

## Introduction to the Special Issue on Job Satisfaction in Fisheries in the Global South

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### 1. Opening remarks

Job satisfaction has attracted the attention of researchers, policy makers and the general public. The reason is simple: work consumes much of an individual's time and job satisfaction tends to affect one's general sense of wellbeing (Pollnac et al, 2001; Pollnac and Poggie, 2006; Pollnac and Poggie, 2008). Research on job satisfaction has demonstrated that it is a factor influencing the health of workers both physical and psychological (Faragher, Cass, and Cooper, 2005; Fisher and Sousa-Poza, 2007; Pollnac et al., 2001). Job satisfaction is also considered to be a predecessor of turnover intent of workers (Lambert, Hogan, Barton, 2001), and therefore highly relevant for the field of human resource management (Cranny, Smith & Stone, 1992).

Job satisfaction pertains to a subjective, individual-level feeling that reflects whether a person's needs are or are not being met by a particular job (Lambert, Barton and Hogan, 1999). It results from the employee's comparison of actual outcomes with those that are expected, needed, wanted, or perceived to be fair or just (Lambert, Hogan and Barton, 2001).

This special issue deals with job satisfaction in an unusual profession – capture fishing – and a geographical context – the global south - that does not figure in most studies of this nature. After all, job satisfaction theory has a strong foundation in industrial societies of the north.

The fisheries sector provides livelihood and employment to 45 million people worldwide (of whom 90% live in the global south<sup>1</sup>) and is one of the world's most important sources of animal protein, yet even the most impervious observers of world affairs will not have failed to notice that capture fisheries are in severe crisis (FAO 2008, World Bank 2008, Worms *et al.* 2003.). Better fisheries governance is considered imperative (Kooiman et al. 2005; Costanza *et al.* 1998). For this purpose, scientists of various disciplines have developed assessment tools to establish the costs and benefits of various fisheries. Such assessments are carried out from the perspectives of ecology, economics, and the social sciences (Thorpe et al. 2001) and a multidisciplinary and consilience approach (Failler and Pan, 2007).

Social scientists study the social value of fisheries and the implications of fisheries decline in a comparative perspective. Job satisfaction studies are a valuable tool for this effort as they provide results that are comparable across different fisheries and geographical regions. As fisheries managers strive to reduce, or at least contain, the amount of fishing effort, and thereby increase the ecological sustainability of fisheries, the question to what extent fishers are attached to their profession is an important one (Muallil et al. 2011). Previous studies suggest that fishing is often more than just another occupation, and that fishers have strong attachments to their work (Pollnac and Poggie, 2008; Pollnac et al., 2001; Acheson, 1981, 1988; van Ginkel, 2007; Smith and Clay 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> Definition global south plus reference

## 2. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction investigations commenced in the 1930s (Locke, 1969, Bruk-Lee et al., 2009) but took a flight in the 1960s and 1970s with the rapid development of labour studies (Marshall, 1994:707). Maslow (1954) – who suggested that human needs form a five-level hierarchy ranging from physical needs, safety, belongingness and love, esteem to self-actualization - was particularly influential in this effort (Lu, While and Barriball, 2005). Following a Maslowian line of thought, job satisfaction was approached from the perspective of need fulfillment (see Kuhlen, 1963; Worf, 1970; Conrad et al., 1985). In more recent years an attitudinal perspective has been added to the study of job satisfaction (Spector, 1997).

Some of the main discussions in the job satisfaction literature concern determinants. Locke (1969) has argued that the origins of job satisfaction could be located: 1) either exclusively in the job, 2) exclusively in the worker's mind, or 3) as a consequence of an interaction between the worker and his work environment. Nearly three decades later Spector (1997:30) distinguishes two categories of antecedents: individual factors and factors related to the nature of the job and its environment.

The first category of studies investigates the relation between personality traits and job satisfaction (Bruk-Lee et al., 2009). Pollnac and Poggie (2006, 2008) have thus argued that individuals with a personality type that can be characterized as active, adventurous, aggressive, and courageous seek out activities (including work) that satisfy these needs. The fishing occupation is one of these. Economists have focused on a range of related issues, such as how relative income or union membership and the role of gender affect job satisfaction (REF?).

The second category relates to the nature of the job and its environment and job satisfaction. There is thus a growing literature on what makes a good job and how the attributes that employees seek for impacts job satisfaction (see examples in Smyth, Zhai, and Li, 2009).

Scholars have generated a variety of tools for assessing job satisfaction, which allow for adaptation to specific purposes and work fields. The job satisfaction studies that were undertaken in fisheries have largely been based on Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs (Bavinck and Monnereau 2007), distinguishing three basic categories: views on the fulfillment of basic needs, social needs, and needs of self-actualization. In order to measure the results hereof in fisheries, Pollnac and Poggie (1988) designed and tested a list of 22 items, which included two questions on overall job satisfaction. The first asks whether a fisher would still go into fishing if he had his life to live over again; the second whether or not he would advise a young man to go into fishing. Other scholars made small modifications to this original set of items yet maintained its overall structure. Comparing these approaches, Binkley (1995) concluded that despite the use of additional indicators all studies yielded similar results.

In line with global job satisfaction studies, job satisfaction studies in fisheries have been plentiful, but mostly based in North America (see Pollnac and Poggie, 1979; Smith 1981, Apostle et al., 1985; Gatewood and McCay, 1988, 1990). This regional bias has generated a corpus of studies on human populations that possess a large measure of cultural homogeneity. Moreover, the fisheries that were included are more-or-less industrialized and integrated into the world economy, to the neglect of

smaller-scale fisheries in different cultural settings. Slowly, however, job satisfaction studies in other regions have been gaining ground (Pollnac et al., 2001; Monnereau, Ruiz and Pollnac, 2010; Pollnac et al, 2010). An international comparison of job satisfaction in fisheries has, however, not been carried out, and the present volume constitutes a unique test of the methodology.

This special issue will appeal to a broad audience of practitioners, researchers, and policymakers interested in 1) research on job satisfaction in general and of fisheries in particular, and 2) development of job satisfaction research tools in the global south.

#### Methodology for the present study

This special issue is rooted in an interdisciplinary research project with the acronym ECOST, which was funded by the European Commission FP6 program in the period 2005-2010.<sup>2</sup> The aim of the ECOST project was to assess the societal costs (ecological, economic and social) of fishing activities and policies in three regions (the Caribbean, West Africa and South and East Asia) in order to contribute to a better management of aquatic resources which affect sustainable development in coastal zones around the world. For the purpose, the ECOST project has developed an Integrated Social-Economic-Ecological model for Fisheries management (called the ECOST model hereafter). This model is structured with three modules each of which intends to characterize some relevant aspects of social, economic and ecological systems, respectively. At the heart of the model stands a fisheries economic module describing the fisheries economy; within the model the economic module is extended to the areas of fisheries sociology and biology or ecology where social and ecological aspects of fisheries are modelled following appropriate theory and methodology, respectively; under the model the three modules are interconnected through established links so that any changes in a system will automatically affect other systems and also take other systems' reaction into account. In particular, the linkage between social and economic systems is made through income distribution and fishing community well-being (where job satisfaction indicator plays a key role), the linkage between economic and ecological systems is made through changes in fish stock and marine environment, and the linkage between social and ecological systems is made through social response to environmental problems, concerns and states. This design enables us to evaluate fisheries management and policies from social, economic and ecological dimensions.

The ECOST project included a selection of social scientists from these areas as well as from Europe, who investigated job satisfaction among different fishing métiers (combination of a type of boat, type of gear and a targeted species). For the purpose of comparison, the team, which was later augmented by Richard Pollnac from the University of Rhode Island, first reviewed and amended the job satisfaction assessment tool, which was developed for North American purposes. A revised version of the assessment tool was subsequently tested on a selection of fishing métiers that are of importance in the countries concerned. This special issue reports on the studies carried out: two in Asia (Thailand and India), two in West Africa (Senegal

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<sup>2</sup> The full title of the project (nr 003711) is *Ecosystems, Societies, Consilience and the Precautionary Principle: Development of an Assessment Method to Establish the Societal Cost of Best Fishing Practices and Efficient Public Policies* (see [www.ecostproject.org](http://www.ecostproject.org)). ECOST was coordinated by the University of Portsmouth (UK) and involved 22 partners across three geographical regions.

and Guinea Bissau) and four in the Caribbean (Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Belize).

The social scientists involved in ECOST reviewed the Pollnac and Poggie (1988) list of 22 items of job satisfaction in a preparatory workshop in Amsterdam (1-3 Nov. 2006). The objective was twofold: (a) to adapt the list of indicators to more adequately reflect the concerns of fishers in developing country settings, and (b) to include issues of current concern, such as management and resource depletion. As a result of this consensual review, the list expanded to 32 items, organized in 6 categories. All (?) of the original indicators were included in the new list, for purposes also of comparison with North American findings<sup>3</sup> (see table 1 below).

TABLE 1 here.

In comparison with the original Pollnac and Poggie (1988) list, the differences are as follows:

*Category 1: Basic needs*

- addition of food security concern (question 10 regarding the ability to feed your family).

*Category 2: Social needs*

- No changes

*Category 3: Self-actualization*

- No changes

*Category 4: Management*

This is a nearly completely new category of six questions which considers views on conflict and conflict resolution, rules and regulations, performance of government officials, possibilities for participation, and overall management. In Pollnac and Poggie (1988) there was only one question on the performance of state and federal officials. This question was included (??).

*Category 5: Nature*

This too is an entirely new category of items with only two questions: views on the condition of the landing place, and views on the condition of fish stocks.

*Category 6: General questions*

In addition to the two original questions, the new survey enquired into the wish to move from one into another fishing métier.

Upon completion of the English language survey, the researchers translated the list into various local languages. Each social scientist subsequently conducted a representative sample of surveys among fishers participating in a fishing métier, also distinguishing between positions such as skipper or crew member.

Papers on the basis of these initial results were first presented and discussed at the MARE People and the Sea: Who owns the coast? Conference (Amsterdam, 2007). Additional field research was subsequently carried out to validate earlier findings.

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<sup>3</sup> Pollnac, et al (2011) found striking commonalities between an analysis of the same job satisfaction attributes in New England, Alaska & several Caribbean nations.

### This special issue

The seven papers that make up this special issue are organized geographically. The first two papers refer to small-scale fisheries in West Africa, with cases in Guinea Bissau and Senegal. In both cases the people involved are small-scale fishers. This region boasts a rich marine ecology and a large and growing fishing population. Important issues include the fishing agreements which have been concluded with the European Union, the implementation of Marine Protected Areas (MPA), and the existence of a large Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) industrial fishery, both of which are believed to impinge on the opportunities of small-scale fishers.

The next three papers relate to important fisheries in South and South-East Asia, in the countries of Vietnam, India, and Thailand. FAO (2010) notes that the largest concentration of fishers in the world lives in Asia (85%), and that this population is steadily increasing. At the same time there are concerns about the longer term sustainability of the fisheries. The fisheries studied in Vietnam and India for this issue are semi-industrial shrimp trawl fisheries. In Thailand, however, the fishers use a variety of small-scale fishing gears.

The final set of papers discusses job satisfaction in the mosaic of nations that comprise the Wider Caribbean. One paper has a specific country setting (the Dominican Republic) while the second paper makes a comparison between three countries (Belize, Jamaica and Nicaragua) with regard to the important lobster fisheries. Although the Caribbean does not host any of the world's major fisheries, the sector is often important for local employment and food security. The fishery of the Dominican Republic is of a small-scale using a variety of gears. In Nicaragua and Jamaica an industrial fishery also exists, but the main target of fishers in this paper relates to small-scale lobster fishers.

The special issue is therefore comprised of a mixture of small-scale and semi-industrial fisheries using a variety of gears and targeting a variety of species. The concluding paper aims to provide a comparative analysis of the various country data and the perspectives on job satisfaction studies in the future. Taken together, the articles in this special issue provide a comprehensive framework for the validation of job satisfaction research, complement earlier research on job satisfaction carried out in the North, and add to current research being undertaken in development studies on wellbeing. In addition, it aims to introduce novel ideas to the agenda of job satisfaction in fisheries. We hope this special issue serves as a useful resource for researchers and users of the job satisfaction tool and of other large-scale assessment social indicator projects pertaining to the wellbeing of fishers. In particular, we hope that the ideas and findings presented in this issue contribute the practices and decisions made by managers and decision makers, namely, to advance fishers' satisfaction with their job, and the wellbeing of their families, and their communities. Additionally, an understanding of job satisfaction among fishers will assist in developing management plans that can provide for appropriate alternative occupations for fishers displaced by necessary reductions in effort.

### References

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