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Numbers vs. Narratives: the importance of integrating social science perspectives in ocean sustainability research

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Many disciplines study the ocean and its uses from different perspectives. Recently, there has been a growing awareness about the inseparability of the social and ecological systems and that achieving sustainable use of ocean resources will require the integration of different types of knowledge and disciplines. In this presentation, we will draw from the experience of two early career interdisciplinary scientists to present examples of the role social sciences can play in achieving sustainable oceans management, how and why it should be integrated with other ocean disciplines. More specifically, we will present how a qualitative research approaches to understanding seafood sustainability governance and community/rights-based management makes an important contribution to sustainable ocean management. We conclude that to achieve ocean sustainability, which is a societal problem, we not only need numbers but also the social sciences and their narratives.