

Governance of marine protected areas in the least-developed countries

Case studies from West Africa



UPVD
Université de Perpignan Via Domitia

IRD
Institut de recherche
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Edited by

Jean-Yves Weigel

Economist

IRD Research Director

UMR PRODIG

France

François Féral

Professor of Public Law

CERTAP, University of Perpignan

France

and

Bertrand Cazalet

Legal expert

CERTAP, University of Perpignan

France

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Preparation of this document

This publication was developed within the framework of FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department initiatives to promote a multidisciplinary reflection process on marine protected areas (MPAs) and fisheries management that would take into account distinct issues in least-developed countries (LDCs). This work drew on the participation of the authors in this framework and at the workshop on MPAs and fisheries management held in Rome (12–14 July 2006), in the European research project Coherence of Public Policy of Conservation and Development of Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in West Africa (CONSDEV), and in the project Marine Protected Areas and Fisheries Management through Resource and Ecosystem Optimization (aires marines protégées et gestion halieutique par optimisation des ressources et des écosystèmes – AMPHORE) of the French national research agency (Agence nationale de la recherche, ANR) for which the MPA governance analytical framework was developed.

This work is based on empirical evidence and materials relating to cooperation arrangements and it reflects the methodology implemented by the various disciplines involved. Its successful outcome is the result of the scientific cooperation between researchers from the North and the South and between researchers and managers from LDCs.

The maps for this publication were provided by Anne Le Fur and Eric Opigez of the Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD).

This work is an adaptation of *Les aires marines protégées d'Afrique de l'Ouest. Gouvernance et politiques publiques*, edited by J.Y. Weigel, F. Féral and B. Cazalet, originally published in French in 2007.

Abstract

The need for effective governance of the marine protected areas (MPAs) in least-developed countries (LDCs) is commensurate with the significant territorial stakes raised by their extensive maritime domain. Another significant challenge is the conservation of biodiversity and of ecosystems whose level of productivity is similar to that of coral reefs (e.g. in East Africa and Madagascar, the Red Sea, Maldives, Cambodia, and South Pacific islands), upwelling systems (e.g. in West Africa and Angola) and estuarine and delta ecosystems (e.g. in West and East Africa, Bangladesh and Myanmar). However, the overriding issue is to reconcile conservation and human presence as, in LDCs, human activities are tolerated in almost all MPAs covered by International Union for Conservation of Nature categories II–VI. Finally, issues related to identity claims and to the process of establishment of property and other legal entitlements on nature are gaining importance.

A review of the literature on fisheries and MPAs governance showed how polysemous and vague the notion of governance was until very recently and how few or oversimplified were the analyses of MPA governance in the LDCs. However, only detailed analyses would allow the characterization of governance systems and identification of their weaknesses with the view to suggesting new governance arrangements and appropriate public policy options. Such analytical deficiencies may be explained by the lack of analytical frameworks capable of taking into account the plurality and intricacy of socio-economic organizations and institutions, the sociocultural features and the role of new mediators and “development brokers” that shape MPA governance in the LDCs. The deficiencies may also be explained by the fact that the dominating hierarchical governance systems tend to underestimate the complexity of MPA governance systems.

Therefore, it has been necessary to develop an analytical framework to study the governance of MPAs in the LDCs, drawing on four sources of inspiration: (i) the interactive fisheries governance approach; (ii) the risk governance approach; (iii) the socioanthropology of mediations and brokerage; and (iv) the governance analytical framework. The framework indicates the five issues that must be addressed in order to operationalize the concept of governance in LDC MPAs: (i) definition of the problem or the issue at stake; (ii) identification of the set of relevant governance norms; (iii) presentation of the actors involved in the governance process; (iv) highlighting the nodes around which actors’ strategies converge; and (v) recalling the processes that have led to the current state of governance. This analytical framework makes it possible to characterize the governance system of each of the MPAs considered and to develop a typology of these systems. The characterization of different governance systems highlights their weaknesses

and paves the way for new public policy options and, more generally, for the restructuring of governance to correct these weaknesses.

However, prior to the development of the analytical framework and the characterization of governance systems, the main MPA governance principles and constraints, as well their legal context, must be clarified. The whole methodology was tested on three West African coastal and marine protected areas, which seemed to provide textbook cases illustrating the difficulties of governance in LDCs: the Banc d'Arguin National Park in Mauritania, the Saloum Delta Biosphere Reserve in Senegal, and the Bolama Bijagos Archipelago Biosphere Reserve in Guinea-Bissau. The analysis of demographic and economic constraints in these West African MPAs showed the importance of: (i) increasing population density and mobility; (ii) the intensification of resource exploitation; and (iii) the opening of the MPA economy. The analysis of the legal and institutional contexts showed the international inspiration of the MPA objectives and conservation arrangements, and the syncretism of the legal system.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AMPHORE	Aires marines protégées et gestion halieutique par optimisation des ressources et des écosystèmes (Marine Protected Areas and Fisheries Management by Resource and Ecosystem Optimization)
CECAF	Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic
CERTAP	Centre d'études et de recherches sur les transformations de l'action publique (University of Perpignan Via Domitia, France).
CONSDEV	Coherence of Conservation and Development Policies of Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in West Africa
FIBA	Fondation internationale du Banc d'Arguin (International Foundation for the Banc d'Arguin)
IBAP	Instituto da Biodiversidade e das Areas Protegidas (Guinea-Bissau)
IMROP	Institut mauritanien de recherches océanographiques et des pêches (formerly CNROP)
IRD	Institut de recherche pour le développement (France)
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUED	Institut universitaire d'études du développement
LDC	least-developed country
MPA	marine protected area
NGO	non-governmental organization
PNBA	Parc national du Banc d'Arguin (Banc D'Arguin National Park)
PRCM	Programme régional de conservation de la zone côtière et marine (Regional Programme of Coastal and Marine Zone)
PRODIG	Pôle de recherche pour l'organisation et la diffusion de l'information géographique, UMR 8586
RBABB	Réserve de biosphère de l'archipel Bolama Bijagos
RBDS	Réserve de biosphère du delta du Saloum
RESED	Recherche et études en sociologie et économie du développement
UMR	Unité mixte de recherche
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

List of Authors

Bertrand Cazalet

Legal expert, CERTAP
EA 4216 and USR 3278 CRIOBE
University of Perpignan, France
E-mail: bertrandcazalet@yahoo.fr

Abdel Wedoud Ould Cheikh

Professor of Anthropology
University of Metz, France
E-mail: abdel.ould-cheikh@wanadoo.fr

Alfredo Simao Da Silva

Geographer, Director of the Institute of Biodiversity and Protected Areas
IBAP, Guinea-Bissau
E-mail: alfredo.simao.dasilva@iucn.org

François Féral

Professor of Public Law,
CERTAP, EA 4216 and USR 3278 CRIOBE
University of Perpignan, France
E-mail: feral@univ-perp.fr

Abdelkader Mohamed Ould Saleck

Senior research fellow
University of Nouakchott, Mauritania
E-mail: akmsaleck@mauritania.mr

Pierre Morand

Biostatistician, IRD researcher
E-mail: pierre.morand@ird.fr

Jean Schmitz

Sociologist, IRD Research Director
UMR CEAF, France
E-mail: jean.schmitz@ehess.fr

Bozena Stomal

Economist, Senior research fellow
RESED, France
E-mail: bozenastomal@wanadoo.fr

Jean-Yves Weigel

Economist, IRD Research Director
UMR PRODIG, France
E-mail: jean-yves.weigel@ird.fr

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