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Editorial: Fishing for human perceptions in coastal and island marine resource use systems, volume II

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Editorial on the Research Topic

Fishing for human perceptions in coastal and island marine resource use systems, volume II

This Research Topic is the second volume or Relaunch of “*Fishing for human perceptions in coastal and island marine resource use systems*”, which can be found here. As human perceptions, decision-making and (pro-) environmental behaviour are closely connected, there continues to be an increasing interest for research evolving around perception studies, and how their use and value in academia, research and decision-making can be improved by stronger multilateral acknowledgement and tailored integration.

The 14 articles of Volume 1 have so far received 95,909 total views, and the articles were downloaded 14,854 times so far (accessed on 06/10/2023), clearly showing the academic interest in and importance of this research field of environmental (and in this case coastal and marine) perceptions. From this first assemblage, the Volume 2 Research Topic Relaunch continues to re-unite perceptions and behaviour in coastal resource use systems, in a short time accumulating 17 authors with four articles, viewed roughly 8,5k times and downloaded more than 1000 times (accessed on 06/10/2023). With increasing acknowledgement of the importance of participatory approaches for individual and collective agency and social equity in marine resource use and governance (e.g. related to the ‘30 by 30’ target), the inter- and transdisciplinary international research community keeps growing. The interests encompass research which integrates perceptions of local residents, local and regional stakeholder groups, as well as resource and environmental managers and decision-makers. By acknowledging the importance of the individual perspective and interest-led personal views, it becomes increasingly obvious how valuable and critical these sources of information are for coastal research and sustainability considerations and transformations. An increase of research effort spent on the connection between perceptions and behaviour in marine resource use systems, therefore, continues to be both timely and needed. The submissions for Volume 2 of

this Research Topic were welcomed from all disciplines, presenting inclusive inter- and transdisciplinary approaches. The Relaunch's contributors were free to explore global, regional or local multi-level examples and discourses from the individual resource-user level to the decision-making level.

With this relaunch, we thus carry on with fishing for a diversity of inspiring and comprehensive contributions on the link between perceptions and human-environment interactions. The four contributions truly show this diversity in approaches, from more theoretical and philosophical considerations (Omstedt and Gustavsson) to very concrete case studies from the small-scale fisheries sector (Nogué-Algueró et al., Kitolelei et al.), and from an individual's study (Kitolelei et al.) to experiences and lessons from a large research project (Rivers et al.). The authors use mainly qualitative approaches in order to critically enlighten and advance the discourse and applicability of research on perceptions of stake- and knowledge-holders - for finding sustainable, locally identified, and integrated human-ocean connections and pathways.

For this - as highlighted by Omstedt and Gustavsson - an integration of the various perspectives existing around the management of marine and coastal social-ecological systems is needed, including human perceptions and behaviour, philosophy, and other scientific disciplines. Valuably, the article discusses the respective challenges of atomistic and holistic views, and the importance of balancing particular and universal claims in understanding and preserving the marine environment. Part of this holistic perspective and complex knowledge is also provided by contextually anchored local knowledge - such as the 'hidden gems' investigated in Fiji by Kitolelei et al. Here, the authors highlight and discuss the crucial role fisherwomen play in this South Pacific island state, relying on indigenous and local knowledge to sustain their families by harvesting marine and freshwater resources. Together with Rivers et al., who draw from the lessons learnt from the Algoa Bay Project in South Africa, both articles highlight the importance of recognizing and valuing indigenous and local knowledge of coastal and marine resources (incl. the cultural, economic, historical, and political contexts), and argue how their integration can lead to better fisheries management and resource conservation. In this respect, both articles present pathways to bridge the (partly real, partly potential) gap between existing local knowledge and current management approaches, emphasizing the need for and benefit of collaboration and transparency. The fourth article shows an intense case of collective action, powered by such local knowledge and a strong sense of local identity and agency, and leading to a shift in fisheries governance from externally imposed limits to collective self-limitation (Nogué-Algueró et al., focusing on small-scale fisheries off the Catalan coast in Spain). Nogué-Algueró et al. argue for the adoption of a (new or old)? ethos of collective self-limitation to protect and benefit local communities and the environment, thereby coming full circle with the philosophical and practical considerations made by Omstedt and Gustavsson. Each of the four articles addresses different aspects of marine and coastal management, including the integration of diverse knowledge

systems, the role of gender in resource management, the concept of limits in fisheries, and the importance of recognizing indigenous and local knowledge in coastal and ocean management. To discuss and possibly define the limits of people's agency to acknowledge, manage and adapt to external forces that are often beyond their control can be seen as an overarching challenge for all the papers brought together under this Research Topic (Volumes 1 + 2), and one which will substantially increase in importance in the upcoming years, where nations will (have to) rush to meet international targets by 2030 (e.g., SDGs, CBD, KMGBF). In conclusion, these articles show that research on perceptions - showing, releasing and using the power of reflections and speculations based on observations - has the potential to increase people's agency in decision-making processes, and thus forms an increasingly important ingredient of the material laid out for the road ahead towards sustainable, responsible and equitable marine and coastal resource use.

Author contributions

AB: Conceptualization, Project administration, Supervision, Validation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing. BR: Methodology, Supervision, Writing - review & editing. W-CW: Methodology, Project administration, Writing - review & editing. HS: Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Writing - review & editing.

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Conflict of interest

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