, like of women, for instance. Women have no access to the Indian "panchayats." The caste system is institutionalized injustice and has proven resistant to legal reform. We need to be good sociologists, exploring how equity and justice works in small-scale fisheries, because sociology comes before law.

Law is intervening is ongoing social relations and interactions that must be understood before we can be sure that legal reforms will work for

the better and not for the worse. Customary legalities and practices are typically, but not always informal, and we need to know about them before we interfere with them, as the SSF Guidelines argue. Legal pluralism is everywhere in small-scale fisheries and we must exercise caution before legal reform is initiated. It is among the conditions that make small-scale fisheries governable, but not necessarily in a good way.

Thus, a closer inspection may reveal the existence of multiple, overlapping, and competing formal and informal legalities, which may be a cause of conflict between state and local communities, causing confusion among fishers about which law to follow, and what the Illegal' in IUU fishing is in real situations. Respect' for customs is among their eleven SSF Guidelines' meta-governance principles. What works is not in need of urgent fixing, and formalization is not always the answer. But sometimes, legal reform would be necessary to realize the principles the SSF Guidelines are advocating. In concrete contexts, they must be made obligatory rather than voluntary for them to have the power to secure the positive difference they are meant to facilitate.

The empowerment of small-scale fisheries people can happen in multiple ways, also legally (see chapters 1 and 2). The SSF Guidelines is 'soft law' in need of being turned into 'hard law', as has happened with the human rights declaration. Implementing human rights into the governance of small-scale fisheries people would take place through securing people rights to education, political representation, freedom of speech, a safe environment, rights of access to resources as a food resource, securing tenure rights, forming organizations, etc. – issues that the SSF Guidelines are all talking about. Co-management needs a legal foundation. However, there is a balance to be struck between what is informal (and should remain so) and what is/and should be formal, as I discussed in chapters 2 and 17. Formalizing would for some purposes be good, even necessary, but not for other things. Formalization may disrupt necessary working conditions and practices that should stay informal. We need to be clear about what things must be either/or both in which contexts, and this is what the social sciences can help with investigating.

V

Governing Small-Scale Fisheries



Puglia, Italy. 2024 © Greta Jentoft

21

The Middle Way

[30]In 1981, I attended a month-long course at the European University in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Croatia was then part of Yugoslavia, and the course was about the unique model of decentralized workers' self-management that Yugoslavia was experimenting with at the time. The idea was to build something in between a Soviet central state economy and a Western capitalist market model.

Throughout my academic career, I have always been interested in the space between state and market, and that made me sign up for the Dubrovnik course. It is also an issue in my small-scale fisheries work. My thinking back then and now is that the two extremes, state OR market, will not bring what we are looking for in small-scale fisheries or in society. Neither do I think that state AND market, the mixture of the two, will deliver on all accounts if it only means that the state imposes restrictions on markets, as they do in fisheries.

There must be, and in fact there is, a middle way, a governance opportunity in between state and market that can be filled with something else, a co-governance model of sorts, a model that gives ample room for civil society organizations, worker's unions, and local communities. Then we

[30] This chapter is developed from my keynote address at the 'Rethink Blue' Conference, held in Zadar, Croatia, April 22-25, 2024.

should explore the conditions for this model to become a viable alternative.

Co-governance

The Yugoslavian experiment inspired my work on producer co-operatives, for instance the studies I did in Poland and Bulgaria together with my colleague Boguslaw Marciniak at University of Gdansk, which we published in Maritime Studies in the 1990s. Norway also has an interesting experience with the cooperative model in fisheries, which I have written a lot about. My work on co-management, as a non-state and non-market way of managing fisheries, emerged from my interest in middle-way solutions.

The idea of addressing governance challenges in between state and market lives on in academic quarters. It is captured in the manner we now think of as an interactive governance in fisheries, and how FAO believes it would make small-scale fisheries more sustainable and socially just. It is about building a deeper form of democracy – one of grassroots involvement, community empowerment, and people's participation. It is not meant to replace but to add to what political scientists call the "numerical democracy," as when we cast the vote in general elections (Rokkan, 1966). The numerical model is not sufficient for managing small-scale fisheries. We need a more interactive co-governance model, as the Yugoslavian workers' self-management experiment was intended to do.

Symbiosis

Humans interact; they socialize, form groups and communities. Sometimes they compete as individuals (or groups), as they do in markets with a single concern in their mind, their own interest. But in other circumstances they depend on people having a concern for each other, the community, and for the environment. They are not driven by egoistic interest but by a sense of social responsibility.

In a state-market governance context, individuals and groups are restricted and enabled by government rules and regulations. Alternatively,

they may be similarly steered by rules they author and enforce among themselves. This was Elinor Ostrom's (1990) governance model, which gave her the economics Nobel Prize. Small-scale fisheries provide numerous examples of self- and co-management. The fact that they are often informally organized, often for single communities, does not make them less real, only more difficult to detect.

Small-scale fisheries and the local community exist in a symbiotic, often informal, relationship, which when broken, will damage both. Once shattered, the symbiosis is hard to rebuild. The symbiosis creates energy and synergy and works better under a system of coordination. The symbiotic relationship is not just a convenient arrangement of mutual benefit, but a deeply cultural phenomenon, a relationship with mutual recognition and a moral content. It is a relationship that requires and builds reciprocal trust which facilitates resilience.

Communities

This is why communities must be part of the equation in small-scale fisheries management and the Blue Economy. In fisheries management bent on neoliberalism, they are not. It is all about state and market, but with a primary emphasis on the latter. Communities are a missing link and a missed opportunity. When communities are out of sight, we do not understand and value their contribution. Neither do we see the fundamental role that women play in small-scale fisheries.

As I described in chapter 19, women provide *direct* contribution to small-scale fisheries when they mend the nets, bait the lines, and run the business side of the fishing operation. They play an *indirect,* and even more important role, when they make the community into a home, a place to live and to raise children. Kids learn things in their family that they cannot do without, also as adults and as member of a fishing crew. It is a provision and a relationship that the state and the market can never replace. The direct contribution can in principle be handled by the state or the market but not the indirect role.

Robust communities have strong internal and external relationships, but communities are often fragmented, poorly organized, and therefore vulnerable. They are easy victim of external pressures undermining their ability of self-governance. As states and markets often do, communities can fail and fall into what Durkheim (1997) called a state of "anomia" – of normative confusion and moral decay. Trustful relations would suffer, and by that the capacity for self-governance and cooperation.

The SSF Guidelines argue that to make small-scale fisheries robust, they must be empowered. The Guidelines believe that civil society organizations can help in achieving this. They therefore address them as much as they talk to states and argue that solutions must be found in-between, and independent from, state and markets. Their underlying paradigm is communitarian, not neoliberal as in the Blue Economy. They express support for co-management and community empowerment.

Foe or friend?

There are hopeful advocates among policy makers and academics who believe that the Blue Economy will be a win for all stakeholders, including small-scale fisheries. They have faith in our capacity to grow our marine economies in ways that are generally beneficial, also environmentally. Until we see the empirical evidence, I think we should remain skeptical optimists and wait for the proponents to deliver the proof.

The Blue Economy is not necessarily what their proponents say it is and what they promise it will achieve. It is what it does in practice. That practice is for us, as social scientists, to critically examine. For small-scale fisheries actors as the traditional users of coastal space, there are risks involved. If the Blue Economy comes at a loss to small-scale fisheries, that is what it is for them. It cannot be explained away as something outside the definition of the Blue Economy, something that is not meant to happen. Concepts get their true meaning in the real world and not at someone's desk.

Governance principles

The Blue Economy can do and be different things for different stakeholders in different situations. We may be positive to the idea but skeptical of its practice. This is also how we should think of middle-way solutions. We may be in favor of the famous Rochdale principles that are foundational for the co-operative model and, in fact, the co-management approach. They read much like the Human Rights Declaration and are integral to "human rights approach" outlined in the SSF Guidelines. As social scientists, we should be critically examining how they are implemented in the Blue Economy. They are universal, and the Blue Economy is no free zone. Neither are co-governance arrangements.

We should not expect successful middle-way outcomes in a non-supportive institutional and political environment: if fisheries co-operatives and co-management arrangements are isolated outliers, exceptions from the dominant paradigm, they have the odds against them. They have a better chance of success in a community-oriented governance system than in one of market or state dominance designed on the idea of neo-liberalism.

Space and place

The Blue Economy is a juggernaut that is hard to resist when unleashed. Thus, the Blue Economy raises issues regarding the limits of governability. When much bigger and more powerful actors move into the coastal space, which they increasingly do, small-scale fishers may have to relocate, take their business elsewhere. That would be easier if it is just about space and not about place.

Small-scale fishers need space to be free, where they can move around, chasing a fugitive resource. But they also need place to feel home, where they have close and lasting relationships – where they have roots. We all do. When we come home, we are happy to be back in a familiar place, when we see again the people who we know and who know us. That is

what makes us feel we are home. We need the freedom that comes with the market and the order that comes with the state. But we also need the sense of belonging that comes with the community. The governability challenge is to find the right mix.

Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2001) noted that while communities provide safety, they have a limiting effect on freedom. They can feel claustrophobic at times. There is a choice to be made about the kind of freedom that markets provide and the safety that community delivers. Middleway governance institutions help in reducing the conflict between the two. They provide platforms for self-realization, self-empowerment, and social entrepreneurship, which all requires a degree of freedom. They also provide the support we need to stay connected. Freedom comes with risks and risks can be too high for comfort. We are completely free when we have nothing else to lose, as Kris Kristofferson wrote in his "Me and Bobby McGee." They offer an opportunity to expand our social network, meet new people and build relationships. At the same time, they require careful, inclusive designs that enable rather than restrict.

There is no such thing as limitless freedom, as I have argued already. We are not free to do whatever we want, and neither should we be. We are bounded by our commitments to other people, by norms and moralities that guide our interactions. This is what the conversation centers around at our mother's knee. If we do not internalize these behavioral principles and abide with them, communities would fall apart, because we could not live together without them. People in small-scale fisheries have it no different. When their communities wither, where do these moral principles go? The market and the state would not be able to house them. Civil society might be able to step in, but it may be too late.

Power relations

A small-scale fisher is not the lonely wolf as he is often portrayed. He enjoys his freedom but does not live and operate in a social vacuum. He socializes with other fishers on land, on the beach and port, and at sea. Fishers often

take their community with them when they go out. They may compete for the biggest catch, but they also cooperate and form teams with other fishers they know. It is more effective that way, but also safer – which in small-scale fisheries is a real concern.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), small-scale fishing is among the most dangerous occupations there are. Displacing fishers from their familiar fishing areas may cause considerable risk to them Their local knowledge does not necessarily apply in the new place. At home, fishing grounds are known territory. They cannot and will not just go anywhere.

IIn the Blue Economy, the fishing grounds, beaches, and dwellings of small-scale fisheries people are threatened, if not already under siege. They do not have them to themselves anymore unless protective legal measures exist to secure them. They rarely have a formal title to their fishing grounds and beaches, sometimes not even to the piece of land where they have their house. They are secure only in so far as other people respect their tenure rights (see chapter 2), which they don't always do. This is also the observation in the SSF Guidelines' preface (see my chapters 1 and 2).

Language power

We should not only be studying what is happening to small-scale fisheries in the Blue Economy. We should also look closely at the language that is used by those aiming to legitimize it. Language is not just a neutral representation of the reality. It is also used to create it. In chapter 11, I talked about "sematic infiltration" as a means to make other stakeholders read the situation as you do.

Language is used to explain, justify, and argue things. Sometimes it is used as 'gaslighting', aimed to confuse and to mislead. In my own country, Norway, it sounds fair enough when large-scale fishing operators talk about the need for 'stable working conditions'. What they really want is the management system to remain as it is, since it works to their benefit. They characterize the current management system as a 'success',

without mentioning that it has functioned to the disadvantage of small-scale fisheries communities. The power of corporate actors does not necessarily come in terms of brute force but in the disguise of a seductive language.

The power of language is implicit in the way we talk about the Blue Economy. The concept gives the impression of a pristine economy, something that we should strive for. Neither is the 'blue compass' blue, even if it now figures in the reports and conferences titles. The metaphor suggests that we know where we are and where we are going but it is nothing but a euphemism.

Level playing field

Likewise, equity and fairness in the distribution of marine space and resources are in the current discourse labelled as 'levelling the playing field.' The metaphor leads us to believe that the Blue Economy involves a friendly sport, played within rules that everyone accepts and abides with. But marine space is not like a football field where everyone plays according to the same rules that are known to all. In the Blue Economy rules are part of the game. It is not only about scoring goals but establishing the rules that may not even have to be fully transparent. Football would not work if these rules were in play.

Contrary to the 'playing field' metaphor, Bourdieu's "social field" concept captures more of the reality that unfolds in the Blue Economy. For Bourdieu, social reality is relational. He assumes, like Marx, that relationships shape interactions, and that interactions shape relations in an iterative process. But they do more; they also shape the people interacting just like football also shapes the footballers, their "habitus" – which is a term Bourdieu borrowed from Latin. Similarly, fishing shapes the fishers, their skills, rationalities, values, identities, and their language. In the process of fishing, they become fishers.

It is hard to predict how the habitus of small-scale fishers will evolve in the Blue Economy. But, if we follow Bourdieu, it is reasonable to expect that fishers will become different from what they once were and now are:

> *"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).*

Empowerment from within

Whether small-scale fishers will become what they want to be is a question they must answer themselves when they reflect on what the Blue Economy does to their communities, their way of life, and thereby themselves. They may feel happy and proud if they succeed to take advantage of the opportunities that the Blue Economy brings. But they may also end up disliking the outcome, feeling a sense of loss if they lose what they have, regretting that they did not do more to prevent it, thinking that the government failed them. People need to be able to recognize their communities and themselves.

If small-scale fisheries people want to control the outcome, they will need to grab power in the process of making, implementing, and enforcing the rules. The SSF Guidelines talk a lot about power relations and the need for the empowerment of small-scale fisheries people. They are an instrument they can use in their struggle. They should not count on the state to implement the SSF Guidelines, or that the market will come to their rescue. The SSF Guidelines are nevertheless an instrument they can use in their social struggle.

Small-scale fisheries people should explore middle way solutions by creating institutions that are neither state nor markets, but something in between. Co-governance models exist that can be emulated. They figure as a menu, where producer co-operatives and workers' unions are two of the items. Small-scale fisheries people may also be more co-creative and playful, as I argued in chapter 17. Co-governance models cannot just be copied from elsewhere but can be inspirational and made subject of experimentation and learning. They must always be designed to fit the

context they are meant to work within.

Small-scale fisheries people should start organizing, among themselves in their own local communities, by deliberating the meta-governance principles before they move into the practicalities of organizational design. They find the principles in the SSF Guidelines. External support will come, but only if they show that they have it in them to do something on their own. Empowerment does not only come from the outside, but from within too.

22

The Achilles' Heel

With the Blue Economy, the coastal commons are becoming increasingly crowded. New actors are moving into the space and claim access to resources that small-scale fisheries people have had for themselves. Small-scale fisheries are therefore often in conflict with other industries. As the weaker party, they are easily pushed aside, run over, and ignored by other, more powerful operators. As I discussed in chapter 21, unless small-scale fisheries people decide to fight back, they have few options other than to retreat, leaving their homesteads and their fishing grounds, and moving elsewhere. Their resistance depends on their ability to unite and act collectively.

Their empowerment would enhance if there was a representative organization acting on their behalf. But small-scale fishing people are often poor organizers who value their individual freedoms and independence. This is their Achilles' Heel. When lacking an organization to work for them, they are vulnerable. Forming an organization is therefore a means of countering their marginalization. As the SSF Guidelines point out: "*Despite their importance, many small-scale fishing communities continue to be marginalized, and their contribution to food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, equitable development and sustainable resource utilization – which benefits both them and others – is not fully realized.*" (p. x).

The SSF Guidelines, paragraph 7.4 underscores the importance of

organizations for building their collective capacity and capability as a strategy for withstanding the pressures that the Blue Economy brings. When intervening to empower small-scale fisheries in the Blue Economy, implementing paragraph 7.4 is where they should start. Norway is an example of how the state can help small-scale fisheries to organize.

Organization as empowerment

Governments do not necessarily side with small-scale fisheries. Instead, they think of them standing in the way of Blue Growth. They are thought of as something of the past that should yield to other industries, which are associated with modernity. The SSF Guidelines, however, recommend that states think twice about their fisheries development paradigms and policies. The Guidelines emphasize that states indeed have a responsibility to support small-scale fisheries, urging them to use their power to secure their space, equity and social justice. With the Guidelines, states have an incentive to adjust the balance of power in favor of small-scale fisheries people.

But as it is in the power of powerful stakeholders to block efforts that go against their interest, this is easier said than done. Implementing the SSF Guidelines is therefore a process with uncertain outcomes. Its emphasis on rights, equity and justice makes it difficult to know whether implementing them would lead to desirable outcomes. Powerful actors operate in ocean and coastal space, fighting their own fights, trying to block governance initiatives that go against their interests. Once policy makers meet powerful resistance, they may be inclined to back off. States would have it easier if there were powerful organizations of small-scale fisheries people to back them up.

Aggregate vs. relational power

There is power in the number of small-scale fisheries people. They constitute millions of people around the world and thus have a potential

of becoming a real tour de force at the world stage of fisheries. But even if many, they are also scattered. Within a particular country they may be few in comparison with other groups, like small-scale farmers for instance. Their relative insignificance at the country level makes them invisible, ignored, and marginalized.

However, as posited by the SSF Guidelines, no matter how many, or how dispersed and fragmented small-scale fisheries people are, they have a right to be recognized and to live a life in freedom and dignity. They have a right to a livelihood and a secure food supply. In this regard, their number should not matter. Still, their number has relevance for their empowerment. The bigger the number, the more difficult they are to organize. Getting everyone on board then becomes a demanding undertaking.

In small-scale fisheries, the power in number is a potential yet to be realized. They must not forever "rhyme with poverty", as Chris Béné (2003) phrased it. Their marginalization is not a given. The SSF Guidelines show the way out of it when they talk about the need to bring them into the mainstream of fisheries and food politics. But this requires more than numerical power. They must also pursue relational power, the power that organization realizes.

I was once visited the fisheries beach in Chennai, India. I was struck by the hectic crowd of people running around with fish to sell and buy. The size of the crowd was impressive, but the social structure was invisible to me. I only saw chaos. I would have loved to learn more about the interaction on the beach, which was apparently more structured than my first impression suggested. It could not work otherwise. I am sure that knowing about their relational power would have impressed me even more.

Leadership

Collective action can happen spontaneously when people have the same experience and a similar idea of how things may change for the better. Here, collective action is an individual but simultaneous decision, progressing in the same direction as a firestorm. It is just for someone to light the match.

But firestorms tend to burn out after a short time. The SSF Guidelines support a more coordinated, concerted, and persisting form of collective action, where someone like a community or a civil society organization takes the initiative and the lead, and does not give up when things get difficult, knowing that they are in for a long haul.

Mancur Olson (1977) explains why leadership is essential for concerted collective action. He argues that under normal circumstances, *"rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests"* (p. 2). Instead, they will prefer that other people take the initiative and bear the burden of forming and running it. This is the free-rider problem, which is especially prevalent in large groups where members can remain anonymous. In small groups, however, among people who know each other well, people tend to be less self-centered, not just because it is more difficult to remain inactive but because they depend on and care for each other. The SSF Guidelines therefore stress the importance of creating "*community solidarity and collective and corporate responsibility and the fostering of an environment that promotes collaboration among stakeholders..."* (FAO, 2015, p. 3). Someone must, however, take the initiative and be willing to lead.

The free-rider problem does not easily go away, even after the organization is established. Self-centered, opportunistic behavior of members make organizations vulnerable. Organizations rely on a loyal membership (Hirschman, 1972). Members' loyalty cannot be taken for granted but must be nurtured. The organization must prove that they deserve members' loyalty. One way to achieve it is to involve them in decision-making. But with increasing scale, it becomes more difficult. Participatory democracy works better in small-scale organizations, as it did in Greek city-states and not for the entire country in the antiquity.

A committed membership provides what Cyert and March (1963) called "organizational slack." With colleague Anthony Davis, I explored it in a small-scale fisheries cooperative in Nova Scotia. We measured the "slack" by the willingness of fisher-members to accept a lower price than the market rate (Jentoft & Davis, 1993). Members' commitment was not unconditional. Their identity with the cooperative mattered. They had to

feel a sense of ownership, that the cooperative was their own, which was nurtured by their involvement in the decision-making and leadership.

The power OF

The Norwegian Fisher Association throws light on what an organization can do for small-scale fishers. Established in 1926, it has remained a towering actor in Norwegian fisheries politics because it has been able to unite fishers from north to south (Norges Fiskarlag, n.d.). When the association speaks, the government cannot avoid listening. A fragmented organizational structure would have given the government the choice of who to listen to, which may have been politically convenient from its perspective.

But rather than keeping that option open, the government engaged with the Association in a constructive partnership, and by that enhanced the governability of the fishing industry. Before 1926, there were more than twenty different fisher organizations in Norway. Therefore, for the government, the alternative would have been to deal with a many-headed troll and listening to a cacophony of voices who were all fighting for their individual interests rather than for the whole industry and for the country. For the government, there were obvious benefits of having one rather than many counterparts, one it could strike deals with.

The unification of Norwegian fishers into one organization took years of persuasion and deliberation, with government in the lead.[31] Once in place, a partnership was established, which created order and better communication between the fishers and the government. This also gave fishers real influence in the governance process. The government would regularly consult the Association before policy reforms were introduced. It would even be reluctant to act without the consent of the Association. In 2024, it is still the pattern. Dissent among fishers on new reform proposals are first deliberated within the Association, and then with the government.

[31] The formation process is described in detail by Christensen and Hallenstvedt (2005).

Fishers do not experience that legal and other reforms are imposed on them without first having had the possibility to express their views on them.

Instead of empowerment being a zero-sum game, the partnership between Norwegian fisheries authorities and fishers proved that power can be a plus-sum game; it empowered both parties in a process that built trust and enhanced governability. Fishers were never in a constant battle with government. It turned more attention outwards instead of inwards – toward export markets where more than ninety percent of the total Norwegian catch still ends up. Fish was Norway's number one export product until the oil industry arrived. Fisheries, as it always was and still is, are not only a matter for the industry but for the country. This gave the Association a bargaining chip and a perception of its own social responsibility.

Historians tell me that without the partnership between the government and the Association, the Rawfish Act of 1938 and the Ownership Act (1956) would not have happened (see Jentoft & Finstad, 2018). The Rawfish Act led to the establishment of co-operative sales-organizations along the entire Norwegian coast. Sales of fish outside these co-operatives became illegal. The law gave the sales-organizations the right to administer transactions with the buyers, and to fix minimum-prices if price negotiations did not lead to agreement.

The Rawfish Act, in combination with the Ownership Act, drastically turned the table in favor of fishers. The Ownership Act made the system more robust, as only active fishers could own a vessel. The laws determined who were sitting on each side of the table. They paved the way out of the situation of poverty that small-scale fishers were in at the time. It changed the distribution of export earnings to their benefit. The two laws also created relative peace in the industry. In Norway, fishers on strike are rarely seen.

I know of no other country with a similar value-chain legal structure. Even the SSF Guidelines refrain from suggesting similar reforms. They would perhaps have been too radical for state delegates. Still, the SSF Guide-

lines do not stop states from creating a more transformative legislation by their own initiative.

The power IN

An organization can change the balance of power relative to external actors. It can also change power relations internally, among members. It is not a given that empowering the fishing industry organizationally trickles down to the empowerment of small-scale fishers. Neither is it certain that an organization of fishers will work in the interest of small-scale fisher members. Thus, the power *of* the organization does not necessarily imply that members have power *in* their organization. They may even end up in a weaker position should power over time become assembled at the top of the organization, as Robert Michels (1915/2016) famously observed and coined the "Iron-law of Oligarchy".

Regardless of the organization's democratic functioning and grass-roots origin, administrators inevitably gain control as the organizations gets bigger, more complex, and hierarchical. They are the hub in the flow of information and have the full overview of what is going on internally and externally, something rank and file members are lacking.

However, according to the historians that have followed it (Hallenstvedt & Dynna, 1976; Christensen & Hallenstvedt, 2005), this is not the full story of the Norwegian Fisher Association. Elected leaders among the fisher members have come and gone and have wisely kept the challenging task of keeping the organization together. Their authority has never been questioned. They were strong but were never autocratic. The Association has been governed by the board of fishers and the bi-annual "country-meeting" (landsmøte). The employed general secretaries always took the back seat.

The Association is perhaps Norway's most hybrid organization. Creating one organization out of a diverse set of fishers with sometimes conflicting interests is no easy endeavor. The conflicts between small and large-scale, capital and labor, rural and urban communities, different gear groups, and

between north and south must all be handled internally. Since they are overlapping, their governability becomes complex. Over time the focus of the Association has shifted from securing the welfare of members to fisheries management and quota distribution. This has led to internal conflict and the marginalization of small-scale fisher members.

Exit

The internal struggle for power has shifted into a zero-sum game that has stretched member loyalty. When voice brings little and votes count less than resources, members may choose to exit. This is what happened when in 1988 a group of small-scale fishers broke out of the Association and formed their own. 'The Norwegian Coastal Fishers' Association.'[32] But the new organization does not have the same power as the one they broke out of. By exiting, they left the established partnership with government. Consequently, their new organization does not have the same power as the one they broke out of.

The Norwegian Fisher Association has also undergone a major overhaul in recent years, and consists now of three sub organizations, one for south-Norway and one for the north, in addition to that of the offshore large-sale vessel-owners. North Norway has the most of fishers, whereas the south is stronger on capital. The ITQ system has concentrated quota rights in the south at the expense of the north. The remaining small-scale, coastal fisher members in the Association are mostly from the north. The conflict between large and small-scale fisheries is therefore also a regional conflict.

This has led to increasing frustration within the northern branch about Association policy, which they feel is controlled by the large-scale vessel members. When the government presented a new quota policy in January 2024, it was perceived to favor the large, offshore, and southern, capital-intensive fisheries actors at the expense of the small-scale and northern community-based fisheries. Later, through the press, it was revealed that

[32] https://norgeskystfiskarlag.no/

the large-scale vessel owners have moved to get the northern branch expelled.

We have not seen the end of the story yet. Conflicts over quota distribution won't go away. The old Association has been able to negotiate an internal compromise in the past. Now, there is reason to expect that it will become increasingly difficult to achieve such a compromise. in the future. Whether the Association will be able to reach a consent that the government can agree with, remains to be seen. Should there be a split within the Association, the organizational map of Norway's fishers would need to be redrawn. Other alliances than those that have existed since its foundation in 1926, may emerge. Whether small-scale fisheries will lose or win is an open question. Whatever happens, small-scale fishers have the power in number, but their number power needs relational power and consolidation.

23

Rotten Fish?

Old people like me enjoy the same music we listened to when we were young. We have little patience for the modern stuff. I always turn up the radio when Paul McCartney is singing "Yesterday." It still evokes the rebel in me when I hear Mick Jagger "I can't get no satisfaction." Céline Dion's Eifel Tower performance at the opening of the 2024 Olympics reminded me of how much I love Edit Piaf. Elvis still moves me. Bob Dylan remains a favorite.

I have it in the same way with my research topics. Those I started out with, continue to catch my attention. Even if I have shifted to other things, I have not left what used to fascinate me when I hear them mentioned. This also happened in September 2024 at a TBTI meeting in Mazatlán, Mexico. When participants spoke about co-operatives, I listened carefully. When visiting a fisheries co-operative there, I had the opportunity to raise questions I used to ask. This experience inspired this essay.

Success or failure

My work on co-management grew out as a natural extension of my focus on producer co-operatives. The two have been interlinked projects.[33]

[33] Co-management is a topic in book I.

In my Norwegian small-scale fisheries backyard, producer co-operatives spread like a firestorm in the 1950s. But I found the century-old Lofoten fisheries co-management system interesting because the basic governance principles were similar.[34]

In Norwegian fisheries, producer co-operatives were short-lived. In the 1980s most of them were gone. Was the explanation to their dismal fate like what we heard from Kerala? From the early 1950s, encouraged by the newly establishment of UN with Trygve Lie, a Norwegian, as the first general secretary, Norway assisted Kerala in modernizing their fishing industry. The Kerala project lasted for about twenty years. The success, however, appeared to be mixed and drew criticism in both countries. John Kurien, a native of Kerala and who I talk about in chapter 12, noticed a negative attitude to Norwegian initiated co-operatives among people in the coastal communities; to them co-operatives smelled like "rotten fish," as he phrased it. In Cambodia, my friend Ron Jones, says that the term "co-operative" supposedly brings back memories of the nasty Khmer Rouge.

Such examples were always puzzling and left me with a research question: Why this reputation? Is it because they fail, and if so, why do they do that? Why are fisheries co-operatives not able to live up to their promises of creating a more people- and community-centered alternative to the traditional capitalist model? Is the co-operative model not suitable for rugged small-scale fishers, as discussed in a study of a small-scale fisheries co-operative in Nova Scotia, Canada (Jentoft & Davis, 1993)? Are the classic, foundational Rochdale principles simply outdated? John Kurien's own conclusion was clear:

"What we see in Kerala today is the consequence of a flawed understanding of what cooperatives really are. A cooperative is at once a people's organisation and a business organisation; though for the purpose of study and analysis we might separate the two dimensions, it is meaningless in

[34] With my master-student, I published a paper on it, which to my surprise caught international attention (Jentoft & Kristoffersen, 1989).

reality to do so. *If a cooperative fails as a people's organisation it will most certainly fail as a business organisation - there is no exception to this rule" (italics, SJ).* (Kurien 1980, p. 9).

Going abroad

In the 1980s and 90s, I had to go abroad to find producer co-operatives in operation in small-scale fisheries. First stop was Nicaragua. Here, I was part of a team to examine the Sandinista government's plan of building co-operatives as a way of supporting small-scale fisheries. Behind it was the ambition of providing a more stable food-supply and alleviate rural poverty. After a month of fieldwork, we finalized our report with a positive conclusion, which released Norwegian financial support to the plan. Based on this experience, I wrote my first article in an international journal (Jentoft, 1986a). Following Kurien, I discussed the inherent conflict between running a viable business enterprise while at the same time running a people's organization with a social agenda.

In the research literature, I found examples of producer co-operatives handling resource management functions. Drawing on available studies, like by Bonnie McCay (1980),[35] I argued in a paper in Marine Policy (Jentoft, 1985) that co-operatives under certain conditions could be a suitable instrument for taking on resource management functions. Without mentioning the term, it was my first paper on co-management. I was strengthened in this belief by what I learned when visiting Japan with a group of fisheries students from my university. Japan was famous for the co-operative development model, which included fisheries management functions, along with other community services. I posited that what worked there, could possibly also work elsewhere. If not, we should explain why.

What stood out from the Japanese example was the fact co-operatives were the norm, and the key actor within a national fisheries governance

[35] Her article appears in a special issue on fisheries cooperatives in Anthropological Quarterly.

system that was built around them. In most other countries, fisheries co-operatives were outliers, the exception from the general rule. This may well explain their relative success. In Belize, which I only read about, fisheries co-operatives benefitted from the lucrative US lobster market (Jentoft, 1986b). The success of fisheries co-operatives may therefore be explained by external factors, not their organizational design and complex agendas. The solution to their survival, I argued, may therefore lie outside, rather than inside the co-operative.

The Japanese, Belize, and I should include Mexican examples that were discussed in Mazatlàn, suggest that the "rotten fish" characterization was too sweeping. The co-operative may indeed be a relevant vehicle for small-scale fisheries development. This was also my student Alastair Begg's conclusion in a Norwegian case study and in Bonnie McCay's research on the Fogo Island fisheries co-operative in Newfoundland, Canada. However, I argued that the organizational design should be flexible and pragmatic and related to their particular social and cultural context. There is no one way to implement the Rochdale principles. Small-scale fisheries actors need cooperation to govern their interdependencies but not necessarily with a standard co-operative design. This is also the conclusion of Kalikoski et al. (2019).

The Rochdale principles[36] are not falsified by unsuccessful examples. A failed fisheries co-operative could possibly have thrived under more enabling conditions. But co-operatives must also function internally, through competent leadership, financial prudence, and a committed membership. To take on social responsibility, like resource management functions, they must be solid and stable. If not, they will be unable to play a role within a resource co-management scheme, as we posited in a study in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (Jentoft & Sandersen, 1996).

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[36] First adopted by Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers in 1844 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rochdale_Society_of_Equitable_Pioneers) and officially adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) in 1937 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Cooperative_Alliance). They have been the basis on which co-operatives around the world have operated. I talk about these principles in book II.

As such, a fisheries co-operative must work effectively both as the people-oriented organization and the business organization they are supposed to be. Their formal, organizational design is important but not sufficient. However, they may need the support, not only from their members, but also from government and civil society organizations. We cannot expect them to thrive if powerful external actors are antagonistic and working against them. Fisheries co-operatives need enabling legislation that secure their integrity, autonomy and authority, as with the Norwegian co-operative sales organizations. Co-operatives will benefit from the legal reforms that the SSF Guidelines are advocating.

Co-operatives must also stand on their own feet. Members must be proactive, as Anthony Davis and I demonstrated in the study of a Nova Scotia fishery referred to in chapter 22, (Davis & Jentoft, 1989). Member solidarity and group identity are a competitive advantage of the co-operative and a resilience factor that must be nurtured. The fate of small-scale fisheries co-operatives depends on their ability to remain people-organizations, as John Kurien pointed out. If members remain passive and indifferent, the co-operative mode makes little sense. If they are co-operatives in name only, the membership may start to wither away or even revolt.

Rebuilding the aquarium?

My Polish colleague, Boguslaw (Bogdan) Marciniak at University of Gdansk, made it possible for me to learn about fisheries co-operatives in Eastern Europe. I knew they existed but were curious about their fate in the social transformations in the 1980s in the wake of the Russian perestroika. In their eagerness to adopt a western capitalist model, would co-operatives be strengthened or swept away? Bogdan guided me to Poland and Bulgaria so that I could see for myself what happened with them. Together we published several papers on what we learned (for example Marciniak & Jentoft, 1992; Marciniak & Jentoft, 1997).

In Poland, the traditional fisheries community organizations, the *maszope-*

rias, did not survive the communist era. The government instead organized co-operatives from the top down. They were not people-organization as co-operatives are meant to be. In Bulgaria during communism, co-operatives were either expropriated by the state or just vanished under the regime. When we were there, only one fisheries co-operative remained (Jentoft & Marciniak, 1991; 1992). The state was more in favor of large-scale, industrial fisheries. When communism was abandoned, privatization became the preferred solution. With co-operatives gone, fisheries communities were left in a void, internally fragmented, and with no firm organizational structure that could bring social order and security, which the maszoperias provided in the pre-communist era.

When we toured coastal communities and talked to people about the future of small-scale fisheries, some raised the issue of bringing back the maszoperias. The cultural sentiment and traditional collective fishing practices were still intact in people's memory. With no community organization representing small-scale fisheries people that was perhaps not a bad idea, but how realistic was is?

Twenty years later, the SSF Guidelines would support such an idea. What they say about respecting traditional institutions and the need for empowerment of small-scale fisheries communities, the maszoperias might gain legitimacy (Bavinck et al., 2015). Still, recreating something that were lost, is not easy. In our paper, we quoted an adage about the transition of communist rule: *"We know that you can turn the aquarium into a fish soup; the question is, can you turn the fish soup back into and aquarium?"* (Jentoft & Marciniak, 1991, p. 83).

However, the aquarium does not need to be exactly as it used to be. Traditional community organizations can be reinvented into a more modern form, fit for a new situation while abiding with the Rochdale principles. You can build back better a new but different aquarium with other fish in it.

No panacea

We know from experience that fisheries co-operatives are hardly a panacea. We also know that they both fail and succeed. But so do state and private companies as well and we should not expect that co-operatives do any better. Co-operatives are complex organizations. They have inherent contradictions due to a broader goal structure and a more wide-reaching social responsibility compared to a private company.

I have seen small-scale fisheries community co-operatives that do more than just serve their fisher members. I once visited a local fisheries community in Sri Lanka where the co-operative, in addition to working for their fisher-members, was running a day-care center, the local school, and a service for the elderly in need of assistance, much like those of local governments do in other countries. It was also working to install some light poles in the community. We should therefore not give up on them but better understand what they are and what they need to function in the context where they operate. But they need capacity building through a competent leadership.

The success of co-operatives is highly dependent on what else is going on in small-scale fisheries. Co-operatives will not succeed if small-scale fisheries are failing. They should not be thought of as a crisis remedy only, but as a tool for normal circumstances. The co-operative mode of organization can help the implementation of the SSF Guidelines but cannot alone bear the burden of securing a future for small-scale fisheries. That would require a holistic governance approach, one that is structured according to the guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines, which read much like the pioneering co-operative Rochdale principles.

24

Diversify, Don't Undermine!

When small-scale fishing and fisheries related work are the only employment opportunity for local people, a community must balance on one leg. The one-sidedness of small-scale fisheries communities can be both a blessing and a curse. When everyone is together 'in the same boat', it is easier to maintain a distinct fisheries culture with people sharing the same experience and having their eyes fixed on their interdependency and common future. They are all involved in keeping the value-chain functioning. Young adults become fishers because other people in the community are fishers. The fishery makes the community what it is and the people into what they are. If it works, the community is viable.

In this situation, the small-scale fisheries community fits the 'ideal type', as the SSF Guidelines conceive it to be. Here, the ideal and the real type of community are the same. But in most instances, this is not the case. Small-scale fisheries are complex and diverse systems. They come in many shapes and forms and must often share space and resources with other industries. This may help to solidify the community but not necessarily the small-scale fishery. Other industries may provide alternative employment alternatives but also take control and marginalize the small-scale fishery. Like a chair, the legs of the community must have similar size. If one is bigger than the other, the chair is unstable.

Thus, alternative employment to small-scale fisheries may turn out to

be a double-edged sword. It may under certain conditions help build a stronger small-scale fisheries employment system. Diversification may lead to a more solid footing for the community, reducing vulnerability. But diversification may also result in fragmentation and conflict between competing activities and cultures. At some point, the small-scale fisheries community is transformed into something else. From having a strong presence in the community, small-scale fisheries become a marginal job-creator that few people, especially the young, find attractive. The general focus of the community shifts to other industries, and the small-scale fishery loses essential community support.

Diversification

The one-sidedness means that anything that threatens the sustainability of the fishery, is putting the community at risk – and vice versa. As parts and parcel of the same employment system, the dynamics of the fishery is also that of the community. They flourish and succumb together. With shifting seasons and fugitive resources, both the fishery and the community are inherently and mutually volatile. Boom and bust are part of their existence. Their sustainability is interlinked, but in jeopardy, and always a work in progress. Since they are interdependent, they make each other vulnerable. Under such circumstances, it is to be expected that communities will embark on path towards diversity. The SSF Guidelines give advice in paragraph 6.8.

> *"States and other stakeholders should support already existing, or the development of complementary and alternative income generating opportunities – in addition to earnings from fisheries-related activities – for small-scale fishing communities, as required and in support of sustainable resource utilization and livelihood diversification. The role of small-scale fisheries in local economies and the links of the subsector to the wider economy need to be recognized and benefited from. Small-scale fishing communities should equitably benefit from*

> *developments such as community-based tourism and small-scale responsible aquaculture."*

According to the SSF Guidelines, a "both-and" strategy is better than "either-or"; complementary and alternative work opportunities can be pursued at the same time as small-scale fisheries are strengthened. A supplementary strategy would build on what is already in the community, add activities that may benefit from and support the existing employment system, like providing services that the small-scale fishery needs to function better while at the same time creating jobs in these services. Then it draws on, and further develops, competencies that the community already possesses. Fishing is a specialized activity but requires skills that can be used for other things, like net-making, boat-repair and building, engine maintenance, processing, marketing, tourism, etc. These are all needed functions in a self-sustained small-scale fisheries community.

Additional and complementary jobs may not be for the individual but for the household and the community. All the things that make the household function better for men, women and children help to sustain the small-scale fishery and hence the community, especially if they are planned to work as an integrated whole. People may combine roles without stress and conflict if they are relieved from work overload. Hard work can drain your energy, as can role conflicts. Role conflicts are stressful, like when women must allocate time to both fish work and childcare. This is also why the community often must step in to relieve the pressure on families, like the community cooperative in Sri Lanka I talked about in chapter 23 does.

Organic solidarity

The small-scale fisheries employment system needs a critical mass of people and activities, below which it will malfunction or fall apart. Small-scale fishers enjoy their freedom but not their lonesomeness. They enjoy socializing and benefit from hearing news from peers. They rely on other fishers to be safe at sea. They often fish together and watch out for each

other and assist if necessary. If other boats fishing nearby are getting fish onboard, they know they are in the right place. They may keep information for themselves but also benefit from information sharing. But they may be reluctant to share information with strangers. While at sea and ashore, they talk to each other, but they also watch and read each other's actions.

A fisher learns how skilled he is by comparing themselves with other fishers, and novice fishers learn from those who are experienced. Fishers know each other, often from childhood, and are often related through kinship. They learn who they can trust. Thus, small-scale fishers form a community of their own, which they bring with them when they go out and which helps them interact. Their network extends on land to those who process, consume and trade fish.

Emile Durkheim's (1933) distinguished between "mechanical" and "organic" solidarity. In the first instance, people associate as equals. In the second instance, they cooperate though exchange. Small-scale fisheries employment systems include both traits. The value chain has both a horizontal and vertical dimension, and the community is an arena for both. For the employment system, the number of actors involved matters but is not sufficient. Their ability to work together is also important.

Consequently, a new type of activity does not only add to the ongoing employment system, but intervenes and potentially transforms it, with uncertain outcomes. It may be the missing leg, but the leg may also bring the system out of balance. Organic solidarity is not about the sum of system components but their linkages and interactions. In this, there are opportunities for collective innovation and synergy creation of mutual benefit.

Whether the innovation is complementary, meant to fit into the existing employment system, or an alternative that breaks with the existing system, may have quite different outcomes. The employment system may be transformed into something it is not. Therefore, much depends on what choices actors make, what the community says yes or no to, and whether it welcomes or rejects the new element. They know what they have but cannot be sure of what they will get in the future. But they may have urgent

problems that must be solved quickly, like when there is a crisis that must be dealt with immediately.

Zero-sum

Small-scale fisheries were the dominant industry in the community where I did my PhD fieldwork in the late 1970s. Now, almost half a century later, they are largely gone and have been replaced by a booming salmon aquaculture industry. Back then, aquaculture was a new and unknown opportunity, and no one could have predicted how it would turn out. The prosperity that aquaculture has created here is for everyone to see and no one wants to turn back. When I returned decades later, tourism had also created growth with cabins and hotels. Private houses where fishing families lived are sold to urbanites in search of a vacation home.

This is how small-scale fisheries communities sometimes transform, at least in my part of the world. They do not die because of poverty but because of new wealth. They are marginalized because of competition from other, more profitable industries. In those cases, small-scale fisheries people may gladly shift to the more lucrative alternative. Older people may have problems adapting, but not the young. I do not think that there are many people left in the community who feel nostalgic about the past. The young who grow up there have no memory of how things used to be. Their identity is no longer associated with small-scale fisheries. There will be no way back for the community should the new industry fail to live up to its promises of a better, more robust alternative.

However, economic growth in coastal communities does not have to be a zero-sum game. The two elements in "creative destruction" , which Joseph Schumpeter (1942/2010) coined, do not necessarily and always hang together. New industries do not need to kill traditional industries but can grow upon them or side by side. Small-scale fisheries do not have to lose and be replaced to make room for other industries. Aquaculture and tourism can create new jobs and build a stronger small-scale fisheries community. But that can only be done if they are of similar scale and create

linkages of organic solidarity. Large-scale aquaculture and mass-tourism have the power to push small-scale fisheries aside, which they often do. This is a threat that the SSF Guidelines warn against. The strategy can be to make space for both.

Imitation or innovation

In Mazatlán, Mexico (see chapter 23), small-scale fishers now only have a small and narrow strip at the end of a long beach where they can pull up their boats and socialize between fishing trips. On the other side of a busy street, high-rise hotels and apartment buildings have fenced them off from the rest of the city. What used to be a thriving small-scale fisheries community is nowhere to be seen. The fishers we talked to have a pessimistic vision of their future. Eventually, as they grow older, they will give up, retire, and blend in with the tourism industry.

Along the Malecon, the broad sidewalk leading from where the fishers are, people stroll or exercise. Here you pass small souvenir booths, one after the other. I did not see many customers so it cannot be a very lucrative business. For all I knew, some of the sellers may well have been retired fishers or their spouses. If small-scale fishers were looking for job ideas, they would have them right here on display. However, judging by the merchandise, they were all selling the same things, probably manufactured in China. There was not anything for sale that drew me to a particular booth or tempted me to buy.

I have had the same experience in other parts of the world. You go to a busy market and the small shops are all selling the same things, even when locally produced. This has some logic to it, but it is hardly good business. Small-scale fisheries are not a last resort alternative, as the perception often is. Selling souvenirs is. It is what you do to make a living when other alternatives are unavailable.

The story comes with a lesson: this kind of job works better as a complementary addition than as an alternative. Since everyone do the same thing, they may easily saturate the market. The only way to attract

customers is to lower the price or be more aggressive in your sales strategy. But when they all do the same thing, everyone will eventually lose. The seller feels the humiliation of selling cheaply because he or she cannot afford not to, while the customer leaves with the dubious satisfaction of having made a bargain.

Instead of replication, communities need innovation, preferably of their own initiative and control. They will do better if they do things that are not identical to what the neighbor is doing. It is even better if new job-activities fit into the existing employment system in a manner that supports and makes it more complete. Then, they should assess the system they already have and think of how to use their skills to develop it. This is a safer approach than branching out into entirely new areas where communities have no experience and no competitive advantage.

Individuals can take risks that communities cannot afford to take. Communities have more at stake. Failure may disrupt the system which must function holistically. Diversification should convert the sophistication of small-scale fisheries into something equally sophisticated by drawing on the social capital and local knowledge that communities have and can invest in. The capacities and capabilities of small-scale fisheries people should be put to complementary rather than alternative use.

This, however, is not what Norwegian small-scale fisheries communities are doing. They all build cabins for foreign tourists and offer boats and equipment for them to go fishing. Fishing tourism entrepreneurs are not always locals. Some are able to fill their beds and boats while others are left with vacant capacities, especially in times of the year when weather conditions are unaccommodating. They sometimes lack the local knowledge to secure that their guests are safe on the water.

When communities cannot rely on a viable small-scale fishery anymore, they must find alternatives. Fishing tourism is close and offers an opportunity to convert their small-scale fisheries skills into something else. They do what they can do but not necessarily what they should do, which is to create something that makes them stand out from the crowd. In Norway, new tourist fishing camps do little to connect to the existing small-

scale fisheries employment system. Instead, they are a new competitor on overfished local stocks. While capture fisheries are under a strict quota regime, tourist fishing is not – at least not yet.

Conflict of interest

In Norway in the 1970s, aquaculture started small. The pioneers were private individuals with the idea to build something for their rural communities. As they were breaking new ground, they were trying and failing, but often succeeding, to their own surprise . They had to learn new skills, and no one was there to teach them. But they did not start from nothing. They often had capture fisheries experience. Some owned fish plants. Those with fishing background knew how to work on the water and to handle fish.

When the pioneers proved that it could be done, that it was possible for salmon to grow in captivity in low water temperatures, the business model changed. Other actors with more money than skills and local knowledge invested and eventually they took over. Then, the governance system had to be adapted, legally and otherwise to the situation on the ground after a major bankruptcy in the value chain, which was designed on the cooperative model of the capture fishery.

Now, about forty years after it all began, salmon aquaculture is big business and a major export industry. What started small-scale and as a complementary addition, soon became an alternative. The "both-and" option became an "either-or." Torbjørn Flakstad, the salmon aquaculture pioneer in North Norway, and now in his nineties, said on TV news on December the 5th, 2024: *"We never dreamed of that aquaculture would be so huge"*. I once visited him where he lived and saw how he began his experiment.

There is no political ambition of governing the two industries in an integrated fashion. They are governed separately, and the relationship is sometimes strained, especially when competing for the same space. The uneven scale between salmon aquaculture and small-scale fisheries creates

an unbalanced power relationship, where small-scale fisheries are pushed back in the bus both locally and nationally.

With split identities, asymmetrical scales, and with skewed power-relations, communities and municipal authorities must learn how to handle the conflict between the two industries. Communities may be forced to take sides. Small-scale fishers are struggling to defend their traditional fishing grounds, as these grounds are often also attractive sites for aquaculture. What the SSF Guidelines say about tenure rights for small-scale fisheries is then put to test. Local authorities may just need to read their title to know that they are voluntary and therefore can be ignored.

What approach?

Communities have the option of 'laissez faire', a do-nothing and wait-and-see approach, or a more pro-active strategy, by taking destiny in their own hand. They may leave it to inhabitants to create jobs for themselves, like small-scale fishers do. Or they may take collective initiatives to form new enterprises. One does not exclude the other. In fact, better results may occur through coordinated, public-private initiatives. Since the small-scale fisheries employment system needs a holistic perspective with an eye on linkages, inter-dependencies and interactions, the latter is preferable. For communities, job creation is better perceived as a social responsibility and an inter-organizational challenge. This is especially the case in functional systems like small-scale fisheries where actors must cooperate to thrive. A fragmented system risks breakdown. Community organization and job creation should go hand in hand to form one integrated employment system.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) observe that innovation often spread through mimicking, or what they call isomorphism. When neighboring communities share a history, a culture, a resource and a practice, it is likely that they will think the same and learn from each other. Thus, when your neighbor community is successful in solving a problem that you also have, you are tempted to follow in its path. You then have the advantage that

your pioneering neighbor did not have. The pioneer entered unknown territory, whereas you have their experience to draw from. They did experimentation from which you may gain. The risk of failure is less for the third community, and so forth. This is largely how aquaculture spread in Norway, supported by research institutions like my own university. Colleagues in the Norwegian College of Fishery Science did important work to make aquaculture possible, for instance on how to treat disease.

Therefore, the innovation adoption curve is exponential until it reaches the inflection point and takes a downward path. Your success as a newcomer depends on at which point you are entering. When on the right side of the inflection point, you are wise to think of something else to do. Salmon aquaculture in Norway is still growing but now as a large-scale, corporate business model, contrary to how it started. Whether fishing tourism will undergo a similar transformation, remains to be seen. Aquaculture and fishing tourism serve quite different markets. Why should a tourist visit a particular fishing community when it does not matter where they go, because they all offer the same thing? Salmon aquaculture is for a market in everlasting need of seafood. Now, in both instances, government brakes are on to regulate growth in both these industries mainly due to environmental concerns.

Look to Bugøynes

To me, the Bugøynes[37] small-scale fisheries community stands out as an example how local communities can thrive in face of crisis. It is located on the southern end of the Varanger fjord, with Russia a short distance away. We need real-life stories of how communities gain vitality and hence an optimistic outlook on their future. This is what the Bugøynes story illustrates. I have been interested in the news about Bugøynes. Theirs is a story of outstanding resistance, survival, and entrepreneurship, underpinning the argument I have been making in this chapter. It is possible

[37] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBvc2Q9yHiA

to diversify without undermining the integrity and integration of the small-scale fisheries employment system.

Bugøynes is not a place to where you stop for a short visit. Located 20 km off the main highway, it is a detour that not even the German occupying forces took, when they hastily fled the Soviet army in 1945. Therefore, Bugøynes was spared from the burning that happened with the rest of the Finnmark communities. As such, the community was spared with all buildings and infrastructure intact. I first visited Bugøynes in the early 1980s with some students who were there to collect data for their term paper. Later I supervised students from Bugøynes writing their master thesis about the community. Bugøynes, where the 250 inhabitants are of Finnish descent, was on TV news in January 2024 and I was asked for a comment about the situation there (Sætra, 2024).

Bugøynes first came into national focus in 1987 when they put in an advertisement in a leading Oslo newspaper with the headline: "Will someone welcome us?" The ad drew wide attention. It led to an intervention in the Norwegian parliament. Journalists from abroad, like the Paris-based Le Monde, took interest in the community. A radio journalist from Canada came for a visit. We translated and included the advertisement in a book that I, together with a group of Norwegian and Canadian colleagues, published in 1988 (Apostle et al., 1988). It follows *in verbatim* below:

> *"Is there a place in Norway that will welcome an increase in population about 300 people?*
>
> *We ask as citizens of the fishing community Bugøynes in eastern Finnmark who now are fed up. The last few years have been a constant struggle to maintain the settlement. The reason is a fisheries policy that failed. Among other things, it led to the bankruptcy of the fish plant – out cornerstone firm – in 1987.*
>
> *In the two years since then no one has been able to get the plant started again. This is because of bureaucratic clutter and lack of will*

> *among bureaucrats and politicians. (In fact, they are still arguing about who owns the plant.).*
>
> *Now we feel it is time to put everything behind us and start again somewhere else. We want to avoid becoming burned out and worn out in our struggle for existence for no purpose. We want to use our strength in a community where we can work for a future for ourselves and our children.*
>
> *We want to move together as a group – solidarity of the people of Bugøynes is strong! The adult part of the population has a mixed professional background. With our competence and go-ahead spirit, we have much to give. We would be bringing fifty children.*
>
> *We are interested in moving south of Trøndelag. Even if there are difficulties in providing jobs there too, we will not let that scare us. We can help in creating new jobs.*
>
> *Correspondence should be sent to "Action Bugøynes, 9935, Bugøynes."*

The advertisement was a cry for help, an act of desperation, but also expressed their collective spirit. People wanted to remain as a community, move and settle together if they had to leave. This is not the place for the long story of what led to it. We describe it in our book. A trigger was the bankruptcy of the fish plant which happened at a time when the cod fishery was in deep crisis. I wrote about cod crisis in another book on ISER Press (Jentoft, 1993). What is more relevant here, however, is what happened since and how Bugøynes looks like today.

New optimism

The outcome turned more positive than anyone could have predicted. The community did not turn into the ghost town. People stayed on. The cod crisis ended, and fishers were lucky to find an alternative resource in the red king (Kamchatka) crab, which soon developed into a booming fishery. The crab resulted from a Russian experiment in the 1960s of importing the crab from the eastern part of the country and implanting it in their

western waters. The stock grew and started to wander westwards. With its location, Bugøynes was the first Norwegian community to encounter the crab and local fishers were quick to take advantage of it.

For Bugøynes there was new hope. With the lucrative crab fishery, optimism replaced pessimism, and with a positive outlook, people started to diversify the economic base. The fish plant struggled to survive, but things were eventually sorted out. With extraordinary entrepreneurial spirit, people established new small-scale enterprises, in aquaculture, in service industries, but especially in the hospitality industry. The business register now counts thirty-four firms, which is impressive given the number of inhabitants.

The Finnish cultural heritage became a development asset as it gives an extra dimension to the Bugøynes narrative. The accommodation, the boat rides, the nature, the food, the hikes; other communities have as well. With its special heritage and the fact that most people still speak Finnish, the Bugøynes story has cultural and economic value. Today, Bugøynes attracts tourists from around the world, including Finland, even in the darkest winter months when the weather is less than accommodating. In the TV program, a couple from Australia expressed great enthusiasm about their stay. They had searched for something entirely different from what they were used to from home and found it in Bugøynes.

Visitors from far away are curious not only about what they will see but also about what they will learn. How are people living under such extreme climatic conditions? How is it even possible to live so far north? What do they do for a living? The answer is as sociological as anything else. Tourists come to a functioning and authentic small-scale fisheries community. They arrive in a local community where friendly and welcoming inhabitants are busy with living normal lives. They do other things than just servicing tourists. They run a thriving small-scale fishery. If a tourist is wondering what that is all about, they can just go down to the wharf, watch boats coming in and see their catch unloaded, and then talk to those who work there. They can also go out with a fisher who understands the significance of the visitors for the community. They are more than happy to bring you

on a fishing trip.

A better self

Bugøynes cannot compete with other destinations in terms of museums, monuments, beautiful parks, lush vegetation, and warm weather. Still, a visitor will be fascinated by its contrast to other, more familiar and famous tourist destinations. But more importantly, Bugøynes has a cultural experience to offer, a seascape and vibrant small-scale fishery, and they serve delicious crab and other marine "slow food" items. (see chapter 10). You learn something and leave the community a bit wiser – and happier - than when you arrived.

Bugøynes has lessons for the social scientist interested in community development, job-creation and diversification. For Bugøynes, and for any other small-scale fisheries community that tries to broaden the economic base, the point is not to be something else. The solution is to be a better and a more explicit self. Every small-scale fisheries community has a story to tell.

Therefore, it is possible to diversify in a way that does not bring a small-scale fisheries community out of balance but creates a more solid foundation for its sustainability. This, however, requires the idea of how old and new industries can fit and support each other. It needs a plan for what the community wants and doesn't want to become.

25

Anything Blue

As per the Eagles, "there is a new kid in town." "There's talk on the street, it sounds so familiar." Is it the same kid we know from before? If he is new, we should get to know him. If we know him already, we should not be fooled if he has shifted his name. The name should not make much difference, but it often does. We are easily duped, especially if we like it more than before. Is this what FAO's new "blue transformation" concept is all about? It sounds familiar.

We have for the last ten years or so been talking about Blue Economy and Blue Growth, and before that the Blue Revolution. This language has changed our ideas about what the ocean can provide. Yet, at the SSF Summit in 2024 (see chapter 4), I did not hear anyone talking about them as something that would bring positive change to small-scale fisheries. No one seemed to believe that they would help to realize what the SSF Guidelines aim to create. Quite the contrary, I only heard criticism.

Also, for fisheries social scientists, the gut reaction has been that of a skepticism. Our institutional role is to be the devil's advocate. These 'blue' concepts have triggered a growing critical research literature. At the face of it, the concepts are neutral, derived of moral content. The ocean was always 'blue', even if it may sometimes be grey or black. Our economies thrived on marine resources. Since ancient times, fish was part of our economy and diet. Why this new language? Who is this new kid in town

who FAO calls "Blue Transformation"? (FAO, 2022).

Blue language

The research literature suggests that so far, the Blue Economy/Growth does not work in the interest of small-scale fisheries people and their communities. If that is also what the new Blue Transformation concept means, they should explore what it involves. These 'blue' concepts are not only meant to describe a reality but also to create the imagery of a more positive future. In this way, they contain a moral message. They are laden with social values that should be carefully examined. They may just be political euphemisms but nevertheless laden with power.

Social change produces both winners and losers. As the less powerful among stakeholders in the Blue Economy, small-scale fisheries people are likely to be in the latter camp. The new blue language is that of powerful interests. It is not the language of small-scale fisheries people. For them, the issue at stake is how these concepts are defined and implemented. Language is power and the political struggle that small-scale fisheries are part of is also about language.

As I listened to speakers at 2024 SSF Summit, I wondered what motivated their critical and passionate voices about the Blue Economy. Now, I am curious about how they view the Blue Transformation concept. That, I think, depends on how it embraces the SSF Guidelines.

Blue future

I have never met a small-scale fisher who believes that everything should remain the same. Neither have I met a fisheries social scientist – or any scientist for that matter – who rejects change in any form or shape and who cannot imagine that things could and should be different than they are. But I have often heard policy makers or industry actors criticize them for it. How can anyone be against the ambition of reducing world poverty and improving nutrition security? Social scientists have often been accused of

luddism and romanticizing the past, of turning against the tide or being anti-modernists. Such criticism is not neutral characterization of what they say and stand for. Criticism is usually part of an agenda. It is typically interest-based. Name-calling is political rhetoric intended to disarm and mislead, and a way of rejecting uncomfortable knowledge. The truth is not always welcome.

Some years ago, I gave a keynote about a proposed new quota system at the annual meeting of Norwegian Rawfish Association. I commented on a newly released report on how to reform it, especially about its idea to reinforce the ITQ system. After I was done, a representative of large-scale boat owners asked if I could imagine the Norwegian fisheries industry without the proposed quota system. The question aimed to take me down. I should have kept my tongue behind my teeth but retorted: This is a contrafactual question. How would Norway have looked like today if Hitler had won the war? It would be pure speculation and require a book like C.J. Sansom's Dominion' (2012).

Urgency

I was not arguing against the need for a quota system, as this person suggested I was. Some order in the fishery is in everyone's interest and quotas is one way of securing it. Small-scale fisheries people want to protect their freedoms, which they must have to be effective. They want to avoid the Tragedy of the Commons just as much as anyone else. I was just arguing for a quota-system more supportive of the small-scale fisheries. After my talk, fishers in the audience came to me to express their support.

The current quota system has made large-scale fisheries operators wealthy and given them the name "quota barons" (Grytås, 2014). They are as protective of their interests as small-scale fishers are of theirs. Language is powerful if one can fill it with words that appeal to values that no one would reject. When the large-scale fishing representatives argue that the quota-system should remain as it is, they talk about 'stable working conditions.' In Norway, the aquaculture industry has adopted the same language. Now,

the Blue Transformation concept has enriched their dictionary. Small-scale fisheries people have no choice but using it as part of their own agenda. They want stable working conditions also, but not status quo. They want a different but reliable quota system that works for them.

Fisheries social scientists are not *a priori* against transformative change – they study change. The issue for them is *what kind* of change and what it leads to. What exactly is the new blue language about? What change is it supposed to produce? In which direction does it take us – left or right, or straight forward? Is the idea to slow down or turn around? Who wins and who loses from these changes? These are questions that are begging for answers.

Which route to take is a difficult choice because it involves dilemmas and sacrifice, which are inherently ethical and political. One should not expect of small-scale fisheries people, like those who gathered in Rome at the 2024 SSF Summit, to be silent just because powerful stakeholders, including the FAO, are wrapping these choices in new language. Neither should social scientists stay out of it. Their role is to unwrap language; to examine its content and identify whose interests it serves. Social scientists are into the business of enriching our language so that we see other aspects of the phenomenon, as we have done in the TBTI book on 'Blue Justice' (Jentoft et al., 2022) and in Arias Schreiber et al. (2022).

If small-scale fisheries people risk being hurt in the blue future, we must prepare for the pitfalls that lie ahead. Profits should not be the only driver, as it does not guarantee that we end up where we want to be. Action is urgent, but we should be thinking slow, as Bent Flyvbjerg argues in his recent book (2023).

Many of the problems facing small-scale fisheries communities, like environmental degradation, overfishing, and climate change, need urgent responses but also thoughtful planning. Small-scale fisheries people have already experienced some of these and other problems on the way to where they are now. They provide lessons for how to move ahead, and it is for all of us to understand what they are, because they do not speak for themselves. Natural scientists are promoting the "ocean literacy" concept, which is now

gaining traction globally (McKinley et al., 2022). In TBTI generally, and in this book specifically, we need "small-scale fisheries literacy" in order to learn what their challenges are about the Blue Transition. Hence the title "Reading small-scale fisheries.

Blue Revolution

The Blue Transformation has a forerunner in the Blue Revolution that was in vogue in the 1980s. The Blue Revolution grew out of the Green Revolution inspired by the plant scientist Norman Borlaug who received the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. Both revolutions aimed at transforming the food system. The green revolution was coined by Indian scholars, whereas the blue version was predominantly about aquaculture, which saw a massive growth of fish production at a global scale, particularly in Asia.

Like the Blue Revolution, the Blue Transformation intends to satisfy the need of the growing world population, eradicate hunger and poverty in a situation where capture fisheries have reached their maturation point. There are now hardly any underfished stocks left. According to the 2024 FAO SOFIA report (State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture), the growth potential is within aquaculture. This is also the primary focus of the Blue Transformation. The expectation is that the growth of fish farming will compensate the decline of capture fisheries (FAO, 2024 [b]).

> *"World production of aquatic animals is projected to reach 205 million tonnes in 2032, 111 million tonnes from aquaculture and 94 million tonnes from capture fisheries, increasing respectively by 17 percent and 3 percent. Aquaculture will account for 54 percent of the total production of aquatic animals and 60 percent of total aquatic food for human consumption, estimated at 184 million tonnes or 90 percent of total production." (FAO, 2024 [b], p. XXVII)*

Although the Blue Revolution has been successful as aquatic food producer, it is has also brought into focus a range of environmental concerns, such

as water pollution, habitat destruction, destruction of mangrove forests, introduction of alien species, disease outbreaks, negative effect on wild fish stocks. For these and other reasons, such as "ocean and coastal grabbing" and displacement of small-scale fisheries, the Blue Revolution has met widespread opposition (The Economist, 2003). If the Blue Transformation is largely an extension of the same policy and practice albeit with a new label, critical questions will be raised again.

Will the Blue Transformation repeat or correct the ecological and socio-economic impacts of the Blue Revolution? It must mean more than production volume growth. With its "Good Aquaculture Practices" as promoted in the Roadmap (FAO, 2022) may have learned from the mistakes of the Blue Revolution, but has the aquaculture industry done it? Do they even care? Who will control what they do? At the end of the day, it is not FAO nor the government authorities, but the industry that is running the show. In Norway, it is questionable whether the government controls the aquaculture industry, or if it is the other way around. Here, the industry is so powerful that they can block any major policy reform that goes against their interest.

FAO's aquaculture growth estimation by 2030 projects a substantial expansion within a short timeline. A radical transformation of the aquaculture is not likely. There is little time for 'slow thinking.' FAO's Blue Transformation roadmap has multiple qualifications as to what the process must entail to avoid negative outcomes, for instance pertaining to governance and existing tenure rights. The process must facilitate equitable access to resources and services and minimize ecological footprints. The roadmap also has a concern for capture fishers and fish-workers, and a focus on gender relations throughout the value chains, reminiscent of the SSF Guidelines.

Thus, FAO's perspective is broader than the Blue Revolution, which is not mentioned in SOFIA 2024. The Blue Transformation agenda intersects with the SSF Guidelines, whose implementation may be hampered by a market-driven, corporate, large-scale aquaculture development. With IYAFA (International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture) in 2022,

small-scale capture fisheries and aquaculture may not involve the same conflict. Instead, opportunities exist for healthy synergies if they have matching scales and think of them as two integrated sub-sectors and livelihoods.

Social researchers should follow how the Blue Transformation and the SSF Guidelines interconnect in practice, also from an interactive governance perspective. Corporate aquaculture is a juggernaut that small-scale fisheries already find hard to match, and with the FAO's growth forecast, the pressure is likely to persist. Small-scale aquaculture, on the other hand, may be a different story, although it also needs integrated and interactive governance approaches that include small-scale capture fisheries as an equal partner.

Blue research

When the Blue Revolution was still the new term, together with two colleagues (Conner Bailey and Peter Sinclair) I edited a book of case studies from around the world on the social dimension of aquaculture as an emerging industry. In the introduction we listed six research questions that we believed were central (Bailey et al., 1996). I still think, also in the context of the Blue Transformation, that they should guide our current research. Therefore, I quote them here in the full:

1. "Under which conditions does aquaculture become a significant form of production? In particular, what social, institutional, technological and environmental factors appear conducive to its establishment?
2. Are there noticeable environmental impacts associated with the introduction of aquaculture? Does the type of technology (i.e. low level of inputs, stocking, etc.) make a difference?
3. How is production organized? What can we say about property ownership, labor utilization and work patterns, and the social relation of production?
4. How does state policy affect aquaculture? How is aquaculture

promoted, retarded or controlled as a consequence of public policy?
5. What conflicts arise as a consequence of the emergence of aquaculture? Are there conflicts over scare resources (e.g. water access rights or problems of pollution)? Are there disputes between capital and labor?
6. What can we say about the social impacts of aquaculture development? For example, who benefits and who loses?" (page vii)

The answers to these questions should be of interest to any observer of the Blue Transformation program. Again, criticism does not need to be directed at aquaculture per se, but at the kind of aquaculture that is being promoted. Quantity of farmed fish is not the only important issue for a growing world population. There are also concerns regarding quality that has implication for the environment, for human health and for other sectors. There are matters regarding organizational structure and distribution. It is not only about food security but also food 'sovereignty', which is not the same. To have a steady food supply does not mean that you are in control of it.

As mentioned in chapters in the book, aquaculture is space-consuming and may invade areas traditionally occupied and used by small-scale fisheries people or the public. One chapter discusses how aquaculture leaves a visual impression that many find negative. The higher density of installations, the more intense the opposition against them. In many countries, like my own, small-scale fishers are at the barricades, especially when aquaculture encroach wild fish spawning areas and fishing grounds. In Norway, salmon aquaculture is controlled by the wealthiest people in the country, some of them living abroad where the tax system is friendlier.

Blue power

Transformation is not marginal, gradual and stepwise change, or additive, more-of-the-same kind of change. It means radical change, holistic change, regime change, system change, paradigm change, so-called 'sea change,' possibly revolutionary change. Transformation is about profound and

notable change. Change is often slow and adaptive. No one has seen Darwin's evolution unfold in real time. But small steps can lead to big leaps by adding up to something that is transformational.

The timeline for Blue Transformation is short. The concept is a vision that is global in reach. The implementation of big ideas, which the Blue Transformation is, must lead into big and small projects, which require the will, the resources, and the power to carry them through in ways that are environmentally and socially sound. FAO has moral and intellectual authority but not the resources or the power. Those rest with member states and the fisheries and aquaculture industries. I anticipate that it will be much easier to convince them to implement Blue Transformation than the SSF Guidelines, if not for other reasons than the economic promises. Aquaculture provides opportunities for lucrative investment for corporate actors. Small-scale fisheries actors on the other hand are left witnessing how their environment is changing without their input and control.

The Blue Transformation is not starting from scratch. The way I see it, it is more about jumping on the bandwagon that the Blue Revolution set in motion. In many countries, the vision of the Blue Transformation will find fertile ground. In the case of Norway, salmon aquaculture has long been a formidable growth industry; in essence a powerhouse. The new blue vision gives a welcomed boost to the fringed reputation of the existing aquaculture industry and the government's controversial plan of further expansion, which even small-scale fisheries municipalities support. Municipalities are thinking that if aquaculture happens at the expense of small-scale fisheries, so be it. It is hard to resist the allure of tax and sponsor money that aquaculture brings in. It is easy to understand when looking at how the aquaculture industry has transformed their communities, while small-scale fisheries have dwindled: both sectors could have achieved a positive development if governed as one system, but in Norway at least, it was never in the cards. In the Blue Transformation, it is essential that it is.

VI

Small-scale Fisheries Matter



Recife, Brazil. 2017 © Ratana Chuenpagdee

26

Fisheries Development as Freedom

Since capture fisheries rely on common pool, renewable natural resources, development efforts can be counterproductive: What is gained in the short run may eventually get lost in the long run. Development projects-based growth, intended to eradicate poverty, may exceed the limits of nature and destroy the capacity of the fish stock to replenish. When seeking to eradicate poverty, there is a risk of aggravating it. Fisheries development is therefore a balancing act. Since we cannot always be sure where the exact natural limits to growth are, and when we are about to transgress them, cautiousness is important. If not, the possibility of ending up worse is real. Sometimes, one step forward is to two steps back. This risk is rationale for the "precautionary principle" in The Convention on Biological Diversity.

Perceptions of freedom

A reader may find the essay title familiar. I have just added "fisheries" to the title of Amartya Sen's famous book.[38] He is the 1998 Nobel prize winner in economics and a philosopher whose research on famine, poverty and social justice is groundbreaking. To my knowledge, fisheries are not among

[38] This is a short version of my chapter "Fisheries Development as Freedom" in Chuenpagdee (2011).

his subjects. Still, he has important things to say to fisheries researchers, managers and policy makers. His argument that "freedoms are not only the primary ends of development, they are also among its principal means" (Sen 1999, p. 10), should be as relevant to fisheries as to other sectors.

However, people engaged in fisheries management may have problems with such a statement. Indeed, rather than being part of its solution, the common perception is that freedom is at the root of overfishing and the subsequent poverty problem. They have other sources of inspiration than Amartya Sen. They often refer to Garrett Hardin (1969) who coined the term "The Tragedy of the Commons". He says:

> *"Therein is the tragedy. Each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit – in a world that is limited. 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. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all" (p. 162/3).*

Hardin and Sen are both talking about overlapping issues, but while the former wants less freedom, the latter wants more of it. For Sen, freedom is not a problem, as in Hardin's case, but a necessary condition and the primary aim of development. Are they talking about different things or could it be that both are right?

Garrett Hardin's perspective

Hardin argues that resources held in common and with no restriction on access and use will inevitably be devastated. Self-centred, rational harvesters would bring on their own misery; they are both culprit and victim. The root cause is the freedom that they enjoy in the commons. Consequently, less freedom, more resources, less poverty, more well-being. Governments would therefore do people a service by taking their freedom away. One step back would eventually bring two steps forward. Painful in the beginning but healthy over time.

Hardin was not the first to identify commons problem. Fisheries economists insist that Scott Gordon deserves the honor. Their primary reference is his seminal article from 1954. In Scandinavia we would even claim that Jens Warming should get the credit, but he wrote in Danish and is therefore not so well known.[39] But let us stick to Hardin, as he is the one who talks explicitly about poverty and freedom.

Hardin's own source of inspiration was not Gordon or Warming (although he is using very similar illustrations to those of Warming) but William Foster Lloyd. In a lecture series at Oxford University in 1833, Foster Lloyd explained poverty by using an analogy between a pastoral commons and the English labour market and between a calf and a human child. In his narrative the calf is equipped with "*a set of teeth and the ability to graze*" and the child with "*a pair of hands competent to work*" (see Lloyd, in Hardin & Baden, 1977, p. 11). In both instances, unlimited access to the commons – whether the pasture or the labour market – would inevitably be disastrous. Hardin added other resource commons to those of Foster Lloyd, including fisheries, but his prime reference was overpopulation and Malthus.

The sort of solutions that we envisage would also depend on our initial image of the problem, what Hans-Georg Gadamer (1989) called prejudgments (which should not be confused with the word prejudice). Hardin phrased his argument by means of an ancient Greek theatrical plot. His main argument in that famous paper is that the tragedy of the commons and commoners belongs to the kind of problems that do not have a technical or a scientific solution. Instead, he argues that solutions depend on "*our values and ideas of morality.*" Thus, poverty qualifies to what Rittel and Webber (1973) called "wicked problems." Poverty is also their prime example. For them, defining the problem is the problem, partly because there are no right and wrong solutions, only good and bad ones, which are always negotiable.

Kenneth Boulding (1977) and Bonnie McCay (1995) have argued that if

[39] Håkan Eggert at University of Gothenburg has translated to English Warming's 1931 article on the Danish eel fishery (see Eggert, 2009).

Hardin had defined the problem as a 'comedy' rather than as a tragedy, he would have prescribed a different remedy. But for poor small-scale fishers the classical 'romance' would have been even more appropriate, as that plot is about the struggle between good (like a loving young couple) and evil (like a fierce dragon) where in the end the good prevails. The romance plot is recognizable in the writings of Karl Marx (see White, 1975).

The romance is a stratagem in the small-scale fisheries discourse. Here, the focus is on the conflict between small-scale, artisanal fisheries existing in harmony with nature and in a struggle with large-scale, industrial fishing vessels invading their fishing grounds, thus limiting whatever freedom of access they enjoyed in the fishery commons in the first place. Thus, the idea of small-scale fishers as both the villain and the victim, as in the Hardin narrative, would be misleading: Victim yes, but villain no.

Images such as that of Hardin's "The tragedy of the commons" can be hazardous, as Elinor Ostrom (1980) pointed out. Simplified images tend to incite simplistic solutions that may do more harm than good. Her advice is that we should look closely into the actual situation on the ground before we initiate new policies. There is no single formula to poverty eradication in small-scale fisheries. If it were, there would be no need for the SSF Guidelines, which have a nuanced idea of what it would take to create progress in small-scale fisheries. The hundred paragraphs suggest that there is no quick fix. They talk more like Sen than Hardin.

Small-scale fishers are not always the poorest of the poor. They live a rewarding (albeit an often insecure) life and livelihood free from domination. Freedom is one of the qualities that make small-scale fisheries an attractive occupation. But it is also a social activity. Small-scale fishing is typically rooted in kinship, community, and culture. You fish with family members; with relatives or friends you grew up with and who live in the community you all call home.

Removing people from this industry to ease pressure on the resource and for economic efficiency may therefore have consequences that are detrimental to people and their community, as well as the culture that underpins them both. They may see it as a violation of human rights rather

than a way to escape Hardin's tragic destiny. Therefore, it is not surprising when well-intended regulatory measures do not receive local enthusiasm. People are reluctant to abandon what they have, do, and know. Who would not?

Providing alternative or supplementary livelihood options to fishing would be a good strategy to reduce poverty, build more robust communities, and to ease the pressure on the resource base. It would also increase people's freedom of choice, if leaving fishing is a viable option that does not require leaving behind other things that they hold dear. Limiting freedom in the commons can only be one part of the solution to development. This would also be in line with the SSF Guidelines, which in article 6.8 says:

> *"States and other stakeholders should support already existing, or the development of complementary and alternative income generating opportunities – in addition to earnings from fisheries-related activities – for small-scale fishing communities, as required and in support of sustainable resource utilization and livelihood diversification.*

Amartya Sen's perspective

Amartya Sen is not into lofty metaphors. Instead, he starts from concrete experience, like famine in his native Bengal in the 1940s. He observes that it was not lack of food per se that made people starve, but their access to it. There was enough food for people in the region but instead of feeding the needy, it went to serve the British war-machine. Sen argues that famine must therefore be analyzed as a relationship between people and the food resource, and that is as much a social arrangement and a justice issue as a natural phenomenon. This also applies to poverty.

For Sen, freedom is about people leading the lives they have reason to value. Freedom of choice is essential but for people to enjoy it, they must have opportunities and resources, as well as capabilities like those that come from education and good health. They depend on certain "instrumental freedoms", such as political, legal and economic entitlements, be they civil

rights, property rights, access to credit or political rights.

Regarding the latter, Sen says: *"Political rights, including freedom of expression and discussion, are not only pivotal in inducing social responses to economic needs, they are also central to the conceptualization of economic needs themselves"* (Sen, 1999, p.1 54). He also includes access to credit and commodity markets among the entitlements. Surely, as any fisheries development agent would know, they represent external obstacles, which, if they were removed, would enhance the small-scale fishers' empowerment and room of maneuver. Hence, freedom is necessary for investment and growth.

Sen's concept of instrumental freedoms includes the notion of "protective security." This is also what the philosopher Isaiah Berlin (1969) was alluding to with his distinction between "freedom *to*" and "freedom *from.*" People need both. One cannot expect them to take on risk if they do not feel secure doing so. Poverty, as Sen discusses, is often also accompanied by exposure to all sorts of risks, including violence and corruption. Add then drug trafficking and the violence that tend to follow it, as is the case on the Atlantic coast in Nicaragua where I have worked. Here, they also experience natural disasters like hurricanes that regularly hit the area. Then you have all the ingredients that tend to make life *"solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short"*, as Thomas Hobbes formulated it in his famous Leviathan (1651).

Sen dedicates his book "The Idea of Justice" to philosopher John Rawls. Rawls is known for his "A Theory of Justice" (1971) in which the "Difference Principle" appears: *"Social and economic inequalities should be arranged so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged persons."* In a commentary in the *Samudra* magazine of The International Collective in Support of Fish-workers, I applied this principle to property rights in fisheries: *"Unless it can be demonstrated, not only in theory but also in practice and not only on average but for the specific situations in which fishing people find themselves, that a particular institutional arrangement will increase the welfare of those most in need, there are legitimate reasons to criticize it"* (Jentoft, 2007, p. 32). The SSF Guidelines' focus on poverty eradication as a way of implementation this principle. Small-scale fisheries people should not be the collateral victim

of fisheries management, as they often are.

Sen argues that freedom is as much about process as institutional design. Democracy works within just institutions but is itself a governing process with distinct qualities. To function, democracy needs formal institutions, like rights to speak and the opportunity "*to which different voices from diverse sections of the people can actually be heard*" (Sen, 2009, p. xii). This is an argument for participation and empowerment, as the SSF Guidelines also stress.

Hardin vs. Sen

Hardin and Sen think differently about institutions. Hardin emphasizes the regulatory and restrictive role of institutions. They are rules that should limit reckless freedom. The other perspective, in accordance with what Sen is arguing, highlights the enabling role of institutions: they set you free to act responsibly. If designed well, institutions allow small-scale fishing people to do things that would otherwise be out of reach. At their best, cooperatives do this.

Both in their regulating and enabling role, institutions are essential element of the "fisheries development-as-freedom" concept advanced in this essay. They build capacity and capability, which are central concepts in Sen's thinking (see next chapter). Conservation may require restrictive measures but is also dependent on the collective entitlements and capabilities that permit people to take responsibility for their own destinies and escape the tragedy that Hardin predicts.

Ostrom and others argue that conservation is not necessarily a government affair only, but something that needs the active participation of fishers themselves and their local communities. But people cannot be expected to address their individual and collective challenges if they do not have in their possession and control what it takes to do so, like those instrumental freedoms that Sen is mentioning.

Hardin's "The Tragedy of the Commons" is not among Sen's references, but I do not believe that Hardin and Sen would necessarily disagree, should

they have compared notes, at least not on all accounts. They share the view of the role of social values in environmental management (see Sen, 1999, p. 269). I assume that Sen would also agree with Hardin that *"injustice is preferable to total ruin"* but I do not think that he would necessarily agree that injustice is an acceptable cost, necessary to avoid the tragedy of the commons. Rather, Sen would argue the opposite.

On certain accounts the two complement each other. Hardin regards poverty as an outcome of overexploitation, whereas Sen has something to teach us about what causes it. Still, their perceptions of freedom are not identical, and these differences have important policy implications. There are various ways of dealing with overfishing and poverty, and some are more sensitive to the needs of small-scale fishers and local communities than others. Community is not a concept that Sen, as an economist, dwells much with. Neither does Hardin as a biologist. If limiting people's freedom in the fishery commons is the only remedy, more hardship for fishing people who are already vulnerable is guaranteed, Fishing people are not like furniture that can easily be moved around. They have rights as human beings; they are supposed to be able to enjoy freedom of choice, which includes the freedom to make mistakes, as Mahatma Ghandi said.

Governments have the power to do more harm than individuals can do, especially those who fish on a small-scale. They can ruin communities more easily than individuals can. Fishing communities are not as resilient as we often think. If appropriately designed, interactive governance systems have the checks and balances to prevent such outcomes. They need to be adaptive yet cautious and be able to learn from experience.

Hardin can hardly be held responsible for what his followers have done when putting his ideas into policy and practice. Despite the "lifeboat ethics" that he is advocating, his argument is much more nuanced than one is often led to believe when reading those who criticize him. There is, however, reason to believe, that as far as small-scale fishers are concerned, policies, practices, and therefore outcomes, would have been very different from what they are today if it had been Sen's, rather than Hardin's idea of freedom that was at their roots.

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Building Capability

My first publications on fisheries co-management appeared in Marine Policy in 1985. It grew out of my interest in producer co-operatives (see chapter 23). Like government agencies and business firms, co-operatives are formal organizations, but their design and *modus operandi* are different as they combine business and social goals, practicing participatory democracy of members as part of their decision-making.

Co-operatives' aims are to secure the well-being of their members, in many instances also their communities, while running a sustainable business operation. These aims are meant to support each other. Neglecting one reduces the chances of securing the other. However, in the research literature, there are examples of fisheries co-operatives also taking on resource management functions by regulating fishing efforts in the marine commons.

These examples contradict the notion that a fishery not managed by an external agent like the state is not managed at all. The state may have a role to play but does not have to be the prime agent. If organized, empowered, and trained for the purpose in a co-operative, fishers themselves could take on the same task – or at least some of it, in an arrangement which from the 1980's onward, is labelled "co-management."

Therefore, the SSF Guidelines have reason to support co-management, as they do in paragraphs 5.15 and 5.18, and co-ops in paragraphs 7.4 and

10.6. Co-operatives are often initiated locally by fishers and community organizers. Sometimes they are planted there by state authorities, as in Eastern Europe during the communist era, often with a poor result. Paragraph 7.4 nevertheless gives the state and development actors a role in "*supporting and setting up co-operatives, professional organizations of the small-scale fisheries sector and other organizational structures, as well as marketing mechanisms, e.g. auctions, as appropriate*." State support may be needed for a co-op to take off, but there is a risk that it may quell local enthusiasm and the feeling of member ownership and loyalty. Co-operatives run the risk of becoming an instrument that is not meant to empower but to control small-scale fisheries people.

However, co-ops and co-management fare better with the state and civil society organizations (CSOs) on their side, provided that the integrity of the co-operative model, as expressed in the original Rochdale principles, is kept intact.[40] If not, co-operatives and co-management exist in name only. Therefore, the division of labor between the internal and external actors requires attention.

Co-ops are supposed to be autonomous, democratic organizations, governed from the inside, not from the outside. The same applies to co-management. They are meant to be collective instruments of their members and communities, not of the state or CSOs. If states and CSOs have supporting roles, then what is their contribution? How should they be involved?

Capacity building

The SSF Guidelines are anchored in the human rights principles and standards. These must be secured, also by legislation, which states have the power and competency to establish. Co-management of co-operatives would be more effective if based on secure tenure rights and otherwise have the backing of law which provides them with formal authority to

[40] Rochdale Principles - Wikipedia

make decisions that become obligatory for members and non-members alike. Their right to intervene, exclude, and regulate must come from somewhere. Some co-management arrangements failed because they lacked legal authority.

The SSF Guidelines mention in objective 1.1e. posit that empowerment requires legal support. frameworks. However, although necessary, it is hardly sufficient for co-operatives and co-management to succeed.

Paragraph 12.1. mentions capacity building of small-scale fishing communities to make it possible for them to participate in decision-making processes along the entire value chain. For this, legitimate, democratic, and representative structures, including of women, must be created. Paragraph 12.2 talk about development of programs that allow small-scale fisheries to benefit from market opportunities. 12.3 emphasizes local knowledge and skills and mentions the facilitation of knowledge transfer as a two-way learning process. Paragraph 12.4 reads:

> *"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. Attention should be given to decentralized and local government structures directly involved in governance and development processes together with small-scale fishing communities, including the area of research."*

Capacity building and empowerment involve structural and institutional development. They also require education and knowledge sharing. Government agencies, CSOs and small-scale fisheries communities need to be better informed, not only about the existence of SSF Guidelines but also more specifically what the hundred paragraphs contain, mean, and would require when implemented.

Not all representatives that negotiated the SSF Guidelines in 2013-2014 had intimate knowledge of small-scale fisheries, not even in their own country. Neither were they familiar with the research literature which had

informed the zero draft that they were discussing. The key concepts in the SSF Guidelines often triggered questions and intense debate. Every sentence in the SSF Guidelines was negotiated, and some of them took a lot of time to agree on.

Finally, after COFI endorsed the SSF Guidelines, they are now what the world officially thinks of small-scale fisheries and what should happen to them. They define what constitutes progress for the millions of people who draw their often-meagre livelihood out of small-scale fisheries. That is indeed extraordinary, something that makes the SSF Guidelines a landmark achievement. That is also why we need to pay attention to their implementation. From their endorsement, concrete steps must be taken to make them become a reality for those they are meant to benefit.

The SSF Guidelines talk in general terms of what would be required of institutions at the state and community level. Each paragraph must be concretized for the context into which they are supposed to take effect. For that, government agencies and CSOs must not only be informed but also educated. States and CSO actors must be able to answer questions that local people may have about the specifics of the SSF Guidelines. They must be able to explain the merits of fisheries co-operatives and co-management and how to bring them from idea to action. How do we establish, design, and operate a cooperative in our community? How do we organize, select our leaders, and educate our members? What are the pitfalls? What can go wrong? Likewise, how do we arrange a functioning co-management system here? How do we develop and enforce rules? Exactly, what rules do we need and how should we enforce them?

These questions must find answers in their settings. They involve difficult choices that if not handled well, may destroy the harmony that exists in a local community. They are technical questions where assistance from external partners would be helpful. Academics can assist, but they do not have all the answers and must themselves be educated though action research. They are not what a Plan of Action can answer.[41] Architects and

[41] https://www.fao.org/fishery/collection/npoa-ssf-process/en

carpenters have different skills. Planners make plans. They themselves do not implement them in communities. They require collective decisions from members of the community.

Capabilities

The capacity to govern the marine commons and a small-scale fisheries community requires institutional support, including legal mandates and rights. It also necessitates financial and natural resources. There must be fish to catch, and available technology for catching and processing. Moreover, fishers must have access to them. Rules for how to operate must also be in place. Without these conditions, they cannot function. This was Amartya Sen's argument (1983) about the catastrophic famine in Indian Bengal in the 1940's. It was not about lack of food caused by the Tragedy of the Commons that caused it. It was lack of entitlement. People were denied admission.

The SSF Guidelines talk about education, learning, qualifications, and know-how. Sen has a different word than capacity – "capability." You must know how to use your resources, entitlements, and mandate. A fisher does nothing with the knife in his hand, unless he knows how to use it. The same applies to all the fishing equipment in his possession, including his boat. It is not enough to have access to it. He must know how to steer it. A fisher can inherit the boat and the capacity that comes with it. But must acquire the know-how and the skill to steer the boast and how to fish.

Co-management requires that the managers know how to manage, what it is that they are managing, and why management is necessary to avoid overfishing, habitat destruction, and ultimately the Tragedy of the Commons. This is not about capacity but capability. Collective action requires both.

Amartya Sen pioneered the "capability approach" in several publications, also co-authored with philosopher Martha Nussbaum. To have freedom and social justice, individually and as a group, people must know how to make full use of their opportunities to lead their life and be what they prefer.

Capability is not a concept in the SSF Guidelines. Perhaps it should have been there because they give content to it.

Obviously, small-scale fisheries need negative freedoms – the freedom from losing things they need to exist, like the entitlements that Sen and the SSF Guidelines are discussing. Fishing people have high stakes in the marine commons. In the Blue Economy, they can no longer take for granted that they will possess these entitlements unless the state is guarantor. To truly serve their interest, the Blue Economy should not take away but help enhance their capacities and capabilities. Implementing the SSF Guidelines would be both a protective and enabling measure.

For this, people must have positive freedoms – the freedom to make something out of their resources and entitlements, like building their communities and the organizations that enable cooperation and collective action. That is why capability is an absolute, and not a relative element, central to their well-being and social justice (see Nussbaum & Sen, 1993). You can exist with less resources if they are sufficient to sustain your communities and well-being.

Literacy is an essential capability. Language is shared, not distributed. Either you know or do not know how to read and write. Participatory democracy, as formally instituted for the functioning of co-operatives and co-management, works better if people have basic literacy. Otherwise, all background information for decision-making must be vocal and memorized. A written charter, goals, plans, budgets, rules and regulations make co-operatives and co-management into a formal, language dependent enterprise.

The SSF Guidelines say: "*States should promote investment in human resource development such as health, education, literacy, digital inclusion and other skills of a technical nature that generate added value to the fisheries resources as well as awareness raising*." (para 6.2). Schols and health clinics must be built where those are missing. Otherwise, people in small-scale fisheries communities would be incapable of taking advantage of their entitlements and opportunities. Normally, these conditions exist outside the auspices of a fisheries management agency. However, they are part of a

comprehensive, indeed 'holistic' approach to well-being and social justice. The SSF Guidelines spell it out in paragraph 6.1:

> *"All parties should consider integrated, ecosystem and holistic approaches to small-scale fisheries management and development that take the complexity of livelihoods into account. Due attention to social and economic development is needed to ensure that small-scale fishing communities are empowered and can enjoy their human rights."*

I have seen fisheries co-operatives taking upon themselves to establish such institutions, as part of building personal and community capability. The SSF Guidelines do not only target fisheries management agencies. They also talk to government and CSOs in a broad sense. Fisheries resource management is a capability, but not the only one that must function. The community must work as well.

In his "The Idea of Justice" (2009), Sen argues that capability is not only an individual trait but also one of communities. Communities can do things that individuals cannot do alone because they require collective action and cooperation. Inhabitants must therefore find ways to work together. With such a basic capability they can create things, like co-operatives, and take on social responsibilities such as building their communities and co-managing their resource commons. They would then be capable of turning management into an interactive governance system and practice, limiting the need for hierarchical government intervention.

Small-scale fisheries a text

Academics can create awareness of the entitlement issue and provide arguments for why it is essential to the project that Sen explains in his "Development as Freedom" (2001). They can also provide lessons about what small-scale fisheries are, why they need to exist, and why their freedoms require institutions that help to secure their human rights and social justice. Academics can also provide insights into why communities

provide the basic capabilities that people must possess to stay healthy and self-sufficient, and indeed free.

As the title "Reading Small-scale fisheries" of this book suggests, small-scale fisheries are like a text one must learn to read. For doing so, we need concepts to penetrate their conditions and functionings. Academics can help to create both the language and the literacy that the analysis of small-scale fisheries governance and development requires. Sharp analytical concepts help you to discover and appreciate nuances that matter. Small-scale fisheries require 'deep reading.'

Much of these concepts already exist in our disciplines or are in the process of being developed there. But like language in general, academic language does not become a capability before you have learned to use it. How would we otherwise know what to do and what to avoid in small-scale fisheries? How would people be able to communicate their concerns, preferences, and intentions? Without analytical language skills, how would we understand how small-scale fisheries are complex? Implementing the SSF cannot take place without the capabilities that language provides when internalizing it.

For Amartya Sen, the "development as freedom" project is about both capacities as entitlements provide and the capabilities that education enables. Small-scale fisheries people are not free unless they have what it takes to make to make entitlements a functioning benefit. They must also have the competencies to manage their fishery and develop their community. This is a knowledge issue, and therefore also about having a language and the ability to convert it into what Jürgen Habermas (1984) called "communicative action."

Because language is social to the core, it builds mutual capability. People can plan and do something together because they can talk with each other. Participatory democracy cannot function without it. Neither can co-operatives and co-management. In TBTI's most recent book, "Governance literacy" (2026), it is argued that Interactive Governance, as Kooiman (2003) first presented it, requires sophisticated language skills, that has an eye for complexity, causality, intentionality, and nuance. It has been a decades long

project to develop and refine a conceptual framework for that purpose. I summarized it in in book 1 and 2 of this trilogy.

28

Justice as Solidarity

Small-scale fisheries people are under pressure from external forces, including policy processes that threaten their individual and collective well-being, as well as the viability of their communities. In crisis ridden small-scale fisheries communities, young people seek alternative careers to fishing, but such opportunities may be non-existent at home. Therefore, they move away, leaving behind a community with an uncertain future. Small-scale fisheries die when their communities are abandoned.

This is a narrative that the SSF Guidelines challenge. Whether they succeed in turning the negative trends for small-scale fisheries around, depends on the response at national and local levels. Is there a willingness to initiate the needed social reforms? Are there incentives that make investment in small-scale fisheries profitable? The SSF Guidelines are voluntary, and relevant actors may choose to remain passive. Alternatively, they may feel morally obliged to follow up what they agreed to when endorsing the Guidelines. Implementation may be perceived as an act of solidarity with people in need of support.

The SSF Guidelines do not call for solidarity. However, the concept appears only once, in paragraph 12: *"Social responsibility: promoting community solidarity and collective and corporate responsibility and the fostering of an environment that promotes collaboration among stakeholders should be encouraged."* Here, solidarity is professed as a quality among small-scale

fisheries actors in the value chain and the community. Solidarity is a means to promote cohesion, integration, and cooperation. This is much like sociologist Emile Durkheim talked about solidarity in his classic treatise on "The Division of Labor in Society" (1893/1964).

Forms of solidarity

Durkheim distinguished between what he termed "mechanical" and "organic" solidarity. The former category refers to solidarity among self-sufficient actors who are and see themselves as equals and colleagues. Mechanical solidarity emerges from resemblance, like among small-scale fishers as first link in the value chain. "Organic solidarity" on the other hand, results from the interdependency that exists between different actors, like those who form the value chain, such as fishers, vendors, processors and traders. Their work tasks are complementary.

For Durkheim, solidarity has functional merits. Solidarity is the 'glue' that binds people together and to society. Without social solidarity in the two meanings, societies would disintegrate. Value-chain actors would be 'risk averse', hesitant to invest. They would feel compelled to protect themselves. Cleary, without social solidarity, small-scale fisheries communities would be more vulnerable to internal fissures and external pressures. They would suffer from normative confusion, from *anomia*, which Durkheim called it. Without social norms like solidarity, IUU fishing would be hard to avoid. Fishers will have little concern for each other and the environment. Social solidarity makes communities more dynamic, resilient, and robust, and should be central to building sustainable small-scale fisheries communities.

Mixed motives

We often have both selfish and altruistic motives for doing what we do. Then we do not have to choose between them. This is Adam Smith's story in his "Wealth of Nations" (1776): when egoistically pursuing a narrow

profit motive, society also benefits. In other words, when acting selfishly, individuals are also working for the common good. This, according to Smith, is the beauty of free market capitalism. For whatever moral ambivalence you may feel because of your self-promotion, Smith clears your conscience. You are a hero, not a villain. Economic Nobel prize winner Milton Friedman (1970) was even more adamant. He argued that you have a moral duty and social responsibility to maximize private profit. Then, he says, you are not wasting shareholder money. Corporate responsibility is limited to shareholders. Social responsibility is not in Friedman's vocabulary like it is in guiding principle no.12 in the SSF Guidelines.; "*[P]romoting community solidarity and collective and corporate responsibility and the fostering of an environment that promotes collaboration among stakeholders should be encouraged*."

Sometimes, however, motives are indeed in conflict: What you do for your private benefit may have negative consequences for society or the group you are part of. Selfish, profit- or what economists call "rent-seeking - actors are making it worse for others. In football, you must pass the ball instead of keeping it to yourself. 'Primadonnas' never make a good team. A responsible citizen has the welfare of other people in mind. With his "Tragedy of the Commons," Garrett Hardin (1968) tells a different story than that of Adam Smith. For Hardin, profit-driven decisions are negative for the group when you sum them up. Collective interests must therefore have priority. It is also of private interest.

In Durkheim's language, if fishers do not have mechanical solidarity, the "tragedy" will eventually hit them. 'The chicken will come home to roost.' They will learn the hard way when discovering that disregarding the common interest is not in their private interest. Then, an external authority like the state must step in, not as an act of solidarity but as one of necessity. In the next instance, the state would place the responsibility onto the fishers by imposing rules and regulations that curb their individual freedoms – which Hardin perceives as the solution to the problem, contrary to Smith and Friedman.

Solidarity as a gift

For Durkheim, solidarity is a social relationship, not a personal virtue. At a minimum, it involves a relationship between two parties; one who extends solidarity and another receiving it. Notably, the two parties can take both roles in a symmetric, mutual relationship, where solidarity is extended to each other. Solidarity is not the support itself but the sentiment behind it. Support is a way of showing it.

Solidarity can work as a *quid pro quo*: I show solidarity with you if you do the same with me. Then it turns into a transaction and "gift relationship", which Marcel Mauss, Durkheim's son in law, talked about (see chapter 35 in book 2 of the trilogy (Jentoft, 2023). Gifting creates the expectation of a return gift. It does not matter if it was part of your plan. Your friend will feel it. In this sense, solidarity may induce loyalty or praise from others, or even material and political support whether that was the intention of not. A nice gesture triggers a grateful response, which serves my interest. Thus, solidarity may mask egocentric motives. Consequently, relational asymmetries between the parties may prevail.

Supporting the SSF Guidelines

At COFI, FAO member states endorsed the SSF Guidelines without a vote. However, dissent had been expressed during prior Technical consultations in 2014 and 2015. Judging from how state delegates argued, it was evident that the views differed in fundamental ways. Given the diversity of small-scale fisheries globally, this was not surprising. Agreeing on which concepts to use proved to be difficult. State delegates did not have to justify why they had reservations. They were never asked to explain their position by other state delegates, who were left to speculate about their concerns.

Some delegates seemed primarily concerned about what the instrument would mean for them. If they could anticipate resistance at home, they would be less supportive. The Norwegian position was different. Active in the deliberations, our delegation of which I was a member, did not argue

from a national, self-centered perspective. Members of the delegation were not selected by the Ministry of Fisheries but by NORAD, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. We, therefore, did not think about what the SSF Guidelines would do for our domestic fisheries. Instead, we followed the foreword: *"It is emphasized that these Guidelines are voluntary, global in scope and with a focus on the needs of developing countries"* (p. ix).

Thus, the Norwegian delegation argued from the premise that the SSF Guidelines are not for us but for the countries we generally support with fisheries development aid. Norway and some other western countries are now helping to fund the implementation of the SSF Guidelines but without bringing them home. Since deemed irrelevant for our own fishing industry, the support might be seen as generous altruism, an act of solidarity devoid of self-interest. But how can countries like Norway support the universal ethical governance principles of the Guidelines abroad which they will not applying at home? However, with Durkheim's terminology, Norway's may have the "latent function" as band-aid for ethical dilemmas more than being a genuine expression of solidarity.

Norway is among the world's major exporters of fish products. It is in our interest to maintain good trade relations with other countries, also in the Global South, which receives a substantial portion of our fish. We stand up for good principles and human rights around the world. No other country gives as much as 1.03 percent of GDP in foreign aid. During the Technical consultations, we more often than other delegates found ourselves on the side of civil society representatives. How should we make sense of this?

Structural reforms

In principle, solidarity does not involve the expectation of a return gift, but the reality may be different. Return-gifting is a decision for the receiver to make. A gift-relationship has moral underpinnings that rest on both parties. It is good morality and practice not 'to bite the hand that feeds you.' Instead, you are expected to show gratitude. When foreign aid yields political support or trade in return, it is not solidarity but a 'gift' that

assumes the character of a transaction.

When domestically, criticism is raised against Norwegian foreign aid, the generosity aspect is toned down while self-interest is emphasized. Fisheries assistance has long been an essential component of Norwegian foreign aid. As gift relations usually do, they help to keep a good relation between giver and receiver, between donor and recipient, because it is unconditioned. It does not demand structural reform, like those advocated by the SSF Guidelines. Structural and systemic injustices that exist within the fisheries sector remain untouched. Ethical dilemmas go unchallenged.

The SSF Guidelines have a more ambitious perspective as they do emphasize the need for structural reforms. *"Equity and equality: promoting justice and fair treatment – both legally and in practice – of all people and peoples, including equal rights to the enjoyment of all human rights."* (p. 2). Social justice is not secured through generous donations. It requires systemic intervention.

Therefore, the Guidelines scarcely mention solidarity but talk extensively about rights and institutional reforms. What concepts like solidarity and justice have in common are that they play into people's moral conscience. If we do not go along with the notions of solidarity and justice, our ethics are questioned.

If small-scale fisheries people have justice, they would be less in need of solidarity. Then they have capacity to fend for themselves. If they have solidarity, they may still need justice. Solidarity may be turned into structural reforms which lead to justice. For the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. social justice is the more appropriate concept than solidarity. Solidarity is a legitimate gesture, but it should not be allowed to stand in the way of justice.

29

People Matter!

When the German-born British economist E.F. Schumacher published his now classical essay collection "Small is Beautiful" in 1973, I was intrigued. I was just out of business school in Oslo and had started on my sociology studies at University of Tromsø, where small-business management was 'my thing.' Schumacher' book gave philosophical depth to my interest by offering an alternative perspective to the "Big is beautiful" paradigm that the business school was propagating. Schumacher turned scale on its head. His idea of the modern business firm was at the other end of the spectrum of that John Kenneth Galbraith talked about in his 1967 best seller "The New Industrial State."

In contrast to Schumacher, Galbraith's focus was the multi-national corporate 'goliaths. I learned from comparing the two. They are not only different in scale. Neither is power the only thing that makes them stand apart. They are business models with unique *modus of operandi.*

I was fascinated by the poetry in the main title of Schumacher's book. What can possibly be "beautiful" about "small"? As a young business school graduate, I was even more intrigued by the prosaic sub-title: "A study of economics as if people mattered." Even if the business account is drawn up from the perspective of owners/shareholders, they are not the only people that matter in a firm. Workers, customers, and suppliers are people too. They should not only be counted as a production factor equivalent to

financial input. Schumacher says: The social responsibility is "t*o provide members of the company of opportunities for satisfaction and development through their participation in the working community."* (p. 235). Who would disagree with that?

When re-reading Schumacher's book fifty years after, I am struck by how his reasoning resonates with the current thinking about small-scale fisheries, as for instance expressed in the SSF Guidelines. *"An attitude to life which seeks fulfilment in the single-minded pursuit of wealth, in short materialism – does not fit into this world, because it contains within itself no limiting principles, while the environment in which it is placed is strictly limited*." (p. 23). Moreover, Schumacher writes: *"Small-scale operations, no matter how numerous, are always less likely to be harmful to the natural environment than large-scale ones simply because their individual force is small in relation to the recuperative forces of nature."* (p. 29). It is for this reason that small-scale fisheries are part of the solution to environmental crises and the social tragedies that follow in the wake of large-scale industrial fisheries operations. For Schumacher, small is beautiful for economic, environmental, and human reasons. This has also been TBTI's perspective.

Conventional paradigm

Schumacher captures his view of standard economics in the few quotes below:

> "*What sort of meaning (does) the method of economics actually produces?* [T]he answer to this question cannot be in doubt: something is uneconomic when it fails to earn an adequate profit in terms of money. The method of economics does not, and cannot, produce any other meaning." (p. 35)
>
> "Society, or a group or an individual within society, may decide to hang on to an activity or asset *for non-economic reason* – social,

> aesthetic, moral, or political – but this does in no way alter its "un-economic" character. The judgement of economics, in other words, is an extremely *fragmentary* judgement; out of the large number of aspects which in real life have to be seen and judged together before a decision can be taken, economic supplies only one – whether a thing yields a money profit *to those who undertake it or not."* (p. 35)
>
> "Even within the compass of the economic calculus, the judgements …are based on a definition of costs which excludes all "free goods", that is to say, the entire God-given environment, except for those parts that have been privately appropriated. This means that an activity can be economic although it plays hell with the environment." (p. 35-6).
>
> "Modern man does not experience himself as a part of nature but as an outside force destined to dominate and conquer it. He even talks of a battle with nature, forgetting that, if he won the battle, he would find himself on the losing side." (p. 11).

Schumacher is a predecessor of the "triple bottom line"– people, planet, and profit. "The three P's" was first coined by John Elkington in 1994. In capitalism, firms must generate enough income to cover their costs, including remunerating the owners who have taken the risk of investing in it. But for Schumacher, firms also have responsibility for the people that they employ and serve. They should not be treated as machines. Thus, Schumacher talks about "job creation" rather than labor. Quoting Ghandi, Schumacher posits, "*the poor of the world cannot be helped by mass production, only by production by the masses*." (p. 128). That fits well with the message of the SSF Guidelines where poverty eradication is a central goal. They do not see small-scale fisheries people as a cost to be minimized.

There is a spiritual message in Schumacher's book. One of the chapters is about Buddhism. Here, work is not "a necessary evil." Labor is a

contribution by real people who have more to offer than their physical strength and more at stake than their salary. They should not only be considered as a cost that the employer should "reduce to a minimum." (p. 45). They are a rich source that the firm, regardless of their scale, should invest in. When they grow, the firm grows in a process that is mutual.

According to Schumacher, for the Buddhist economist, consumption is only one of several means to well-being. *"The aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption."* (p. 48). This is the "sufficiency principle" in small-scale fisheries governance that Chuenpagdee and Juntarashote (2011) talk about. Enough is good enough. Maximization of consumption is both irrational and unethical in a world with limited resources and vulnerable ecosystems. Schumacher insists that one must distinguish capital from income. Fishing cannot follow a mining approach. If harvesting continues until the fish is no more a resource, the "Tragedy of the Commons" as Garrett Hardin (1968) described it, is a fact.

Growing big

In my business school, a firm's success was measured by its growth. Staying small was not an option. You grow or you die. Market competition would otherwise drive you out. This assessment was not different from that of Marx, who talked about capitalism in much similar ways to how Darwin described the laws of nature. Darwin's 'natural selection' and 'the survival of the fittest' were also underpinning Marx's thinking.

Why then take an interest in the small-scale business enterprise if they are doomed? The question was raised to me by my fellow sociology students who knew more about Marx than about business economics and had not read Schumacher. I needed to justify my focus, which was not that difficult, at least to myself. At the aggregate level, the relative proportion of small-scale firms remains remarkably stable. In Norway, firms with 20 employees or less have for decades remained about 85 percent of the total number of firms in all industries. Considering the doomsday scenario, this is astonishing. Small firms are the bedrock of the Norwegian industry. How

come?

Small firms are resilient as a sector but not necessarily as a unit. Still, small firms make industries thrive. They bring about innovation and change. Nevertheless, small firms go bankrupt and disappear at a high rate. But they also pop up in great numbers. Closures are compensated for by new establishments. A small business firm is not 'meant' to exist forever but often lasts for a short period of time before disappearing. It frequently specializes in a small market niche with limited persistence. The market is typically limited to a geographical region, community, or product. The firm retires with the founder, especially if there is no son or daughter to take over.

Success factors

The resilience of the small-scale sector depends as much on the entrance of new firms as on their exit. Each exit/entrance might bring new opportunities. Both are the nature of their business. In support of the SSF Guidelines, small-scale business research should therefore have a strong focus on entrepreneurship; on those who build a new firm and on those who see a future in small-scale fisheries. We should especially seek out the young, those who do not refrain from the risk of building new fisheries enterprises that may look different and have exciting goals. What do they do to build their enterprise, what do they aim to achieve, what do they bring into the project, and what do they have to sacrifice? Are they driven by an ego-centered, narrow profit motive, the need to secure employment for themselves, or do they feel by feel responsibility to build something for their family and community? One does not have to exclude the other. Entrepreneurship is often both private and social in the making and always in the consequence. Entrepreneurs may stand out from the crowd but are people too.

These were questions for my master thesis at University of Tromsø in 1976. Here, I told the story of 20 small-scale firms in different industries, some of them within fisheries. How did they originate, develop and mature?

These are researchable questions. Since I did not hear about small firms in business school, I was curious to know how small firms looked from the inside, how they were owned, organized and managed. Were they just smaller versions of a big firm or in the process of becoming so?

Quantitative vs. qualitative

Big and small are quantitative categories, which can be measured and captured in a table. Beauty, on the other hand, is a qualitative feature, something to admire and imitate, like a piece of art. I wanted to hear the story; how the firm came into existence, how obstacles had been handled in the process, what they learned and how they adapted. I was also interested in how the owner/leader prepared for and handled generational succession.

Small firms are important both for society as well as individually in their localities and for the people they employ. They serve local markets and create jobs. In fisheries they have a key role in the value chain. This is why they are relevant for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Schumacher argues that small firms provide an avenue to a more humane and sustainable future. People are not just cogs in machinery. Neither should they, as Immanuel Kant categorically argued, be treated as a means to a goal that is not their own. They have more than use value. They also have experiences to learn from and a voice worth listening to. Through participation people can have a say in the definition of the firm's goal. Then, the firm becomes a teamwork.

The ancient Greeks believed that meaningful democracy can only occur in small-scale settings, in the city state. James Madison, one of the main architects of the American Constitution, proved them wrong. Nonetheless, democracy works better when people have more intimate relations to begin with and can learn from each other face to face and thus build trust. With increasing scale, social relations become less affective. Management then must be formal. Madison's solution was indirect representation, though elected representatives. Then people have little more to offer than their vote. Large scale creates distance between representatives and those who

they represent.

Thus, scale is a condition for genuine participation in decision-making and the knowledge consequently generated, as Carole Pateman (1975) argued. Participation builds the individual as well as the organization. It provides an opportunity to gain learning from experience. Excellence is not only an issue of large scale. In small firms, members can see their own role in the whole production process more easily. A job at the conveyer belt provides less oversight and few opportunities for learning on the job. If your only job is minor cutting and picking bones out of the fillet as it passes your station, you get bored rather than inspired by what you do. Work wears you out. Monotony makes you ill.

Schumacher observed that large scale comes with a paradox; "*when we look closely, we can notice that as soon as great size has been created there is often a strenuous attempt to attain smallness within bigness*." (p. 53). In Scandinavia, Big firms are often broken up into smaller units to make them more efficient and dynamic. They are conglomerations rather than hierarchies. The economies of scale work both ways. Something important is lost when firms grow. Informality and self-initiative are replaced by a layered organization, formal communication and leadership. In 1971, with a group of business school students I visited Volvo's factory in Gothenburg, which left a lasting impression on me. Car production is as large-scale as large can be. At that time, however, Volvo experimented with self-managed, semi-autonomous groups in the 1970s was an effort to obtain both the economies of large and small scale. This was a time when Schumacher's ideas were in vogue.

Technology

Schumacher was proponent of what he called "intermediate technology." This is simple, affordable, and sustainable tools within the reach of poor people in developing nations or rural areas. Their empowerment and economic wellbeing do not require high-cost industrial technology. Instead, they need to foster self-reliance and minimize environmental

impact. The means of production must allow them to use local materials and manpower for strengthening subsistence techniques.

Small-scale fisheries fit Schumacher's concept. They are known for their simple, low-cost technology. Vessels, gear and processing technology is developed through local experimentation and adaptation to the environment. In Nicaraguan communities where I spent time, boats were made of dug-out logs and driven by sail. Fish is either carried fresh or sun dried to nearby markets. The Norwegian cod is exported to foreign markets, dried in the open air through a technique that is at least a thousand years old.

For Schumacher, technology can be both small-scale and modern. Small fishing vessels can be made more effective and safer, with state-of-the-art communication technology. Fishing technology can help to ease the physical burden of those onboard. Small-scale fisheries communities often need better infrastructure, like harbors and ice machines. Development planning should be focused on removing the bottlenecks that hinder the functioning of a smoother value chain. Local people know what these are. They do not need external experts or development agencies to tell them. But they would benefit from the support of government or CSOs to help implement them. Paragraph 7.5 states:

> *"All parties should avoid post-harvest losses and waste and seek ways to create value addition, building also on existing traditional and local cost-efficient technologies, local innovations and culturally appropriate technology transfers. Environmentally sustainable practices within an ecosystem approach should be promoted, deterring, for example, waste of inputs (water, fuelwood, etc.) in small-scale fish handling and processing."*

Beautiful or beastly?

We should not compare small and large firms as if they are the "beauty and the beast," as per the classic fairy tale. Small firms are often subcontractors and suppliers of large firms. For instance, Volvo relies on thousands of

them spread over of them. Together the form a complex value-chain with a global reach Small and large firms typically operate in different markets or serve different niches within them. Small firms are often a 'mom and pop' businesses. They specialize in custom-made products rather than in mass production on industrial scale. Frozen or canned fish can also be industrialized and mass-produced in big companies. Fresh or dried fish producers are usually small-scale.

Big and small firms may co-exist, but if they occupy the same niche, the situation is complex. Then, conflict is likely to occur, where the power of large actors is used to drive out the small operator. With Maarten Bavinck (2011), I have argued for the subsidiarity principle for small-scale fisheries governance: when there is a choice between large and small-scale, small is preferable. What can possibly be produced by small operators should be reserved for them. The SSF Guiltiness are into the same idea when they talk about "preferential treatment" of small-scale fisheries among the guiding principles (FAO 2015, page 2).

Subsidiarity and preferential treatment are moral principles markets do not recognize. It must be agreed upon and installed as a governance mechanism. The SSF Guidelines is a voluntary instrument which must be converted into policy and law at the level of the nation state.

30

As Good Neighbors

When positioning for the future, a small-scale fisheries business owner has a choice to make. Should he expand his enterprise to exploit the economics of scale and to increase his market share, or should he realize the "Small is beautiful" vision of E.F. Schumacher that I discussed in chapter 29. In the mind of the business entrepreneur, conditions may not be conducive to any of the two options. The world of fisheries is not in a steady state. Risk is endemic. He must still do something that later might cause regret.

The entrepreneur cannot be sure he has what it takes to succeed. Entrepreneurship is a capacity and capability issue (see chapter 27). It requires resources, markets, space, workforce, funding, rights, permissions, experience, education, skills, and guts. Since choosing one path rather than the other is rarely made in ideal circumstances and always with incomplete information, success is not guaranteed. Things can go wrong. The decision to proceed is a leap of faith, and the entrepreneur can only hope for the best.

Living the dream

Small entrepreneurs are bound to learn the hard way. Many of them whom I have interviewed over the years told me that if they had known in advance what they were getting themselves into, they would have chosen differently.

But when the decision was taken, there was no way back. They had to stay on the course and make the best out of it. Hard work, long hours, personal sacrifice, and a good amount of luck helped them succeed.

Small business management takes place under circumstances that are often unaccommodating. At the outset, the small entrepreneur was living their dream, until they experienced that it was an uphill battle, without knowing if they would ever reach the top. The initial romanticism of making it on your own was soon replaced by the harshness of reality. In hindsight, they were not convinced that 'small is beautiful.'

No wonder, therefore, that small-scale business actors tend to be risk averse. If they can manage with what they have, they see no urgent reason to risk losing it. They have more than their business at stake. It could be that they learned that E.F. Schumacher was right after all. People can live with loss of property value or market shares but not losing their ability to secure their household income, their way of life and freedom. Instead, they find ways of coping with smallness. They might discover opportunities that they were initially not aware of. Perhaps, along the way, things changed in their favor.

Social safety net

Small-scale fisheries actors are rarely alone but part of a social network. They may be short on financial capital but rich in social capital. They have people who they can reach out to and consult. Small-scale fisheries form clusters of people with "functional flexibility" (Apostle et al., 1998, p. 241); growing up in a fisheries community gives people different skills. They do not need to bring in a technical expert to fix their boat engine. They do it themselves or get help from someone capable nearby. This is what I do when my outboard motor needs service. I bring it to a neighbor who knows what to do. Likewise, when a young person wants to become a fisher and invest in a boat, he seeks advice in his family or in the community. Then his enterprise becomes a collective as much as an individual endeavor. The community does not want to see him fail.

To understand how small-scale fisheries thrive, one must focus not just on the individual entrepreneur but also on how communities function as a social network. Small-scale fisheries communities are not an aggregate of isolated, self-sufficient parts, but one of social relations of interaction and interdependence. In the ideal and most constructive scenario, they are like fraternities, which is the literal meaning of the 'Prud' homies and the 'cofradias' in France and Spain.

Small-scale fisheries are multifunctional dynamic social systems into which governance interventions may or may not play a constructive role. To make small-scale fisheries self-sustainable, one must build stronger communities that can function in a symbiotic relationship. They function because people do different things and can assist each other. However, their inter-dependencies may pose risk; the fall of one actor may bring down another. Still, interdependence can be turned into an asset, where the success of one creates positive opportunities for others, and makes growth exponential.

Flexible specialization

Schumacher is not the only scholar who identified the benefits of small-scale. In 1984, the two MIT professors Michael Piore and Charles Sabel published a book called "The Second Industrial Divide" that added thoughts to those of Schumacher. Like him, they became famous as much for their poetry as their prose. They coined the term "flexible specialization" as a contrast to the large-scale, automated production model they labeled "Fordism." We know both models from the fishing industry.

Piore and Sabel observed that technology largely determines the organization of production. Fordism refers to how Henry Ford mass-produced his cars along the conveyer belt. This is also the technology employed in a large-scale fish processing plant or a factory trawler. Here, the automation technology and product standardization dominate. Fish is filleted, cut, packed and frozen in a continuing operation. Profits are secured by steady, high quantity throughput.

In small-scale fisheries, fish is caught by selective gear, dried, salted, or consumed fresh in the family, community or sold in local markets. In fewer cases, small-scale fishery products are exported – as in the Norwegian cod-fisheries or the lobster fisheries in Nova Scotia, Canada where my colleagues and I did interviews for our book (Apostle et al., 1998).

Although the catch can shift hands via middlemen, there is often no processing between landing and consumption. The fish goes directly into the kettle or onto the grill. The catch may only take hours before it is on the dinner table. Frozen, mass-produced fish products can take months before it is at the consumers, after having crossed national borders and oceans. This is the fish we find in supermarkets. The "catch of the day" that restaurants offer in their menu is of a small boat, not a big trawler.

Piore and Sabel compare the rigidity of the Fordist model with the flexibility of small-scale production. Instead of going big and branching out, small producers are concentrating on what they are good at. They work in small batches, like in crafts and niche markets. Small-scale technology allows a quick adjustment to shifting opportunities and demands, whereas the Fordist model permits only a steady course. Large, Fordist companies are like supertankers; they take time to turn around, whereas the small flexible enterprise can turn quickly on the spot.

The two scholars do not talk about fisheries, but they could well have done so. The small fishing enterprise survives because it is mobile and can shift gear quickly when needed. They specialize in fisheries but not necessarily in particular species. The large freezing company are stuck with their Fordist production form. A factory fishing trawler is designed for groundfish trawling, not for anything else. It is also built for longer voyages. Fordism involves standardization; the technology of trawlers is largely the same. Small-scale fisheries technology, both vessels and gear, is more heterogenous and designed to function in their local environment.

Small-scale fishers adapt to seasonal variation and stay idle ashore when needed, like during stormy weather. For the factory trawler, the season and the weather are not an issue. The large-scale fish processor controls working conditions through vertical integration. Sometimes they comprise

the whole value-chain. Then, flexibility is less important. The onshore management determines when the vessel should land. The corporation focuses on profit but can also afford a loss in the fishing operation. In small-scale owner/operated fisheries, it is not the boat but the family that is the 'profit center.' It is not different from a peasant farmer, whose profit center is not the tractor. The small-scale fisher entrepreneur gains control by being flexible.

Cluster

As an ideal type, the Fordist corporation is self-contained. It needs no friends. It has internalized all functions. The small-scale fishing entrepreneur, on the other hand, is not alone. He needs partners and the closer they are, the easier information flows and transactions go. Together they are part of a technological and socio-economic cluster-system that has flexibility, security, and synergy built into it. In many instances, these systems in fisheries have a deep history, much deeper than Fordism has. For Piore and Sabel, flexible specialization of the unit of production is more effective when functioning within a homogenous and heterogenous cluster with spatial boundaries where a small unit can compensate for its weaknesses by establishing ties with others. They get their resilience through collaboration.

To create a well-functioning value chain, small-scale fisheries actors build horizontal and vertical partnerships that are more than just a trading relationship. It matters not just what they do but also who they are. They have several links, perhaps on a personal level; it is not 'just business." In clusters, relations are "un-tradable interdependencies" (Marangoni & Solari, 2006, p. 76). Here, partners stick with each other in good as well as bad times, like good friends do. They may even decide to establish a formal association to foster co-operation and collective action as an act of empowerment through solidarity. They may feel shared responsibility for each other and their community, which collaboration over time will reinforce. Together, they can realize projects that they cannot do alone.

Flexible specialization is a way to shield itself from uncertainty and vulnerability, but it is more effective when embedded in a group, like a joint venture. Labor can become a flexible, common source, like when skilled crew move between vessels from season to season. Fisheries knowledge and capability rest in the community and can be mobilized when needed, for instance in particular seasons and situations. Together, entrepreneurs can build infrastructure for their common benefit. They build trust to lower opportunism and transaction costs.

Thus, small-scale fisheries need cluster design and planning, instead of leaving it to the market. Flexibility requires autonomy and decentralization, but also coordination and collaboration, which markets do not always deliver because you are supposed to compete to stay vibrant. Planning requires intimate knowledge of the composition and functioning of the small-scale fisheries system in its regional and local context. That knowledge emerges from the experience of working in the area and with peers.

A small-scale fisher knows his fishing, but he also knows the system from his position in it. But his knowledge is hardly complete. Others have a different outlook on the functioning of the fishery, which may be equally relevant. To secure a holistic perspective and facilitate interactive learning, planning must have broad stakeholder representation and must work for all.

Piore and Sable posit that clusters are based on proximity, by members being located close to each other. Clusters are both a spatial arrangement and a social system, creating a condition for informal and frequent communication and collaboration. You save costs and may get inspiration when you can just walk over to your neighbor.

Proximity can expedite cooperation and stable exchange but can also be a source of dispute. Neighbors are not always on good terms. They may know each other too well to be willing to cooperate in good faith. Thus, clusters are vulnerable to conflict and evaporation, especially when self-centered opportunism takes over. Then, tacit agreements are broken, and informal codes of conduct are violated (Apostle et al., 1988, p. 243).

Proximity is a condition but does not automatically turn into a cluster. Clusters require mutual trust to exist.

Flexibility as freedom

'Untradable interdependence' can become a lock-in. It adds complexity to a situation where the exit option is complicated. Building clusters involves organization. They require social entrepreneurship and relational skills. They often need an external mediator, which is a role a CSO may play. Clusters are a means of building capacity that the SSF Guidelines say is essential for small-scale fisheries (see chapter 27).

For small-scale fisheries entrepreneurs in the fisheries value-chain, cluster formation makes flexible specialization an opportunity; as an entity you benefit from remaining small, as a group you achieve the advantage of large scale. To make the cluster an effective instrument for learning and resilience, members must have relational capabilities.

Clusters must have a conflict resolution mechanism, which an organization may bring. They must build both 'mechanical' and 'organic' solidarity, as members in a well-functioning community might be both similar and different. This is especially the case when clusters are designed to embrace the entire value-chain. Small-scale fishers are structurally comparable but in their relationship with vendors and processors they are dissimilar, yet interdependent.

Small-scale fisheries clusters are likely to function better if members are at equal scale, sharing the same problems and challenges, values and outlooks. Piore and Sabel posit that family and community links are conducive to cluster interaction and governance, and hence, to flexible specialization. Familiarity and solidarity take away some of the vulnerabilities and risks of specialization. You can seek help in case of need when, for instance, facing market change, technological disruption, resource crisis, and when government regulations affect your business. Since small-scale fisheries are inherently unstable, survival requires ability to adapt and change. For that, you need the flexibility specialization, which

clusters can provide if properly designed and supported. Individual actors need the protective and enabling institutional environment, but so do clusters.

Government policies and management systems must promote rather than kill flexibility. Economist James Wilson at University of Maine pointed out that quota systems tend to limit the ability to shift between target species. Fishers would, therefore, fish longer on a fish species than they would otherwise when they experience that their CPUE (Catch Per Unit Effort).

A species-specific quota system limits their fishing flexibility to shift to other species, which would be good for the resource, their business economy and food supply. Small-scale fishing is a specialized activity but can only be sustainable with in-built flexibility. Fishers know how to apply their unique skills broadly. They are typically multi-species harvesters. Consumers can also be taught to be more flexible in their fish consumption and food preparation patterns. From a nutritional perspective, there is nothing wrong with eating fish that is not shining white.

A Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) that locks fisher in or out of their traditional fishing areas to make space for other marine entrepreneurs, may have similar negative effect on fishers' flexibility. Small-scale fishers need to have the freedom to leave a fishing area in decline and go somewhere else where yields are better. If not, they would, as Wilson would predict, stay longer where they are allowed to fish than they otherwise would be inclined to do. If they cannot be geographically mobile, they cannot be sustainable.

Marangoni and Solari (2006) are largely in agreement with Piore and Sabel but have doubts about whether flexible specialization would become the dominant form of production in a post-Fordism future. They posit that "the relaxation of old *stabilising* institutions has tended to produce a verticalization process in clusters around radically transforming the form of these territorial organizations and eroding their pillars." One of their pillars they mention is communities. They speak primarily about Italy, but they are not far off with what happened elsewhere, also in fisheries. When pillars crumble, institutions erode. Notably, as Apostle et al. (1998)

say, it is *"not only the structural traits of firms and communities, for instance pertaining to scale, technology, and form or organization"* but *"the social and moral economy of this structure that generates a sustainable system..."* (p. 241)[42]

Power relations

Small-scale fisheries need to be protected from the intrusion of large-scale operators into their traditional space, something the MSP zoning is meant to do. According to the SSF Guidelines, zoning must legally secure the tenure-rights of small-scale fisheries communities and contain measures to ensure that rules are adhered to. In many countries, especially developing countries like in Nicaragua where I worked, the problem however, is not lack of legislation to protect small-scale fisheries communities from being encroached by large-scale fishing vessel but insufficient enforcement. Rules are just words on paper and boundaries on a map have little effect if no one is there to oversee that they are respected, and that is partly a funding issue. Not all countries can afford a well-functioning control force.

Large and small actors might form clusters that make their co-existence mutually beneficial. However, scale differentials also involve power relations that may work against their equitable collaboration. For the small-scale actor, the "untradable inter-dependencies" then become a vulnerability rather than an opportunity. For small-scale fisheries, power relations are usually not working in their favor, as the SSF Guidelines observe: *"Small-scale fishing communities also 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* (p. x)."

If limited to a business contract where self-interest dominates, their association exists when the small partner is useful for the large one. Clusters

[42] As a co-author of this book, it might be that I am quoting myself here. After 30 years, I have no exact memory of what among us seven co-authors wrote what. But this last section of the book was on Gene Barrett and me, and we were both inspired by Piore and Sabel's work.

may be more balanced if small-scale fisheries people are organized as a group and speak with one voice. Individually, actors have power if they can link up with partners inside or outside the cluster. Then, clusters make small look more 'beautiful,' but not if they work as straitjackets. Fisheries clusters are more 'beautiful' if untradable interdependencies are balanced, equitable, and mutually beneficial. But beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. Large-scale operators may have a positive idea of their power-relations while small-scale fisheries people may have a different idea of their interdependence.

Structural differences are emblematic in fisheries. Power-differentials are the rule rather than the exception. Equitable and balanced relationships that secure the freedoms and responsibilities of small-scale fisheries value-chain actors, would therefore be challenges that a cluster cannot easily deliver on. It is a 'wicked problem' that is not solved once and for all by institutional mechanisms. Institutions, like formal clusters, must be designed to last, like tenure rights are supposed to do. Clusters must be designed to foster ongoing interactions that make flexible specialization a real opportunity without squandering stability, security, and predictability.

VII

Writing Small-Scale Fisheries



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In Whose Interest

The SSF Guidelines urge states around the world to engage in issues confronting small-scale fisheries within their jurisdiction. The phrase "States should …" appears 74 times in the Guidelines and is as direct as diplomatic language goes for this kind of voluntary instrument. By endorsing the SSF Guidelines, states have accepted that indeed they 'should' but since they are not mandatory, states have the choice whether to act on them or not, and how. The Guidelines do not in a legal sense compel them to implement, but their own sense of moral responsibility may suggest that they indeed 'should.'

Now, more than ten years after FAO's COFI (Committee of Fisheries) adopted the Guidelines, only a limited number of states are holding their promises (see details in the book introduction). Disappointing as this may be, it is not surprising. Small-scale fisheries are in a very different situation globally. Some states need them more than others. Many states have the muscle of a well-functioning governance apparatus while others are short of governance capacities and capabilities. Some states may justly be called 'failed. Those are the states where small-scale fisheries need the SSF Guidelines most.

A neutral arbiter?

Governments around the world now have great expectations for the Blue Economy. They will, therefore, be facing some hard choices as the SSF Guidelines put some limits on what states can do to promote it. The state has many stakeholders in the coastal space to please. Implementing the SSF Guidelines would in many instances require radical policy and institutional reform. These are also where they will encounter the toughest resistance among stakeholders who, in their own interest, would like to see the Guidelines dead on arrival.

The state is not necessarily the most powerful stakeholder in the fisheries and coastal governance system. Its fisheries authority is only one player in a power game with multiple stakeholders, among them small-scale fisheries actors. As a stakeholder, one cannot take for granted that the state always represents the common good. In the real world, the state may function as Karl Marx observed. He took issue with the notion of the state as a neutral arbiter, ensuring that power-relations are balanced and that social justice is served. Rather, Marx saw the state as an instrument of the ruling class and therefore a major source of systemic injustice. Today, we may look at the modern state with greater nuance and ambivalence. Marx's statement would be too sweeping, also in a fisheries context. The state has several faces and roles.

Still, Marx's observation begs for an empirical examination. What roles does the state play in fisheries? Is it 'putting its money where its mouth is'? Whose side is the state on, in principle and in practice? Are small-scale fisheries benefactors or victims of state intervention? The SSF Guidelines are instituted to change state priorities and practices by giving small-scale fisheries a chance to thrive on their own terms, with the support of the state backed by the Guidelines.

Legal design

Just as fisheries actors are not always acting as the law prescribes, neither do the states. Small-scale fisheries people may lack support for litigation, as the SSF Guidelines suggest they may need to secure their rights. I was once a co-judge in a case where some Norwegian small-scale fishers sued the government because they felt discriminated against within the quota system. Their legal funding came from a CSO.

It would be hard to prove that our legal system is deliberately designed to disfavor of small-scale fisheries. How would we then explain the Rawfish Act of 1952, which I talked about in chapter 5 in book 1 (Jentoft, 2019)? The law authorized co-operative fisher sales organizations to determine minimum prices under which buyers could not go. It changed the balance of power in favor of small-scale fisheries. The 2013 decision to forbid vessels larger than 15 meter to fish inside fjords is another example. Both measures are in the spirit of the SSF Guidelines but were not created because of them.

Why states hesitate to introduce legal reforms that would tip the balance of power in the direction of small-scale fisheries is a question that should engage small-scale fisheries researchers. We should put Marx's assertion to empirical test. We should explore where in the governance system the bottleneck is, as it may not sit where we believe. The devil may hide in the administrative details, in the rules and their practical application, in the overall institutional designs, or in the underpinning images and paradigms that determine the reading of what small-scale fisheries are and how they function. Given the SSF Guidelines' strong focus of local communities, we should examine if they are given political attention.

State vs. government

The state is a sovereign, permanent political entity with a population living within its borders. It consists of a set of institutions defining its powers and enabling its functioning. In contrast to the state, the government is

temporary and less abstract. It is the composite organization currently operating on behalf of the state. With every new national election, a new government is put in place. Sometimes it means a shift in fisheries policy and mandate, but not necessarily of the governance system as such. A new government may have different ideas of which policy measures will secure the sustainability of small-scale fisheries but would not change the design of the governance system if it fits the new agenda.

For the technical consultations on the SSF Guidelines in 2013-14, the Norwegian state delegation was made up of government people and a couple academics of which I was one. From the deliberations, it was clear that some of the delegations had a stricter mandate than we had. We came with our experience and expertise and could argue as we saw appropriate. Some other delegations had to call back to their governments before they could consent with the wording of a particular paragraph.

If our delegation had committed to a language inconsistent with state interests and government policies, the government would have had a chance to intervene at COFI, which they do not. Norway's consent might be explained by the non-binding nature of SSF Guidelines. To determine whether the government is acting in the public interest when implementing the SSF Guidelines on behalf of the state, one must first be aware of what the public interest is.

From the state's perspective, it is relevant to consider not only the functioning and well-being of small-scale fisheries but also how it works in a larger social political context. One should not assume that everything that is in the interest of small-scale fisheries also is in public interest – and *vice versa*. Implementing the SSF Guidelines to the full may not be of national interest. A government may find that there is a contradiction between the public interest as it sees it and what the SSF Guidelines advocate. This is Iceland's position, which at COFI in 2014 stated that the Guidelines are not for them. They have made their economy dependent on a large-scale, industrial fishery, allowing an ITQ system to dominate.

Institutional reform

A government is a reluctant and reactive reformer which acts when it must. Like other stakeholders, it pursues its interests. Bureaucrats tend to side with the current order, which is largely of their own making. They want stability and predictability rather than sudden upheaval or constant revision. They have followed established procedures, and invested considerable effort into making it work. They would naturally be reluctant to demand change coming from outside unless there is some crisis that puts the current governance system out of balance.

In Norway, the administration stays on when, after an election and a new government replaces the old one. This is also how it works for the highest-level official in a ministry. Bureaucrats have power not only because of the position they hold but also because of their knowledge of how both the governing system and the system-to-be governed work. A politically appointed minister who comes and goes may be a newcomer to the sector under his or her responsibility. The 'making' of a new minister is the ministry's task.

In the summer of 2008, I attended the birthday party for my senior professor. Norway was then in a run-up for a parliamentary election. The media speculated whether a certain politician would become the next fisheries minister. She had been outspoken about small-scale fisheries and wanted to see radical policy change to secure community viability. She said that there should be "lights in the windows" instead of abandoned houses. In the birthday party was also a high-level civil servant in the ministry who I knew well. I wondered if the ministry was prepared and willing to implement the policies she was advocating. I asked him what they would do in the ministry if she was appointed, which indeed she was. "*Oh, I believe we shall get her under control,*" he said. And so, they did. No new radical governance change favoring small-scale fisheries communities was initiated. Things remained largely the same.

His answer suggests that when tracing the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, we must look beyond the policy level and inside the

bureaucracy. Whatever enthusiasm there was at the outset, when the SSF Guidelines reach the national level, it may be impaired. COFI's endorsement in June 2014 was a sweet moment. At the public administrative level, the SSF Guidelines may leave a different taste.

Is change possible?

For the government, modification trumps radical change. Adaptation is preferable to total overhaul. Reform is better than revolution. Change is therefore incremental.

If the government does not put its weight behind the SSF Guidelines, it is to be expected that they will be stalled or be slow and gradually implemented. They are, as stated in the preface, primarily aimed at the Global South. Bureaucrats in the Global North may in good conscience put the SSF Guidelines to rest.

However, it does not mean that the governing system is stuck, that no change along the lines of the SSF Guidelines is imaginable. Through the political process, the government may be compelled to act due to pressure from industry, civil society, media, and academia. The Norwegian fisheries governing system is the outcome of all these forces. It has undergone continual fine-tuning for many decades. The history of the fishery is also the history of Norway.

Together with my master student, I examined how the governance system of the Lofoten seasonal cod fishery developed during the 19th century (Jentoft & Kristoffersen, 1986). Many of the principles for Norwegian small-scale fisheries governance that were laid down Lofoten in 1897 are still embedded in today's governance system. They are also in alignment with those of the SSF Guidelines.

Historically, the Norwegian government has been on the side of small-scale fisheries. When the Norwegian Fisher Association was formed in 1927, it was largely on the initiative of the government, who wanted a representative partner it could consult. Since then, important legislation has been put in place to empower small-scale fisheries *vis avis* large-scale

fisheries. For this, fishers have responded with legitimacy and support. They have accepted regulatory interventions since they were routinely negotiated rather than imposed on them. In recent years, the Association has been challenged by large-scale fisheries representatives in way that threatens its survival. It remains to be seen whether the cooperative spirit will survive in the Blue Economy that the Norwegian government is now embracing. Conflicts accentuate as new industrial actors, such as big aquaculture, enter coastal space.

The implementation of the SSF Guidelines hinges on their legitimacy (see chapter 32). Even if it has been an underpinning governance quality in the Norwegian system in the past, the new government push for Blue Growth is meeting opposition from small-scale fisheries actors. The message is not sufficient to achieve legitimacy if the messenger does not enjoy trust. For a government that strives to be a neutral arbiter bent on making all stakeholders satisfied, that is a challenge.

Who is governor?

Expanding the representation of stakeholders in the Blue Economy governance system will bring new interests and concerns to the table. Distributional issues that were not there before will emerge. Small-scale fisheries people often have more urgent, legitimate and consequential concerns than most of the new stakeholders, but they typically have less power. Consequently, small-scale fisheries may end up being further marginalized, which is contrary to what the SSF Guidelines are meant to achieve.

My colleague Knut Mikalsen and I published an article in Marine Policy where we examined in more detail the complexity of stakeholder participation in fisheries management (Mikalsen & Jentoft, 2001). What we wrote there still holds. We asked how to secure more diverse participation without undermining the need for efficient decision-making. *"Inclusive institutions may well facilitate 'rational discourse' and deliberation among legitimate stakeholders, but they may prove unwieldy "tools" for solving pressing*

management problems." *"How do we make participants focus on the public interest when resource scarcity leaves everyone to fend for themselves?"* (p. 291)

To assert that fisheries and coastal governance and management are politics is to state the obvious. We argued that most stakeholders are accountable to a particular constituency. Tending to the interests of their constituents sometimes prevents representatives from expressing broader views. Short-term goals and special interests often take precedence over long-term planning when stocks are scarce. Representatives of small-scale fisheries are not immune to this inclination, especially when their concerns are urgent, for instance when their livelihoods are at stake. Then their concerns are also legitimate.

Stakeholder involvement is no guarantee that public interests are served. Neither can we be assured that CSO presence would make much difference. CSOs are stakeholders, and their agenda may be to serve the special interest. The public interest is not simply the sum of stakeholder interests. Power relations may systematically discriminate against minority interests. Deliberations may be distorted by 'semantic infiltration', the dominance of some holders who articulate their concerns more forcefully than others (see chapter 11).

Therefore, the public interest cannot be left to the stakeholders alone, even a small-scale fisheries group. Communities have a right to be represented when community interests are at stake. Same with government when broader concerns are involved, such as national security. This is why co-governance is meant to be a partnership arrangement between government and industry actors.

This, however, raises the questions phrased in old Latin adage of "who governs the governors?" (*"Quis custodiet ipsos custodes*?). The answer might be the state and the government representing it. But who governs the state? In democratic states, government institutions control each other in a system of checks and balances, which ultimately answers to the electorate. Such governing interactions are not shielded from perversion. To function, institutions must have autonomy and legitimacy, but they must also abide with some well-reasoned and shared governance meta-principles, like those

that are listed in the SSF Guidelines.

Meta-governance

Norway is what Germans call a "Rechtsstaat" – in Norwegian "rettsstat." Our governance system is constitutionally set up according to the law. The judiciary is formally independent from other branches of government, the legislative and executive branch, and can exercise its role without external interference from the executive branch or external non-government actors. This is the institutional innovation of the US constitution, intended as a check on governing power.

However, central to the so called "Nordic model" of governance, the Norwegian governance system also has a long tradition of organized stakeholder involvement. The Norwegian Fisher Association plays a role in governance like stakeholder organizations do in other industries, say in agriculture. To understand how fisheries are governed, one must learn how this model is set up and working. It makes small-scale fisheries people less vulnerable than in many other countries. They do not end up in poverty should they lose their job.[43]

In fisheries and coastal management, the governability challenge is complex. It is not just about economic efficiency and legality; it is also about social justice and legitimacy. In many countries, like in Norway and even more so in Iceland, fisheries are also a major factor in the national economy, as job creator and wealth generator. No wonder, therefore, that the state considers fisheries as too important to be left to fisheries stakeholders alone. Small-scale fisheries need governance to resolve their internal problems but their contribution to food security, poverty alleviation and community development requires a broader perspective, like that of the SSF Guidelines.

In Norway, this has led to the formation of a co-governance system where the government has both retained power to itself and delegated power to the Fisher Association and to fisher sales organizations. This arrangement

[43] The Nordic model and income equality: Myths, facts, and policy lessons | CEPR

has served both country and fishing industry well. In recent years, however, this system has started creaking at the seams.

As resource management has become more prevalent and fisher welfare has been pushed down the list, stakeholder conflicts have become a more prevalent and urgent governance issue (Holm, 1995). Fisher unity and solidarity have largely evaporated. Consequently, the Fisher Association's ability to lead and represent has become more cumbersome. This has also changed its identity. The welfare of fisheries communities and the coastal settlement structure are no longer part of its agenda. The social contract between the state and the industry that used to override the governance system, as Holm observes, has been diluted.

Thus, the public interest tends to fall between the chairs. The fate of small-scale fisheries communities is less of a concern for the Association whereas policy makers have not picked up the cane it has laid down. What the current management system does to local communities is nobody's concern and responsibility.

Friend or foe?

The SSF Guidelines are a global statement on which governance interventions are in the interest of both small-scale fisheries stakeholders and society as a whole. How to balance the two concerns was a central issue during the Technical Consultations. It is likely that the issue will continue to be discussed in the implementation process and beyond. The SSF Guidelines are not the end of the conversation even if it laid down some fundamental governance principles. What exactly the public interest is at national and local levels, and who should act on it in what way, will continue to engage government and small-scale fisheries stakeholders alike. With their voluntary status, the SSF Guidelines serve as a reference point when hard decisions are made when principles are contextualized, institutions are formed, and when daily governance decisions are made.

What the SSF Guidelines lack in legal status, they have in moral force. For the state to prove that it is a friend and not a foe of small-scale

fisheries, their implementation provides the measure. But they also specify the social responsibility that rests on small-scale fisheries actors and their representatives in the governance process. As they are fending for themselves, they must also recognize that their responsibilities extend beyond their fishery to securing the well-being of their local communities and beyond.

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In Whose Eyes?

Governance reforms must first go through a formal test; are they within the purview of the law? If not, must the law be changed to accommodate them? The implementation of the SSF Guidelines will undergo similar examinations. Governments would ask: does what the Guidelines propose, confirm or disagree with the current legal order? The Guidelines do not ask states to break the law or implement transformations unfitting to the context. They do, however, suggest that statutory revision may be part of their implementation.

Secondly, legal orders must undergo a legitimacy test: do they contradict the ethical principles like those of the SSF Guidelines? Do reforms make moral and practical sense for the people affected by them? This is also the case for the SSF Guidelines as such. Will there be love at first sight? Will they be rejected? Would support grow and mature when small-scale fisheries people see them take effect?

Legality rules, legitimacy decides

The legality issue rests with the three branches of government. The legitimacy issue lies with the industry, communities, and stakeholders. Based on their own calculus, small-scale fishers decide for themselves whether to adhere or to break a rule. Small-scale fisheries are not

very transparent for outsiders. When fishers disagree with or find it cumbersome to live with rules, they will find ways of circumventing the rules, especially when are imposed on them. Breaking a rule may for them not only be rational but also just, and, therefore, legitimate. IUU fishing has proved hard to eliminate, especially when breaking rules are considered legitimate among peers and in the community, as when people fish illegally to feed their family. Poverty and hunger are relentless drivers. They provide moral reasons to break rules. The state government would then have a pervasive governability challenge to deal with. They should not just handle the rule breaking. They must also solve the problems which are justifying non-adherence.

Legal pluralism

Communities did not exist in a legal vacuum until the state appeared. They had their own normative order. Rather than statutory law replacing local law, the two orders may still live side by side, in harmony or conflict, in a situation of so-called 'legal pluralism' (Jentoft & Bavinck, 2014). When in conflict, legal pluralism keeps a fisher in a bind: which normative order should he follow – that of the state or that of the community? Thus, an action may be illegal in one system and legal in another.

The implementation of the SSF Guidelines may interfere with both normative orders, but they do not insist that state law takes precedence over local law. Instead, they ask for respect for traditional law, but they do not uncritically embrace it. Customary law does not always live up to their guiding, ethical principles. Enforcement can be unacceptably harsh. The implementation of the SSF Guidelines cannot be blind to the way customary law is working. Still, customary law may not be outdated but in need of reform, just as state law may be.

State or customary legal orders may be unsustainable in the long run if they do not survive the legitimacy test. They are not legitimate just because they are legal. They may remain legally effective if they are legitimate among those who live with them. However, they might still need reform

should they not live up to the moral standards, as specified in the SSF Guidelines. They are not legitimate from a general perspective if they, for instance, discriminate women, ethnic minorities or otherwise violate the human rights of people affected even if there is local acceptance for such practices.

Co-management

FAO considers IUU (Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated) fishing to be a problem affecting the entire value chain, including small-scale fisheries communities:

> *"IUU fishing is found in all types and dimensions of fisheries; it occurs both on the high seas and in areas within national jurisdiction: it concerns all aspects and stages of the capture and utilization of fish, and it may sometimes be associated with organized crime. Fisheries resources available to bona fide fishers are removed by IUU fisheries, which can lead to the collapse of local fisheries, with small-scale fisheries in developing countries proving particularly vulnerable. Products derived from IUU fishing can find their way into overseas trade markets thus throttling local food supply. IUU fishing therefore threatens livelihoods, exacerbates poverty, and augments food insecurity."* [44]

The IUU problem does not go under the SSF Guidelines radar. Article 5.16 argues that "*[s]tates should ensure the establishment of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) systems or promote the application of existing ones applicable to and suitable for small-scale fisheries.... States should ensure effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to deter, prevent and eliminate all forms of illegal and/or destructive fishing practices having a negative effect on marine*

[44] Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

and inland ecosystems."

Notably, in the same paragraph, the SSF Guidelines address this issue within the context of co-management. Thus, they look beyond law enforcement in a narrow sense. Small-scale fisheries actors may themselves possess the means, including the local knowledge needed, to address the issue and should therefore become a partner in solving the problem. States "*should provide support to such systems, involving small-scale fisheries actors as appropriate and promoting participatory arrangements within the context of co-management*."

Co-management arrangements can be, but are not necessarily stricter enforcers than state agencies, but because their process enables stakeholder participation, they add legitimacy to rules. Co-management provides a platform onto which stakeholders can bring their knowledge, ethical values and opinions, for instance, pertaining to social justice. They make IUU fishing not just a matter of legality but also one of morality. You have a different attitude and approach to a rule that you have developed yourself together with your peers, than to a rule that is developed by a distant authority and imposed from the top-down. Breaking a co-produced rule is betrayal whereas breaking a government rule may be considered an act of civil protest. In the first instance, you may invoke condemnation from your peers, in the latter you draw their admiration and support.

In addition, co-management is a transdisciplinary learning process. It provides an opportunity for participants to learn how management works, and how knowledge across disciplines and particular experiences informs the process of rulemaking. In co-management, biological, economic, social and cultural matters issues are integrated and calibrated. I was part of a Swedish study that showed that fishers with co-management experience tended to be more willing to comply (Jagers et al., 2012). This was also a central argument in my Lofoten fishery research in Norway (Jentoft & Kristoffersen, 1986). Both studies gave answers to why fishers adhere to rules in the first place, which sociologically is a more interesting question than why they break them. The SSF Guidelines cannot be imposed on unwilling small-scale fisheries stakeholders. The only way to make the

Guidelines accomplish what they aim to achieve is to bring them on board in a collaborative, participatory, and transdisciplinary manner. Without legitimacy, they are bound to fail.

By endorsing the SSF Guidelines, states have committed themselves, if not legally, so at least morally, to implement them. Small-scale fisheries actors, on the other hand, have no such obligation. They are at the receiving end of the Guidelines but are not obliged to accept them. They did not endorse the Guidelines: states did it for them. That CSOs are enthusiastically supporting the Guidelines does not necessarily matter much when push comes to shove. Small-scale fisheries actors decide for themselves whether to enter the boat or not. They can also leave any time. They must be convinced about the merits at the outset and over time when they see the Guidelines take effect.

Small-scale fisheries people will naturally ask whether the Guidelines fit with their reality as they know it, By reading the Guidelines and comparing them to their own reading of the situation they are in, they will do the legitimacy test. They may welcome the SSF Guidelines, but not necessarily in the form they are written and delivered.

Participation

Involvement through co-management or in some other form of collaboration will make small-scale fisheries actors experience the SSF Guidelines from the inside. Legitimacy is associated with their content, from what they can read from their hundred paragraphs. It is also produced in an interactive process of implementing them. If small-scale fisheries actors have a hand on the wheel, they may take ownership of the Guidelines. Then, they are social entrepreneurs, governors and stewards, not clients.

If the interactive governance process has been fair and square, small-scale fisheries stakeholders would even be inclined to accept decisions that go against their individual interests, especially if the can see that they serve the common good. When experiencing empowerment, legitimacy is reinforced. Legitimacy is both a contributing factor as well as an outcome.

With a process that leaves participants with a feeling that they and their experience-based knowledge matters, legitimacy is enhanced. They will also become more knowledgeable about the complexity of fisheries and coastal governance. Participatory democracy may be cumbersome as a process but more effective in the long run because it yields legitimacy and support (Jentoft, 2004).

The philosopher Michel Foucault coined the "governmentality" concept. It refers to how people's behavior is governed, not by force but by creating an environment that facilitates and motivates self-discipline and self-governing. Co-management – or co-governance (Kooiman, 2003), is a means of creating such an environment. However subtle, for Foucault, it is an instrument of governance power. Foucault's governmentality precedes and contributes to governability (Jentoft & Johnsen, 2015).

A cynic might view co-management as manipulation, as a conspiracy against the autonomy and integrity of small-scale fisheries actors and communities. But that is excessive, in my view. Power is legitimate if co-management is based on sound moral principles, mutually agreed upon and arrived through a process of just representation, informed by reasoned deliberation. This is how co-management is meant to work, also when it is means of implementing the SSF Guidelines. They were developed through years of consultations involving thousands of small-scale fisheries stakeholders around the world. Not just the text itself, but also the process of developing it has generated legitimacy and support, and therefore governmentality.

What's in the word?

In 2000, I published the article "Legitimacy and disappointment in fisheries management" (Jentoft, 2000). Here, I cited political scientist David Beetham (1991), who noted that "*rules cannot justify themselves simply by being rules but require justification by reference to considerations that lie beyond them*." (p. 69)]. Thus, I concluded that legality cannot be a sufficient condition for a legitimate fisheries governance regime. In contrast, the economist Kenneth

Boulding (1990, p. 113) pointed out that the *"legitimacy is a continual and unrelenting process."* A law can be dismantled by a formal decision, whereas legitimacy is squandered over time, for instance, in the SSF Guidelines implementation process. Notably, legitimacy is not an 'add on' to the law. Beetham puts it like this: *"Legitimacy is not the icing on the cake of power, which is applied after baking is complete, and leaves the cake itself essentially unchanged. It is more like the yeast that permeates the dough, and makes the bread what it is."* (p. 69). The legitimacy of the SSF Guidelines sits deep in the text, in the ethical principles and action proposals, and not in their wrapping.

Beetham's perspective is, therefore, different from that of sociologist Max Weber for whom legitimacy is in the eyes of the beholder: in those affected by public policy or a legal reform. For him, the legitimacy test is only theirs to make. If we think like Weber, the legitimacy of the SSF Guidelines would be up to stakeholders alone to decide. But not all stakeholders think the same. What is legitimate for one may be illegitimate in the eyes of someone else. To be a support in the implementation, the process must yield consensus. Every paragraph of the Guidelines was deliberated until delegates agreed. They were not voted on. One can imagine a similar process when the Guidelines are contextualized at national and local levels.

This concept of legitimacy invites important research questions. Are the SSF Guidelines understood, deliberated, and accepted by affected stakeholders? Do they even know that they exist? Implementation is not a one-way, top-down communication but also a process from the bottom up. Of particular interest is the fate of the guiding principles and how they inform the deliberation on lower governance orders. Paragraphs that talk about institutions and governance practices often include the "as appropriate" term, which suggests the need for pragmatism. SSF Guidelines must be made to fit with the domestic and local context. However, the guiding principles are ethical defaults (see chapter 7 book 2, Jentoft, 2024). You do not recognize and respect human rights or cultural norms 'as appropriate.' The guiding principles do not invite opportunism. You adhere to them.

In my old article, (Jentoft, 2000), I cited the philosopher Jean-François Lyotard (1986) who said that in modern societies, legitimacy is anchored in overriding narratives and ideas. The guiding principles refer to some overarching values and discourses that are beyond small-scale fisheries, like sustainable development, food security, social justice, human rights and dignity, gender equity, empowerment and good governance. Lyotard argued that legitimacy does not result so much from action of the past but from the anticipation of something that will happen. The SSF Guidelines give small-scale fisheries people reason to expect that things will change for the better because of them. Without this promise, they are likely to reject them.

Lyotard's observation also finds resonance in the seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals, to which FAO makes a link. The SDGs have broader reach small-scale fisheries. They are singled out in SDG 14b, but all seventeen development goals are relevant to them. Legitimacy is about interpretation and meaning. It would help with the implementation of the SSF Guidelines if the people affected experience that they are authors of the even bigger narrative of the SDGs.

33

Academic Contributions

Universities are among our oldest institutions. Established around year 500 AD, the Nalanda University in India was perhaps the first one, if we do not consider Plato's Academy in Athen's from 387 BC to AD 529 as a university. It taught many of the same subjects that universities teach today. Raphael's masterpiece of the Academia from 1511 (now in the Vatican Museum) shows people engaged in intense discussion, with Plato and Aristotle at the center. The University in Bologna from 1088 is recognized as the oldest in Europe. In Scandinavia, Uppsala University in Sweden was founded in 1477, a couple of years before the university in Copenhagen, Denmark.

There is a reason why universities have stayed that long: They play a role that society cannot be without. They generate new knowledge while hedging around our common stock of knowledge generated over centuries. They educate our young to grow into intellectual and moral maturity and make them equipped to fill important societal tasks. Universities make democracy functioning and good governance possible. And no less essential: they help us reflect on ourselves, how we should live and address the challenges that confront society. Thus, universities also make contributions to small-scale fisheries and to the well-being of their people and communities. It is hard to imagine a future where universities are gone. Artificial intelligence (AI) will change them but in what way, no one knows. Yet, something troublesome is happening when a professor cannot be sure

whether a student's text is authentic or AI generated.

Higher learning and research need a home, which is what the university is offering. Plato's Academia was doing something that we still need. Learning works better within a social context, where people find trust and inspiration in the interaction they have with teachers and fellow students. Can what universities do and stand for, take place in a different institutional setting? That is possible but hardly realistic. Universities would not have lasted so long if better alternatives were available.

Academic freedom

Universities are a guarantor of academic freedom, which has been essential for knowledge creation, innovation, and societal progress. To be free the British philosopher Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997) argued, one must be shielded from interference and be allowed to self-manage. Thus, academic freedom is both negative and positive. It is a capacity, i.e., something universities provide but also a capability, something we can exercise, as Amartya Sen formulated it (see chapter 27). We must have the freedom to select our research topics but also know how to investigate and communicate our findings. The former is what universities secure; the latter is what they teach. Universities are in themselves a freedom project.

Academic freedom is a dynamic, transformative force. Universities are open institutions. They are not oblivious to how society changes. My university is different now than it was when I was a student. It has grown but what it teaches has also changed. New programs have been added to its portfolio. So far, the social sciences and humanities have stood their ground, which is not the case everywhere. We may still have universities 50 years from now, but they might be unrecognizable from those that have existed throughout the ages. A thing to watch is what happens to academic freedom, also in the age of AI.

The Humboldt University in Berlin, named after its founder Friedrich Wilhelm Christian Karel Ferdinand von Humboldt (1767-1835) and his even more famous brother, the naturalist and explorer Alexander (1769-

1859) whose name is enshrined in the Humboldt Strait and Humboldt current. Established in 1810, here is where the modern university system was incepted. A good university education was supposed to be unbiased, following an integrated comprehensive approach, combining research and education. The goal was not just qualifying students for the labor market but also building their character through a strong element of the arts in addition to the sciences.

Academic freedom was a key principle. The state should not determine what the university is teaching, what courses they offer, and what students read. Likewise, research should be unfettered by external interference and control. Knowledge generation should follow its own logic, and research and education should go hand in hand. At the Humboldt University's website, it is stated that academic freedom is not a privilege… It is the prerequisite for universities to remain what they should be: places of knowledge, innovation – and contradiction. Only free science can answer the big questions of our time.[45]

In many countries around the world, including my own, academic freedom is now under assault. Universities used to be where knowledge developed freely on its own terms, within an institutional framework that was there to protect and promote it. Now, this is not a given any longer. The warning signs are often subtle, often wrapped in language that is difficult to disclose and reject. Should academic freedom end up on the ash heap of history, universities would lose their reason to exist. The loss for society is hard to imagine. Universities need autonomy and self-governance. Then they cannot be arenas for negotiation between government authorities, corporate industry, and civil society institutions, not even students who come and go.

[45] Academic freedom - Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Practicing academic freedom

Since academic freedom is necessary for the functioning of the university as we know it, we must struggle to keep it alive. We cannot take it for granted that it will prevail because it has existed for so long. It may slip between our fingers without noticing it. Academic freedom cannot exist in name only, declared and celebrated without being practiced. Academic freedom, like freedom in general, requires that we know how to use it. Academics must demonstrate that they need it for their work to have any meaning and impact. Otherwise, they risk losing it.

This is how the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) argued about freedom. It needs "Bestimmtheit" – in English Determination/ Resoluteness / Decisiveness. The same applies to academic freedom. It must be used for something concrete. It does not wear out by use as shoes do – quite on the contrary. If we do not exercise it, it remains an abstract idea. You do not need new shoes if you never wear them. If we remain passive, we risk losing it. The idea of academic freedom must be put to test, as its limits are porous and must be discovered. It is intimidating at times. No one will challenge you if you never challenge them.

Academic freedom is important as a right and an opportunity but becomes an empty shell if it is not employed in research and education. The university is there to protect and enable it. It is up to the professors and students to activate it. Academic freedom is not just a condition. It is a discovery process, a driver, and an outcome. A university is a place to learn but can easily become the cave that Plato warned against, a world of its own. As professors and students, we need to break the chains, get out of the cave and into the sun.

If you want to know small-scale fisheries, you cannot lock yourself inside the library. You learn more if you also go out and visit communities where people live and work. This is why social scientists do empirical fieldwork. Theories help you imagine small-scale fisheries, not to know them. They trigger your curiosity and inspire your questioning, but do not give the certainty you need to be firm and adamant about them. For that you need

to experience small-scale fisheries in real life. You need to see them and get to know people who are engaged in them. Academic freedom allows you to do that.

In one of his aphorisms, Arthur Schopenhauer (1976, p. 91), another German philosopher, posited that *"[p]eople who pass through their lives in reading and acquire their wisdom only from books, are like those who have learned about a country from travel instructions."* He could well have been thinking of academics. Academic freedom allows you to remain in the library if that is your preference, but it also includes the freedom to leave university from time to time. This is what sabbaticals are about. They provide an opportunity to break your routine, to leave behind the comfort of your own office, and to learn from the experience of staying in a different environment. It is a customary academic right and an opportunity that must be used for the purpose it is meant. Not all universities offer this.

The onslaught on academic freedom is also targeting sabbatical arrangements. What used to be a necessity is now being seen as a luxury and privilege. It is not what a university professor can expect as part of the job routine but something that must be earned. It is not difficult to justify this rule change, but only when the relevance of academic freedom is devalued.

My own academic career would have been different if I had not taken the opportunity to visit and work abroad. I studied the extensive literature on poverty more generally, but I learned even more from my years working on the Nicaragua's Caribbean coast where poverty reigns, especially among Indigenous fisheries communities. Then, the poverty concept became less abstract than it would have been if literature was my only source of learning. We often struggle to say what small-scale fisheries are, and there is no definition in the SSF Guidelines. They have features that differ from place to place. But it is not difficult to define them when you see them on the beach or in the port.

Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to visit many countries where small-scale fisheries exist. This has given me opportunity to gain knowledge from comparison. Then you understand that small-scale fisheries are not one thing. Still, small-scale fisheries in Norway and

Nicaragua and in other countries where I have worked, have different features, but also things that are similar. I got to realize that small-scale fisheries must be understood relative to their anchoring in local communities. I am not claiming that this is always the case, but it is true in most situations.

It is the task of the researchers to explore how the dynamic relationship between the small-scale fisheries and their community works and how it can be turned into an opportunity for bettering the functioning and well-being of both. Learning about the differences that make a difference for their symbiosis can only happen through comparative research, which for the researcher requires the opportunity to be mobile. You learn about the world by seeing it from your local community. But if you are stuck there, you learn less. It becomes like Plato's cave. Once you move out of the cave and into the world, you discover how big small-scale fisheries are and how much there is to learn about them.

To be 'enlightened' about small-scale fisheries, you need to go both deep and broad. My academic freedom has allowed me to go in both directions. It has not only been an enriching personal experience. It has made me a better researcher and teacher. And most of all, it has made it possible to contribute with confidence to the discourse on small-scale fisheries internationally. This would not have been possible if I never left home. Neither do I think that my interest in and contribution to the SSF Guidelines would have happened either. Their significance would have passed me.

Losing freedom

Small-scale fisheries research is not immune to the pressures on academic freedom. We should, therefore, be cognizant of the pressures to academic freedom coming from both inside and outside our field. We are also exposed to pressure from the inside, from bureaucratic routine that steels from our free time. We should also be wary of the demand from state, industry, and civil society to be part of their agendas. Academic research should not be an instrument in promoting goals that are not its own.

Academic freedom functions less in a hierarchical mode than in one of self-governance. Formality and bureaucracy may restrict academic freedom, and in the worst case kill it. We need to examine the institutional environment but also how we are using that freedom to govern ourselves at all levels. Academic freedom can be experienced as a burden because it needs to be determined; you must make up your mind about how to use it. It involves difficult choices. Academics are stakeholders who know how to argue, and they always challenge the legitimacy of authority. Therefore, universities often have difficulties reaching decisions that members can agree on. The governmentality is less than in most other organizations. Academic leadership involves a substantial element of conflict resolution, also on the issue of academic freedom.

The self-governing mode is time consuming and may not have the support among rank-and-file members as academic freedom needs. This can be a justification for converting the university into a more hierarchical organization, governed from the top down. However, the 'flat' self-governing mode can also be an arena for learning academic freedom and why it needs both external and internal enabling conditions.

For students, universities can be their first encounter with participatory democracy and provide lessons they can bring with them when they finish their degrees and leave for the world outside. To learn about how the world works, you need first to learn how your own institutions work. We usually start with our own family and community work before we spread our wings. A university is a steppingstone, a place to temporally reside, in the process of learning how society at large works. So much better if also universities were democratic institutions.

Freedom to criticize

I do believe that the academic community has a responsibility to engage in a way that is both critical and constructive to the vision of progress in small-scale fisheries as the Guidelines perceive it. Poverty eradication, food security, human rights, social justice, and gender equality are laudable

guiding principles also for the academic community. These are moral principles, which academic researchers share. While supporting the guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines, academics should nevertheless stay true to academic norms and values, like academic freedom and commitment to truth. Only then do they make trustful contributions to their implementation.

Researchers are trained to look at the world from different theoretical perspectives and may still question these values and principles. The age-old discourse on what is ethical and just has not reached their final settlement. Perhaps they never will. The diverse perspectives, beliefs and worldviews among members of the university are conducive also to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. We must nonetheless retain the freedom to be critical, to speak truth to power. After criticism, the idea of what should come next must follow. We have a responsibility not only to find problems but also to point out solutions, suggest better at solving problems while fulfilling the goals of the SF Guidelines. Criticism is easy. Finding a solution that would work is difficult. Academic freedom is necessary for both.

Academic freedom means to be shielded from repercussion in any form whatsoever. It requires independence and self-governance for the institution and from the leadership down to the individual researcher. This is what tenure for professors is meant to secure. Academics are not free to do their work and speak their mind if they run the risk of losing their job. When people in universities are on short-term contracts, they are more vulnerable to sanctions.

Academic freedom means the right to seek inspiration wherever it is to be found. We find relevant research questions that point to practical solutions and new opportunities for change in small-scale fisheries within our academic disciplines as well as outside them. I hope I have shown this in my three TBTI volumes. The topics chosen are entirely my own. I have found them in diverse disciplines, while listening to colleagues and practitioners talking about issues that are important to them.

Academic freedom presupposes the freedom *to* phrase our own research questions, and the freedom *from* interference, dictation, and repercussion.

Basic, curiosity driven research is important in its own way. The history of science has numerous examples when discoveries happened serendipitously, when the researcher found something else than he or she searched for. Basic research is also important because it leads to new research questions, some of them applied, like conceptual discourse often do.

A new concept can open our eyes to current issues, new knowledge, and new policies. Just think about the trajectory of the sustainable development concept. It was first coined in the 1980s but is now part of our common language. It is mentioned twelve times in the SSF Guidelines. We should not put the carriage in front of the horse. We need concepts to study the matter before we act on it. Otherwise, there is risk of failure. Much of the language of marine and fisheries governance originates from academia, like the Blue Economy concept did.

The process of learning involves testing your assumptions and reflecting on our empirical findings in a continuing cycle. Learning about small-scale fisheries has no finish line. New concepts and questions are discovered in the process of research. When small-scale fisheries change, research must follow. With new theoretical insight, small-scale fisheries may find novel ways of enhancing the freedom and well-being of people at both individual and collective levels. The concept of interactive governance, which has been central to TBTI's transdisciplinary approach, makes us think differently about what it takes to make small-scale fisheries function better.

Transdisciplinarity

Francis Bacon stated that knowledge is power. Academics should, therefore, be aware of their own impact on others. We must not only be critical of others but likewise of ourselves. Academic concepts and ideas should not be imposed on small-scale fisheries people but be part of the conversation we have with them. They are meant for collective and interactive learning, not for hierarchical intervention. The receivers of academic concepts must be as free as those who promote them.

Academic freedom comes with social responsibility. Truth does not speak for itself, and as academics we are part of the conversation about what our concepts allude to and what they mean in concrete settings, like in small-scale fisheries. We should be wary of the opposite situation, as when external powers determine which language is relevant, and what constitutes valid knowledge. Academic freedom creates a role conflict; researchers are both inside and outside the SSF Guidelines implementation process. They provide independent, often critical, inputs to the transdisciplinary process that they are part of.

Academic freedom is not just about the right to criticize, to speak truth to power. It is also the freedom to play with concepts and ideas, like what the jazz musician does with the music I talked about in chapter 18 in Jentoft (2023). In the process of transdisciplinary research and planning, this freedom is mutual and must not be curbed, only be challenged by the better argument, which may well come from outside academia, like from the fishing people themselves.

All participants in the transdisciplinary research and the implementation process governance have this right to be playful. None of them should be limited by an instruction manual. None of them should enter the process with a fixed mandate that restricts their freedom to think, argue, and experiment. When jazz musicians play together, they create new music on the spot. Without freedom, neither jazz nor transdisciplinarity will work. What is realistic and "appropriate" in the SSF Guidelines should be tested, not pre-determined. Without playfulness, nothing innovative and revolutionary would come out of the implementation process. It will just be replication of existing maxims and procedures, which is the antithesis of applied science. Scientists are supposed to emulate Mozart, not the musicians who perform the script he wrote.

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Academic Writing – My Take

Writing and reading are two different things. If you haven't noticed, try reading your own text after you have let it rest for a while. Even if the words and sentences that you wrote are those you also read, your experience is different. Your sense of your text may change, and you may feel the urge to clarify, re-arrange, add, and delete things to improve the language, improve the flow, and sharpen the argument. In this way, you do not just write; you build your text.

Writing and reading are both creative but intertwined processes. It is not very different from how an artist works. A painter does not work out in detail how the finished painting is going to look like before he starts. He would continuously examine the progress by taking a step back and watching it from a distance, like a spectator would. Only from a distance will the painter see clearly what he has created. He may then add a stroke here and there to make it better. An academic writer does the same when giving the manuscript a pause before he reads it with fresh eyes.

The essays that constitute this and the two other books in the trilogy have gone through such a process. They have been polished and sometimes rewritten. This is also what has happened with these ten new chapters. I read them three months after I wrote them, and I found many things to correct. Since English is not my first or daily language, there is always room for improvement.

Reading your own text can be both delightful and painful. Sometimes re-reading can convince me that I got it right. In other instances, I am not so sure. This is a disturbing feeling, especially when it is too late to change things because it has already been published. It is good advice to re-read before the text goes to print.

I have colleagues who work on a paragraph until they are fully satisfied before they move to the next. This is not the way I do it. I am afraid of losing momentum. I am in trouble if I lose the argument and the contour of my story. Writing may thus be a struggle with your forgetfulness and the danger of losing the thread. Essays involve less risk than long articles in this respect. When writing regular academic journal papers, I always go back to the abstract to check whether I did what I said I would do. There is less need for it when writing an essay. Usually, it does not even come with an abstract. The first draft just takes a few days to develop.

This is also the advice I give to my students when I teach academic writing. Writing is a creative process, often driven by impulse, and it is easy to get carried away This makes writing fun. As such, it should not be thought of as a piece of engineering, a way of reporting, but as a manifestation emerging from your imagination. Academic writing is in essence an art form, as I argue in the introduction to this book.

In the social sciences, monographs used to be more common than journal articles. I was the first one in my department who wrote articles for my doctoral thesis. Now, social scientists have adopted the practice of natural sciences where journal articles are standard. Colleagues of my generation often have problems getting used to it.

Teaching writing

Many years ago, I gathered some PhD students to talk about academic writing and publishing. I told them about my own experience. What we discussed, I later developed into a whole writing course that I would often teach inside and outside my university. I even brought it abroad. The Center for Sami Studies at my university taped it and is using it in their

master program.

As I taught what I practiced myself as writer, reviewer, and as Editor in Chief of Maritime Studies, I also became more effective in my own writing. We generally become better teachers when we can draw from our personal research experience, but I believe the opposite is also true. In both roles, practice makes master. Again, this is also true for artists. You do not learn to paint, unless you paint. Then you are also better equipped to teach painting. The writing course benefited from my experience of writing and publishing. I told students the importance of practicing writing, not occasionally but regularly. Good writers write every day, as Patti Smith says she does in her memoir (Smith, 2025). Not only is she a superb musician; she is also a brilliant writer, whose books I enjoy.

In my academic writing course, I talked about the architecture of an article, about the different sections, and which function they should have related to each other and to the whole. I compared the article to a house, stressing the proportionality between the different sections, like floors, windows, and doors. The introduction should not be too long relative to other sections. The same with the conclusion. I gave the different parts a percentage number of the total word count. Like houses, I noted that different articles do not have identical but largely similar designs, which are easy to learn. For both the architect and the academic writer, there is room for creativity within limits. Their creations are reviewed for their aesthetics and novelty. But they have lesser freedom to experiment with form than fiction writers and painters have.

I discussed what a good title is, what should go into the abstract, where in the introduction section to land the research question. I stressed the importance of following the need-to-know rather than the nice-to-know principle when providing the context for the reader, and not to be bogged down in irrelevant detail. I also described what the theory section is for, and how to draw from and cite relevant literature, how to organize the footnotes or endnotes and the reference list. I explained how to present data in the form of tables, graphs, and quotes from interviews.

My advice was to check out the journal they had in mind, as journals

have their own standards and requirements. On their website, journals have listed a series of instructions for authors. Ignoring these instructions can result in a waste of time. It also increases the likelihood of rejection. Then, together we went through some already published papers to see how authors have designed and written their articles.

The writing process

Writing a paper is a struggle. You start from zero every time. There is no distinct procedure. It is often very personal. If you prefer to begin with the conclusion section before you write anything else, that is fine. Whatever works for you is good enough. I told my students that to overcome the initial blocking, they should begin writing the section that is most straight forward. That is typically the methods section. Your writing station is your choice. You don't need to sit in your office. If you work better in a café, like Satre did, then do it. I often do the same. If you must travel somewhere to find concentration, you do what famous writers have done before you. But try to get a routine for where and when to write.

Unlike many people do, I never work out in detail what to write before I start. I find it to be more entertaining and interesting to let the text flow. When one sentence inspires the next and develops a coherent argument that you did not have at the outset, you may surprise yourself. You feel the urge to say 'Yes!' It is nice to see your published article, but the process of writing is rewarding too. It is fun to write when you know how to do it. This is something you learn by writing.

I regularly meet with a colleague to talk about our writing. Just listening to myself expressing my ideas can be motivating. I then take a note of what I said. When we meet in a café in the afternoon, he eats breakfast because his habit is to work through the night. I cannot do it. I write best in the morning when my mind is fresh. I had another night-working colleague, who always had breakfast ready for his wife before he went to bed. Ph.D. students often have small children, which requires a different daily rhythm. You must, therefore, work out some agreement with your partner that

works for both you and for family.

These were among the things we talked about in the writing course. Often people in the audience raised the questions that we discussed. I gave my advice based on my own writing practice, like I do here. They wanted to know the secret to prolific writing. I mentioned how my writing benefits from the conversation I have with myself when walking, which I do regularly, and that I. also ask a close colleague to read my text while offering to do the same for him or her. Presenting a draft at a conference is always helpful, but you should prepare a text and not just a power point. Performing in front of an audience sharpens your mind. The questions and comments you receive can give new ideas that lead to revision.

Another issue that often came up was the challenges of writing with other people, which can be both stimulating and frustrating if you cannot agree on how the text should look like, if your writing styles and routines are very different, and if your co-author does not deliver as agreed on. You may sit and write together but also decide together who should draft different parts. Your expertise may be different but mutually beneficial, and together, you will learn from each other and write a text you would not be able to do alone.

Writing a paper is not a linear process. As you read your text, you may decide to delete things, and that may be painful. Writing brings feelings, frustrations, insecurity, and anxiety, but also satisfaction and bliss, even pride. The satisfaction you feel when you succeed can be immense. I told them to be prepared for harsh criticism from anonymous reviewers, sometimes even rejection, which can be hard to take. That is an experience that everyone has. What matters is not to give up.

I think it was uplifting for them to hear that my most cited paper was initially rejected by the reviewer. I wrote to the editor who was still willing to accept a revised version. Regardless of how negative reviews can be, there is always something to learn from them, even when they are a blow to your ego. Very few papers submitted to a journal are accepted without revision. Reviewers always find things to criticize. That is their job. It is in your own interest to revise accordingly if it leads to a better paper, which

it usually does. It is still your product.

Essays are different

Essays have a long tradition as an academic writing genre, much longer than the standard journal papers that I focused on in my course. Its origin is attributed to Seneca, the stoic philosopher, Roman senator, and early mentor of emperor Nero. He inspired the French nobleman Montaigne (1533-1592) who was another prolific essay writer, who I talk about in chapter 11 and 18.

My trilogy is made up of essays and not the kind of papers that I talked only briefly about in my writing course. Essays are shorter, more tentative, primarily reflective, more polemic, synthesizing, and not data heavy. For the writer, the format of essay provides more freedom to experiment with the composition than the standard research paper. Their design is not standardized but may follow the steps in your argument. Sometimes the argument comes first and the reasoning leading to it follows next. In other instances, the course of the essay text is the opposite; the argument concludes rather than introduces the essay.

Since essays tend to be short, at least in this trilogy, reading is quick. It can be done in the classroom. When my first book in the trilogy, Life above Water, was re-published by TBTI Japan, they did not just translate the text but invited comments from scholars to every essays.[46] Students can be asked to do the same. Then, they learn something about the topic and how it can be discussed in essay form. For students, reading and writing are not separate learning processes.

Academic essays can discuss complex issues, ideas, and concepts They are not just story telling but argumentation and reasoning, often drawing on real-life or invented stories. Notably, essays are not popularizations, made easy to read for people with no knowledge, education, or experience. In his own collection of essays Hans Skjervheim, one of Norway's most

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renown philosophers, finds the notion of popularization patronizing.

An academic essay can also be demanding to read. It should help you to think. Skjervheim argues that his essays should rather be read as introductions to a complex problem area. They do not exhaust the topic; there is more to say about it. They leave a 'yes, but', and it invites the reader to join the conversation. I hope the essays that I have written in this and the other two books in this trilogy can function in this way. They are not meant to close the dialogue on a matter of interest to small-scale fisheries, but to open it. It is even better if students can find ideas in the essays for their own research.

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Reaching Hundred

Writing all these essays was never something I planned from the start. I wrote them in the moment, as the idea came to me, one by one, and they just added up to finally become a hundred. I did not intend to end up with a trilogy. But in the end, it almost felt like a sport, as when an athlete tries to see how far he can go. I thought I would stop at ninety essays, but then I could not stop writing before I completed the hundred. This essay completes the effort. Reaching hundred essays feels like a closure.

Hundred essays are hundred ideas, and equally as many topics and arguments. They were not listed at the outset but evolved during the nine-year-long process. I reached back into my academic career and checked if I had written something in the past that could be developed into a short essay. In that way, these three volumes have a flair of being my academic autobiography. I also remembered things I talked about in class and of arguments I made at meetings. I have learned from the critical response I received from listeners and from the answers I gave on the spot. In some instances, rebuttals induced me to counter their arguments, and without thinking about it then, I later realized that I had an idea for an essay. Academia is not always a friendly place. However, in my experience, it is stimulating, with a constant fodder for thought.

The hundred explained

Writing is not just an intellectual and creative exercise but also an emotional process. It is driven by excitement or agitation when I strongly agree or disagree with a policy or with an argument that someone makes. I write essays because they make me happy when they come out nicely. When I have a full story and a coherent argument that were developed while writing, I learn from myself. In that sense, they are for me also a discovery of sorts, an art form, like a painter who develops his artwork while painting. This makes writing rewarding. It never, at least for me, comes easy. It can at times be frustrating, especially when I do not manage to say what I want to say. Writing in English is still a challenge, but it is getting easier with practice.

The essays are so short that I rarely get a writer's block before I have the first full draft, and I have techniques for avoiding them. These essays make me an academic writer, more than a scientist. They are thinking pieces, not research reports. They feel natural after an extensive career of empirical research, when it is time to reflect on your work and life. Still, in my view, one should not necessarily wait until the end before starting to write them. A reader of my essays will notice that I have become a kind of philosopher in the process. I have taken Hannah Arendt's contention to heart; you do not need to be a professional philosopher to be a philosophizer.

I was once asked about the secret of my prolific writing. The answer I gave was that it is essential to be involved, being alert while on the move. My essays would never have been written if I had stayed at my desk. Few of the essays have been written in my office but many at my home dinner table. I was always restless but not a nerd. Many of the essay ideas emerged while I was doing something else, while on travels or my regular evening walks. I always loved to write in cafés. Their chaos and noise never bothered me. Some of the essays were written in hotel rooms, airports and during flights. Quite a few of them were originally talk manuscripts at conferences.

Writing is a lonely process. It is you and the text in front of you. But the ideas themselves often emerged during conversations with friends and

colleagues, when listening and arguing with them. I can recall exactly when the idea came to me. By hanging out with colleagues and running research projects in collaboration with others, ideas come as an unforeseen consequence. My essays are results from having people around me who inspire and challenge me. Without them I would never have reached a hundred. TBTI director Ratana Chuenpagdee suggested to me that the trilogy deserves a final word about how the trilogy evolved. Therefore, this final essay.

The sociology of writing

My thesis supervisor, Professor Cato Wadel, an anthropologist who also spent years at Memorial University where TBTI originated, insisted that "we are our social relations!" Looking back at my own career, indeed my life, that feels true. He posited that we should also be sociologists on ourselves. None of us, and academics are no exception, develop in a social vacuum. We grow up and come to age in our families and communities. We mature in school and university and in the workplace. The experiences we have over our lifetime stimulate our thinking about society and ourselves, who we are, how we became who we are, and how we fit in.

We meet and interact, build friendships, personal and professional networks, and communities. This we do together with others who leave an impact on us. Because we are social animals, as Aristotle said, *"we become each other,"* according to sociologist Amitai Etzioni. I am me because of you. I am a father because of my children, a husband because of my wife. A fisher is a captain because of his crew. Etzioni gave a keynote at the first world sociology congress I attended in 1978, in Uppsala, Sweden. His work has since been an inspiration for me.

There are things to be said for the merits of solitude, by being into yourself and your own thoughts. Notably, solitude is different from loneliness, either in life in general or in academia. You can be alone in your office while having colleagues next door, some of them senior or younger than yourself. Colleagues can be life-long friends. Some of them may have been

your mentor, others may have been your students. I became the academic I am because of them. I am grateful for what I have learned from my colleagues and friends I am the academic I became because of them. I leave it to the reader to define what that is.

A good colleague is one with whom you can test your half-cooked ideas. I have many friends and colleagues who I have worked with over the years and learned from. Professor Knut Mikalsen, who I have worked with over the years and who came with me to Uppsala all those years ago, was always a support and a partner in conversation. He has read and commented on drafts of several of the essays in this trilogy. Professor Maarten Bavinck at Amsterdam University has been a co-author and a support for many years. He introduced me to India and Sri Lanka, and to 'legal pluralism.' Together we edit the Mare Series on Springer. Through him I also became the Editor in Chief of Maritime Studies.

Some of the people I have worked with and learned from have now passed away, and I miss them and our conversations. I still work with many of the colleagues I mention below. I am proud of the many books and articles we have published together. Having known and knowing all these people who are also my friends, makes me even happier. At my age, remembering names when I need them is a problem, but here they are, as far as my memory goes in this moment of writing:

Abraham Hallenstvedt, Cato Wadel, Yngvar Løchen, Ottar Brox, Jens-Ivar Nergård, Jakob Meløe, Karl Jan Solstad, Anthony Davis, Victor Thiessen, Jan Kooiman, Maarten Bavinck, Bonnie McCay, Greta Jentoft, Doug Wilson, Ratana Chuenpagdee, Knut Mikalsen, Maarten Bavinck, Conner Bailey, Peter Sinclair, Richard Apostle, Gene Barrett, Leonard Kasdan, Susan Hanna, Jim Acheson, Jan-Wilhelm van der Schans, Helge O. Larsen, Tom Christensen, Hans-Kristian Hernes, Kjell Arne Røvik, Turid Moldenæs, Petter Holm, Peter Ørebech, Peter Arbo, Jahn Petter Johnsen, Bjørn Hersoug, Jens Revold, Bjørn Petter Finstad, Torbjørn Trondsen, Henry Minde, Roy T. Eriksen, Joeri Scholtens, José J. Pascual-Fernández , Raquel de la Cuz Modino, Jaime Ramón Bruquetas, Miguel Gonzalez,

Cristina Pita, Jim Prescott, Julia Nakamura, Rashid Sumaila, John Kurien, Vivek Vivekanandan, Sebastian Mathew, Shandrika Sharma, Clarence Gonzalez, Arja Koskinen, Kirkman Roe, Diala Lopez, Sebastian Linke, Alida Bundy, Sverker Jagers, Derek Johnson, Boguslaw Marciniak, Alyne Delaney, Kevin St. Martin, Evelyn Pinkerton, Jesper Raakjær Nielsen, Poul Degnbol, Robin Mahoon, Patrick McConney, Roger Pullin, Prateep Nayak, Sérgio Mattos, David Symes, Anthony Charles, Milena Arias Schreiber, Alicia Bugeja Said, Silvia Salas, Lina María Saavedra-Díaz, María José Barragán-Paladines, Yinji Li, Ragnar Nilsen, Nils Aarsæther, Arild Buanes, Einar Eythorson, May-Britt Ellingsen, Gisli Pálson, Per Otnes, Georges Midré, Moenieba Isaacs, Mafaniso Hara, Philile Mbatha, Jackie Sunde, Mimi Lam, Aliou Sall, Philippa Cohen, Brennan Lowery, Maricella de Torres-Castro, Seth Macinco, Alice Ferrer, Julia Fraga, Jeppe Høst, Thomas Højrup, Ronald Jones, Evan Andrews, Lars Lindström, Andrew M. Song, Maaike Knol, Bjørn Sagdahl, Arne Eide, Ola Flåten, Else Grete Broderstad, Alf Håkon Hoel, Maiken Bjørkan, Thijs van Son, Anne Katrine Normann, Håkan Sandersen, Pål Skogmo, Jeppe Kolding, Fikret Berkes, Merle Sowman, Siri Gerrard, Katia Frangoudes, Denis Bailly, Ahmed Khan, Eddie Allison, Cornelia Nauen, Shehu Akintola, Moslem Daliri, Ehsan Kamrani, Vesna Kerezi, Johan Williams – the list goes on. I have had great PhD students like Siri Ulfsdatter Søreng, Johan Klemet Kalstad, Geir Runar Karlsen, Maria Victoria Solstand, Camilla Brattland, Mbachi Msomphora, Mahmud Islam, and Paul Onyango. I have learned more from them than they have learned from me. Rolf Willmann, Nicole Franz, Daniela Kalikoski, and Daniella Salazar, were great colleagues while I worked a semester in FAO in Rome in 2018.

Without TBTI and Professor Ratana Chuenpagdee, I would have retired for real many years ago, and this trilogy would not have seen the light of day. She is the colleague who I have published the most with over the years. Ratana was also part of the FishGovFood project that Professor Jan Kooiman initiated and led in early 2000. Jan was a great colleague who inspired my work on Interactive Governance. Many of the essays in these three books refer to this project, which TBTI embraced and further

developed. I can only hope that association have been a "gift relationship" that sociologist Marcel Mauss analyses in his classic treatise. He inspired the title of the second book, "The Gift of Community." I think about this trilogy as a way of returning something of value to the 'gift' I received from TBTI.

I knew some of these people by reputation or from reading before I met them in person, but it was never a plan to build my career through them. We often met by chance, and there is a story I could tell about how, where and when it happened, which are still vivid in my mind. I have often wondered why sociologists are always looking for causes and patterns while underestimating serendipity. I have, for instance, never seen it discussed in sociology textbooks. We rarely entertain sociologically that things that change our lives often just happen by coincidence. They have no clear cause and were not part of a plan. We all have this experience.

Part of the answer why we look for patterns and causes is that we want to predict what may happen in the future. This is of course a legitimate endeavor. But social scientists are poor fortunetellers and prophets. We do not deal in natural laws. We do not believe that society develops because of them. We look for how society, and even ourselves, are socially constructed. People often act spontaneously: they do something unexpectedly and innovative that may even surprise themselves. We often make decisions on the spot because the situation requires that we react quickly without giving it much consideration. We may well know how to respond because we have been in a similar situation before. We know how to talk to strangers, people we meet by accident, like when we participate in a conference and listen to a presentation or start a conversation with people in coffee breaks. I first met Sebastian Linke and Paul Onyango when they approached me after I gave a conference talk. We just happened to be at the same place at the same time.

I met Professor Wadel, my thesis supervisor and mentor, at a conference in 1974. Sitting across from each other at the dinner table, we started talking. If the chair had not been the only one empty and he had not taken an interest in me, my academic career would have been over before

it started. I had my business school degree and was looking for a job. Meeting him changed my mind and by that my life. I decided to continue with sociology. Cato taught me not only to become an academic but how to be one. I learned from what he told me to read, for instance, but also from who he was and how he lived his own academic life. I wanted to become like him, but I cannot say I did. His shoes were too big for me to fill, and I had to find my own footwear. However, for years, until he passed away in 2011, he was my muse, the one in my head I wrote for. He also appears in several trilogy essays. I wonder what he would have thought if he saw this trilogy and the other things I have published since he passed away.

Hua Hin

In April/May 2026, I attended the 5th Small-Scale Fisheries World Congress in Hua Hin, Thailand. I have written about what I experienced there in an essay for another TBTI book. There I discuss how conferences are social arenas, important for building the academic community of small-scale fisheries. In conferences, we meet face to face with colleagues who do similar work. We present our ideas and findings in sessions and deliberate who we as academics build knowledge. Conferences are a check on how we are doing.

The Hua Hin congress was a celebration of our academic community, but also rich with new insights. which gave me ideas for additional essays included in this third book. The congress raised issues that triggered interesting discussions in breaks afterwards, over lunches and dinner, that left me with lessons to take home. One session was organized around different tables, like in a café, where participants were invited to present their work to people who sat down with them. I used the opportunity to present my trilogy.

I was pleased to see how many people showed up at my table. Many were unfamiliar faces to me. I could not talk about every single topic but concentrated on the general themes. I started by explaining the book titles. The first, Life Above Water is alluded to the UN Sustainable Development

Goal 14 which is named "Life Below Water" and has one target related to small-scale fisheries. Since I wanted to highlight the human and social dimensions of small-scale fisheries and not biological and ecological issues which the goal is about, it was important to stress the obvious: small-scale fisheries people live in, and operate from, local communities. They live by the water and work on it (unless when diving for fish). You do not understand what small-scale fisheries are and how they develop unless you also explore what they do onshore and offshore. 'Life below the water' is not human life, only a condition for it.

Without ignoring the interconnectedness between life below and above the water, 'Life above water' is the primary focus of the social science of small-scale fisheries. In the first book, I argue that the causal arrow does not only go from sea to land, which is the standard paradigm of biologists and economists. I believe this to be a trivial observation: obviously, small-scale fisheries communities cannot exist if there are no fish to catch. My argument is that the causal arrow also goes the opposite direction, from land to sea. Fishers become who they are and become capable in their profession because they grow up in a fisheries community. They do learn to fish from fishing with family members who are also their role models. I submit that a healthy aquatic ecosystem requires healthy local fishing communities and social institutions that function to support and sustain them. I believe this to be a truism, even if it can be difficult to prove.

The second volume of the trilogy bears the title I have already mentioned: The Gift of Community. Here I describe and discuss what communities are, what they do and how they change. Like small-scale fisheries, they can be difficult to define because they vary so much from region to region. The life of a small-scale fisheries person in Norway is of course different from the life in a small-scale fisheries community in other countries, let us say India. Still, they have things in common that are essential for the functioning of small-scale fisheries. I am interested in what these things are, what it generally takes to build robust communities, and what communities do and mean for the people who grow up and live there. I try to explain what they get in terms of knowledge, language, identity, worldview, ethics, and

morality, which bind its people together and which make communities into an integrated social, cultural and dynamic system.

In the science café session, I also talked about the title of this third volume: Reading small-scale fisheries, which alludes to how we depend on language to understand small-scale fisheries. This is as true for researchers as it is for anyone else. Our concepts are lenses through which we read and make sense of what we observe. It is no different to become a sociologist, a medical doctor, a lawyer, or a fisher. To become skilled in your profession, you must first acquire the language of it; you must become literate.

The more complex the task is, the more nuanced the language you need and the longer the training takes. You must have concepts for things a lay person cannot see and therefore would not care about. Academics have a role to play in developing a more sophisticated language that enables us to see and understand the characteristics of small-scale fisheries, what they have in common and what is unique about them. Without this knowledge, and the language it is embedded in, governance failure is unavoidable. Governors will simply not know what they are doing.

Reading my essays

My essays are short and will not take much time to read. Therefore, I hope they will be used for classroom discussion or workshop deliberation as happened with the Japanese translation of Life above Water. For a newcomer to small-scale fisheries, the essays can function as the introduction to them. Essays are different from the standard research papers in scientific journals. They are more like magazine articles. Some of my essays have already appeared in other outlets, for instance in Samudra of ICSF, which had their own café table at the Hua Hin conference. I am a member of ICSF – The International Collective of Fishworkers. For me, this organization and its people have been an inspiration for decades.

The essays discuss issues that are complex but do not exhaust them in any way. Instead, they should be read as introductions to topics in small-scale fisheries that are often of a general nature, and which have an extensive

literature that is relevant to their analysis and governance. In this way, I hope my essays will inspire readers to follow them up. My reference list provides directions. The essays were not written in the sequence they appear in the book. They are stand-alone pieces and can be read in the order the reader may prefer. They do not build on each other, although the same theme is sometimes expanded upon in several chapters and discussed from different angles.

As the reader will see, I have found inspiration in the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines), which FAO initiated over ten years ago. Since I was part of the Norwegian delegation that negotiated them in 2013 and -14, I have personal reason for talking so much about them. The Guidelines deserve broad interest, and nothing will please me more that if I my essays can inspire academia to show interest in them. For me, the involvement was a unique learning opportunity that does not come so often to a university professor.

I was present when COFI, FAOs Committee of Fisheries, adopted them in June 2014, which was another learning opportunity. For small-scale fisheries the SSF Guidelines are a watershed moment, also for the academic community. Fisheries social scientists often complained they are never listened to. With the SSF Guidelines, they cannot say that anymore. There is hardly any issue in the social science of small-scale fisheries which is missed in the Guidelines. Now, when the work of social scientists has been taken seriously by such a prominent institution as the FAO, we have an obligation to contribute to their implementation.

The Guidelines are packed with observations, concepts, and arguments that are intriguing from a social science perspective. This trilogy can also be read as my contribution to their practical realization by helping to prepare governors and stakeholders for the problems, dilemmas, and opportunities they may encounter. I hope to have shown why the SSF Guidelines are both interesting from an academic perspective and why they are important from a social and political perspective.

A café guest in Hua Hin raised the question whether the essays are peer-reviewed. They we not in any formal way, like with a standard submission

to a scientific journal. But I have had friends and colleagues reading drafts. Ratana, who as TBTI director generously written the foreword to all three books, read all of them and provided useful suggestions that have improved my writing. Vesna Kerezi who has done the final editing, also provided valuable comments. I am grateful for their input. My wife Greta Jentoft has helped me with polishing the texts and to say things more clearly. The person asking the peer review question said that this should be enough, which I agree with.

Notably, these are personal essays, my own thoughts. It would feel awkward to be peer-reviewed as is routine for journal articles which I have published many over the years. A reader may well disagree with what I say, which is all fine if it triggers ideas in his or her own mind, if they would take the discourse of small-scale fisheries a step forward. Ideas, perspectives, and opinions are not written in stone. Our discourse is a work in progress, which is not likely to end as long as small-scale fisheries exist. This may not be the last thing I will write, but I seriously doubt that there will be a tetralogy – a fourth book in my TBTI essay series.

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