

Review of: "Contextualizing Public Coastal Access Challenges in South Africa, a Review of Best Practices in Selected Countries"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I provided some advice toward the end that could be used for all of section 3.

ABSTRACT section

I suggest this for an abstract instead of the one currently in the draft. This will reduce repetition of words and phrases and make it clearer what the reader can expect:

Coastal regions and populations worldwide experience the challenge of coastal access constraints. Owing to South Africa's socio-economic background of apartheid, equitable access to coastal resources remains a challenge. Integrated coastal management has been the subject of numerous research projects in South Africa; nevertheless, the issues surrounding coastal access and global best practices received little attention. This study was conducted due to insufficient documentation of global practices for addressing coastal access challenges relevant to South Africa. The objective of this paper was to contextualize challenges of coastal access in South Africa and assess the best practices in selected countries to address them. This study was contextualized in terms of the established literature and previous studies. In examining the key public coastal access challenges, a thematic literature review was used to systematically identify themes and gaps. The best practices for public coastal access are examined in this research using global examples. The following challenges were identified, that is, influence by private properties, apartheid spatial legacy, influence of new developments, lack of institutional capacity, policy gaps, and funding constraints. The study concludes that lessons learnt from different case studies should be integrated into the policy framework of South African integrated coastal management to improve public coastal access.

Content suggestions/thoughts:

1. Introduction section

- First paragraph could be divided into two paragraphs. Consider starting a new paragraph just before: "In South Africa, public trust doctrine has been incorporated..." (I also provided a revision to that specific sentence below.)
- Consider this revision:
 - **(original)** In South Africa, public trust doctrine has been incorporated in an environmental right in section 24 of the

Constitution which laid the foundation for several statutes to incorporate a public trust doctrine in South African environmental and natural resources law⁵.

- **(revised)** In South Africa, the public trust doctrine is embedded within the environmental right outlined in Section 24 of the Constitution. This has established the basis for incorporating the doctrine into various statutes related to environmental and natural resources law.

- Last paragraph in the introduction (starts with “Coastal management and planning in South Africa have been impacted...”.) Consider rewriting and restructuring that paragraph to give it a more narrative flow and a clearer frame. For example:

The historical spatial-political planning of apartheid has significantly influenced coastal management and planning in South Africa, leading to uneven access and development along the coast. This legacy of racial inequality has restricted access to and use of coastal resources for much of the 20th century. In contrast, Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) is a relatively recent concept in Sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, especially when compared to its longer history in other parts of the world. This highlights the importance of learning from the successful ICM experiences of other regions to address local challenges.

The concept of best practice refers to effective solutions, policies, interventions, actions, or procedures that have proven successful and could benefit entities facing similar issues. At the policy level, adopting best practices leverages previous successes rather than "reinventing the wheel," thereby applying proven strategies in new contexts.

Despite significant advancements in policy development for ICM in South Africa since 1994, transitioning from policy and legal frameworks to actual implementation remains a complex challenge, similar to experiences in other global contexts. This paper discusses the specific challenges of public coastal access in South Africa, emphasizing the notion that true access involves more than just physical entryways. Achieving meaningful public access requires overcoming constraints that prevent different segments of the population from accessing and enjoying the coast. These challenges are not unique to South Africa but have unique implementation nuances.

To address these issues, the paper draws on international best practices. Recommendations are made with the goal of improving coastal access in South Africa—considering the global context—but tailored to local needs and conditions.

2. Methodology section (bold and strikethrough show what to consider removing and adding)

To investigate the guiding question – which ~~what are~~ best practices ~~that~~ can be extrapolated to address public coastal access challenges in South Africa? Thematic literature review was used to contextualized public coastal access challenges in South Africa. Thematic literature review is “a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) in a specific body of literature¹⁷. **The search** engines Google Scholar and Academia were used ~~as search engines~~ to review existing literature ~~and the~~

Recurring themes were categorized into relevant clusters, each dealing with a specific issue. Themes were generated from ~~both the~~ data and ~~from~~ the investigator's prior theoretical understanding of the phenomenon **under study**¹⁸.

Themes regarding coastal access challenges were generated from various government reports as well as published reports. ~~Case study approach was used to select countries who have coastal access laws to solicit best practices for South Africa.~~ A case study approach was employed to identify countries with effective coastal access laws, from which best practices were gathered to inform South Africa's strategy. Benchmarking was used as the most appropriate way of best practice (DO YOU MEAN BENCHMARKING WAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE BEST PRACTICE FOR OTHER COUNTRIES OR FOR YOUR THEMATIC ANALYSIS? IT WASN'T CLEAR. OPTION 1) IF YOU MEAN FOR YOUR OWN ANALYSIS, THEN CONSIDER WRITING: "Benchmarking was the most effective method for identifying best practices in the literature." OPTION 2) IF YOU MEAN BENCHMARKING IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE BEST PRACTICE, CONSIDER WRITING: "Benchmarking was the most effective best practice identified in the literature." YOU'LL WANT TO DEFINE BENCHMARKING AND LET US KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN BY "MOST EFFECTIVE") Experts in many fields, such as medicine, management, computer science, and law, commonly focus on how to improve performance by identifying and compiling best practices¹⁹. The selection of best practices was predicated on problem statements derived from the themes of South Africa's **public coastal access** challenges ~~pertaining to~~. Data were analyzed using content analysis. (DID YOU HAND CODE? USE A PROGRAM? BRIEFLY TELL US ABOUT YOUR CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, CODING, AND QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS APPROACH, INCLUDING TRUSTWORTHINESS AND RIGOR. See <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1609406920967174>.)

3.1. Addressing private ownership of the coastline:

A) This section would be easier to follow if you organize it by talking about South Africa and then introducing what is happening in other parts of the world. I think just some rearranging and a transition sentence between those two: S. Africa and the rest of the world.

B) And while you start to sum up what you want that section to accomplish, I think you need to extend it out a little more. What are you seeing in S. Africa vs. the rest of the world? What parallels and differences (patterns?), and what do they mean, or even, what does that mean for S. Africa? This would make the section stronger. I think you could do that with just a few sentences.

3.2. Apartheid spatial legacy

A) Swap the first two sentences.

B) There's a 2004 study out of California that has excellent examples of spatial constraints – however, they have some interesting findings you should consider. [jlr-volume-36-number-3-pp-414-443.pdf \(nrpa.org\)](https://www.nrpas.org/jlr-volume-36-number-3-pp-414-443.pdf)

C) Similar issue to previous – tie it all together. What patterns do you see? What can we take from the various spatial approaches and how they're tied to racial/cultural influences on planning and investments?

D) Finally, something to note – in my study of Black Miamians who ceased visiting nearby coastal beaches, after decades of enjoying beaches and coastal spaces – one of the things I found was that even after desegregation ended, it wasn't just structural constraints that kept them from visiting the coast, it was cultural capital. When beaches desegregated in the late

1960s, Black Miamians A) weren't familiar with other beach options than the Black beach they were allowed to visit and B) didn't feel safe or comfortable visiting beaches they were formerly banned from. So it's not just planning spatially. It's outreach and awareness building that never happened (clearly defacto segregation was at play). Bush's *White Sands Black Beaches* book is an excellent read. Also, I'm happy to share my pubs and dissertation if it's helpful. [Segregation and the Sea: Toward a Critical Understanding of Race and Coastal Blue Space in Greater Miami - Cassandra Phoenix, Sarah L. Bell, Julie Hollenbeck, 2021 \(sagepub.com\)](#). You can reach out to me if you'd like me to share.

For the rest of the paper - I recommend you tie together each of the sections so that we understand what all of the examples mean in each of the sections. What is YOUR interpretation of what's happening or what it means for S. Africa? It's not enough to list how other countries are doing it, but to tell us how that might impact S. Africa's future access and planning. We want to hear from you and learn from you - you're the expert. Also, there are some definitions about access (ICMA) that might be more helpful earlier on, unless your intent is to tell us how these definitions impact S. Africa. That wasn't clear to me.