An exploration of how differences in approaches to socio-economic data collection can impact outputs and policy development

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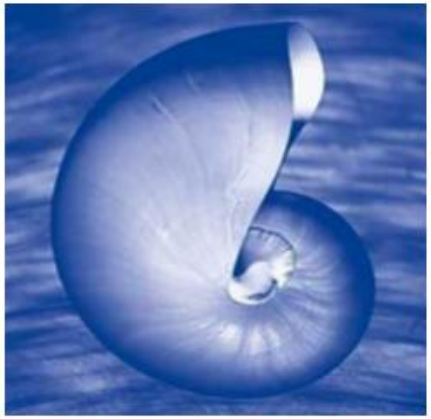

Nautilus Consultants

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Why do we do socio-economic studies?

- **Basic rationale**
  - support / **justify** project proposals
  - **prioritise** investment
  - **rank** locus of **intervention**
  - **direct policy formation** and/or monitor impacts of policy
- **They focus on the economic**
  - would argue that **these tend to be economic studies** – next to no socio-elements
  - **focus on quantification**
  - much **less focus on how things work**
- **Scale factors**
  - **as we come down the scale** from larger businesses to smaller businesses, larger communities to smaller communities, **the socio- component becomes not just much more important, but much more critical**
  - **we are not very good at looking into the socio- components of the fishery sector** – regardless of how we seek to define the term socio- (which we should recognise as being pretty vague)

What do we mean by the term socio-?

- the socio- in socio-anthropology, socio-logy, socio-political and socio-economic tends to look at various dimensions of people systems, influences and impacts
- very much from the perspectives of describing
  - what is – systems, numbers, links
  - how they work
  - what behaviour patterns are at work
  - whether and how change can be predicted

- socio-economics looks at the people systems associated with economic activity

- we are not very good at mapping any of this

The extent to which studies address socio-economics

- a sample of 12 studies undertaken by Nautilus over the last decade are used to inform analysis

- a simple stylised analytic framework has been devised to profile what elements of socio-economics have been addressed in each study
- main elements are:
    - quantitative
    - systems,
    - spatial analysis – human;
    - spatial analysis – nature;
    - management & organisation

- study performance has been measured on a five * basis

analytical components & notional ideal score

quantitative

core focus	*****
add-ons – segmentation	*****
add-ons – business focus	****
economic metrics	***

systems

supply chain	****
market analysis	***
resource base	****
sociology	***

spatial analysis – natural

natural geography	****
natural productivity	***
management mosaic	***

spatial analysis – human

demography	****
economic geography	****
settlement patterns	****

management & organisation

how businesses operate	***
commercial organisation	***
community organisation	***
empowerment	****

Simplified profile of projects used in the sample

Highland Council: socio-economic profile	**Feel for industry structure and activity at sub-regional level, and at large and small scale**
Defra: quota management study	**Relatively limited social dimension within study – but relatively limited visibility of small scale**
Defra: review of UK PO operations	**Relatively limited social dimension within study – but relatively limited visibility of small scale**
Seafood Scotland: UK supply chain study	**Scale factors tended to mask any realistic treatment of smaller scale interests**
EC DG Mare: profiling economic contribution of ancillary services	**Choice of large and small scale case studies enabled informative exploration of scale issues**
Marine Scotland: supply chain study - inshore / small scale fisheries	**Good capture of supply chain structures / links, but struggle to get more insight into the drivers / behaviours behind the links**
SW Scotland FLAG: socio-economic impact study	**The island scale of the study allowed for development of a better understanding of the communities and industry links – in part through buy-in of industry to the study**
EC DG Mare: review of impact of EC FLAG programme - UK case study	**Necessarily process driven (how the programme works), UK rather insular in its approaches to CLLD (reluctant to engage with experiences from elsewhere)**
Dumfries & Galloway Council: socio-economic profile	**Provided major improvement in the information available to those unfamiliar with the industry, pointing up under-valued role of small scale and processing**
MSC / Seafish / MMO: Project Inshore - fishery profiling	**Important systematic capture of resource, environment, fishery and management details for inshore fishing across England and Wales – but remains under-utilised**
NFFO / SFF / BIM: review of brown crab management	**Consolidation of available information providing common understanding and strong evidential basis for onward debate – showing up patterns, and countering hearsay**
Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee: sustainable inshore fisheries pilot	**Using the MSC assessment methodology as an audit tool, able to demonstrate the complexity of the inshore sector, but also the wealth of spatial information available**

Category explanations with notional ideal scores

Quantification		
core focus	socio-economic analysis - three stats - output, employment, income	*****
add-ons - segmentation	can break stats down by fishing segment (vessel size and/or gear and/or inshore/offshore, static/mobile) - but not always a priority or required by client - more a means to calculating output, employment and income	*****
add-ons – business focus	could add no. of businesses by economic segment; some concept of scale - capital value	***
economic metrics	output / GVA, employment and income multipliers; performance measures (production per person, profitability)	***
Systems		
supply chain	supply chain / value chain analysis - much less often, though increasing; clients & policy makers not so clear as to how to use such information	****
market analysis	market analysis - not really called for - very little "traditional" market investigations undertaken (who sells to who, what tariff and non-tariff barriers, packaging, pricing, margins, etc) - much more reliant on use of large data-sets and interpolation / extrapolation	***
resource base	who analyses the resource base - all too often seen as separate from economic and socio-economic analysis - to do with environment, marine management and fishery management, and requirements of certification	****
sociology	culture, value systems, aspirations, community structure, similarities & differences, natives & incomers – correlations to other factors	***

Spatial analysis - human		
demography	demography (population composition, origins, ethnicity, stratification, wealth, settlement patterns, deprivation);	****
economic geography	economic geography (industrialisation, narrow or broad economy, key industries, key sources of employment, training infrastructure, mobility, proximity, barriers to entry)	****
settlement patterns	settlement patterns (housing, schools, medical/health/care, shops, leisure & recreation, connectivity) and correlation with demography;	****
Spatial analysis - natural		
natural geography	spatial analysis - not very often - underlying physical geography (including geology and habitats; bathymetry, rivers and roads);	****
management mosaic	MPAs, fishing zonation, gear separation, seasonal closures	***
natural productivity	natural productivity (land and sea - linking to physical geography and land and sea use);	***

Management & organisation		
how businesses operate	analysis of businesses - increasingly rare - how do people start in business, how do they grow, what drives mergers and acquisitions, who are the investors; how do they form links with other businesses - cooperation, business along the supply chain	***
commercial organisation	what factors lead to organisation within the sector - POs, associations, trade bodies, committees; family relationships, friendships, sources of finance, local knowledge, particular skills sets	***
community organisation	community deliberation / decision-making structures (parish / community councils), church groups, third sector organisations, special interest groups, self-help groups, mental health groups	***
empowerment	access to and involvement in decision-making; representation; dispute resolution systems and outcomes; grievance procedures	****

study assessment of analytical components vs ideal

quantitative

- core focus *****
- add-ons – segmentation *****
- add-ons – business focus ***
- economic metrics ***

systems

- supply chain ****
- market analysis ***
- resource base ****
- sociology ***

spatial analysis – natural

- natural geography ****
- natural productivity ***
- management mosaic ***

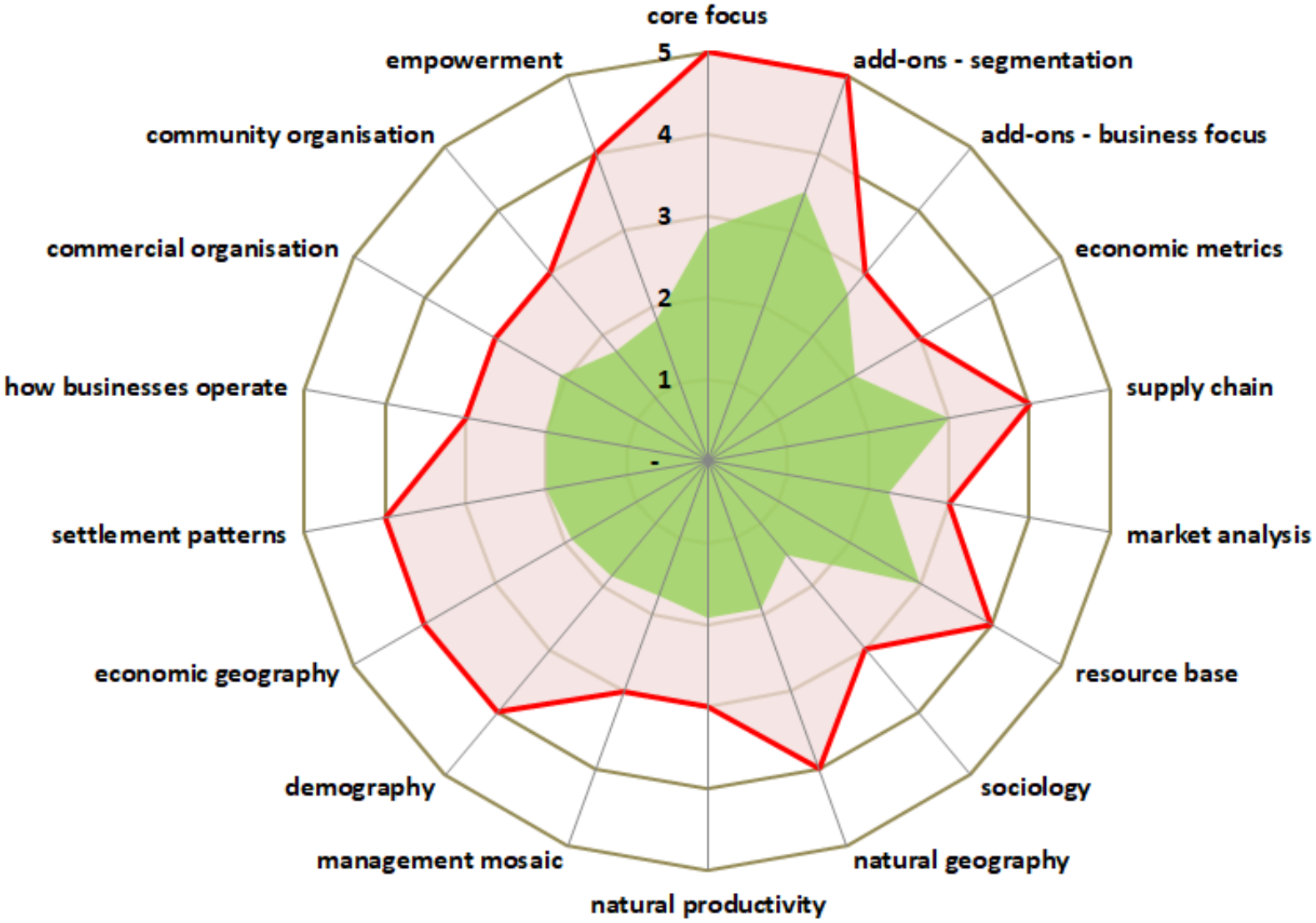
spatial analysis – human

- demography ****
- economic geography ****
- settlement patterns ****

management & organisation

- how businesses operate ***
- commercial organisation ***
- community organisation ***
- empowerment ****

scored assessment of analytical components vs ideal



Recurring issues

- **big numbers** tend to trump / mask small numbers
- local councillors, politicians, and other decision-makers often have poor to **very poor understanding of industry structure, function and operation** – and so drawn to / prioritise big numbers – and blind to smaller scale
- regularly socio-economic studies (should) seek to demonstrate that from a socio-economic perspective **small scale activity is highly significant** – and at times **can** have a contribution that **outweighs larger scale** and concentrated activity
- recognition of the cultural and **sociological contribution of fishing traditions all too easily undervalued** in favour of headline economic figures
- **small scale interests poorly represented** (or not good at representing themselves)
- **fishermen and fish workers are in general un-empowered**; and **small scale interests are un-empowered** – in stark contrast to larger scale interests
- public support and investment follows economic figures – remains **really difficult to present strong socio- arguments for support and investment** – lack of vocabulary, metrics and evidence
- **within the smaller scale systems, real difficulties in resolving mobile:static gear conflicts / spatial management issues** – lack of empowerment remains major impediment, and governance institutions reluctant to intervene

Does this matter – scale factors?

- **Scale**
  - the **smaller** the community / settlement / sub-sector, the **more important the socio- element becomes**
  - there is a stage at which better to **study the whole community** rather than just fisheries
- **Balance**
  - **if** it is just a matter of **justifying resource allocations**, focus on **employment, income and output seems to be sufficient**
  - **if** the **focus** is more **on changing behaviour** or predicting responses to change, then **need more of the socio- element**
- **Blind-eye**
  - **very limited attention paid to entrepreneurship** or to how well businesses are run (or where they struggle or fall short)
- **Takes time and patience**
  - putting **greater focus on the socio- element** generally means that investigations are **more intrusive and personal** (gets down to nitty gritty of individuals and relationships) – which becomes more problematic the smaller the community / settlement being looked at; **how to address this needs sensitivity** (need to establish the confidence of fishermen and their families – **takes time and patience** – and funders reluctant to fund this sort of work; more reliance on academics is a possibility)
- **Improved data availability**
  - but regular investigations **could be taken much further than currently**, given the **greater availability of a wider range of metrics** – demography, quality of life, environment, industry
- **Should be able to expect to access industry profiles**
  - **little excuse for not being able to readily access a socio-economic profile** of the industry at a small functional scale – say at scale of a fishing district or the area covered by each seafood hub – **but no coherent policy / strategy on this** (even though plenty of studies have been commissioned that capture some or all of such data – but not widely known about, not readily accessible, and/or not up to date)

Gap analysis – the biggest gaps are evident

- in **measuring the extent to which industry members are or feel "empowered"** – distanced from decision-making – particularly clear and problematic at smaller scale
- in mapping the **community structures / support mechanisms** in place – and why they matter – resilience
- in **having a workable "feel" for the sociology of fishing communities** (of particular relevance at the smaller scale) – understanding behaviour, looking for intervention points, looking at how best to target support / change resources
- **it's not just about numbers**