**RESPONSE TO EDITOR AND REVIEWERS**

Journal: Maritime Studies

Manuscript number: MARS-D-24-00030R1

Title: "“Men Don’t Feel Comfortable with Successful Female Leaders”: Exploring Participatory Exclusion in Community-based Fisheries Management, South Coast of Kenya"

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a. In black italic type: exact comment from the reviewer.

b. Indent and in normal font: response from the co-authors.

c. In normal font and in blue: revised text as it appears in the manuscript.

***Editor***

*General comments*

*We have received the second set of reviews from our advisors on your manuscript, "“Men Don’t Feel Comfortable with Successful Female Leaders”: Exploring Participatory Exclusion in Community-based Fisheries Management, South Coast of Kenya", which you submitted to Maritime Studies. The reviews are from your original reviewer, who provided positive feedback previously, as well as a new third reviewer.*

*Based on the advice received, I have decided that your manuscript could be reconsidered for publication should you be prepared to incorporate another round of major revisions. Both reviewers recognise the merit in your manuscript and importance of your contribution. However more conceptual (in relation to participatory exclusion, intrinsic/instrumental motivations, discomfort, complementarity of concepts and application to a fisheries context) and methodological (e.g. differences between SSIS AND FGDs) clarity is requested. Moreover, both reviewers are in agreement that the results and discussion sections need to be further improved. Reviewer 3 has pointed to the need for highlighting the insights and themes derived from this study in light of the literature, in the discussion section. Reviewer 1 questions the relevance of the different geographical settings to the results, while Reviewer 3 seeks an explanation on why specific places were selected and their significance in CBFM interactions.*

Dear Professor Weeratunge,

Thank you very much for reconsidering our manuscript and for your decision supporting its publication in *Maritime Studies* pending another round of major revisions. We highly appreciate your synthesis of the conceptual and methodological concerns expressed by the Reviewers 1 and 3, and their suggestions to improve the sections of the results and discussion. We hope that we sufficiently addressed their comments and improved the version of the manuscript in the view to be published in *Maritime Studies.*

***Reviewer 1***

*General comments*

*Thank you for your time and effort in responding to the comments. Again, I found your paper really interesting to read and review. I think you've done a particularly good job with the new conceptual approach sections, including more literature and I feel clearer now with the method and overall aims. I have a few further recommendations that I think will help with the clarity which you may want to consider.*

Thank you very much for your second review of our manuscript. We took into consideration your recommendations to improving the clarity our manuscript. We are grateful for your time, and we hope that we correctly addressed your comments and suggestions. **Please see our detailed responses below.**

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| Comment | **Response** |
| *I think it still needs to be clearer in the results and discussion how and where the participatory exclusion concept has been investigated and confirmed. The concept is emphasised in the main title, so it would be good to see the concept loud and clear throughout the manuscript. I think a clearer section in the discussion could help with this (e.g. 5.1. gendered participation levels in CBFM could be more tailored to discussing the concept). In addition, using the term 'participatory exclusion' directly in the text where it is relevant will help make your arguments more direct.* | This is an important point that contributes to clarifying the relevance of using the participatory exclusion concept for this study. Following your suggestions we have:   * Revised and tailored the section 6.1 to discuss this concept. Please see the **revised section p.21-22 -L.597-628.** * Used the term directly as a key word **(p.1)** and in the subtitles **5.1 (p.13-L.337) and 6.1 (p.21-L.595).** * Clarified some sections of the manuscript as indicated below and * **P.13-L.339-341:** “In this section, we combine primary data from participant observation, interviews and group discussions with secondary data on BMU governance to investigate participatory exclusion within CBFM processes through the analysis of women’s and men’s participation levels in the three studied communities.” * **P.15-16-L.425-429:** “In the three studied communities, women’s participation levels in CBFM are lower than those of men (Table 4). Men mostly participate interactively in CBFM, whereas women’s participation levels vary from passive (C1, C3) to active (C2). These results indicate that, despite its participatory nature, CBFM contributes to feed into women’s exclusionary processes from fisheries management and decision-making in these three SSF communities. Thus, these findings demonstrate the relevance of using the participatory exclusion notion in the SSF sector.” * **P.16- L.436-437:**   “In the following, we use data from participant observation, interviews and group discussions to identify the main barriers to women’s participation that drive participatory exclusion in CBFM.”   * **P.21- L.577-585:** “By contrast, men’s participation level is systematically higher than that of women, providing evidence for participatory exclusion predicated on gender in BMU. Barriers to women’s participation that drive this participatory exclusion mechanism are multifold and intertwined, combining socio-cultural, economic, and institutional factors, and barriers specific to female leadership. Moreover, we found that all BMU members do not experience BMU places in the same way, owing to their intersecting identities, suggesting that BMU places may ultimately reproduce social inequalities. These findings tend to indicate that participatory CBFM approaches have the potential to support exclusionary processes and highlight the relevance of intersectionality as an analytical framework to capture the complexities of power hierarchies in SSF management and governance. “ * **P.22- L.631-636:** “Our results illuminate the diversity of barriers faced by women in CBFM that drive participatory exclusion, thus revealing the complexity of gender power relationships in CBFM. These findings are largely consistent with the literature on SSF management globally, suggesting that reported barriers are not specific to CBFM approaches but find ground in a broader SSF governance context (FAO et al. 2023; Galappaththi et al. 2022). The multifaceted nature of these barriers suggests that addressing participatory exclusion in SSF management requires holistic and multidimensional approaches.” * **P.24- L.695-697:** “At the empirical level, our study confirms that CBFM processes in the studied SSF communities are characterized by participatory exclusion, adding evidence to the growing body of literature denouncing the lack of inclusiveness in CBFM approaches (Johnson et al. 2021; Rabbitt et al. 2022).” |
| *As the study is already including several complex concepts, I'd recommend restricting use of new concepts or terminology that aren't directly important to the study. For example, intrinsic/ instrumental motivations are brought up a few times early in the introduction/background and then not mentioned again.* | Thank you very much for your suggestion to limit the use of new concepts that are not central to the study. Following your recommendation, we decided not to use the terminology of “intrinsic/instrumental motivations” in the revised manuscript to gain in clarity. **Please see the corrections P.2- L.19-22 and P.5- L.122-124.** |
| *I don't feel the study is taking the geographic approach that has been highlighted as important in the introduction (P3 L28-30). Different locations have been investigated, however, the relevance of the different geographic settings to the results hasn't been discussed. I fully appreciate this may be beyond the scope of the study, but in this case, I'd recommend being careful with positioning the study in this way (geographic), and more so emphasise the place-based approach and the investigating roles of different arenas in everyday life (home, landing site, mosque etc).* | Thank you for raising this important point, which requires clarification. We used the term “geographic” since it is one of the key dimensions of the relief map tool developed by Rodó-de-Zárate (2014) to explore (dis)comfort in different places of daily life. However, we agree that our study did not investigate in detail the differences in geographical settings of the studied communities.  For clarity purpose, we replaced the term of “geographic approach” by “place-based approach” as suggested. **Please see the revised text below and:**   * **P.2- L.28-30:** “This research area points out the relevance of using a **place-based** approach in intersectional studies, recognizing that emotions associated with certain social identities are contingent on places that engender and may reinforce social inequalities.” * **P.6- L.181-183:** “In line with Eaves et al. (2023), this study adopts a **place-based** approach of (dis)comfort by exploring fisherfolk’s lived experiences in relation to CBFM spaces and through an intersectional lens.” * **P.24- L.703-705:** “We encourage the application of this method in gender and fisheries research to improve our understanding of intersectional and **place-based** dynamics related to participation in SSF management and governance.”   Reference:  Rodó-de-Zárate, M. (2014). Developing geographies of intersectionality with Relief Maps: reflections from youth research in Manresa, Catalonia. *Gender, Place and Culture*. *A Journal of Feminist Geography*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.817974> |
| *I'm unsure about the difference in intention is with the SSIs and FGDs. Both seem to be focusing on key BMU members and ask similar open-ended questions about men and women's participation. Could you justify the use of both methods some more?* | This is an important comment that requires methodological clarification, thank you for pointing it out. SSIs and FGDs data collection methods differed in their **objective, sampling, target, questions and duration**.   * **SSI** aimed to get historical and institutional background information on the BMU development and the integration of gender considerations. We used purposive sampling to select key informants among BMU members, who were members with good knowledge about the BMU history and its development. SSI lasted about 45 minutes. * **FGD** aimed to explore collectively the perceptions of women’s and men’s groups regarding their participation in the BMU. We selected any person who was a BMU member using convenience quota sampling. FGD lasted about 90 minutes.   **We have integrated these clarifications into the ms. Please see the revised figure 2 p.11 and the text below:**   * **P.9- 10-L.243-256:**   “We also conducted semi-structured interviews (SSI) on gender equity in BMU across the study site. For SSI, we selected 18 key informants (nine women and nine men) using purposive sampling. Specifically, we selected BMU members who had good knowledge about BMU history and its development in each community. We ran SSI to collect historical and institutional background information on the BMU development and the integration of gender considerations. To do so, we asked questions related to the history of local BMU, women’s and men’s representation in BMU, and their respective management activities. We provide the list of questions for SSI in supplementary material (List 1). The lead author conducted all SSI which lasted about 45 minutes each.  Further, we conducted six focus group discussions (FGD) with BMU members, two in each community, to collectively discuss the perceptions of women’s and men’s groups regarding their participation in management and decision-making processes. We provide the main guiding questions for FGD in supplementary material (List 2). We selected FGD participants using convenience quota sampling and gathered between four and nine people in each FGD. FGD lasted about 90 minutes on average. Given the context in our study site, which implied a spatial separation of women and men and power asymmetries, FGD were done separately by gender to ensure that everyone felt comfortable discussing in public.” |
| *P10 L269-279, unless it's coming from observations in the field, remember to include some references for this info on fishing characteristics.* | Thank you for drawing our attention on this point. In this section, the information on fishing characteristics stems from our field observations (fisheries -related activities in this study site -as most of the Kenyan coast- have not been documented through a gender lens). We consider that referring to participatory observation in this part could be confusing since we introduce our data collection methods in the following subsections, but if you think it is important mentioning it here, we can provide corrections. |
| *P12 L328 - what are plural and fluid identities?* | We used the term “plural” to indicate that respondents are characterized by multiple overlapping identities, of which we focused for this study on identities related to their administrative status, age; education level, ethnicity, gender and marital situation. We used the term “fluid” to acknowledge that these respondents’ identities are not static but may change over time (for example: a respondent’ gender identity or age range). |
| *With Figure 1, if it's possible to include an image for seagrass in D, I think this would make most sense as seagrass is included as one of the three main habitat types in the map (B). It's also a key habitat for men and women's fishing in Kenya* | Thank you for this relevant remark. We have integrated the suggested change. **Please see the corrections on Figure 1 p.8.** |
| *How long did an FGD and SSI take to conduct on average?* | We have provided this clarification in the method section. **Please see below and p.10:**   * **L. 249:** “The lead author conducted all SSI which lasted about 45 minutes each.” * **L. 254:**” FGD lasted about 90 minutes on average.” |
| *Finally, please include the numbers alongside the percentage figures in P23 L616-618.* | We have integrated the suggested change. **Please see the corrections p.20-L.568-571.** |

***Reviewer 3***

*General comments*

*Thank you for the opportunity to review. I've taken a fresh look at the manuscript in its current form. It reads well and focuses on a stimulating area of research/scholarly gap. The manuscript has the foundational elements and the potential for an interesting contribution. However, it requires further development to strengthen analytical depth, derive key insights, and better articulate its value addition. Please see my detailed comments and suggestions below for your consideration. I found sections 1, 2 and 4 nicely written and concise.*

*Overall, there is great potential in this manuscript and I look forward to seeing a next iteration.*

Thank you very much for this positive feedback and favourable decision supporting the publication of our manuscript in *Maritime Studies* pending major revisions. We have considered all your comments and found them particularly useful to improve the quality of the paper. We highly appreciate the time and valuable inputs your provided to this manuscript, and we hope that we sufficiently addressed your comments. **Please see our detailed responses below (comments on the left, and responses on the right of the table).**

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| *The conceptual section (section 3) can be expanded more to comprehensively treat the literature and help the readers get a better grasp on how these concepts complement each other and how they have been applied in fisheries context. For example, in section 3.3, I liked how the notion of (dis)comfort is framed as an entry point, but this section can benefit from a brief discussion on how the concept has been applied in fisheries context, key themes that it helps reveal, and why such understandings matter. This expansion will help ground the study firmly, given its attention to comfortability as one of the scoping elements that provides the basis for this paper.* | We recognize that the previous version of section 3 in our manuscript presented a lack of clarity and analytical depth regarding our conceptual approach, and more specifically on the complementarity of the concepts and their application to a fisheries context. We sincerely appreciate that you provided useful recommendations to address this limitation. We have carefully considered your comment on the notion of (dis)comfort and provided more detail on its relevance for fisheries settings.  We hope that we sufficiently addressed your comment by:   * Detailing the relevance and key themes for each concept: * **P.5-L.124-125:** “This concept of participatory exclusion is powerful to highlight and reflect on existing gender inequalities in resource management and governance.” * **P.6-L.148-149:** “[Intersectionality] It represents a critical analytical tool to provide a more nuanced understanding of the intersecting factors shaping social inequalities (Rodo-Zarate 2014).” * **P.6-L.175-179:** “(Dis)comfort has also been discussed in the literature in relation to feminist research praxis (Chadwick 2021) and epistemologies (Eaves et al. 2023). This concept is often used as an entry point to investigate power asymmetries and critically examine complex forms of oppressions (Collins 1990; Harding 1986). More specifically, (dis)comfort is a central notion to understand the relation between social inequalities and spatial dynamics (Rodo-Zarate 2014).” * Expanding on their application in fisheries contexts: * **P.5-L.125-131**: “This notion has been used in other settings than the forestry sector, including fisheries management. Adapting Agarwal’s participation typology to Melanesian SSF communities, Rabbitt et al. (2022) show that participatory exclusion is also relevant to CBFM contexts. Their study reveals that despite the inclusive aspirations of CBFM, this approach did not systematically translate into women’s active participation in fisheries management. While not using this concept explicitly, other gender and fisheries scholars have also examined exclusionary processes predicated on gender in fisheries management (Baker-Médard 2016; Rohe et al. 2018).” * **P.6-L.149-154:** “In SSF settings, scholars have increasingly used an intersectional approach to highlight the complexities of power dynamics in relation to the access and control over fisheries resources (Ferguson 2021; Galappaththi et al. 2021; Hapke & Ayyankeril 2018; Khan et al. 2018). For instance, a study on fisherfolk’s livelihood adaptation in southeastern India reveals that gender interacts with wealth and class in shaping adaptive and coping responses to changes in SSF communities (Novak Colwell et al. 2017).” * **P.6-179-181:** “To the best of our knowledge, this concept has not been applied in the fisheries literature yet, although it has the potential for unravelling perceived experiences of inequalities related to the access and management of fisheries resources.” * How they complement each other: * **P.5-L.131-132**:” However, adding an intersectional lens to the study of participatory exclusion appears relevant to unpack power dynamics within gender categories.” * **P.7- L.185-191**: “Weaving these three conceptual frameworks provides an enriched and in-depth picture of power geometries within CBFM processes by making visible exclusionary dynamics based on gender and other axes of social differentiation. Specifically, using an intersectional lens contributes to deepen the analysis of gender power hierarchies that are illuminated through the participatory exclusion concept, while the study of (dis)comfort provides a more comprehensive view of subjective experiences resulting from social inequalities. Combining these three analytical lenses is thus relevant to capture the complex dialectic between intersecting social positions, subjective emotions, and participation in SSF management.” |
| *The empirical results are very interesting. Can you also elaborate why/how these specific places were picked (e.g., road, social hall) and how important they are from a CBFM interactions perspective?* | Thank you for this comment. For this study, we only focused on specific places linked to CBFM processes as detailed in **Table 1 p.9.** These places are highlighted in purple on the abscissa axis of the relief maps (e.g., “eco-friendly” place and “BMU office” displayed on figure 3 p. 18). While we included other places when collecting data such as “home” or “road”, their analysis is beyond the scope of this study since it focuses on CBFM activities. As a result, they appear on the relief maps but are not part of this study (**please see the legend of figure 3, p.18**).  To select CBFM places, we organized a meeting with BMU members in two communities to explain the purpose of the study and ask them collectively about the main places used for CBFM activities as indicated **p. 10- L.261- 263:**  “In a first step, we asked BMU members during meetings to identify places frequented on a weekly basis, and especially places related to BMU activities. For this study, we focused on BMU places as defined in Table 1.” |
| *I appreciate the positionality statement and the words of caution. Can you also briefly clarify - here in section 4.4 or earlier as part of the methods - the measures that were taken to address and mitigate some of the key challenges in this regard? One can otherwise question the validity of empirical results and the interpretation.* | We appreciate this comment that invites us to expand on the measures we took to mitigate the limitation related to our positionality. **Please see our clarification below and p.13-L.327-334:**  “We acknowledge that our research team’s attributes contrast culturally, socially, economically, and ontologically with those of the studied SSF communities. As a result, our study may have not fully grasped the complexities of intersectional power dynamics related to participation in CBFM in coastal Kenya. To mitigate this bias derived from our positionality, we used three main strategies that include i) conducting an extended fieldwork period to build and maintain trust with local communities, ii) closely working with local key informants who know well the local context and iii) rephrasing questions in interviews to cross-check information. Overall, we recommend developing local research on gender and intersectional issues in CBFM in the Western Indian Ocean region to improve understandings of these critical issues.” |
| *The Relief Maps are really interesting to see and there is much to learn from these. In Figure 5, I was curious as to why she is unhappy at home in relation to all of the social identities that she identifies with.* | Thank you for raising this point. Although the place “home” is displayed on this relief map (figure 5), it is not highlighted in purple. As explained above on the question about the selection of places, the fact that it is not in purple means that it is a place not related to CBFM processes and therefore not included in our analysis.  For this particular respondent, her narrative revealed that she experienced oppressive feelings at home as indicated in her relief map, but these elements are beyond the scope of our study as we were interested in understanding intersectional identities linked to CBFM processes specifically. |
| *Discussion section is my main concern in this paper. It needs further development / deeper engagement with results to derive some key insights/themes - what are the new insights and understandings that emerge from this study on top of what we already know? As of now, the discussion comes across as somewhat of a summary of results that primarily engages with the general themes in this area of scholarship such as the barriers, leadership challenges, etc. and therefore the contribution to advancing knowledge is not clear as it needs to be.**I suggest re-writing the discussion by focusing on a few key nuanced insights scoped around lived experiences and comfort levels in CBFM contexts - be sure to use signposting/sub-titles as needed. For example, how do oppression and privilege materialize across the important places of interaction? You could explore across communities and weave in both individual intersectional experiences and collective experiences of participatory exclusion. The reader will also benefit from seeing the results from across Relief Maps and by community/type of exclusion, such as a figure that layers all the Relief Maps in a way that it can visualize patterns. You may want to restructure the flow and insert some of the illustrative examples (e.g., Mwanahawa's lived experience) as boxes/vignettes to support the points being made. You can also choose to maintain focus on intersecting social identities but the intersectional lens does provide the flexibility to broaden the analytical scope t include various other structures of oppression such as institutional and economic barriers, if the study results allow you to do so.* | Thank you very much for this remark stressing the need for clarifying in the discussion section the main insights of the study, their implications and contribution to advancing knowledge in the field of gender and fisheries.We have clarified certain points of the discussion following your recommendation to highlight the ways in which our study contributes to new understandings. However, we maintained the same structure of the discussion since it corresponds to the three research objectives of the study (O1, O2, O3) and integrates some of the previous comments/remarks by the other reviewers.  **Please see our clarifications for each of the subsections of the discussion and related research objective as indicated below and in the corresponding text:**  **Subsection “6.1** **Participatory exclusion in CBFM” 🡺 (O1) To assess women’s and men’s participation levels in CBFM**   * **P.21-L.597-607:** “Our findings reveal that, in all studied communities, women’s participation level in BMU is lower than that of men. These findings demonstrate the value of applying a gender analysis to the study of SSF management and governance as it provides an enriched picture of power relationships. By using gender-disaggregated data, our study allows a sound comparison of both genders’ engagement in BMU and highlights that CBFM approaches in coastal Kenya are male-dominated, thus supporting evidence from literature on SSF management (Baker-Médard 2016; Hauzer et al. 2013; Kleiber et al. 2015), and environmental governance in general (OECD 2021).   Specifically, these findings tend to confirm the relevance of the participatory exclusion notion (Agarwal 2001) in the coastal Kenya context and adds to the scholarship pointing out the limitations of CBFM in terms of gender-inclusiveness (Johnson et al. 2021; Twyman 2017). While this concept emerged in the forestry sector, our study contributes to demonstrating its importance for research on SSF, in line with other gender and fisheries scholars (Baker-Médard 2016; Rohe et al. 2018).”  **Subsection “6.2** **Barriers to women’s participation in CBFM” 🡺(O2) To identify the main barriers to women’s participation in CBFM**   * **P.22-23-L.643-650:** “An additional insight that emerges from our results is the specificity of barriers related to female leadership. Women are largely excluded from leadership positions in the BMU board because of a lack of human and social capital and gender discrimination. This may explain why only women with a high social status may access these positions, thus limiting women’s representativity as observed in C3. These findings are consistent with recent studies on women’s restricted access to leadership positions in fisheries and ocean governance, both in Kenya (Ojwala 2023) and elsewhere (Bradford et al. 2023; IOC-UNESCO 2020). Without addressing these barriers to female leadership, achieving women’s interactive participation in CBFM, and more broadly in SSF management and governance, will remain deeply compromised (Rabbit et al. 2022).”   **Subsection “6.3** **Intersectional experiences of CBFM places” 🡺 (O3) To examine to what extent other power structures interact with gender in shaping lived experiences related to CBFM places**   * **P.23-24-L.674-687:** “Our results indicate that gender intersects with other power structures in shaping lived experiences related to BMU places. This suggests that gender is embedded in broader power social dynamics that shape the participation of individuals in CBFM, thus reinforcing the relevance of intersectionality as an analytical lens for capturing power hierarchies (Crenshaw 1989, 1991). More specifically, our findings support the call made by several scholars to foster intersectional approaches in research on SSF management and governance (Ferguson et al. 2021; Rice et al. 2024). Adopting an intersectional perspective has the potential to improve our understanding of SSF communities by illuminating the social differences produced by intersecting identities among fisherfolk, as opposed to mainstream views that emphasize the homogeneous character of local communities (Ferguson et al. 2021; Ojwala 2023). By revealing the determinant role of education level, age, administrative status, and marital situation on an individual’s participation-or lack thereof- in CBFM places, alongside gender, our findings add to intersectional analysis in the SSF sector (see Alati et al. 2023; Axelrod et al. 2022; Ferguson 2021; Rohe et al. 2018). The documented power dynamics, however, are specific to our study area, which highlights the importance of the local context in situating intersectional issues (Axelrod et al. 2022; Nightingale 2011) and supports recent critics against the “one-size-fits-all solution” narrative in SSF communities (Rabbit et al. 2022; Rohe et al. 2018).” |
| *The conclusion/policy implications section also has the same issue as the discussion and needs attention.* | We appreciate your recommendation to clarify the main insights and contributions of our work in the conclusion section. We have expanded on the key highlights of the study and how it contributes to the literature on gender and fisheries from an empirical and methodological standpoint.  **Please see the clarifications and complements below and p.24 – L.690-705:**  “Our study on gender inclusiveness in CBFM through the case of BMU on the South Coast of Kenya demonstrates that women’s participation in CBFM is limited owing to multifold barriers, including a restricted access to leadership. Furthermore, our findings contribute to document intersectional dynamics linked to CBFM places, suggesting that CBFM may result in exclusionary processes. Overall, this study provides a critical contribution to the academic field of gender and fisheries, and more specifically to intersectional research on CBFM. At the empirical level, our study confirms that CBFM processes in the studied SSF communities are characterized by participatory exclusion, adding evidence to the growing body of literature denouncing the lack of inclusiveness in CBFM approaches (Johnson et al. 2021; Rabbitt et al. 2022). From a methodological standpoint, the adaptation of the relief maps method to SSF communities demonstrates the relevance of this analytical tool for SSF contexts. This method is powerful in highlighting both privileged and marginalized positions within BMU places, thus contributing to shedding light on the intersected nature of social inequalities produced by CBFM processes. Moreover, our adaptation of the relief maps revamps this methodological intersectional tool by highlighting the connections between emotions (discomforts) and access and participation to CBFM places through the examination of spatial discontinuities. We encourage the application of this method in gender and fisheries research to improve our understanding of intersectional and place-based dynamics related to participation in SSF management and governance." |
| *Regarding the quote captured in the title, I liked the emphasis that it brings to (dis)comfort but wondered because the overall quote does not seem to really represent the study focus/findings. The quote signals more of a leadership focus to me.* | We highly appreciate your comment that invites us to reflect on the chosen quote for the title of the ms. As you mentioned it, we picked it because it contributes to highlight the notion of (dis)comfort while emphasizing the issue of female leadership. While our study reveals the importance of several types of barrier to women’s participation in CBFM, it stresses the importance of barriers specific to female leadership, which is a key driver of participatory exclusion processes. This point is detailed in the **discussion part p.22-23 L. 643-650** and emphasized in the key insights and recommendations of **the conclusion p.24, L.690-692 & L.709-714.**  While we agree that our study touches on other aspects than leadership-related issues, it is one key insight we wished to emphasize in the title, but we would be happy to consider another suggestion if you wish so. |