



Viewpoint

Interplay between perceived changes in fishery and social structures in Tanzanian coastal fishing communities



Robert Katikiro^{a,b,*}, K.H.M. Ashoka Deepananda^c, Edison Macusi^d

^a Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Ecology (ZMT) GmbH, Fahrenheitstrasse 6, 28359 Bremen, Germany

^b Mnazi Bay-Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park (MBREMP), P.O. Box 845, Mtwara, Tanzania

^c Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, University of Ruhuna, Matara 81000, Sri Lanka

^d Institute of Biological Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, University of the Philippines Los Baños College, Laguna 4031, Philippines

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 9 March 2014

Received in revised form

18 December 2014

Accepted 18 December 2014

Handling Editor George A. Rose

Keywords:

Social structure

Kinship

Social cohesion

Individualism

Fisheries

Coastal Tanzania

ABSTRACT

The dynamics and impacts of a fishery on sociocultural aspects of fishing communities are rarely studied. Here, we seek to describe how perceived changes in a fishery system – such as declining fish stocks, market failures and the loss of important species – may strengthen or weaken sociocultural patterns, specifically social networks and cohesion, identity, and traditional institutions. These findings are based on 103 semi-structured interviews, 10 focus group discussions, and nine life history interviews with individuals selected randomly from five coastal villages in the Mtwara district of Tanzania. Data were also complemented by a literature review and participant observation. Over 90% of people interviewed reported that the roles of informal village institutions, such as kinship and neighbourhood, have in recent years become loose and changeable due to the perceived ecological changes in the fishery and the influx of people without a fishing culture background. Nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated that the increased monetisation of fisheries products has led to unfettered private actions that have negative impacts, including degradation of resources, creating front groups in order to conceal private intentions, and social tensions like theft of fishing gear. The findings suggest that approaches to understanding and promoting the development of fishing communities in developing countries should include objectives that recognise how sociocultural systems alter and adapt in the face of extreme conditions within the fishery.

© 2014 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Changes occurring in a fishery can trigger a transformation of social structures and dynamics that would eventually affect customary practices and traditional lifestyles of fishing communities (Crona et al., 2010). Some of these traditions, as argued by McClanahan et al. (1997), have been known to have positive impacts on fisheries management and are as good as conventional forms of fisheries management. Several authors (e.g., Cinner and Aswani, 2007; Symes and Hoefnagel, 2010; Urquhart et al., 2011) indicate that the changes in a fishery, such as the size of fish catch and availability, the abundance and diversity of fish species, the size

of fish stocks, as well as the state of fishing habitats, are starkly evidenced in social dynamics and structure among small-scale fishers in coastal settlements.

Despite the increasing reports on changes that occur in the small-scale fisheries sector in many parts of the world (Barnes-Mauthe et al., 2013), detailed information about the influences of rapid development processes on the fishing communities and their dynamics is still rare (Crona and Bodin, 2010). In most countries of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region, which is home to diverse coastal cultures (Diop et al., 2011), for instance, the impact of the quickly changing natural environments on the shape of fishing communities, their fishing practices and their social dynamics is comparatively poorly studied (Cinner and David, 2011). Here, we draw on our recent interviews and focus group discussions in Mtwara rural district, southern Tanzania, to illustrate empirically the interconnectedness between perceived changes in the fishery status and social structure in coastal fishing communities of the WIO region by using a case study from Tanzania. We identify three broad areas deserving greater attention by policy makers: history of fishery, shift in power structure, and loss of important

* Corresponding author at: Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Ecology (ZMT), Fahrenheitstrasse 6, 28359 Bremen, Germany. Tel.: +49 421 2380033; fax: +49 42123800.

E-mail addresses: robert.katikiro@zmt-bremen.de (R. Katikiro), ashoka.dkhm@gmail.com (K.H.M. Ashoka Deepananda), edmacusi@gmail.com (E. Macusi).

social structures. In so doing, we underscore the need for improving understanding of sociocultural patterns in small-scale fisheries, with a particular focus on developing countries.

2. Mtwara rural district, southern Tanzania

The current study was carried out in five randomly selected coastal villages in the Mtwara rural district: Mnete, Nalingu, Msimbati, Mngoji and Mkubiru (Fig. 1). All study villages are situated in a marine protected area (MPA) known as the Mnazi Bay-Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park (MBREMP), created in 2000. Between 60% and 80% of people in the study villages rely on marine fisheries resources for their livelihood strategies (Malleret, 2004). The fishery in Mtwara rural district, including the study villages, is almost exclusively shallow water based. It is dominated by artisanal fishers utilising a wide variety of gear types, including hand lines, traps, nets, beach seines, spears and sticks, long lines, *juya*, *tandilo* (Malleret, 2004) and, most recently, ring nets. Artisanal fisheries are also dominated by the collection of shellfish and other invertebrates on reef flats and intertidal areas, primarily by women and children. A large proportion of the fishers, although probably with a tradition of fishing in the area, are in fact commercially oriented, even if that is partly opportunistic in the sense that if fish

suitable for marketing are caught then they are sold; otherwise the catch is eaten (Labrosse et al., 2004).

Catch composition is multi-species, mostly reef fish. Most commonly species caught are demersal fish, followed by some large and small pelagic; crustaceans, octopus and squid are also common (Labrosse et al., 2004). Fishing vessels are mainly dugout canoes (*mitumbwi*) and some dhows, as is common in other coastal areas of Tanzania (Masalu et al., 2010). The majority of fishing vessels operating in this district are not motorised.

2.1. Historical overview of the fishery in the study villages

There is little written information available regarding the state of the marine fishery in the colonial period (1884–1960) in Tanzania, and the Mtwara rural district is not exceptional. Interviews and focus group discussions in this district revealed situations where influxes of people from hinterland areas to the coast were the main concern in terms of disruption of traditional uses of fisheries resources, leading to the rise of destructive fishing activities like dynamite fishing. Over 90% of people interviewed for this study admitted that although the majority of households in their villages derive their livelihoods from fishing-based activities, a substantial number of residents in their villages were originally from a non-fishing family and clan group during the colonial period. They

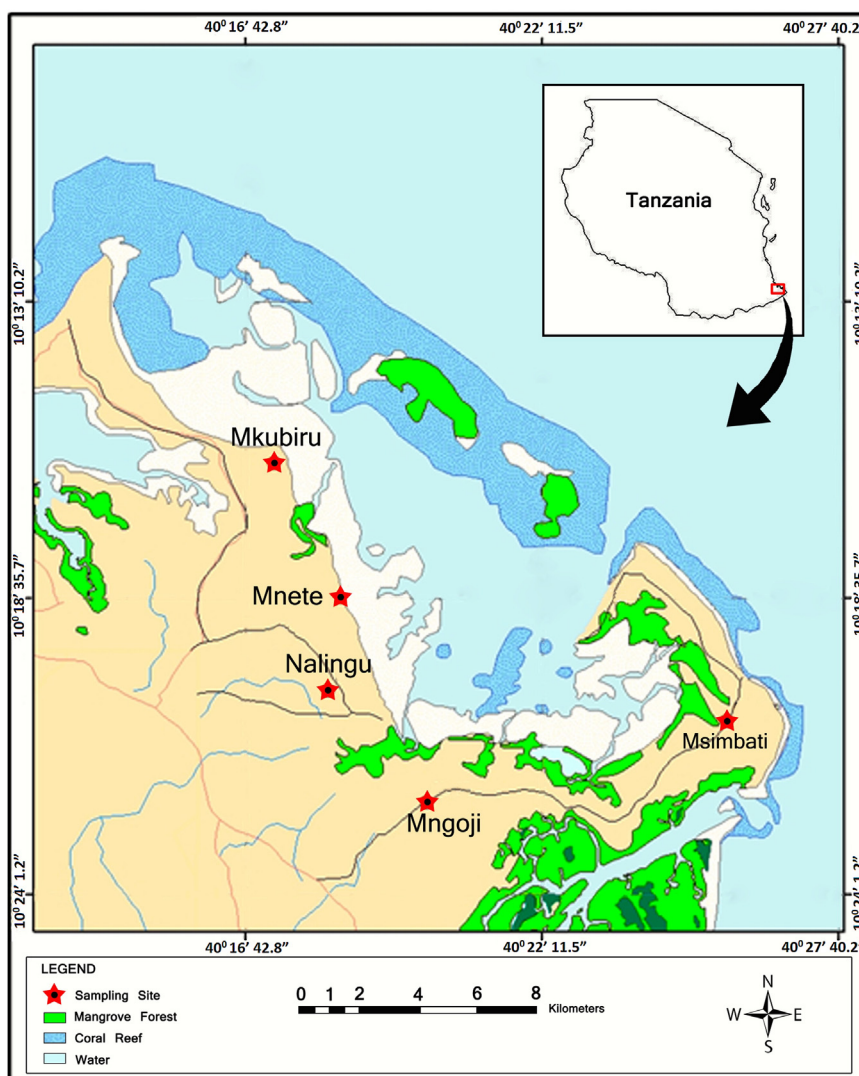


Fig. 1. Map of the study area.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6385714>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6385714>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)