



Aim

This study explores existing evidence relating to social, economic and cultural outcomes from fishing and to whom they accrue with the aim of addressing the evidence gap relating to data on social impacts that can inform fisheries and marine management processes, including FMPs.

Introduction and methodology

The UK government has committed to build “a vibrant and sustainable UK fishing industry”. This requires evidence that sets out the complex and interlinked social, cultural and economic outcomes fisheries provide, acknowledging these accrue to those involved in the fishing sector and also their families, the occupational communities they form and the place-based communities to which they belong. Such evidence will help to understand how to build resilience in the fisheries sector and support the MMO in its wider work on marine conservation, planning and licensing. This study developed a wellbeing focused conceptual framework drawing on commonly used sustainability and wellbeing frameworks. A quick scoping review (QSR) was undertaken to identify existing evidence of wellbeing outcomes from fishing and the barriers and enablers to the realisation of these outcomes. Based on the findings of the QSR a list of testable social wellbeing indicators was developed, which have potential for evaluating changes in wellbeing resulting from fisheries management change.

Results

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) highlights fishing as a cultural practice that facilitates and enables the realisation of material, subjective and relational wellbeing outcomes. It shows how the capital assets a fisher, their family and occupational and place-based communities can access, use and transform shape the fishing practices undertaken and enable the realisation of different wellbeing outcomes, which in turn shape fishing practices. Governance, management and other sources of change are central to the framework to illustrate that they affect all other components. The QSR provides an overview of the literature on wellbeing outcomes from fishing in the UK. The QSR highlights evidence of material wellbeing outcomes of fishing including economic factors, such as income and employment from fishing, the fishing supply chain and related sectors such as tourism, as well as health outcomes, skills and knowledge. Subjective wellbeing outcomes were not well captured in the literature, with available evidence relating primarily to occupation identity and job satisfaction. Evidence for relational wellbeing outcomes relate to intergenerational ties, social cohesion, relationships with place, place identity and group identity, and relationships with policy and management. The QSR also provided insights into barriers and enablers that hinder and facilitate the realisation of wellbeing outcomes, although the evidence for this is limited. Based on the outcomes of the QSR, a list of suggested indicators was identified that could be used to measure the extent to which commercial fishing contributes to material, subjective and relational wellbeing outcomes, but in many cases the data underpinning the indicators are not yet collected or used. To be operationalised, the indicators will need further refinement, testing, prioritisation and reduction into a composite set of measures that can be utilised in a real-world context

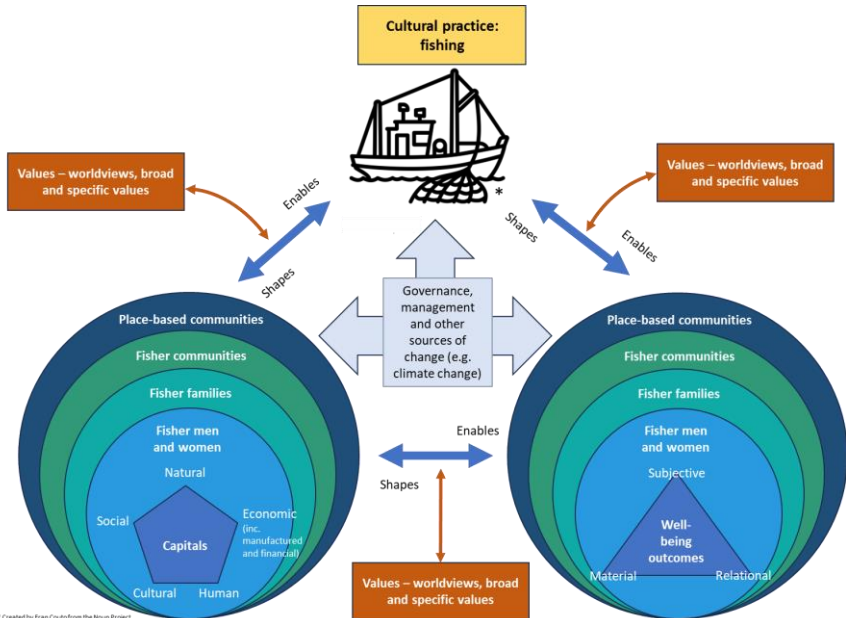


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for understanding wellbeing outcomes.

Conclusions and recommendations

Through development of a conceptual framework and a series of potential wellbeing indicators, this project provides an important step towards understanding wellbeing outcomes of fisheries and the basis for understanding how to further develop the evidence base. To take the outcomes of this research further and to operationalise the conceptual framework and indicators, the following next steps are recommended:

- Test assumptions within the framework with decision-makers and fisheries stakeholders
- Test fisher perceptions of wellbeing outcomes from management measures
- Refine and prioritise indicators to a manageable set for inclusion in existing collection instruments
- Undertake a large-scale, cross-UK, exercise to collect consistent data to assess material, subjective and relational outcomes.
- Assess the sensitivity of wellbeing outcomes to change

MMO comments

This project provides important foundational understanding to strengthen MMO’s evidence base of the social values of fisheries and support development of FMPs and other fisheries and marine management processes. There are some gaps in reported wellbeing outcomes, such as positive mental health impacts of fishing. These may represent true evidence gaps or be a product of the QSR. More research is needed to support a comprehensive understanding of fisheries wellbeing outcomes.

Further information

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