

Small Coasts, Large Issues - Can Communities Protect Their Coasts?

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How can coastal communities protect their environment while maintaining economic activities that use marine resources sustainably? This question can be addressed by investigating either national or regional approaches in marine policy that successfully promote the sustainable use of coastal ecosystem services. It can also be answered through the analysis of case studies on local coastal management schemes, which describe the innovative hands-on approaches of coastal communities to conserve or restore their environment. These community-based management schemes are often culturally sensitive and bottom-up, due to the nature of their operational structure, which is either grassroots or indigenous. The greater challenge has amounted to arguing the continued relevance of the 'community' brand of coastal management in the face of increasing vocal (and fashionable) alternatives that try to make sense of the unity and diversity of coastal living and environment. However, both studies on policy approaches and those of community case studies can only offer limited answers to the question, providing perspectives that are either too area specific or artificial. This paper will discuss ways to advance sustainable coastal management locally and globally. To look locally, it proceeds through a discussion of the way Satoumi is utilized to mainstream the idea of conserving biodiversity and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources to the work of production sectors, mainly fishers communities, and argues the benefits of the Satoumi approach in comparison to other contemporary coastal management schemes, such as Marine Spatial Planning. To look globally, it argues the need for a comprehensive understanding of global coastal governance outlook and introduces newly establish marine initiative, the NF-UBC Nereus Program. The paper concludes that both the local and global matter: Sustainable use of ocean resources requires both innovative local, bottom-up management approaches as well as global-scale coordinated scientific research efforts and large-scale management responses.

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