

NUMBERS VS. NARRATIVES: THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATING SOCIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVES IN SUSTAINABLE OCEANS MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

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THE HUMAN DIMENSION OF OCEAN MANAGEMENT

- Ocean management issues are not just technical problems, but rooted in human behaviour.
- Millions of people live in coastal areas and depend on ocean resources for their livelihoods, for sustenance and well-being.
- Oceans are part of complex socio-ecological systems that require understanding of both human and ecological dimensions.
- Management decisions must take into account social, economic and ecological data.



CALLS FOR INTEGRATING SOCIAL SCIENCES

- Solutions will require knowledge from social sciences such as sociology, anthropology, political science and psychology to understand how humans perceive the problems and will adapt and change their behaviour.
- The UN Decade for Oceans: “the science we need for the ocean we want” and ‘Ocean Science’ should be interpreted broadly as encompassing: social sciences and human dimensions
- However, social sciences to date have not been integrated well into policy making processes which typically give priority to natural sciences and economics.



OCEAN MANAGEMENT IN ABOUT TRADE-OFFS

- Dealing with marine environmental dilemmas requires understanding the trade-offs between environmental protection, social justice and economic development.
- Making decisions about trade-offs is fundamentally a problem of ethics, habits, values, institutions, beliefs and power – all areas of expertise of the social sciences.
- By creating different possible narratives, social sciences further help us imagine possible future relationships between the ocean, its resources and society.

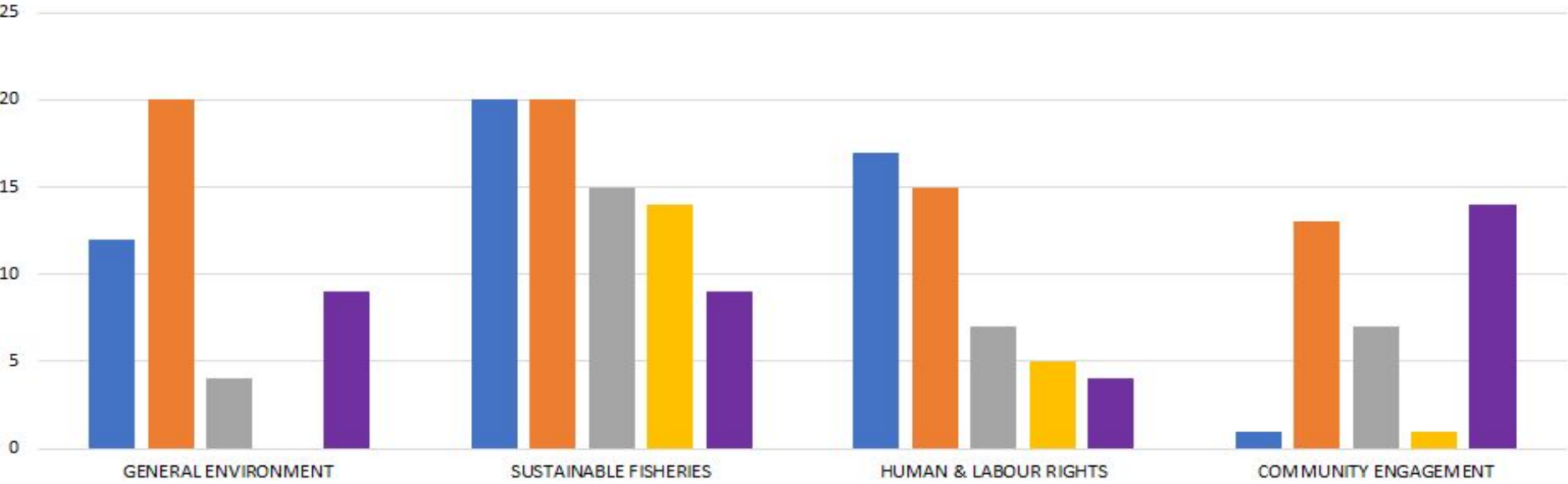


USING SOCIAL SCIENCES TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF COMPANIES IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

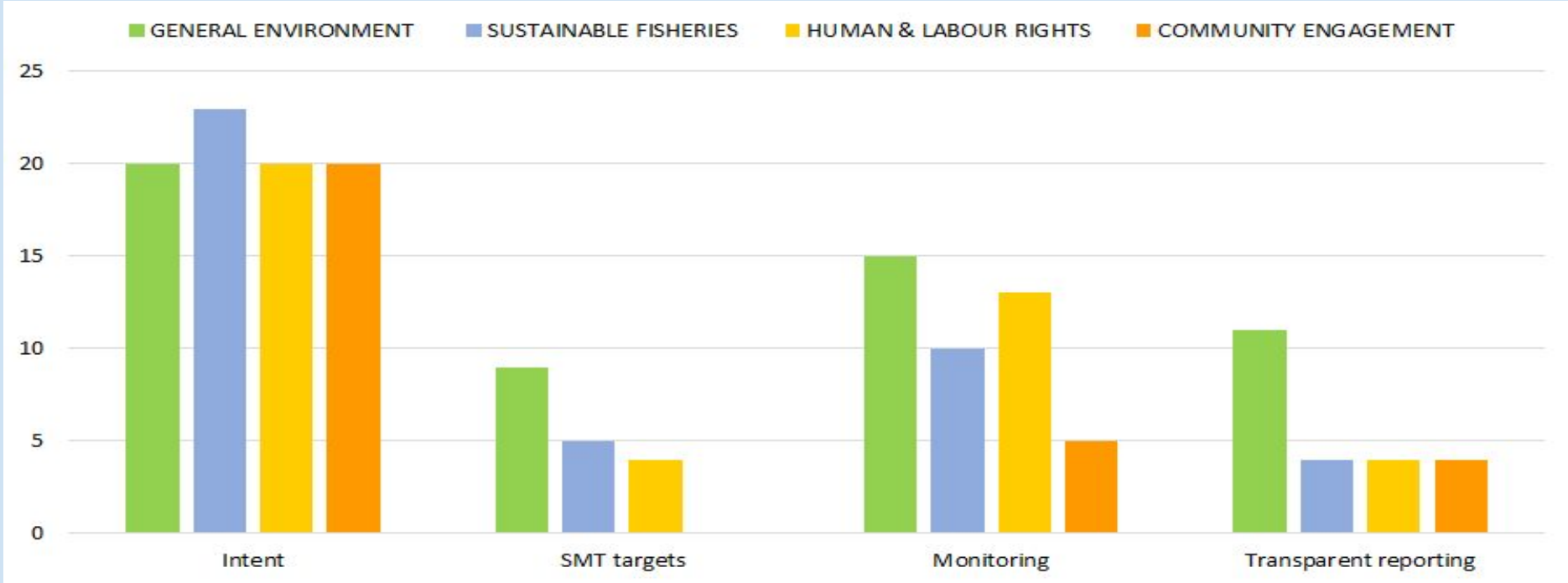
- The role of businesses in contributing to sustainable development and the welfare of society is changing. In line with Sustainable Development Goals 12, 14 and 17's, governments and NGOs are calling on the private sector to play their part in the sustainable development of fisheries.
- The changing expectations of businesses are given effect through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). However, it remains unclear how seafood companies are supporting the SDGs through their CSR programs.
- Global seafood supply chains and seafood markets are keystone actors in marine socio-ecological systems with the 13 largest companies handling 11% of global fish catch.

HOW ARE SEAFOOD COMPANIES ENGAGING IN SUSTAINABILITY?

■ Supply chain control ■ Internal/direct improvements/actions ■ Partnerships ■ Guiding government ■ Philanthropy/Awareness



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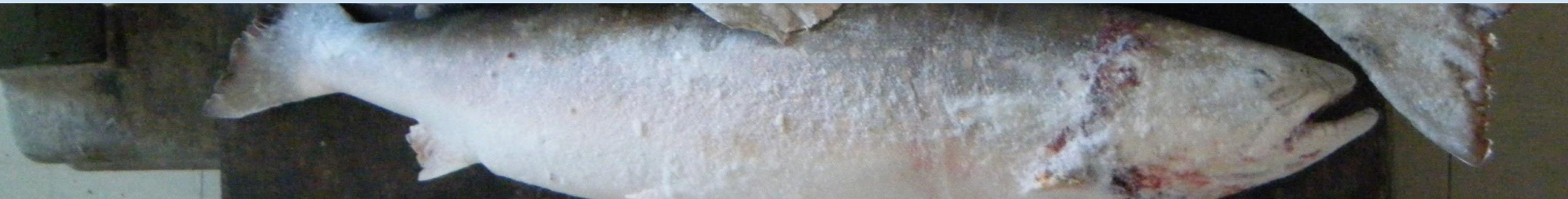
INSIGHTS ON THE ROLE OF SEAFOOD COMPANIES IN GOVERNING SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

- Through their purchasing power, seafood companies can impose sustainability standards on their supply chains, including fisheries.
- However, private sustainability standards used by companies must address social, environmental and economic issues holistically, especially in small-scale fisheries.
- Companies must allow for fisher participation in the definition and implementation of standards.



USING SOCIAL SCIENCE TO EXPLORE BETTER WAYS TO MANAGE NUNAVUT FISHERIES BASED ON INUIT WORLDVIEWS

- In 1993, after 25 years of negotiations, the Inuit of the Eastern Canadian Arctic and the Canadian federal government signed the Nunavut Lands Claim Agreement (NLCA), a modern treaty mainly dealing with land and water rights (and creating the Territory of Nunavut in 1999).
- In addition, the NLCA established the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) as the main instrument of wildlife management.



IQ AND SCIENCE: TWO WAYS OF BEING AND KNOWING

- Through the NWMB, wildlife management in Nunavut is under a co-management regime, bringing together harvester and government representatives.
- NWMB's mission is to conserve wildlife through the application of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ, the Inuit worldview, "what Inuit have always known") and scientific knowledge, two knowledge systems that are based on very different philosophical underpinnings.
- How to bring them together as equals to manage fisheries sustainably is a problem of beliefs, values, habits, institutions, and, ultimately, power.



FROM MULTIDISCIPLINARITY TO TRANSDISCIPLINARITY

several academic disciplines

more than one branch of knowledge

- Subsistence fishing and hunting are social-ecological systems that are best understood by combining data from the natural and social sciences.
- However, the Inuit view of the complexity of wildlife management cannot be understood based on Western premises. Indigenous knowledges exist outside of Western science, which does not mean they are less valid.



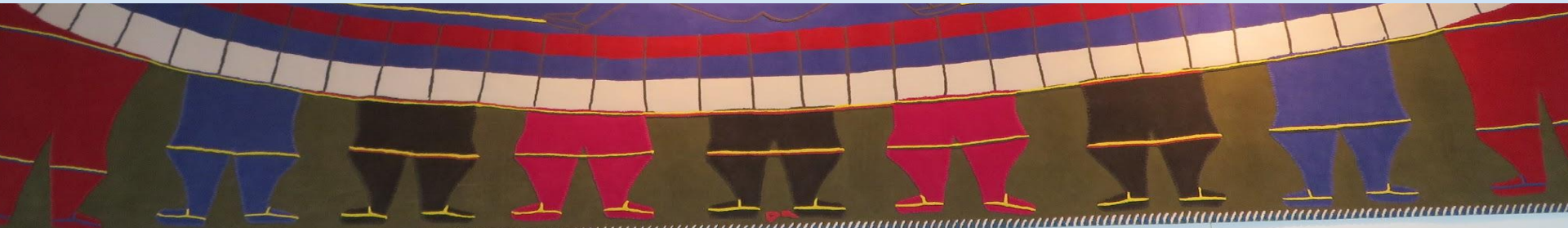
COLLABORATION AMONG AND BEYOND DISCIPLINES

- When working with Indigenous peoples, Western science (natural and social) is not enough to understand human behaviour.
- To access Indigenous worldviews and Indigenous science, Indigenous methods are needed. How to do this as a non-Indigenous researcher, is a conundrum.
- Co-production of knowledge, i.e. a collaborative exploration of different interpretations of knowledge, can facilitate such research and has been found to improve co-management approaches when done openly and honestly.



CONCLUSION

- The future of the sustainability of our oceans will depend on the ability of scientific and policy making communities to integrate knowledge from social sciences and natural sciences.
- Ultimately, achieving sustainable oceans is about understanding and managing human systems and behaviours and their impact on the oceans.



A photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is a bright yellow circle in the upper right, with a pink and orange glow around it. The sky transitions from pink to blue. The ocean is dark blue with white-capped waves.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING A LOOK!

Questions, comments, concerns?

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