

**Our Community Since Oyster
Aquaculture :a Photovoice approach
Case study of Cowell:Janine Pierce
*Stream:evaluation of actual practice, participation &
outcomes***

**University of South Australia School of Commerce CCWPL
BUE,Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies**



Community Builders Symposium
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Why?

- Stage 3 of a wider study of impact of the environmentally sensitive industry of oyster aquaculture on social sustainability of 5 oyster communities on the Eyre Peninsula in SA



Why? To answer:

- What is ***social impact*** dimension of knowledge of oyster aquaculture impact on Cowell community?
- Can Photovoice be ***linked*** to Five Capitals approach?
- Are there any ***changes*** or interdependences in the five community capitals?



Profile of Cowell

- ***Where:*** In SA on Eyre Peninsula approximately 493 km northwest of Adelaide via Pt Augusta
- ***Economic activity:*** sheep, wheat, fishing, jade, tourism & ***Oyster Aquaculture***
- ***Why studied:*** ***part of a wider study of five oyster communities on Eyre Peninsula & selected for a stand alone study to innovatively combine Photovoice with Five Capitals approach***

Who participated?



How and When

- ***Method: Photovoice:***
- **photos & focus group**

- ***When: Sep-Oct 2006***
- ***How many participants: 7 community members (11 had initially promised but could not commit to whole process)***

5 Capitals approach *(Cocklin & Alston, 2003)*

Sustainability of community capitals is examined:

- **Natural** (resources, ecosystems, aesthetics)
- **Human** (knowledge, skills, abilities)
- **Social** (networks, values, trust, shared vision)
- **Institutional** (public, private, non-government)
- **Produced** (built environment: public assets, harvested, made, \$\$)
- Together these stocks & flows of capitals represent required aspects to sustain a community
- *Question: how are these changing & interacting?*

Funding

- ***Australian Research Council (ARC linkage)***
- ***University of South Australia (School of Commerce)***
- ***Industry partner in the research: Eyre Regional Development Board (Mark Cant)***
- ***University members: Professor Jennifer McKay (co researcher in this case study), Professor Rhonda Sharp, Janine Pierce***

Stakeholders

- Community members of Cowell
- Wider Eyre region
- Oyster industry
- University of South Australia
- Eyre Regional Development Board
- Australian Research Council
- Government bodies: Local, State, Federal
- Other bodies (e.g. environmentalists)

Photovoice: why used in community studies?

- ***Community driven:*** participant photos & follow up focus group enable community voice and community discussion of strengths and issues
- ***'Snapshot in time':*** to capture a historical picture in Cowell of oyster industry's impact as at 2006
 - ***A medium to assess Five Capitals***
(Cocklin & Alston,2003)
- ***Outcomes provide a base for engagement with stakeholders, including policy makers & decision makers***

Combined method of Photovoice and Five Capitals

Outcomes
:
Results then action



Participants take photos linked to 5 capitals

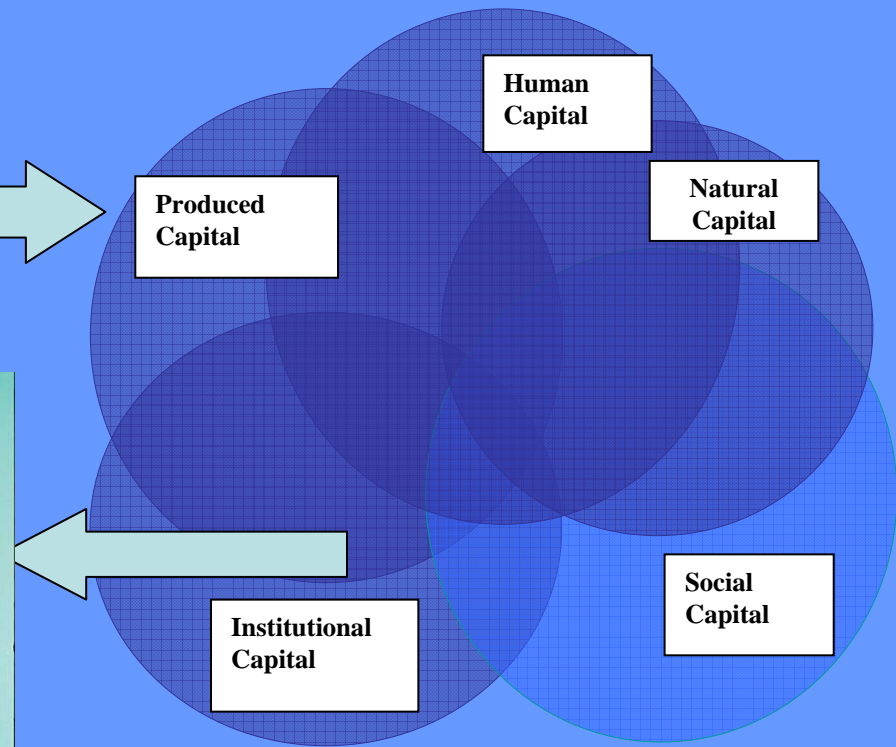
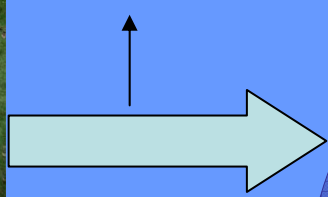


Photo themes

- **Image** that describes *how it* (oyster aquaculture) has *impacted on you*
- **Image:** *what it* (oyster aquaculture) *means to you*
- **Image:** *social sustainability* for your community
- **Image:** *good news* about oyster aquaculture in your community
- **Image:** *bad news* about oyster aquaculture in your community

Photovoice method

- Wang (1999) identified 3 key stages of Photovoice
- **Recruitment** of participants, explanation of study, camera usage guidance, ethics, selecting photos to take
- **Telling** stories of photos to contextualise
- **Codifying** of issues & themes

Photovoice Method

- **Initial contact:** letters, phone calls & consent forms
- **Despatch:** of disposable cameras & diaries
- 2 wks later return of cameras & diaries
- **Develop photos:** & code to reflect 5 capitals themes in diaries (both positive & negative impact)
- **Focus group workshop:** facilitation to prioritise photos that best reflect capitals themes
- **Write up:** results, information then available to wider audience e.g. wider community,

What was found from this study?

- Human and Produced capitals highlighted most in photos: mostly positive
- **Human:** jobs, more population, entrepreneurship, school & job related skills, more professionals in town
- **Produced:** more buildings & infrastructure, more financial capital, more businesses, houses, tourism
- **Natural:** only a few mentions of this capital, happy with water quality & water access in most cases, 'Commons' negotiated-positive photos

Mention of Capitals:

- ***Social:*** Enhanced community vision, ways of interacting, social cohesion, trust & understandings, enhanced community pride & club membership
- ***Institutional:*** Government confidence (air sea rescue boat), improved schools & job pathway programs, enhanced services, and boat ramp assisted with govt funding

The negatives:

- **Not much emphasis on negatives, but maybe in a community focus group requiring open sharing a limit may be put on this by participants in portraying their community negatively to ‘outsiders’**
- **However: a similar story was told to the confidential interviews in Stage 2 of this study-participants seemed genuinely proud of and happy with their community since oyster aquaculture with some negatives but not enough to disturb social sustainability**

Negatives Question 5: Image that describes what is bad about oyster aquaculture in your community

- ***Natural Capital:*** Some oyster related rubbish, unsightly & odours, some overload at the boat ramp in busy times
- ***Produced:*** Shortage of accommodation for oyster workers



*Comments:
unsightly*



*Comments: "Shortage of accommodation-
aquaculture trainees live in poor accommodation
like this house-they simply cannot afford anything else"*

Negative observations

- Some negative comments in diaries related to attracting elements to work in oyster industry with different norms and values to Cowell community & some neighbour resentments and jealousy amongst townsfolk
- However: these comments in diary (only one participant) were not supported by photos and show that it is challenging to provide negatively associated photos of people in community

Positive images: 'Question 1: Image that describes how oyster aquaculture in your community has impacted on you' (vibrant main street, growing school, enhanced health services, locally made oyster punts)



Comments: "Cowell Hospital & Allied Health: new outpatients built to meet growing needs of Cowell"



Comments: "School has its own aquaculture program with an oyster lease"



Comments: "Cowell Hospital & Allied Health: new outpatients built to meet growing needs of Cowell"



Comments: "Oyster punts made in Cowell"

Question 2: Image that illustrates what oyster aquaculture means to you



Comments "Rise in house values, equity and can borrow against it"



Comment: 'My House'



Comments: "A means to your employment and pride"



Comments: "New kindergarten built for the large population of children, due to the young families moving to Cowell for employment on oyster leases"

Question 3: Image that illustrates degree of sustainability for your community in the future



Comments: "Business sustainability"



Comments: "Function room: people can sit down and eat oysters and wine; Community can hire out for private functions"



Comments: "School and sustainability; own oyster lease"



Comments: "New business and sustainability"

Question 4: Image that describes what is good about oyster aquaculture in your community



*Comments: "Improvements to boat ramp great for oyster growers, professional fishers and recreational fishers;
Aquaculture industry personnel always support these working bees"*



Comments: " Business is good in Cowell"



Comment: " Impact with other industry"



Comment: "Gourmet foods made from oysters and sold locally"

Capitals Interrelate: natural, human, social, institutional, produced



Comments: “Upgrade to boat ramp so oyster growers and fishermen can use together; means promoting and increasing tourism, jobs, boat ramp committee and abalone divers, and fish watch; walk dogs, people fish, talk and meet”

Evaluation:Photovoice

- **Great community commitment to this type of research and an enjoyable & positive community experience**
- **Community collaboratively working out their story of oyster aquaculture impact**
- **Capitals framework can be linked to Photovoice**
- **Photovoice proved a successful tool in this community research: however challenge to photograph some aspects**

Lessons learnt:

- ***Step back and let community do the work to tell their story***
- ***Be a facilitator only: authenticity is everything***
- ***'Tyranny of distance' can be managed through modern communication methods***
- ***Look and listen to photos, diaries & discourse***

So, is Oyster Aquaculture in Cowell Socially Sustainable?

- **Basic needs:** housing, community infrastructure, income etc precursors to capacity building)
- Mostly yes but shortage of oyster
- worker accommodation & some issues with oyster operations near housing
- **Individual capacity for learning & self development:** Yes for education, skill development & entrepreneurship No for some repetitive jobs
- **Social & community capacity:** Yes, enhanced boat ramp a 'Commons' meeting place for all, increased social cohesion & support through community infrastructure, businesses to keep and build population, clubs etc

References

- Cocklin, C. & Alston, M. (eds). 2003, *Community Sustainability in Rural Australia: A Question of Capital?* Academy of Social Sciences in Australia.
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You have provided a voice 'inside looking out' for impact of oyster aquaculture today in your community, and a historical record of what oyster aquaculture community impact looked like and was experienced in 2006