Complex Coastal Systems: Transdisciplinary Learning on International Case Studies

Transdisciplinary learning across case studies

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Abstract

Seven international case studies in coastal management are examined in this book. Each of the case studies dealt with an inlet or mouth management issue, but they were not selected based on similarity in their ecological (biophysical) or social systems. The case studies also differed in terms of the dominant environmental paradigm used by the scientists in their original analyses, as clarified in the introductory and other chapters. During the international cross-comparative workshop, aimed at transdisciplinary learning within and across the case studies, the marked differences in the research emphasis placed on the ecological and/or the social system (the object of inquiry), in the connections made to management practice and policy decision making (the theoretical lenses informing the way of inquiry), and in the knowledge sources used (the way of inquiry), became apparent. Accordingly, in the following sections the learning from the transdisciplinary research endeavour is synthesised by cross-comparing the coastal systems (S), the methods (M) applied and the concepts employed by the involved scientists (C). The cross-comparison is itself informed by concepts from systems thinking and policy analysis, with the aim of influencing coastal management and research practice internationally.