



# Marine fisheries and sense of place in coastal communities in southern England: the challenge for policy makers

Dr Julie Urquhart  
Dr Tim Acott



# Channel Integrated Approach to Marine Resource Management (CHARM III)



Programme INTERREG IIA  
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Atlas des Habitats des Ressources Marines de la Manche Orientale  
Eastern Channel Habitat Atlas for Marine Resource Management

Projet CHARM  
CHARM Project

Realisé sous la direction de  
André Carpentier  
Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer

Realised under the supervision of  
Stuart Harrop  
University of Kent

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# University of Greenwich: Project Aims

- To explore the social and cultural impacts of marine fisheries on coastal communities
- Looking at the contribution and importance of marine fishing to: place identity, cultural heritage, sense of place and social capital.
- To inform the development of fisheries policy



# Rationale

- Most fisheries policy and research has centred around biological and economic objectives (Clay & McGoodwin 1995; Symes & Hoefnagel 2010)
- Increasing recognition of need to include social objectives in fisheries & marine policy
- Active fishing communities contribute to local social fabric, culture & image of an area & its use for marketing (e.g. Tourism)

*"[The] Integrated Maritime Policy should also promote Europe's maritime heritage, supporting maritime communities, including port-cities and traditional fisheries communities, their artefacts and traditional skills, and promoting links between them that enhance their knowledge and visibility."*

(Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU Blue Paper 2007)



# It's not just about the fish!



# Study Areas

Devon – Brixham

Cornwall – Cadgwith, Helford River, Mullion Cove, Newlyn, Pembroth, Porthleven, The Lizard, Mevagissey, Sennen Cove



Kent – Whitstable

East Sussex – Hastings, Rye

Normandy –  
Boulogne-sur-mer,  
Fecamp

Brittany – Paimpol

Normandy – Barfleur,  
St Vaast



# Methods

- In-depth semi-structured interviews(to date: Hastings 19; Cornwall 39; Brixham 19; Whitstable 5)
  - Fishermen
  - Fishing associations/industry
  - Tourism providers
  - Museums/heritage
  - Artists/galleries
- Intertwined with material culture study





# Place and Identity

- Way of life
- Sense of belonging
- Rootedness
- Heart & soul of community



“It’s in my blood, when you speak with a lot of fisherman they will always say the same, once a fisherman always a fisherman” (Fisherman, Mullion Cove)



# Place Character

- “Fishing Clutter”/Real place
- Activities
- Smell / Sounds

“You don’t want places to feel like a museum”  
(Tourism provider, Mevagissey)



# Tourism

- Romanticization
- Expectations of visitors



“It’s all part of the image of Cornwall as well isn’t it, you know you see... in tourism books and there’s always little ports” (Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committee)

“There is a certain romantic appeal of somebody getting out of bed at 4 o’clock in the morning, getting in a little boat on their own and going and earning their living” (Fisherman, Sennen)



“Being in a place where there are real live people that you can talk to in the pub or on the harbourside does bring things to life, I think again it adds another dimension to people’s holiday the fact that they’re not living in some museum” (VisitCornwall tourism manager)

# The Product

- Provenance
- Branding/marketing associated with place e.g. Cornish sardine

“That sense of place is really important on all levels. You know whether it’s for the local community or for the tourists. You know the fact that you’re coming here and you’re eating something that was caught by that man there, just out there is special. That authenticity of experience as well as keeping it real.” (Museum & Gallery Director, Cornwall)



# Conclusions

- Understanding how marine fishing contributes to the character, identity, cultural heritage and social cohesion of coastal communities can help to shape more sustainable fisheries and coastal policies
- Role of fishing and place for the regeneration of coastal towns

*“The most endangered species on the water is fishermen”*  
(Hastings fisherman)



Proposed INTERREG 4a 2 Seas Project

# GIFS

## Geography of Inshore Fishing & Sustainability

- Coastal zone governance and marine fishing
- Fishing places and community
- Economy and regeneration in fishing communities
- Demonstration regeneration project at Arnemuiden, Netherlands

Contact: [GIFS@greenwich.ac.uk](mailto:GIFS@greenwich.ac.uk)