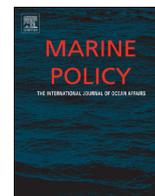




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## Overcoming the lack of political will in small scale fisheries

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## ABSTRACT

Weak governance is one of the main causes of the present poor condition of fisheries ecosystems. Lack of political will is one of the primary factors characterizing weak governance in fisheries. The purpose of this paper is to better understand what is meant by political will and political capacity, what the lack of these means in reference to small scale fisheries governance, and how to overcome the lack of political will, in particular, in order to improve small scale fisheries governance. The paper demonstrates the importance of political will and political capacity in determining the quality of fisheries management. Existent scholarship has largely conceptualized political will and political capacity as being the same concept, thus muddying our ability to determine exactly what is limiting a state's ability to manage not only fisheries, but also environmental resources more-generally. The paper concludes that even in low capacity states, local champions of fishery management can affect moderate progress on this complicated issue if they use community networks to engage in enforcement of fishery policies.

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## 1. Introduction

Weak governance is one of the main causes of the present poor condition of fisheries ecosystems, both human and natural elements [1]. Governance may be defined as “the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs” and “good governance” is, among other things, “participatory, transparent and accountable” [2]. Governance includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interests [3]. Governance depends upon both will and capacity.

Factors characterizing weak governance in fisheries include (but are not limited to) corruption, conflicts of interest, lack of political will, inadequate resources (physical, human and financial) available for fisheries management, poor enforcement, lack of stakeholder participation in decision-making by both men and women, and lack of a clear vision for the fisheries. Lack of political will on the part of political and judicial leaders and bureaucrats is cited as the most frequent reason for unsuccessful governance and economic reform efforts globally. This includes anticorruption reforms [4], integrated coastal management [5], environmental

flow policy [6], water policy reform [7], economic reform [8], and health care reform [9]. Despite its importance, lack of political will is poorly understood and, as a result, poorly analyzed [10]. Woocher [11] states that, “remarkably little systematic analysis of the concept and its determinants seems to have been conducted.” Evans [12] concludes that the difficulty with most discussions of political will is that more time is spent lamenting its absence than analyzing what it means.

The purpose of this paper is to better understand what is meant by political will and political capacity, what the lack of these means in reference to small scale fisheries governance, and how to overcome the lack of political will, in particular, in order to improve small scale fisheries governance. In Section 2, a discussion on political will and political capacity is presented. A discussion of the manifestation of local of political will is presented in Section 3. Two case studies from Vietnam and the Philippines are presented in Section 4 to illustrate the importance of political will and political capacity in determining the quality of fisheries management, followed by a discussion of cases in Section 5. The paper concludes with a discussion on the need for local champions of fishery management to overcome lack of political will.

## 2. Will and capacity

Understanding how “political will” and “political capacity” can affect the governance of small-scale fisheries is important because, outside of exceptional circumstances, both willingness and

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capacity must exist for a government to effectively undertake any action on behalf of a state [13]. This section clarifies our understandings of “political will” and “political capacity” as they have been conceptualized and operationalized in many different ways with no consensus having yet emerged on either.

### 2.1. Political will

Following a wide-ranging survey of commonalities and differences among many prominent conceptualizations of “political will”, Post et al. [14] offer what they feel is an improved, integrated definition of it as “the extent of committed support among key decision makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem”. It is appreciated that their definition includes “commitment”, as that invokes the determination to follow through and see that desired goals are achieved. However, issues is taken with what they see as one of the strengths of their conceptualization: political capacity as “an integral part of political will” [14]. They view capacity to be constitutive of both resource capacity and what can be best-called political capacity [14]. In this paper, political will is viewed as a commitment by a political actor or group of actors to create and/or implement a policy for the sake of that policy's implementation.

Our primary reasoning for keeping political will and political capacity conceptually separate when studying political phenomena is straightforward: it is one thing to have the resources to do something, but it is another thing to willingly use those resources. That is, capacity is viewed as potential that is only realized when some actor is willing to make use of it in order to achieve a goal. For example, Post et al. [14] integrated definition of political will includes “allocation of analytical resources”, “funding commitment”, and “implementation [of] resources and support of implementers” as emblematic capacity-components of will [14]. The releasing of funds, for example, is capacity, actually two different forms of it: resource capacity (having funds to release) and political capacity (having the authority to release funds). Once again, however, the authority to use resources is distinct from the willingness to do so.

The policy area of fisheries enforcement provides a clear example of how the failure to understand the difference between will and capability can negatively affect our understanding of effective policy-making [15,16]. In many countries around the world, police officers and judges have the authority to enforce laws prohibiting illegal fishing (e.g., use of explosives and prohibited fishing gear) by filing reports, responding to calls, making arrests, and conducting fair trials where appropriate sentences are meted out for the guilty. That is, they hold the capacity to enforce the law. However, fisheries enforcement remains a pervasive threat to fisheries governance around the world because of a general lack of willingness by police and justices to discharge their duties. Here, the willingness to enforce the law is quite separate from the legal capability to do so. All-too-often, the unwillingness to enforce fisheries laws comes from societal or political attitudes that fisheries management is a low priority issue [16]. In this case, a conceptualization of willingness containing capacity would not allow for the proper identification of the problem at hand—unwillingness despite capacity.

The problem for understanding policymaking created by a compound definition of political will becomes worse should this conceptualization become the basis for measures created for purposes of evidence-based policymaking. Conceptualization is the first step of measurement, followed by operationalization (putting numbers to concepts). Imagine a single measure of political will based on a conceptualization that includes political capacity, as well. Any such measure would be inherently upwardly biased. In the case of our fisheries enforcement example, the upward bias comes from law enforcement and judicial personnel typically being well-enough equipped (capacity) to enforce basic

fisheries laws; this capacity would improve the measure of political will despite no actual willingness existing in practice.

The questions “how do we know willingness when we see it?” and “what kind of willingness are we seeing?” led us to include the phrase “for the sake of that policy's implementation” in our definition of political will. Any interest there is in the concept of political will is based upon the premise that being able to identify and study it will allow us to perhaps find a way to create it on behalf of worthwhile policies. Let us assume that a local bureaucrat faithfully executes a national policy. Were this local agent cajoled, bribed, etc., to execute this policy what, then, does this say about willingness in any meaningful way? Not much. In the United States in the 1970s, the federal government wished to enact a national highway speed limit of 55 miles/h. It could not directly force states to institute this policy, but what it could do was tie the speed limit to federal highway funding such that only those states implementing the speed limit would receive these funds. States obeyed. Does this say anything important about the willingness of states to implement the speed limit in a way that invokes commitment or preference to the policy? No. It may, on the other hand, say something about the willingness of states to give up some degree of policy independence for federal highway monies, freeing up their own budgets for other expenditures.

Further, much of policy administration is done through the delegation of tasks. However, the principal-agent theory informs us that delegation is “a relationship characterized by self-interest and unequal information. Those charged with carrying out the policy, the agents, are likely to know more about the task than the principal, and they have their own self-interested goals that ... they ... will prefer over the principal's goal” [17]. This situation gives a distinct motive to agents to be willing to engage in actions because of self-interest (e.g., corruption) or other motives not having anything to do with commitment to the policy itself. This is important because commitment to a policy's implementation is vital for the sustainability and proper administration of that policy.

### 2.2. Political capacity

Political capacity is conceived as the aggregate abilities and resources available to a government actor to make and enforce a given policy. These aggregate abilities and resources represent the proverbial “fund” from which an actor can draw to undertake an action. Put simply, political capacity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for successful policies. That being said, the abilities and resources that make up capacity are present in unique combinations, and interact in different ways in nearly every situation. Political capacity is a multi-dimensional concept, and like political will, can sometimes be hard to identify. However, a great deal of scholarship suggests that there are some key dimensions that, when present in greater quantity and quality, make successful policies more likely.

When approaching the issue of complex policy-making, like the management of fisheries, the ability of actors to take action will hinge on several components of political capacity. There is a growing consensus that, at the most basic level, conceptions of political capacity should generally rest on a four part formulation including some level and combination of (1) military or coercive capacity, (2) the quality and consistency of the bureaucracy, (3) the states underlying social and physical resources, such as a well educated population and robust economy, and (4) the state's ability to extract resources like taxes and knowledge from society in order to function effectively [18–22].

Thus, key questions for analysis of political capacity include: does the country enjoy stability and law and order? Is the bureaucracy well-educated and meritocratic? Does the country have a robust, diverse economy, and an educated population? Is the government able to tap into existent social knowledge and

expertise about a variety of issues? Finally, can the government collect a large proportion of the taxes levied? Scholarship on the issue of political capacity directs analysis of a number of factors to effectively answer the above questions. These include the stability and longevity of the particular regime in power to capture coercive power [23]; the processes by which government employees are hired, trained, and retained [24]; the presence or absence of a well educated population or high levels of local knowledge on a variety of issues [19]; the size and sophistication of the economy [25]; the presence or absence of institutionalized structures that allow the government to tap into the knowledge of the population, particularly on environmental resources management [26,27]; and the degree to which complicated taxes are levied and collected as an important indicator of bureaucratic expertise and also underlying societal resources [28,29].

Of course, all four factors are deeply interrelated. For example, without coercive capacity it is unlikely there is enough political stability to extract resources by collecting taxes and drawing on the knowledge and expertise of the citizenry. Without a high-quality bureaucracy, accurate tax accounting and collection is impossible, and there is a serious lack of expertise and direction for the coercive elements of government. Without a robust economy and a well-educated society, it is likely there will be unrest [30-33] and also there will be no revenue for the government. Finally, without expertise and a revenue base a state is unlikely to have either coercive capacity or a strong bureaucracy as government employees and soldiers do not work and fight for free and without adequate direction. Indeed it is clear how the absence of any one of these qualities renders governmental actors much less capable of taking effective action whether they desire it or not.

It is important to emphasize that states with low political capacity are not totally incapable. A state may have individuals in leadership positions who are extremely motivated on particular issues, and their charisma allows a state or actor to outperform what would be expected given its underlying capacity. While it is possible to interpret this as a weakness of analysis of political capacity separate from political will, it actually reveals an advantage of this approach. Indeed, the causal influence of such charismatic leadership is only identifiable relative to the state's underlying level of political capacity to take effective action on a particular issue. Put simply, if a state has a high degree of political capacity to deal with a particular issue, then a charismatic leader could be epiphenomenal, rather than directly causal, in more effective outcomes.

### 3. Political will and small scale fisheries

Lack of political will manifests itself in a number of ways in small-scale fisheries governance. The most visible of these is the inaction of political and judicial leaders in enforcing laws and regulations. This inaction may be due to alleged or real corruption or due to the real or perceived negative impacts of fisheries management decisions on fishers' livelihoods, incomes and food security [34]. The fact that the impact may be short term, and that there may be expectations of increased income or food availability in the long-run, is not persuasive in these situations. Furthermore, in many countries, the judicial systems are not enforcing fishery laws and regulations [35,16].

Lack of political will may also exhibit itself as a lack of commitment of adequate resources (funds, staff, equipment) necessary to undertake fisheries management [5]. Lack of political will may manifest itself as a lack of interest in or priority for fisheries management or the small scale fisheries sector in general (political and economic marginalization) [34], or a need to prioritize other government services over fisheries management. In addition, there may be a failure of political leaders and bureaucrats to initiate or

actively support participatory governance practices, implement policies or regulations, actively seek to understand underlying problems and issues in the sector, support citizen proposed initiatives, or respond to legal reforms. Lack of political will may also be seen as bureaucratic inertia to initiate or support fisheries governance reforms or initiatives.

Lack of political will can be shown by the failure to follow through on a public declaration or promise [10]. Although political leaders may sometimes openly reject or resist a fisheries governance initiative, it is more common for them to publicly claim support for the initiative and then fail to put it into practice. The show of support could be disingenuous from the start and be a form of calculated opposition.

Williams et al. [36] state that government and fishers tend to be risk averse in relation to making change, by the nature of the political cycle and by their livelihoods, respectively. They will not make change unless there are clear benefits (political to the former and economic to the latter) of reform or an undeniable crisis where costs of not making change become extremely explicit. Costs of change are most often borne in the short run, with often-uncertain benefits to fishers and society borne in the longer term and outside the planning horizons or current priorities of government and/or stakeholders. There may also be a lack of understanding among political leaders of the tolerance for change which increases taking a cautious approach.

Policy change alone does not result in implementation. Ongoing political leadership and public support is essential. At the highest level, political support is crucial for setting strategic direction, securing planning resources, championing the policy change, and enforcing implementation. Political challenges can be large. Those impacted by change can wield considerable political power, and may use it to resist attempts for reform. Competing social and economic requirements may further bias the political arena against reform.

Fisheries management requires real and active commitment by government officials to carry it forward. Given the broad range of issues and management actions to be undertaken, it is important to have political backing for implementation and continuity of support. Lack of continuity of fisheries management initiatives often occurs when new political leadership takes office and no longer gives priority to the same issues as the previous administration. In addition, the collapse of fisheries development projects when funding and technical assistance terminates remains a challenge to fisheries managers. While the project may provide benefits during the project life, longer term benefits do not necessarily continue after project termination if there is not continued support for the project activities.

### 4. Case studies

To demonstrate the importance of political will and state capacity in determining the quality of fisheries management outcomes, two cases were selected that illustrate how low-capacity states were able to overcome their limitations to achieve moderate successes in fisheries governance. Understanding how different states deal with fisheries governance offers an excellent way to understand the role that existent levels of political will and capacity in any given state leads to policy outcomes. This is because some of the most complex and difficult problems a state will deal with are those of environmental management [37] for several reasons. First, environmental governance, particularly in developing countries, strikes at the core of a people's ability to subsist and make a living. There is intense pressure on developing countries from domestic and international forces to achieve economic growth and this often comes at the expense of the environment, a phenomenon that reflects the well-known "environmental Kuznets curve hypothesis" [38]. Second, high

quality environmental governance requires a great deal of scientific expertise [37]. Finally, as many scholars have noted, environmental issues require a huge amount of cooperation, collaboration, and trust between community and state level institutions [26,27,39–41].

Selecting cases to illustrate the importance of political will and political capacity in the role of fisheries governance is fraught with difficulty due to the problems of case comparison. However, our two cases, Vietnam and the Philippines, where moderate success has been achieved despite different underlying circumstances, highlights the importance of political will and political capacity in driving the outcomes. Both states have low levels of political capacity at the national level due primarily to their lack of centralized regulatory and legal frameworks, as well as economies that are under pressure from both local and global demand for fish as both a food source and key export. These both represent “hard cases” [42] where it would be expected that success is rare or nonexistent due to the lack of overall capacity. Thus, given their successes, both demonstrate the important role political will can play in overcoming poor capacity, and are illustrative of actions even developing countries can take to govern their fisheries effectively.

#### 4.1. Case one: fisheries co-management in Vietnam

Innovation in fisheries management in Vietnam is focused at provincial and district levels, where local authorities interpret national laws and develop local ordinances and decrees to support fisheries co-management [43]. While the existing national laws, decrees and guidelines may imply the use of co-management, no specific law on co-management exists in Vietnam. The political will and capacity to support co-management is stronger at local government (provincial and district) levels than at the national government level. Local governments complain that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD, which subsumed the Ministry of Fisheries in 2007) has been slow to support local co-management efforts [43]. There are relatively weak lines of accountability from national government downward to local government levels, as compared to the greater degree of political will and capacity shown by local governments towards fishing communities.

In Ben Tre province, for example, the former provincial fisheries department head has worked with a Provincial People's Committee to establish four co-management pilot sites and to establish a pilot fishing rights site. Notably, she has also proposed cross-sector co-management steering committees at the province and district levels to oversee and coordinate activities in all the sites [44]. Other examples of local innovation include co-management of lagoons and coastal fisheries systems by co-management councils, core groups and district level government in Binh Dinh province [44], and community-managed marine protected areas in Khanh Hoa province, where a domestic NGO, Centre for Marine Life Conservation and Community Development, has helped to catalyze new forms of collaboration between coastal communities and local government [44].

In Thua Thien Hue province in central Vietnam, the provincial fisheries department head prepared and gained political and resource support from the Provincial People's Committee for the allocation of fishing rights to a Fishery Association for Tam Giang Lagoon [45–47]. The lagoon system covers an area of approximately 22,000 ha, and follows the length of the coast for approximately 70 km. At least 300,000 people live in and around the lagoon in 33 communes and towns and 326 villages: it is estimated that 100,000 people depend directly on the lagoon by undertaking capture fisheries and/or various forms of brackish water aquaculture. The high diversity of aquatic habitat in the Tam Giang lagoon supports a range of marine and brackish water species. As a result, the Tam Giang lagoon has historically provided a multi-species capture fishery. This

was the case prior to the introduction of aquaculture in the late 1980s. Two decades of economic growth, rapid aquaculture expansion and the intensification of capture fisheries has profoundly altered the Tam Giang lagoon system, and has resulted in real dilemmas around access to resources, land allocation and coastal management. Empirical and anecdotal evidence suggests an ecological crisis within the lagoon. Intense pressure from capture fisheries, aquaculture, and near-shore development has led to catch reduction, disease outbreaks and declining water quality, and this led government officials to appreciate the need for more effective strategies to address coastal marine issues.

Because of the deteriorating lagoon environment and fisheries resources, the provincial authority issued a series of policies and regulations to control fishing and aquaculture operations in the lagoon in the hope of managing the lagoon resources sustainably. However, the conventional top-down approach to lagoon fisheries management proved to be ineffective as it excluded the involvement of local resource users and led to uncertainty and mistrust of authorities inclined to use coercion and fines to implement government decisions. A large number of regulations were issued by the authority in order to manage the lagoon fisheries resources but enforcement and compliance were especially low. At the same time, the authority did not have enough human and financial resources to implement fisheries management policies at field level. Local authorities recognized the high political and financial costs of continuing the top-down approach, and had the political will to undertake policy changes necessary to promote positive change. The overall chaotic management situation coincided with a push towards decentralized governance arrangements in Vietnam [21]. Changes to the Fisheries Law (2003) gave support for individual and non-State property rights arrangements, and for local people to organize around fisheries management initiatives. The Fisheries Law enabled partnerships between state and local organizations in the management of fisheries and aquaculture resources by supporting decentralized management, and the establishment of Fishery Associations with the potential to hold resource rights. In late 2005, the provincial authority issued Decision 4260 that enabled the participation of local fishers in the management planning and implementation as well as the delegation of some lagoon management responsibilities to the local fishers' groups. In 2009, Decision 942, issued by the Peoples Committee of Phu Loc district, included the first ever government allocation of fishing rights to a fisher's organization, established formal collective property rights over a capture fishery, and involved the allocation of 993 ha of lagoon space to the Vinh Giang Fishery Association. Provincial and district officials showed the political will to innovate by taking advantage of these changes in national laws through local policy change and the political capacity to support these changes with funds and resources for organization building and capacity development and the allocation of fishing rights. The lack of a clear legal mandate did not deter officials from having the political will to take advantage of “a window of opportunity for policy change” for a new resource management approach [45].

#### 4.2. Case two: fisheries management in the Philippines

Fisheries management in the Philippines is largely guided by two key national laws: (1) Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 (RA 7160) and (2) Fisheries Code of 1998 (RA 8550) [48]. These guide the Department of Agriculture (DA)-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) at the national level, as well as the local government units (province, municipality, *barangay* (village)). In 1991, the government recognized the need to increase participation in management and to devolve control over resource access to local levels of government through policy and institutional

reforms. The LGC devolved much authority to local government units (LGUs), specifically municipalities. The basic tenet of the LGC is decentralization. A general operative principle is a provision that the LGUs may group themselves, consolidate or coordinate their efforts, services and resources for purposes commonly beneficial to them. Section 35 specifically states that LGUs may enter into joint ventures and such other cooperative arrangements with people's organizations (PO) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to engage in the delivery of certain basic services, capability building and livelihood projects, and to develop local enterprises designed to diversify fisheries, among other things. Section 16 of the Fisheries Code states that "The management of contiguous fishery resources such as bays which straddle several municipalities, cities or provinces, shall be done in an integrated manner, and shall not be based on political subdivisions of municipal waters in order to facilitate their management as single resource systems. The LGUs which share or border such resources may group themselves and coordinate with each other to achieve the objectives of integrated fishery resource management." In addition, the Fisheries Code (Section 73) endorsed the establishment of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMC) at the national, municipal and village (*barangay*) levels. The FARMCs are mandated to carry out a number of management advisory functions in close collaboration with the LGU. Thus, for coastal and marine ecosystems and fisheries within 15 km of the shore, the location of the major centers of marine biodiversity within the Philippines, the Fisheries Code provides the legal structure for establishing governance structures for ecosystem based fisheries management through the Integrated FARMC and the ability of municipalities to coordinate municipal fisheries ordinances to address common concerns and enforcement.

Lanuza Bay is situated in the northernmost section the province of Surigao del Sur [49]. It extends from Carrascal in the north and encompasses the municipalities of Cantilan, Madrid, Carmen, Lanuza, Cortes and Tandag. Out of 99 *barangays* in the Lanuza Bay management cluster, 42 are considered coastal *barangays* and economically highly dependent on coastal and marine resources. The Lanuza Bay ecosystem is counted among the most biologically diverse and productive marine habitats in the northern part of Surigao del Sur and holds some of the richest fishing grounds of the Caraga region. However, by the early 2000s, such abundance and diversity were under increasing threat from destructive fishing activities (e.g., blasting and fine mesh nets), encroachment of commercial fishing on municipal waters, siltation and habitat degradation due to upland activities particularly logging and mining operations.

There have been a number of initiatives through the years to address the problems facing Lanuza Bay's fisheries and marine resources [49–51]. The Lanuza Bay Development Alliance (LBDA) began in 1998 when the municipality of Lanuza, along with some non-governmental organizations (NGOs), church leaders, academe and other stakeholders, launched a campaign to convince other LGUs to collectively address illegal fishing in the Bay. Lanuza was soon joined by the municipality of Cortes and, through the years, LBDA developed into the formal association of seven LGUs that it has become today. The LBDA was formally established in May 2004 with a Memorandum of Agreement among the member municipalities. LBDA includes all five municipalities bordering Lanuza Bay, as well as Carmen and Tandag. Carmen, situated less than 1 km inland from the Bay's coastline and having no coastal waters, and Tandag, which is outside the Bay area, were included in the Alliance because of their catchment influence on the Bay. Furthermore, Tandag is Surigao del Sur's seat of government and therefore an important contributor to development initiatives in the area.

The process of establishing and maintaining the LBDA illustrates both political will on the part of local elected leaders to address the

threats to the marine resources and the political capacity to provide long term support to the Alliance. Political will was shown by elected leaders by overcoming the existent political difficulties and costs by using the power of collaboration to reform governance practices, especially in the context of enforcing fishery laws in municipal waters where jurisdictional boundaries are often obscure and easily questioned. At first, the participating elected leaders were only concerned about parochial concerns within their jurisdictions, such as boundary conflicts and municipal water demarcations, rather than broader Bay-wide ecosystem-based concerns. With leadership from several elected officials, NGOs, and people's organizations, the agenda shifted to concerns that transcended political boundaries and focused on ecosystem-based initiatives. The LGUs and NGOs encouraged people's participation in the process by providing transportation subsidies to local people who could not afford the costs of attending the frequent meetings and workshops. Through the process, local elected leaders and people's organizations crafted and adopted the LBDA Covenant on the conservation and management of the Bay's coastal and fishery resources, LBDA manual of operations, unified fisheries ordinance (UFO), and environmental management plan framework. The crafting of the Bay-wide Covenant strengthened the bond of the LBDA members and provided a venue for collaboration and cooperation between local elected leaders, NGOs such as BALAOD Mindanaw and Green Mindanao, and local people's organizations. The Unified Fisheries Ordinance (UFO) provided a policy for governing of the municipal waters of the member LGUs. The UFO was individually enacted by all seven member municipalities of the Alliance and is implemented through a Project Management Office (PMO). The PMO, headed by a coastal and fisheries resource management program director, is responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring of the implementation of coastal resource management (CRM) and fisheries management programs and projects in the seven LBDA municipalities. The director, whose salary is taken out of the yearly contributions of member-LGUs, works with municipal CRM coordinators to generate a monthly report on the status of program implementation by each LGU.

Key political capacity practices to the LBDA is the regular budget allocation for the PMO from the LGUs; a LBDA financial management system in place; a management body with clear roles and responsibilities and meeting regularly; adoption of a harmonized comprehensive fisheries and aquatic resources management ordinance; ongoing capacity building of the management body; and linkages with various government agencies and non-governmental and people's organizations for support.

## 5. Discussion: analysis of cases: overcoming the lack of political will and capacity

Fisheries depletion may be one of the most difficult environmental issues for a state to deal with due to their size, scale, complexity, and due to the competing interests involved. However, both the Philippines and Vietnam cases illustrate several potential ideal-type pathways for overcoming hurdles to lack of political will and lack of political capacity exist. The first pathway is the importance of leadership on fisheries governance at both the local and national level. The second pathway is the education of the public to generate the values necessary to ensure cooperation and enforcement of fisheries management policies. Finally, it is also critical that there be cooperation between local and state institutions to ensure workable policies and enforcement.

The importance of adequate leadership on fisheries governance, and for all environmental policy making, cannot be overstated. Lack of political will often results from leaders who apathetic about a particular issue, or who simply cannot prioritize an issue due to a litany of more pressing concerns. As demonstrated in our cases, in

both Vietnam and the Philippines key advances were only made when a local leader with adequate expertise in the issue made an effort to coordinate local resources to begin to enforce existent law and develop pragmatic solutions that worked for local fishing communities. While still limited by the lack of leadership on this issue at the national level, the ability of local leaders to begin to effect change is promising and illustrative of the impact motivated and influential individuals can make despite poor resources, and lack of national institutions and support.

Educating the public by tapping into the local knowledge-base infrastructure is also a critical element in effecting positive change in fisheries management. Local NGOs played a large role in both Vietnam and the Philippines by organizing communities that share marine resources, particularly by developing local enforcement mechanisms. Using these local networks to build regulatory goals not only allows for the use of local knowledge and expertise in fisheries management, but also lends the enforcement activities credibility to local populations. This credibility helps to form common values between enforcers and local fishermen around more sustainable activities that are for everyone's benefit. This helps reduce the appearance that regulators are disconnected from the local communities and also reduces the number of opportunities for one or two corrupt government agents to undermine the entire enterprise.

The final pathway towards more positive outcomes in fisheries management is made conspicuous by its absence in both cases. That is the lack of co-ordination and clear co-management frameworks between the national and local levels. As discussed above, local enforcement mechanisms and utilizing local knowledge are critical to positive outcomes. However, given, the interdependence of marine environments, and the necessity of vast resources to manage them, state level support is extremely important to building on the modest successes at local levels. Overall, this is the largest issue faced by developing countries when it comes to environmental issues generally and will only improve as state's increase their institutional capacity to deal with the complex problems environmental management poses.

## 6. Conclusion

The importance of political will and political capacity in determining the quality of fisheries management has been demonstrated through an analysis of two cases where fishery management improved despite significant obstacles. Existent scholarship has largely conceptualized political will and political capacity as being the same concept, thus muddying the ability of scholars and policymakers to determine exactly what is limiting a state's ability to manage not only fisheries, but also environmental resources more-generally. The utility of separating the concepts of political will and political capacity, and providing an analytical framework for identifying the presence or absence of them, is clear in the cases discussed above. The takeaway from the analysis of fisheries in the Philippines and Vietnam is that even in low capacity states, local champions of fishery management can affect moderate progress on this complicated issue if they use community networks to engage in enforcement of fishery policies. This demonstrates that states with low capacity need not give upon this issue that is critical to so many of their citizens. That being said, beyond identifying and supporting local champions, states need to focus on building institutional capacity at the national and local levels to deal with policy development and regulation. Particularly states should develop clear co-management frameworks so that limited resources can be mustered effectively.

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