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# Poverty, sustainability and human wellbeing: A social wellbeing approach to the global fisheries crisis

Sarah Coulthard <sup>a</sup> ... J. Allister McGregor <sup>c</sup>

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the extent to which a social wellbeing approach can offer a useful way of addressing the policy challenge of reconciling poverty and environmental objectives for development policy makers. In order to provide detail from engagement with a specific policy challenge it takes as its illustrative example the global fisheries crisis. This crisis portends not only an environmental disaster but also a catastrophe for human development and for the millions of people directly dependent upon fish resources for their livelihoods and food security. The paper presents the argument for framing the policy problem using a social conception of human wellbeing, suggesting that this approach provides insights which have the potential to improve fisheries policy and governance. By broadening the scope of analysis to consider values, aspirations and motivations and by focusing on the wide range of social relationships

that are integral to people achieving their wellbeing, it provides a basis for better understanding the competing interests in fisheries which generate conflict and which often undermine existing policy regimes.

## Research highlights

• A social conception of human wellbeing can potentially improve fisheries policy. • Analysis of values, aspirations and motivations reveals competing interests. • Competing interests and wellbeing losses can undermine conservation policy. • Centralizing the social human being in policy analysis can elucidate trade-offs. • A wellbeing approach can help recognize the hard choices in fisheries governance.



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## Keywords

Fisheries; Social wellbeing; Poverty and governance

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