

Thrift, Eric, Ben Belton, and Derek Johnson. '**Dried Fish in Global Perspective: Themes and Knowledge Gaps from a Multidisciplinary Literature Review**'. Webinar, 10 December 2020.

This webinar was presented by Eric Thrift, Ben Belton, and Derek Johnson. In an earlier webinar, Derek Johnson presented the quantitative results of the DFM global literature review on dried fish. In this meeting we shared our qualitative assessment of that literature. Drawing on a systematic review of over 1300 publications directly focusing on dried fish, we presented an overview of key themes and knowledge gaps in contemporary research, with reference to selected examples illustrating studies from different continents, disciplines, and theoretical perspectives. Findings were presented thematically according to the following topics: (1) Ecology; (2) History and change; (3) Culture and social relations; (4) Nutrition, food security, and health; (5) Technical knowledge; (6) Economy, value chains, and labour; and (7) Policy and governance. The presentation was followed by a short discussion session.

As we found early on, a vast majority of existing publications on dried fish consist of technical research. Given our goal of locating transdisciplinary approaches that incorporate insights from the social sciences and humanities, however, we chose to focus more heavily on the literature from non-technical fields.

We noted several strengths to this overall literature. In many fields, such as development and nutrition, there is a strong literature on the Global South from Global South authors. We found substantial research on the nutritional benefits and health threats of dried fish, as well as published findings that identify methods and technologies to address these. We also found considerable, rich detail buried within many of the technical studies we reviewed.

The literature on dried fish is fragmented and lacks synthetic analysis, with limited contributions from the areas of social science and social-ecological dynamics. Our review suggests the value of more systematic and transdisciplinary research including critical approaches to gender, social difference, value chains, and the political ecology of dried fish. We found there is a need for disaggregated data on fish products (fresh, dried, fermented, smoked, etc.) in consumption surveys and similar research. We identified a need for stronger research on food security and nutrition, which would both acknowledge and critically engage the socio-cultural contexts – including governance and social institutions – that frame technical innovations and interventions.

Participants in the meeting asked a number of questions that highlight further knowledge gaps and will prompt our further engagement with this literature. These topics include:

- Links between human migration and fish processing or consumption practices
- The gender of authors who are studying and writing about dried fish
- How changes in processing methods relate to the expanding scale of fish processing operations and consumer demand

- The impacts of food safety controls on small fish processors
- The role of community-level and informal institutions in the dried fish business, including financing or risk management
- International experience with the use of harmful preservatives during processing and storage of dried fish