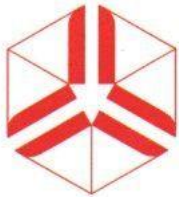


Analysis of Power in Fisheries Co-management: Experiences from Mbenji Island, Lake Malawi

Friday Njaya
Department of Fisheries
Malawi

Acknowledgements

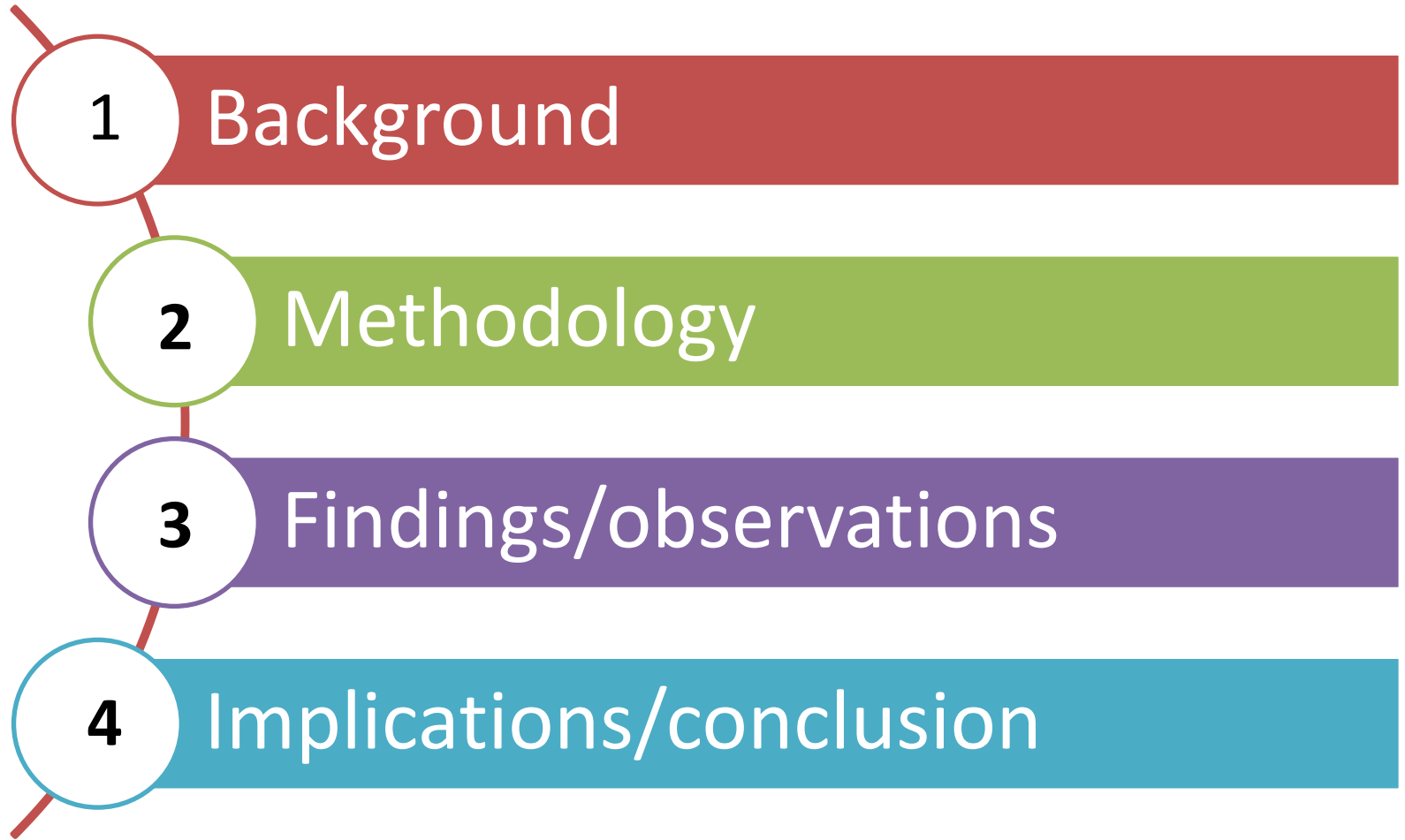


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Presentation Outline



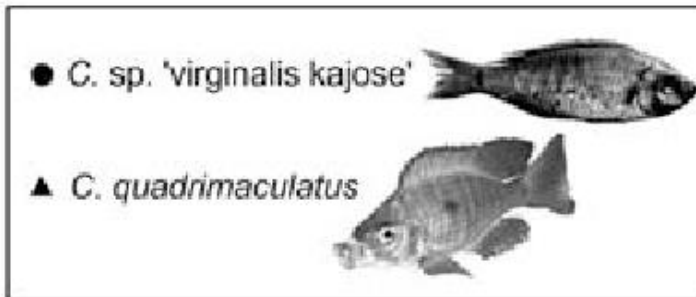
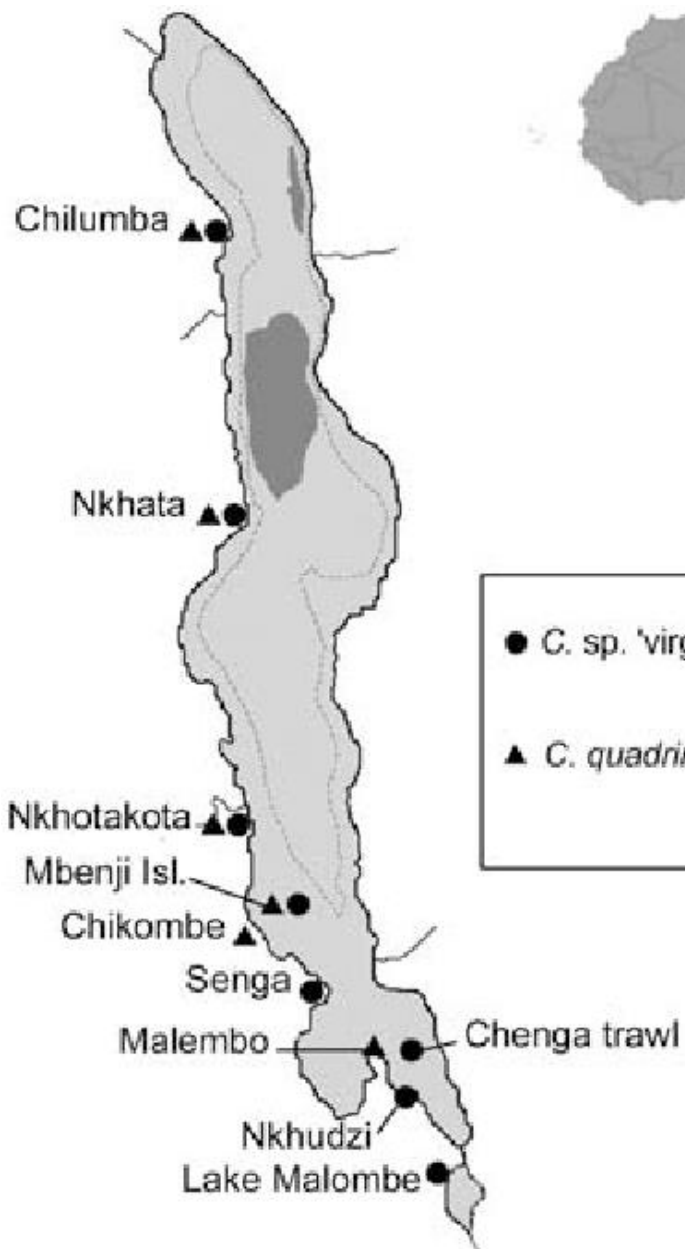
Background

- Why fisheries co-management?
 - budgetary constraints
 - interests from external agencies
 - perception that the resources were not managed sustainably
 - global recognition of community participation
- In some cases cultural heritage became part of fisheries management
- Level of participation and sharing of power among the actors may vary with time

Motivation

- Co-management: need to understand **power relationships and their distribution**
- Decentralisation framework
- Contribution to the implementation of the *2015 FAO Ten Steps to Responsible Inland Fisheries*
 - Step 8: Need to respect equity and rights of stakeholders by protecting the cultural heritage of indigenous people and their connections to the environment







[adkonings](#) on 27 August 2008

http://mw.geoview.info/penga_penga_island_aka_gas_mbenji_islands_lake_malawi,13565068p

Mbenji fishery

- 60 fish species are located around the island
 - *Copadichromis* species (utaka)
 - *Bathyclarias* and *Clarias* species
 - Mbuna
- Fish processing methods
 - Smoking
 - Sun-drying
 - Deep frying





- Size: 32km²
- Mbenji is located in central Lake Malawi in Domira bay, Salima district in T/A Makanjira, Group Village Headman Mpiringidzo,
- 14 km from Chikombe beach
- About 150 fishers are allowed to operate per year

Socio-cultural beliefs

- Cultural heritage for the island been recognised since the 1950s with rules through first Chiefs's dream
 - No fish exploitation without following rules
 - Women not allowed to go to the island
 - No killing of wildlife or cutting down of trees is allowed as this is believed to be like undressing places where spirits reside
 - Beer drinking and smoking any type of tobacco is prohibited as these practices may provoke anger from the spirits

Pleasing spirits

- No peace or favourable weather for fishing when spirits get angry
- Hence offering sacrifices as a token of appreciation or seeking forgiveness
- Happens every year in April on the graveyard of Nyangulu (first Chief on the island)



Fishing regulations

- Closed season: from 1 Nov to 31 Dec according to FCMA, but for Mbenji it is from 3rd week of December to April (4 months)
- Time believed that spirits demand quietness around the island
- Coincidentally this is the period when various fish species breed
- No trawling and use of nkacha fishing
- No light fishing



Closed ceremony in Dec 2012

Economic activities at Mbenji

- Fishing
- Fish processing
- Boat construction
- Engine servicing
- Other businesses like groceries, selling clothes, wares, watching videos

Methodology

- Decentralisation framework (Agrawal et. al, 1999)
- Power Cube (Cornwall, 2000)

Decentralisation framework

- identify key stakeholders in the community who exercise power over public resources
- types of power they hold:
 - power to *create rules or modify* old ones,
 - power to *make decisions* about how a particular resource or opportunity is to be used,
 - power to *implement and ensure compliance* with the new or altered ruled, and
 - power to *adjudicate disputes* that arise in the effort to create rules and ensure compliance

Limitations

- Decentralisation framework mainly focuses on powers from the government side (legislative, executive and judicial) and not from the community
- Therefore, the *power cube* framework provides this complementary analytical framework.

Power Cube framework

- Is a framework for analyzing power dimensions including **levels, spaces, and forms** and their inter-relationships
- *Forms*: refers to the ways in which power manifests itself including visible, hidden and invisible forms
- *Level*: local/community, national or regional
- *Spaces*: an arena, process or mechanism within which people communicate about issues, share information, make decisions and take actions

Findings: decentralisation

Attribute	Observation
Key stakeholders	chiefs, government, BVCs , NGOs
Power to <i>create rules or modify</i> old ones	Potential for change as the practice has been passed on from generation to generation e.g. new rules on light fishing
Power to <i>make decisions</i>	Only the chief makes decisions e.g. no light fishing
Power to <i>implement and ensure compliance</i>	Limited power given to the BVC for monitoring fishing on Mbenji
Power to <i>adjudicate disputes</i>	Chief has power to address conflicts and no use of courts

Findings based on power cube

Power dimension	Situation
Forms	<p data-bbox="452 434 672 488">Visible:</p> <ul data-bbox="452 519 1773 725" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="452 519 1773 725">• DoF gets power from FCMA (1997) while LGA (1997) and Chiefs Act (1967) provide power for the chiefs to implement co-management <p data-bbox="452 751 904 805">Hidden power:</p> <ul data-bbox="452 836 1808 891" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="452 836 1808 891">• Chief is 'actively' engaged for his personal benefit <p data-bbox="452 916 935 971">Invisible power:</p> <ul data-bbox="452 1002 1792 1279" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="452 1002 1792 1056">• culture does not allow women to go to the island<li data-bbox="452 1082 1761 1205">• Women or young people cannot openly criticise views raised by elders<li data-bbox="452 1230 1626 1279">• Women not allowed to go to Mbenji Island

Power dimension	Situation
Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Village level - Mpiringizo• No support in the past but now seeking intervention of the government (councils) – shifting power
Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited participation of resource users• No space for biologists on stock assessment• Women and young men not given platform

Implications

- Limited participation and accountability which is against decentralisation
- Gender issues
- Decisions made for benefit of the chief – “elite capture”
- Limited equity to resource access and benefits
 - Fish resources not managed for the benefit of the local community since migrant fishers are favoured in return for *mawe* or money
 - Women not allowed to buy fish from the island
- Seeking support from GoM may shift power

Conclusion and way forward

- Power dynamics are at community level
- Emerging institutional landscape with a paradigm shift of power from community to the government
- Appreciate cultural heritage of the community and their connection to the environment
- Address cultural barriers for equity – gender
- Biological assessment and economic valuation of the fishery

Future.....

- *tsogolo la Mbenji ndilowala kwambiri moti pamene madera ena akuti nsomba zinatheratu kuno chifukwa chotsatira miyambo ya makolo tikudyabe nsomba ndipo sitilora zamasewera katangale ndi ziphuphu ”*
T/ A Makanjira: April, 2017
- ...”future for *Mbenji* is bright ..while some areas on the lake are complaining about declining fish stocks, here it is a different story due to our cultural way of conserving fish ... we also do not allow corrupt migrant fishers”



Thank You