Cultural Ecosystem Services and Sense of Place: a Process Driven Relational Perspective

For submission to the session "**Cultural ecosystem services: Frontiers in theory and practice**".

Summary

Marine ecology, through the process of marine fishing, drives a series of terrestrial relationships that are woven into material and phenomenological worlds. Using sense of place and cultural ecosystem services we explore how fishing practice is enrolled into community relationships and discuss how emergent cultural values contribute to developing narratives about sustainable communities. Drawing on insights from Actor Network Theory and non-representational theory marine fishing activity can be seen to drive a series of translations through which cultural value and ecosystem benefits emerge. This has applied implications for fisheries management by making visible relations that might otherwise be hidden in studies that focus on ecological and economic dimensions of fisheries management. Conceptual perspectives are reported in the context of empirical work carried out on inshore fishing as part of two INTERREG IVA funded projects, CHARM III and GIFS.

Extended abstract

Marine ecology, through the process of marine fishing, drives a series of terrestrial relationships that are woven into material and phenomenological worlds. Using sense of place and cultural ecosystem services (CES) we explore how fishing practice is enrolled into community relationships and discuss how emergent cultural values contribute to developing narratives about sustainable communities. This has applied implications for fisheries management by making visible relations that might otherwise be hidden in studies that focus on ecological and economic dimensions of fisheries management alone. Aligning sense of place with cultural ecosystem services has the potential to provide a policy-relevant context within which the contribution of marine fisheries to sustainable community development can be articulated. Through sense of place coastal towns can be understood as complex entanglements of nature and society where marine fishing acts as a process of identity creation connecting the often-unseen undersea world with places on land. This might be through direct experience of fishermen, or indirectly through the way fishing activities spill out into coastal locations (place character, community identity, personal identity). The focus is, therefore, to understand place making as processes that span different environmental settings of the sea and land. In using sense of place as a lens to understand these processes, we explore relationships created and in part driven by marine fishing.

Part of the marine ecosystem service is a direct experience of fishing and being at sea, but further aspects emerge as the idea of fishing gets incorporated into the socio-cultural mix of different places. Mechanisms are needed to incorporate this process-driven, relational understanding into fisheries policy, coastal zone management and sustainable community development more broadly. The popular categories of supporting, provisioning, regulating and cultural services need to take better account of relationships between material and subjective worlds. Possible conceptual frameworks for building this approach include actor network theory (Latour, 2005), hybrid geography (Whatmore, 2002) and non-representational theory (Thrift, 2007). Actor network theory (ANT), as an example of a non-dualistic approach, offers the potential to explore processes and relations driven by the activity of marine fishing. ANT is co-constructionist and can be used to identify "how relations and entities come into being together" (Murdoch, 2001, pg. 111).

To plan for a sustainable future for fishing communities, an understanding is needed of the multiple cultural ecosystem values that result and spill out from the act of fishing. In developing a sense of place / CES methodology we drew on the empirical results of two ERDF Interreg IVA co-funded projects CHARM (Channel Integrated Approach for Marine Resource Management) and GIFS (Geography of Inshore Fishing and Sustainability). The study area included fishing communities located in Southern England, Northern France, Belgium and the Southern Netherlands. Mixed methodologies were used including a narrative approach where the voices of the participants were allowed to emerge and tell the story of the importance of marine fishing in their lives and the places in which they live. This was combined with the use of photography and photo-elicitation methods to explore the cultural values of inshore fisheries in coastal towns. A quantitative questionnaire approach was also developed and implemented. Understanding cultural values requires interdisciplinary approaches that span positivist and interpretivist approaches and further extend into the arts and humanities. As creative approaches are used to explore cultural values the distinction between value creation and value elicitation becomes important. The creation of cultural values through writing, painting, photography etc. is an important element of understanding the process of narrative creation for coastal towns with inshore fishing fleets.

The idea of translation can be used as a way of expressing the changes that occur as ecosystems are used or perceived by people. The language draws from ANT and considers relations between different entities in terms of translations leading to particular network outcomes. Inshore fisheries can be understood as processes driving a series of translations that connect marine and terrestrial environments. These translations can be understood as co-constructed with a non-representational dimension existing prior to the creation of cultural value as material relations are socially constructed. As the process of translation continues it becomes evident that many ecosystem benefits are not obtained directly from ecosystems, rather they are derived somewhere down the line as a result of human use and management. We

explore this idea in the context of the multiple cultural values created as a result of inshore fishing activity.

References:

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