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Kosamu, I.B.M.

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Author: Kosamu, I.B.M.

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Propositions

Management of Small-Scale Fisheries in Developing Countries: The case of Elephant Marsh in Malawi.

Ishmael Bobby Mphangwe Kosamu

1. Success of the Elephant Marsh fishery requires that the government be as intelligently absent as possible, e.g. by only helping to create a governance framework for leaving the actual decision making to the lowest possible level, and subsequently respecting, protecting, and supporting these local institutions. (This Thesis)
2. Designing a management system for the Elephant Marsh Fishery requires sufficient flexibility to allow for the organic *bricolage* of community-based institutions. (This Thesis)
3. A sustainable management system for the Elephant Marsh fishery might well be a low-cost, internally amorphous and locally based 'nested enterprise', built for growth and adaptation. (This Thesis)
4. A multi-level, actor-based analysis of rules and other mechanisms prevailing at a fishery (e.g. through Action-in-Context) is an essential foundation for designing sustainable institutional arrangements. (This Thesis)
5. Although widely recommended by several authors in literature (e.g. Ostrom, 1990; Cox et al., 2010; Pomeroy, 2016; Cundill & Fabricius, 2010), co-management is not the most suitable mode of managing small-scale fisheries in developing countries, characterized as these often are by a weak government.
6. In agreement with Ostrom (2009), fishing communities do not really see the need to improve the management of a fishery until they feel enough resource pressure (e.g. enough scarcity).

7. By focusing less on formal requirements of institutional design (e.g. Imperial & Yandle, 2005; Rijke et al., 2012; Cinner et al., 2012), and reflecting more on what really works, institutional thinking should accept that good institutions might also be purely locally-based and less complying with Western-style criteria of efficiency, equity or procedural justice.
8. Because data-based stories are as important as quantitative data in the crafting of resource governance systems, there is need to treat such data with equal value in line with FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Re-usable) data principles (Wilkinson et al, 2016).